

measure
for
measure

chicago
shakespeare
on navy pier theater

rendering: Costume Designer Virgil C. Johnson



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teacher handbook

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Barbara Gaines
Artistic Director

Criss Henderson
Executive Director



Chicago Shakespeare Theater is Chicago's professional theater dedicated to the works of William Shakespeare. Founded as Shakespeare Repertory in 1986, the company moved to its seven-story home on Navy Pier in 1999. In its Elizabethan-style courtyard theater, 500 seats on three levels wrap around a deep thrust stage—with only nine rows separating the farthest seat from the stage. Chicago Shakespeare also features a flexible 180-seat black box studio theater, a Teacher Resource Center, and a Shakespeare specialty bookstall.

In its first 17 seasons, the Theater has produced nearly the entire Shakespeare canon: *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *As You Like It*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Cymbeline*, *Hamlet*, *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*, *Henry V*, *Henry VI Parts 1, 2 and 3*, *Julius Caesar*, *King John*, *King Lear*, *Love's Labor's Lost*, *Macbeth*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Othello*, *Pericles*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Tempest*, *Timon of Athens*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *The Winter's Tale*.

Each year Chicago Shakespeare receives widespread critical acclaim for artistic excellence and its accessible, creative approach to Shakespeare's work. Chicago's Jeff Awards year after year have honored the Theater, including repeated awards for Best Production and Best Director, the two highest honors in Chicago theater.

Since Chicago Shakespeare's founding, its programming for young audiences has been an essential element in the realization of its mission. Team Shakespeare supports education in our schools, where Shakespeare is part of every required curriculum. As a theater within a multicultural city, we are committed to bringing Shakespeare to a young and ethnically diverse audience of 50,000 students each year. Team Shakespeare's programming includes free teacher workshops, student matinees of mainstage shows, post-performance discussions, comprehensive teacher handbooks, and an abridged, original production each year of one of the "curriculum plays." Team Shakespeare offers a region-wide forum for new vision and enthusiasm for teaching Shakespeare in our schools.

The 2004–2005 Season offers a student matinee series for Chicago Shakespeare Theater's mainstage productions of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. This winter, Chicago Shakespeare presents especially for students a 75-minute abridged adaptation of *The Comedy of Errors*, at its theater on Navy Pier and on tour to schools and theaters across the region. We hope that you and your students will enjoy our work—and Shakespeare's creative genius brought to life on stage.



Marilyn J. Halperin, Director of Education
Roxanna Y. Conner, Team Shakespeare Manager
Laura Bork, Education Associate
Kelly A. Lewis, Publications Manager

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

written by
William Shakespeare

directed by
Barbara Gaines

Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* takes us into a world where power is abused, laws distorted, and people live unprotected. In this corrupt and seamy city of Shakespeare's invention, human society has decayed. The energetic underworld refuses to be stifled, and remains a constant, sore reminder of human instinct that cannot be legislated away. It is an uncertain world, peopled by characters shut off from themselves and from one another. It is a lonely world, dominated by power.

Contradictions surface. What is the relationship between individual liberty, self-restraint, and public law? Can a religious doctrine of mercy have any place in a secular doctrine of government and the administration of justice? Can the law live independent of the fallibility of human beings who create and enforce it? How do we live a life based upon belief, and make room for others' beliefs and needs?

Shakespeare and his contemporaries could not have imagined the society in which, 400 years later, we now live. Yet the questions that *Measure for Measure* confronts us with are those that candidates, philosophers and pundits have spent this past year debating. They are questions that refuse to go away, and remain at the very center of a democratic society, always struggling with itself to be better. ✱

Rendering by Costume Designer Virgil C. Johnson

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Art That Lives

Drama, like no other art form, is a living art. It is written to be performed live before a group of people who form an audience and together experience a play. Ancient cave paintings depict men disguised as animals.

Since ancient times, impersonation and imitation have served man in his effort to express himself and to communicate. The drama of western civilization has its roots in the ancient Greeks' religious rituals and observances. Until the Renaissance, when Shakespeare wrote, drama was closely tied to religious beliefs and practice.

Drama not only depicts human communication, it is human communication. In theater, unlike television or film, there is a two-way communication that occurs between the actors and their audience. The audience hears and sees the actors, and the actors hear and see the audience. We are used to thinking about the actors' roles in a play, but may find it strange to imagine ourselves, the audience, playing an important role in this living art. Because the art lives, each production is guaranteed to be different, depending in part upon an audience's response. Live drama is the sharing of human experience, intensely and immediately, in the theater, which momentarily becomes our universe.

A live theater production depends upon its audience. The best performances depend upon the best actors—and the best audiences. When the actors sense a responsive, interested audience, their work is at its best—full of animation and energy. When the actors sense disinterest, they, too, are distracted, and the play they create is less interesting.

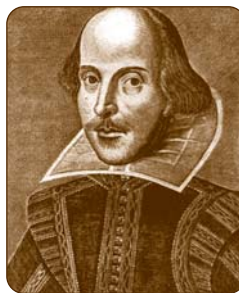
One actor described the experience of live performance as a story told by the actors and audience together. In this sense, you are also a storyteller in the experience of live theater. We hope you'll enjoy your role—and help us give you a dramatic experience that you'll always remember.

