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ROGER WARREN, co-editor of *Twelfth Night* in the Oxford Shakespeare, was Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Leicester until his retirement.

STANLEY WELLS is Honorary President of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and Honorary Emeritus Governor of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. He is Emeritus Professor of Shakespeare Studies at the University of Birmingham, General Editor of the Oxford Shakespeare, and co-editor of *Twelfth Night*.

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Twelfth Night, or What You Will

Edited by

ROGER WARREN

and

STANLEY WELLS

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PREFACE

THIS is essentially a collaborative edition. The editors' contributions are roughly as follows: the text is based on that prepared by Stanley Wells for the Oxford *Complete Works*, with modifications by Roger Warren, chiefly concerned with lightening the punctuation in order to preserve the shape and rhythm of the verse lines as much as possible; the introduction was written by Warren and revised by Wells; and the commentary was written by Warren, incorporating much material prepared by Wells for a projected annotated Oxford *Complete Works*. Where we have disagreed about a reading (for example at 5.1.274), we have set out the conflicting arguments as clearly as possible, so as to emphasize that an edition is not a fixed thing, but offers opportunities for continual reassessment of the textual evidence.

The edition is collaborative in other ways too. We have been fortunate in having James Walker, a very experienced practical musician and composer for the theatre, to edit the music; and just before starting work on the edition, Warren participated in the preparation of Peter Hall's 1991 production at the Playhouse, London: the detailed discussion of each phrase that took place during the rehearsals was of great value in preparing the commentary. We have also learnt much from other productions, which we have tried to acknowledge in the introduction and commentary.

We should also like to thank all those who have helped with various suggestions, and especially to acknowledge the generous co-operation of the librarians at the Shakespeare Institute and the Shakespeare Centre, Stratford-upon-Avon.

ROGER WARREN
STANLEY WELLS

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INTRODUCTION

Twelfth Night is one of the most popular of Shakespeare's plays in the modern theatre, and its success seems to have begun early; the sole surviving reference to it during Shakespeare's lifetime is to a performance. On 2 February 1602, John Manningham, then a law student of the Middle Temple in London, wrote in his diary:

> At our feast we had a play called *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, much like *The Comedy of Errors* or *Menaechmi* in Plautus, but most like and near to that in Italian called *Inganni*. A good practice in it to make the steward believe his lady widow was in love with him, by counterfeiting a letter as from his lady, in general terms telling him what she liked best in him, and prescribing his gesture in smiling, his apparel, etc., and then when he came to practise, making him believe they took him to be mad.[1]

This must have been an early performance. The play was probably written in 1601, either immediately before or straight after *Hamlet*.[2] Both plays were therefore written at the mid-point of Shakespeare's career, when he was at the height of his powers, so their theatrical success is not surprising.

The play has not, however, always been as popular in the theatre as it is today. Although it was among the earliest of Shakespeare's plays to be revived when the London theatres

[1] The document is reproduced in S. Schoenbaum, *William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life* (Oxford, 1975), p. 156. Presumably the actors were Shakespeare's company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men; they were unlikely to relinquish a new play to anyone else, and in any case the text was not generally available, since it was not published before the First Folio of 1623, and was only then entered in the Stationers' Register, on 8 November 1623. See Wells and Taylor, *Textual Companion*, p. 32.

[2] Other pointers to this date are: (i) references to 'the Sophy'—the Shah of Persia (2.5.170; 3.4.269)—probably postdate Sir Robert Shirley's return from Persia, in a ship named *The Sophy*, in 1599; (ii) an apparent allusion to the Arctic voyage of William Barentz in 1596–7 (3.2.24–6); an English account was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1598, the earliest surviving edition dated 1609; (iii) 'the new map with the augmentation of the Indies' (3.2.74) appears to be one published in Hakluyt's *Voyages* in 1599 and reissued in 1600; (iv) some of the snatches of song in 2.3 probably draw on Robert Jones's *First Book of Songs or Airs* (1600). See Wells and Taylor, *Textual Companion*, p. 123, for a more detailed discussion of the dating.

reopened after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, only three performances in the later part of the seventeenth century are known, and Samuel Pepys attended each of them. On 11 September 1661 he entered the theatre simply because the King was going to be there. 'So I, against my own mind and resolution, could not forbear to go in, which did make the play seem a burden to me, and I took no pleasure at all in it.' Nevertheless he saw it again on Twelfth Night 1663, when he found it 'but a silly play, and not relating at all to the name or day', and yet again, though with no more enthusiasm, on 20 January 1669, 'as it is now revived' (which may imply adaptation, though no alteration survives from his period), this time calling it 'one of the weakest plays that ever I saw on the stage'.[1]

