

Antonio:

Useful Quotes:

- 'I have many enemies in Orsino's court' [2.1]
- 'If you will not murder me for my love, let me be your servant' [2.1]
- 'Put up your sword. If this young gentlemen / Have done offence, I take the fault on me' [3.3]
- 'Will you deny me now[his purse][To Viola]' [3.4]
- 'I snatch'd one half out of the jaws of death' [3.4]
- 'Virtue is beauty, but the beauteous evil / Are empty trunks o'erflourish'd by the devil' [3.4]
- 'Antonio never yet was thief or pirate' [5.1]
- 'A witchcraft drew me hither: / That most ingrateful boy there by your side, / From the rude sea's enraged and foamy mouth / His life I gave him and did thereto add / My love, without retention or restraint' [5.1]
- 'How have you made a divison of yourself? / An apple, cleft in two, is not much more twin / Than these two creatures. Which is Sebastian?'

Critical Viewpoints:

Jan Kott: "The desire of Orsino for his page, or Olivia for a woman, and of Antonio for his young master, is not 'confined' in marriage resolution." — Homosexual desire (early criticism)

Steve Davies argues that 'it would not have been possible to present explicitly [...] homoerotic feelings on the Elizabethan stage, or indeed any stage since then, until the legalization of male homosexuality. Sodomy [...] became a criminal act under Henry VIII punishable by burning.' However, Davies also points out that in Elizabethan England there was a 'cult of male friendship and love' which may find implicit voice in the play through the relationship between Sebastian and Antonio, and Orsino and Cesario. (Socio-historical criticism)

Nancy Lindheim argues that 'much of Antonio's language demonstrates the early modern overlap in vocabulary for all strong positive feelings, the extent to which a single language was applied unselfconsciously in discourses of erotic love, friendship and religion alike.' She goes on to argue that 'according to Renaissance theory, friendship occurs between male equals [...] it is superior to male-female relationships because it is a product of moral choice which finds pleasure in souls, not bodies.' (Early criticism of the play — the critic is modern but the criticism is contemporary in nature.)

20th Century Criticism:

- **Harold Goddard (1951)** 'Pretty nearly everybody in it but Viola and Sebastian... is at the point where from excess of something or other he is about to be converted into something else'.
- **Joseph Summers (1955)** 'The confrontation of Sebastian and Cesario/Viola provides the means for discarding of all the lovers' masks'

Modern Criticism:

- **John Casey (c. 1997)** 'Antonio and Sebastian provide the most fertile ground for queer inquiry'.
- **Stephen Orgel** 'The only overtly homosexual couple in Shakespeare [are Antonio and Sebastian], except for Achilles and Patroclus' c.1996. New Historicist critic.
- **Jan Kott (c. 1990's)** 'Love and desire pass from a youth to a girl, and a girl to a youth. Cesario is Viola, Viola is Sebastian'
- **Austin Brown** 'It is not Sebastian's masculinity to which Antonio is attracted, but rather his physical and social manifestation of femininity'
- **Sean McEvoy (2018)** 'That part of [Olivia's] love which is composed of her sexual desire for him is not necessarily compromised by Sebastian having a different gender to Viola'

Productions:

1874 Olympic: Viola and Sebastian played by the same actress Kate Terry

1969 RSC John Barton: The storm reaches its highest point during the reuniting scene between Sebastian and Viola

1974 RSC Peter Gill: Very bisexual production he staged it as an 'exploration of rampant bisexuality' (Gill). Antonio is plainly Sebastian's lover. This production is significant in the history of the treatment of LGBTQIA+ in popular culture during the 20th Century

2001 Posner Production: Antonio and Sebastian wake up in an unmade bed together — possible homoerotic readings etc...

2017 National Theatre Live Simon Godwin: The homoerotic parts of the play are emphasized with Sebastian and Antonio kissing and the fight scene being in a gay nightclub.

