

## SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

The supervisor should complete the report below and then give this cover, enclosing the final version of the extended essay, to the Diploma Programme coordinator. The supervisor must sign this report; otherwise the extended essay will not be assessed and may be returned to the school.

Name of supervisor (CAPITAL letters)

### Comments

If appropriate, please comment on the candidate's performance, the context in which the candidate undertook the research for the extended essay, any difficulties encountered and how these were overcome. These comments can help the examiner award a level for criterion H. Do not comment on any adverse personal circumstances that may have affected the candidate.

had no difficulty choosing her essay topic, as Twelfth Night is her favourite play, and Feste one of her favourite Shakespearean characters. The theme of disguises, and the related theme of being true to oneself, has been one that she has been interested in throughout the A2 English course, particularly in our reading of short stories from Julie Orringer's How to Breathe Underwater. She has written several poems on the same theme; and in the conclusion of this essay tries to show that Twelfth Night still has great relevance to a modern audience.

I watched the progress of this essay from seed idea to finished product over a period of at least a year. I was impressed by enthusiasm for the play and by her detailed knowledge and understanding of the subtleties of irony, figurative language and so on. is an outstanding A2 English student. Most of the work in the essay is her own independent analysis, though she is encouraged to supplement her understanding through the reading and discussion of secondary sources.

The final draft of the essay, in my opinion, shows effective analysis and interpretation and a skillful and convincing argument. Her response to the research question has been well-developed, well-organised, clearly expressed and fully substantiated. worked hard on conforming to the Formal Presentation requirements, and is proud of what she accomplished with this assignment.

I have read the final version of the extended essay that will be submitted to the examiner.

To the best of my knowledge, the extended essay is the authentic work of the candidate.

I spent 8 hours with the candidate discussing the progress of the extended essay.

Supervisor's signature:

Date:

# ASSESSMENT FORM (for examiner use only)

Candidate session number								
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## ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

		First examiner	maximum	Second examiner
<b>General assessment criteria</b> <i>Refer to the general guidelines.</i>	<b>A</b> Research question		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>B</b> Approach		3	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>C</b> Analysis/interpretation		4	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>D</b> Argument/evaluation		4	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>E</b> Conclusion		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>F</b> Abstract		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>G</b> Formal presentation		3	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>H</b> Holistic judgement		4	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Subject assessment criteria</b> <i>Refer to the subject guidelines. Not all of the following criteria will apply to all subjects; use only the criteria which apply to the subject of the extended essay.</i>	<b>J</b>			<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>K</b>			<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>L</b>			<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>M</b>			<input type="checkbox"/>

TOTAL OUT OF 36



Name of first examiner (CAPITAL letters): \_\_\_\_\_ Examiner number:

Name of second examiner (CAPITAL letters): \_\_\_\_\_ Examiner number:

***Title: Disguises in Twelfth Night***

***Research Question: How do the disguises of Viola and Feste bring out the theme of appearance versus reality in Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare?***

Extended Essay presented in  
**ENGLISH A2**

Word Count: 3673 words

ABSTRACT (298 words)

*How do the disguises of Viola and Feste bring out the theme of appearance versus reality in Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare?*

Though Viola and Feste use disguises for different purposes, ultimately Shakespeare uses them for one single purpose---to highlight the theme of appearance versus reality. The aim of this essay is to examine the disguises of Viola and Feste in *Twelfth Night* in order to determine their roles in bringing out different aspects of the central theme of the play.

The essay does so first by analyzing Viola's physical disguise as a male servant and by pointing out certain aspects of the theme of appearance versus reality such as the idea that appearance can prevent one from seeing the reality and that keeping up appearances can be nerve-racking and self-destructive. One lie leads to another and as Orsino knows Viola as 'Cesario', Viola can but suppress her true feelings for him. This emotional disguise brings out another aspect of the theme---covering one's feelings can be suffocating and can ruin fulfillment in personal relationships.

