

Dramatic Irony in William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night

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Abstract: Authors use many techniques to get their point across. One of these techniques is dramatic irony. William Shakespeare used this technique in his play Twelfth Night (1601) to present his views about love, self love, friendship, etc. in a way that produces laughter and on the part of the audience.

The aim of this study is to show the technique of dramatic irony in Twelfth Night, and to discuss its role in helping audience recognize the themes and the personalities of the

characters of the play, and finally its influence on the dramatic construction of the play.

The study deals with the definition of dramatic irony, reasons for using this kind of technique, and its elements. Then, it shows dramatic ironies in Twelfth Night both in the main plot and subplot. Finally, the study sheds light on the influence of the dramatic irony on the dramatic construction of the play. The study ends with Notes and a Bibliography.

William Shakespeare was a master of his craft. He commanded the English language as no one else could. But his talent did not end at words; it spilled over into creative techniques including dramatic irony.

Dramatic irony is widely used in drama, especially in William Shakespeare's plays which rely largely on it. The question should be asked is: why does this technique spread largely to cover not only drama but also all kinds of literature? To know the reasons, it is necessary first to know what is meant by dramatic irony.

When the audience is more aware of the true state of events that will have a great influence on the development of the plot in any work of literature than the characters themselves are, it is called dramatic irony¹. It keeps the audience on the inside throughout the entire literary work. William Shakespeare's Taming of the Shrew is full of dramatic ironies. Christopher Sly, a drunkard tinker is found asleep by a lord who takes him into his house and has him treated as a nobleman. Lucentio falls in love with Bianca so he changes his clothes with Tranio (Bianca's tutor) in order to be a tutor to teach Bianca. Petruchio, Horntensio's friend is persuaded to present the disguised Horntensio as another tutor for Bianca. All these events which are caused by disguise, deception, and mistaken identity are known to the audience, but not to the characters themselves. So with the use of dramatic irony, Shakespeare incorporates the audience into the play by endowing them with the great position by allowing them to know the hidden truth.

The result of dramatic irony is that of a comforting effect and interest on the part of the audience because they " [enjoy] being on the secret "² which means that the authors respect them. This is one reason for largely spreading dramatic irony as a technique. The audience feels like a part of the story, i.e. they feel they have something in common with the characters. Also it makes the audience feel privileged and even superior to the characters when they understand the hidden meanings of the words and actions of the characters at the time the characters are oblivious³. Therefore, the behaviour of the characters becomes ironic because they are unable to grasp the reality of the truth. Besides that, it produces comic effects, especially in the comedies, because the ignorance of the characters makes them appear ridiculous and their actions humorous⁴. That makes the play more interesting and entertaining.

Moreover, dramatic irony is used to heighten suspense. When the audience knows what is happening, there is more suspense, because they are waiting for the crucial moment in which they can see the reactions of the characters when everything is revealed⁵. It is also used to "assist in developing the depth of the characters and ... in foreshadowing"⁶. In Sophocles' Oedipus the King, for instance, Oedipus is a nobleman. He declares the punishment of banishment for the man who killed Laius.

Oedipus: If self-incrimination keeps him silent,
Let him be accused he need
fear nothing
banishment. P.32⁷ Worse than

Oedipus does not realize this time that the man he is speaking of is himself, but the audience does. Therefore, when Oedipus puts a curse on the Laius' murderer and hopes the killer's life to be wretched, there is heightened suspense since the audience knows that Oedipus is in hard times. They also foreshadow that his life will be wretched at the end.

After all, whatever the reason is for using it, dramatic irony creates a remarkable increase in the audience's tension and concern, and a kind of unity between the audience and the characters. It also creates a setting for a great deal of irony where the characters make comments that take on a double meaning.

Dramatic irony is based on three main elements: 1- Disguise: it occurs when a character either hides his true identity under a mask in order not to be recognized by anyone, such as a woman disguised as a man (outer disguise) or when a character disguises as another personality to hide his real one (inner disguise). In almost most of Shakespeare's plays, women disguise as men. In Two Gentlemen of Verona, Julia disguises as a boy in order to follow her lover, Proteus, who forsakes her. Julia (disguised as Sebastian) becomes Proteus's servant and he does not realize or discover that until the end of the play while the audience knows that from the beginning. 2-Mistaken identity is usually accompanied by disguise, or in other words, it is the result of disguise. It happens when one character is unaware of the disguised character and mistakes him for another. In The Merchant of Venice, Portia and Nerissa disguise as men: a lawyer and a clerk in order to save Antonio. As a result, Bassanio and Gratiano mistake them for a lawyer and a clerk and, on that basis; they treat them and give

