The articles in this study guide are not meant to mirror or interpret any productions at the Utah Shakespeare Festival. They are meant, instead, to be an educational jumping-off point to understanding and enjoying the plays (in any production at any theatre) a bit more thoroughly. Therefore the stories of the plays and the interpretative articles (and even characters, at times) may differ dramatically from what is ultimately produced on the Festival’s stages.

The Study Guide is published by the Utah Shakespeare Festival, 351 West Center Street; Cedar City, UT 84720. Bruce C. Lee, publications manager and editor; Clare Campbell, graphic artist.

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Cover Art for Twelfth Night by Cally Long.
# Twelfth Night

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Shakespeare: Words, Words, Words  
By S. S. Moorty

“No household in the English-speaking world is properly furnished unless it contains copies of the Holy Bible and of The Works of William Shakespeare. It is not always thought that these books should be read in maturer years, but they must be present as symbols of Religion and Culture” (G.B. Harrison, *Introducing Shakespeare*. Rev. & Exp. [New York: Penguin Books, 1991], 11).

We, the Shakespearean-theater goers and lovers, devotedly and ritualistically watch and read the Bard’s plays not for exciting stories and complex plots. Rather, Shakespeare’s language is a vital source of our supreme pleasure in his plays. Contrary to ill-conceived notions, Shakespeare’s language is not an obstacle to appreciation, though it may prove to be difficult to understand. Instead, it is the communicative and evocative power of Shakespeare’s language that is astonishingly rich in vocabulary—about 29,000 words—strikingly presented through unforgettable characters such as Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear, Othello, Rosalind, Viola, Iago, Shylock, etc.

In the high school classroom, students perceive Shakespeare’s language as “Old English.” Actually Shakespeare’s linguistic environment, experience, and exposure was, believe it or not, closer to our own times than to Chaucer’s, two hundred years earlier. Indeed, the history and development of the English language unfolds as follows: Old English, 449–1100; Middle English 1100–1500; and Modern English 1500-present. Shakespeare was firmly in the Modern English period.

At the time Shakespeare wrote, most of the grammatical changes from Old and Middle English had taken place; yet rigid notions about “correctness” had not yet been standardized in grammars. The past five centuries have advanced the cause of standardized positions for words; yet the flexible idiom of Elizabethan English offered abundant opportunities for Shakespeare’s linguistic inventiveness. Ideally it is rewarding to study several facets of Shakespeare’s English: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, wordplay, and imagery. The present overview will, however, be restricted to “vocabulary.”

To Polonius’s inquisitive question “What do you read, my lord?” (*Hamlet*, 2.2.191) Hamlet nonchalantly and intriguingly aptly replies: “Words, words, words” (2.2.192). This many-splendored creation of Shakespeare’s epitomizes the playwright’s own fascination with the dynamic aspect of English language, however troubling it may be to modern audiences and readers. Shakespeare added several thousand words to the language, apart from imparting new meanings to known words. At times Shakespeare could teasingly employ the same word for different shades of thought. Barowne’s single line, “Light, seeking light, doth light of light beguile” (*Love’s Labour’s Lost*, 1.1.77), as Harry Levin in his General Introduction to *The Riverside Shakespeare* (9) explains, “uses ‘light’ in four significations: intellect, seeking wisdom, cheats eyesight out of daylight.”

Another instance: Othello as he enters his bedroom with a light before he smothers his dear, innocent Desdemona soliloquizes: “Put out the light, and then put out the light” (Othello, 5.2.7) Here ‘light’ compares the light of Othello’s lamp or torch to Desdemona’s ‘light’ of life.

In both instances, the repeated simple ordinary word carries extraordinary shades of meaning. “Usually such a tendency in a Shakespeare play indicates a more or less conscious thematic intent.” (Paul A. Jorgensen, *Redeeming Shakespeare’s Words* [Berkeley and Los Angeles; University of California Press, 1962], 100).

Living in an age of the “grandiose humanistic confidence in the power of the word” (Levin 9), Shakespeare evidently felt exuberant that he had the license to experiment with the language,
further blessed by the fact that “there were no English grammars to lay down rules or dictionaries to restrict word-formation. This was an immeasurable boon for writers” (Levin 10). Surely Shakespeare took full advantage of the unparalleled linguistic freedom to invent, to experiment with, and to indulge in lavishly.

However intriguing, captivating, mind-teasing, beguiling, and euphonious, Shakespeare's vocabulary can be a stumbling block, especially for readers. “In the theater the speaking actor frequently relies on tone, semantic drive, narrative context, and body language to communicate the sense of utterly unfamiliar terms and phrases, but on the page such words become more noticeable and confusing” (Russ McDonald, *The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare: An Introduction with Documents* [Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1996], 184).

Unlocking the meaning of Shakespeare's vocabulary can prove to be an interesting challenge. Such words include those which “have dropped from common use like ‘bisson’ (blind) or those that the playwright seems to have created from Latin roots . . . but that did not catch on, such as conspectuities’ (eyesight or vision) or ‘unplausible’ (doubtful or disapproving). Especially confusing are those words that have shifted meaning over the intervening centuries, such as ‘proper’ (handsome), ‘nice’ (squeamish or delicate), ‘silly’ (innocent), or ‘cousin’ (kinsman, that is, not necessarily the child of an aunt or uncle” (McDonald 184). Because of semantic change, when Shakespeare uses ‘conceit,’ he does not mean ‘vanity,’ as we might understand it to be. Strictly following etymology, Shakespeare means a ‘conception’ or ‘notion,’ or possibly the ‘imagination’ itself.

Perhaps several Shakespearean words “would have been strange to Shakespeare’s audience because they were the products of his invention or unique usage. Some words that probably originated with him include: ‘auspicious,’ ‘assassination,’ ‘disgraceful,’ ‘dwindle,’ ‘savagery.’” Certainly a brave soul, he was “ a most audacious inventor of words.” To appreciate and understand Shakespeare’s English in contrast to ours, we ought to suspend our judgment and disbelief and allow respect for the “process of semantic change, which has been continually eroding or encrusting his original meaning” (Levin 8).

Shakespeare’s vocabulary has received greater attention that any other aspect of his language. Perhaps this is because it is the most accessible with no burdensome complications. Whatever the cause, Shakespeare’s language will forever be challenging and captivating.
Not of an Age, but for All Mankind

By Douglas A. Burger

After an enormous expenditure of money and effort, Shakespeare's Globe Theater has risen again, four centuries later, on London's south bank of the Thames. Designed as a faithful reconstruction of the original, it uses the building methods of the time and traditional materials (oak timbers, plaster walls, wooden pegs, water-reeds for thatching the roof). From above, the shape seems circular (actually, it is twenty-six sided) with three covered tiers of seats surrounding a central area which is open to the sky. There the “groundlings” may stand to see the action taking place on the stage, which occupies almost half of the inner space. There are no artificial lights, no conventional sets, no fancy rigging.

Seeing a Shakespeare play in the afternoon sunlight at the new Globe must come very close to the experience of those early-day Londoners, except, of course, that we in the twentieth-century behave better. We don't yell insults at the actors, spit, or toss orange peels on the ground. We also smell better: the seventeenth-century playwright, Thomas Dekker, calls the original audience “Stinkards . . . glewed together in crowdes with the Steames of strong breath” (Shakespeare's Globe: The Guide Book [London: International Globe Center, 1996], 42). And we are safer. The first Globe burned to the ground. The new theater has more exits, fire-retardant insulation concealed in the walls, and water-sprinklers that poke through the thatch of the roof.

That hard-headed capitalists and officials would be willing, even eager, to invest in the project shows that Shakespeare is good business. The new Globe is just one example. Cedar City's own Utah Shakespearean Festival makes a significant contribution to the economy of southern Utah. A sizable percentage of all the tourist dollars spent in England goes to Shakespeare's birthplace, Stratford-on-Avon, which would be a sleepy little agricultural town without its favorite son. The situation seems incredible. In our whole history, what other playwright could be called a major economic force? Who else—what single individual—could be listed along with agriculture, mining, and the like as an industry of a region?

Why Shakespeare?

The explanation, of course, goes further than an attempt to preserve our cultural traditions. In an almost uncanny way, Shakespeare's perceptions remain valuable for our own understandings of life, and probably no other writer remains so insightful, despite the constantly changing preoccupations of audiences over time.

The people of past centuries, for example, looked to the plays for nuggets of wisdom and quotable quotes, and many of Shakespeare's lines have passed into common parlance. There is an old anecdote about the woman, who on first seeing Hamlet, was asked how she liked the play. She replied, “Oh, very nice, my dear, but so full of quotations.” She has it backwards of course. Only the King James Bible has lent more “quotations” to English than Shakespeare.

Citizens of the late nineteenth century sought in the plays for an understanding of human nature, valuing Shakespeare's character for traits that they recognized in themselves and in others. The fascination continues to the present day as some of our best-known movie stars attempt to find new dimensions in the great characters: Mel Gibson and Kenneth Branagh in Hamlet, Lawrence Fishburn in Othello, Leonardo de Caprio in Romeo + Juliet, to name just a few.

Matters of gender, class, and race have preoccupied more recent audiences. Beatrice sounds a rather feminist note in Much Ado about Nothing in her advice to her cousin about choosing a husband: Curtsy to your father, but say “Father, as it please me.” Coriolanus presents a recurring dilemma about class relations in its explorations of the rights and wrongs involved in a great man's attempt to control the masses. Racial attitudes are illuminated in Othello, where the
European characters always mark the hero by his race, always identify him first as the "Moor," are always aware of his difference. London's new/old Globe is thus a potent symbol of the plays’ continuing worth to us. The very building demonstrates the utter accuracy of the lines written so long ago that Shakespeare is not “of an age” but “for all time.”
Elizabeth’s England

In his entire career, William Shakespeare never once set a play in Elizabethan England. His characters lived in medieval England (Richard II), France (As You Like It), Vienna (Measure for Measure), fifteenth-century Italy (Romeo and Juliet), the England ruled by Elizabeth’s father (Henry VIII) and elsewhere—anywhere and everywhere, in fact, except Shakespeare’s own time and place. But all Shakespeare’s plays—even when they were set in ancient Rome—reflected the life of Elizabeth’s England (and, after her death in 1603, that of her successor, James I). Thus, certain things about these extraordinary plays will be easier to understand if we know a little more about Elizabethan England.

Elizabeth’s reign was an age of exploration—exploration of the world, exploration of man’s nature, and exploration of the far reaches of the English language. This renaissance of the arts and sudden flowering of the spoken and written word gave us two great monuments—the King James Bible and the plays of Shakespeare—and many other treasures as well.

Shakespeare made full use of the adventurous Elizabethan attitude toward language. He employed more words than any other writer in history—more than 21,000 different words appear in the plays—and he never hesitated to try a new word, revive an old one, or make one up. Among the words which first appeared in print in his works are such everyday terms as “critic,” “assassin,” “bump,” “gloomy,” “suspicious,” “and hurry;” and he invented literally dozens of phrases which we use today: such un-Shakespearean expressions as “catching a cold,” “the mind’s eye,” “elbow room,” and even “pomp and circumstance.”

Elizabethan England was a time for heroes. The ideal man was a courtier, an adventurer, a fencer with the skill of Tybalt, a poet no doubt better than Orlando, a conversationalist with the wit of Rosalind and the eloquence of Richard II, and a gentleman. In addition to all this, he was expected to take the time, like Brutus, to examine his own nature and the cause of his actions and (perhaps unlike Brutus) to make the right choices. The real heroes of the age did all these things and more.

Despite the greatness of some Elizabethan ideals, others seem small and undignified, to us; marriage, for example, was often arranged to bring wealth or prestige to the family, with little regard for the feelings of the bride. In fact, women were still relatively powerless under the law.

The idea that women were “lower” than men was one small part of a vast concern with order which was extremely important to many Elizabethans. Most people believed that everything, from the lowest grain of sand to the highest angel, had its proper position in the scheme of things. This concept was called “the great chain of being.” When things were in their proper place, harmony was the result; when order was violated, the entire structure was shaken.

This idea turns up again and again in Shakespeare. The rebellion against Richard II brings bloodshed to England for generations; Romeo and Juliet’s rebellion against their parents contributes to their tragedy; and the assassination in Julius Caesar throws Rome into civil war.

Many Elizabethans also perceived duplications in the chain of order. They believed, for example, that what the sun is to the heavens, the king is to the state. When something went wrong in the heavens, rulers worried: before Julius Caesar and Richard II were overthrown, comets and meteors appeared, the moon turned the color of blood, and other bizarre astronomical phenomena were reported. Richard himself compares his fall to a premature setting of the sun; when he descends from the top of Flint Castle to meet the conquering Bolingbroke, he likens himself to the driver of the sun’s chariot in Greek mythology: “Down, down I come, like glist’ring Phaeton” (3.3.178).

All these ideas find expression in Shakespeare’s plays, along with hundreds of others—most of them not as strange to our way of thinking. As dramatized by the greatest playwright in the
history of the world, the plays offer us a fascinating glimpse of the thoughts and passions of a brilliant age. Elizabethan England was a brief skyrocket of art, adventure, and ideas which quickly burned out; but Shakespeare’s plays keep the best parts of that time alight forever. (Adapted from “The Shakespeare Plays,” educational materials made possible by Exxon, Metropolitan Life, Morgan Guaranty, and CPB.)
History Is Written by the Victors
From *Insights*, 1994

William Shakespeare wrote ten history plays chronicling English kings from the time of the Magna Carta (*King John*) to the beginning of England's first great civil war, the Wars of the Roses (*Richard II*) to the conclusion of the war and the reuniting of the two factions (*Richard III*), to the reign of Queen Elizabeth's father (*Henry VIII*). Between these plays, even though they were not written in chronological order, is much of the intervening history of England, in the six Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI plays.

In writing these plays, Shakespeare had nothing to help him except the standard history books of his day. The art of the historian was not very advanced in this period, and no serious attempt was made to get at the exact truth about a king and his reign. Instead, the general idea was that any nation that opposed England was wrong, and that any Englishman who opposed the winning side in a civil war was wrong also.

Since Shakespeare had no other sources, the slant that appears in the history books of his time also appears in his plays. Joan of Arc opposed the English and was not admired in Shakespeare's day, so she is portrayed as a comic character who wins her victories through witchcraft. Richard III fought against the first Tudor monarchs and was therefore labeled in the Tudor histories as a vicious usurper, and he duly appears in Shakespeare's plays as a murdering monster.

Shakespeare wrote nine of his history plays under Queen Elizabeth. She did not encourage historical truthfulness, but rather a patriotism, an exultant, intense conviction that England was the best of all possible countries and the home of the most favored of mortals. And this patriotism breathes through all the history plays and binds them together. England's enemy is not so much any individual king as the threat of civil war, and the history plays come to a triumphant conclusion when the threat of civil war is finally averted, and the great queen, Elizabeth, is born.

Shakespeare was a playwright, not a historian, and, even when his sources were correct, he would sometimes juggle his information for the sake of effective stagecraft. He was not interested in historical accuracy; he was interested in swiftly moving action and in people. Shakespeare's bloody and superb king seems more convincing than the real Richard III, merely because Shakespeare wrote so effectively about him. Shakespeare moved in a different world from that of the historical, a world of creation rather than of recorded fact, and it is in this world that he is so supreme a master.
Mr. Shakespeare, I Presume

by Diana Major Spencer From Insights, 1994

Could the plays known as Shakespeare’s have been written by a rural, semi-literate, uneducated, wife-deserting, two-bit actor who spelled him name differently each of the six times he wrote it down? Could such a man know enough about Roman history, Italian geography, French grammar, and English court habits to create Antony and Cleopatra, The Comedy of Errors, and Henry V? Could he know enough about nobility and its tenuous relationship to royalty to create King Lear and Macbeth?