Pepys seems to have reflected the taste of his age: the play then left the repertory for over eighty years. William Burnaby drew on it for his *Love Betray'd* of 1703, a very free adaptation, mostly in prose, which retains fewer than sixty of Shakespeare's lines. Only two performances are known, one in February 1703 and the other in March 1705.[2] *Twelfth Night* shared in the general neglect of Shakespeare's comedies during the early part of the eighteenth century but returned to the English stage in January 1741, with Charles Macklin as Malvolio. After this, while not receiving as many performances as *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, or *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, it remained in the repertory of either Covent Garden or Drury Lane for the rest of the century.[3] The acting version printed in Bell's edition in 1774 is substantially Shakespeare's text with a few cuts, including two of Feste's songs; J. P. Kemble's acting edition of 1811 also makes only comparatively minor changes, including the transposition of the

[1] *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews, 11 vols. (1970–83); 2.177, 4.6, 9.421.

[2] The play was reprinted by the Cornmarket Press in 1969. Charles Molloy's *The Half-Pay Officers*, of 1720, listed by e.g. Campbell and Quinn in *A Shakespeare Encyclopaedia* (1966) as an adaptation of *Twelfth Night*, bears scarcely any relation to Shakespeare's play. It is described by George C. D. Odell, *Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving*, 2 vols. (New York, 1920), 1.248, and was reprinted by the Cornmarket Press in 1969.

[3] Full information on performances from 1660 to 1800 is given in *The London Stage*, 11 vols. (Carbondale, Illinois, 1965–8).

first and second scenes, a practice which still occasionally happens at the present time.[1]

In 1820 Frederic Reynolds, along with the composer Henry Bishop, put on at Covent Garden a heavily adapted version introducing 'Songs, Glees, and Choruses, the Poetry selected *entirely* from the Plays, Poems, and Sonnets of Shakespeare' and adding also the masque from *The Tempest*. This adaptation, which was indulgently reviewed by Leigh Hunt,[2] continued in performance at intervals over several years; the text has not survived.

Shakespeare's play had been introduced to New York in 1804, and it was the American actresses Charlotte and Susan Cushman, appearing as Viola and Olivia, who brought it back to the London stage in 1846, at the Haymarket Theatre. Other notable nineteenth-century productions included those of Samuel Phelps at Sadler's Wells in 1848, Charles Kean at the Princess's Theatre in 1850, and one at the Olympic Theatre in 1865, in which the text was altered so that Kate Terry could play both Viola and Sebastian.[3] Henry Irving's production at the Lyceum Theatre in 1884, in which he played Malvolio with Ellen Terry as Viola, was not a great success, and Augustin Daly's took remarkable liberties with the text.[4]

These were all performances in the nineteenth-century pictorial tradition, but in 1895 William Poel's semi-professional Elizabethan Stage Society acted the play 'after the manner of the sixteenth century' (though not without abbreviation), impressing Bernard Shaw with 'the immense advantage of the platform stage to the actor'.[5] The winds of change were blowing, even though Beerbohm Tree's version at His Majesty's Theatre in 1901, in which he played Malvolio, reverted to traditional methods. It had what George Odell described as 'the most extraordinary single setting I have ever beheld. It

[1] Kemble's edition was reprinted by the Cornmarket Press in 1971 with a brief introduction by John Russell Brown. It is discussed by Odell, 2.52, 62–3.

[2] *Leigh Hunt's Dramatic Criticism* 1808–1831, ed. L. H. and C. W. Houtchens (1950), pp. 227–31.

[3] Jean Anouilh similarly adapted the play, in his own translation, for the French actress Susanne Flon, reviewed by Alan S. Downer, 'For Jesus' Sake Forbear', *SQ* 13 (1962), 219–30; pp. 226–8.

[4] Described and analysed by Odell, 2. 386, 406–7, and 441–2.