them the rings that rouse a problem which is solved at the end when mistaken identity is revealed while the audience is aware of everything from the beginning. 3- Deception: occurs when a character intends and plans tricks and conspiracies secretly, to deceive others to achieve his ends that are made fun of, get rid of them, or for punishment. A Midsummer Night's Dream is a comedy based on Oberon's trick. Oberon, the King of fairies, decides to punish his wife, Titania, because she refuses to give him the boy of the Indian King. Oberon orders his mischievous servant Puck to bring him a magic flower. If its juice falls on the eyelids of a sleeper, it will make him fall in love with the first creature he sees on waking up. Oberon squeezes the love juice on Titania's eyelids. As a result, Titania falls in love with Bottom who has been bewitched by Puck and has the head of an ass. Oberon wants to punish Titania through making her fall in love with a man with an ass's head. All these tricks or deceptions which are known to the audience but not to the characters themselves.

As usual, the end of any literary work is the final resolution. So, in the case of the plays where the basis of conflict and change is dramatic irony, the resolution is, of course, the resolve of dramatic irony itself⁸.

In Twelfth Night, the play starts with dramatic irony and ends with its resolution. If we review the play thoroughly, we shall find that almost every scene in every Act contains dramatic irony.

With dramatic irony, Twelfth Night presents the themes of love, self-love, friendship, and the theme of appearance and reality.

The main plot revolves around the disguise of Viola. Viola decides to hide herself under the mask of a man to obtain employment by the Duke of Illyria as a kind of protection and security since she thinks that her brother may be drowned and she is left alone in this foreign land.

Viola [To Captain]: Conceal me what I am, and be my aid

become

this duke

For such disguise as haply, shall

The form of my intent. I'll serve

(I. ii. 51-53)⁹

In fact, "Viola's disguise into a male sets a series of conflicts and changes in motion. This [disguise] ignites two plights in parallel; her disguise intensifies her love towards Orsino and Olivia's love towards her"¹⁰. Thus, dramatic irony is based on disguise in this case. Disguise is crucial to the plot of the play. It is the thread that runs through the play from the beginning to its end.

After having known that Viola has survived, Shakespeare lets the audience know that Sebastian, Viola's brother, is still alive as well. Shakespeare hides this fact from Viola as he hides the fact of Viola being still alive from Sebastian who also thinks that Viola may be drowned and he is left alone in the foreign world:

Sebastian For some hour before you took me from the breach

Of the sea was my sister drowned.

Antonio Alas the day!

Sebastian A lady, sir, though it was said she must resemble me, was yet of many accounted beautiful;
(II. i. 17-21)

Again, Shakespeare makes the audience aware that Viola and Sebastian are twins. These facts, which are known to the audience but not to the characters, are important for the development of the plot of the play. They prepare us, the audience, for the role played by mistaken identity and they set up the potential for dramatic irony.¹¹

Viola as Cesario confuses all of the characters into thinking that she is a man. The only people who know of her identity (apart from the captain who rescues her from the shipwreck) are the audience. This makes the play more enjoyable and entertaining for the audience as they want to know what happens in Viola's future and if she finds her brother.

Viola falls in love with Orsino and she is so much favoured by him that he tells her what is inside himself and sends her to woo Olivia. This is interesting for the audience because they want to know what happens to Orsino and his love for Olivia and to Viola and her love for Orsino if Olivia ever removes her veil to accept Orsino's love. This is the case in which Shakespeare uses Viola's inner and outer disguise to hide her identity as a means to leave the audience in suspense¹². The audience is waiting to see how this matter will play itself out.

Against her will, Viola carries out orders unquestioningly and goes to Olivia's house asking for her hand to Orsino. Olivia is impressed by Viola's youthfulness, passion, and beauty, i.e. "[y]ounger men

are apparently more interesting to her than older nobility such as Orsino",¹³ and by her charming speech, in other words, Viola's praising Olivia's beauty makes Olivia welcome the idea of love not for Orsino but for Viola.

