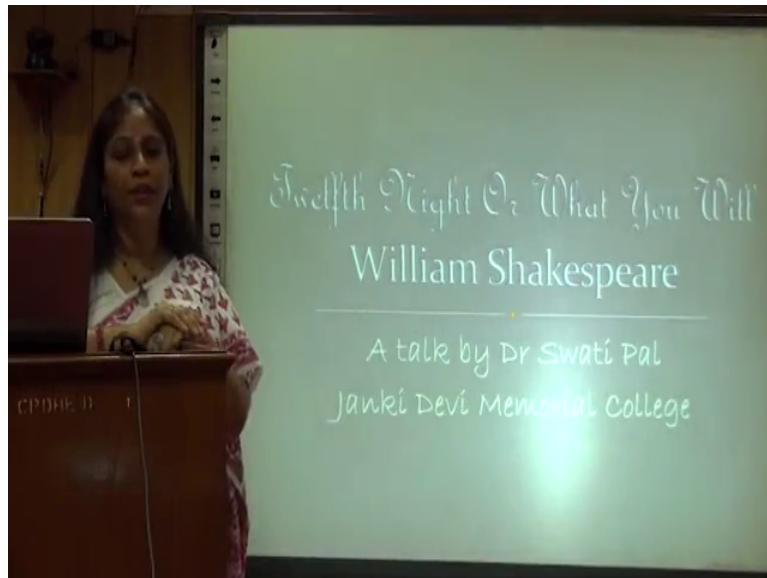


The Renaissance in Shakespeare
Prof. Swati Pal
Janki Devi Memorial College

Lecture - 14
Twelfth Night

(Refer Slide Time: 00:07)



Hello. My name is Swati pal, and I am from Janki Devi Memorial College. Today I have been asked to speak about a very famous play by William Shakespeare called “Twelfth Night or What You Will”.

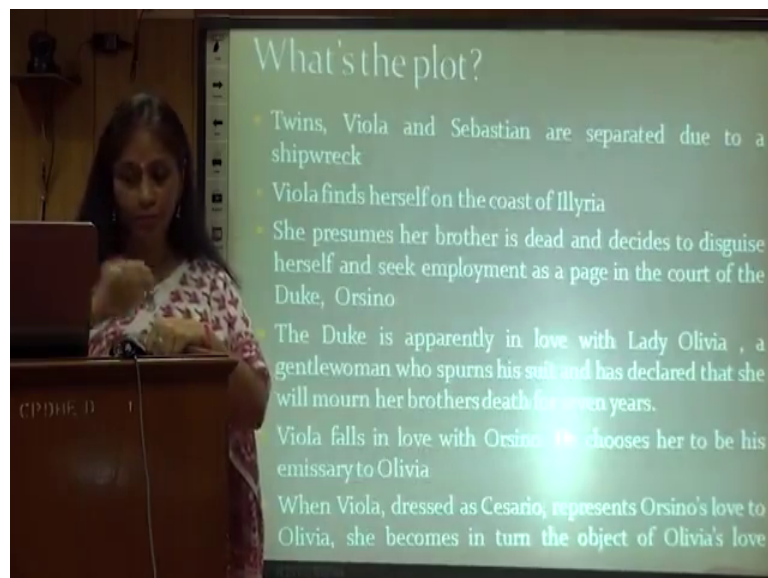
Before I actually start talking about the play, I must confess to a certain fascination that I have with this play entirely for personal reasons. The first reason is of course, is that I studied this play as an undergrad student myself in Calcutta and we had the opportunity to perform this play for a public audience. But importantly the reason why I have a fascination with this play is because I have always felt a certain familiarity a certain sense of kinship, with the plot and it is many ramifications. Why do I feel this? Have a look at some of the ingredients of this plot.

(Refer Slide Time: 00:59)



Siblings' getting lost or separated, love at first sight, love and it is many trials, unrequited love, disguise, revenge, siblings finding each other, love being restored. I do not know about anybody else, but I have always felt that these ingredients are exactly what one finds in a typical [FL] Bollywood film. Hence, I suppose this sense of kinship. Now that I have talked about the ingredients of plot, let us perhaps have a quick look with at the plot and here is a short summary.

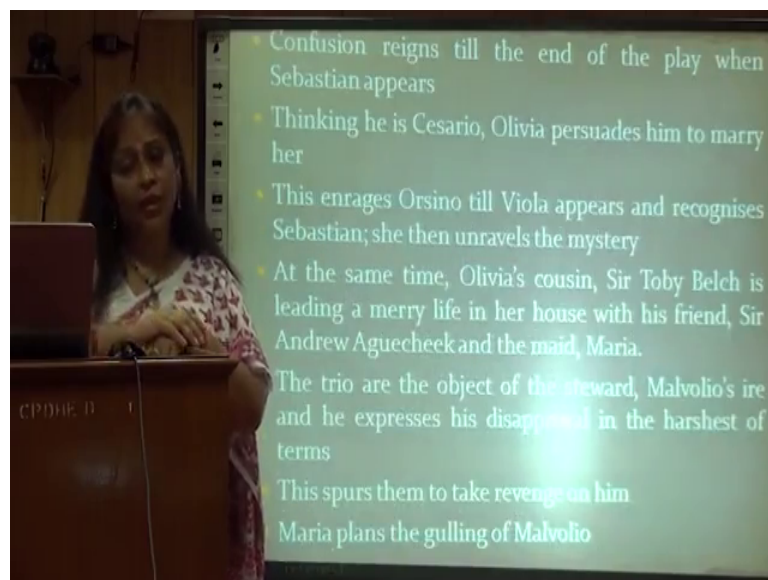
(Refer Slide Time: 01:43)



Twins Viola and Sebastian are separated due to a shipwreck. Viola finds herself on the coast of Illyria. She presumes her brother is dead and decides to disguise herself and seek employment as a page in the court of the Duke, Orsino. The Duke is apparently in love with Lady Olivia who is a gentle woman, but who spurns his advances. She has declared that she is going to be in mourn for her brother for 7 years. Viola meantime falls in love with Orsino. He chooses her to be his emissary to Olivia not realizing of course, that she is a Lady in disguise.

When Viola dressed as Cesario represents Orsino's, love to Olivia she becomes in turn the object of Olivia's love interest.