Secondly, the essay analyzes Feste's physical and emotional disguises. His comic face may have made other characters believe he is the fool, but it actually hides much wisdom underneath. This emphasizes how easily people can be deluded by appearances. While Feste is entertaining and parodying other characters, Feste's own world is falling apart. His disguise as a clown makes it impossible for him to reveal the hurt and loss he bears inside. This highlights how suffocating disguises can be. Even when he tries to in his songs, nobody understands; and in order to make a living, Feste goes on playing the fool.

Finally, Sebastian reappears and takes away Viola's need to disguise so she can marry Orsino. In contrast, Feste has to keep his façade. Either way, another aspect of the theme is emphasized: taking off disguises and presenting one's true self is liberating.

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## INTRODUCTION (285 words)

Dr. Johnson, rather irritated with *Twelfth Night*, complained that it rendered “no just picture of life” (as cited in Bloom, 1999). This seems true if we take the play only as a comedy, without giving any thoughts to it since the jokes and laughter are all but a disguise. The purpose of this essay is to investigate the question: *How do the disguises of Viola and Feste bring out the theme of appearance versus reality in Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare?* What lies beneath the words and the lines in the play is something utterly different, even the exact opposite. In fact, Shakespeare is trying to point out to the audience the problem of the society at that time, by letting them laugh at their own faults such as superficiality and self-indulgence. The physical and emotional disguises that Viola and Feste put on may create much dramatic irony for the audience, and humor for other characters in *Twelfth Night* as well as the audience, but what Shakespeare is really trying to accomplish is to bring out different aspects of the theme of appearance versus reality through the conflicts the two characters’ disguises create. Not only was the difference between appearance and reality often unnoticed by people in Shakespearean time, but even now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is still easily unnoticed. In addition, the negative effects disguises have on others and, even more severely, on the person who puts on the disguise, are still lingering and do not seem to fade away. In other words, it is unjust to say that *Twelfth Night* is “no just picture of life” because the theme it portrays---a virus that is eating up the human world---is not only true, but also eternal.

## DISGUISES OF VIOLA (1510 words)

The name, 'Viola', shared not only with a flower but also with an old type of large stringed musical instrument (the viola da gamba which Sir Toby claims Sir Andrew Aguecheek knows how to play), suggests to the audience that not only does Viola possess good looks like a flower, but, like an instrument, she also 'plays' a male voice, using a servant's language (Act1 Scene 3 Lines 23-24). Often from the start she is seen to be disguising her true self, giving her words double meanings, and sometimes keeping quiet about her inner feelings. The clothes she wears to hide her female body and the happy face she puts on to conceal her hopeless love for Duke Orsino bring endless confusion to the other characters and pain to herself.

Among the two types of disguises Viola puts on in *Twelfth Night*, physical disguise is the most obvious. After her ship has sunk and she has lost her twin brother, Viola is all alone and desperate. Yet she manages to think clearly. To prevent her origin from being discovered before she finds her way back home, Viola asks the captain to dress her like a page so she can serve the duke of Illyria as 'Cesario'. Though Orsino becomes attached to 'Cesario' not long after 'he' arrives, much confusion and many conflicts are created. For instance, Orsino thinks 'Cesario' has "smooth and rubious" lips and "small pipe" like "the maiden's organ" because 'he' is still a boy, not because 'he' really is a woman (Shakespeare, 2000. Act 1 Scene 5 Lines 31-32). However, the audience is very well aware of the fact that 'Cesario' is actually Viola. Such dramatic irony gives the audience a sense of superiority and intrigues them at an early stage. It also gets them to reflect on the theme of appearances, in this case, the idea that clothes are capable of altering someone's sexuality. This is doubly ironic since the audience in Shakespearean times would have been aware of the actors being boys. Not only does Viola's disguise bring irony, but it also adds humor to the play. For example, when she waits outside Lady Olivia's house and Olivia asks Malvolio what 'Cesario' looks like, he tells her that "he speaks very shrewishly" and that one would think "his mother's milk were scarce out of him" (Act 1 Scene 5 Lines 140-142). Though the audience knows 'Cesario' is really a "gentlewoman" as Olivia puts it, they would still find such a comment hilarious. The humor in turn makes the theme of appearance versus reality more welcome by the audience. It is also ironic when Viola asks Feste if Olivia is in the house and Feste