[5] *Our Theatres in the Nineties* (1932, reprinted 1948), 1.184–91; p. 189.

was the garden of Olivia, extending terrace by terrace to the extreme back of the stage, with very real grass, real fountains, paths and descending steps. I never saw anything approaching it for beauty and *vraisemblance*'—but the disadvantage was that it had to be used 'for many of the Shakespearian episodes for which it was absurdly inappropriate'.[1] This was the last major production of *Twelfth Night* in the high Victorian style. In 1912 Harley Granville Barker directed it at the Savoy Theatre, London, in a production which, influenced partly by Poel, laid the foundations for the many twentieth-century stagings of this play, some of whose insights have made an important contribution to the rest of this introduction.[2]

A 'Twelfth Night' Play?

It is interesting that the earliest recorded performance should have been at a celebratory feast: John Manningham saw it on 2 February, which was Candlemas, the festival of the blessing of candles to celebrate the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a Catholic feast which, like others, survived into post-Reformation England. Both the other early performances we know about were also given privately to celebrate festive occasions: by the King's Men at court on Easter Monday, 6 April 1618, and again at Candlemas, 2 February 1623, before Charles I at Whitehall. This inevitably prompts us to ask whether *Twelfth Night* was conceived and performed as a play especially suited to private performances on festive occasions. It seems unlikely that such a successful stage play would have been reserved for private performance; but on Twelfth Night 1601 Shakespeare's company performed an unspecified play before Queen Elizabeth I and her chief guest, Don Virginio Orsino, at Whitehall, and Leslie Hotson has argued in *The First Night of 'Twelfth Night'* (1954) that the play was rapidly put together for this occasion. Although his book sheds much valuable light on details of the text, from which the commentary in this edition has benefited, his main argument has not won general acceptance; it is likelier that the ducal visitor and the festive

[1] Odell, 2.455.

[2] Barker's production is described in detail by Dennis Kennedy, *Granville Barker and the Dream of Theatre* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 136–47.

occasion suggested the name of Shakespeare's duke and the title of his play, which was probably written later that year.

Opinion varies about how far the title provides a clue for interpretation. In spite of Pepys's view that the play was irrelevant to the day, it was often performed on or around 6 January in the later eighteenth century. Like the feast of Candlemas, the elaborate festivities associated with Twelfth Night were a survival of medieval customs into post-Reformation England. L. G. Salingar conveniently summarizes those features of the play which relate to the period of licensed 'misrule', revelry, and topsy-turveydom traditionally associated with the Twelve Days of Christmas, of which Twelfth Night was the conclusion and the climax:

> The sub-plot shows a prolonged season of misrule, or 'uncivil rule', in Olivia's household, with Sir Toby turning night into day; there are drinking, dancing, and singing, scenes of mock wooing, a mock sword fight, and the gulling of an unpopular member of the household, with Feste mumming it as a priest and attempting a mock exorcism in the manner of the Feast of Fools.[1]

Both the principal actions of the play present reversals of established norms such as the period of misrule encouraged: in the main plot, the Duke Orsino is educated out of his aberrant state of love-melancholy by his servant, who then becomes her 'master's mistress' (5.1.317); in the sub-plot, Olivia's steward aspires to become his mistress's master. And during the drinking scene, Sir Toby's quotation of an unidentified song, 'O' the twelfth day of December' (2.3.79), may be his drunken version of the carol 'The Twelve Days of Christmas', perhaps identifying the party as his own version of a Twelfth Night revel.[2]

Modern directors have taken diametrically opposed views of the usefulness of the associations of Twelfth Night to

[1] 'The Design of *Twelfth Night*', *SQ* 9 (1958), 117–39; p. 118. The topic is also discussed by François Laroque in *Shakespeare's Festive World* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 227–8.

[2] In *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (Princeton, 1959), C. L. Barber argues that Shakespearian comedy draws on the forms and traditions of Elizabethan holidays (not just Twelfth Night) to create a pattern of festive release leading to psychological clarification: 'People are caught up by delusions or misapprehensions which take them out of themselves, bringing out what they would keep hidden or did not know was there' (p. 242).

performance, as Michael Billington's conversations with some of them in *Directors' Shakespeare* (1990), a valuable account of the theatrical issues, makes clear. For Terry Hands, '*Twelfth Night* meant just that—the sixth of January, the moment when you take down the decorations and Christmas is over. The festive moment has passed, and this is now the cruellest point of the year', and the drinking scene is an attempt 'to put their Christmas tree back up' (pp. 2, 8).[1] On the other hand, John Barton, who directed a long-running and almost universally admired production for the Royal Shakespeare Company (1969–71), finds the play less wintry than 'autumnal in mood' (p. 7). In this respect, Barton agrees with Peter Hall, who directed another much admired autumnal staging (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1958–60, and again at the Playhouse, London, in 1991); while for Bill Alexander, director of the RSC's 1987–8 production, 'the title was a kind of distraction' (p. 3).