Are these questions even worth asking? Some very intelligent people think so. On the other hand, some very intelligent people think not. Never mind quibbles about how a line should be interpreted, or how many plays Shakespeare wrote and which ones, or which of the great tragedies reflected personal tragedies. The question of authorship is “The Shakespeare Controversy.”

Since Mr. Cowell, quoting the deceased Dr. Wilmot, cast the first doubt about William of Stratford in an 1805 speech before the Ipswich Philological Society, nominees for the “real author” have included philosopher Sir Francis Bacon, playwright Christopher Marlowe, Queen Elizabeth I, Sir Walter Raleigh, and the earls of Derby, Rutland, Essex, and Oxford--among others.

The arguments evoke two premises: first, that the proven facts about the William Shakespeare who was christened at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon on April 26, 1564 do not configure a man of sufficient nobility of thought and language to have written the plays; and, second, that the man from Stratford is nowhere concretely identified as the author of the plays. The name “Shakespeare”—in one of its spellings—appears on early quartos, but the man represented by the name may not be the one from Stratford.

One group of objections to the Stratford man follows from the absence of any record that he ever attended school—in Stratford or anywhere else. If he were uneducated, the arguments go, how could his vocabulary be twice as large as the learned Milton’s? How could he know so much history, law, or philosophy? If he were a country bumpkin, how could he know so much of hawking, hounding, courtly manners, and daily habits of the nobility? How could he have traveled so much, learning about other nations of Europe in enough detail to make them the settings for his plays?

The assumptions of these arguments are that such rich and noble works as those attributed to a playwright using the name “Shakespeare” could have been written only by someone with certain characteristics, and that those characteristics could be distilled from the “facts” of his life. He would have to be noble; he would have to be well-educated; and so forth. On these grounds the strongest candidate to date is Edward de Vere, seventeenth earl of Oxford.

A debate that has endured its peaks and valleys, the controversy catapulted to center stage in 1984 with the publication of Charlton Ogburn’s The Mysterious William Shakespeare. Ogburn, a former army intelligence officer, builds a strong case for Oxford—if one can hurdle the notions that the author wasn’t Will Shakespeare, that literary works should be read autobiographically, and that literary creation is nothing more than reporting the facts of one’s own life. “The Controversy” was laid to rest—temporarily, at least—by justices Blackmun, Brennan, and Stevens of the United States Supreme Court who, after hearing evidence from both sides in a mock trial conducted September 25, 1987 at American University in Washington, D.C., found in favor of the Bard of Avon. Hooray for our side!
A Nest of Singing Birds

From Insights, 1992

Musical development was part of the intellectual and social movement that influenced all England during the Tudor Age. The same forces that produced writers like Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, John Donne, and Francis Bacon also produced musicians of corresponding caliber. So numerous and prolific were these talented and imaginative men—men whose reputations were even in their own day firmly established and well founded—that they have been frequently and aptly referred to as a nest of singing birds.

One such figure was Thomas Tallis, whose music has officially accompanied the Anglican service since the days of Elizabeth I; another was his student, William Boyd, whose variety of religious and secular compositions won him international reputation.

Queen Elizabeth I, of course, provided an inspiration for the best efforts of Englishmen, whatever their aims and activities. For music, she was the ideal patroness. She was an accomplished performer on the virginal (forerunner to the piano), and she aided her favorite art immensely in every way possible, bestowing her favors on the singers in chapel and court and on the musicians in public and private theatrical performances. To the great composers of her time, she was particularly gracious and helpful.

Singing has been an integral part of English life for as long as we have any knowledge. Long before the music was written down, the timeless folk songs were a part of our Anglo-Saxon heritage. The madrigals and airs that are enjoyed each summer at the Utah Shakespearean Festival evolved from these traditions.

It was noted by Bishop Jewel in 1560 that sometimes at Paul’s Cross there would be 6,000 people singing together, and before the sermon, the whole congregation always sang a psalm, together with the choir and organ. When that thundering unity of congregational chorus came in, “I was so transported there was no room left in my whole body, mind, or spirit for anything below divine and heavenly raptures.”

Religious expression was likely the dominant musical motif of the Elizabethan period; however, the period also saw development of English stage music, with Morley, John Wilson, and Robert Johnson setting much of their music to the plays of Shakespeare. The masque, a semi-musical entertainment, reached a high degree of perfection at the court of James I, where the courtiers themselves were sometimes participants. An educated person of the time was expected to perform music more than just fairly well, and an inability in this area might elicit whispered comments regarding lack of genteel upbringing, not only in the ability to take one’s part in a madrigal, but also in knowing the niceties of musical theory. Henry Peacham wrote in The Compleat Gentleman in 1662 that one of the fundamental qualities of a gentleman was to be able to “sing your part sure, and...to play the same upon your viol.”

Outside the walls of court could be heard street songs, lighthearted catches, and ballads, all of which indicates that music was not confined to the cathedrals or court. We still have extant literally hundreds of ballads, street songs, and vendors’ cries that were sung or hummed on the street and played with all their complicated variations on all levels of Elizabethan society.

Instruments of the period were as varied as the music and peoples, and the instrument and songbooks which remain in existence today are indicative of the high level of excellence enjoyed by the Elizabethans. Songbooks, mainly of part-songs for three, four, five, and six voices exist today, as do books of dance music: corrantos, pavans, and galliards. Records from one wealthy family indicate the family owned forty musical instruments, including twelve viols, seven recorders, four lutes, five virginals, various brasses and woodwinds, and two “great
organs.” To have use for such a great number of instruments implies a fairly large group of players resident with the family or staying with them as invited guests, and the players of the most popular instruments (lutes, virginals, and viols) would be playing from long tradition, at least back to King Henry VIII. In short, music was as necessary to the public and private existence of a Renaissance Englishman as any of the basic elements of life.

The Utah Shakespearean Festival musicians perform each summer on authentic replicas of many of these Renaissance instruments. The music they perform is authentic from the Elizabethan period, and the instruments are made available for audience inspection and learning.
The status of the actor in society has never been entirely stable but has fluctuated from the beginnings of the theatre to the present day. The ancient Greeks often considered actors as servants of Dionysus, and their performances were a sort of religious rite. Roman actors, often slaves, were seen as the scraps of society, only one step above gladiators. In medieval Europe, both the theatre and the actor, suppressed by the Catholic Church, were almost non-existent but gradually re-emerged in the form of the liturgy and, later, the Mystery plays. The actors of Shakespeare’s age also saw fluctuations in reputation; actors were alternately classified as “vagabonds and sturdy beggars,” as an act of Parliament in 1572 defined them, and as servants of noblemen.

As early as 1482, noblemen such as Richard, duke of Gloucester (later Richard III), the earl of Essex, and Lord Arundel kept acting companies among their retainers. But other than these select groups protected by nobles, actors lived lives of danger and instability because when they abandoned their respectable trades, they also left behind the comfort and protection of the trade guilds.

However, life soon became much more difficult for both of these classes of actors. In 1572, Parliament passed two acts which damaged thespians’ social status. In the first one, the Queen forbade “the unlawful retaining of multitudes of unordinary servants by liveries, badges, and other signs and tokens (contrary to the good and ancient statutes and laws of this realm)” in order to “curb the power of local grandees” (Dennis Kay, Shakespeare: His Life, Work, and Era [New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1992], 88). One result of this was that some of the actors, now considered superfluous, were turned away.

To make matters even worse, these actors faced yet another impediment: the “Acte for the punishment of Vacabondes” (Kay, 88), in which actors were declared “vagabonds and masterless men and hence were subject to arrest and imprisonment” (Thomas Marc Parrott and Robert Hamilton Ball, A Short View of Elizabethan Drama [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1943], 46).

However, there were still nobles, such as the earl of Leicester and the earl of Sussex, who endorsed players; the protector would usually seek royal permission for these actors to perform in London or, less frequently, some other less prestigious town. Thus the actors were able to venture forth without fear of arrest. It is through these circumstances that Shakespeare ends up an actor in London.

There are many theories—guesses really—of how Shakespeare got into the theatre. He may have joined a group of strolling players, performed around the countryside, and eventually made it to London, the theatrical hub of Britain. Another theory suggests that he began as a schoolmaster, wrote a play (possibly The Comedy of Errors) and then decided to take it to London; or, alternately, he could have simply gone directly to that great city, with or without a play in hand, to try his luck.

An interesting speculation is that while he was young, Shakespeare might have participated in one of the cycles of Mystery plays in Stratford: “On one occasion the Stratford corporation laid out money for an entertainment at Pentecost. In 1583 they paid 13s 4d ‘to Davi Jones and his company for his pastime at Whitsuntide.’ Davi Jones had been married to Elizabeth, the daughter of Adrian Quiney, and after her death in 1579 he took as his wife a Hathaway, Frances. Was Shakespeare one of the youths who trimmed themselves for the Whitsun pastime?” (S. Schoenbaum, William Shakespeare: A Compact Documentary Life [New York: New American Library, 1977], 111).
But however he got into the theatre and to London, he had made a very definite impression on his competitors by 1592, when playwright Robert Greene attacked Shakespeare as both actor and author: “‘There is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tiger’s heart wrapt in a Player’s hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you: and . . . is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country’” (G. B. Harrison, Introducing Shakespeare [New York: Penguin Books, Inc., 1947], 1).

We don’t often think of Shakespeare as primarily an actor, perhaps because most of what we know of him comes from the plays he wrote rather than the parts he played. Nevertheless, he made much of his money as an actor and sharer in his company: “At least to start with, his status, his security derived more from his acting skill and his eye for business than from his pen” (Kay, 95). Had he been only a playwright, he would likely have died a poor man, as did Robert Greene: “In the autumn of 1592, Robert Greene, the most popular author of his generation, lay penniless and dying. . . . The players had grown rich on the products of his brain, and now he was deserted and alone” (Harrison, 1).

While Shakespeare made a career of acting, there are critics who might dispute his acting talent. For instance, almost a century after Shakespeare’s death, “an anonymous enthusiast of the stage . . . remarked . . . that ‘Shakespear . . . was a much better poet, than player’” (Schoenbaum, 201). However, Shakespeare could have been quite a good actor, and this statement would still be true. One sign of his skill as an actor is that he is mentioned in the same breath with Burbage and Kemp: “The accounts of the royal household for Mar 15 [1595] record payments to ‘William Kempe William Shakespeare & Richarde Burbage seruantes to the Lord Chamberlain’” (Kay, 174).

Another significant indication of his talent is the very fact that he played in London rather than touring other less lucrative towns. If players were to be legally retained by noblemen, they had to prove they could act, and one means of demonstrating their legitimacy was playing at court for Queen Elizabeth. The more skilled companies obtained the queen’s favor and were granted permission to remain in London.

Not all companies, however, were so fortunate: “Sussex’s men may not have been quite up to the transition from rural inn-yards to the more demanding circumstances of court performance. Just before the Christmas season of 1574, for example, they were inspected (‘perused’) by officials of the Revels Office, with a view to being permitted to perform before the queen; but they did not perform” (Kay, 90). Shakespeare and his company, on the other hand, performed successfully in London from the early 1590s until 1611.

It would be a mistake to classify William Shakespeare as only a playwright, even the greatest playwright of the English-speaking world; he was also “an actor, a sharer, a member of a company” (Kay, 95), obligations that were extremely relevant to his plays. As a man of the theatre writing for a company, he knew what would work on stage and what would not and was able to make his plays practical as well as brilliant. And perhaps more importantly, his theatrical experience must have taught him much about the human experience, about everyday lives and roles, just as his plays show us that “All the world’s a stage, / And all the men and women merely players” (As You Like It, 2.7.149–50).
When Shakespeare peeped through the curtain at the audience gathered to hear his first play, he looked upon a very motley crowd. The pit was filled with men and boys. The galleries contained a fair proportion of women, some not too respectable. In the boxes were a few gentlemen from the royal courts, and in the lords’ box or perhaps sitting on the stage was a group of extravagantly dressed gentlemen of fashion. Vendors of nuts and fruits moved about through the crowd. The gallants were smoking; the apprentices in the pit were exchanging rude witticisms with the painted ladies.

When Shakespeare addressed his audience directly, he did so in terms of gentle courtesy or pleasant raillery. In Hamlet, however, he does let fall the opinion that the groundlings (those on the ground, the cheapest seats) were “for the most part capable of nothing but dumb shows and noise.” His recollections of the pit of the Globe may have added vigor to his ridicule of the Roman mob in Julius Caesar.

On the other hand, the theatre was a popular institution, and the audience was representative of all classes of London life. Admission to standing room in the pit was a penny, and an additional penny or two secured a seat in the galleries. For seats in the boxes or for stools on the stage, still more was charged, up to sixpence or half a crown.

Attendance at the theatres was astonishingly large. There were often five or six theatres giving daily performances, which would mean that out of a city of one hundred thousand inhabitants, thirty thousand or more spectators each week attended the theatre. When we remember that a large class of the population disapproved of the theatre, and that women of respectability were not frequent patrons of the public playhouses, this attendance is remarkable.

Arrangements for the comfort of the spectators were meager, and spectators were often disorderly. Playbills seem to have been posted all about town and in the theatre, and the title of the piece was announced on the stage. These bills contained no lists of actors, and there were no programs, ushers, or tickets. There was usually one door for the audience, where the admission fee was deposited in a box carefully watched by the money taker, and additional sums were required at entrance to the galleries or boxes. When the three o’clock trumpets announced the beginning of a performance, the assembled audience had been amusing itself by eating, drinking, smoking, and playing cards, and they sometimes continued these occupations during a performance. Pickpockets were frequent, and, if caught, were tied to a post on the stage. Disturbances were not infrequent, sometimes resulting in general rioting.

The Elizabethan audience was fond of unusual spectacle and brutal physical suffering. They liked battles and murders, processions and fireworks, ghosts and insanity. They expected comedy to abound in beatings, and tragedy in deaths. While the audience at the Globe expected some of these sensations and physical horrors, they did not come primarily for these. (Real blood and torture were available nearby at the bear baitings, and public executions were not uncommon.) Actually, there were very few public entertainments offering as little brutality as did the theatre.

Elizabethans attended the public playhouses for learning. They attended for romance, imagination, idealism, and art; the audience was not without refinement, and those looking for food for the imagination had nowhere to go but to the playhouse. There were no newspapers, no magazines, almost no novels, and only a few cheap books; theatre filled the desire for story discussion among peo-
ple lacking other educational and cultural opportunities.

The most remarkable case of Shakespeare’s theatre filling an educational need is probably that of English history. The growth of national patriotism culminating in the English victory over the Spanish Armada gave dramatists a chance to use the historical material, and for the fifteen years from the Armada to the death of Elizabeth, the stage was deluged with plays based on the events of English chronicles, and familiarity with English history became a cultural asset of the London crowd,

Law was a second area where the Elizabethan public seems to have been fairly well informed, and successful dramatists realized the influence that the great development of civil law in the sixteenth century exercised upon the daily life of the London citizen. In this area, as in others, the dramatists did not hesitate to cultivate the cultural background of their audience whenever opportunity offered, and the ignorance of the multitude did not prevent it from taking an interest in new information and from offering a receptive hearing to the accumulated lore of lawyers, historians, humanists, and playwrights.

