

Unlocking Shakespeare's Meaning: A Look at Verse, Background, Character, and Plot in *Twelfth Night*

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of each fall semester, the literary study for eighth grade English begins with an intensive study of Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story, *The Maypole of Merry Mount*. A little known story, it nevertheless serves as an early introduction for the skills and background for a final nine-week unit on Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. The Hawthorne story's characters are vagabonds, street performers, perhaps those from the Elizabethan underworld, disillusioned English transported to America by their desire for a better life. In the seventeenth century Massachusetts colony of Merry Mount, which was dissolved quickly by Miles Standish and the Puritans, echoes of life in Shakespeare's England reverberate. Students produce the story as a play, and six months later these eighth graders return to Shakespeare's English to study and perform scenes from *Twelfth Night*.

Teaching Shakespeare to eighth graders was a formidable task I would not have undertaken even five years ago. I rationalized that thirteen year olds lacked the background, the language skills, and the life experiences necessary for understanding and appreciating Shakespeare's plays. It was late one summer night, however, upon leaving a performance of *The Taming of the Shrew* at the Houston Shakespeare Festival that I realized how much my students might learn and enjoy learning--how differently they would see this daunting task of reading--the required Shakespeare, if they performed Shakespearean scenes of their own. Shortly after that I began developing a unit for my favorite comedy, *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, keeping in mind that the culminating activity would be scenes selected and performed by students. How then could I go from opening the text to blocking movement on a stage? What specific information would be essential to understanding the play well enough to be able to make choices about it? Clearly I would not only have to address the skills that were missing; I would also have to teach them using middle school methodology.

I gave the unit a span of nine weeks, from introduction to finished product. I decided to focus the introduction on three areas: the language that referred to Elizabethan culture, four conventions of Shakespearean comedy, and possible references to Shakespeare's life. Having these tools in hand, my students and I followed a video of *Twelfth Night* with our text, a Folger Library edition based on *The First Folio*, pausing frequently to analyze and point out examples in the play. Students selected scenes with my help, memorized lines with minimal blocking, and performed their scenes the last two weeks of school in a classroom turned performing arts center.

The missing, and I might add, key element to interpreting the scenes the students chose to perform earlier was an awareness of the hidden clues to what Shakespeare might have intended actors to do with the speaking of the lines. Training in verse speaking, therefore, is the final and most important component in the unit, for without this knowledge of verse, the students are only decoding words on a page. Verse speaking is, I am convinced, the lifeblood that truly makes Shakespeare's plays come alive.

Rationale

Because Shakespeare is in vogue now among an audience more diverse than ever, students accept his plays more readily. For years, however, studying Shakespeare seemed to be such an essential component of the curriculum that today high schools continue to require the study of four plays, and many middle and even some elementary schools have begun to include him to their curriculum. Why? What is the appeal that demands his inclusion in schools across the nation, both public and private. The supporting evidence is convincing. Every new reading or exposure brings readers closer to Shakespeare's meaning. Perhaps our society needs the self-analysis to which Shakespeare leads us. He mirrors our lives, four hundred years later, with "the voices of many mirrors" (Bloom 15). Shakespeare can still teach us the truth about human nature. Bloom says he invents "ways of representing human changes, alterations not only caused by flaws and by decay but affected by the will as well.." (3) Harrison adds that Shakespeare is:

...the most universal of all because he is the wisest... he can understand and sympathize more than other men. He can see the whole picture of humanity and recreate it so that men of every kind, country, creed and generation understand. (3)

When we read or see Shakespeare, we find our own experiences and so we use his words to express our own emotions more aptly. Second only to the Bible in quotations is Shakespeare. The more we read, the more we understand the plays and ourselves as well. The study of Shakespeare is the most valuable because we are able to see our own lives as part of universalism--we can find ourselves in his plays.

Elizabethan life was rich with words. Shakespeare's plays, sonnets, and poems illustrate his mastery of common language which "runs the gamut from fools and rustics to kings and fairies" (McCrum and MacNeil). MacNeil tells us the Elizabethans borrowed 12,000 words from other languages, and Shakespeare alone coined over 1500 words. Compared with the Puritans of his day who relied on only about eight thousand words--the language of the Bible, Shakespeare's plays reflect the use of about 34,000 words. Aside from everyday speech, equally important to a study of Shakespeare is a close look

at the heightened language of the plays. Van Tassel, a successful Shakespeare acting coach and director, believes, "Unless you make the effort to discover what the language is saying and doing, and then have the skills to read that language correctly, your Shakespearean characterization will be unsuccessful." (7) An audience who can't understand what is being said will nod off. Speaking skills supercede development of characters and background information. Only after a speaker applies verse speaking skills are those elements helpful in making the reading or acting as complete and truthful as possible.