[Theatrical performance] is essentially a sociable, communal affair. This is important. To resist this is, I think, to ruin one of the very important parts of the theatrical experience. Let the play and let the fact that temporarily you are not your private self, but a member of a closely-fused group, make it easy for the performance to 'take you out of yourself.' This, I suggest, is the object of going to a play...to be taken out of yourself, out of your ordinary life, away from the ordinary world of everyday.

—Tyrone Guthrie, 1962

HOW CAN YOU HELP US GIVE YOU THE BEST PERFORMANCE WE CAN?

- Please don't talk during the performance. Talking distracts the actors as well as the people sitting nearby.
- Respond naturally to our play. Emotions are part of drama. We hope that you'll laugh, cry and even gasp—but as a natural response to the story, and not in order to distract attention from the stage.
- Please keep all “noisemakers”—food, gum, personal stereos, etc.—back at school or on the bus! In a quiet theater, wrappers and munching are heard by all, the actors included.
- No photographs of any kind, please! Flashbulbs can make the actors lose their focus and can be dangerous. Digital cameras, along with all other kinds of recording devices, are prohibited.



Bard's Bio

The exact date of William Shakespeare's birth is not known, but his baptism, traditionally three days after a child's birth, was recorded on April 26, 1564. His father John Shakespeare was a tanner, glover, grain dealer and

town official of the thriving market town of Stratford-upon-Avon. His mother Mary Arden was the daughter of a prosperous, educated farmer. Though the records are lost, Shakespeare undoubtedly attended Stratford's grammar school, where he would have acquired some knowledge of Latin and Greek and the classical writers. There is no record that Shakespeare acquired a university education of any kind.

Some skeptical scholars have raised doubts about whether Shakespeare, due to his relatively average level of education and humble origins, could have possibly written what has long been considered the best verse drama composed in the English language. But not until 1769, 150 years after Shakespeare's death, did these theories arise—and, to all appearances, Shakespeare's contemporaries and immediate successors never seemed to question whether William Shakespeare wrote the celebrated works attributed to him.

At 18, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, eight years his senior. They had one daughter Susanna, followed by twins, Hamnet and Judith. Hamnet, Shakespeare's only son, died at age 11. From 1585, the year in which the twins were baptized, until 1592, when he is first referred to as a dramatist in London, we know nothing of Shakespeare's life. Consequently, these seven years are filled with legend and conjecture. We may never know what brought Shakespeare to London or how he entered its world of theater. The first reference to Shakespeare as an actor and playwright appears in 1592 and was made by Robert Greene, a rival playwright and pamphleteer, who attacked Shakespeare as an "upstart crow" for presuming to write plays (when he was only a mere actor) and copying the works of established dramatists.

Subsequent references to Shakespeare indicate that as early as 1594 he was not only an actor and playwright, but also a partner in a new theatrical company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, which soon became one of London's two principal companies. The company's name changed to the King's Men in 1603 with the accession of James I, and it endured until the Puritans closed the theaters in 1642. From 1599 the company acted primarily at the Globe playhouse, in which Shakespeare held a one-tenth interest.

During his career of approximately 20 years, Shakespeare wrote or collaborated in what most scholars now agree upon as 38 plays. His earliest plays, including *Love's Labor's Lost*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Richard III*, *King John* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, were written between 1589 and 1594. Between 1594 and 1599, Shakespeare wrote both *Romeo and Juliet* and *Julius Caesar* as well as other plays, including *Richard II*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *As You Like It*. His great tragedies, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, were composed between 1599 and 1607, and were preceded by his last play traditionally categorized as comedy, *Measure for Measure*. The earlier histories, comedies and tragedies made way for Shakespeare's final dramatic form—the so-called "romances" which were written between 1606 and 1611 and include *Cymbeline*, *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*. These were the plays of a playwright no longer bound by the constraints of his earlier historical and tragic forms. Although single volumes of about half his plays were published in Shakespeare's lifetime, there is no evidence that suggests he oversaw their publication. It was not until 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death, that 36 of his plays were published in the First Folio. Drama was only just beginning to be understood as "literature" as we understand it today, and so it is not at all surprising that so

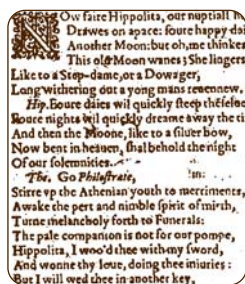
little attention was given to Shakespeare's plays in published form until seven years after his death. However, we do know that Shakespeare did oversee the publication of three narrative poems and a collection of 154 sonnets.

Shakespeare seldom devised his own plots for his plays, but creatively borrowed here and there from histories, prose romances, poems, and plays of his own and others. Shakespeare was an ingenious dramatic artist with a vast imagination. He created masterpieces out of conventional and unpromising material. In Shakespeare's time, ancient stories were told and re-told. The important thing was not the originality of the plot but how the story was told. In the telling of a story, there are few writers who rival Shakespeare in theatricality, poetry, and depth of character.

By 1592, Shakespeare had emerged as a rising playwright in London, where he continued to enjoy fame and financial success as an actor, playwright and part-owner of London's leading theater company. After living life in the theater for nearly 20 years, in 1611 he retired to live as a country gentleman in Stratford, his birthplace, until his death on April 23, 1616.