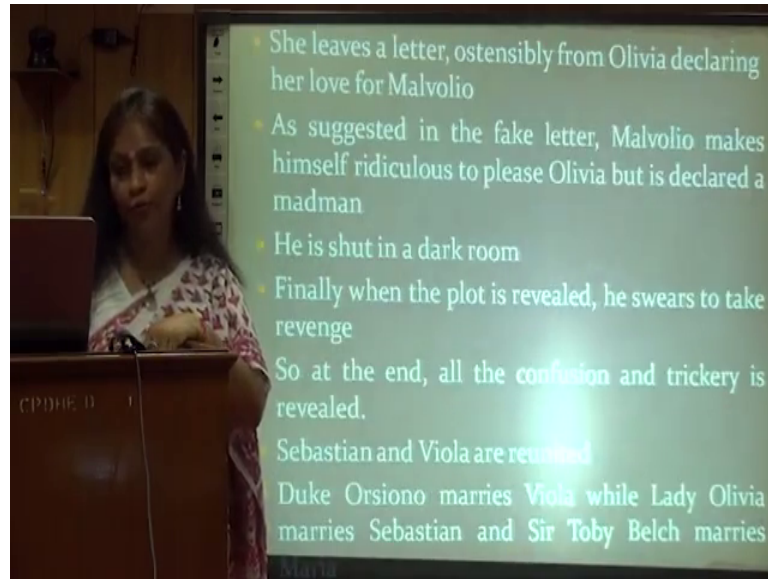
(Refer Slide Time: 02:43)



Confusion reigns till the end of the play when Sebastian the hapless brother appears. Thinking he is Cesario, Olivia whisks him off and persuades him to marry her. This completely infuriates Orsino, till Viola appears on the scene, recognizes Sebastian and of course, unravels the complications of this mystery.

At the same time there is a subplot in the play in which we have Olivia's cousin a sir toby belch, who is leading a very merry life a very boisterous life, with his friends Andrew Aguecheek and the Lady the maid of the house Maria. The trio are the object of much disapproval by the steward of the household, who is a man called malvolio a man known for his pomposity. He expresses his disapproval in the harshest of terms, and this spurs the trio to take revenge on him. Maria now plans the gulling of malvolio.

(Refer Slide Time: 03:56)

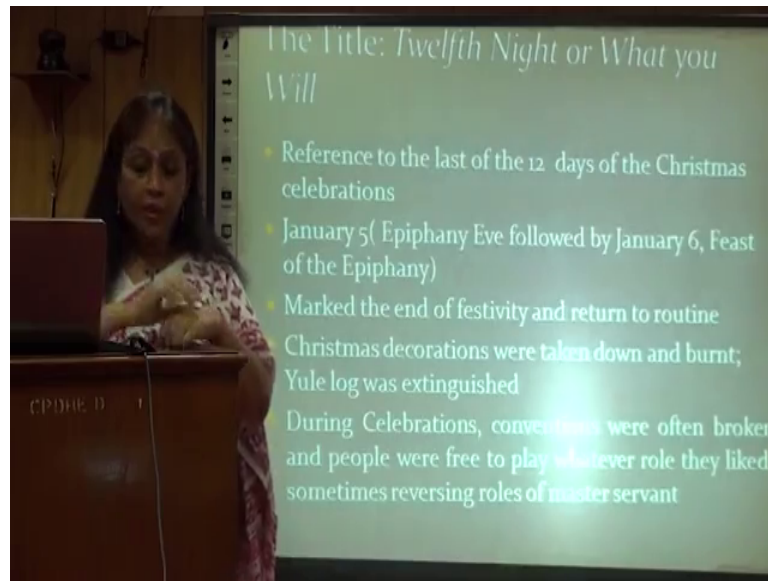


She leaves a letter ostensibly from Olivia, proclaiming Olivia's love for Malvolio. As suggested in the fake letter Malvolio goes out of the way to make a complete ass of himself in order to please Olivia, but instead of the rewards he thinks he is going to get, he finds that he is declared a madman and shut up in a dark room. Finally, when the plot is revealed he swears to take revenge. So, at the end all the confusion comes to an end. Sebastian and Viola are united, Duke Orsino marries Viola, Lady Olivia marries Sebastian, and Sir Toby Belch marries Maria. The only person who is embittered is Malvolio and of course, Sir Andrew Aguecheek who has nothing to show off for himself.

So, as we can see play ends on an all is well kind of note. As this mapping of the plot makes it amply clear and it is labeled a comedy as we all know; however, I will come back to this aspect of the plot later and discuss whether this play is really as comic as it is made out to be.

I would like to move on to the next aspect of the play which is the title of the play.

(Refer Slide Time: 05:24)



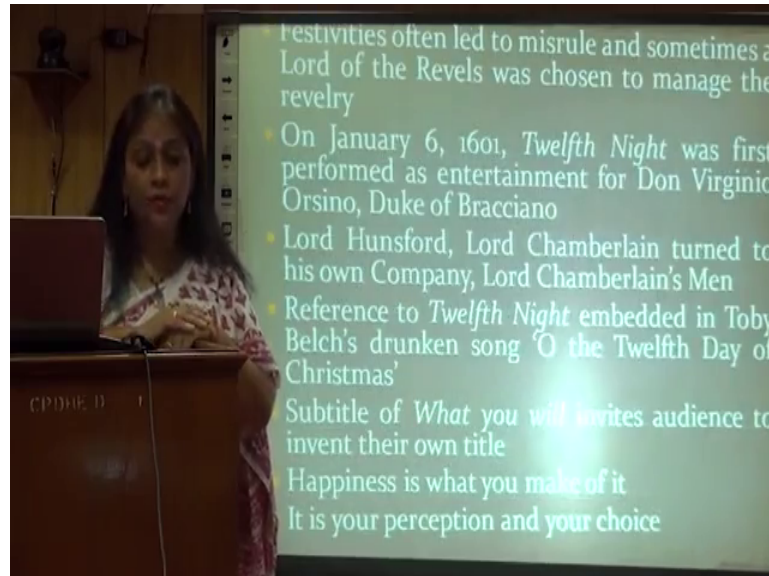
The full title of the play is *Twelfth Night or what you will*. Now it is a fact that a lot of titles of Shakespeare's plays do not really reveal what the play is actually about. In this play *Twelfth Night* is a reference to the night before the last 12 days of Christmas, which in Shakespeare's time began on 25th December, namely January 5th also called epiphany eve which was followed by the feast of the epiphany on January 6th. This was the eve of the last day of the Christmas celebrations before life became routine and especially before the long English winter, with its very dark nights and its very cold days, which ultimately paved the way for the beautiful English spring.

In a lot of country places this was the time, when the decorations that hung in the hall were taken down and burnt. And the yule log which was kept burning all through Christmas celebrations was extinguished completely. So, that it can be used as kindling later on. Now Christmas was a time as it is even now for partying and gifting, in general a time of complete misrule celebrated by often breaking societal codes, and how were the codes broken the codes were broken by role reversals, where masters served servants and vice versa and people were allowed to play whatever roles they so wished.

It is this aspect of Christmas that perhaps the subtitle *what you will* could be a reference to. I find a close link between this subtitle, *what you will* and the subtitle of another of Shakespeare's plays called *as you like it*. By the way *what you will* was also the title of a play by Marston of the same period anyhow, to get back to the celebrations during

Christmas. In England various accounts make it clear that the festivities that often took place in England during Christmas were really riotous.

(Refer Slide Time: 07:54)



Sometimes a lord of the revels was chosen to conduct the ceremonies and to ensure that certain amount of calm and peace was kept.