That title, however, is not simply *Twelfth Night*. Both the earliest sources, John Manningham's diary and the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays (1623), the sole authority for the text of the play, call it *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*; perhaps the permissive *What You Will* is intended to qualify too rigorous an insistence upon Twelfth Night and its associations of misrule.[2] Such openness would be entirely characteristic of a play which establishes so subtle a balance between contrasting elements that it has often been characterized as 'elusive' in mood and overall effect. John Gielgud, who directed what seems to have been a rather unsuccessful production at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1955, comments: 'It is so difficult to combine the romance of the play with the cruelty of the jokes against Malvolio, jokes which are in any case archaic and difficult. The different elements in the play are hard to balance

[1] Hands's 1979 RSC production is discussed in Roger Warren, 'Shakespeare at Stratford and the National Theatre, 1979', *SS* 33 (Cambridge, 1980), 169–80; pp. 170–1.

[2] Barbara Everett argues that 'the "sub-title" is really no sub-title, but a generic, perhaps primary, and certainly important part of the title' ('Or What You Will', *EC* 35 (1985), 294–314; p. 304). She points out that 'Marston's *What You Will*, though not published till 1607, was almost certainly written and first performed not long before the first performance of Shakespeare's comedy', so this may have necessitated a change in Shakespeare's title (p. 313).

properly.'[1] For this reason, as Michael Billington points out in his introduction to *Directors' Shakespeare*, 'different characters become, at different times, the pivot of the play [but] the quartet of RSC directors suggests that Sir Toby is the motor that drives the plot and Feste the character who determines the mood' (p. ix).

It may be that one reason why John Barton's and Peter Hall's autumnal versions were so successful in achieving just that elusive balance between contrasting elements that Gielgud mentions, between sweet and sour, laughter and tears, was that autumn itself is a season of contrasts: serene, warm days edged by chilly nights, mist, and lengthening shadows. Keats catches precisely this quality in his ode 'To Autumn' where he defines the perfection of the autumn day by reminding the reader of those things that threaten it—the hint of transience in the 'soft-dying day' and in the 'gathering swallows', about to depart to escape the approach of winter. And he might be describing the quality of *Twelfth Night* itself when he writes in his 'Ode on Melancholy' that 'in the very temple of delight | Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine'. This combination of happiness and sadness, to the point where an awareness of the one is essential to the full experience and appreciation of the other, is characteristic of the mood of *Twelfth Night*, epitomized in the lines in which Orsino and Viola discuss female perfection,

> ORSINO
> For women are as roses, whose fair flower
> Being once displayed, doth fall that very hour.
> VIOLA
> And so they are. Alas that they are so:
> To die even when they to perfection grow
> (2.4.37–40),

or in Viola's phrase about her imaginary sister 'Smiling at grief' (2.4.115), or in Feste's comparison of Orsino's mind to an opal, an iridescent jewel that changes its appearance in the varying light (2.4.74).

An autumnal mood also suits the revels of Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, which carry a sense of the best days being past, of

[1] *An Actor and his Time* (1979), p. 176.

having to make the most of every moment while it lasts. Feste perfectly catches this mood in the song he sings to them in the drinking scene: 'Present mirth hath present laughter. . . . | Youth's a stuff will not endure' (2.3.46, 50). Perhaps the need to indulge in 'present laughter' explains the rather desperate tone of the revelry in most performances, and more particularly how the joke against Malvolio comes to be pushed to the extreme of attempting to drive him mad. Making the most of passing moments is as much a part of Twelfth Night, the end of a period of mid-winter revels, as it is of autumn; and references to other seasons in the text—'More matter for a May morning' (3.4.137) and 'this is very midsummer madness' (3.4.53)—allude to other periods of Elizabethan revelry, May Day and Midsummer Eve, not necessarily to a particular season in which the action takes place—although Bill Alexander, the director who felt that 'the title was a kind of distraction', departed as far from mid-winter as possible and set his 1987 RSC version in the brightly-lit summer sunshine of a fishing village on the Illyrian coast. This leads naturally to the ways in which various stagings have presented Illyria, and to the more general question 'Where—or what—is Illyria?'

