



ELA Virtual Learning

English 218 Introduction to Literature

Lesson: May 15, 2020



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Objective/Learning Target:

- Read and comprehend literature, including drama, independently and proficiently.
- Draw conclusions, infer, and analyze by citing relevant and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including where the text leaves matters uncertain.
 - Read and comprehend informational text independently and proficiently.



Bell Ringer:

Do you find Shakespeare's comedy to be funny? What, if anything, is funny to you? If nothing, why not, do you think?

****Start a document to record your response to this and the work which follows on later slides.**

Learn - Shakespeare's comedy

Throughout much of *Twelfth Night*, the mix-ups, such as mistaken identity resulting from disguises or twins - are the main source of conflicts. These are also some of the main sources of comedy. Viola dresses as a man and Olivia starts making advances toward her/him. Antonio mistakes Viola/Cesario for Sebastian and is speaking to her about things she knows nothing about. The resulting confusion from these mix-ups leads to various characters saying and doing things they would not normally do, and that can be funny. Granted, it is generally more funny when viewed as an audience, rather than read only, as one can see the looks on faces, etc., when the play is performed.

Shakespeare uses many comedic devices in his plays. One of his other tools is that of the flawed character. Aristotle reportedly said that comedy attempts to imitate men who are worse than average. Sir Toby is the agreeable drunk, while Malvolio's arrogance renders him priggish and egotistical. In both cases, the source of their flaws can be funny.

Learn - Shakespeare's comedy

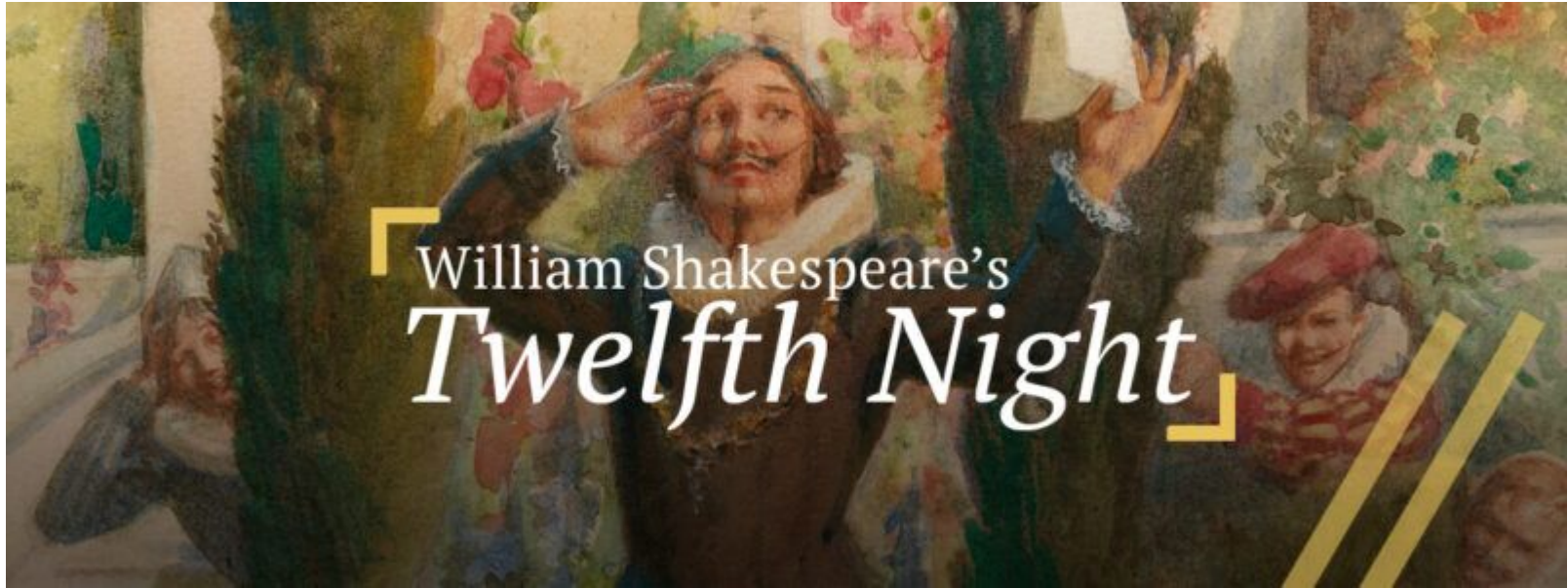
Shakespeare's flawed characters, some of whom may show some personal growth by the end, become a vehicle of comedy first. Their foibles give the other characters something to play off of and provide conflict to add more humor to the plot.