The audience was used to the spoken word, and soon became trained in blank verse, delighting in monologues, debates, puns, metaphors, stump speakers, and sonorous declamation. The public was accustomed to the acting of the old religious dramas, and the new acting in which the spoken words were listened to caught on rapidly. The new poetry and the great actors who recited it found a sensitive audience. There were many moments during a play when spectacle, brutality, and action were all forgotten, and the audience fed only on the words. Shakespeare and his contemporaries may be deemed fortunate in having an audience essentially attentive, eager for the newly unlocked storehouse of secular story, and possessing the sophistication and interest to be fed richly by the excitements and levities on the stage.
It is hard to get from the facts of Shakespeare's life to any sense of what it must have been like to have lived it. He was born in 1564 in Stratford-on-Avon and died there in 1616. The day of his birth is not certain, but it may have been the same as the day of his death—April 23—if he was baptized, as was usual at the time, three days after he was born. He married Anne Hathaway in the winter of 1582–83, when he was eighteen and she was twenty-six. He became the father of three children. The first was Susannah, who was born around May 23, close enough to the date of the wedding to suggest that the marriage was not entirely voluntary. Shakespeare's twins, Hamnet and Judith, were baptized on February 2, 1585. Hamnet died of unknown causes (at least unknown by us at this distance in time) in 1596. Shakespeare's career as actor, theatre owner, manager, and, of course, playwright began in the vicinity of 1590 and continued for the rest of his life, though there are clear indications that he spent more and more time in Stratford and less and less in London from 1611 on. His work in the theatre made him wealthy, and his extraordinary plays brought him a measure of fame, though nothing like what he deserved or would posthumously receive.

It's hard to get even the briefest sense of what Shakespeare's life was like from such information. It is probably impossible ever to know what Shakespeare thought or felt, but maybe we can get closer to what he saw and heard and even smelled. Perhaps some snapshots—little close-ups—might help to bring us nearer to the world in which Shakespeare lived if not quite to the life he lived in that world. In Shakespeare's youth, chimneys were a new thing. Before that, smoke was left to find its way out through a hole in the roof, often a thatched roof, and there were even some who maintained that this smoky atmosphere was better than the newfangled fresh air that chimneys made possible—along with a greater division of rooms and more privacy.

In the year of Shakespeare's birth, Stratford had more trees than houses—"upwards of 400 houses as well as 1,000 elms and forty ashes" (Peter Thomson, Shakespeare's Professional Career [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992], 1). Peter Levi says, "The town was so full of elm trees that it must have looked and sounded like a woodland settlement. For example, Mr. Gibbs's house on Rothermarket had twelve elms in the garden and six in front of the door. Thomas Attford on Ely Street had another twelve. The town boundaries were marked by elms or groups of elms (The Life and Times of William Shakespeare [New York: Wings Books, 1988], 7). Shakespeare's "Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang" becomes a far more majestic image with the picture of Stratford's elms in mind. And the birds themselves had a sound which modern ears no longer have a chance to enjoy. "We must realize that it was ordinary for . . . Shakespeare to hear a dawn chorus of many hundreds of birds at once. . . as a young man thirty years ago I have heard a deafening dawn chorus in the wooded Chilterns, on Shakespeare's road to London" (Levi 10).

Exactly what Shakespeare's road to London may have been or at least how he first made his way there and became an actor is much debated. He might have been a schoolmaster or fifty other things, but he may well have started out as he ended up—as a player. We can then, in John Southworth's words, "Picture a sixteen-year-old lad on a cart, growing year by year into manhood, journeying out of the Arden of his childhood into ever more unfamiliar, distant regions, travelling ill-made roads in all weathers, sleeping in inns, hearing and memorising strange new dialects and forms of speech, meeting with every possible type and character of person; learning, most of all perhaps, from the audiences to which he played in guildhalls and inns" (Shakespeare the Player: A Life in the Theatre [Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2000], 30). At some time in his life—in fact, many times—Shakespeare must have known theatrical tours very like that.
In London itself, the new Globe, the best theatre in (or rather just outside of) the city, was in an area with a large number of prisons and an unpleasant smell. “Garbage had preceded actors on the marshy land where the new playhouse was erected: ‘flanked with a ditch and forced out of a marsh’, according to Ben Jonson. Its cost . . . included the provision of heavy piles for the foundation, and a whole network of ditches in which the water rose and fell with the tidal Thames” (Garry O’Connor, *William Shakespeare: A Popular Life* [New York: Applause Books, 2000], 161). The playgoers came by water, and the Globe, the Rose, and the Swan “drew 3,000 or 4,000 people in boats across the Thames every day” (161). Peter Levi says of Shakespeare’s London, “The noise, the crowds, the animals and their droppings, the glimpses of grandeur and the amazing squalor of the poor, were beyond modern imagination” (49).

England was a place of fear and glory. Public executions were public entertainments. Severed heads decayed on city walls. Francis Bacon, whom Will Durant calls “the most powerful and influential intellect of his time” (*Heroes of History: A Brief History of Civilization from Ancient Times to the Dawn of the Modern Age* [New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001], 327), had been “one of the persons commissioned to question prisoners under torture” in the 1580s (Levi 4). The opportune moment when Shakespeare became the most successful of playwrights was the destruction of Thomas Kyd, “who broke under torture and was never the same again,” and the death of Christopher Marlowe in a tavern brawl which was the result of plot and counterplot—a struggle, very probably, between Lord Burghley and Walter Ralegh (Levi 48).

Shakespeare, who must have known the rumors and may have known the truth, cannot have helped shuddering at such monstrous good fortune. Still, all of the sights, smells, and terrors, from the birdsongs to the screams of torture, from the muddy tides to the ties of blood, became not only the textures and tonalities of Shakespeare’s life, but also the information and inspiration behind his plays.
Ghosts, Witches, and Shakespeare
By Howard Waters
From Insights, 2006

Some time in the mid 1580s, young Will Shakespeare, for reasons not entirely clear to us, left his home, his wife, and his family in Stratford and set off for London. It was a time when Elizabeth, “la plus fine femme du monde,” as Henry III of France called her, had occupied the throne of England for over twenty-five years. The tragedy of Mary Stuart was past; the ordeal of Essex was in the future. Sir Francis Drake’s neutralization of the Spanish Armada was pending and rumors of war or invasion blew in from all the great ports.

What could have been more exciting for a young man from the country, one who was already more than half in love with words, than to be headed for London!

It was an exciting and frightening time, when the seven gates of London led to a maze of streets, narrow and dirty, crowded with tradesmen, carts, coaches, and all manner of humanity. Young Will would have seen the moated Tower of London, looking almost like an island apart. There was London Bridge crowded with tenements and at the southern end a cluster of traitors’ heads impaled on poles. At Tyburn thieves and murderers dangled, at Limehouse pirates were trussed up at low tide and left to wait for the water to rise over them. At Tower Hill the headman’s axe flashed regularly, while for the vagabonds there were the whipping posts, and for the beggars there were the stocks. Such was the London of the workaday world, and young Will was undoubtedly mentally filing away details of what he saw, heard, and smelled.

Elizabethan people in general were an emotional lot and the ferocity of their entertainment reflected that fact. Bear-baiting, for example, was a highly popular spectator sport, and the structure where they were generally held was not unlike the theatres of the day. A bear was chained to a stake in the center of the pit, and a pack of large dogs was turned loose to bait, or fight, him. The bear eventually tired (fortunately for the remaining dogs!), and, well, you can figure the rest out for yourself. Then there were the public hangings, whippings, or drawing and quarterings for an afternoon’s entertainment. So, the violence in some of Shakespeare’s plays was clearly directed at an audience that reveled in it. Imagine the effect of having an actor pretend to bite off his own tongue and spit a chunk of raw liver that he had carefully packed in his jaw into the faces of the groundlings!

Despite the progressing enlightenment of the Renaissance, superstition was still rampant among Elizabethan Londoners, and a belief in such things as astrology was common (Ralph P. Boas and Barbara M. Hahna, “The Age of Shakespeare,” Social Backgrounds of English Literature, [Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1931] 93). Through the position of stars many Elizabethans believed that coming events could be foretold even to the extent of mapping out a person’s entire life.

Where witches and ghosts were concerned, it was commonly accepted that they existed and the person who scoffed at them was considered foolish, or even likely to be cursed. Consider the fact that Shakespeare’s Macbeth was supposedly cursed due to the playwright’s having given away a few more of the secrets of witchcraft than the weird sisters may have approved of. For a time, productions experienced an uncanny assortment of mishaps and injuries. Even today, it is often considered bad luck for members of the cast and crew to mention the name of the production, simply referred to as the Scottish Play. In preaching a sermon, Bishop Jewel warned the Queen: “It may please your Grace to understand that witches and sorcerers within these last few years are marvelously increased. Your Grace’s subjects pine away, even unto death; their color fadeth; their flesh rotteth; their speech is benumbed; their senses bereft” (Walter Bromberg,
Ghosts were recognized by the Elizabethans in three basic varieties: the vision or purely subjective ghost, the authentic ghost who has died without opportunity of repentance, and the false ghost which is capable of many types of manifestations (Boas and Hahn). When a ghost was confronted, either in reality or in a Shakespearean play, some obvious discrimination was called for (and still is). Critics still do not always agree on which of these three types haunts the pages of Julius Caesar, Macbeth, Richard III, or Hamlet, or, in some cases, why they are necessary to the plot at all. After all, Shakespeare's ghosts are a capricious lot, making themselves visible or invisible as they please. In Richard III there are no fewer than eleven ghosts on the stage who are visible only to Richard and Richmond. In Macbeth the ghost of Banquo repeatedly appears to Macbeth in crowded rooms but is visible only to him. In Hamlet, the ghost appears to several people on the castle battlements but only to Hamlet in his mother's bedchamber. In the words of E.H. Seymour: “If we judge by sheer reason, no doubt we must banish ghosts from the stage altogether, but if we regulate our fancy by the laws of superstition, we shall find that spectres are privileged to be visible to whom they will (E.H. Seymour “Remarks, Critical, Conjectural, and Explanatory on Shakespeare” in Macbeth A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare [New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1963] 211).

Shakespeare's audiences, and his plays, were the products of their culture. Since the validity of any literary work can best be judged by its public acceptance, not to mention its lasting power, it seems that Shakespeare's ghosts and witches were, and are, enormously popular. If modern audiences and critics find themselves a bit skeptical, then they might consider bringing along a supply of Coleridge's “willing suspension of disbelief.” Elizabethans simply had no need of it.
Shakespeare’s Day: What They Wore

The clothing which actors wear to perform a play is called a costume, to distinguish it from everyday clothing. In Shakespeare's time, acting companies spent almost as much on costumes as television series do today.

The costumes for shows in England were so expensive that visitors from France were a little envious. Kings and queens on the stage were almost as well dressed as kings and queens in real life.

Where did the acting companies get their clothes? Literally, “off the rack” and from used clothing sellers. Wealthy middle class people would often give their servants old clothes that they didn’t want to wear any more, or would leave their clothes to the servants when they died. Since clothing was very expensive, people wore it as long as possible and passed it on from one person to another without being ashamed of wearing hand-me-downs. However, since servants were of a lower class than their employers, they weren’t allowed to wear rich fabrics, and would sell these clothes to acting companies, who were allowed to wear what they wanted in performance.

A rich nobleman like Count Paris or a wealthy young man like Romeo would wear a doublet, possibly of velvet, and it might have gold embroidery. Juliet and Lady Capulet would have worn taffeta, silk, gold, or satin gowns, and everybody would have had hats, gloves, ruffs (an elaborate collar), gloves, stockings, and shoes equally elaborate.

For a play like Romeo and Juliet, which was set in a European country at about the same time Shakespeare wrote it, Elizabethan everyday clothes would have been fine—the audience would have been happy, and they would have been authentic for the play. However, since there were no costume shops who could make clothing suitable for, say, medieval Denmark for Hamlet, or ancient Rome for Julius Caesar, or Oberon and Titania’s forest for A Midsummer Night’s Dream, these productions often looked slightly strange—can you imagine fairies in full Elizabethan collars and skirts? How would they move?

Today’s audiences want costumes to be authentic, so that they can believe in the world of the play. However, Romeo and Juliet was recently set on Verona Beach, with very up-to-date clothes indeed; and about thirty years ago, West Side Story, an updated musical version of the Romeo and Juliet tale, was set in the Puerto Rican section of New York City.

Activity: Discuss what the affect of wearing “special” clothes is—to church, or to a party. Do you feel different? Do you act different? How many kinds of wardrobes do you have? School, play, best? Juliet and Romeo would have had only one type of clothing each, no matter how nice it was.

Activity: Perform a scene from the play in your everyday clothes, and then in more formal clothes. Ask the participants and the spectators to describe the differences between the two performances.
Synopsis: Twelfth Night

Viola and Sebastian, twins, are separated during a shipwreck. Viola, thinking her brother dead, finds herself stranded in Ilyria. She disguises herself as a man, Cesario, and enters the service of Duke Orsino, who is in love with Olivia and who sends Viola/Cesario to woo Lady Olivia in his behalf. Orsino does not know that Viola has fallen in love with him. Olivia is indulging in a seven-year season of mourning for a dead brother and is refusing to accept the advances of any man. Her sorrow is not so profound, however, as to keep her from falling in love with the disguised Viola. She is so in love, in fact, that she later sends a Cesario/Viola a ring and invitation to return and then admits her love for “him.”

Of Olivia’s household, only her steward, the melancholy Malvolio, finds a morbid pleasure in the atmosphere of mourning which Olivia has decreed. Her uncle, Sir Toby Belch (who lives in her house), doesn’t believe in grief; he spends his time drinking with Olivia’s clown, Feste, and his dupe, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, a wealthy but foolish knight.

Because Malvolio is so arrogant, Maria, Olivia’s chamber woman, plots with Sir Toby, Aguecheek, and Feste to get even. This they succeed in doing by means of a forged letter supposedly from Olivia, duping Malvolio into wearing yellow stockings cross gartered, which she detests. Malvolio’s unaccountable antics cause Olivia to think him mad, and Sir Toby and Maria have him committed to a dark room.

Meanwhile, Viola’s twin brother, Sebastian, unaware that Viola is still alive, arrives in Ilyria with a sea captain, Antonio, who is an outlawed man in Ilyria. Antonio lends his purse to Sebastian and parts.

Seeking more “sport,” Sir Toby presses Aguecheek and Cesario/Viola into a duel. Antonio rushes to rescue the youth, whom he believes is his friend, Sebastian, and is arrested by the duke’s men and met by Cesario/Viola with a denial that he/she ever saw him or his purse.

Now Aguecheek rushes to complete the duel with Cesario/Viola but encounters Viola’s twin brother instead who quickly wounds the knight. Olivia interferes and leads Sebastian to a priest and (thinking he is Cesario) marries the surprised young man.

Antonio is brought before the duke and creates some confusion by relating his adventures with Cesario/Viola, who he still thinks is Sebastian. Olivia adds to the confusion by entering and claiming Cesario/Viola as her husband.

Sir Andrew and Sir Toby in the meantime have had another encounter with Sebastian; they enter wounded and blame their hurts upon Cesario/Viola. Everything is finally made clear when Sebastian himself appears and the company sees Viola and Sebastian, twins, side by side. Viola promises to assume her maiden attire to prove her identity as Sebastian’s sister. Orsino, remembering Viola’s many expressions of affection, is content to abandon his hopeless love for Olivia and marry Viola. Sir Toby marries Maria for her wit, and only Malvolio remains single and seems dissatisfied with the happiness of the others.
Characters: *Twelfth Night*

**Orsino:** The duke of Ilyria, Orsino is usually melancholy and in love with being in love. He at first is in love with Olivia, but, upon seeing the hopelessness of that situation and the honesty and beauty of Viola, falls in love with and marries her.

**Sebastian:** The twin brother of Viola, he is a noble young man who is shipwrecked along with his sister and ends up in Ilyria. At the end of the play, he marries Olivia.