tells Viola he “would play Lord Pandarus of Phrygia” and “bring a Cressida [Olivia] to this Troilus [‘Cesario’]” (Act 3 Scene 1 Lines 44-45). In a classical story, Troilus employs Pandarus to bring him to Cressida, the woman with whom he is secretly in love. Feste’s metaphor would fit perfectly if ‘Cesario’ was really a man, except ‘he’ is not. Therefore, such conflict once again reminds the audience how a facade one puts on can prevent others from seeing the reality. Nonetheless, Viola’s disguise as a page does not only confuse other characters; at times it troubles herself as well. For example, when Toby and Fabian threaten that Andrew will fight with her, she gets very frightened and says, “Pray God defend me! A little thing would make me tell them how much I lack of a man” (Act 3 Scene 4 Lines 261-262). Not only is this aside comic for the audience due to its sexual meaning, but it also seems to convey how nerve-racking and self-destructive it is to have to keep up a lie.

Lady Olivia’s reactions to Viola’s disguised words show just how easily taken in people can be by appearances. Because of the mistaken identity her male clothing suggests, Viola has an enormous effect on Lady Olivia throughout the play. During one of ‘Cesario’s’ visits, Olivia asks Viola if she is a comedian. Viola tells Olivia “by the very fangs of malice, [she] swear[s] [she is] not that [she] play[s]” (Act 1 Scene 5 Lines 161-162). Olivia thinks Viola means she is not a comedian, but the audience possesses the important information given at the start of the play that what Viola really means is she is not a servant. In fact, this is not the only time in the play where Viola actually means more than what her words seem to present. However, irony occurs when other characters cannot interpret correctly her disguised words. As she herself says, “they that dally nicely with words may quickly make them wanton.” (Act 3 Scene 1 Lines 11-12). Captivated by Viola’s presumptuousness which no ‘other’ men seem to have or to dare show in front of Olivia, she finds herself asking ‘Cesario’ more questions about ‘him’ than she needs to during ‘his’ first visit. When she asks ‘Cesario’ what ‘he’ is and what ‘he’ would, ‘he’ says, “What I am, and what I would, are as secret as maidenhead” (Act 1 Scene 5 Lines 188-189). This is extremely ironic because ‘Cesario’ does own the secret that ‘he’ does have the condition of being a maiden. Yet again, Olivia does not see what is underneath the words as the audience does. After talking to ‘Cesario’ alone, Olivia becomes nothing but even more attracted to him, so attracted that she actually considers marrying him. To find out about ‘Cesario’s’ family background, Olivia asks ‘him’ what ‘his’ parentage is. ‘Cesario’ replies, “Above my fortunes” (Act 1 Scene 5 Line 245). What ‘he’ means is ‘his’ family is nobler than ‘his’ present position as a page would suggest, but of course that



is not what Olivia understands. Despite Olivia's obvious interest, 'Cesario' remains firm and will not seem to step down unless she agrees to accept 'his' master's hand. 'He' even coldly wishes Olivia's fervor would be placed in contempt. Yet what 'he' does is right because 'he' is a girl who can never return Olivia's love. Nonetheless, Olivia is already too in love with 'Cesario's' tongue, face, limbs, actions and spirit to accept such rejection. She does not understand why she has caught "the plague" so quickly, but she has (Act 1 Scene 5 Line 262).