Another example of using character for comedy is the victim character - someone who is the object of ridicule, or deception. This character might be otherwise sympathetic; we like a kind-hearted character, even if he's a fool or bumbler. It's funny when Olivia is hitting on Viola because she thinks Viola is Cesario - a man. Olivia is a good person who is being deceived and is therefore showering Viola with attention, which would generally not get her anywhere. Both characters are sympathetic, so it becomes funny when the misunderstandings occur.

Learn - Shakespeare's comedy

The deceived character might also not be sympathetic, such as with Malvolio. He is deceived by Toby and Maria, then by Feste the Fool, and it's funny because we do not sympathize with him. He deserves it.

There are so many different ways to convey humor: here is a summary of some of the devices used in [Shakespeare's comedy](#). This is the basis for your assignment this week, so please read through each of them and think about how you have seen them in the play so far.



Please continue your reading of *Twelfth Night*, beginning on page 157 of the book, where Act 5 begins. Act 5 only has one long scene, so read up through line 218, on page 175. Stop when you see Sebastian enter. Remember, these are now book page numbers - not pdf page numbers.

Practice:

Twelfth Night - Act 5, Scene 1 to line 218 - After reading, respond to the following in full sentences.

In this reading, the key ingredient is confusion - the intertwining plot lines regarding twins and gender mix-up are coming together. In this rising action, one can find some of the other devices of comedy referenced in the [Shakespeare's Comedy](#) document. In fact, one can see absurdity, ambiguity, confusion, irony, paradox, and sarcasm in this reading. Your task is to find a text example for three of those. On your document, number your response, state the comic element, write the quote correctly (including who is talking) and give a brief explanation of why this quote represents the element. On the next slide, you will find an example from Act 3.

Practice: Example of quality response

1. Ambiguity

Fool: No, indeed, sir. The Lady Olivia has no folly. She will keep no Fool, sir, till she be married, and Fools are like husbands as pilchers are to herrings: the husband's the bigger. I am indeed not her Fool but her corrupter of words. (3.1.34-38)

This is ambiguity because it can be taken at least two ways. When he says Olivia will “keep no Fool, sir, till she be married,” it sounds like the fool could be one like Feste, or it could be the husband. He also uses a simile with “as pilchers are to herrings” where “pilcher” could mean a sword, but most likely means a lowly person. Finally, he says he is her “corrupter of words,” which can mean he changes words for her or that he makes her words dishonest or untrue.

Response Criteria

(Answers will Vary)

- Check your written response to make sure it meets the following criteria:
 - Did you write in complete sentences?
 - Did you use standard conventions (spelling, punctuation, grammar)?
 - Did you answer the questions?
 - Did you use MLA formatting in all things, including a proper MLA header?

Sample Appropriate Response:

Bellringer - Responses will vary, but should talk about this play as being funny or not and why.

Practice: An example is on the previous slide.

Resources

Comedy is truly in the eye of the beholder; what one person finds funny, another may not. Here is a good, relatively short (15 min.) TED Talk on the subject. Chris Bliss discusses the subjective nature of comedy in “[Comedy is Translation](#)”. Not only does he make some great points, as a comparative literature scholar, but he is also funny, as a stand-up comedian. At one point, he says, “A great piece of comedy is a verbal magic trick..” That is so true! Check it out.