**Antonio:** A sea captain and true friend of Sebastian, he is a wanted man in Ilyria and thus at first remains in hiding. However, when he surfaces to save who he believes is Sebastian he is arrested, but is later pardoned and released when all the confused identities are sorted out.

**A Sea Captain:** A friend of Viola

**Valentine:** A gentleman attending Orsino.

**Curio:** Another gentleman attending Orsino.

**Sir Toby Belch:** The uncle of Olivia, he lives in her household and uses her generosity to him as a way to support his life of drink and song. He also takes advantage of Sir Andrew and his money. In the end, he marries Maria, his equal in wit and fun.

**Sir Andrew Aguecheek:** A rich and foolish knight and “friend” of Sir Toby Belch, he is duped into staying in the household and providing money and drink to Sir Toby.

**Malvolio:** A steward and foolish suitor of Olivia, Malvolio is the opposite of Sir Toby and Maria. His arrogance with them eventually leads to their tricking him and cruelly locking him in a dark room. In the end, he is the only one unhappy and swears his revenge on the rest.

**Fabian:** A servant of Olivia.

**Feste:** A clown and servant of Olivia, he usually participates in Sir Toby’s and Maria’s partying and trickery.

**Olivia:** A countess, she is in mourning (for seven years!) for her deceased brother. She falls in love with Viola, whom she thinks is a boy, and, in the end, marries her twin, Sebastian, thinking he is the other twin.

**Viola:** Twin sister of Sebastian, she is a strong and capable young woman who dresses as a boy, Cesario, to survive in this strange country. She quickly falls in love with Orsino and later, after he realizes she is a beautiful and intelligent young woman, marries him.

**Maria:** An attendant of Olivia, she is part of the partying and antics of Sir Toby and the others. She later marries Sir Toby.
Let The Punishment Suit The Crime

By Diana Major Spencer

Twelfth Night: Another “twin” comedy, another pants role, another course-of-true-love-never-did-run-smooth mix-up, another sub-plot of less-than-noble rowdies, disguise, mistaken identity, and love tokens—in short, another Shakespearean romantic comedy. With “identical” male/female twins to add confusion and gender innuendo to the action, this delightful confection romps along through exaggerated love begetting exaggerated melancholy, exaggerated mourning fostering aggressive female wooing, and exaggerated priggishness leading to—a suitable comeuppance? Ay, there’s the rub in this favorite comedy: The punishment doesn’t fit the crime.

Its superior subplot features Malvolio (whose name parses as “Ill Will”), Steward of Olivia’s household. A priggish Puritan, he deigns to squelch the partying of at least two of his social superiors, Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek—both of whom also sport character-defining surnames (Belch, self-explanatory for an imbiber; Ague-, a fit of chills and shivering; cheek, with no particular textual suggestion, my mind always conjures “nether cheek,” for a moniker of “quivering ass”). Granted, Sir Toby and Sir Andrew need reminders about disturbing the peace, yet Malvolio’s manner of reproof provokes Sir Toby’s best line in the play: “Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?” (2.3.114–16; all line references are to The Riverside Shakespeare, ed. G. Blakemore Evans [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974]).

Sir Toby, a Falstaffian type, loving food, drink and roguishness, funds his extravagances by extorting largesse from Sir Andrew, through his promise to facilitate Sir Andrew’s wooing of Olivia, whose hospitality, respectability, and mourning mode Uncle Toby has rudely abused. Sir Andrew’s primary functions in the play are to finance Sir Toby’s amusement and say, “Me, too” and “Me, neither” in every conversation. He can also be manipulated for Sir Toby’s amusement, as in the phony duel with Cesario (Viola).

Maria, Olivia’s devoted servant and the final member of Sir Toby’s clique, seems level-headed and good-natured, seconding Malvolio’s cautions, but condemning his supercilious, sour-puss manner. She calms the over-rowdy Sirs by creating a delicious, rollicking revenge against Malvolio: a seductive riddle of a letter-from-pseudo-Olivia to be dropped in his path. The prideful, ambitious, social-climbing Puritan will surely follow Maria’s instructions to his own well-deserved humiliation.

Unfortunately, however, Toby’s back-talk in act 1, Maria’s bogus letter in act 2, and Malvolio’s preening in act 3, lead to an objectionable scene in act 4, scene 2, the so-called “torture scene,” where Malvolio is confined in some kind of dark space, rather poorly enduring Feste’s demeaning proofs that he’s insane. No matter how convincingly the actor portrays extremes of pain, frustration, and desperation, watching the begrimed Malvolio, wearing a distressed costume and writhing in anguish, just isn’t funny. He may be exquisitely insufferable and fully deserving of unspeakable come-uppances, but seeing him onstage shifts our attention—and thus our empathy—to the prig we so recently scorned, and away from the genial pranksters we were cheering for against the hypocrite Puritan. The practical joking of that good-natured coterie of flamboyant carousers descends to very cruel and most unusual punishment, even though nothing about their prior behavior suggests meanness. Even the prank setting up a duel for two thoroughly reluctant and inept duelers aimed only for some good belly laughs, never for physical harm.

Still, isn’t that the scene as Shakespeare wrote it? Not necessarily, argues Becky Kemper, presenter at the 2007 Wooden O Symposium here at the Utah Shakespeare Festival. After citing several onstage examples of horrendous cages and dungeons designed for Malvolio, she states, “These
images of torture seem out of place in Illyria” and “rob the audience of a satisfying conclusion” (“A Clown in the Dark House: Reclaiming the Humor in Malvolio’s Downfall,” Journal of the Wooden O Symposium 7 [2007], 42). Prior to the Romantic age, says Kemper, critics and diarists applauded Malvolio as “truly comic” and the “tricks” played on him justifiable. In time, however, “great tragedians specialized in playing the emerging star turn of Malvolio” (43)—great tragedians who might demand additional onstage time not afforded earlier Malvolios because of adherence to the original stage directions.

The first known printing of Twelfth Night is the First Folio of 1623, in which the scene of Malvolio’s “torture” places the stage direction “Malvolio within” on a separate line before Malvolio’s first speech. Nowhere does “Enter Malvolio” appear in the scene. In other words, he’s off-stage throughout the entire scene. The 1987 Complete Oxford Shakespeare follows the First Folio, but my 1974 Riverside Edition includes “within” as part of Malvolio’s first speech: “Mal. (Within.) Who calls there?” My 1952 G.B. Harrison and 1961 Hardin Craig Complete Works place “[Within]” inside the speech block, but with brackets and no period. In none of these three editions does within appear anywhere else in the scene, possibly suggesting that Malvolio remains off-stage for just that one line before his confinement device is dragged onstage or lifted through the trapdoor.

As further indication of Malvolio’s absence from the stage, Kemper notes in her provocative paper that Feste’s performance in the scene falls into two parts. First, Sir Topas questions Malvolio’s sanity and perception of darkness, using pseudo-religious arguments to dismiss Malvolio’s protestations. At this point, Maria says, “Thou mightst have done this without thy beard and gown. He sees thee not” (4.2.64–65, emphasis mine), suggesting either that Malvolio’s dark room is somewhere other than onstage or that he’s blindfolded. Toby then speaks to Feste: “To him in thine own voice, and bring me word how thou find’st him,” indicating that Malvolio in not within view. Toby continues, “I would we were well rid of this knavery. If he may be conveniently deliver’d, I would he were, for I am now so far in offense with my niece that I cannot pursue with any safety this sport” (4.2.66–71).

The “knavery” Sir Toby intended is described in act 3, scene 4, shortly after Malvolio, smiling and cross-gartered over yellow stockings, has presented his “Be not afraid of greatness” speech to Olivia. She leaves when her servant announces “the young gentleman of the Count Orsino” (3.4.57–58), and Malvolio remains to be mocked for his “lunacy” by Toby and Maria. He storms out, calling them “idle shallow things, I am not of your element” (3.4.135–39). “Knavery,” “sport,” “pleasure,” and “pastime” fall far short of torture.

The second part of the “torture” scene, according to Kemper, recalls act 1, scene 5, where, after an exchange with Feste, Olivia asks, “What think you of this fool, Malvolio?” (1.5.73). Malvolio sneers, “I marvel your ladyship takes delight in such a barren rascal. . . . Unless you laugh and minister occasion to him, he is gagged. I protest I take these wise men that crow so at these set kind of fools no better than the fools’ zanies” (1.5.82–89). In act 4, scene 2, after returning to Malvolio as himself, Feste badgers Malvolio on his pitiful state of lunacy until Malvolio becomes a “wise man . . . at these . . . fools,” who is thus, “no better than the fools’ zanies”: “Fool, there was never man so notoriously abus’d. I am as well in my wits, fool, as thou art” (4.2.87–88, emphasis mine). Touché, Feste!

Having witnessed star actors portraying the pitiable victim of whips and chains—even maces and chain-saws—I’d welcome an alternative version of the “torture” scene to compare the overall
continuity of tone between the two production. The trade-off, of course, is that Malvolio would likely not entice your greatest star, but become the supporting character he’s supposed to be.

Twelfth Night: Sheer Comedy

With the writing of Twelfth Night, Shakespeare reached perhaps his highest achievement in sheer comedy, the comedy of entertainment and gaiety without any shadow of unhappiness. From first to last the comic spirit hovers over this play, and both actors and audience join in the gaiety. So skillful is Shakespeare’s treatment of his material that audiences forget the plot turns on an improbable set of circumstances, coincidences, and mistaken identities devices in use long before Shakespeare thought of them.

The title of the play symbolizes January 6, the twelfth night after Christmas and the end of the solemn Christmas festivities. For the Puritans in England, the Christmas season was not a time for celebration, but rather a devotional period, filled with somberness and dedication. The twelve days following Christmas were held to be symbolic of motherhood and, therefore, solemn. At the end of this period, the jollification began, and the renewing celebration reached full tempo only during the evening of the twelfth night, which began the season of universal festivity, of masques, pageants, feasts, and traditional sports, marking the end of the holy season. In several senses Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night seems to say: “Enough; no more excess.” Almost everyone in the play is suffering from an excess of something or other or is about to be converted to something else.

The predominant theme of the play is love. Youth, fantasy, and laughter have made Twelfth Night endure. It is the happiest play Shakespeare wrote, even though a somber strain runs just beneath the surface of the action from beginning to end. The play is loaded with the imagery and vocabulary of love, all in the Italian vogue which was a dominant and popular force on the Elizabethan stage. Popular love cliches are embodied within the play, such as that the woman should be younger than her lover; that man loves more deeply than woman; that true love is jealous.

Theatre-goers remember Twelfth Night for the people they encounter in it, rather than for the working-out of the plot. Their attention centers on the lesser characters in Lady Olivia’s household: drunken Sir Toby Belch, foolish Sir Andrew Aguecheek, and the sprightly and devilish Maria. They do no look for dreadful logic, but rather the characters in Twelfth Night verify what audiences know of life. They have all known some pompous Malvolio who thought there would be no more cakes and ale because he was virtuous. Sir Andrew is the quintessence of foolishness. Maria is a little wilder vixen than many play-goers have known, but they recognize the type. Their problems are basic human problems. The lovers’ triumph is delayed this time not by parental interference or money or politics, but by the deceits and self deceptions of the characters themselves.

The plot is sheer fantasy: improbable, exotic, romantic. Many of the characters are exaggerated, but no one really objects, and the play’s sustained popularity over the centuries stands to refute those realists who insist that only the immediate endures.

The sad note running through the play surfaces with Feste the clown’s final song: the players are all happily departed following the grand assemblage of the final act, and Feste, on an empty stage, sings of the wind and the rain, of being a boy and then having to face “man’s estate.” He reminds us that these overly merry, overly playful, overly sentimental, and overly unrealistic characters have been too concerned with loving, spending, and getting, and that actually the more serious things of life are still there, barely beneath the surface.
Twelfth Night: Madness and Folly

Shakespeare seems preoccupied with madness and folly in *Twelfth Night*. As Feste suggests, “Foolery . . . does walk about the orb like the sun; it shines everywhere” (*The Complete Signet Classic Shakespeare*, ed. Sylvan Barnet, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1972, 3.1.39-40). Indeed, Shakespeare has created a broad spectrum of fools in this play; the actions and words of almost all his characters fit the recognized behavior patterns of fools. Feste is, of course, an “allowed” or professional fool; Sir Toby Belch, like Falstaff, is a “Lord of Misrule” who orchestrates the folly of his cohorts; Maria, with her mischievous practical joking, resembles the spiteful court fools whose malicious capers brought ruin upon many unwary courtiers; Viola in her disguise is a “witty fool” not unlike Feste; Sir Andrew Aguecheek qualifies as a “natural” fool; and Olivia, Orsino, and Malvolio all suffer from melancholic folly, respectively derived from sorrow, unrequited love, and self-love.

Feste is the most obvious of these fools, belonging to a class of jesters who, as Anton C. Zijderveld writes in *Reality in a Looking Glass*, “were . . . in full command of their wits. . . . They played at being foolish, often with much wit and ingenuity” (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982, 92). He is the “allowed fool” who can criticize the two absolute rulers of the play Olivia and Orsino with impunity, and he does. He takes the liberty to prove Olivia a fool for her grief (1.5.56-71) and to chastise Orsino for his changeability (2.4.73-79). Feste is the only member of this society who can find fault with his superiors without endangering his position. When Malvolio rather nastily reproaches Olivia for enjoying Feste’s jests, Olivia is quick to remind him of his place and to deliver some criticism of her own: she replies, “You are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste with a distempered appetite” (1.5.90-1). In this way Feste serves as an emotional and critical outlet for the subjects of absolute rulers. Zijderveld comments that the fool “is irreverent in the face of authority and tries his best to undermine the impression management that is staged by the powerful” (28). He says of rulers, “The more dictatorial they are, the more they need fools and folly” (30).

If the Lady Olivia needs fools and folly, she has them in abundance. Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Maria from a society of fools whose sole aim is merry-making and the destruction of any impediment to their pleasure. Their society is “a grotesque inversion of the established hierarchy, a looking-glass image of the status quo” (66), in which the drunken Sir Toby serves as lord and master. Zijderveld writes that in the French city of Lyon there existed “some twenty different societies of fools in the sixteenth century, each having its own abbot, admiral, prince, king, court judge, or patriarch as Lord of Misrule” (73). Accordingly, Sir Toby is the leader of his friends’ drunkenness, the advisor of Sir Andrew’s wooing of Olivia, and the director of the duel between Sir Andrew and Viola/Cesario. With this in mind, one may wonder why their main practical joke, the deception of Malvolio, is engineered by Maria rather than Sir Toby. One possible explanation for this is that Maria is modeled on the malicious court fools, some of whom were women. In fact, she strongly resembles Mathurine, the female fool of the French kings Henry III (1574-89), Henry IV (1589-1610), and Louis XIII (1610-43). Zijderveld writes, “Her personality was not all that pleasant.” He goes on to say that “She was as malicious as an old ape” (96). Just as Maria loathes Malvolio’s austere Puritan behavior, Mathurine particularly “hated the morally strict and stern Protestants” (96). Yet another parallel between Maria and Mathurine is that both of them are associated with the Amazons. Sir Toby names Maria “Penthesilea,” queen of the Amazons (2.3.177), and Mathurine “often wore . . . the outfit of an Amazon” (96). Another characteristic of the fool which Maria exhibits is her smallness. Viola mockingly says, “Some mollification for your giant, sweet lady” (1.5.203-4) after Maria, with a sailing metaphor, has urged Viola to get on with her business. According to Zijderveld, “midgets
and dwarfs occupied a very special position” among fools, and they were valued by their owners (97).