Olivia always dismisses Orsino's messengers of marriage under the excuse that she has a vow of mourning for seven years for the death of her brother, an action that appears more for her sake rather than in actual despair for the loss of her brother. But upon seeing Cesario (Viola), Olivia finds that she cannot hide her love. She confesses that she is in love. This shows that Olivia suffers from self-deception. She even reveals it indirectly by sending a ring to Cesario (Viola). The ring is a symbol of love and marriage. Viola: "I left no ring with her, what means this lady?"(II. ii. 14)"She loves me sure...."(II. ii. 19) She is rational enough to realize that Olivia has fallen in love with her. The audience also realizes Viola's problem as they realize that Olivia is the largest victim to love and disguise. Olivia falls in love with Cesario (Viola), though she realizes how far from manliness this "Cesario" is. Olivia is obviously blinded by love in this case. By this, i.e. through Viola's disguise, the audience is made aware of one of the play's themes that is the theme of appearance and reality which means that things are not always what they seem. When the characters are unaware of a disguise, their quest for the truth or reality becomes a lesson in truth seeking for the audience. Hence, Olivia's readiness to fall in love with appearance is a lesson about blind love that Shakespeare presents in this play through dramatic irony.

The dialogue about love and women between Orsino and Viola is another example of dramatic irony

based on disguise. The audience who knows the truth about Viola's gender understands it. Nevertheless, Orsino does not understand her answers.

Orsino: Hath stayed upon some favour that it loves;

Hath it not, boy?

Viola: A little, by your favour.

Orsino: What kind of woman is't?

Viola: Of your complexion.

Orsino: She is not worth thee, then. What years, i' faith?

Viola: About your years, my lord.

(II. iv. 22-28)

The dialogue is quite humorous, especially when she tells him the story of her father whose daughter loved a man:

My father had a daughter loved a man,
As it might be, perhaps, were I a woman,
I should your lordship.

(II. iv. 102-104)

Viola's lines are an example of the prettiest use of dramatic irony when the audience understands the hidden meaning. To them, it is an obvious expression of her love, shaded by her talking of it in the third person. This creates a desire inside them to shout "TELL HIM! TELL HIM YOU LOVE HIM, VIOLA!"¹⁴ But Orsino remains totally unaware and takes the references as polite and meaningless complements.

After that long conversation, Viola is obliged to go to woo Olivia again. The dialogue between Olivia and

Cesario (Viola) is a series of speeches, which shows that both of them are in some sort of disguise known to the audience but not to the characters. Cesario's (Viola's) sentence "That you do think you are not what you are" (III. i. 130) which means that Olivia is mistaken because she is in love with a girl, is misunderstood by Olivia who thinks Cesario (Viola) refers to her social position which is different from Cesario (Viola) and on this assumption Olivia replies: " If I think so, I think the same of you" (III. i. 131) which means that Cesario (Viola) is a nobleman in disguise. Viola also misinterprets Olivia thinking that she means that Cesario (Viola) is not what he is and Cesario (Viola) agrees with her "Then think you right; I am not what I am"(III. i. 132) which means that she is a girl. Once more Olivia misinterprets Cesario (Viola) and she wishes that Cesario (Viola) were a man in love with her:" I would you were as I would have you be!" (III. i. 133). This time Olivia declares her love to Cesario (Viola) face to face. Olivia is pleading for love and is rejected because Cesario (Viola) tells her in the plainest way that she does not and will not give her heart to any woman:

I have one heart, one bosom, and one
truth,
And that no woman has; nor never none
Shall mistress be of it, save I alone.
(III. i. 150-152)

Olivia is surprised by this dreadful answer. The audience, unlike Olivia, understands what is meant. They are waiting with pity to know what will happen next. By this, dramatic irony accomplishes its task of

sharing the audience with the feelings of the characters. The love triangle between Orsino, Viola (as Cesario), and Olivia is unravelled at the end of the play when Viola reveals her real identity as a woman.

Another example of dramatic irony Shakespeare uses in this play is that which is based on deception. In Twelfth Night, it is the characters, almost without exception, who, in varying degrees, are involved in deception as Patrick Swinden says: "Whether we look in the plot that Shakespeare took (indirectly) from the Italian, or the plot he made up to put beside it, we shall discover deceit piled on deceit."¹⁵

Sir Toby (Olivia's uncle) deceives Sir Andrew (Sir Toby's friend who woos Olivia) to believe that he can win Olivia's heart. Whenever Sir Andrew wants to withdraw because he believes that Olivia will accept Orsino's proposal of marriage, Sir Toby persuades him that she will not marry anyone elder or richer than herself and that he can win her at the end:

Sir Andrew: Faith, I'll home tomorrow, Sir Toby; your niece will not be

seen; or if she be, it's four to one she'll none of me. The

count himself here hard by woos her.