Exposing middle school students to as much as they can handle about reading and performing Shakespeare's plays affords an advantage for students in two ways. First, Shakespeare is "the fixed center of the Western canon" (Bloom 3). Bloom turns to Samuel Johnson's words: "We owe Shakespeare everything. . . Shakespeare has taught us to understand human nature" (qtd. in Bloom 3). In what might be the definitive philosophy on the teaching of English in America, *Literature as Exploration*, Louise Rosenblatt completes the connection:

...the human experience that literature presents is primary... The reader seeks to participate in another's vision--to reap knowledge of the world, to fathom the resources of the human spirit, to gain insights that will make his own life more comprehensible. (7)

If students can relate to experiences from literature, they will be able to validate more easily experiences from their own past. In studying Shakespeare, students grow, and while they understand his plays better, they also see themselves in the largeness of Shakespeare's characters, the representation of human beings at their best and worst--at whatever stage the students are in at the time they read the plays.

Middle school students should study Shakespeare for a second reason. Americans fall behind the British in reading and acting Shakespeare, not because Americans lack the proper accent. Elizabethan speech, as Peter Hall points out in *The Story of English*, was a rough, unrefined language closer to American speech today. Rather, the British believe that beginning their training with the heightened language of Shakespeare will enable them to do any kind of acting after that. Even British school children read Shakespeare and see many performances. Studying Shakespeare's plays with middle school students, using methods that are age appropriate gives students an earlier preparation for four years of Shakespeare in high school. What they can bring to text analysis, characterization, and background will better guarantee their success with subsequent plays.

Teaching Shakespeare clearly gives students the kind of language study they deserve, but then why is *Twelfth Night* the best choice for my students? It doesn't take an intensive study of the plays to discover that many scholars, critics, and directors believe that *Twelfth Night* is the greatest of all Shakespeare's comedies, although it may not be the individual favorite. Bloom tells us:

Like all the other strongest plays by Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night* is of no genre ...but in its own very startling way it is another 'poem unlimited'... One cannot get to the end of it, because even some of the most apparently incidental lines reverberate infinitely" (227).

Jenkins adds that *Twelfth Night* is the greatest comedy because of its success with romantic love, symbolizing "the mind's aspiration towards some ever alluring but ever elusive ideal (140). Although Shakespeare borrowed this romantic love plot "from the story of Apolonius and Silla and Barnabe Rich's *Farewell to Military Profession* (1581) and ultimately from a comedy performed in Sienna in 1531, *Gl'Yngannati*" (Howard-Hill, xiv), its mellow happiness, its zany spiritedness, its irony and metaphor and the resilience of its characters make it a superb choice for my bright young students.

In *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare complicates the plot with tangled relationships that engage in the revelry that the title suggests. *Twelfth Night* is the Christmas finale, twelve days after Christmas when boisterous merrymaking and revelry turn wisdom and responsibility into a Feast of Fools, presided over by Festus, or the Master of Ceremonies. In earlier times for twelve days people could indulge their fantasies and release their cares, but when it was over, their lives returned to the seriousness of hard work. *Twelfth Night*, however, is a holiday of hope, the archetype of the life-death-life cycle. After the dead of winter comes the rebirth of spring; after darkness there is light and joy. Such is the re-enactment of Shakespeare's characters in *Twelfth Night*. Bloom tells us that "Everyone. . . is mad without knowing it" (226). The Duke Orsino is sick with love, pining for the Countess Olivia, who uses the mourning of her brother as an excuse not to see him. The pretentious Malvolio, Olivia's steward, is full of self-love and ambition, believing that Olivia can love him. Olivia's cousin Sir Toby Belch is a drunken parasite whose feelings of revenge cause the manipulation of Malvolio's humiliation and downfall. The foolish Sir Andrew Aguecheek becomes Toby's easy victim as his weakness allows him to be duped into believing that he too can be loved by Olivia. The twins Sebastian and Viola, each believing the other has drowned in a shipwreck, fall too easily in love themselves-- Sebastian with Olivia and Viola with Orsino. But the power of love in this play must succumb to the revelry of *Twelfth Night*. Viola, from the beginning, disguises herself as a boy so she may serve in Orsino's court as Cesario, who quickly becomes his confidant. Orsino sends Cesario to woo Olivia for him, and according to the topsy-turvy world of

Twelfth Night. Olivia, unaware of the disguise, gives up her mourning to fall in love with Cesario. Sebastian, Viola's twin, wins Olivia only because she believes him to be Cesario. They marry in the haste dictated by Twelfth Night insanity, as do Toby and Maria, who is Olivia's lady-in-waiting, followed by Orsino who discovers his beloved Cesario is Viola, whose convenience as a woman allows him to have "share in this most happy wrack" (5.1.1.278). It is Feste, however, at the end of the play, who helps the audience across the boundary of revelry into the serious light of a new day.