Viola is another type of female fool and also has much in common with the French fool Mathurine. Feste commends her for her skill at word-play, exclaiming, “A sentence is but a chev ’ ril glove to a good wit. How quickly the wrong side may be turned outward!” (3.1.11-13). Mathurine, one of the few fools who “were obviously of good wit” (96), was a “smart fool” who “certainly knew her allies and foes” (97). Viola’s cross-dressing also fits in with the behavior of Mathurine, who was sometimes seen dressed as a “military officer with a huge sabre” (96). Indeed, this sort of sexual ambiguity was not uncommon among medieval fools: “They are never clearly male or female, but engage happily in transvestism” (4).

Maria calls Sir Andrew a “natural” throughout the play, a title which he thoroughly deserves. In Erasmus’s In Praise of Folly, the personified Folly characterizes the natural fool as “that class of men whom we generally call morons, fools, halfwits, and zanies” (trans. Hoyt Hopewell Hudson, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970, 47). Even Andrew recognizes that people think him a fool at 2.5.82 after Malvolio refers to “a foolish knight.” According to Sir Toby, Andrew “speaks three or four languages . . . and hath all the good gifts of nature” (1.3.26-8), yet Andrew does not know the meaning of the word “accost” (1.3.58) nor of “pourquoi” (1.3.90). Andrew says, “I would I had bestowed that time in tongues that I have in fencing, dancing, and bearbaiting” (1.3.90-92), yet we find later on that, as Maria predicts, he is a coward and cannot fence well at all. In short, “many do call” (2.5.82) Sir Andrew fool, and they are right; he is all folly and no wit, unlike Feste, Toby, and Maria, who are deliberate in their foolery, beneath which exists a layer of wisdom.

Olivia and Orsino are also unintentionally foolish, though less obtuse than Sir Andrew. Both are melancholic, and from this disorder arises folly; Zijderveld includes in his detailing of the spectrum of folly a kind of fool called “melancholicus” (35). It is easy to identify the types of melancholy from which the countess and duke suffer. Olivia’s is clearly derived from her excessive grief over her brother’s death; she tells Valentine that she will mourn for seven years. Orsino’s melancholy finds its origin in his obsessive, unrequited love for Olivia; he enacts the role of the despised courtly lover, surfeiting himself with music, bowers of flowers, and self-pity indeed he seems more in love with love itself than with Olivia.

Robert Burton, in his Anatomy of Melancholy, calls grief “the mother and daughter of melancholy, her epitome, and chief cause. . . . Sorrow, saith Plutarch to Apollonius, is a cause of madness, a cause of many other incurable diseases” (ed. Floyd Dell, New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1927, 225). Burton likewise says of love-melancholy that “if it rage, it is no more Love, but burning Lust, a Disease, Phrensy, Madness, Hell” (651).

Feste recognizes Olivia’s folly, “dexteriously” proving her a fool for mourning for her brother’s soul, which is in heaven (1.5.57-71), and Olivia herself later compares herself to Malvolio, lamenting, “I am as mad as he, / If sad and merry madness equal be” (3.4.13-14). Feste also pinpoints Orsino’s ailment, proclaiming, “Now the melancholy god protect thee, and the tailor make thy doublet of changeable taffeta, for thy mind is a very opal” (2.4.73-5). Erasmus writes, “A man who is deceived not only in his senses but in the judgement of his mind . . . is bound to be considered close to madness” (52). Olivia and Orsino, whose reactions are out of proportion with their troubles and who lack temperance in sorrow and love, certainly fit this description.

Malvolio’s melancholic folly originates in his self-love. In In Praise of Folly, Folly asks, “what is so foolish as to be satisfied with yourself? Or to admire yourself?” (29). Burton calls self-love a “delectable frenzy, most irrefragable passion, this delightful illusion, this acceptable disease” (253). Malvolio certainly thinks highly of himself, fantasizing about marrying Olivia at 2.5.23-81 and grouping himself with the truly wise men who despise all kinds of folly at 1.5.82-89. Erasmus’s Folly, however, has this to say about these supposedly wise men: “even those who arrogate to themselves the part and name of wise men cannot conceal me, though they walk about ‘like apes in scarlet or asses in lion-skins’. . . . Although they are wholly of my party, in public they are so ashamed of my name that they toss it up at others as a
great reproach” (10).

Malvolio is also the only modern man in an essentially medieval society. He is the prototypical Puritan who threatens to wipe out folly altogether, in himself and in everyone else. He is, as a result, the opposite of Feste, the traditional medieval fool who strives to bring out the foolishness in all his acquaintances. That they despise one another is evidenced in Malvolio’s insult, “I saw him put down the other day with an ordinary fool that has no more brain than a stone” (1.5.83-5). Feste’s enjoyment of his revenge on Malvolio demonstrates that he returns a full measure of antipathy.

Twelfth Night becomes, in effect, a looking-glass for Shakespeare’s society and our own. The play takes us from the routine of ordinary life to the realm of folly. As Zijderveld speculates, “If one follows the fool into the reality of his looking-glass, if one adapts to his ‘language,’ his ‘logic,’ his kind of ‘reason,’ the routine and ‘normal’ reality of everyday life, with its structures and hierarchies, begins to look genuinely foolish” (27). Shakespeare shows us the reflection of ourselves and our society in the distorted mirror of Twelfth Night, and as a result, we reach a heightened awareness of our own shortcomings and absurdities. Paradoxically, we learn by laughing, passing beyond seriousness to wisdom.
Twelfth Night: Similarities and Differences
By Diana Major Spencer

Many patrons of the Utah Shakespearean Festival have never missed a production in the entire thirty-five years of its existence. Others started later, but have been just as consistent since being hooked. Why do we keep coming back? Surely not to see a Shakespearean play we haven’t seen before—there just aren’t that many.

My own enchantment with the Festival has progressed through stages. Aside from relishing the plays, my first in-depth discovery was the repertory cast list in the Souvenir Program, from which I learned the repertory concept and the pleasure of admiring the same actors in radically different roles. Then, as plays I had seen several years before started coming around again, I pondered how dissimilar two productions could be and still be the same play. My current fascination is the constantly shifting juxtapositions of plays which allow insights into Shakespeare's thinking that book study may not. Similarities and differences among the plays that might have gone unnoticed begin to emerge, sometimes involving different uses of the same source.

A case in point, last season (1996) the Festival produced The Comedy of Errors. This year (1997), we see both Twelfth Night and Pericles. All three begin with a disaster at sea that breaks up a family as well as a ship, and all three end with a family reunion. The Comedy of Errors is one of Shakespeare's earliest (1594 or earlier), Twelfth Night from his rich middle period (1600-1601), and Pericles from around 1608. In both The Comedy of Errors (a farce) and Pericles (a romance), children are separated from parents and parents from each other. In the end, both fathers are reunited with their now adult lost babes, and both mothers, presumed dead for a decade or two, miraculously emerge from the conveniently located cloisters where each has served as abbess in the interim.

In both The Comedy of Errors (a farce) and Twelfth Night (a romantic comedy) identical twins separately survive their respective shipwrecks, later to swirl in a maelstrom of mistaken identities. Both include near-identical scenes between an old man and the wrong twin: In The Comedy of Errors, old Egeon, the father of the twins, who needs to pay a hefty fine because he is a Syracusan in Ephesus, asks money of the wrong Antipholus to pay his fine (5.1.283-323). Similarly, in Twelfth Night, the sea captain who has loaned money to Sebastian asks Viola to return it in order to pay his fine (3.4.320-70).

Scholars agree on identifying Shakespeare's source for both Pericles and the frame for The Comedy of Errors as John Gower’s version of Apollonius of Tyre in Confessio Amantis. The first extant mention of Twelfth Night, the diary of lawyer John Manningham, describing the Candelmas Feast of February 2, 1602, reports: “At our feast we had a play called Twelfth Night, or What You Will, much like The Comedy of Errors, or Menechmi in Plautus, but most like and near to that in Italian called Inganni” (quoted in The Riverside Shakespeare [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974], 403; all references are to this volume). Manningham might have included Pericles were his diary entry six or seven years later.

Still, although Shakespeare used the same motifs again and again, the combinations differ so greatly that each play is genuinely unique. For example, the “identical” twins in Twelfth Night differ in gender (not so in The Comedy of Errors), and while each Antipholus in The Comedy of Errors has a Dromio—and vice versa—Viola in Twelfth Night has no companion. We first meet her as she assesses her situation, wishing aloud to the captain that she could serve Olivia. He discourages her because he has heard of Olivia’s vow to receive no requests. She then suggests serving Duke Orsino. The captain agrees to present her to Orsino as “an eunuch” (using the name Cesario), but we see nothing more of him. We hear about him in act 5 in reference to Viola’s “maiden weeds” (5.1.255), when Viola reports his imprisonment on some accusation of Malvolio’s; and again, after Malvolio has vowed revenge “on the whole pack of you,” when Orsino reminds us we need the captain to retrieve Viola’s regular clothes. Thus, after act 1, scene 2, Viola has no confidant whatsoever. Only she knows who and what she is.

Consequently, she has a vulnerability other romantic heroines lack. Rosaline, Rosalind, Beatrice,
Portia, Kate are bolder, brasher, more assertive, and more willing to take matters into their own hands. In contrast, Viola follows her one moment of problem-solving assertiveness by saying, “What else may hap, to time I will commit” (1.2.60); that is, “I’ll let time take care of everything else.” Things happen to her; she is not the causer of events. Compare Olivia’s self determination: Olivia’s brother dies, and she determines to indulge in a seven-year grief—for which she has the leisure and the means (though not the will). Viola has also lost a brother, but she has neither leisure nor means; she must find a way to survive—as a humble page.

Almost immediately, she reveals that she wants to marry Orsino: Valentine, another servant, reminds “Cesario” that the duke “hath known you but three days, and already you are no stranger” (1.4.3-4). The same short scene ends with Viola woefully agreeing, at Orsino’s insistence, to carry love messages to Olivia: “I’ll do my best / To woo your lady. [Aside.] Yet a barful strife! / Whoe’er I woo, myself would be his wife” (1.4.40–42). As usual, Viola is helpless to act.

Nor does she provoke Olivia’s love-at-first-sight. After all, her meeting Olivia was an assignment from the duke. But Olivia acts: “Even so quickly may one catch the plague? / Methinks I feel this youth’s perfections / With an invisible and subtle stealth / To creep in at mine eyes” (1.5.295–98). The smitten Olivia sends Malvolio after “Cesario” with a ring, which, when refused, Malvolio throws to the ground. “Fortune forbid my outside have not charm’d her,” Viola says incredulously (2.2.18). “If it be so, as ‘tis, / Poor lady, she were better love a dream” (2.2.26–27).

Viola’s subsequent lines sum up the plot: “My master loves her dearly, / And I (poor monster) fond as much on him; / And she (mistaken) seems to dote on me. / What will become of this? As I am man, / My state is desperate for my master’s love; / As I am woman (now alas the day!), / What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe! / O time, thou must untangle this, not I, / It is too hard a knot for me t’ untie” (2.2.32–40).

Again she waits to see what time will bring. But, ironically, even as she prays for time to bail her out, she laments what the passage of time means to her future prospects: Orsino tells Cesario, “women are as roses, whose fair flow’r / Being once display’d, doth fall that very hour.” Viola responds, “And so they are; alas, that they are so! / To die, even when they to perfection grow” (2.4.38–41).

Her vulnerability is especially poignant in her asides and soliloquies. During the fight with Sir Andrew, and in the final scene when she is called “husband” by Olivia and threatened by a jealous Orsino, she shrinks back in confusion. The sword fight, concocted by Sir Toby to shift the blame away from himself for Sir Andrew’s lack of success in wooing Olivia, is thrust upon her. Viola is only trying to survive. Even more reluctant than Sir Andrew to fight, she gulps a timorous aside: “Pray God defend me! A little thing would make me tell them how much I lack of a man” (3.4.302–303).

An important structural consequence of Viola’s passivity, which contributes tremendously to Twelfth Night’s uniqueness, is the extensive and complex sub-plot which weaves in and out of the Orsino-Olivia-Viola-Sebastian plot. Instead of evaluating circumstances and plotting actions and teasing with her companions about who loves whom and how to get the attention of the love object, Viola quietly defers to time to solve everything, while Shakespeare invents the drunken Sir Toby Belch, the gullible Sir Andrew Aguecheek, the supercilious Malvolio, and Maria, with the supporting cast of practical jokers who give Malvolio his, perhaps excessive, come-uppance.

The fact is the main plots of Shakespeare’s comedies have a formulaic quality, but the individuation of his characters from play to play precludes monotony. So soon after last year’s Festival production of The Comedy of Errors, Twelfth Night seems much more accomplished, not only in the twist to the twins theme, reminiscent of The Two Gentlemen of Verona, where Viola in disguise must woo on behalf of the man she loves, but even more in the development of these incomparable “cakes and ale” characters who have no echoes anywhere. Déjà vu from season to season, it seems, begins with similarities, but ends up emphasizing differences among the plays.
Ghosts of a Dozen Different Characters and Situations

By Patricia Truxler Atkins

Twelfth Night: or, What You Will, is one of Shakespeare’s most successful plays. In what Harold Goddard calls “an almost unbroken succession of telling scenes,” the play is a kind of recapitulation of what has come before especially in the other six romantic comedies composed between 1595 and 1600 and an anticipation of what is to come in the later, great achievement of the romances. It is as if Shakespeare, for his last unadulterated comedy, summoned, as Goddard suggests, “the ghosts of a dozen different characters and situations with which he had previously graced the stage” and, once again, showed us through a woman the best way to love.

Here Shakespeare, the famous “pilferer of others’ plots,” pilfers from himself. The situation of the clever, gentle, and disguised Viola recalls Rosalind from As You Like It. Feste, the clown of Twelfth Night, is but another variation of the fool, Touchstone, in As You Like It, who “speaks wisely what wise men do foolishly.” Malvolio, who is a sort of unsophisticated and overreaching Don John from Much Ado about Nothing and who, like Bottom from A Midsummer Night’s Dream, reminds us that we are all fools in love, anticipates even the perversion and presumption of Cloten from Cymbeline. Orsino, with a touch of the melancholic Jaques from As You Like It, is also Orlando, from the same play, saved from himself by nothing less than the influence of a good woman. And the plot itself requiting unrequited love and thereby rejuvenating a dying race both looks back on the problems of the romantic comedies and forward to the problems of the romances.

Here, as in all of Shakespeare’s romantic comedies, women get what they want and men get what they need. Even Olivia, who like Phoebe from As You Like It, has made the mistake of falling in love with a woman disguised as a man, gets the man she wants in the form of the disguised woman’s twin brother, Sebastian. And Orsino, who opens the play with his heart-sick lamentations about music and love, gets what he needs: a woman who is capable through lasting love of bringing him out of his self-indulgent melancholy into the real world, in this case, of comedy.

Just as Twelfth Night looks back on the great romantic comedies which come to maturity in that sort of holy trinity of As You Like It, Much Ado about Nothing, and Twelfth Night, it anticipates the situations and solutions of the great romances and problem plays to come Measure for Measure, All’s Well that Ends Well, Cymbeline, and The Winter’s Tale, especially. For here, men sin and women amend. And while Orsino’s sin is only a minor one a miscalculation of Olivia’s worth and Viola’s devotion it has potential for disaster.