Shakespeare was the man, who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of Nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards, and found her there.

—John Dryden, 1688



The First Folio

Shakespeare wrote his plays for the stage, not for the printed page. In Shakespeare's day, plays were not considered "literature" at all. When a play was printed, it was printed inexpensively in a small book, called a "quarto,"

the sixteenth-century equivalent of our paperback editions. It was not until 1616, the year of Shakespeare's death, when a contemporary of his, dramatist Ben Jonson, published his own plays in an atlas-size book called a "folio," that plays were viewed as literature worthy of publication. Jonson was chided as bold and arrogant for his venture.

Two of Shakespeare's close colleagues decided to ignore tradition and gather his plays for publication. In 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death, the first Folio, a book containing 36 of his 38 plays, was published. The first Folio was compiled from stage prompt books, from the playwright's handwritten manuscripts, from various versions of some of the plays already published for use in the theater—and from the memory of his actors. Its large format (much like a modern atlas) was traditionally reserved for the "authority" of religious and classical works.

Shakespeare's first Folio took five "compositors" two-and-one-half years to print. The compositors manually set the type by first memorizing the text line by line. There was no copy editor, and the compositors frequently altered punctuation and spelling. Errors caught in printing would be corrected but, due to the prohibitively high cost of paper, earlier copies remained intact. Of the 1,200 copies of the first Folio that were printed, approximately 230 survive today, each slightly different. Chicago's Newberry Library contains the Folio in its rich collections (and it can be reviewed in small groups by appointment).

Chicago Shakespeare Theater's use of the first Folio as its script and "blueprint" is unusual. The first Folio serves as the most authentic and effective manual available to Shakespearean actors nearly 400 years after its publication. Its punctuation gives clues to our actors about what words to emphasize and about what ideas are important. In Shakespeare's own theater company, with only a few days at most to rehearse each new play, these built-in clues were essential. Today, they still help actors make the language much easier to understand—even though you're hearing language that's 400 years younger than ours.

A key to understanding Shakespeare's language is to appreciate the attitude toward speech accepted by him and his contemporaries. Speech was traditionally and piously regarded as God's final and consummate gift to man. Speech was thus to Elizabethans a source of enormous power for good or ill . . . Hence the struggle to excel in eloquent utterance.

—David Bevington, 1980



Shakespeare's England

Elizabeth I ruled England for 45 years from 1558 to 1603 in a time of relative prosperity and peace. "Few monarchs," says Shakespearean scholar David Bevington, "have ever influenced an age so pervasively and left their stamp on it so permanently." The daughter of Henry VIII and his second wife Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth was regarded by many Catholics as an illegitimate child and an illegitimate monarch. The politics of religion constantly threatened Elizabeth's reign even though it was one of the most secure that England had known for hundreds of years. Religious conflict during the Tudors' reign pervaded every aspect of English life and, most particularly, its politics. Elizabeth had no heir, and so throughout her reign the matter of succession was a real and disturbing threat to the nation's peace (and a recurrent subject of Shakespeare's plays). While Shakespeare was writing *Julius Caesar*, one of the Queen's favorites, the Earl of Essex, rebelled against her government. Shakespeare's portrayal of the enforced abdication of a king in *Richard II* was censored in performance during Elizabeth's reign.

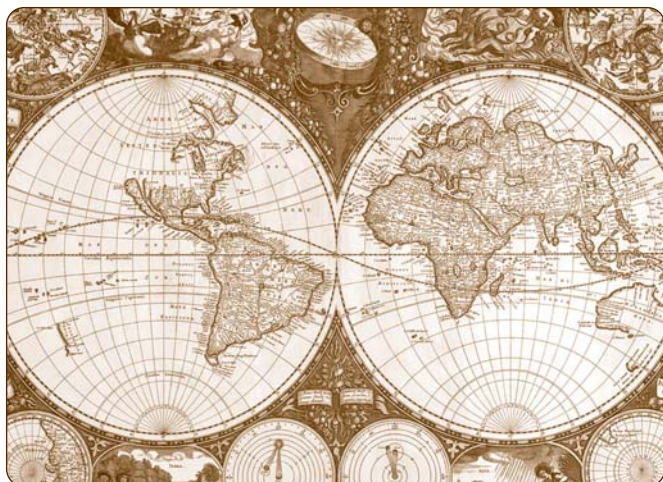
Elizabethan England was a smaller, more isolated country than it had been previously or would be later. It had withdrawn from its extensive empire on the Continent, and its explorations of the New World had barely begun. There was a period of internal economic development as Elizabeth ignored the counsel of her advisors and kept out of war until the attempted invasion by Spain and the Great Armada in 1588. England's economy was still, however, based in agriculture, and its farmers were poor and embittered by strife with rich landowners who "enclosed" what was once the farmers' cropland for pastures. Uprisings and food riots were commonplace in the rural England surrounding Stratford-upon-Avon, where Shakespeare grew up. London, then the largest city of Europe, was a city of contrasts: the richest and the poorest of England lived here, side by side. While many bettered themselves in a developing, urban economy, unemployment was a serious problem. It was a time of change and social mobility. A rising middle class for the first time in English history aspired to the wealth and status of the aristocracy.