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Goals

During the course of "Unlocking Shakespeare's Meaning," students will participate in a simulation of Elizabethan life in order to understand the words and phrases that seem unfamiliar to students in the twenty-first century. An introduction to Shakespeare and *Twelfth Night* through discussion and video will enable students to connect the text to influences of Elizabethan life. A third component, verse speaking, will teach students acting clues that Shakespeare uses in the metric lines to indicate to the actor how to play the scene. Finally as students watch the Trevor Nunn film version and then follow the text with the Kenneth Branagh film version of *Twelfth Night*, they will use their knowledge of language, background, and verse to analyze, interpret, and perform scenes from the play with greater ease and with more eloquent results.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Imagine students trying to interpret Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* when over 250 references to Elizabethan life are not accessible to them. When students understand the puns and the interaction between characters who speak of pitch, viol-de-gamboys, bearbaiting, fivefold blazon, galliards, and "carrying his water to the wise woman" (3.4.1.110), they overcome a critical barrier to understanding meaning. A combination of research, discussion, simulation, guest speakers, and lessons on verse speaking precede a study of *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*. The culminating activity is student productions of three to five minute scenes from the play.

Shakespeare's Life and Times

Students watch two videos about Shakespeare's life and times and receive an introduction to the period and to the background of the Twelfth Night celebration. Their festival begins with a welcome wassail song, lifting their glasses of apple cider and toasting the tree in the center of the room and finally pouring the remaining cider in the tree tub. Following this ritual is the selection of the King and Queen of the Bean, chosen when a boy finds the bean in his piece of cake and the girl finds the pea in hers. Games of oranges and lemons and tug of war follow, along with mummers who perform the traditional play of St. George who must fight a powerful, evil knight. Students are responsible for knowing facts about Shakespeare's life and writing. Using videos, articles, and an Elizabethan chronology, students collect facts and take three quizzes about his life. They also watch a video clip about the replica of the Globe Theatre in London and finally Trevor Nunn's version of *Twelfth Night*.

Elizabethan Culture

Students prepare at home and at school for a simulation project for the Elizabethan era. First students select from a given list a first and last name of an Elizabethan man or woman and create a persona, making decisions about station in life, character, and personality. Students then select topics for researching Elizabethan life: food, fashion, music, dancing, crime and punishment, politics and government, conflicts between England and other nations, disease and medicine, sports, theatre and entertainment, economics, religion, wedding and funeral customs, education, family life, city life and country life, and literature.

Students begin researching in pairs in and out of class. They will present the information they find in the form of a short play with other members of the class acting as the Elizabethan community. For example, the audience may find themselves at a wedding, a state funeral, a public execution, or a bearbaiting arena. The performance does not have to show a public event, however. In addition, students may recruit other actors if their play requires more than two people.

Students continue to research and write their scripts. I provide several books for classroom use, and students may work in the Internet lab. Several good compact discs are available in the classroom for listening to early music played on copies of Renaissance instruments. Students must also research outside of class. For those students who choose to perform dances as part of the simulation, I offer a book and audio tape called "Popular Dances of the Renaissance, Dance Lessons with Written and Vocal Instructions."

As students in the audience watch the plays, they must keep a diary of what they witness in the voice of their invented Elizabethan character. Students may record private events from the plays as hearsay, gossip, or news from other sources, and each day they earn points by turning in journal accounts of what they saw and heard that day as an

Elizabethan. At this time students have an opportunity to try on historically accurate costumes of an Elizabethan lord and lady that I purchased for the classroom and to discuss the difficulties as well as the cultural significance of dress.

As the simulation continues, guest speakers visit and share their Shakespeare expertise with the eighth graders. University of Houston Shakespeare Outreach presents a troupe of actors who do scenes from two plays and talk to the audience about Shakespeare. In addition, Dr. Sidney Berger, founder of the Houston Shakespeare Festival and Director of the UH School of Theatre, will work with eighth grade actors performing scenes from *Twelfth Night* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

Watching, Reading, and Discussing *Twelfth Night*

Students apply Shakespearean conventions, references to his life, references to Elizabethan culture, and knowledge of verse speaking as we read the play and follow the Kenneth Branagh video of *Twelfth Night*, often pausing to analyze and discuss lines. As we view the video, students will follow the New Folger Library *Twelfth Night*, the 1993 edition taken from the First Folio, 1623. The application of situations, events, and character types in this play to students' lives in the twenty-first century can reinforce the universality of Shakespeare's writing. As students follow the play with the video, we will pause to discuss and apply to our lives today the following questions:

1. Do people today engage in betting on brutal entertainment similar to bearbaiting?
2. Do people today become lovesick over unrequited love?
3. Do people grieve over the loss of a loved one in the same way as people in Shakespeare's day?
4. Is excessive drinking still a problem for people today?
5. Do you know people in society who use people for their money?
6. Are naive people taken advantage of today in the same way that Andrew was?
7. Have you ever helped a friend get the girl/guy you wanted?
8. Have you ever known someone who was conceited and self-righteous?
9. Do you know someone who has fallen in love with someone who was unavailable?
10. Have you ever been chastised for being rowdy?
11. Have you ever been at a party that got out of control?
12. Have you ever played a mean trick on someone?
13. Do stand-up comics still rely on word play, puns?
14. What is the history of man's treatment of the mentally incompetent? Do we still put people in a "dark house"?
15. How do we use jewelry symbolically today?
16. Do people today still engage in duels?

