



ASL SHAKESPEARE PROJECT

LESSON PLAN 14: Soliloquies

SECTION *Twelfth Night*; SUBSECTION Themes; MOVIE 12 (Soliloquies)

OBJECTIVE

To be able to define soliloquies and their function within dramatic literature.

BACKGROUND

Soliloquies are words spoken by the actor to the audience when there is no one else on the stage. They are useful because the audience learns the character's thoughts about what has happened and what might happen. The audience also learns about any worries the character might have.

WHAT TO DO

There are two soliloquies you can watch on the website. First, have students watch the soliloquy movie under *Twelfth Night*, Themes, Movie 12 (Soliloquy).

In Act 2, Scene 2, Viola realizes that Olivia has fallen in love with her at first sight. First read the monologue below and then watch it on the website under *Twelfth Night*, Themes, Movie 13 (The Ring Speech).

VIOLA

I left no ring with her: what means this lady?
Fortune forbid my outside have not charm'd her!
She made good view of me; indeed, so much,
That sure methought her eyes had lost her tongue,
For she did speak in starts distractedly.
She loves me, sure; the cunning of her passion
Invites me in this churlish messenger.
None of my lord's ring! why, he sent her none.
I am the man: if it be so, as 'tis,
Poor lady, she were better love a dream.
Disguise, I see, thou art a wickedness,
Wherein the pregnant enemy does much.
How easy is it for the proper-false
In women's waxen hearts to set their forms!
Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we!
For such as we are made of, such we be.
How will this fadge? my master loves her dearly;
And I, poor monster, fond as much on him;
And she, mistaken, seems to dote on me.

continued...

What will become of this? As I am man,
My state is desperate for my master's love;
As I am woman,--now alas the day!--
What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe!
O time! thou must untangle this, not I;
It is too hard a knot for me to untie!

Have the students answer the following questions.

1. What is the troubling situation in which Viola finds herself?
How much of this does she blame on herself, and how much on her disguise?
2. Look up the following words in an online dictionary (such as the Oxford English Dictionary <http://www.oed.com/>) to find their historical meaning: "fadge," "churlish," and "pregnant." What do these words mean and how does that change your understanding of this passage?
3. How does this soliloquy inform your understanding of Viola's character?
Or of the dramatic irony found in the play?
4. Why do you think that Shakespeare wrote this section as a soliloquy?

In Act 1, Scene 5 Olivia is alone on stage before Malvolio returns. Read the soliloquy below and watch it performed under the *Twelfth Night* Section, under Themes, Movie 3 (Love at First Sight).

OLIVIA

'What is your parentage?'
'Above my fortunes, yet my state is well:
I am a gentleman.' I'll be sworn thou art;
Thy tongue, thy face, thy limbs, actions and spirit,
Do give thee five-fold blazon: not too fast:
soft, soft!
Unless the master were the man. How now!
Even so quickly may one catch the plague?
Well, let it be.
What ho, Malvolio!

Have the students answer the following questions.

1. What feelings does Olivia have towards Viola?
2. How does Olivia's word choice demonstrate her attitude about love?
3. How does Olivia role-play her meeting with Viola?
4. Why do you think that Shakespeare wrote this section as a soliloquy?
5. Write and perform a soliloquy about someone or something you love.