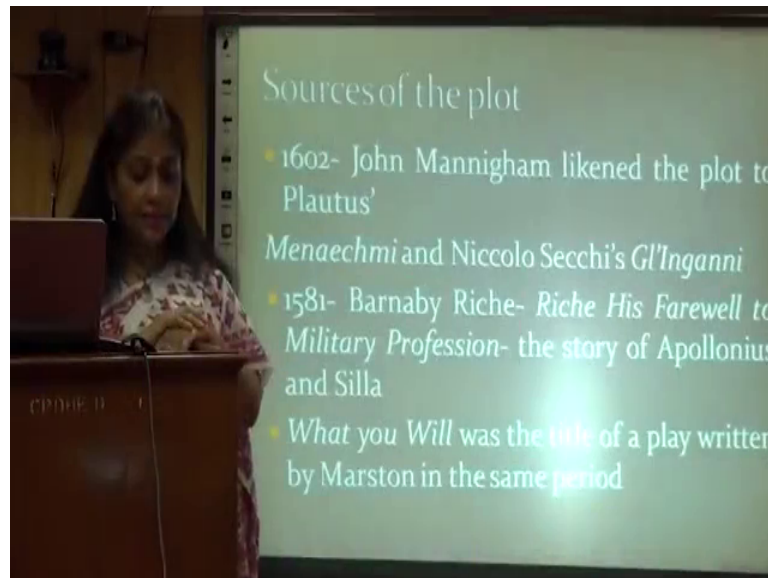
Now, why is this information relevant to our understanding of Twelfth Night. The reason is that from the accounts that we have by a writer called Hutson, who says that the play was performed first on January 6th 1601 when Don Virginio Orsino, the Duke of Bracciano was the guest at the court. Lord Hansford that is the lord chamberlain at that time writes of selecting and preparing a play for the occasion. This has a similarity those of you who are familiar with *midsummer night's dream*, will recall the very hilarious play put up by the mechanicals for the wedding ceremony of Theseus with Hippolyta.

Anyway, in this case when don Orsino had to be entertained on epiphany eve it was only natural that the lord chamberlain that is the lord Hansford would turn to his own company known as the chamberlain's men. Now apart from the day when the play was first performed which may have well given it a name Twelfth Night, there is a reference to Twelfth Night embedded in the play in sir toby's drunken song o the twelfth day of Christmas; however, to get back to the subtitle what you will which to me actually is a better description of the play. I feel that the subtitle is perhaps an invitation to the audience to either invent a title of their own liking or it is a reminder to the audience that

happiness is what you make of it. That happiness is a perception that happiness is your own choice. So, what you will what you wish it to be.

So, much for the title let me, now get back to as I had said to the plot.

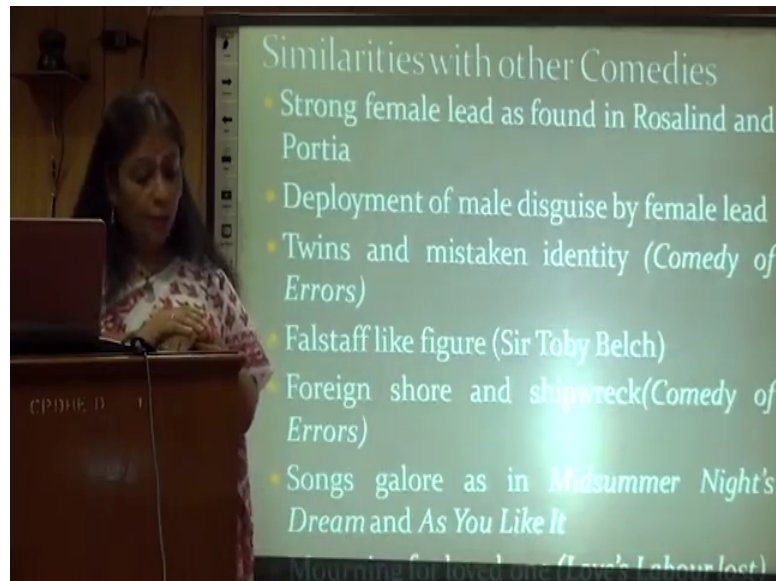
(Refer Slide Time: 10:13)



In 1602, a John Manningham noted that he saw a play called Twelfth Night performed in February that year at Middle Temple, which he compared to a comedy of errors and likened to Plautus's *Menaechmi* and Niccolò Secchi's *Gl'inganni*. Another possible source for this play could be the book written by Barnaby Riche, *Riche His Farewell to Military Profession* in 1581, which contains a story called *Apollonius and Silla*, which has a plot very similar to *Twelfth Night*.

And in fact, most people believe that this is perhaps the closest source of *Twelfth Night*. I have already mentioned *What you Will* by Marston written in this period. Whatever be the source of the plot? One very striking feature that is evident in this play, is that it is neatly organized into a series of situations. Many of the elements that we encounter in this play are present in other plays by Shakespeare and I would like to give you a few examples.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:31)



For example, the female lead Viola is very strong and is comparable to the kind of lead that we have in characters like Rosalind and Portia. Then there is a deployment of male disguise by the female lead. There are twins and there is mistaken identity very similar to what we see in a comedy of errors. There is a Falstaff like figure, in sir toby belch Falstaff is a character we meet in the henry the fourth plays. The clown fester seems a lot like touchstone in as you like it.

There is travel to foreign shores and ship wreck again very similar 2 comedy of errors. The plays midsummer night's dream and as you like it have plenty of songs and so does this play. Just as the princess mourns a year for her father in love's labor lost Olivia too is in mourning, but in this instance the father figure is replaced by the brother and the one year is replaced by 7 years.

I have at the outset sketched the plot, and I would now like to revert to some aspects of it.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:57)



We see that the play ends on a very happy note. And there is a movement all through the play towards a restoration of an acceptable order. The kind of social order which it was felt would definitely yield in happiness. Just to remind you we find a similar kind of thing happening even in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*, where following social norms was considered to be a sure shot mode of getting happiness in life.

Anyway to get back to the Elizabethan world order to repeat restoring an acceptable order was the convention that was bound to result in happiness and all. Through there appears to be a festive spirit in the play as also a lot of laughter and this is very true of a lot of Shakespearean comedies, many of which were actually written for festivals. And laughter on stage is again a very prominent a feature in Shakespearean comedy and is very essential to plays like *Twelfth Night* that are labeled comedies; however, there are some aspects that perhaps problematize the notion of comedy in the play.

Now, though the play ends with many weddings, it begins with death. It begins with the death of Olivia's brother and it begins with Olivia mourning his loss. It also begins with separation and of course, though Viola is told by the captain of the ship that her brother is alive, but she does not know this for sure. And she does feel a tremendous sense of loss at this separation. So, this deep sense of loss felt by the 2 women and their mourning is important to the action of the play, but what is unusual is the ultimate fate of malvolio.