17. How can our emotions play tricks on us? Why is this a universal human trait?
18. Why do people today still sacrifice so much for love?
19. Why can love distort a person's ability to reason?
20. Do you think the feeling of being reunited with a loved one has changed since Shakespeare's day? Why or why not?
21. Do people today still blame their behavior on conditions related to the moon (midsummer madness) or blood or organs (liver, heart)?
22. Do we still blame our conservative nature on the Puritans?
23. Are singing and dancing important parts of almost all cultures today?

Verse Speaking: Scanning the Text

Elizabethans devised iambic pentameter for their plays because this meter is as near to ordinary speech as possible. Shakespeare used this form with greater freedom than any other writer of the period, allowing it to make the writing as formal or as colloquial as he wished. Students learn verse speaking skills and practice scanning scenes from *Twelfth Night*. Students practice using four skills with these lines: Supporting the final word in each line, emphasizing the stressed words or syllables, separating the thoughts with phrasing, and breathing only at punctuation points (Van Tassel, 89).

Students become familiar with the following literary terms and keys to verse speaking in preparation for scanning the text:

1. *meter*: inner rhythmical structure of a line consisting of a relationship between stressed and unstressed syllables
2. *iamb*: a metrical foot consisting of two syllables in an unstressed, stressed pattern
3. *pentameter*: five metrical feet of ten syllables per line
4. *blank verse*: unrhymed iambic pentameter
5. *scan*: to score syllables indicating unstressed and stressed
Ex.: The quality of mercy is not strained. (dee dum dee dum dee dum dee dum dee dum)
6. *scansion*: the process of scoring syllables in a metric line

7. *phrasing*: breaking the metric line into individual thoughts by using caesuras when punctuation is absent
8. *caesura*: a short sense pause, marked // which does the following: a. allows words to be understood, b. places focus on a word or phrase following it, c. slows the language down, d. separates phrases and allows the listener to hear one at a time
9. *short line*: a metric line with fewer than five feet, calling for a pause that finishes out the remaining feet
10. *shared line*: a metric line with fewer than five feet, calling for completion by one or more speakers with no pause in between
11. *enjambment*: the thought or meaning implicit in the line which may run from one metric line to the next
12. *elision*: contracting two words or syllables into one. Ex.: Elide "raven" to "rav'n" spoken as one syllable. Elide "even" to "e'en" spoken as one syllable.
13. *rhymed couplet*: two lines of verse that rhyme. Scenes in the plays often end with a rhymed couplet as a kind of punctuation of the scene.
14. *trochaic foot*: a stressed followed by an unstressed syllable (as in older)
15. *spondaic foot*: two stressed syllables (as in heartbreak)
16. *long lines*: Shakespeare uses variants of iambic lines for emphasis. Alexandrine: six metrical feet (iambic hexameter) usually with a caesura after the third foot. The thought cannot be contained in just five feet. The Alexandrine also creates balance.
17. *trimeters*: three feet lines (not short lines) used for emphasis

Verse Speaking: Some Guidelines

Advice from the experts on verse speaking: Unlock the verse, and you unlock the plays. The meter "provides the emotional pulse of the speech" (Berry 53) as well as Shakespeare's own directions to the actor. Linklater suggests that each end word is "a springboard that propels the thought or feeling onto the beginning of the next line" (156) and prepares the listener for what comes next. The experts on verse speaking agree that students must read Shakespeare out loud before they can understand it. They have to

know the rules of meter and form in order to make choices about how to use the verse, to understand Shakespeare's intentions. When Patsy Rodenburg coaches actors, she tells them, "I want you to respect the line energy, its start, middle and end, but I also want the sense of the words to travel through each line. . . you must, throughout this exercise, breathe and think the whole text" (202). When working with the text, students will beat out a whole iambic pentameter speech and indicate where the stressed and unstressed syllables are. Students follow these guidelines.

1. Regular verse lines often indicate the character's control over a situation.
2. Feminine endings indicate weakness or uncertainty.
3. Some regular metric lines break the rhythm. Some words hold more thought or content than others and should therefore be stressed instead of unstressed. Ex.: From *Romeo and Juliet*, Chorus: From ancient grudge break to new mutiny, (A trochaic foot is formed because break is stressed and to is unstressed in this foot.)
4. Some words must be elided to keep the rhythm. Ex.: "heaven" to "heav'n" (one syllable)
5. Stress the last words in the line. Don't pitch the end of the line down.
6. In an enjambment, don't breathe at the end of the line. Keep going until the punctuation. Remember to lift the pitch on the final word of the line.
7. You must pause at the end of a short line long enough to complete five feet.
8. Think about why characters change from poetry to prose or vice versa. Determine how to play the characters from this discovery.
9. Don't breathe until the end of a metric line. (You may take a short breath on a caesura if necessary.)
10. Pick up a shared line quickly.
11. The structure of the line influences the shape of the scene. Shakespeare gives stage directions in the verse.
12. Always play to the rhyme. Rhyme exists as a kind of punctuation (the audience will remember it), as comedic effect, and as a way of portraying innocence.
13. Always lift the ends of lines. Supporting the last word makes the meaning of the word specific, not general, and therefore memorable. The audience will think more about it.
14. Characters sometimes speak in prose when they have lost control, are ordinary people, are characters who act unwisely, are speaking in an earthy way or are in an earthy relationship.
15. Shakespeare uses variants of iambic lines for emphasis.
16. Long lines express the following: a. heavy or turbulent emotions, terror, madness
b. humor or symmetry in comedies, and c. strength.
17. Characters who speak verse do so to show respect or love or other noble feelings of depth.

