

# Love versus lust and desire

[Environment](#), [Animals](#)



Love vs. Lust and Desire (The Twelfth Night) Love and lust can often be mistaken for each other by unsuspecting and naive characters. In William Shakespeare's *The Twelfth Night* a majority of the characters experience learning the difference between whether lust is the same as love or if they are merely enjoying someone's looks only. The question of desire being overpowered by love is something that has been deeply looked at by literary critics to try to decipher. The beginning of the story starts out with Viola and her twin brother Sebastian getting into a shipwreck where Viola believes that her brother has drowned and been lost at sea.

She shows an enormous amount of love in those first few moments when she realizes that he is gone. No love is ever greater than family love because it is the most pure form of love. Viola, out of self-preservation, takes a job in the house of the Duke Orsino and becomes his messenger to his love Olivia. Olivia is a vain woman who is also mourning her brother's death and refuses to see Orsino or listen to his marriage proposals. As a different tack, Orsino sends Viola, dressed as Cesario, to try to court Olivia for him. This is not love that Orsino is feeling. Unrequited, melancholic love intensifies this process: it is self-consuming, as Orsino is pursued and consumed by his own desires. " (Eagleton) As Eagleton alludes he is merely attracted to Olivia's beauty and power. The way he acts towards her does personify that he loves her, but he only compliments her beauty and virtue in his poems. He alludes to only wanting her because she is what is seen as the most desirable woman around his land. " Irrationally, Orsino would love a woman who he knows loves herself. But whereas he shrewdly guesses the true condition of his lady's affection, he is blind to the similar makeup of his own passion. (Hunt)

This showing of lust is counteracted by the showings from Viola of love for Orsino. She chooses to do as he asks and help him court Olivia despite the fact that she is a woman in disguise and loves Orsino herself. This is a sacrifice that could easily be shown as a sign of true love for Orsino. Viola's showing of love is something to be examined closer. She has not known Orsino for more than a day when she begins to love him, yet she is willing to sacrifice her own happiness to help create a marriage between Orsino and Olivia.

She could be seen as naive and hopeful, but she seems wiser than that if examined closer. " Viola is then drawn within this illusion, through her adoption of an illusion of disguise to further her real aim of serving Orsino; she is made to act the part of one actor (Orsino) to another actor (Olivia) in a way which conflicts with her own genuine identity (her love of Orsino). " (Eagleton) Orsino also trusts Viola, as Cesario, completely. He entrusts her with his hopes and his most intimate errands. " Orsino is caught at a transitional moment in love's metamorphosis. He secretly enjoys Viola's feminine beauty while the page identity--" Cesario"--gives him an excuse for not recognizing the threatening natural opposite to himself--an opposite that in truth complements him. " (Hunt) Orsino sees Viola (Cesario) as someone he can trust and feel strangely drawn to. This could be a sense of lust compelling him or the nature of true love in its purer form. Through the beginning of the story Viola's love for Orsino grows only to see Orsino's love for Olivia continue steady. This is all disrupted when Viola's brother, Sebastian, is revealed as alive and in the same city.

Olivia, who has been courting Cesario (Viola), mistakes Sebastian for Cesario and convinces him to marry her. This can only be another example of the feeble yet strong importance put on physical attraction between two strangers to create a feeling of love that is deeply rooted in lust. Olivia found Cesario's cool demeanor to her to be refreshing and the slightly feminine build to be attractive. " The consequence of Viola's entering the reciprocal illusion of Orsino and Olivia is the creation in Olivia of a reality—her love for Viola—which breaks beyond the illusion and yet is similarly illusory—she does not know that Viola is a woman. (Eagleton) Olivia's love for Cesario is a little more sincere than Orsino's love for Olivia because Olivia enjoys Cesario's company and demeanor as strictly opposed to his looks. When Olivia learns that Sebastian is her husband and not Cesario, she is still happy despite the mix up. Orsino's switching of his love from Olivia to Viola so easily and efficiently is a sign that he may not really know the true nature of love at all. Orsino may only really know the way of desire and lust.

Viola overlooks this and marries Orsino without any hesitation because she loves him. Orsino refers to Viola as " his fancy's Queen" implying that he really cares for her on a level deeper than merely her looks which he has not been able to see in her manly disguise. The ending of the story regards every couple marrying the person they seem the most happy with, but it's highly questionable if they love the person they have chosen or if they merely have chosen someone they like. ? Work Cited

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