What is unusual for this comedy is the ultimate fate of malvolio and the nature of the laughter that is evoked when he is exposed to public humiliation. In keeping with the principles of humanist education, we see Maria and the others believe that the gulling of malvolio would be comical. It would enable pleasure and ridicule, but not only that it would also serve as an instrument to cure him, to cure him of his pomposity and his self-love. In other words, malvolio was seen as this sick man, a man sick with self-love who needed to be cured of this terrible disease. Fabian in fact, makes a representation about the value of punitive comedy, when he tries to convince Olivia about why it was not only just that malvolio be laughed at, but that she too should be able to see the justification for the gulling of malvolio.

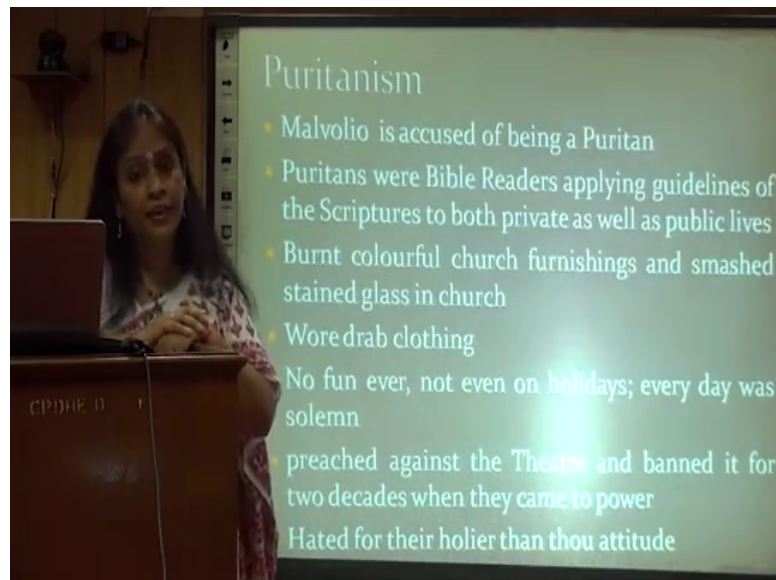
The humanist audience in fact was akin to a judge a judge that decided what was fair and was not fair in terms of public humiliation in terms of ridicule of a particular character; however, we see that the vocabulary used by Maria to refer to her joke, I would like to recall she says she refers to it as my physic. And this often appears in the comedies of Johnson, where immoral characters are sick of such diseases as self-love. And laughter is seen as the laughter as well as public humiliation are seen to be the physic, the cure and the restorative that can purge the individual of such diseases.

However, just as there is a certain sympathy with shylock, at the end of the play the merchant of Venice Twelfth Night too ends with a certain sympathy for the gulled malvolio. A sympathy that is reflected not just in accounts by audience not just by you and me, but also by certain characters in the main plot like Olivia, who really fails to see anything comical at all about the comedy that has been enacted upon malvolio.

In fact, when Fabian says in act 2 scene 5, what dish o' poison has she dressed him. His sentence in fact, reveals the very thin line between physic and poison and indicates the rather bitter sweet taste of this comedy. In fact, at one point Fabian finds it almost unbelievable to see malvolio so completely invested in Maria's letter that he exclaims and I quote, if this were played upon a stage now I would condemn it as an improbable fiction he says this in act 3 scene 4. I see this as a comment not just on the metatheatricality of this moment, but also of a foregrounding of the artificiality of the joke's success. So, to sum it up I would say that this uncomfortable laughter really problematizes the notion of Twelfth Night as a pure comedy.

Now, apart from the fact that malvolio needed to be taught a lesson, he was sick with self-love, he was extremely pompous he was extremely harsh in his speech and he needed to be brought down a peg or 2 from his high horse, but the gulling of malvolio is also linked to another aspect.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:11)



Malleoli's tyranny has been linked in this play to puritanism and his gulling reflects the hatred for puritanism. Maria in act 2 scene 3 calls him first a kind of puritan and shortly after she says the devil a puritan that he is, in Shakespeare's time England's puritans were members of the English national church who emphasized the authority of the bible. They hoped to abolish or purify the catholic episcopal hierarchy, which focused on certain things like church tradition, liturgy and the sacraments.

The puritans were primarily bible readers, and they tried to apply the guidelines of the scripture to both their private as well as their public lives. So, how did they articulate their public understanding of the scriptures they would burn colorful church furnishings and smash stained glass windows? And in private life a puritan would probably wear drab clothing stay cold sober making holidays as solemn and killjoy as possible and they refused to do anything that was fun even on a Sunday, but more importantly and this is a fact recorded in theatrical history they were dead against anyone who went to the theater. And when the puritans finally, took over the government, they actually shut theaters for close to 2 decades.

Obviously many people disliked the puritans for their holier than thou mentality and their agenda to force their conservative lifestyle on everyone. One can almost hear the hostility for puritanism in Toby Belch when he says 'dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale' in Act 2 Scene 3 to Malvolio. It is this hatred for puritanism that leads to the gulling of Malvolio, who ends up embittered and dying to take revenge. There are critics who have commented upon the national character of the British in the laughter generated at the humiliation of 2 characters in 2 of Shakespeare's plays.

One of course, being Malvolio and they have commented on the puritanism which the British were against, and there is of course, the more dislikable the more villainish character of Shylock in Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice. Shylock is disliked because he is a Jew, this says something about the British national character.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:17)



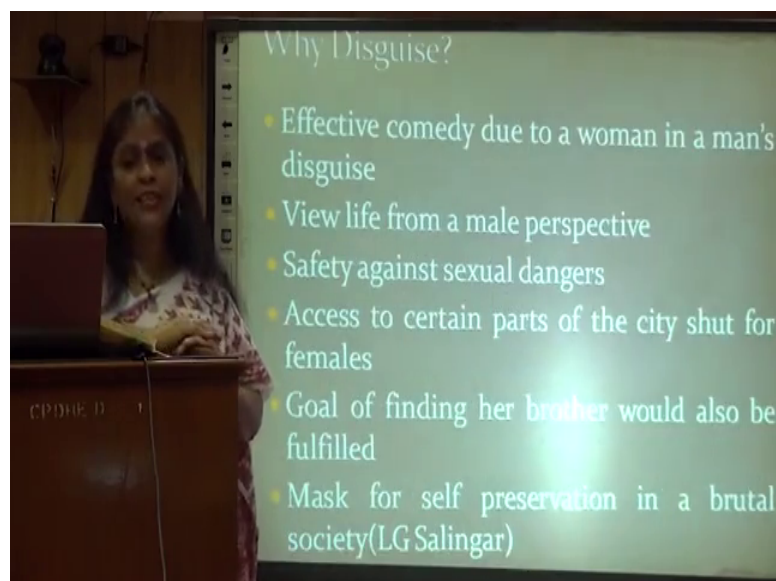
I will now move on to talk about gender and sexuality, which is sheerly very central to this play. And I will do so by looking at 2 major aspects. One is the issue of disguise and cross dressing and the other is the homo eroticism that is definitely an issue in this play.

In discussing the use of disguise in the play, I would like to recall Stephen Greenblatt who happens to be one of the most famous of the new historicist critics. In his article 'Fiction and Friction from Shakespearean Negotiations' Greenblatt talks about how one disguise, that is the disguise of Viola as Cesario makes impossible 2 sets of couplings.