LESSON PLANS

Verse Exercises Using Scenes from *Twelfth Night*

Students can learn to use the verse as Shakespeare may have intended, not only to enhance the beauty of the lines, but also to unlock meaning and receive direction regarding interpretation of the lines.

1. Van Tassel suggests an exercise called "Kick the Box" to help students support the final word in each metric line. For this exercise you need a small cardboard box. On the beginning sound of the last word in each line, the student will literally kick the box. This physical action accompanies the "explosion" of the word stressed by the actor, and as Rodenburg emphasizes, those end words complete a thought and end the journey, even if "the energy of the thought might go into the next line or lines" (201). Linklater also reminds students to beware "falling inflections" (131), a downward inflection of the voice on the word at the end of the metric line. She believes the cause of this problem is the dying of the thought and that the cure lies first in the revival of the thought contained at the end of the line. Our culture has conditioned us to believe the second half of our sentences are redundant and therefore often ignored. Loyalty to Shakespeare's verse lies in extending the energy both in thought and voice to the end of the line. The following two scenes offer opportunities to practice stressing the end of the line.

Act 1, sc. 4, lines 10-46 (Viola and Orsino)

Act 5, sc. 1, lines 345-411 (Orsino, Malvolio, Olivia)

2. *Scansion*: Students will score, or mark, the unstressed and stressed syllables in each metric line using a breve, the symbol that is similar to the mark used to indicate that a syllable has a short vowel sound, for unstressed syllables and the accent mark to show that a syllable is stressed. Students may also identify other variations in the verse: short lines, shared lines, irregular lines, and feminine endings, for example. See "Verse Speaking: Scanning the Text." Students can use the two scenes that follow for practice.

Act 1, sc. 5, lines 250-318 (Olivia, Viola, Malvolio)

Act 5, sc. 1, lines 46-95 (Viola, Orsino, Antonio, First Officer)

3. *Phrasing*: A break within the five-foot line usually comes after the second or third stressed syllable, sometimes coinciding with punctuation and also a break in thought. This pause actually separates the thoughts by urging the actor to stop momentarily as the "word holds and lifts for a fraction of a moment before it plunges into the second half of the line" (Berry 59). Voice coaches, however, agree that this pause is negotiable and

depends on the interpretation of the line. At any rate, this break, called a caesura, shows the separation in thought on paper with the use of double diagonal lines, //, where the pause should go. Students can use these two scenes to practice marking caesuras.

Act 2, sc. 4, lines 1-47 (Viola, Curio, Orsino)

Act 5, sc. 1, lines 96-181 (Orsino, Viola, Olivia)

4. *Breathing*: Some voice coaches insist on speaking seven lines of blank verse on one breath, some allow a breath at the end of a line, and some allow breaths at the caesura. Who is right? The answer is as varied as the individuals asking the question and may be connected to an actor's interpretation, but most agree on some basic guidelines: Breathe at punctuation marks: full breath at a period or colon, pause at a comma or semicolon. Voice coaches usually suggest continuing without a pause for an enjambment, or a line whose thought runs over into the next line, and also in the middle of a line for a caesura. Well-trained actors learn correct posture and breathing habits from the outset. Rodenburg's key tip about speaking on stage or before the public is this:

'Breathe. Take breath when you speak.' Many of us under stress of speaking publicly do exactly the opposite and stop breathing just when we need it most. . . The trick is to keep breathing as you speak. (39)

Use these two scenes to practice breathing.

Act. 2, sc. 4, lines 86-137 (Orsino and Viola)

Act. 5, sc. 1, lines 219-291 (Sebastian, Orsino, Antonio, Olivia, Viola)

5. *Antithesis*: Understanding opposites relies on understanding the content and quality of language. Shakespeare creates both tension and balance in his use of antithesis, swinging the actor and listener from side to side both emotionally and intellectually. Rodenburg states the importance of attending to the antitheses in the verse lines: "The actor must remember that drama is about debate and constant struggle. There is rarely a rest

between opposing forces" (204). Renowned voice coach Cicely Berry advises the actor to understand that in order to catch the attention of the listener, he/she must attend to the weight of the words: the length of the vowels and consonants and the number of syllables in the word. This involves enunciation and stress, but also pacing--slowing down and not hurrying to speak the words too quickly. Students can identify the examples of antithesis in the following scene and then practice speaking the lines with attention to the sound and meaning of the words that create the antitheses.