Even more sadly, Olivia is not the only one who is suffering from unrequited love, who is longing for a hand that is so far away to hold. Viola's mistaken identity has rendered herself loveless as well. For her, putting on a physical disguise necessitates putting on an emotional disguise as well. The moment Viola puts on the male garments, she is 'Cesario', the male servant of Orsino. When Feste first meets Viola, he laughs at her about not having a beard. Viola replies, "I am almost sick for one, though I would not have it grow on my chin." (Act 3 Scene 1 Lines 39-40) This shows how desperate Viola is for Orsino's love. Nevertheless, no matter how sincere and deep her feelings are, there is no way she can reveal them as the physical disguise has inevitably forced an emotional disguise. Covering lies with lies is what she is doing and will always have to do if she chooses to keep up the physical disguise. This conveys another idea to the audience: Putting on a disguise and not revealing who we are can be suffocating and ruin fulfillment in a relationship. As she shows sympathy toward Olivia, saying to herself, "Fortune forbid my outside have not charmed her", "Poor Lady, she were better love a dream" and "What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe", Viola unconsciously conveys to the audience how hopeless she herself feels (Act 2 Scene 2 Line 15). Not only does she think disguise is "a wickedness" which prevents her from winning Orsino's romantic love, but she also knows it is easy for the "proper-false" to set their forms in women's "waxen hearts" (Act 2 scene 2 Lines 23-26). This makes her more unhappy than ever. Orsino may have fallen deeply in love with Viola if he had seen her in her female clothes too. Yet, Viola does not have such an option. She cannot reveal her true identity till she is sure she can go home safely; and the chance of her finding her brother seems slim at this point of the play. Therefore, Viola can but watch herself trapped in her loyalty to Orsino and try her hardest to win Olivia's love for him. Viola's affection is further proved when Orsino asks her if 'his' eyes have stayed upon some favor and she replies, "A little, by your

favor” (Act 2 Scene 4 Line 24). It must be extremely painful for Viola to have to hold back her feelings when the person she loves is right in front of her and is even asking her who she loves. Therefore she puns on the meaning of ‘favor’. Throughout the play, Viola has mixed feelings about her situation. She loves Orsino, but she has to pursue another woman for him and hear him talk all about how much he loves this woman. In addition, she does identify with and feel sorry for Olivia, but Olivia is her love enemy. Thus Viola shows how suffocating to personal fulfillment disguises can be. She conceals her sexuality and suppresses her feelings from beginning till near the end. Nobody understands or sees through her the whole time and she has to keep all the pain and torment to herself.

## DISGUISES OF FESTE (1561 words)

Although no one sees through Viola's disguise, Feste, Olivia's fool, is seen through by Viola. Viola remarks, "This fellow's wise enough to play the fool, and to do that well craves a kind of wit" (Act 3 Scene 1 Lines 52-53). She, like the audience, realizes that people are not all that they seem. As she is not what she seems herself, she realizes Feste is more than a fool. Another difference between Viola's disguise and Feste's disguise is that Feste keeps his sadness bottled up in himself till the very end. However, Feste is similar to Viola in that he puts on both a physical disguise and an emotional disguise. In other words, apart from putting on a gown to play Sir Topas and a clown's outfit to play the fool, Feste also wears a smile every day to hide the pain that marriage and old age bring him.

If one character in *Twelfth Night* represents the play, it is definitely Feste. This is because like the play itself, Feste disguises his intelligence and true thoughts about life with a comic surface. Just as Malvolio, Olivia's steward says, "Unless you laugh and minister occasion to him, he is gagged" (Act 1 Scene 5 Lines 75-76). A fool needs cooperation, it is not the joke that makes him successful, but the audience. If the audience does not laugh, he has failed. Similarly, one aspect of a play's success is if the audience learns from it. And the audience can only truly comprehend and appreciate these deeper meanings when they are willing to use their hearts. For example, the people in Olivia's house once locked Malvolio into a dark room to 'punish' him for being so arrogant and excessively serious. To convince Malvolio that he is mad for being so full of self-love and to make him change, Feste dresses up as a priest—Sir Topas—and speaks to Malvolio (Act 4 Scene 2).