What are these 2 sets of couplings? One is the coupling of Orsino and Cesario and the other is the coupling of Olivia and Cesario. Greenblatt says and I quote Viola's disguise has not only created social confusion, but Elizabethan conservatism is challenged as well. What does he mean by this? We see in the play that Olivia is attracted to Viola, but only when Viola is disguised as a male. As long as Viola wears the male disguise Olivia will continue to be attracted to her.

The audience too is perfectly willing to allow this to happen as long as Olivia is not aware that Cesario is truly a woman. Given a time period a homosexual relationship would not be societally acceptable; hence the Elizabethan audience would not have given much thought to the homo erotic nature of the play. Why because they would realize that Cesario was a woman in disguise and at the removal of disguise would solve the problem in the play. They knew that the relationship between Olivia and Cesario was set to fail.

(Refer Slide Time: 24:37)

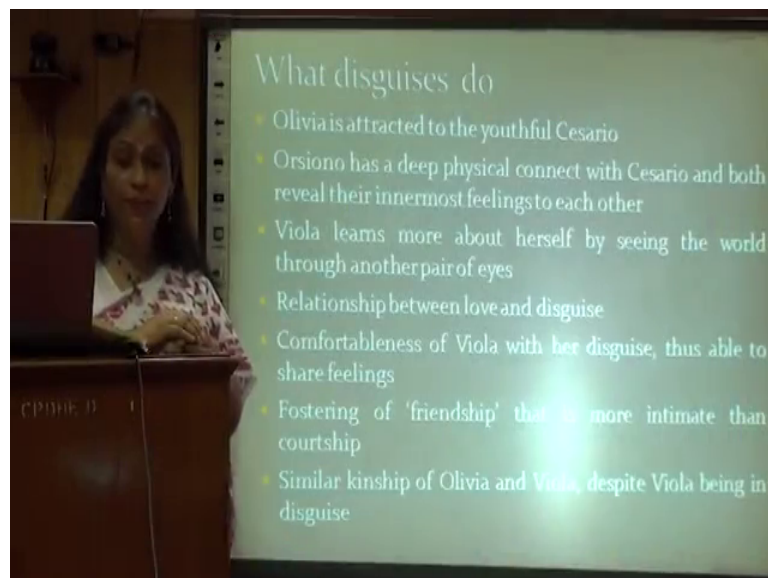


But why did Viola need to disguise herself as a male in the first place? It is important to realize that if she had not done so, and she had sought to serve Olivia or she had sought to serve Duke Orsino as a woman, the play would not have had the effective comedy of a woman in a male disguise, in a man's disguise. Also Viola would not have had the opportunity to view life from a male perspective. Dressing as a man would ensure her safety especially against sexual dangers and Viola would have access to certain parts of the city that might be closed for females.

Besides the disguise would safeguard her virtue being new to Illyria her femininity could pose a problem. A man would be safer because of his gender. Viola needs this safety and also sexual acceptance because her goal her mission is to find her brother. And in order to fulfill that mission she feels that perhaps donning a male disguise would serve her purpose best.

Viola's donning of disguise has been both adored as well as critiqued or seen as a critique of society. For example, L G Salinger in the design of Twelfth Night while agreeing that disguise helps to create barriers from dangers especially male sexual dangers, it is saying it is also a mask for self-preservation in a brutal society. Viola is a virgin shipwrecked in a strange land. This was truly dangerous and thus her need to mask herself.

(Refer Slide Time: 26:38)



Now while Olivia is attracted to Viola in her guise as the youthful Cesario, it is also true that Orsino has a deep physical connect with Cesario. He is able to disclose intimate information to Cesario only because he shares an intense connection with Cesario. And in fact, he admits it in act one scene 4 that he has bared his soul to Cesario. Had Viola kept her feminine costume she would not have been privy to Orsino's intimate feelings.

But as Cesario and as a male, she has a seemingly physical connection with Orsino. Orsino recognizes the connection and is willing to share his affections with Cesario. 2 questions now must be asked. One by donning a male disguise, Viola has the chance to see the world from the male perspective as I have said before. The question is does she

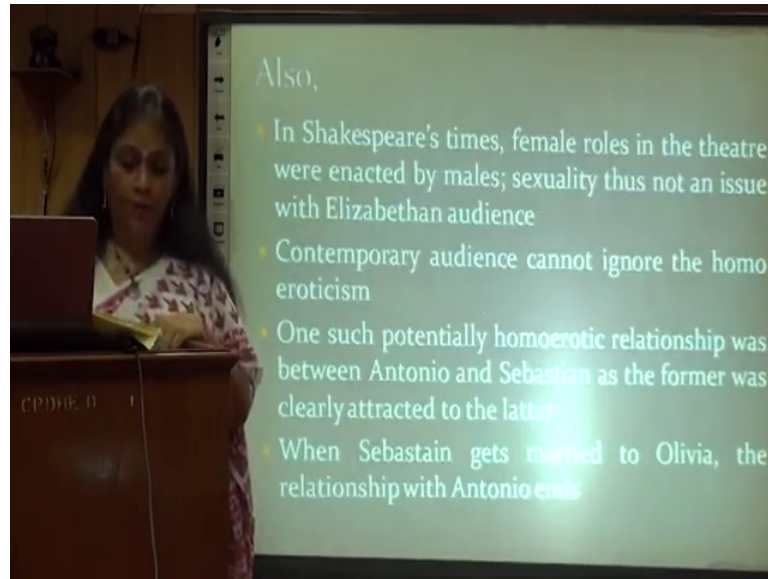
really free herself from her feminine (Refer Time: 27:49) from the feminine lens? The answer could be that perhaps Viola learns more about herself by seeing the world through male eyes through another set of eyes.

The second question is though heterosexual views prevailing in Elizabethan England would not allow love to blossom, between Orsino and Cesario, is it true that Shakespeare might have been offering a commentary on the relationship between love and disguise. Perhaps it can be speculated that romance could have sparked off between Orsino and Cesario had the times permitted it.

We notice too the fact that Viola is quite comfortable with her disguise as well. It is her comfortableness on her part that enables her in turn to share her feelings for Orsino to him. Of course, she does so obliquely she refers to a story in which she talks about her father having a daughter in actuality she is talking about herself. Viola could never have had such an intimate session with Orsino had he known that she was a woman.

The disguise, thus fosters a friendship that allows both to confide in each other without the trivialities or the pressures of courtship. In a courtship very often people try to impress one another, but here in this friendship this is not required. Again it is possible to see that though Olivia falls in love with Viola, in her garb as a man she found a kinship in Viola. Perhaps the kinship is due to the fact that they are both women. They connect on an intimate level because they understand the romantic anguish that each is experiencing.