Illyria

Illyria was the ancient name of an area of the Adriatic coast roughly corresponding to what was for long known as Yugoslavia. In the classical world, Illyria had a reputation for piracy: the Illyrians' attacks on Adriatic shipping led to Roman intervention, and the area became the Roman province of Illyricum. Shakespeare was clearly aware of its reputation since his only other reference to it, in the phrase 'Bargulus, the strong Illyrian pirate' (*Contention* 4.1.108), is a translation of 'Bardulis Illyrius latro', from Cicero's *De Officiis* 2.11, a work used as a textbook in Elizabethan schools. This association of Illyria with piracy may have contributed to the vivid evocation of a ferocious sea-battle between Antonio and Orsino at 5.1.45–70, and to the ambiguous presentation of Antonio in general, discussed in a later section of this introduction.

In Shakespeare's day Illyria was a series of city-states controlled by the Venetian republic. Possibly Shakespeare con-

ceives of Orsino and Olivia as neighbouring rulers of these city-states, for whom a marriage alliance might appear natural; yet Orsino and Olivia seem just as much to be neighbouring Elizabethan aristocrats; Olivia's household is presented in precise detail, complete with steward, waiting-gentlewoman, fool, and sponging elderly relative. The coexistence of the remote and the familiar in Shakespeare's Illyria—nicely characterized in a review by Hugh Leonard as 'a fairyland with back-streets' (*Plays and Players*, August 1966, p. 16)—suggests to some interpreters that it should be 'magical, romantic, *Illyrian* in that sense' (John Barton), or even a country of the mind: 'The place is defined by the characters and the journey they undertake . . . which is an emotional journey' (Terry Hands, in *Directors' Shakespeare*, pp. 8, 9). Each of these aspects of Illyria—the geographical or Mediterranean, the specifically English, the magical, and the sense of a country of the mind—can be illustrated by the prominence each has been given in notable stagings, though of course to emphasize one aspect need not exclude the others, and in the most balanced productions does not do so.

For Shakespeare's company, working on an unlocalized stage and wearing what was for them modern dress, the question of design choices presumably did not arise; and the staging of the play is exceptionally undemanding of theatrical resources.[1] Later actors and directors, since at least the middle of the nineteenth century, have sought to provide a visual equivalent for the play's poetic and dramatic qualities. In the nineteenth century there was a fashion for elaborately realistic and sometimes would-be 'historical' settings. Since Illyria in Shakespeare's time 'was under the rule of the Venetian republic', a note in H. H. Furness's 1901 New Variorum edition explains, 'the custom has long prevailed of treating the piece as a romantic and poetic picture of Venetian manners in the seventeenth century. Some stage managers have used Greek dresses. For the purposes of the stage, there must be a "local habitation" ' (p. 4). In a New York production of 1904, for instance, a kind of 'Illyrian' national dress was evolved, using elements of Greek, Balkan, even Turkish costumes. The twins

[1] Peter Thomson considers '*Twelfth Night* and Playhouse Practice' in his *Shakespeare's Theatre*, 2nd edn. (1992), pp. 91–113.

each wore a skirted robe with a sleeveless jacket trimmed with braid, a fez, and a sash around the waist with a scimitar.[1] Harley Granville Barker's Savoy production in 1912 reacted against such 'realistic' designs by setting a stylized garden with brightly coloured, cone-shaped formal trees against a yellow and black abstract drop-cloth for Orsino's court; but even he made a concession to prevailing 'Illyrian' styles by dressing Orsino in oriental robes, complete with turban.[2]

Although Bill Alexander at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1987 attempted to evoke the actual Illyria of Shakespeare's time, his aim was not the historical but the timeless. 'Those white-washed buildings were the same, arguably, in the sixteenth century as they are in the twentieth century.' The costuming was 'Elizabethan Illyrian', that is, 'Greek–Yugoslav dress of that period'—and in fact it was not far removed from the nineteenth century's attempts to create an 'Illyrian' style. But Alexander also addressed the important question why, since so much of the society in the play seems so English, Shakespeare bothered to set it in Illyria at all: 'I think he does it for its compression value: . . . when people are displaced, their characteristics become heightened' so that there is 'an intensification of human behaviour' (*Directors' Shakespeare*, pp. 12, 32). His evocation of the historical Illyria, then, was ultimately directed at sharpening the audience's sense of the psychology of the play.