Sir Andrew:

Useful Quotes:

- 'He's a great quarreller' [1.3]
- 'Good Mistress Accost' [1.3]

- **Modern Criticism:**
- **Sheila Bannock 1969** – ‘Viola acts as a catalyst, a storm of honest emotion.’
- **Harold Blood 1987** — ‘Who else would fall in love with the self-intoxicated Orsino?’
- **Ian Judge 1994** – ‘a disguise allows her to create new life...hope and joy can be seen to spring from happiness.’
- **Lisa Jardine 1994**- ‘... (On stage) boys dressed as girls dressed as boys, all apparently add to the delicious pleasure of the erotic chase.’
- **Rex Gibson 2002** – ‘Some like Viola, are independent spirits, free to act in their dramatic worlds...’ **(Feminist reading)**
- **Rex Gibson 2002** – ‘Both Viola and Olivia escape patriarchal control and transcend the restrictions of social codes...’
- **Jean Howard**- ‘Both women ending up as a subject to conventional male dominance in the hierarchy of marriage.’
- **Rex Gibson 2002** – ‘Viola’s cross- dressing enhanced erotic effect on Elizabethan audiences’

Critical theories applied to Viola:

Queer Theory:

- In this section there are a number of mini-arguments that need developing but hopefully provide the starting point for critical queer analysis.

The important notion of ‘Queer Theory’ is that its focus is not simply an appropriate theoretical tool for the examination of texts by gay or lesbian writers, or of works that address homosexual sexuality.

Judith Butler (arguably the most famous and important queer theorist and also philosopher of the 21st century), famously declared ‘there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender... identity is performatively constituted by the very “expressions” that are said to be its results’. In relation to *Twelfth Night* Cesario dresses as a man, therefore for all intensive purposes is a man in the eyes of the other characters. Cesario is both beloved of Olivia and infatuated with Orsino, therefore, gender fluidity in the play, according to a gender theorist, serves as the play’s central dramatic irony.

This reading of the play is incredibly important when applied to the concept of disguise and costume, in which when Cesario/Viola changes costume for the social audience she is therefore traversing the genders. The nature of gender being fluid and non-binary is important to this argument. As Butler argues, in the quote above, gender has no concept without a performance and the audience watching the play act as a representation of a

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- **Nancy Lindheim** argues that 'the tactic of foregrounding Viola's female identity also promotes a degree of titillation at the potential sexual transgressions of her [relationship] with Olivia. As critics often note, however, lesbianism was barely conceivable as a practice in the period'
- **Nancy Lindheim** also argues that 'much of Antonio's language demonstrates the early modern overlap in vocabulary for all strong positive feelings, the extent to which a single language was applied unselfconsciously in discourses of erotic love, friendship and religion alike.' She goes on to argue that 'according to Renaissance theory, friendship occurs between male equals [...] it's superior to male-female relationships because it is a product of moral choice which finds pleasure in souls, not bodies.'

Mid-20th Century Criticism

C.L Barber 1959

- 'Antonio's impassioned friendship for Sebastian is one of those ardent attachments between young people of the same sex which Shakespeare frequently presents'

Modern Criticism (Late 20th and Early 21st Century)

- **Steve Davies 1993**
'The rawest, most devoted and possessive love in the play belongs to [Antonio], so that an emotional centre of *Twelfth Night* is located on its margins. Male friendship is too weak a term for this absolute bonding between young men'
- Antonio's silence at the end of the play 'is a mark of absence from the consciousness of the text [...] darker readings have tended to interpret [his] silence as a sign of exclusion and alienation, providing a shadow which sets into relief and brings into possible question the glossy "goldenness" of the harmonious romantic conclusion.'
- 'In *Twelfth Night* the failure of homoerotic fulfilment is located not in the major plot but in the minor Antonio/Sebastian action'
- **Rex Gibson 2002**

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Stephen Greenblatt argue that we are so immersed with popular culture that we cannot *not* read Antonio and Sebastian as a homoerotic relationship.

Jacob Lund 2012:

‘The language of Antonio in relation to Sebastian’ is ‘openly homoerotic’

‘At the end of the play Antonio remains on stage to see the union of Sebastian and Olivia, a woman the twin barely knows suggesting perhaps a specific rejection of male-male relationships here’

New historicism criticism, Robert Kimbrough argues that sexuality was less of a concern to the general audience as there was an all-male cast (puritan critics like Philip Stubbs were a rarity). However contemporary audiences there is so much more sexuality in differing strata along therefore erotic and homoerotic criticism is much more present. See Christopher Luscombe’s production with the Wildean Orsino.

Stephen Travis Crowder ‘Sebastian’s function is that he acts as a male substitute for his sister’