Sir Toby: She'll none o' the count; she'll not match above her degree,

neither in estate, years, nor wit; I have heard her swear it. Tut,

there's life in 't, man.

(I. iii. 86-91)

Sir Andrew believes him directly:

I'll stay a month longer. I am a fellow o' the
strangest mind i'
the world; I delight in masques and revels
sometimes alto-
gether.

(I. iii. 92-94)

Shakespeare makes Sir Andrew "a figure of fun"¹⁶ because of his foolishness. He is made a fool by Sir Toby for the latter's benefit because Sir Andrew is rich and Sir Toby is a pleasure seeker. Sir Toby is self-love in this respect and dramatic irony helps the audience to understand this theme. The audience knows that Sir Toby deceives Sir Andrew because they know what a kind of lover Sir Andrew is since life, for him, consists of "eating and drinking" (II. iii. 10) only and what a kind of woman Olivia is. Thus, they foreshadow that the marriage between them will never happen. Besides Sir Toby's deception, Sir Andrew deceives himself, i.e. he suffers from self-deception. He thinks that he is a courtly lovable gentleman. To Sir Toby and the audience this is wrong.

This example of dramatic irony based on deception is further used to create a link between Orsino, Viola, Olivia's relationship_ Sir Toby, Sir Andrew's relationship_ and Sebastian, Antonio's relationship.

After having noticed Olivia's admiration towards Cesario (Viola), Sir Andrew decides to withdraw again. But Sir Toby and Fabian (Olivia's servant) deceive him into thinking that Olivia wants to arouse his jealousy, "to put fire in/ [his] heart, and brimstone in [his] liver." (III. ii. 16-17). They further deceive him to have revenge upon Cesario (Viola) by challenging her in a fight though they know that he is a coward. This

situation is funny for the audience who knows that Cesario (Viola) is a woman and she cannot be his rival in love.

Now Sir Toby deceives both Cesario (Viola) and Sir Andrew and makes fun of them. He goes to Cesario (Viola) to tell her about the fight with Sir Andrew. When he sees that Cesario (Viola) is a coward like Sir Andrew, Sir Toby tells her that Sir Andrew insists on the fight. He even describes Sir Andrew as a brave knight:

He is knight, dubbed with unhatched rapier, and
on carpet
consideration; but he is a devil in private brawl;
souls and
bodies hath he divorced three, and his
incensement at this
moment is so implacable that satisfaction can be
none but by
pangs of death and sepulchre. Hob, nob, is his
word; give 't
or take 't.

(III. iv. 203-208)

Then Sir Toby returns to Sir Andrew telling him that Cesario (Viola) accepts the fight, insists on it and that he must be careful because Cesario (Viola) is very brave:

Why, man, he's a very devil; I have not seen
such a firago.
I had a pass with him, rapier, scabbard, and all,
and he gives

me the stuck- in with such a mortal motion that
it is in-
evitable; and on the answer, he pays you as
surely as your
feet hit the ground they step on. They say he has
been fencer
to the Sophy.
(III. iv. 237-242)

A lot of the intrinsic humour in this play is based on this scene of fight because the ignorance of the rivals (Sir Andrew and Cesario [Viola]) juxtaposes with the omniscience of the audience. The fight starts when Antonio (Sebastian's rescuer and friend) enters and draws his sword against Sir Andrew: "I for him [Cesario (Viola)] defy you [Sir Andrew]" (III. IV. 273)

Antonio's entrance to the scene prepares for another dramatic irony, which, this time, is based on mistaken identity. This idea is shown when Antonio mistakes Viola for her twin, Sebastian, and intervenes to protect her from Sir Andrew. Antonio risks death and comes to Illyria, though he is wanted by Orsino's officers for the sake of Sebastian. This is a typical example of friendship. Once more, Shakespeare clearly depicts another theme of the play through dramatic irony. It is the theme of friendship and the roles of Sir Toby and Antonio are remarkable in this province.

Fortune plays its role and Orsino's officers catch Antonio. This matter obliges Antonio to have his money back from Cesario (Viola) mistaking her for Sebastian:

Antonio: I must obey. [To Viola]This comes with seeking you;

But there 's no remedy; I shall answer it.
What will you do, now my necessity
Makes me to ask you for my purse? It
grieves me
Much more for what I cannot do for you
Than what befalls myself. You stand
amazes;
But be of comfort. (III. iv. 289-295)

This situation is comic to the audience because they know that Viola receives no money from Antonio: "What money, sir?" (III. iv. 289) Antonio is stunned because he cannot understand why Sebastian betrays him now.