And so, in a completely contrasting style, was Peter Hall's very English view at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1958. Derek Granger in his review pointed out that the play 'marvellously lends itself to a close pictorial re-working' and that Lila de Nobili's designs were 'permissibly explicit; we are in fact in a Caroline park on a sunny late afternoon at the very end of September; the light is gold and gauzy, the shadows are umber, the sunflowers glow against the garden wall and there is just the hint of a nip in the air' (*Financial Times*, 23 April 1958). The use of painted gauzes allowed the perspectives of a seventeenth-century long gallery for Orsino's court (see fig. 1)

[1] There is a photograph of the twins in *SS 32* (Cambridge, 1979), facing p. 88.

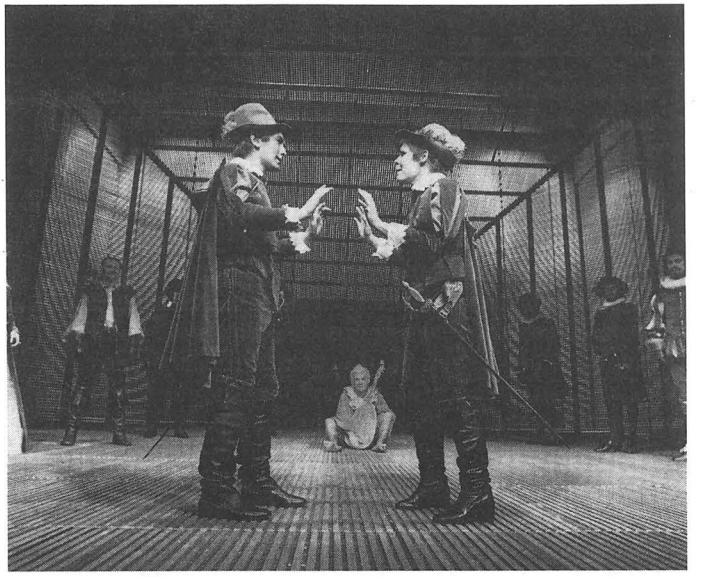
[2] There are several photographs in Dennis Kennedy, *Granville Barker and the Dream of Theatre* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 136–47.

1. Orsino (Derek Godfrey, seated centre) and Viola (Dorothy Tutin, standing behind him) listen to Feste (Max Adrian) singing 'Come away death' in a seventeenth-century long gallery. Peter Hall's production, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1960.

to blend swiftly into Olivia's walled garden. The advantage of these designs, as A. Alvarez put it when the production was revived in 1960, was that they provided 'a kind of visual parallel for the play's complexities' (*New Statesman*, 28 May 1960), and in particular reflected its changing moods; as one vista melted into another, the production precisely caught that shifting, 'elusive' quality often mentioned in connection with the play, its balancing of happiness and melancholy. That balance was further enchanced by Hall's decision to set the play some thirty years after its probable date of composition, in a Caroline world of lace collars, silks, and plumed hats which recalled Van Dyck's images of Charles I's court, in which autumnal colours often temper court splendour with a hint that the golden moment cannot last. Roy Walker summarized some advantages of presenting Illyria like this: the 'choice of Cavalier costume gave the maximum thematic contrast with Malvolio's Puritan habit, served the opposition of amours and austerity, and . . . eased the problem of the identical twins with a hair-style equally suitable to boy and girl'.[1]

The Illyria of John Barton's RSC production (1969–71) was in some respects a visual distillation of Hall's. Christopher Morley's design was a receding, slatted gauze box which proved very flexible. Set with candelabra and dimly lit, it resembled Hall's in suggesting Orsino's enclosed ducal hall; but when the gauze box was back-lit, it evoked a mysterious world beyond. This was crucial to Barton's view of the 'magical, romantic' nature of Illyria, and it was especially effective at the first appearance of Viola: the doors at the back of the gauze box flew open and she suddenly materialized amid swirling spray, rising like Venus from the sea; her long flowing hair also carried a suggestion of Alice in Wonderland. But the magical was balanced with the wittily human as Viola gradually recovered her bearings and resolved on positive action, especially once she assumed her page's disguise. Barton back-lit the gauze not only to suggest 'magic and the sea and the world outside that they'd come from' (*Directors' Shakespeare*, p. 10), but also to intensify moments that were

[1] 'The Whirligig of Time', *SS 12* (Cambridge, 1959), 122–30; pp. 128–9.



