



ASL SHAKESPEARE PROJECT

LESSON PLAN 13: Melancholy

SECTION *Twelfth Night*; SUBSECTION Themes; MOVIE 11 (Melancholy)

OBJECTIVE

To understand the worldview of Elizabethan people regarding early medical beliefs and personality traits.

WHAT TO DO

I. Watch Movie #11 under the Themes section of *Twelfth Night*. Read the text for this section:

Medical care during Shakespeare’s time was not very good. People believed that there were four fluids in the body:

1. Blood,
2. yellow bile,
3. phlegm, and
4. black bile.

These fluids corresponded to the four elements: Air, fire, water, and earth. But these liquids, or “humours” as they were called, also controlled a person’s characteristics—their physical appearance, their moods, and their morality. The perfect temperament resulted when no one of these humours dominated, if they were equally balanced.

BLOOD	YELLOW BILE	PHLEGM	BLACK BILE
Air	Fire	Water	Earth
Hot and Moist	Hot and Dry	Cold and Moist	Cold and Dry
“SANGUINE”	“CHOLERIC”	“PHLEGMATIC”	“MELANCHOLIC”
Amorous, Happy, Courageous	Violent, Vengeful	Dull, Pale, Cowardly, Calm	Gluttonous, Lazy, Sentimental
Spring	Summer	Winter	Autumn

By 1600 it was common to use “humour” as a means of defining someone’s personality. *Twelfth Night* begins with Duke Orsino whose humour is “melancholy”. He is saddened by unrequited love—with his love for Olivia that is not returned.”

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2. Watch the movie “If Music be the food of love” (The Project; Performance; Movie 5).

Copy and distribute the attached chart and, based on the text (either ASL or English) of the play, have the students fill in the correct personality trait for each of the characters listed. Also, have the students write down the lines from the play that specifically prove the character has the trait they have selected.

3. Have your students share with the class their findings.

LESSON PLAN 13 Melancholy

CHARACTER	PERSONALITY	QUOTATIONS
Orsino	Melancholy	“If music be the food of Love, play on.”
Sir Toby Belch		
Malvolio		
Sir Andrew Aguecheek		
Maria		
Sebastian		
Olivia		
Viola		