The confusion of mistaken identity continues and Shakespeare shows another example of dramatic irony based on mistaken identity in scene i of Act IV. In this brief scene, mistaken identity is intermingled with violence that abruptly changes to be combined with love. Sebastian is about to strike Feste because Feste mistakes him for Cesario (Viola) and insists that Sebastian is Cesario (Viola): "If you [Feste] tarry longer/ I shall give worse payment" (IV. i. 16-17). Sir Andrew also mistakes Sebastian for Cesario (Viola). After having seen the cowardice of Cesario (Viola) from the earlier fight, Sir Andrew finds now his chance to show his knighthood, so he strikes Sebastian: "Now, sir, have I met you again? There's for you" [Striking Sebastian] (IV. i. 21). Sebastian who is unaware of what is going on and he is startled as to why this man (Sir Andrew) is striking him, is not afraid of returning the harm, so he starts striking Sir Andrew as well: "Why,

there 's for thee, and there, and there./ Are all the people mad?" (IV. i. 22-23). Sir Toby and Fabian intervene to protect Sir Andrew. The fact, that the audience knows it is Sebastian, not Cesario (Viola) while the characters do not, makes the fight excused.

However, the fight is stopped by Olivia. Shakespeare creates much humour out of mistaken identity. Olivia hopes that Sebastian, whom she mistakes for Cesario (Viola), will forgive her uncle and will not be angry with her. Sebastian, bewitched by Olivia's beauty, falls in love with her at first sight. Therefore, when she asks him to marry her: "Nay; come, I prithee; would thou 'dst be ruled by me!" (IV. i. 57), Sebastian accepts at once: "Madam, I will." (IV. i. 58) Olivia is extremely happy at the sudden change of events that make Cesario (Viola) finally love her and agree to marry her. At the same time, Olivia is lucky because she gets married to a real man and not to a woman in the image of man. The marriage of Olivia and Sebastian provides the basis for all of the other complications to be unravelled later on.

The non-recognition continues and Orsino comes with Cesario (Viola) to woo Olivia. The arrival of Orsino with Cesario (Viola) allows the audience to observe that Orsino is expressing his frustration with the lack of progress in his efforts to win Olivia. While Orsino and Cesario (Viola) are waiting for Olivia, Antonio and officers arrive. Cesario (Viola) praises Antonio before Orsino: "He [Antonio] did me kindness, sir, drew on my side;" (V. i. 57) whereas Antonio accuses her of betraying him after three months of friendship. Both Orsino and Cesario (Viola) regard his words madness: "... fellow, thy words are/ madness"

(V. i. 88-89). If they call Antonio's words madness, what will they call Olivia's words: "Whither; my lord? Cesario, husband, stay?" (V. i. 133) And what will they call Sir Andrew and Sir Toby's complaint Against Cesario (Viola): "He [Cesario (Viola)] has broke my head across, and has given Sir Toby a bloody/ coxcomb too. For the love of God, your help!" (V. i. 165-166) Viola's disguise and mistaken identities following it make the audience more excited, more interested, and more enthusiastic to know when everything will end up and how. They certainly know that the solution is in the hand of either Viola or Sebastian but they do not exactly know which one or how.

The appearance of Sebastian before all makes the audience know how the things will be unravelled before the characters themselves. Therefore, they are not amazed by his arrival, his apologizing to Olivia for hurting her uncle: "I am sorry, madam, I have hurt your kinsman," (V. i. 194) and by greeting his friend Antonio: "Antonio! O my dear Antonio!" (V. i. 204) whereas the characters are amazed as it is illustrated by their comments:

Orsino: One face, one voice, one habit, and
two persons,

A natural perspective, that is and is
not!

(V. i. 202-203)

Antonio [To Sebastian]: How have you made division
of yourself? An apple cleft in two is not more twin
Than those two creatures. Which is Sebastian?

Olivia: Most wonderful!