Viola, in the guise of Cesario, woos Olivia for Orsino and tells Olivia and the audience that celibacy is only a means to an end. “What is yours to bestow is not yours to reserve,” we are told. Olivia, who wants to indulge in the livery of a nun for several years to mourn the death of her brother, reminds us of Isabella from Measure for Measure, who, until the right man comes along, has all the potential of making celibacy a full-time occupation. And Orsino, who wants Olivia chiefly because she does not want him, has all the potential of a Troilus waiting for his unworthy Cressida. Meanwhile, Viola, the only one of the threesome who may be grounded in reality, wants Orsino. Like many of Shakespeare’s plays, this play turns on the problem of rejuvenation. Here again, life celebrates life, not death, and Olivia’s chief problem is perhaps a failure to understand that, in the face of her brother’s death, she must look not to avoid men but to find the exactly right one with whom she might bring new life into the world.

Twelfth Night was not the first play in which Shakespeare would hint at the moral and intellectual superiority of women in matters of love, and it was certainly not to be his last.
Time Does Heal; Grief Is Not the End
By Brooke Dobson and Ace G. Pilkington

Perhaps no play of Shakespeare’s is more directly connected to his personal life than Twelfth Night. While it is always dangerous to make ringing assertions about the correlations between Shakespeare the person and Shakespeare the writer, it is hard to deny that such correlations exist in this play. Shakespeare’s twins, Hamnet and Judith, were born in 1585. Hamnet, who was Shakespeare’s only son, died in 1596 at the age of eleven. Twelfth Night, a play about twins separated in a shipwreck, may have been written as little as three years after Hamnet’s death. It could not have been later than 1602, the date of the first recorded performance. Gary O’Connor points out the connections: “In Hamlet Shakespeare had brought back to life his lost son, Hamnet. In Twelfth Night, in his concealed allegorical manner, he broached again in glittering terms the subject of his own twins, concentrating almost wholly on the girl and boy bond. . . . Viola stands in for them both, playing her brother as well as herself. . . . In such a way, since Hamnet’s death, had Judith stood in for Hamnet” (William Shakespeare: A Popular Life [New York: Applause Books, 2000], 204).

There are, of course, two women who have lost brothers in Twelfth Night, one permanently and one temporarily. Olivia’s grief for her brother’s death is obvious, even ostentatious. Valentine reports to Orsino that “to season a brother’s dead love” Olivia “like a cloistress . . . will veiled walk” for seven years. (All references to act, scene, and line numbers in the play are to Bruce R. Smith, ed., Twelfth Night: Texts and Contexts [New York: Bedford/St. Martin, 2001], 1.1. 27 30). She has removed herself from society and from male-female relationships, and her mourning clothes are the outward sign of her withdrawal. Viola’s grief is much less obvious, but she pursues the same purposes. When she disguises herself as her brother, she is partly trying to fill the void caused by his absence. In the process, she has removed herself from male-female relationships even more effectively than Olivia has done. Her male disguise may not look like mourning clothes, but it removes her from the possibilities of courtship and demonstrates a grief so great that Viola has eliminated her own identity in order to keep a semblance of her brother alive. Viola is caught between two worlds, two states of being, created by the great bond that she feels for her twin brother and the confusion and consternation of his possible death. When Orsino asks, “But died thy sister of her love, my boy?” Viola/Cesario answers, “I am all the daughters of my father’s house, / And all the brothers too—and yet I know not” (2.4.116 118). It is not entirely clear who is alive and who is dead, almost as though both must live or both must die.

Viola and Olivia’s first meeting is enormously important. When the two of them meet face to face, they find their disguises distinctly uncomfortable. Olivia quickly realizes that a seven-year period of mourning is no longer a reasonable goal. In fact, she is willing to abandon her grief for her brother and replace it with love for Cesario. Viola/Cesario, who has previously announced her desire to marry Orsino, now experiences the passions of jealousy (of a rival) and envy (of that rival’s beauty). The point of transition for both of them, the symbolic instant, is when Viola asks Olivia to draw back her veil and Olivia does so. Olivia has at least temporarily removed the physical barrier or mask of grief that keeps her from seeing the world and being seen by it. Olivia’s love for Cesario then forces Viola to the realization that she cannot maintain her mask of grief, her impersonation of her brother, indefinitely.

Ironically, this confrontation between romantic rivals will ultimately free both of them to pursue the loving relationships they really want. Olivia announces her conversion from lady in mourning to lady in love with the words, “Even so quickly may one catch the plague?” (1.5.240). For Viola, things are a bit more complicated, but she has also come to a realization. She says, “Disguise I see thou art a wickedness.” She then goes on to make clear just what a mess she is in, “What will become of this? As I am man, / My state is desperate for my Master’s love; / As I am woman—now alas the day!— / What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe! / O Time, thou must untangle this, not I; / It is too hard a knot for me t’untie!” (2.2.30 35).

For Olivia and Viola, the loss of a brother creates a void and a need for that void to be filled. For both of them, love comes as a solace for grief and as a promise of future happiness to replace past pain. In Twelfth Night,
Time does untangle the knots. Sebastian, Viola’s brother, returns, Olivia can marry the man she loves, and Viola can marry Orsino. It is an almost fairy tale ending for the married or about-to-be-married couples, a happily ever after conclusion that seems to banish all sadness. However, in the play as in Shakespeare’s real life, there has been a death. Olivia’s brother will not return, nor will Shakespeare’s son. Perhaps one of the most important messages of Twelfth Night is that Time does heal, grief is not the end, and happy endings are possible.
What Will the Future Hold?
By Stephanie Chidester

What can be learned from a play where all is topsy-turvy, where logic and reason are abused and rejected just as thoroughly as Malvolio is? Not much, if Harold Bloom is to be believed. In his view, “Twelfth Night does not come to any true resolution, in which anyone has learned anything... No one could or should be made better by viewing or reading it” (“Introduction,” Modern Critical Interpretations: William Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night, ed. Harold Bloom [New York: Chelsea House, 1987], 3).

Restoration critic Samuel Pepys, despite being drawn back to see Twelfth Night several times, condemned it as “a silly play,” and “one of the weakest plays that I ever saw on the stage” [cited in Hazelton Spencer, “Mr. Pepys is not amused,” ELH: A Journal of English Literary History 7.3 (Sept 1940): 175].

While these criticisms may be unduly harsh, the play is nonetheless perplexing. The atmosphere of the play resembles that of A Midsummer Night’s Dream when the lovers are wandering in the enchanted forest under the influence of fairy potions, except that the characters of Twelfth Night cannot blame their antics on fairy mischief. And whereas in A Midsummer Night’s Dream the lovers eventually return to a rational world and wonder if their experiences were only dreams, the inhabitants of Illyria never definitively emerge from their irrational dream world.

While gorgeously poetic, the play’s initial scene illustrates the social disorder in Illyria. Twelfth Night opens with Duke Orsino, the purported social and political leader of this strange country, spouting a self-indulgent and vaguely decadent tribute to music and love. Unlike analogous figures in other plays (Theseus in A Midsummer Night’s Dream or Duke Vincentio of Measure for Measure, for instance), Orsino has no concern for politics or maintaining order, and is apparently unable to simultaneously manage affairs of state while conducting a courtship. He cannot even be bothered to woo Olivia in person; rather than going himself to plead his case, he prefers to send his minions, so that he may lounge about sighing and listening to love songs.

Sebastian is likewise passive, and instead of investigating the irrational behavior of everyone around him (“Are all the people mad?” [4.1.27; The Signet Classic Shakespeare: Twelfth Night, or, What You Will, ed. Herschel Baker [New York: New American Library, 1965]), he allows himself to be courted by and become engaged to someone he suspects may be deranged, however beautiful she may be. Sir Toby Belch is a jovial sponge, good for consuming “cakes and ale” (2.3.115), dancing and “caterwauling” into the wee hours of the morning (2.3.72), and wreaking havoc with practical jokes, but not much else. Sir Andrew Aguecheek is weak as well as foolish, easy prey for parasites of the pocketbook like Sir Toby Belch.

As W.H. Auden argues, the normal social order with regard to gender roles has been overturned: “Women have become dominant in Twelfth Night... The women are the only people left who have any will, which is the sign of a decadent society. Maria, in love with Sir Toby, tricks him into marrying her. Olivia starts wooing Cesario from the first moment she sees him, and Viola is a real man-chaser” (Lectures on Shakespeare, ed. Arthur Kirsch [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000], 154).

Although they exhibit the ambition and initiative lacking in their male counterparts, the females in the play are no more rational than the men. Viola, perhaps driven by grief for the loss of her twin brother, impulsively sets out to attach herself to the nearest eligible bachelor. Samuel Johnson sums up the situation thus: “Viola seems to have formed a very deep design with very little premeditation: she is thrown by shipwreck on an unknown coast, hears that the prince is a bachelor [sic], and resolves to supplant the lady whom he courts” (cited in Bloom, 2). Olivia is similarly volatile, though the loss of her brother is much less recent. Given an eloquent and moderately attractive romantic prospect, she abandons her vow of seven-years’-mourning in an instant and chases Cesario with no regard for either her own dignity or the inclinations of her beloved.

Malvolio, perverse killjoy that he is, appears to be the sole advocate of reason (or at least order) in
the play, and he does his best to keep Olivia’s rowdy houseguests in line. Nevertheless, even he is lured into irrational behavior by his own “self-love” (1.5.90), greed, and social ambition. It takes little more than a few hints and an obscure letter to induce Malvolio to abandon his “sad and civil” demeanor (3.4.4) and prance about “in yellow stockings and cross-gartered” (3.2.73–74), grinning like a maniac. Ironically, Feste, the allowed fool, is the only character who consistently behaves in a “normal” manner throughout the play, but normal for him is zany for anyone else.

So, what can we make of a play that is a composite of delightful madness and irrational dreams? Shakespeare directs us toward a better understanding through the play’s title, which alludes to the chaotic festivals that were often held on the sixth day of January as part of the Christmas season.

The Twelfth Night festival and others like it “took place at regular intervals, and whenever the occasion warranted it, timed to the calendar of religion and season—the twelve days of Christmas, the days before Lent, early May, Pentecost, . . . and All Saints” (Natalie Zemon Davis, “The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France,” Past and Present 50 (1971): 41-42). During these festivals, social strata were inverted for a short time, giving the disenfranchised an opportunity to mock their “betters” and generally blow off steam without threat of repercussions.

Samuel Pepys missed this association entirely, pronouncing that the play was “not related at all to the name or day” (Spencer, 175), perhaps because no other mention of Twelfth Night or the Christmas season exists in the play. However, despite the dearth of references to this particular carnival, it is interesting to note that the events of the play precede two marriages, and that festivities similar to the Twelfth Night “Feast of Fools” were “timed also to domestic events, marriages and other family affairs” (Davis, 42).

Shakespeare incorporates several elements common to these seasons of misrule into Twelfth Night, including “masking, costuming, hiding; charivaris (a noisy, masked demonstration to humiliate some wrong-doer in the community), farces, parades and floats; . . . dancing, music-making, . . . reciting of poetry, gaming and athletic contests” (Davis, 42). It is easy to detect such features in Shakespeare’s play: Viola’s disguise as Cesario and Feste’s pretence of Sir Topaz; the hazing of Malvolio; the rowdy merrymaking of Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, Maria and Feste; the many songs recited by Feste; the attempted dueling contest between Cesario and Sir Andrew; and the actual altercations among Sebastian, Sir Toby, and Sir Andrew.

What troubles most critics about Twelfth Night is not the madness, per se, but the absence of a return to normalcy by the play’s end. Although the puzzle of Sebastian/Viola/Cesario has been solved with the reunion of the twins, Malvolio’s tormentors remain unpunished, and the lovers’ marriage seem doomed to failure without major changes in behavior and character. W.H. Auden’s scathing commentary is typical of audience reactions: “The Duke, who up till the moment of recognition had thought himself in love with Olivia, drops her like a hot potato and falls in love with Viola on the spot, and Sebastian accepts Olivia’s proposal of marriage within two minutes of meeting her for the first time. Both appear contemptible, and it is impossible to imagine that either will make a good husband” (154).

However, the final scene contains hints that order and stability may soon be restored: First, Olivia promises justice for Malvolio (“Thou shalt be both the plaintiff and the judge / Of thine own cause,” [5.1.356–57]), a promise which is never revoked, despite Fabian’s defensive arguments. More importantly, Duke Orsino’s actions and words begin to agree better with his social position. He begins to take charge, directing matters to his satisfaction, informing Viola that he will marry her and insisting that she change into her “woman’s weeds” (5.1.273). Then he modifies Olivia’s dictum regarding Malvolio, adjuring them all to “Pursue him and entreat him to a peace” (5.1.382).

Whether Malvolio will actually have his revenge, or if the misdeeds of Sir Toby and friends will be forgiven as a type of Twelfth Night revelry, we cannot know. But just as the play’s title suggests a festival of misrule, it also implies that the mayhem is only temporary. Just as order must be restored after a
Twelfth Night or Mardi Gras carnival, the lunacy reigning in Illyria must surely end. Natalie Zemon Davis explains that these carnivals “act both to reinforce order and suggest alternatives to the existing order” (50). If this is so, we can hope that after such a prolonged period of disorder in Illyria, the future will hold beneficial change as well as greater peace and stability.
The Food of Love, or Humour?
By Diana Major Spencer

Suppose Orsino were actually as love-smitten as his most popular opening line in the entire canon would indicate: “If music be the food of love, play on” (1.1.1; all line references are from *Twelfth Night, The Riverside Shakespeare*, 1974). “Give me excess of it,” he swoons (1.1.2), yet it takes only six and a half lines before, “Enough, no more” (7). His comrade Curio’s suggestion that they go hunting momentarily invigorates the Duke, but naming the hart as sporting target reduces our would-be wooer to lovelorn visions of himself as a vulnerable hart, pursued by the “fell and cruel hounds” of “[his] desires” (21-22). Alas!

Suppose Olivia, Orsino’s intended, were forthright enough to refuse Orsino outright instead of indulging the ruse that weeping and wailing her brother’s death would occupy her for the next seven years, and that word of her pseudo-devotion had not wafted in the public gossip-stream to the captain of an unfortunate ship that was about to be shipwrecked on the stormy seas off the shore of Illyria.

Then suppose Viola, cast ashore in the company of the captain after a violent shipwreck separated her from her twin brother, and thinking him drowned and herself forlorn, were able to realize her first choice in the “what-do-I-do-now?” lottery—find a position in Olivia’s household. Yet the captain’s knowledge of Olivia’s pseudo-seclusion (thinking it real) sends her in a different, far more interesting, direction—to Orsino in disguise.

What if? Let’s just say we’d miss out on one of Shakespeare’s most delightful comedies, full of illusions, delusions, disguises, mistaken identities, and dirty tricks. *Twelfth Night* has always been popular on stage—John Manningham’s diary entry in February 1602 was most likely not about its first performance, say several scholars, and evidence exists of many enactments through the years. Even Dryden and his fellows in the Restoration permitted Shakespeare’s script on stage without rewriting it to classical specifications. Further, 2019 marks its tenth production at the Utah Shakespeare Festival, with high expectation of full houses. In the Festival’s second tour through the canon of thirty-seven or so scripts, only a handful of other plays is produced as often.

It’s hard not to like *Twelfth Night*. Shakespeare concocted a double love story with traces from several sources, none definitive, and gave it a couple of outlandish twists based on the unlikely survival of both shipwrecked twins and the far-fetched three-month interval between their respective arrivals in Illyria, each accompanied by similarly benevolent captains. Orsino seems less ardent than a serious true-love should be, and his pursuit of Olivia consists primarily of sending messages via servants. He accidentally woos Viola as he philosophizes about affairs of the heart in fairly intimate terms with Cesario (Viola in disguise), while she falls in love with him as she delivers love notes to his intended, Olivia, while awaiting “what else may hap” (1.2.60).