2. The reunion of the twins (Gordon Reid as Sebastian and Judi Dench as Viola), watched by Feste (Emrys James, centre). John Barton's 1969–71 RSC production.

at once mysterious and intensely human, above all for the reunion of the twins (see fig. 2), and he underscored such moments with the recurrent sound of the sea, a device adopted by several directors since. Barton's production was first given in a season that concentrated on Shakespeare's late romances; and one consequence was to make the audience especially aware of the ways in which *Twelfth Night* anticipates those plays: in the use of the sea as both destroyer and renewer; in the sense of characters undertaking emotional journeys; and in the final renewal of a family relationship which is as important as (or more important than) the coming together of lovers upon which comedy usually concentrates.[1]

An Illyria very far removed from all these was Peter Gill's at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1974. Here, more than in any other production, Illyria was a country of the mind. The key

[1] This production is discussed in Stanley Wells, *Royal Shakespeare* (Manchester, 1977), pp. 43–63, and in Lois Potter, *'Twelfth Night': Text and Performance* (1985).

to this interpretation was a huge, dominating mural of Narcissus gazing infatuatedly at his reflection in the water, suggesting the extent to which the characters are prisoners of their own obsessions. As Irving Wardle put it, Orsino, Olivia, and Malvolio, 'in his own way the greatest narcissist of the lot (and the only one who finally resists cure)', are all 'intoxicated with their own reflections, and the function of Viola and Sebastian is to put them through an Ovidian obstacle course from which they learn to turn away from the mirror and form real attachments' (*The Times*, 24 August 1974). But the production was concerned with body as well as with mind: Peter Ansorge focused something essential about the play as well as the staging when he defined this Illyria as 'a highly refined, erotic trap . . . in which the characters must learn to read the subtext of their desires' (*Plays and Players*, October 1974, p. 31). So as well as presenting various visual images of Illyria, these stagings used design to focus important aspects of the play to which subsequent sections of this introduction must return.

'Most like . . . that in Italian called "Inganni" '

In the diary entry describing the *Twelfth Night* performance he saw in 1602, John Manningham called the play 'much like *The Comedy of Errors* or *Menaechmi* in Plautus' (the principal source of *The Comedy of Errors*), but added that it was 'most like and near to that in Italian called *Inganni*'. He shrewdly identified the main influences on both the twins story and the love story. There were at least two Italian comedies called *Gl'Inganni* ('The Mistakes'), one by Nicolò Secchi (performed in 1547, first published in Florence in 1562 and frequently reprinted) and one by Curzio Gonzaga (published in Venice in 1592). Both appear to derive from an anonymous play, *Gl'Ingannati* ('The Deceived'), first performed at Siena in 1531 by a literary society called the 'Intronati' ('Thunderstruck by Love') and published in Venice in 1537. All these dramatize the central situation of *Twelfth Night*: a girl disguised as a page woos another lady on behalf of the master whom she loves; the lady then falls in love with the 'page', but subsequently marries 'his' twin brother. The story

recurs in two English prose narratives: Barnaby Riche reworks it in *Riche his Farewell to Military Profession* (1581); and there is a variant in an episode in Emanuel Forde's romance *The Famous History of Parismus* (1598).[1] It was, in other words, a story that was 'in the air' at the time; and it is worth considering some points of comparison (and contrast) between these works and *Twelfth Night*, not to 'prove' debts which are unprovable, but to indicate the *kind* of story that Shakespeare is using, and modifying, for his main plot.

After a prologue and two introductory scenes which contain two references to Twelfth Night (*la notte di beffana*—the Epiphany), the disguised heroine of *Gl'Ingannati* makes her first appearance and instantly establishes the tone of the play:

> It is indeed very rash of me, when I think of it, to come out in the streets so early, considering the wild practices of these licentious youths of Modena. Oh, how awful it would be if one . . . seized me by force, and, dragging me into a house, wanted to make sure whether I am a man or a woman! (Bullough's translation, cited throughout, p. 292)

Here there is a titillating, salacious flirting with the sexual ambiguities of the disguised heroine. To some extent, this is inherent in the situation, however and by whoever it is dramatized; but this bald statement announces the main source of interest in *Gl'Ingannati*; and a similarly blunt statement occurs later when the heroine describes her master whom she loves: 'He looked me up and down from head to foot so closely that I feared he would recognize me' (p. 296). Unlike Viola, this disguised heroine has followed and is now serving a man who deserted her, so there is a double risk of recognition, both of sex and of identity; but even allowing for this, *Gl'Ingannati* expresses the potential of the situation in a blunter way than Orsino does:

> Diana's lip
> Is not more smooth and rubious; thy small pipe

[1] Several of these texts are conveniently gathered together in Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, vol. 2 (1958), pp. 286–372. They are discussed in Bullough, in Robert C. Melzi, 'From Lelia to Viola', *Renaissance Drama*, 9 (1966), 67–81, and in Salingar (see p. 5 n. 1 above).