Sebastian: Do I stand there? I never had a brother;
(V. i. 207-211)

Sebastian also swallows the bait of Viola's disguise and mistakes her for a male: "Of charity, what kin are you to me? /What countryman, what name, what parentage?"(V. i. 215-216) This is a hint to make the audience imagine that a change of clothes is enough to deceive others¹⁷. When Viola reveals herself as a woman, everything becomes clear. The confusion dispels and things quickly fall into their natural order. Olivia agrees to be Sebastian's wife just because he resembles Cesario [Viola] (the image of the man she loves so deeply) in spite of the fact that Olivia opens her heart to Cesario (Viola) because of her kindness and charming speech that Sebastian does not seem to have.¹⁸ It emphasizes that Olivia's love has no depth or sincerity. She is infatuated with the idea of love and not with a particular person just as Orsino who, after a long period of declaring his love and devotion to Olivia, transfers his love to Viola depending on her confession many times when she was in disguise that no woman would love him like her if she were a woman. Now, when she reveals herself as a woman, the love between Orsino and Viola is possible, especially as he realizes that he loved Viola all along:"[To Viola] Boy, thou hast said to me a thousand times/ Thou never should'st love woman like to me." (V. i. 252-253) This emphasizes the idea that "[Orsino's] attraction to Olivia...like the other would be wooers Sir Andrew Aguecheck and Malvolio, is a disaster."¹⁹Whereas Viola's love, unlike them, is true and stable. Hence, without dramatic irony, the theme of love would not be better displayed in this play.

Shakespeare continues to employ dramatic irony throughout the play to include the subplot. Dramatic irony in the subplot repeats the same themes of the main plot through Maria's deception of Malvolio (Olivia's steward) because of his ill behaviour.

Malvolio also suffers from self-deception. He feels that Olivia loves him and that is why she agrees with him in everything he does including insulting not only the other servants but also even her relative Sir Toby and his guest Sir Andrew. According to Malvolio, it is love that makes his commands as if they were her own and his opinions taken into consideration. But according to reality, this is the position that was always given to any household steward in the Elizabethan period and not only to Malvolio, as it is pointed by Clare Byne: "an Elizabethan household steward was a gentleman of considerable importance, occupying a very responsible position, which gave him the exercise of very considerable power".²⁰ As a result, the audience, once more, is made aware of the theme of appearance and reality.

Before falling in Maria's trap, i.e. before finding the letter, the audience, through his way of thinking, which is heard by them, recognizes that Malvolio is guilty of self-love. This creates much humour because, as it seems, that Malvolio forgets that he is merely Olivia's steward. His ambition to be a count and to impose his authority upon the others makes him blind to reality and makes the audience sure that Malvolio does not love Olivia for her person, as C. L. Barber comments: "He [Malvolio] does not desire Olivia's person; that desire even in a steward, would be sympathetically regarded, though not of course encouraged by a Twelfth Night

mood, what he wants is to be Count Malvolio...His secret wish is to violate decorum himself, then relish to the full his power over others".²¹

Also, through his way of thinking, the audience is informed on Malvolio's real identity that is hidden under the mask of Puritanism. It can be regarded as a spiritual or inner disguise because Malvolio has a materialistic spirit that is different from what his spirit must be since he is a Puritan as he claims and behaves.

Dramatic irony in the subplot begins when Maria with the presence of Sir Toby and Sir Andrew writes a forged love-letter to Malvolio in her own hand that looks like Olivia, i.e. Maria's hand is to be disguised as Olivia's, to deceive Malvolio to think it is from Olivia. The audience is aware of this deception whereas Malvolio is not when he finds the letter, reads it, and follows its instruction. Malvolio's error which leads to embarrass himself is "a conceited and subjective interpretation of data, which confirms instead of challenging his fantasy".²²

There is the presence of dramatic irony in Act III, scene iv, that is shown by Olivia's mistaken identity for Malvolio. When Olivia asks him "wilt thou go to bed, Malvolio?" (III. iv. 29) she means to have rest, Malvolio interprets this as a seduction and, thus, he enthusiastically replies "To bed! ya, sweetheart, and I'll come to thee" (III. iv. 30) which shows the extent of his delusion. Then he repeats the instructions of the letter. Olivia surprisingly repeats after him. She even ascribes his strange behaviour to a "very midsummer madness." (III. iv. 51) Malvolio is mistaken for a mad- man by Olivia because she does not know what is going on whereas the audience who is aware of Malvolio's sanity

and who knows the reason behind, which is supposed to be his strange behaviour will laugh aloud.

Another scene prepares the audience for dramatic irony, which, this time, contains its three main elements together, is when Feste wears a gown and beard of a priest to disguise as priest Topas who is supposed to cure mad Malvolio. Malvolio is deceived for the second time because he is unaware that he is actually talking to Feste than to real Sir Topas. The dialogue between Malvolio and Feste gives pleasure to the audience who knows that Malvolio mistakes Feste for Sir Topas especially when Feste wants to help Malvolio with a light and a paper to write a letter to Olivia whereas Sir Topas (Feste) prevents Feste from even talking to Malvolio:

Feste Advise you what you say; the minister is here. [*As Sir Topas*]

Malvolio, Malvolio, thy wits the heavens restore! Endeavour thyself to sleep, and leave thy vain bibble-babble.