Under Elizabeth, England returned to Protestantism. But in her masterful style of accommodation and compromise, she incorporated an essentially traditional and

Catholic doctrine into an episcopal form of church government that was ruled by the Crown and England's clergy rather than by the Pope. Extremists on the religious right and left hated her rule and wanted to see Elizabeth overthrown. She was declared a heretic by Rome in 1569, and her life was endangered. "Her combination of imperious will and femininity and her brilliant handling of her many contending male admirers have become legendary," says David Bevington, and resulted in a monarchy that remained secure in the face of religious and political threats from many sides. In choosing not to marry, Elizabeth avoided allying herself and her throne with a foreign country or an English faction which might threaten her broad base of power and influence.

Throughout Renaissance Europe, governments were centralized, assuming the power that once belonged to city-states and feudal lords. The rule of monarchies, like Elizabeth's, was absolute. Elizabeth and her subjects viewed the monarch as God's deputy, and the divine right of kings was a cherished doctrine (and became the subject of Shakespeare's history plays). It was this doctrine that condemned rebellion as an act of disobedience against God. However, this doctrine didn't free Elizabeth from occasional rebellion at home—even from her closest advisors—or from challenges from abroad.

Childless, Elizabeth I died in 1603. The crown passed to her cousin James VI, King of Scotland, who became England's King James I. James, who ruled from 1603 to 1625 (Shakespeare died in 1616), clearly lacked Elizabeth's political acumen and skill, and his reign was troubled with political and religious controversy. He antagonized the religious left, and his court became more aligned with the Catholic right. It would be James' son, Charles I, who would be beheaded in the English civil wars of the 1640s. ✱



The Renaissance Theater

A man who would later become an associate of Shakespeare's, James Burbage, built the first commercial theater in England in 1576, not much more than a decade before historians think Shakespeare first arrived on the London theater scene. Burbage skirted rigid restrictions governing entertainment in London by placing his theater just outside the city walls, in a community with the unglamorous name of "Shoreditch." The name reflected the position of his theater, on the shore of the Thames River and just beyond the ditch created by the walls of London.

Burbage was not the only one to dodge the severe rules of the Common Council by setting up shop in Shoreditch. His neighbors were other businesses of marginal repute, including brothels and bear-bating arenas. Actors and playwrights in Shakespeare's day were given officially the status of "vagabond." They were considered little better than common criminals unless they could secure the patronage of a nobleman, or better still, the monarch.

Shakespeare and his fellow actors managed to secure both. They became popular entertainment at Queen Elizabeth's court as the Lord Chamberlain's Men and continued to enjoy court patronage after King James came to the throne in 1603, when they became the King's Men. Their success at Court gave Shakespeare and his fellow shareholders in the Lord Chamberlain's company the funds to build the Globe playhouse in 1599. The Globe joined a handful of other theaters located just out of the city's jurisdiction as the first public theaters in England.

Shakespeare may have developed his love for the theater by watching traveling acting troupes temporarily transform a courtyard into a theater. When he was a boy growing up in rural Stratford-upon-Avon, acting troupes traveled around the countryside in flatbed, horse-drawn carts, which did triple duty as transportation, storage for props and costumes, and stage. Their horses pulled the cart into an inn yard or the courtyard of a country estate or college. People gathered in the courtyard to watch, some leaning over the rails from the balconies above to view the action on the impromptu stage below.

Many of these traveling performances staged religious stories, enacting important scenes from the Bible. During the Renaissance, the stories enacted in these performances became more secular. Public officials scorned the theater as immoral and frivolous. The theaters just outside London's walls came to be feared as places where physical, moral and social corruption were spread. They were frequently shut down by the authorities during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, when the city was menaced by the plague, or by political and social rioting. Even when the theaters were open, the Master of the Revels had to read and approve every word in a new play. The show could not go on until he gave his permission.

All kinds of people came to plays at the Globe, and they came in great numbers. A full house in the Globe numbered about 3,000 people. Though the same dimensions as the original structure, the reconstruction of the Globe holds 1,500 at maximum capacity—an indication of just how close those 3,000 people must have been to one another! They arrived well before the play began to meet their friends, drink ale and snack on the refreshments that were sold at the plays. From start to finish, a day at the theater could take half the day. It was more like tailgating at a football game, or going with friends to a rock concert than our experience of attending theater today.

Affluent patrons paid two to three pence or more for gallery seats (like the two levels of balcony seating at Chicago Shakespeare Theater) while the “common folk”—shopkeepers and artisans—stood for a penny, about a day's wages for a skilled worker. They were a demanding, diverse group and Shakespeare depicted characters and situations to appeal to every level of this cross-section of Renaissance society. The vitality and financial success of the Elizabethan theater is without equal in English history.

There was no electricity for lighting, so all plays were performed in daylight. Sets and props were bare and basic. A throne, table or bed had to be brought on stage during the action since Elizabethan plays were written to be performed without scene breaks or intermissions. When the stage directions for *Macbeth* indicate that “a banquet is prepared,” the stage keepers prepared the banquet in full view of the audience. From what scholars can best reconstruct about performance conventions, Shakespeare's plays were per-

formed in “modern” dress—that is, the clothes of Shakespeare's time—regardless of their historical setting. The actors wore the same clothes on the stage as their contemporaries wore on the street. Hand-me-downs from the English aristocracy provided the elegant costumes for the play's royalty.