(Refer Slide Time: 30:01)

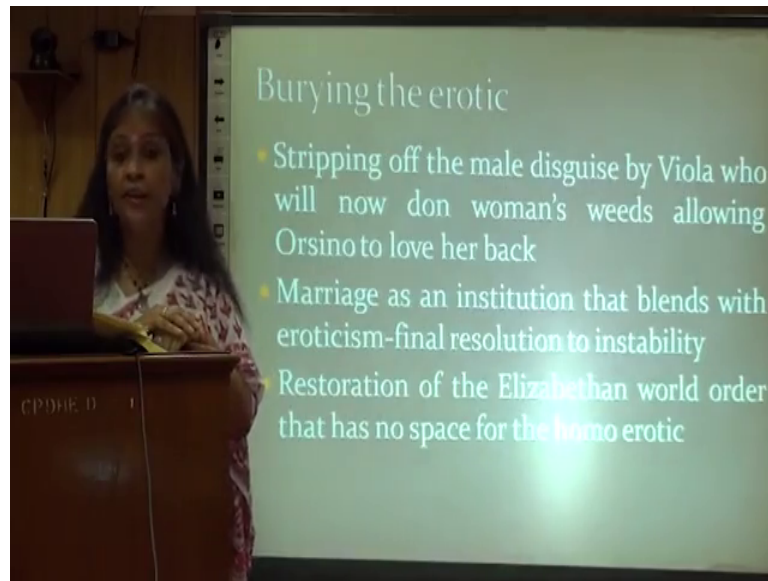


To sum up, this aspect of disguise and sexuality, I would like to simply say that in Shakespeare's times boys played the role of female characters in the staging of plays. Hence sexuality was not an issue with Elizabethan audience, but today such thinking would be almost impossible with a contemporary audience, because today we are fueled by the sexual agendas that are put forward by the media to us.

Another homo erotic relationship in the play is the one between Antonio and Sebastian. Antonio is the young man whom Sebastian meets by chance in Illyria. He questions him about the city of Illyria and requests him to show him around. Antonio responds him by saying and I quote my desire sharper than filed steel did spur me forth, and not all love to see you though so much as might have drawn one to a longer voyage act 3 scene 2. It is evident that Antonio has formed an attraction for Sebastian. His desire as he says is sharper than steel and it is love that draws him to Sebastian; the connotation of sharper than steel could not be more evident.

However, his passionate speeches as we see do not culminate with Sebastian returning his affections. Once Olivia engages a priest to marry her off to Sebastian, who she of course, has mistaken for Cesario the relationship between Antonio and Sebastian comes to an end. As I said Elizabethan world order is restored.

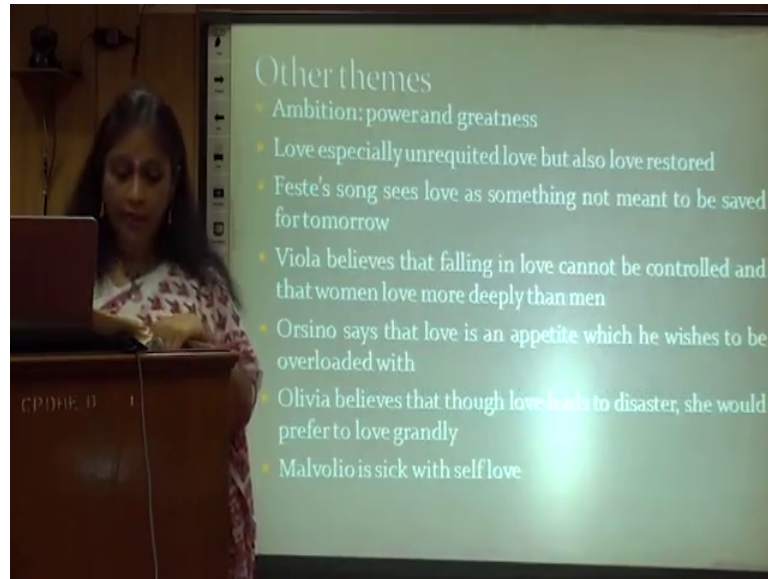
(Refer Slide Time: 32:00)



The homo eroticism in the play is thus done away with by, a the stripping of the disguise donned by Viola, made possible only of course, at the appearance of Sebastian. She now dons the women's wigs that Orsino wishes to see her in. And why does Orsino wish to see her in women's wigs? Because he wants to ensure that he loves a woman, he reciprocates the love of a woman.

And secondly, the homo eroticism in the play is done away with by marriage. It is marriage that leads to a blending of eroticism with the public institution. It is the final resolution to the unstable lives that are being led by the characters. As I said somewhere earlier in the discussion, that that the Elizabethan world order would need to be restored for balance and harmony. And a happy ending and such an ending had no space no place for the homo erotic.

(Refer Slide Time: 33:08)



There are a number of other important aspects in this play. A famous line often quoted in this play is in the letter read by malvolio, in his gulling in act 2 scene 5, which says be not afraid of greatness, some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them ambition the desire for power and greatness, which we see in many of Shakespeare's plays such as Julius ceaser is also present in Twelfth Night in malvolio's desire for Olivia's love. So, that he could become rich and powerful and great. He is also obnoxious in the way in which he imagines that he is a superior being, in the way in which he imagines that Olivia must love him because there is nobody else like him. It is this superiority of his that leaves everyone to be so annoyed with him.

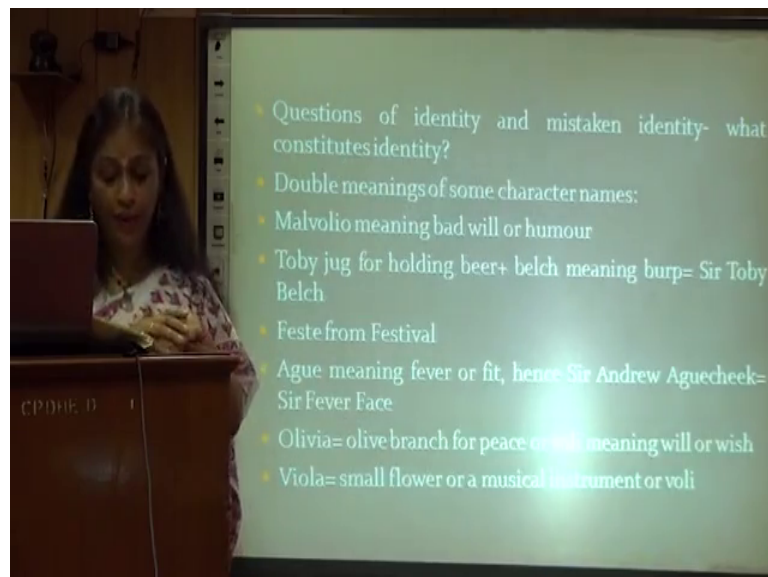
Then of course, there is this entire aspect of love in the play. And it is mostly unrequited love which forms a major dramatic concern in the play. This is the love which causes a lot of play pain. Orsino loves Olivia, also he believes that she is (Refer Time: 34:40) Viola loves Orsino, but cannot divulge that since she appears before Orsino in the garb of Cesario Olivia loves Cesario, but her love is not returned by Cesario who is actually Viola.