Malvolio Sir Topas!

Feste Maintain no words with him, good fellow. [*As Feste*] Who, I,

sir? Not I, sir. God be wi' you, good Sir Topas. [*As Sir Topas*]

Marry, amen... [*As Feste*] I will, sir, I will

(IV. ii. 83-89)

As the play progresses and the state of Malvolio becomes worse, the audience can easily sympathize with Malvolio though they know that it is his self-love which ends himself locked up in a dark cell and is accused of being mad. Therefore, they welcome the idea when Feste eventually brings Malvolio a paper and a candle to write a letter that he (Feste) gives to Olivia. Olivia sends for Malvolio to explain everything. When Malvolio comes with the letter in his hand, everything becomes clear. We see that the letter, which sets dramatic irony, is the same that resolves it.

Throughout the use of dramatic irony in the play, it is noteworthy that its influence on the dramatic construction of the play is the parallels and contrasts. Malvolio's love to Olivia is a parallel to Viola's love to Orsino. Viola, disguised as Cesario, is the servant of Duke Orsino and Malvolio is the steward of Countess Olivia. Both of them fall in love with their masters, and both of them act as love-messengers: Viola between Olivia and Orsino, and Malvolio between Olivia and Cesario (Viola). Despite this almost identical parallel in circumstances, Malvolio and Viola are a contrast in character and action. Viola's love is pure and sincere. She painfully sacrifices her love for the sake of Orsino's happiness and tries her best to convince Olivia of Orsino's love and worth, using her sincere emotions that are motivated by the purest motives of love of her bosom. Accordingly, Viola's disguise as a man does not conceal her feelings as a woman, but her experience as a man integrates with her feelings as a woman.²³ Malvolio's love, on the contrary, is self-love. He seizes the slightest chance that comes his way to achieve all his absurd dreams of power and wealth. Also, Viola's

reaction when Antonio calls her "Sebastian" is in contrast with Malvolio's when he reads Maria's letter. Though both of them are told what they want to believe, Viola does not believe and keeps her balance until she makes sure that her brother is really still alive while Malvolio believes the letter without thinking it may be fake which leads to his downfall.

Viola is also a parallel to Olivia. Both of them have a dead father and a lost brother on the part of Viola since she does not know whether he is alive or not, and a dead brother on the part of Olivia. Yet they are a contrast in character and action. Despite the loss of her brother, Viola is still optimistic and has faith to live life to the full. She loves Orsino for his sake and keeps her love in her heart like "a worm i' the bud," (II. iv. 107) whereas Olivia is pessimistic. She keeps herself away from the world because of her dead brother. She is indifferent to Orsino's passions and feelings. Falling in love with Cesario (Viola in disguise) and then transforming it to Sebastian after it was only for the memory of her dead brother shows that Olivia's love is self-love. Moreover, the relationship between Antonio and Sebastian is a contrast to that between Sir Toby and Sir Andrew. The true friendship is shown by the technique of dramatic irony.

To employ dramatic irony in this play, Shakespeare uses disguise, mistaken identity, and deception which, in return, cause confusions and internal conflicts among his characters and it is this confusion that appeals to the audience and leads to comedy. It keeps the audience wondering how many more of these situations will arise, and at the end, how this confusion and conflict will be solved. Eventually, without dramatic irony, the themes

of love, self-love, friendship, and the theme of appearance and reality would not be better presented. And without dramatic irony, the play would be far less confusing and far less interesting. But with dramatic irony, Twelfth Night is categorized as one of the most amusing comedies ever written.

Notes:

¹Layman A. Baker, "Dramatic irony: Critical Concepts," (1999, [URL:http://www.ksu/english/baker/english287/cc-dramaticirony.htm](http://www.ksu/english/baker/english287/cc-dramaticirony.htm)) January 24, 2006, p.1 of 4.

²C. Hugh Holman, A Handbook to Literature (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1960), p. 155.

³"Dramatic Irony," (1999, URL: [http://www.vcu.edu/art web/ play writing.htm](http://www.vcu.edu/artweb/playwriting.htm)) January 24, 2006, p. 2 of 2.