An Elizabethan traveler's sketch of the original Swan.

Most new plays were short runs and seldom revived. The acting companies were always in rehearsal for new shows but, due to the number of productions, most plays were rehearsed for just a day or two. It was not until 1660 that women would be permitted to act on the English stage. Female roles were performed by boys or young men. Elaborate Elizabethan and Jacobean dresses disguised a man's shape and the young actors were readily accepted as “women” by the audience.

In 1642, the Puritans succeeded in closing the theaters altogether. They did not reopen until Charles II came to the throne 18 years later. A number of theaters, including the Globe, were not open very long before the Great Fire of London destroyed them in 1666. During these years when the English theaters were closed, many of the traditions of playing Shakespeare were lost. The new theater of the Restoration approached Shakespeare's plays very differently, rewriting and adapting his original scripts to suit Restoration tastes. It is left to contemporary scholars to reconstruct the traditions of Elizabethan theater from clues left behind. ✱

Chicago Shakespeare's Courtyard-style Theater



David Taylor of Theatre Projects Consultants has devoted a great deal of energy and imagination to the question of what kind of space is best suited to presenting Shakespeare's plays. Taylor, who worked as one of the primary consultants on the design of the new Chicago Shakespeare Theater, feels that this unique performance space reflects elements of both the Globe playhouse and the courtyards-turned-theaters, in which the young Shakespeare might first have acquired his love of the stage.

The interior of the Globe playhouse, opened in 1599, was simple and similar to that of Chicago Shakespeare Theater—a raised platform for the stage surrounded by an open, circular area with three galleries, one above the other. Both theaters use a thrust stage with an open performance area upstage; basically, the entire performance space is in the shape of a capital “T.” The audience sits on three sides of the thrust stage, so the play is staged in the middle of the audience—much like the Elizabethan Swan Theatre’s design, for which a traveler’s careful sketch still remains. This immersion of the stage and the action performed on it into the audience creates a three-dimensional theater that demands three-dimensional directing and acting.



Chicago Shakespeare Theater

The people sitting in the side seats have the closest interaction with the performers, and the performers with them. The play unfolds between the audience members seated on the sides, and the actors draw upon the responses of the audience (laughter, gasps, nervous shifting in chairs when tension mounts) as they perform. “The backdrop and the scenery for Shakespeare is the human race,” Taylor notes, “so we’re putting Shakespeare into its proper context by making human faces the backdrop for those sitting in any seat in the theater.”

“This close, close relationship with the performers on stage is the very essence of the courtyard experience,” according to Taylor. “The courtyard experience was about leaning out of windows. It was about throwing open the windows in the courtyard when the stage was brought through on a cart and leaning out and interacting.” Audience members seated in the galleries at Chicago Shakespeare Theater are encouraged to use the “leaning rails” to watch the players below—much like those watching from courtyard balconies might have done centuries ago when a traveling troupe set up their temporary stage.

The actors and the audience share the experience of seeing and interacting with one another. Taylor thinks that actors benefit tremendously from the courtyard design: “They’re not looking at people sitting in straight rows, disconnected from everybody around them in big seats. There’s a sense of community in the space, a sense of embracing the performer on stage.” Actors are always “fed” by the energy generated from their audience. The design of Chicago Shakespeare Theater offers a feast of feedback to the actors on its stage.

As an audience member, your facial expressions and body language serve both as the focal point of the actors’ energy and the backdrop for the other audience members seated across from you. “It’s important that we don’t lose the performer among the faces, but it’s essential to understand that every single face is a live piece of scenery reflecting and framing what’s going on,” Taylor reflects. “That’s the reason why the courtyard theater shape is such a wonderful historical springboard for modern theater design.”

Speaking of his experience directing on the open stage in Stratford, Ontario, Tyrone Guthrie once said: “Theatrical performance is a form of ritual; the audience is not asked to subscribe to an illusion but to participate in the ritual . . . The attraction for me of the ‘open stage’ as opposed to the proscenium is primarily this: that it stresses the ritual as opposed to the illusionary quality of performance.”

Other theaters have been modeled upon the Elizabethan experience of courtyard theater, perhaps most notably the Royal Shakespeare Company’s Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. The Swan served as an important model for Chicago Shakespeare Theater. An important element in both theaters are the brick walls that surround the audience. Brick is an aesthetic choice, but, due to its particular design, it also serves as an acoustical choice. The angle of the bricks in the side walls help diffuse sound, sending it in different directions throughout the theater. The sound, lighting and rigging systems are all state-of-the-art. Chicago Shakespeare Theater’s design allows for a wide array of possibilities for structuring and using the performance space. Performers will enter from surprising places, set pieces will emerge seemingly from nowhere, and parts of the stage that seem permanent and solid may prove not to be so!

