

## المحاضرة العاشرة Act 5....Analysis

This long scene concludes the action of the play. A few at a time, the play's main characters enter until they are all in the same place at the same time, and the various confusions and deceptions can finally be resolved. Of course, the ultimate climax is the reunion of Sebastian and Viola—their meeting unravels the major deceptions and conflicts of the play.

The moment before the climax, significantly, is the most complicated moment in the entire play for Viola, at least in terms of how everyone understands her identity. Just before Sebastian's entrance, Viola, in her disguise as Cesario, is surrounded by many people, each of whom has a different idea of who she is and none of whom knows who she actually is. Sebastian's entrance at this point effectively saves Viola from her identity crisis. We might think of the scene as showing Sebastian taking over the aspects of Viola's disguise that she no longer needs to wear. It is Sebastian whom Antonio has really been seeking, Sebastian who has really married Olivia, and, in the end, Sebastian who is actually male. Thanks to her brother's assumption of these roles, Viola is free to cast off her masculine disguise. First she casts it off through speech, as she lets everyone know that she is really a woman, and then through deed, as she talks about putting back on her women's clothing, or "maiden weeds" .

But even once the truth about Viola's womanhood comes out, the uncertainty that her disguise has raised remains. For instance, Orsino's declaration of love to Viola is strangely phrased. Continuing to address Viola as if she were male, he says, "Boy, thou hast said to me a thousand times / Thou never shouldst love woman like to me". Similarly, in his final lines Orsino declares:

Orsino continues to address his future wife by her assumed male name, which hints at his ongoing attachment to Viola's masculine potential. Though he knows Viola is a woman, he continues to recognize Cesario as a legitimate identity for Viola. His statement that in female garb Viola will be his queen does not make it clear that he is asking Viola to renounce her assumed male identity forever; nor is it clear whether Orsino is truly in love with Cesario or Viola.

Equally puzzling, but in a different way, is Orsino's earlier threat to kill Cesario when he thinks his servant has betrayed him. "I'll sacrifice the lamb that I do love," he says, and Viola acquiesces meekly. "And I, most jocund, apt, and willingly, / To do you rest, a thousand deaths would die," she declaims. These bizarre speeches—articulating Orsino's strange violence and Viola's apparent death wish—recede into the background amid the general rejoicing that follows, but they leave critics baffled. Perhaps Shakespeare is suggesting that love is so close to madness that both Orsino and Viola can easily tip over the edge into blood-drenched insanity, where one lover becomes a killer and the other a sacrificial lamb.

Meanwhile, the general happiness that prevails is marred by the reemergence of Malvolio from his dark prison. When the trick is revealed, no one else seems to be quite as upset about it as the steward. "Alas, poor fool, how have they baffled thee!" Olivia says to him, calling the resolutely unfoolish Malvolio a "fool". This barb, at once, adds insult to injury and shows how the spirit of the play has upended even the steadfast, puritanical steward. The unamused Malvolio's parting remark—"I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you"—sounds a jarring note in the supposedly tranquil, joyful concluding scene. Malvolio's anger injects a hint of pathos or realism into the otherwise idyllic ending: someone must suffer while everyone else is happy. Antonio is likewise sacrificed to the anarchic spirit of the play, although less noticeably: his

homosexual ardor for Sebastian must go unsatisfied in a play where heterosexual marriage is the logical endpoint.