Act. 3, sc.1, lines 100-172 (Viola and Olivia) Find 10-12 examples of words or phrases placed against each other to show opposites.

Rhetorical Devices in *Twelfth Night*

Classical rhetoric was of great interest to philosophers who used its process to discuss the relationships among language, truth and morality. Aristotle in particular wrote of the uses of rhetoric, and Roman rhetoric developed a process of speech composition broken into five categories:

1. Invention: analyzing and researching the speech topic
2. Disposition: arranging the material into an oration
3. Elocution: fitting the words to the situation
4. Pronunciation or action: delivering the speech
5. Memory: lodging ideas within the mind (Rhetoric)

By Shakespeare's day, rhetoric was reduced to style mainly, known for its prettily turned phrases. In his book *William Shakespeare*, A.L. Rowse tells us that Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique* had a marked influence on Shakespeare's writing, and readers now can easily identify three rhetorical devices found over and over in his plays. Examples from *Twelfth Night* follow. As students read the play, they will be able to find many more examples.

1. Descriptio lists name or descriptions in a series. (*Twelfth Night*, Act 1, sc. 3,1. 55)
2. Line for line exchanges are suitable for taunts and banter. (*Twelfth Night*, Act 1, sc. 5,1. 221-229)

3. Amplification refers to piling up speeches with vivid metaphor. (*Twelfth Night*, Act 1, sc. 1, 1.1-15)

Conventions and Stock Devices

Students reading Shakespeare's comedies can identify conventions and stock devices that appear frequently. Many of the ones listed below contribute to the humor and enjoyment of *Twelfth Night*.

1. The girl dressed as a boy
2. The noble band of outlaws
3. The sheltering forest
4. The helpful friar
5. The exile from court
6. The girl talking over her lover with her maid
7. The girl dressed as a page who pleads her lover's suit with her rival
8. The lovesick young man, brooding over love
9. The songs in the comedies and the dance at the end
10. The two kinds of clowns: the wise clown, generally a court jester and a sophisticate, and the rustic clown who means well but is not very bright.

Performing Scenes from *Twelfth Night*

Students will choose one scene to scan, or score, and read from the following scenes from *Twelfth Night*. Students should mark unstressed and stressed syllables, breaking the lines into feet and then marking the stresses, two syllables comprising one foot with a soft and a stressed syllable in each foot. When students read a line, they will place emphasis on the stressed syllables. The scenes that students scan will be the scenes that students use in their final performances.

1. Act 1, Scene 3, lines 10-46 (Orsino and Viola)
2. Act 1, Scene 5, lines 238-end (Viola and Olivia)
3. Act 2, Scene 2, lines 17+ (Viola)
4. Act 2, Scene 4, lines 1-55 (Orsino and Viola)
5. Act 2, Scene 4, lines 89-137 (Orsino and Viola)
6. Act 3, Scene 1, lines 100-172 (Olivia and Viola)
7. Act 3, Scene 3, lines 1-54 (Sebastian and Antonio)
8. Act 3, Scene 4, lines 344-404 (Orsino's officers and Antonio)
9. Act 4, Scene 1, lines 46-70 (Toby, Sebastian, Olivia)
10. Act 4, Scene 3 (Sebastian and Olivia)

11. Act 5, Scene 1, lines 96-180 (Viola, Orsino, Olivia)
12. Act 5, Scene 1, lines 219-291 (Sebastian, Viola, Orsino, Olivia)
13. Act 5, Scene 1, lines 326-4410 (Malvolio, Olivia)

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- Rosenblatt, Louise M. *Literature as Exploration*. NY: Noble and Noble, 1978.
- Shakespeare, William. *Twelfth Night*. The New Folger Library Shakespeare. New York: Washington Square Press, 1993.
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In addition to biography, commentary on the plays and verse speaking, I have collected a number of titles of books, pamphlets, videos and CD's that students may use in their research on Elizabethan life.

Arnold, Janet. *Patterns of Fashion, c. 1560-1620*. New York: Macmillan, 1985.

Good illustrations of Elizabethan costumes.

Barton, John. *RSC in Playing Shakespeare*. London: Methuen/Random House, 1984.

Informative conversations on verse speaking with members of the RSC.

Berry, Cicely, *The Actor and the Text*. New York: Applause Books, 1992.

An incredibly wonderful handbook for verse speaking (and more) written by the voice director of the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Bloom, Harold. *Shakespeare, the Invention of the Human*. New York: Riverhead Books, Penguin Putnam, 1998.

Not entirely unbiased commentary on the plays, but an enlightening introduction. The title indicates the genius of Shakespeare and why we love him.

Brook, Peter. *The Empty Space*. New York: Touchstone, 1968.

A book about the theatre itself written by a former director of the RSC. He addresses four classifications: Deadly Theatre, Holy Theatre, Rough Theatre, and Immediate Theatre.

"The Elizabethans," London: The Pitkin Guide, 1999.

Brief history of the people with good illustrations.