> Is as the maiden's organ, shrill and sound,
> And all is semblative a woman's part.
>
> (1.4.31–4)

All these Italian versions have the heroine hint at her love for her master, as Viola does in her allegory of a sister who died of love (2.4.88–115), but once more this is inherent in the situation: a disguised heroine needs some statement of her feelings, however reticent. The heroine's assumed name in *Gl'Ingannati*, Fabio, may have suggested Fabian's name to Shakespeare, though another possibility is suggested in the Commentary to 2.5.1. In Curzio Gonzaga's *Gl'Inganni*, the heroine assumes the name 'Cesare': this looks like the origin of Viola's choice of 'Cesario' for her male disguise. It is interesting that Viola, like the Italian heroines, does not use her brother's name, whereas the heroine in Barnaby Riche's version does, thus making the confusion of the twins much more complete, more 'plausible', and, for the brother, even more bewildering.

Shakespeare may have read these Italian plays, or possibly come across the stories through performances by the *commedia dell'arte*, which often drew upon published Italian plays and which was especially fond of plots involving twins (was that where John Manningham too came across *Gl'Inganni*?);[1] but the immediate stimulus was almost certainly provided by Barnaby Riche's story of Apollonius and Silla in *Riche his Farewell to Military Profession*, perhaps by way of Matteo Bandello's version of the story in his *Novelle* (1554) or François de Belleforest's French translation of it (1570).

Riche's narrative sets out to show how lovers drink from 'the cup of error':

> for to love them that hate us, to follow them that fly from us, to fawn on them that frown on us, to curry favour with them that disdain us, . . . who will not confess this to be an erroneous love, neither grounded upon wit nor reason? (Bullough, p. 345)

This sentence might even have been the spark that set off Shakespeare's choice of main plot; he echoes its phrasing at Olivia's declaration of her love for 'Cesario': 'Nor wit nor

[1] For *commedia* performances in England, see K. M. Lea, *Italian Popular Comedy*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1934), 2.339–455.

reason can my passion hide' (3.1.150). When Riche's Duke Apollonius courts Lady Julina 'according to the manner of wooers: besides fair words, sorrowful sighs, and piteous countenances, there must be sending of loving letters [to] become a scholar in love's school' (p. 351), he anticipates not only Orsino's formal wooing of Olivia, but still more the lesson in courtship given by Proteus in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

> Say that upon the altar of her beauty
> You sacrifice your tears, your sighs, your heart.
> Write till your ink be dry, and with your tears
> Moist it again . . .
>
> (3.2.72–5)

And when Duke Apollonius (Orsino) sends Silla (Viola) to woo Lady Julina (Olivia), and Julina falls 'into as great a liking with the man as the master was with herself' (pp. 351–2), the phrasing is close to Olivia's 'Unless the master were the man' (1.5.284) and to Viola's soliloquy on the complicated situation (2.2.33–9). Closer still is the similarity between Julina's 'it is enough that you have said for your master; from henceforth, either speak for yourself or say nothing at all' (p. 352) and Olivia's

> I bade you never speak again of him;
> But would you undertake another suit,
> I had rather hear you to solicit that
> Than music from the spheres.
>
> (3.1.105–8)

Riche's handling of the crisis of the story is closer than the Italian plays to *Twelfth Night*. Julina protests to Duke Apollonius that she is married to Silvio/Silla, 'whose personage I regard more than mine own life' (p. 356), a phrase that Shakespeare transfers to Viola/Cesario, who protests that she loves Orsino 'more than my life' (5.1.131); Julia urges Silla 'Fear not then . . . to keep your faith and promise which you have made unto me' (p. 358), as Olivia urges Viola: 'Hold little faith, though thou hast too much fear' (5.1.167). But Shakespeare's revelation of the heroine's sex is necessarily very different from Riche's, since he was using a boy actor. Riche says: 'And here withal loosing his garments down to his stomach', the 'page' 'shewed Julina his breasts and pretty