However, that is only for one day. Every minute, every hour, every day of Feste's life, he has to wear a clown's dress. This makes everyone in Olivia's house think Feste is a real fool, especially Malvolio who calls him "a barren rascal" and "an ordinary fool that has no more brain than a stone" (Act 1 Scene 5 Line 72-74). However, one would be a fool if he or she thinks Feste is a fool. This example highlights Shakespeare's idea that appearances can easily blind people from seeing reality. As mentioned before, his clown clothes actually disguise his intelligence. Throughout the play, he proves to the audience how clever he is with his words. As a "corrupter of words", Feste acts as a mirror to his 'patients', allowing them to cure

themselves of their follies by seeing themselves and their behaviors from a mocker's perspective, to join in the laughter at themselves (as cited in Ford, 2006, p. 53). For instance, when he tries to prove Olivia a fool, he deliberately tells her he thinks her brother's soul is in hell. As he has expected, she immediately says it is in Heaven. Feste very wisely points out to Olivia that it is foolish to mourn for her brother's soul being in heaven (Act 1 Scene 5). Moreover, Feste is sensitive enough to realize how fickle Orsino and his love for Olivia really are. "The tailor make thy doublet of changeable taffeta, for thy mind is a very opal!" (Act 2 Scene 4 Lines 70-71) By choosing words carefully, Feste manages to point out Orsino's fickleness without getting himself in trouble because Orsino thinks Feste is praising him. Furthermore, if Feste is a plain and ignorant fool, he would not think of revenge or anything like that. Nonetheless, when Malvolio is successfully tricked, Feste says, "the whirligig of time brings in his revenges" (Act 5 Scene 1 Lines 356-357). Feste does have feelings, he feels offended by Malvolio and so he is no fool.

Not only does Feste's physical disguise hide his wit, but it also covers his very essential thoughts about life. In fact, through Feste, Shakespeare conveys much of his own philosophy. One example where Feste seems to voice Shakespeare's philosophical ideas is when Olivia calls Feste dishonest and he says, "Anything that's mended is but patched; virtue that transgresses is but patched with sin; and sin that amends is but patched with virtue" (Act 1 Scene 5 Lines 40-43). Feste understands that in life, there is no black and white. Nothing is completely wrong, nothing is completely right. In other words, nothing and nobody is perfect which is an essential truth of life? In addition, when Olivia insists he is the fool, Feste protests by saying a hood does not make a monk (Act 1 Scene 5 Lines 48-49). This is true to the core as we cannot tell what people are like by the clothes they wear. Feste may be wearing the dress of a court fool, but not in his brain. People are often too easily deluded by appearances. Moreover, surrounded by all kinds of people in his life, Feste remains aware of the fact that good things or times never last long, that a "sentence is but a cheveril glove to a good wit...the wrong side may [quickly] be turned outward" (Act 3 Scene 1 Lines 9-11). He is Shakespeare's tool to not only make the audience laugh, but to engage them to think about many ideas about the theme of appearance versus reality as well.