Of course, as I have said since this is a comedy everybody gets more or less what they want at the end, but there are various other perspectives of love as we can see. Fester's song says that love is not something to be said for tomorrow, what is love 'tis not hereafter present mirth hath present laughter is what he says. Viola believes that falling

in love is not something one can control and that women actually love more deeply and more genuinely than men. Orsino right at the start of the play says that love is like an appetite, and he wishes that he could be overloaded with love.

He also sees music as being absolutely the right kind of instrument to fuel love in a person. Olivia believes that though love may lead to disaster, it was better to love as grandly as one could. And Malvolio as we have discussed was sick with self-love. So, we see that there are many perspectives, there are many views regarding love. There is also of course, a love of a sister for her brother. We also talked about homo erotic love earlier.

(Refer Slide Time: 36:23)



The question of identity too is central to the play, where mistaken identities can cause both painful circumstances such as when Antonio is arrested for mistaking Viola to be Sebastian. Or it can also lead to very bizarre circumstances, such as when Sebastian finds himself whisked off by Olivia. The important question that I would like to put forward in the light of mistaken identities is this. Will Olivia be content with Sebastian when it was with Cesario that is Viola that she fell in love.

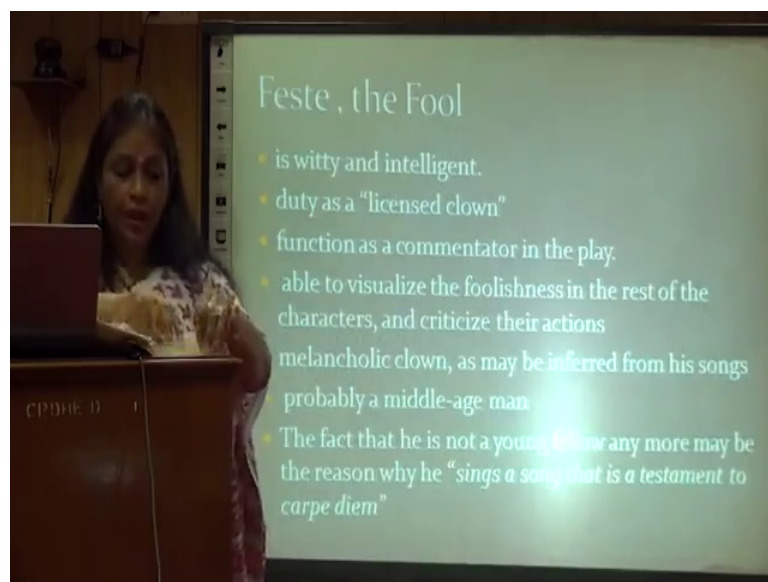
In other words, is identity only a superficial construct aided by what we wear, that is something that we really need to think about in the light of this and other plays. Again in terms of identity, one of the things that lends a certain identity to people to some of the characters in Twelfth Night at least is the name that they have. For example, lot of names have double meanings, malvolio means bad will or humor. A toby jug was a pottery beer

mug made in a form of a seated person. And belch is a synonym for burp. As a man who likes his beer Sir Toby Belch was certainly very well named. Feste has the same note as a festival though of course, in this particular play the fool is not a very festive kind of person. He is quite a melancholic person as we discussed later. Sir Andrew Augecheek. Augé means fever or fit.

So, Sir Andrew Augecheek means Andrew fever face. Olivia could refer either to the olive branch which is a symbol of peace or Shakespeare might have been playing with *voli* which means will or wish. Viola and this is almost like an anagram of Olivia is a small flower or a musical instrument, but is also another take on *voli*.

Before I proceed to the last section of my lecture, I must not forget to mention the fool, Feste. The fool in Shakespeare's comedies is the laughing stock of all the characters in the play, yet he comments about them and about other matters. And his comments prove that he is far wiser than the rest. The sallies that are uttered by the fool create social satire. The fool with his motley mindedness, has the ability to illuminate the entire world in a flash.

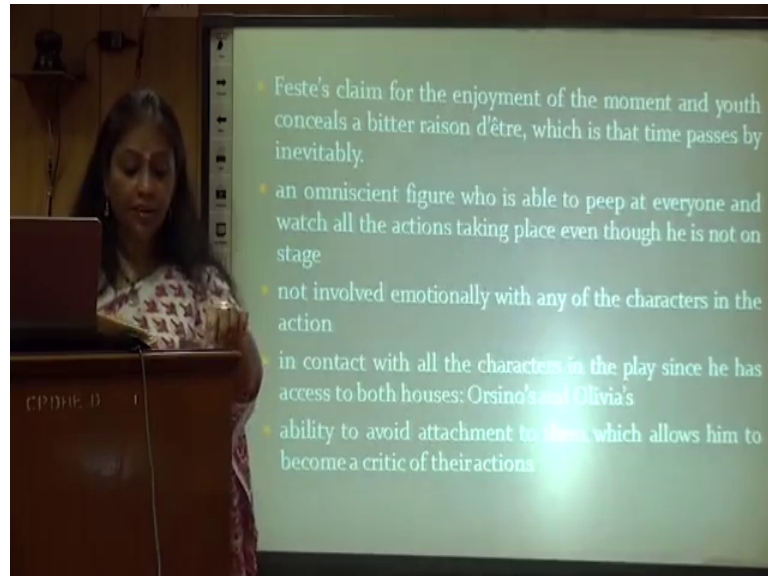
(Refer Slide Time: 39:23)



In *Twelfth Night*, Feste is not a stock character. He is not the regular clown or jester that is often depicted in a lot of Shakespeare's plays and a lot of other literature, but he is a wise character about whom Viola indicates in Act 3, Scene 1, "this fellow is wise enough to

play. The fool Feste is witty and intelligent, which helps him to carry out his duty as a licensed clown as well as function as a commentator in the play.

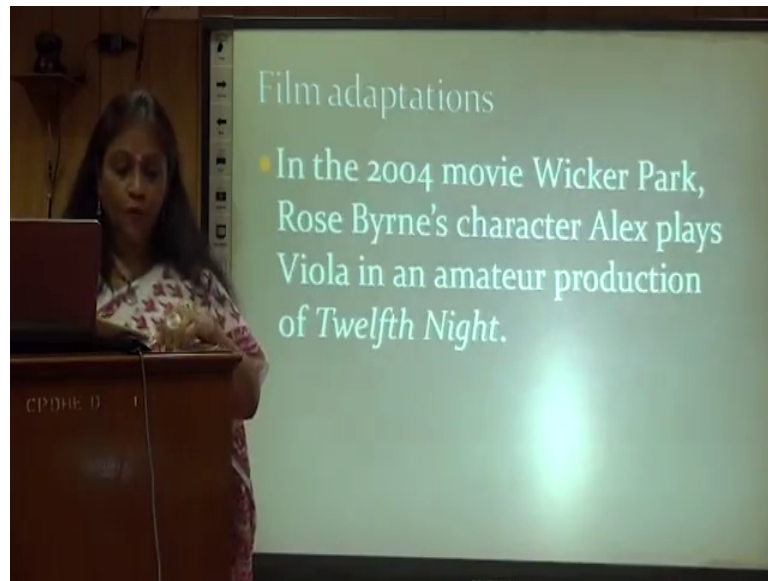
(Refer Slide Time: 40:00)



As I have said earlier, he is a rather melancholic clown, a fact indicated by his songs which deal with the passage of time and *carpe diem* motif. He is probably a middle aged man who has been working in Olivia's household for a very long time. A fact that is indicated by Curio to Viola at some point, his concern with enjoying every moment of life arises from his realization that time and tide wait for no one. He is quite philosophical in a lot of the things that he says. He appears also to be an omniscient presence, who can see what is going on everywhere. This might have something to do with the fact that the fool has access to both the households, the fool in all Shakespeare's plays have access the fools have access to every place. So, Feste has access to both the households, but because he is not attached to any action or any person. In fact, the sense of detachment is really very important, he can therefore, be a fair critic of what is going on.