Gibson, Rex (ed). *Cambridge School Shakespeare: Twelfth Night*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Includes commentary and activities specially designed for students.

Gordon, Richard. *The Literary Companion to Medicine*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

Informative essay on Elizabethan medicine.

Graham, Rob. *Shakespeare, A Crash Course*. New York: Watson-Guption, 2000.

Everything you've always wanted to know about Shakespeare, sort of, with lots of photographs and drawings and a humorous look at what we think we know about Shakespeare. It's a small picture book with great graphics.

Grun, Bernard. *The Timetables of History*. New York: Simon and Schuster/Touchstone, 1991.

Useful guide to art, music, literature, philosophy, science, technology, and daily life throughout recorded history. See the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods.

Harrison, G.B., ed. *Shakespeare, Major Plays and the Sonnets*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1948.

Old, out-of-print book, but its background information on Shakespeare's England is excellent.

Hearn, Karen, ed. *Dynasties, Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England 1530-1630*. New York: Rizzoli, 1996.

Art in Shakespeare's day, completely portraiture, with popular miniatures.

Howard-Hill, T.H. Introduction. *Twelfth Night*. By William Shakespeare. The Blackfriars Shakespeare. Dubuque, Iowa: WM. C. Brown Company, 1969.

An edition of *Twelfth Night* with ample footnotes and an excellent introduction that includes information on Shakespeare's life, language, and the printing of his plays as well as a discussion and text of the play.

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A collection of articles about the comedies previously published in various journals. This book includes Germaine Greer's article on *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Kennedy, Judith. "Popular Dances of the Renaissance." Talent, Oregon: Judith Kennedy, 1985.

A booklet and an accompanying audio tape with clear instructions for twelve English Renaissance dances. The instruments that play the music on the audiotape are copies of the early Renaissance instruments including the viol de gamba.

Produced by members of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

Linklater, Kristin. *Freeing Shakespeare's Voice*. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1992.

Subtitled "The Actor's Guide to Talk the Text." An excellent, well written guide that covers language, verse and prose, and the roles and responsibilities of an actor.

McCrum, Robert and Robert MacNeil. "Muse of Fire," *The Story of English*. MacNeil-Lehrer Productions/BBC, 1986.

This video covers the Age of Exploration, as the English of the Bible and of Shakespeare came to the New World.

Onions, C.T. *Shakespeare Glossary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.

A book that offers readers immediate and practical assistance with words in Shakespeare's plays that only the Elizabethans would have used and understood.

Paston-Williams, Sara. *A Book of Historical Recipes*. London: National Trust, 1995.

Traditional favorites of Elizabethan cooks.

Quinton, Alfred Robert. *Stratford-upon Avon and Shakespeare's Country*. Sevenoaks, Kent: J. Salmon Ltd., 1995.

Lovely watercolors and descriptions of Shakespeare's Warwickshire.

"Rhetoric." *Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature*. 1995 ed.

A comprehensive guide to authors, works, terms, and topics from all eras and all parts of the world.

Rodenburg, Patsy. *The Actor Speaks: Voice and the Performer*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

Another essential guide not only for verse speaking but also for speaking and interpreting the language of Shakespeare in general. Well written, easy to follow.

Rosenblatt, Louise M. *Literature as Exploration*. NY: Noble and Noble, 1978.

The definitive philosophy of the teaching of English, then and now.

Rowse, A.L. *Shakespeare the Man*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988.

A revised edition of his book *William Shakespeare*. I liked the older edition better--more details, but really because I read it first and loved it.

Rowse, A. L. *William Shakespeare*. New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1965.

An older edition of *Shakespeare the Man*. Rowse is a literary historian with a passion for Shakespeare. What makes this book unique is that he states with serious confidence who he believes to be the Dark Lady and the young man of the Sonnets. Very interesting. Read it and you, too, will know the truth.

The Royal Shakespeare Company. "Rehearsing the Text," *Playing Shakespeare*. Princeton, NJ: Films for the Humanities, 1990.

John Barton directs Judi Dench and Richard Pasco in Act 2, Scene 4 of *Twelfth Night*, focusing on the necessity of skills in verse speaking.

The Royal Shakespeare Company. "Speaking Shakespearean Verse," *Playing Shakespeare*. Princeton, NJ. Films for the Humanities, 1990.

Members of the RSC give a workshop on styles of verse speaking.

Rosenblum, Joseph. *A Reader's Guide to Shakespeare*. New York: Salem Press, Inc., 1987.

A resource for basic information on Shakespeare as man, dramatist, and poet.

Salgado, Gamini. *The Elizabethan Underworld*. Phoenix Mill, Great Britain: Wrens Park Pub., 1999.

Interesting focus on crime and punishment, poverty, and the mentally ill in Elizabethan England.

Shakespeare, William. *Twelfth Night*. The New Folger Library Shakespeare. New York:: Washington Square Press, 1993.

An edition that includes introductory information about Shakespeare's life theatre, publication of his plays, an introduction to the play, textual notes, and an article by Catherine Belsey. I chose this particular text for use in my classroom with my students because of its excellent annotations.