Leaning out of your courtyard “window,” you can enjoy not just what is happening on stage, but also the responses of the people sitting across from you. Shakespearean theater is about people. As Taylor concludes, “You’re the scenery. You’re the special effects. And the people you see performing this play are performing it in front of, and out of, you.” ✱

TIMELINES

1300

- 1326 Founding of universities at Oxford and Cambridge
- 1348 Boccaccio's *Decameron*
- 1349 Bubonic Plague kills one-third of England's population
- 1387 Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*
- c.1440 Johannes Gutenberg invents printing press
- 1472 Dante's *Divine Comedy* first printed
- 1492 Christopher Columbus lands at Cuba
- 1497 Vasco da Gama sails around Cape of Good Hope

1500

- 1501-04 Michelangelo's "David" sculpture
- 1503 Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*
- 1512 Copernicus' *Commentariolus* published, theorizing that earth and other planets revolve around sun
- 1518 License to import 4,000 African slaves to Spanish American colonies granted to Lorens de Gominzot
- 1519 Ferdinand Magellan's trip around the world
- 1519 Conquest of Mexico by Cortez
- 1522 Luther's translation of the New Testament

1525

- 1531 Henry VIII recognized as Supreme Head of the Church of England
- 1533 Henry VIII secretly marries Anne Boleyn, and is excommunicated by Pope
- 1539 Hernando de Soto explores Florida
- 1540 G.L. de Cardenas "discovers" Grand Canyon
- 1541 Hernando de Soto "discovers" the Mississippi

1550

- 1558 Ascension of Queen Elizabeth I
- 1562 John Hawkins begins slave trade between Guinea and West Indies
- 1564 Birth of William Shakespeare and Galileo
- 1565 Pencils first manufactured in England
- 1570 Pope Pius V excommunicates Queen Elizabeth
- Mayor of London forbids theatrical performances in the City
- 1573 Francis Drake sees the Pacific Ocean

1575

- 1576 Burbage erects first public theater in (the "Theater" in Shoreditch)
- 1577 Drake's trip around the world
- 1580 *Essays of Montaigne* published
- 1582 Marriage license issue for William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway
- Daughter Susanna Shakespeare christened
- 1585 Christening of son Hamnet and twin Judith
- 1587 Mary Queen of Scots executed
- 1588 Destruction of the Spanish Armada

SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

C. 1592-1595 COMEDIES

Love's Labor's Lost
The Comedy of Errors
The Two Gentlemen of Verona
A Midsummer Night's Dream
The Taming of the Shrew

HISTORIES

1, 2, 3 Henry VI
Richard III
King John

TRAGEDIES

Titus Andronicus
Romeo and Juliet

SONNETS

probably written
in this period

- 1592 Shakespeare listed with the Lord Chamberlain's Men
- 1593-94 Plague closes London playhouses for 20 months
- 1595 Coat of arms granted to Shakespeare's father, John
- 1596 Death of son Hamnet, age 11
Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*
- 1597 Shakespeare, one of London's most successful playwrights, buys New Place,
one of the grandest houses in Stratford-upon-Avon
- 1599 Globe Theatre opens, as home to the Lord Chamberlain's Men,
with Shakespeare part-owner

1600

- 1602 Oxford University's Bodleian Library opens
- 1603 Death of Queen Elizabeth, coronation of James I;
Lord Chamberlain's Men become the King's Men
upon endorsement of James I
- 1603-11 Plague closes London playhouses for at least 68 months (nearly 6 years)
- 1605 Cervantes' *Don Quixote Part 1* published
- 1607 Marriage of Susanna Shakespeare to Dr. John Hall;
Founding of Jamestown, Virginia, first English settlement on American mainland
- 1608 *A true relation of such Occurances and Accidents of Note
as hath passed in Virginia* by John Smith
Galileo constructs astronomical telescope
- 1609 Blackfriars Theatre, London's first commercial indoor
theater, becomes winter home of the King's Men
- 1611 *The Authorized Version "King James Version"* of the Bible published
- 1613 Globe Theatre destroyed by fire
- 1614 Globe Theatre rebuilt
- 1615 Galileo faces the Inquisition for the first time
- 1616 Judith Shakespeare marries Thomas Quinney
Death of William Shakespeare, age 52
- 1618 Copernican system condemned by Roman Catholic Church
- 1619 First African slaves arrive in Virginia
- 1623 The first Folio, the first compiled text of Shakespeare's complete works published

1625

- 1625 James I dies, succeeded by Charles I
- 1632 *Ai due massimi sistemi* of Galileo
- 1633 Galileo recants before the Inquisition
- 1636 Harvard College founded at Cambridge, Massachusetts
- 1642 Civil War in England begins
- 1642 Puritans close theaters throughout England until the Restoration of Charles II,
18 years later
- 1649 Charles I beheaded
- 1649 Commonwealth declared

C. 1596-1600

COMEDIES

The Merchant of Venice
Much Ado About Nothing
The Merry Wives of Windsor
As You Like It
Twelfth Night

HISTORIES

Richard II
1,2 Henry IV
Henry V

TRAGEDIES

Julius Caesar

C. 1601-1609

COMEDIES

Troilus and Cressida
All's Well That Ends Well
✱ Measure for Measure

TRAGEDIES

Hamlet
Othello
King Lear
Macbeth
Antony and Cleopatra
Timon of Athens
Coriolanus

C. 1609-1613

HISTORIES

Henry VIII

ROMANCES

Pericles
Cymbeline
The Winter's Tale
The Tempest

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

Dramatis Personae

VINCENTIO Duke of Vienna

ANGELO the Duke's deputy

ESCALUS a respected statesman and second in command to Angelo

ISABELLA a novitiate to the order of Saint Clare

CLAUDIO brother to Isabella

JULIET betrothed to Claudio

LUCIO an immoderate gentleman friend to Claudio

PROVOST warden of the prison

FRIAR PETER and FRIAR THOMAS

ELBOW a constable

MISTRESS OVERDONE a brothel-keeper

POMPEY a pimp and servant to Mistress Overdone

MARIANA once betrothed to Angelo

ABHORSON an executioner

BARNARDINE a prisoner sentenced to die

FRANCESCA a nun

A JUSTICE

SERVANTS, LORDS, OFFICERS
and other ATTENDANTS



Costume Designer Virgil C. Johnson created the original renderings for Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2005 production of *Measure for Measure*. Read more about his creative process on page 28.