Olivia turns out to be not so unwilling to love as unwilling to love *Orsino*. Her dear departed brother, along with the obscuring crepe and veil, dissipate after Viola/Cesario’s first visit pitching Orsino’s woo. She develops such passion, in fact, that in the end she compels a perfect stranger, Sebastian, to take refuge in her house and then into marriage because she mistakes him for Cesario (Viola). Sebastian, the long lost identical-twin brother, shrugs and accepts.

Except for Sebastian, the characters in the love plot move politely through their futile adorations, and it’s all very pleasant and they’re all very nice and we’re enjoying it and it’s amusing, but it’s not very exciting. However, as with his other comedies, Shakespeare includes a motley underclass of characters with their own rowdy plot that weaves in and out of the love plot at stra-
tetric moments. *As You Like It*, for example, has Jaques, Touchstone, and Audrey; and *Much Ado about Nothing* is saved by Dogberry and Verges and their intrepid police force.

In *Twelfth Night*, the rousing secondary plot is thoroughly intertwined with the mild-mannered main plot through Olivia’s relationships as niece to the rowdy Sir Toby and as mistress to her servants, Malvolio and Maria, all of whom reside in her household. Sir Andrew Aguecheek, frequent visitor to Sir Toby to advance a futile pursuit (by proxy) of Olivia’s hand, belongs to Shakespeare’s “humourous” characters. (Reminder: Olivia stubbornly rejects courtship; think’st thou her available choices motivate her cloistering?)

“Humourous” characters are governed by out-of-balance humours. Until William Harvey discovered human blood circulation and published a treatise in 1628 (five years after the First Folio and twelve years after Shakespeare’s death), the dominant theory of human physiology dated from Greek physician Hippocrates (450-370 BC), the Father of Medicine. For all those centuries, the humours—bodily fluids blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile—were believed to govern health, complexion, and disposition. We all have some of each, but proportions (deficiencies or excess) define our respective peculiarities.

Inevitably, peculiarities beget stereotypes, which become literary tools for depicting character (e.g., Hamlet and Romeo associated with melancholy [black bile] and Falstaff with sanguinity [blood]). With these concepts inherent in the world view of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, they were among the tools he’d unconsciously reach for as he constructed his plays and poems—in histories and tragedies to help us understand the behavior of a character (Hotspur, Laertes), but in comedies to mock and exaggerate character traits. Ben Jonson’s *Every Man In [and Out] of His Humour* illustrates a formal acknowledgment of stereotype as comic character. This theatrical trend, in fact, changed the meaning of *humour* in common usage from “mood, disposition, subject to imbalance of your fluids” to “comical.” (The change of spelling to “humor” happened only in the United States with Noah Webster in 1828.)

In *Twelfth Night*, the most humorous character is Malvolio, who is not only Puritan, but also priggish, choleric, splenetic, bilious, ill-tempered, irascible, angry, et cetera. *Thesaurus.com* lists thirty-one categories of synonyms for choleric, each containing twenty to fifty additional (though overlapping) examples. Olivia finds Malvolio a splendid steward because he’s so thoroughly nit-picky, But Sir Toby—actually his social superior—takes exception to his superciliousness (which literally means “raising [super] eyebrows [cili]”). Feste suffers Malvolio’s disdain and specific insult to his vocation as a professional fool, while Maria bristles at his scolding. These three justifiably conspire to get even.

Brilliantly, they play on the characteristics of his choleric pridefulness and ambition: “I will drop in his way some obscure epistles of love, wherein by the color of his beard, the shape of his leg, the manner of his gait, the expressure of his eyes, forehead, and complexion, he shall find himself most feelingly personated,” says Maria (2.3.156–61). As an excess of yellow bile causes Choler, the color yellow defines the disease, hence yellow stockings; cross-gartering constricts the blood, as Malvolio tells Olivia, a much happier and balancing humour (if not in excess); and smiling is entirely foreign to his usual surly disposition.

In contrast, Sir Andrew Aguecheek exhibits phlegmatism, associated with water, dullness, sleepiness, the ague (chills, fever, runny nose), and lack of drive of any sort. Most of his dialogue consists of saying “Me, too,” “So could I too,” or “Nor I neither” to Sir Toby, never initiating either suggestion or action. He’s passive enough to fund Sir Toby’s drinking on pretext of wooing Olivia, at least until the funds run low. He’s the perfect patsy to amuse Sir Toby and
Feste with a challenge to Cesario for Olivia’s hand (3.2); and his pale, thin, limply hanging hair (1.3.99-104) reinforces his other signs of physical and mental weakness. Accompanied by a dose of sanguinity or choler, he might project a calm stability and serenity, instead of complete sluggishness.

These “lesser” characters produce two major distractions from the love-plot—Malvolio’s come-uppance and the parody duel between Cesario and Sir Andrew. Just as Sir Andrew is formulating his challenge to Cesario, Sebastian and Antonio remind us they’re in town, then depart separately. Antonio stumbles onto the duel, interrupts the swordplay to defend Cesario (mistaken for Sebastian), then is arrested by Orsino’s officers for being in Illyria. Sebastian (mistaken for Cesario) is waylaid by Sirs Toby and Andrew, then rescued by Olivia after thumping his attackers.

The delightful confusion ultimately reunites the twins, sorts out the couples, and proposes a wedding. Sirs Toby and Andrew seek care for their hurts, and peace and civility return. Only Malvolio’s choleric humour tarnishes the happy ending: “I’ll be reveng’d on the whole pack of you” (5.1.278).
Shakespeare’s Words: Selected Vocabulary

Since Twelfth Night was written, many words in English have changed their meaning, and some are no longer used. If you remember the slang you used a few years ago, it seems dated. For instance, who now uses the word “groovy”? Shakespeare used the rich vocabulary of his day within his plays. To help you understand when you read Shakespeare read the line in context of the scene, try translating the lines into your own words, use today’s vernacular.

**Fresh in murmur**: being rumored

“And so is now, or was so very late;
For but a month ago I went from hence,
And then ’twas fresh in murmur (as you know
What great ones do, the less will prattle of)
That he did seek the love of fair Olivia.
—Sea Captain (1.2.30–34)

**Galliard**: lively dance in triple time

“Why is thy excellence in a galliard, knight?”
—Sir Toby Belch (1.3.120)

**Gaskins**: loose breeches

“That if one break, the other will hold; or if both break,
your gaskins fall.”
—Maria (1.5.24–25)

**Leman**: sweetheart

“’Twas very good, i’ faith. I sent thee sixpence for the leman;
hadst it?”
—Sir Andrew Aguecheek (2.3.24–25)

**Baffle**: publicly humiliate

“This is open. I will be proud, I will read politic authors,
I will baffle Sir Toby, I will wash off gross acquaintance,
I will be point-device the very man.”
—Malvolio (2.5.160–163)

**Aqua vitae**: distilled liquors

Maria Nay, but say true, does it work upon him?
Sir Toby Belch Like aqua vitae with a midwife.
(2.5.195–196)

**Conster**: explain

My lady is within, sir. I will conster to them whence you
Come;
—Feste (3.1.55–57)

Give me leave: do not interrupt me
“Give me leave, beseech you. I did send,
After the last enchantment you did here,
A ring in chase of you.”
—Olivia (3.1.111–113)

Vulgar proof: common knowledge
“Viola: I pity you.
Olivia: That’s a degree of love.
Viola: No, not a grize; for ’tis a vulgar proof
That very oft we pity enemies.”
(3.1.123–125).

License of ink: freedom that writing permits
“Go, write it in a martial hand, be curst and brief. It is no matter
how witty, so it be eloquent and full of invention. Taunt him with
the license of ink.”
Sir Toby Belch (3.2.42–45)

Midsummer madness: extreme folly
“Why, this is very midsummer madness.”
—Olivia (3.4.56)
Shakespeare’s Language:
Figuratively speaking

Shakespeare uses figurative language as he speaks with metaphors, similes, and personification. Recognizing when his characters are speaking figuratively helps in understanding the play.

**Metaphors**

A metaphor is the application of a word or phrase to somebody or something that is not meant literally but to make a comparison. For example, in the lines below, the Duke of Illyria compares music to food for lovers.

“If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.”

(1.1.1-3).

**Similes**

A simile is a figure of speech that draws comparison between two different things using the word “like” or “as.” For example: Valentine compares being unable to see one’s love to a nun being kept from the outside world.

“The element itself, till seven years’ heat,
Shall not behold her face at ample view;
But like a cloistress she will veiled walk,
And water once a day her chamber round
With eye-offending brine; all this to season
A brother’s dead love.”

(1.1.25–30)

**Personification**

Personification occurs when human attributes or qualities are applied to objects or abstract notions. For example: The Captain responds that the waves are Sebastian’s acquaintances.

“Where like [Arion] on the dolphin’s back,
I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves
So long as I could see.”

(1.2.15–17)
Shakespeare’s Language: Prose vs Verse

Many students—and adults for that matter—find Shakespeare difficult to read and hard to understand. They accuse him of not speaking English and refuse to believe that ordinary people spoke the way his characters do. However, if you understand more about his language, it is easier to understand. One idea that may help to remember that his plays are written in two forms: prose and verse. In Twelfth Night prose and verse are both used extensively.

Prose

Prose is the form of speech used by common people in Shakespearean drama. There is no rhythm or meter in the line. It is everyday language. Shakespeare’s audience would recognize the speech as their language. Prose is used by characters such as murderers, servants, and porters. However, many important characters can speak in prose. The majority of The Merry Wives of Windsor is written in prose because it deals with middle-class.

The servants from Twelfth Night speak in prose. For example, when Sir Toby introduces Sir Andrew to Maria, he is using prose:

“Toby: Accost, Sir Andrew, accost
Sir Andrew: Good Missress Accost, I desire better aquaintaince.
Maria: My name is Mary, sir.
Sir Andrew: Good Mistress Mary Accost—
Sir Toby: You mistake, knight, ‘Accost’ is to front her, board her, woo her, assail her.
Sir Andrew: By my troth, I would not undertake her in this company.
Is that the meaning of ‘accost’?”
(1.3.43–52)

Sir Andrew mistakenly believes that Maria’s name is Accost. There is no rhyme or rhythm, and the text flows without concern of where the line ends on the page, we recognize the passage as prose. Consequently, we can better understand that Sir Andrew, Sir Toby, and Maria are all comical characters who speak the language of an Elizabethan audience member.

Verse

The majority of Shakespeare’s plays are written in verse. A character who speaks in verse is a noble or a member of the upper class. Most of Shakespeare’s plays focused on these characters. The verse form he uses is blank verse. It contains no rhyme, but each line has an internal rhythm with a regular rhythmic pattern. The pattern most favored by Shakespeare is iambic pentameter. Iambic pentameter is defined as a ten-syllable line with the accent on every other syllable, beginning with the second one. For example:

“He nam’d Sebastian. I my brother know
Yet living in my glass; even such and so
In favor was my brother, and he went
Still in this fashion, color, ornament.
For him I imitate. O, if it prove,
Tempests are kind and salt waves fresh in love!”
—Viola, (3.4.379–384)

The accent occurs on every other syllable, and the natural accent of each word is placed in that position on the line.

Shakespeare sometimes used this style of writing as a form of stage direction. Actors today can tell by “scanning” a line (scansion) what words are most important and how fast to say a line. When two characters are speaking they will finish the ten syllables needed for a line showing
that one line must quickly come on top of another. This is called a shared line or a split line.

For example, in this scene Olivia interrupts Viola's reply to Orsino:

Duke Orsino: Farewell and take her; but direct thy feet
Where thou and I henceforth may never meet.

Viola: My lord, I do protest,—
Olivia: O, do not swear;
Hold little faith, though thou hast too much fear.”

(5.1.165–169)

Trochaic Verse

On some special occasions Shakespeare uses another form of verse. He reverses the accent and shortens the line. The reversed accent, with the accent on the first syllable is called trochaic. He uses this verse frequently in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and in *Macbeth* where magic or ritual is involved. A good example is Oberon’s magical speech:

“Flower of this purple dye,
Hit with Cupid’s archery,
Sink in apple of his eye.”

(3.2.102–104)

When reading or acting a Shakespearean play, count the syllables in the lines. You will be surprised at Shakespeare’s consistency. Then circle the syllables where the accent appears. You will notice that he places the most important words on the accent. Words like “the,” “is,” and “and” that do not carry the meaning are on the unaccented portion of the lines. In the Globe Theatre where there were no microphones, the more important words would carry and an audience member would still know what was going on because the important words were heard. Iambic pentameter has been called a “heart beat,” and each of Shakespeare’s lines contains that human beat.
Famous Lines

“If music be the food of love, play on.”
—Duke Orsino (1.1.1)

“O, mistress mine! Where are you roaming?
O! stay and hear, your true-love’s coming,
That can sing both high and low.
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man’s son doth know. . .
What is love? ’Tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What’s to come is still unsure.
In delay there lies no plenty,
Then come kiss me sweet and twenty;
Youth’s a stuff will not endure.”
—Feste (2.3.39-52)

“Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?”
—Sir Toby (2.3.114)

“My purpose is, indeed a horse of that colour.”
—Maria (2.3.167)

She never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm i’ the bud,
Feed on her damask cheek: she pin’d in thought;
And with a green and yellow melancholy,
She sat like patience on a monument,
Smiling a grief.”
—Viola (2.4.109–115)

“I am all the daughters of my father’s house
And all the brothers too.”
—Viola (2.4.120–121)

“Still you keep o’ th’ windy side of law.”
—Fabian (2.4.164–165)

“Be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon ’em.”
—Malvolio (2.5.143–146)

“Remember who commended thy yellow stockings, and wish’d to see thee ever cross-garter’d.”
Malvolio (2.5.153–154)

“Why, this is very midsummer madness.”
—Olivia (3.4.56)
Twelfth Night in Modern Terms

Activity: Have the students translate one of the two speeches below into their own words, encouraging the use of slang, colloquialisms, or regional jargon.

OLIVIA: O, what a deal of scorn looks beautiful
In the contempt and anger of his lip!
A murd’rous guilt shows not itself more soon
Than love that would seem hid: love’s night is noon. –
Cesario, by the roses of the spring,
By maidhood, honor, truth, and every thing,
I love thee so, that, maugre all thy pride,
Nor wit nor reason can my passion hide.
Do not extort thy reasons from this clause,
For that I woo, thou therefore hast no cause;
But rather reason thus with reason fetter:
Love sought is good, but given unsought is better.
(3.1.145–156)

OLIVIA: Your love does know my mind, I cannot love him,
Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble
Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth;
In voices well divulg’d, free, learn’d, and valiant,
And in dimension, and the shape of nature,
A gracious person. But yet I cannot love him.
He might have took his answer long ago.

VIOLA: If I did love you in my master’s flame,
With such a suff’ring, such a deadly life,
In your denial I would find no sense,
I would not understand it.

OLIVIA: Why, what would you?

VIOLA: Make me a willow cabin at your gate,
And call upon my soul within the house;
Write loyal cantons of contemned love,
And sing them loud even in the dead of night;
Hallow your name to the reverberate hills,
And make the babbling gossip of the air
Cry out “Olivia!” O, you should not rest
Between the elements of air and earth
But you should pity me!

OLIVIA: You might do much.
(1.5.257–276)
Shakespeare’s Theatre: Life in the Globe

Objective
Teach students about Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre and Elizabethan culture by creating a construct of the Globe in your classroom.

Information
Shakespeare’s audience for his outdoor plays was the very rich, the upper middle class, and the lower middle class. The lower middle class paid a penny for admittance to the yard (like the yard outside a school building), where they stood on the ground, with the stage more or less at eye level; these spectators were called groundlings. The rich paid two pennies for entrance to the galleries, covered seating at the sides. The rich paid three pennies to sit in the higher galleries, which had a better view. The “best” seats were in the lords’ rooms, private galleries closest to the stage. Where you could see as much of the other audience members as you could of the show.