Shakespeare, William. *The First Folio of Shakespeare, the Norton Facsimile*. Ed. Charleton Hinman. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1996.

A full-size photographic facsimile of the 36 plays compiled by John Heminges and Henry Condell. Because the First Folio original was printed two pages at a time, with corrections and changes made each time, no two Folios are identical. The late Charleton Hinman invented a device he called the Hinman Collator which, by superimposing images of apparently identical pages, produced finally a corrected state of the entire Folio text. Norton has included line numbering in the margins for easy use. A fascinating and beautiful book to be treasured.

Shakespeare's Globe Theatre Restored. Much Ado About Something! Venice, CA: TMW Media Group.

A video documenting University of California, Berkley students producing *Much Ado about Nothing* on the stage of the Globe Theatre in London.

Spain, Delbert. *Sounded Soundly: The Verse Structure and the Language*. Santa Barbara: Capra Press, Garland-Clarke Editions, 1988.

A close, scholarly, sometimes difficult to read examination of the elements of verse speaking.

Strong, Roy. *The Renaissance Garden in England*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1998.

The art and the importance of gardens in the lives of the Elizabethans.

Van Tassel, Wesley. *Clues to Acting Shakespeare*. NY: Allworth Press, 2000.

Acting coach/director gives specific information and exercises for verse speaking. A concise handbook that is easy to read.

Warren, Roger and Stanley Wells, eds. *The World's Classics: Twelfth Night, Or What You Will*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Excellent appendix on the music in the play as well as a very good introduction.

Wells, Stanley. *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Good collection of essays on a wide variety of subjects regarding Shakespeare.

Wells, Stanley. *Shakespeare: A Life in Drama*. NY: W.W. Norton.

Another good biography from a Cambridge scholar.

A Bibliography of Early Music

All of the CDs listed below contain music played by musicians and scholars who have used copies of Renaissance instruments in the recordings in order to produce a sound as close to the time period as possible.

Baltimore Consort. *Ladyes Delight*. Troy, New York: Dorian Recordings, 1991.

Baltimore Consort. *Watkins Ale*. Troy, New York: Dorian Recordings, 1991.

The Broadside Bank. *Songs & Dances from Shakespeare*. Wotton-Under-Edge, Glos., England: Saydisc Records, 1995.

The New York Consort of Viols. *Music of William Byrd*. New York: Lyrichord Discs Inc., 1993.

The New World Renaissance Band. *Where Beauty Moves and Wit Delights*. Berkeley, Michigan: Nightwatch, 1993.

Phyfe, Owain with L'Ensemble Josquin. *Sweet Was the Song*. Berkeley, Michigan: Michigan: Nightwatch, 1995.

Rutter, John and the Cambridge Singers. *Olde English Madrigals and Folk Songs at Ely Cathedral*. Omaha, Nebraska: American Gramophone, 1984.

Twelfth Night: A Verse Tr has been added to your Cart. Add to Cart. Modern readers denote "mistress" to mean "a female lover," "on the side," and yet modern readers never find "mistress" annotated in Shakespeare's plays. In Herschel Baker's Signet Shakespeare Twelfth Night, Act I, Scene 1, for example, Duke Orsino speaks, "O spirit of love, how quick and fresh art thou,/ That, notwithstanding thy capacity,/ Receiveth as the sea. Nought enters there,/ Of what validity and pitch soe'er,/ But falls into abatement and low price/ Even in a minute." Second, they admitted enjoying "Shakespeare's" characterizations, his dialogues' structures, his seeming contradictions and artful paradoxes, his conceits, his rendering of plot, and his synthesis of thematic elements. Have a look at some examples of blank verse: Example #1: Mending Walls (By Robert Frost). Something there is that doesn't love a wall. Shakespeare has other literary pieces that are also good sources of blank verse examples. Example #3: Dr. Faustus (By Christopher Marlowe). You stars that reign'd at my nativity, Whose influence hath allotted death and hell, Now draw up Faustus like a foggy mist Into entrails of yon labouring clouds, So that my soul may but ascend to Heaven. Just look at the above example in which the first line is written in regular pentameter. However, there is a little variation in the stressed pattern in the following lines that is again revived in the last two lines, and does not follow any rhyme scheme. Example #5: Macbeth (By William Shakespeare). Shakespeare created his characters by writing words for them to say and actions for them to do. He also created an awful lot of characters; if you pick up a copy of any Shakespeare play whatsoever, and look at the beginning where it lists the characters in that play (the Dramatis Personae), you will see the names of more than seven characters, guaranteed. Twelfth Night, a comedy, has fourteen characters, Macbeth, a tragedy, has about 28, the First Part of Henry VI, a history, has 37. Another hint: the names of 23 of Shakespeare's characters appear in the titles of his plays. The seven kings Shakespeare wrote about are: Richard II, Richard III, Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI, Henry VIII, and King John. These are seven of the ten Histories that Shakespeare wrote.