illustrations of *Measure for Measure* characters by Costume Designer Virgil C. Johnson

The Story

The laws of Vienna have slept, unattended for years. Society has grown corrupt under the lenient rule of **Duke Vincentio**. To clean up the city and enforce its long-neglected law, the Duke stages his departure from Vienna, appointing the stainless **Angelo** as his deputy. Donning the robes of a Franciscan friar, the Duke returns secretly to Vienna to observe Angelo and the outcome of his deputy's reforms. He does not have long to wait.

Angelo wastes no time reviving a moribund statute that answers fornication with death. The first victim is **Claudio**, Juliet's betrothed and father to her unborn child—and brother to **Isabella**. Claudio's friend **Lucio**

appeals to Isabella, a young novitiate preparing to take her sacred vows. She reluctantly agrees to come before the deputy to plead for clemency. Angelo, overcome by desire, concedes to yield up her brother—if Isabella first yields up her chastity. Claudio begs his sister to consent. The young woman urges her brother to prepare for death.

Cloaked in holy disguise, the Duke intercedes: Mariana, once Angelo's betrothed, will assume Isabella's place in the sordid shadows of night. And the Duke, revealing himself at last, casts light into his own dark corners. ✱

MEASURE FOR MEASURE



Act-by-Act Synopsis

You are confusing two concepts: the solution of a problem and the correct posing of a question. Only the second is obligatory for an artist. The court is obliged to pose the questions correctly, but it's up to the jurors to answer them.

—Anton Chekhov

ACT I

Vienna has fallen into moral and political decay under the lenient rule of Duke Vincentio. In an effort to revive the city's laws that he has long neglected, the Duke decides to leave for a time and appoint as his deputy the austere Angelo, with Escalus, an elderly counselor, serving as second in command to Angelo. Angelo wastes no time enforcing the old laws of Vienna. Immediately, the brothels in Vienna's suburbs are outlawed, and Mistress Overdone and her tapster Pompey discuss their uncertain futures.

The moral reform of Vienna is not to end here. Angelo revives an old statute that imposes the death penalty for fornication. His first victim, who must serve as a fearful example to others, is a young man named Claudio. Claudio, with his willing bride-to-be Juliet, has fathered a child out-of-wedlock. As Claudio is paraded through the Vienna streets on the way to prison, he sees his friend Lucio. Claudio asks Lucio to seek out his sister Isabella and enlist her aid in obtaining a pardon from Angelo.

Lucio visits Isabella in the convent, where she has only just arrived as a novice to the order. Though doubting her power to influence the case, Isabella agrees to plead for clemency before Angelo. We discover that the Duke never intended to leave Vienna, but instead plans to remain there, disguised as a Franciscan friar, to observe his deputy and the behavior of his subjects under Angelo's strict rule.

ACT II

Escalus intercedes on Claudio's behalf, but Angelo is unmoved. An overeager constable named Elbow appears before Angelo and Escalus with his two charges,

Pompey and Master Froth. Angelo, too impatient to hear the confused details of the case, leaves the matter to Escalus to judge. Escalus dismisses the case, but warns the men that the law is becoming stricter in Vienna. Pompey says that as long as people have appetites, it will be futile to create laws that try to curb human instinct. He leaves the courtroom quite undeterred.

Isabella appears before a disinterested Angelo, but as she pleads her brother's case, she arouses a passion previously unknown to the deputy. He tells her to return the following day. When she does, he proposes a devil's pact—her brother's life for her chastity. Isabella refuses, and threatens to tell the world of his crime. Angelo's chilling response, "Who will believe thee, Isabel?" underscores the unbalanced scales of power between them. The Duke, disguised now as "Friar Lodowick," visits the prison and asks the pregnant Juliet to repent for her sin.

ACT III

The Duke disguised as Friar Lodowick counsels Claudio to prepare for death, reminding him of all the suffering our lives hold that he should willingly leave behind. Secretly, "the friar" listens as Isabella tells her brother of her interview with Angelo. Terrified of death, Claudio begs his sister to accept Angelo's terms. Enraged and feeling betrayed, Isabella rejects her brother's pleas vehemently and leaves. Friar Lodowick intercedes. He proposes that Mariana, a woman once betrothed to Angelo and still in love with him, secretly serve as Isabella's substitute in a sexual rendezvous with Angelo. Isabella will remain chaste, and Mariana will ensnare her former love. Isabella agrees to the plan.

Lucio meets the disguised Duke and, claiming to be closely acquainted with the Duke himself, proceeds to slander him roundly. The brothel of Mistress Overdone is closed, and she and Pompey are brought to prison. Left alone, the Duke reflects on the virtues demanded of a ruler and privately condemns Angelo's transgressions.