⁴"The Uvic Writer's Guide: irony," (1995, URL: [http://www.Uvic.ca/w/guide/pages/literature/irony.htm.](http://www.Uvic.ca/w/guide/pages/literature/irony.htm)) January 24, 2006, p. 1 of 2.

⁵"Reasons for Irony,"(URL: [http:// www.ripen. edu/ academics/ the atre 23/...Oedipus/ reason for irony.htm](http://www.ripen.edu/academics/theatre23/...Oedipus/reasonforirony.htm)) February3, 2006, p.1of 1.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Sophocles, The Oedipus Plays of Sophocles: Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus, Antigone, translated by Paul Roche (London: Longman Group Limited, 1958).

⁸C. Cheng, "Shakespearean Use of Dramatic Irony," (March 1996, URL: <http://www.geocities.com/sophius/dramaticirony.htm>) January 25, 2006, p. 2 of 5.

⁹William Shakespeare, Twelfth Night, ed. Bernard Lott (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1959). All subsequent quotations from this play are taken from this edition and enclosed within the text in parentheses.

¹⁰C. Cheng, p.2 of 5.

¹¹Jenia Geraghty, "A Study of William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night, Showing How Shakespeare's Choice of Form, Structure and Language Shape Meaning," (November 2002, URL: http://www.literature_study_online.com/essays/twelfth_night.htm) February 7, 2008, p. 3 of 6.

¹²"Deceiving Disguises in Twelfth Night," (URL: http://www.bookrags.com/essays/op:search&sting:twelfth_night.htm) March 12, 2006, p. 2 of 2.

¹³Lee Lady, " Shakespeare's Women in Drag: Viola," (February 2002, URL: <http://www.hawaii.edu/~lady/lit/Shakespeare/Viola.htm>) March 13, 2006, p. 2 of 8.

¹⁴"Use of Humor and Dramatic Irony in Twelfth Night," (URL: <http://www.exampleessays.com/viewpapers/39423.htm>) March 5, 2008, p. 1 of 1.

¹⁵Patrick Swinden, An Introduction to Shakespeare's Comedies (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973), p. 127.

¹⁶E. F. C. Ludowyk, Understanding Shakespeare (Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 209.

¹⁷Bernard Lott, "Introduction," to William Shakespeare, Twelfth Night, ed. Bernard Lott (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1959), p. xiii.

¹⁸Lee Lady, p. 7 of 8.

¹⁹Joseph Penquigney, "The Two Antonio and Same-Sex Love in Twelfth Night and The Merchant of Venice," in Shakespeare and Gender: A History, eds. Deborah Barker & Ivo Kamps (London: Verso Press Ltd., 1995), p. 180.

²⁰Clare Byrne, "The Social Background," in A Companion to Shakespeare Studies, eds. Harley Granville-Barker & G. B. Harrison (Cambridge University Press, 1964), p. 204.

²¹C. L. Barber, Shakespeare's Festive Comedy (Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 255.

²²Ralph Berry, Shakespeare's Comedies: Explorations in Form (Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 201.

²³Juliet Dussinberre, Shakespeare and the Nature of Women (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1975), p. 265.

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السخرية الدرامية في مسرحية ((الليلة الثانية عشر))

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الخلاصة:

يستخدم المؤلفون الكثير من الاساليب للإقناع بوجهة نظرهم. احد هذه الاساليب هو السخرية الدرامية الذي استخدمه ولیم شكسبير في مسرحيته ((الليلة الثانية عشر)) () هذا الاسلوب ليعرض ارائه عن الحب، حب الذات، و الصداقة...الخ بطريقة تثير الضحك و المتعة من قبل الجمهور.

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى بيان اسلوب السخرية الدرامية في المسرحية الكوميديية ((الليلة الثانية عشر)) و مناقشة دوره في مساعدة الجمهور على ملاحظة و إدراك الموضوعات المطروحة و شخصيات الشخوص، و اخيرا" تأثيره على البناء المسرحي للمسرحية.

تتناول الدراسة تعريف السخرية الدرامية، و اسباب استخدام هذا النوع من الاساليب، و عناصره، و من ثم بيان السخرية الدرامية في مسرحية ((الليلة الثانية عشر)) في كل من الحكمة الرئيسية و الحكمة الثانوية. و اخيرا" تلقي الدراسة الضوء على تأثير السخرية الدرامية على البناء المسرحي للمسرحية. تنتهي الدراسة بقائمة الهوامش و قائمة المصادر.