How much did it cost?
To get an idea of the cost of a ticket in today’s terms, consider that the average blue collar worker earned five to six pennies a day; bread for his midday meal cost a penny, ale cost another penny, and, if he were lucky enough to have chicken for dinner, it cost two pennies. His rent was often a shilling (twelve pennies) a week, so there wasn’t much money left over for play-going, nor would he have been able to take time off from work to go and see a play in the middle of the day, when they were usually performed.

Before the students decode what seating area they wish to be in, have them cost out the price of a ticket, using their allowances or earnings as a base for comparison with Elizabethan ticket prices and deducting amounts for rent and food.

Example: A student gets an allowance of $5 a week. He gets 500 pennies, as compared to the Elizabethan worker’s 36 pennies per week. Therefore, 14 of the student’s pennies equal one of the worker’s pennies. From his weekly allowance he must deduct his food and lodging, which would be 33 pennies Elizabethan (12 pennies for lodging and 3 pennies times 7 days for food). The worker has 3 pennies left for entertainment or extra chicken or ale. Let the student work out how much he has left for entertainment, and whether he will see one play with a very comfortable seat, or several, standing in the yard.

Activity
Clear a space in the center of your room. Draw straws to create a lower, middle, and upper class. Have the lower-class students sit on the floor. Place a semicircle of chairs around the open space for the middle class. The upper class may sit on their desks behind the students in chairs.

Consider who really has the best seats for the performance. (Hint: How would seeing a play in Shakespeare’s time be different from seeing a play today?)

Shakespeare’s audience was perhaps not as well behaved as you are. Since the play was so long, people would leave their seats and go looking for food to eat and ale to drink during the performance, or perhaps go visit with their friends. Some playgoers, especially those who had saved up money to come and see the play, were extremely annoyed if they were unable to hear the actors and would tell rowdy audience goers to quiet down.

Later in Shakespeare’s career, his acting company was invited to perform in noble houses and royal courts; the audience there was a good deal more polite, and focused on the play as you do.

How is seeing a play today different than watching television at home, or going to a movie? How should our behavior be different?
Elementary School Activities

1. Why do people make fun of other people? If the students are comfortable have them share how it has made them feel to be made fun of. What is the difference between teasing and hurting? How do we know where to draw the line? Why do Maria, Toby, and Sir Andrew want to get back at Malvolio? Does he treat the other characters in a polite manner? Did he deserve what he got?

2. Consider the title. What can *Twelfth Night* mean? Many, perhaps most, students won’t know about the Feast of the Epiphany, but they certainly will have heard the song “The Twelve Days of Christmas.”

3. The subtitle What You Will has provoked much speculation. Ask students to consider what the phrase might mean. One possible meaning is similar to the currently popular “whatever,” which seems to mean, “I don’t care” or “it doesn’t matter,” that is, a kind of dismissal. Scholars have suggested that it is tied to the concept of the will as in willpower, willful, willing, etc. Ask students to look for or think of as many words as possible that contain the prefix “will.” From their list ask them to think about the various meanings of “will” and hold those meanings in mind as they read the play.

4. The names of the characters in the play carry a great deal of meaning. Students can consider the following question: What would you think of a person named like these? Sir Toby Belch—perhaps vulgar, disgusting

   Sir Andrew Aguecheek—after looking up “ague” perhaps weak, sickly, twitchy

   Malvolio—with a bit of help with “volio” perhaps someone who wishes evil or finds evil because he wishes to. Mal—in Spanish and other Latin languages means “bad.”

   Feste—perhaps festive, causing a festival, lively and ready for a party

Then have students look for similarly suitable names for the other characters: Sebastian = Braveheart, or Olivia = Foolish. They can surely find better examples. Consider the names of other popular characters in books or on television for other good examples.

5. Help students create visualize representations of each of the characters once they have been introduced by clipping pictures, images, or words they find in magazines. The collection of pictures for each character can be placed on large sheets of paper. As the reading of the play and consideration of similar modern drama continues, students can refer to the pictures to help them see the characters as if they were in a television comedy.

6. Viola gets her job at Orsino’s court partly because she is skilled in all sorts of music. If you were applying for the job of page, what music would you play to Orsino to cheer him up? Have the students form a kazoo and rhythm band; one of them plays Orsino and decides when the various music makes him happier.

7. Viola and Sebastian are twins. Divide your students into pairs of boys and girls, and ask them to make their clothing match as closely as possible. (roll pants, or take off their shoes) Then, have one member of the pair walk across the room, and the other member mimic him/her. Continue this exercise with several common activities—brushing hair, eating an apple, sitting down, washing hands. Have the student audience critique the performance.

8. Mirrors: Have one member of each pair face the other. Then, in slow motion, have one member initiate an action—raising hands over head, bending to the floor, etc.—and the other follow. At a signal, have the follower become the leader; alternate, faster and faster, until no one can tell who is the leader and who is the follower.
9. This activity helps students learn to stay in character. Pick one student to be Malvolio; his objective is to not be amused. Then have the rest of the students tell as many jokes, make faces, be as silly as they can to try to make him laugh. If he laughs then he picks another student to be Malvolio, and the game can start again.
Middle and High School Activities

1. At the opening of the play, Orsino speaks the famous line, “If music be the food of love, play on!” He says he wants to hear music because an excess of it may kill his appetite for love. However, you’d be right to suspect he also gets pleasure from the music because it reminds him of his beloved Olivia. We all know the power of music to reinforce or alter our moods. Describe how two different kinds of music affect you.

2. *Twelfth Night* concludes with a triple marriage, as Orsino marries Viola, Olivia marries Sebastian, and Sir Toby marries Maria. Think about these three relationships and the kind of love each is based on. Then explain whether you think each marriage will flourish or flounder, and why?

3. Ask students to take notes on an episode of their favorite television comedy, marking especially places where they and their friends, if they were watching it in company—laughed a lot. In class in small groups, ask the students to make a list of especially funny parts and then try to figure out why they were laughing. Have the groups share the funniest episodes and the reasons why they thought they were funny. Look at the results and ask, “So, what makes something funny?” As there is surely no one right answer, anything from the sentimental to the cruel should be allowed to stand. One question that should be explored is, “Can you care about people you’re laughing at?”

4. Ask students, “What causes people to fall in love?” Suggest that they think about people they know, characters in television programs, movies, and stories as well as their own experiences—if they want to include personal stories—and try to write down at least three different reasons why people fall in love. Then have them make a list of the reasons for falling in love and put the most frequently mentioned answers each on a sheet of paper and post the sheets around the room. Next ask the students individually to put a number on how long it took in each of the cases for the people involved to fall in love and put those numbers on the sheet under the appropriate cause. Then ask, “How long does it take to fall in love?” Again there is no right answer, of course.

5. Students can vote for the silliest, wisest, meanest, and most likeable character in the play (much like class yearbooks have Class Clown, Cutest Couple, etc.) and then discuss why they selected each, referring to specific actions and dialogue of the character.

6. Pretend the play is the script for a season of a television sitcom; after removing act and scene divisions, have the students divide the play into a season of episodes. Which television and/or movie actors would they cast in the various roles? Where do they put the cliffhangers? Who needs more dialogue? Could any of the characters be eliminated?

7. Continuing with the sitcom idea, students can develop the second season using many of the same characters, introducing new ones, following up on the final episode (Act 5 of the play).

8. Speak English: Shakespeare’s language, though wonderful, is a problem for modern young readers. As a part of the production of a television show or movie, a task force can be assigned the responsibility of watching for words and expressions that might not be familiar to the audience. A group of students—especially those interested in language—can be assigned the role of “Language Watchdogs” to catch such words and expressions, decide how crucial to the understanding of them is to the audience, and suggest alternatives. The task force might also propose replacements, and the class can decide which replacements would still work in the overall language of the play.

9. The themes of gender in society have been discussed in books and film. Films like *Mrs. Doubtfire, Some Like It Hot,* and *Tootsie,* and the recent film based on *Twelfth Night, She's the Man,* explore gender in society. Assign students a compare-and-contrast research paper based on the gender roles identified in *Twelfth Night* and compare them to *She's the Man, Mrs. Doubtfire, Some Like It Hot,* or *Tootsie.* What do we learn about ourselves when we are forced to live the way the other half lives?
Study Questions

1. How is it that Viola has come to Illyria?
   a. To find her brother
   b. Shipwrecked
   c. For an adventure

2. For what reason is Olivia in mourning?
   a. Death of her father
   b. Her lover has abandoned her
   c. Her brotherís death

3. Why does Sir Andrew continue to give Sir Toby money?
   a. Blackmail
   b. To win Oliviaís hand
   c. Fencing lessons

4. Maria and Sir Toby torment Malvolio for what reason?
   a. Revenge
   b. To get his money
   c. To hurt Olivia

5. Why does Sir Andrew challenge Cesario to a duel?
   a. To correct an insult
   b. Because he knows he can win
   c. Because Sir Toby has forced him

6. Orsino loves
   a. Olivia
   b. Cesario
   c. Maria

7. Olivia loves
   a. Orsino
   b. Cesario
   c. Sir Andrew

8. Viola loves
   a. Orsino
   b. Sebastian
   c. Olivia

9. Orsino weds
   a. Olivia
   b. Viola
   c. Maria

10. Olivia weds
    a. Sir Andrew
    b. Orsino
    c. Sebastian
11. Sir Toby weds
   a. Maria
   b. Viola
   c. Olivia

12. Feste ends the play with a song that says
   a. Love conquers all
   b. After all this silliness it is time to face realities
   c. Thy all live happily ever after

13. Which character is in love for love's sake?
   a. Malvolio
   b. Orsino
   c. Sebastian
   d. Olivia
   e. Viola

14. Which of the following characters is least foolish or mad?
   a. Malvolio
   b. Sir Toby
   c. Orsino
   d. Olivia
   e. Viola

15. Which of the following sets of characters do not find love mates by the end of the play?
   a. Sir Toby and Sir Andrew
   b. Sebastian and Sir Toby
   c. Sir Andrew and Orsino
   d. Malvolio and Orsino
   e. Malvolio and Sir Andrew

16. Which of the following devices is not used by Shakespeare in Twelfth Night?
   a. Separated twins
   b. Mistaken identity
   c. Song and dance
   d. Banished nobility
   e. Drunken revelry

Answers to Multiple Choice Questions
1. b 5. c 9. b 13. b
2. c 6. a 10. c 14. e
3. b 7. b 11. a 15. e
4. e 8. a 12. b 16. d
Lesson Plan—Middle and High School
Adapted from: Donna Seekamp, Aurora Academy Charter School, Aurora, Colorado

Title:
Who’s the Man?: Creating a Literary Device Movie Poster
English and Theatre/sixth to twelfth grade

Objective:
Students will be able to define the themes in *Twelfth Night* through a variety of literary devices applied to the creation of a movie poster.

Resources:
- *Twelfth Night*, act 1, scenes 1–4
- Key vocabulary
  - **Theme:** a distinct, recurring, and unifying quality or idea about life that an author conveys in a literary work
  - **Imagery:** figurative language, especially metaphors and similes, used in poetry, plays, and other literary works; a set of mental pictures produced by the imagination
  - **Metaphor:** figure of speech comparing two dissimilar things
  - **Simile:** figure of speech comparing two dissimilar things using “like” or “as”

Process
1. Show examples of popular movie posters—preferably from romantic-comedies. Discuss what is communicated through use of color, image, or text. Brainstorm the meaning and cultural associations of the word “love.” How well do these posters tell the story of the movie?
2. As a class or in parts read about Orsino’s definition of love in act 1, scenes 1–4, ending where Viola, disguised as Cesario, vows to woo Olivia for Orsino at the close of scene 4. Have students take notes on vocabulary, figurative language, and images conveyed during the reading.
3. As a class, discuss the meaning of the vocabulary words or other questions arising from the text. above and have students take notes. Ask students to share examples of imagery, metaphor, and simile they found in the reading.
   
   For example:
   
   - **Metaphor**—“If music be the food of love” (1.1.1); “I turn’d into a hart” (1.1.20); “Sweet beds of flowers” (1.1.39).
   - **Simile**—“Came o’er my ear like the sweet sound/That breathes upon a bank of violets” (1.1.5-6); “Receiveth as the sea” (1.1.11); “like a cloistress” (1.1.27).
   - **Theme**—Love is one of the themes in the play. How do the opening lines introduce this theme? (Immediately, with Orsino’s declarations and with the splendor and beauty surrounding the duke, the theme of love is set before the audience. The rich language creates and displays the theme.)

3. Have students create a movie poster with images, a tagline, color scheme, etc., advertising what these scenes communicate about beauty and love and Orsino’s feelings. On the back of the poster, students must write at least six metaphors or similes that inspired their design as well as their explanation of each of the quotes.

4. Assessment: Have students present their movie posters to the class explaining all the elements, quotes, and literary devices that went into their design process. Ask students to define and share examples of devices they encountered during creation of their poster.
Additional Resources

ArtsEdge
http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/
ArtsEdge offers free, standards-based teaching materials for use in and out of the classroom, as well as professional development resources, student materials, and guidelines for arts-based instruction and assessment.

Utah Shakespearean Festival education website
http://www.bard.org/education.html
Expand your horizons, your outlook, your understanding with our myriad of educational resources, not just for students, but for students of life.

ProjectExplorer, Ltd.
http://www.projectexplorer.org/
ProjectExplorer, Ltd. is a not-for-profit organization that provides an interactive global learning experience to the kindergarten through twelfth-grade community. Providing users globally the opportunity to explore the world from their own computer, it is a free, all-inclusive site that uses story-based learning to spark students’ imaginations.

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare
http://www-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/
The web’s first edition of the Complete Works of William Shakespeare. This site has offered Shakespeare’s plays and poetry to the internet community since 1993. Downloadable plays are available by scene or in their entirety.

Absolute Shakespeare
http://absoluteshakespeare.com/
Absolute Shakespeare provides resources for William Shakespeare’s plays, sonnets, poems, quotes, biography, and the legendary Globe Theatre. Absolute Shakespeare also offers a review of each character’s role in each play including defining quotes and character motivations for all major characters.

Royal Shakespeare Company
http://www.rsc.org.uk/learning/Learning.aspx
Provides resource materials from Royal Shakespeare Company shows for teachers and students.

Folger Shakespeare Library
http://www.folger.edu/
The Folger Shakespeare Library, located on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., is a world-class research center on Shakespeare and on the early modern age in the West. It is home to the world’s largest and finest collection of Shakespeare materials and to major collections of other rare Renaissance books, manuscripts, and works of art.

Twelfth Night film adaptations:
- Trevor Nunn directed a film version of Twelfth Night in 1996, which stared Helena Bonham Carter as Olivia, Ben Kingsley as Feste, and Nigel Hawthorne as Malvolio. This production has solid performances and a faithful cut of Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night.
- Neil Armfield directed a film version of Twelfth Night in 1987, which stared Gillian Jones as Viola and Sebastian and Geoffrey Rush as Sir Andrew Aguecheek. This version was filmed on a stage, but has great

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production values.

- Andy Fickman directed a modernized version of *Twelfth Night* called *She’s the Man* in 2006, which starred Amanda Bynes as Viola, Channing Tatum as Duke, and David Cross, from *Arrested Development*, as Gold. When her big brother decides to ditch for a couple weeks in London, Viola heads over to his elite boarding school, disguises herself as him, and proceeds to fall for one of her soccer teammates, Duke. Little does she realize she’s not the only one with romantic troubles, as she—or he—gets mixed up in a series of love affairs. It is, perhaps, the best of the flock of recent “teen-Shakespeare” retellings.