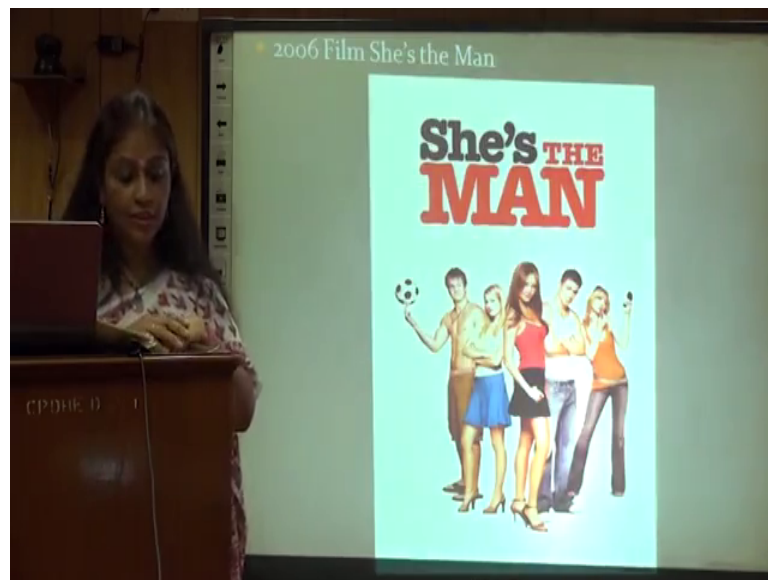
So, now going to go move on to the last section of my discussion which is a look at some of the adaptations of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*: in film and on stage and this actually yields very rich results, I am just going to be looking at a few of them.

(Refer Slide Time: 41:36)



Some important films based on Twelfth Night are the 2004, movie wicker park. In which rose Byrne the character Alex plays Viola in an amateur production of Twelfth Night.

(Refer Slide Time: 41:54)



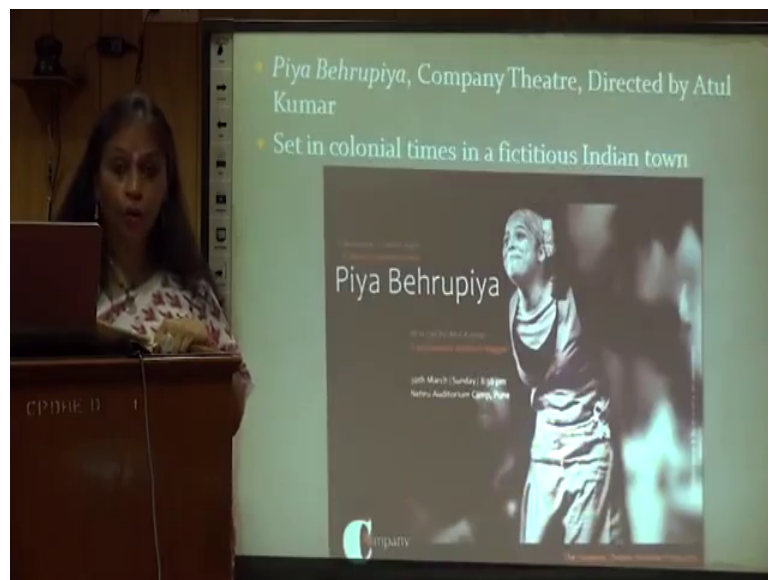
The 2006 film, "She's The Man", the film Shakespeare in love contains several references to Twelfth Night. And oh yes in 2001 Disney channel's original movie, moto crossed set the story in the world of motocross racing. On stage the number of musicals have reworked the play such as your own thing 1968, music is 1977, all shook up 2005 and play on 1977.

(Refer Slide Time: 42:32)



It is interesting that the last 2 versions actually featured Elvis Presley himself an icon, but one of the interesting adaptations of Twelfth Night is actually a desi one. In 2012 the globe

(Refer Slide Time: 42:49)



Theater commissioned Mumbai's the company theatre to work on an Indian adaptation of a Shakespearean play. Led by actor director atul Kumar, the play chosen by company theatre was Twelfth Night. Set in colonial times in a fictitious Indian town piya behurupia as the play is called in Hindi has been a runaway success and has performed

over a thousand. I beg your pardon, but one of the interesting adaptations of Twelfth Night is actually a desi one, in 2012 the globe theatre commissioned Mumbai's the company theatre to work on an Indian adaptation of a Shakespearean play led by actor director atul Kumar, the company chose Twelfth Night.

Set in colonial times in a fictitious Indian town piya behurupia as the play is called in Hindi has been a runaway success and has performed over a hundred shows the hundredth being in Chile. The times of India reviewed it as a 2 hour roller coaster ride as one who has seen the play I could not agree more, and I would definitely urge you to go and have a look at this play; if you can incidentally there is now a desi version of a rock and roll version of Twelfth Night that is going to be produced again by the theater company located in Mumbai again commissioned by the globe theatre.

So, as we can see at the end of the long discussion, I began by saying that I have a certain affinity with this play. I have a certain affinity because all the ingredients within it are so uncannily familiar. And I would like to just take you back for a brief recap, what is it that we talked about? We talked about how disguise plays such an important role in terms of problematizing notions of gender and sexuality. We looked at how there is a certain homo-erotic element in the play which of course, was not acceptable in the Elizabethan world order, but which today we are able to see very clearly indicated by Shakespeare in this play.

As a commentary on nature of love between people, we see certain characters like malvolio being gulled to such an extent that it actually draws our sympathy, it actually makes us feel sorry for him the way in which he is ridiculed and we can compare, his public humiliation to the kind of humiliation felt by shylock in the merchant of Venice. We see love unrequited we see various aspects of love that are put forward by various characters in the play. We see power and ambition we see what this leads to in the case of malvolio. We see fester the fool who does not just play the fool, but actually is like a commentator on the going on the goings on in the play.

And of course, we now end with the adaptations of this play making it absolutely clear that the play is timeless and has universal appeal across cultures across nations.

Thank you.