Throughout the play, Feste sings songs. On the surface, they are intended to

entertain other characters, but these songs actually parody their faults. More importantly, they carry those feelings Feste keeps to himself behind that carefree and playful face. This shows how disguises can make it impossible for individuals to express their inner feelings. In spite of the jokes and laughter Feste presents to other characters in the play and to the audience, he himself is suffering from love and life. However, playing the fool is his job, to make a living, he must always act happy even though he is dying inside. Like Viola, Feste's disguise hides much pain. Sometimes what he says and sings is rather dark and negative. For example, when Maria tells Feste Olivia may hang him for being absent, he replies, "Let her hang me; he that is well hanged in this world needs to fear no colors" (Act 1 Scene 5 Lines 4-5). He seems to be saying it does not matter what happens to him any more because he has already lost hope and died long ago. By adding that a good hanging prevents a bad marriage, Feste implies that he is or used to be in a marriage and has suffered from it. The existence of a lover is further suggested when Sir Andrew compliments Feste and he, instead of saying thank you, says his lady has a white hand. He also once says in his songs that "I am slain by a fair cruel maid" (Act 2 Scene 4 Line 52) and that "My lady is unkind" because "she loves another" (Act 4 Scene 2 Line 68). In this way, he shows not only his own pain, but also reflects the pain of other unrequited lovers in the play. In addition, when Viola thinks Feste must care for nothing, he says he does care for something. Apart from love, Feste also seems to be trapped in the fear of old age and death alone. In one of his songs, he says youth is a stuff that will not endure, that no friends will lay flowers on his grave if he dies, and that his lover will not even find his grave to weep on. Why would he be singing songs with such heartbreaking lyrics if he did not really feel torn inside? Even more sadly, perhaps Feste can only express how he sincerely feels and be his true self in songs because when Orsino pays him for singing and says the money is "for [his] pains", Feste replies, "No pains, sir; I take pleasure in singing" (Act 2 Scene 4 Line 65). The irony is Feste enjoys singing because only in songs can he let out his pain and despair. The last song Feste sings alone on the stage is unforgettable. It is about the disappointments at each stage of the life outside the theater which the audience is about to rejoin, including shut gates, failed marriages and drunken heads. While the song leads us out to the reality of wind and rain, Feste sings in the final line, "We'll strive to please you every day" (Act 5 Scene 1 Line 385). It is simply heartrending because Feste is almost screaming that the world may be a living hell and leaves bruises all over his body, but he will still put on a strong face and a clown's clothes

and pretend he is all right.

Viola puts on a physical disguise and has to keep all her feelings bottled up and never gets to let them out till she finally takes away her disguise and ends up in Orsino's arms. On the other hand, with his court dress, Feste sometimes gets to express his pain with his lyrics, yet nobody understands they are his own thoughts as they are all too sick of self-love and obsessed with their own pains. Feste will never ever be understood or identified with because, to make a living, he must go on and disguise himself as the fool. He must push all his fears and forlorn hopes to the bottom of his heart and put on a smiling face and entertain people. Till the end, he has no hands to hold and no shoulders to cry on. In this way, Feste, like Viola, is an example of Shakespeare's idea that taking off disguises can be joyful and liberating; keeping them on can be suffocating.

## CONCLUSION (307 words)

The physical and emotional disguises Viola and Feste put on significantly bring out the theme of appearance versus reality through the conflicts they create. These conflicts convey how appearance can blind one from the truth, how keeping up appearances can be nerve-racking and self-destructive, and how disguising one's feelings can be suffocating and ruin fulfillment in personal relationships. For Viola and Feste, there is little choice about wearing a disguise as survival depends on it. Viola needs her disguise to survive, but discards it when Sebastian appears, making it unnecessary. Feste is not confronted by any happy circumstances that allow him to cast off his disguise. Nonetheless, they both prove how taking disguises off can be liberating. Shakespeare's use of disguise in this play provokes audiences to think about how the theme relates to their own lives. Viola and Feste may not have had a choice, but most people do. It is just a matter of whether they are confident and brave enough to show their true selves or not. Very often in life, people lie and hide just to save face or avoid breaking someone's heart, but in the end, they are the ones who get lost and hurt. Is it worth it after all? Is it really necessary to keep the truth hidden? Wouldn't it be easier if everyone revealed his or her true feelings? Shakespeare left behind this question 400 years ago, and 400 years later, audiences are still compelled to ponder over these ideas. This is because the world is still full of, or even built on, lies, concealment and disguises. It is truly amazing how Shakespeare seems to have the ability to predict the inevitable insufficiency of candor in the human world. For now, individuals can but try their hardest to find that balance between climbing walls in life and staying true.

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