ACT IV

Mariana consents to the friar's plan and, with Isabella's help, the secret rendezvous is carried out. Angelo remains unaware that it is Mariana, not Isabella, who has sated his lust, but nonetheless he orders Claudio's immediate death—and orders that Claudio's head be sent to

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him as proof. Pompey is offered parole if he will serve as an assistant to the executioner Abhorson, but the executioner is offended by Pompey's immoral trade. Persuaded by the friar, the prison's Provost hides Claudio and substitutes the head of a prisoner who fortuitously died that day of a fever. Friar Lodowick allows Isabella to believe that her brother is dead, and counsels her to seek justice from the Duke, whom he knows to be returning to Vienna.

ACT V

As instructed by the Duke's letter, Angelo, accompanied by Escalus and other officials, meets the Duke at the city gates. There, Isabella openly accuses Angelo and demands justice. The Duke pretends not to believe her story and orders her arrest. Then Mariana reveals her role as Angelo's bed partner. Angelo denies her story. The Duke leaves the scene, and assigns the trial to Angelo to judge. Once more assuming the disguise of Friar Lodowick, the Duke returns to the scene to serve as a witness for the two women. Lucio turns upon the friar with slanderous remarks. Attacked as a false witness, the Duke loses his disguise, and reveals his true identity.

Angelo confesses his guilt and asks for death. But instead the Duke orders him to marry Mariana. After the ceremony is performed, the Duke then orders Angelo's death, "an Angelo for Claudio, death for death." Mariana begs for clemency, and in turn begs Isabella to do the same. Isabella, who still believes her brother dead, kneels beside Mariana and asks the Duke to spare Angelo, the man she presumes to be her brother's murderer. Barnardine and Claudio are brought in, and the Duke pardons both. He proposes marriage to Isabella, and pardons Angelo. He orders Lucio to marry Mistress Keepdown, a prostitute whom Lucio has abandoned with child, and then to be whipped and hanged for slander—punishments he quickly recinds.

The Duke once more proposes to Isabella, who answers with silence. ✱



Something Borrowed, Something New...

SHAKESPEARE'S SOURCES

Shakespeare spun his stories from a fabric of old—and sometimes not-so-old—stories well known to his audience which, though largely illiterate, was far better versed in a narrative heritage than we are today. Many of Shakespeare's later plays, including *Measure for Measure*, rely upon the primitive material of folk tale and myth. As we know from those we heard in our own childhood, these stories do not live in the realm of logic or realism. To create the play *Measure for Measure*, written in the months following Queen Elizabeth's death and the momentous accession to the throne of her successor James I, Shakespeare turned to the stories of common folk tales: of a disguised ruler, a corrupt judge, and a bed-trick that ensnares a man in his own trap.

Italian author Giraldi Cinthio in 1565 published a book of stories based upon these old tales of such interest to Shakespeare. (Shakespeare used Cinthio's stories for *Othello*, too.) In Cinthio's story, the Emperor of Rome sends the capable and respected magistrate Juriste to rule in Innsbruck. A young woman named Epitia pleads to Juriste for her brother, sentenced to death for raping a virgin. Juriste answers that he will spare her brother—if Epitia gives herself to him. Epitia returns to the prison and there tells her brother to prepare to die, but he appeals to her to accept Juriste's terms—and surely, he says, the judge will marry her. Epitia, swayed by her affection for her brother, agrees and returns to Juriste, who seduces her and sends her home, with promises that he will send her brother to her. Instead, he sends her brother's severed head. Epitia pretends to be resigned, but plots revenge. She travels to the Emperor to tell her story. Juriste is summoned. Epitia repeats her accusations before Juriste and calls for justice. The conscience-stricken Juriste pleads for mercy. The Emperor orders their marriage, but then decrees that the new bridegroom must die for the brother's death. Epitia pleads for the repentant

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Juriste. The emperor is deeply moved and acquits Juriste, and the couple live happily ever after.

Cinthio's tale served as fruitful material not only to Shakespeare but also to another English writer, George Whetstone, whose work in turn served Shakespeare as a second source. Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*, like Cinthio's story and *Measure for Measure*, tells the story of a sister who, in pleading for her brother's life, arouses the passion of a corrupt judge. Promos offers Cassandra's brother clemency in exchange for the maiden's chastity. Cassandra, like the heroine in every version known prior to Shakespeare's, gives herself to the magistrate in order to save her brother. Promos promises to marry her and to spare her brother, but instead orders his execution. But in Whetstone's play, the jailer secretly substitutes the head of a felon, and saves the brother's life. In the end, Promos is forced to marry Cassandra, who must plead for the life of her new husband before the king. *Promos and Cassandra* is a straightforward "morality play." Popular in medieval drama, morality plays presented allegorical, single-dimensional characters who, with names like "Charity" and "Everyman," face and overcome moral temptation or conflicts. Intended to both entertain and instruct, their moral lessons were straightforward and clear cut.

In Whetstone it is a jailer, not the Duke, who devises the plan to save the brother's life. In Shakespeare's sources, the ruler remains lofty and detached. It is Shakespeare who creates a duke who never intends to relinquish power to his deputy. Shakespeare's play is not so simple as either Whetstone's or Cinthio's tale. If *Measure for Measure* is a morality play, we're never quite sure in whom "goodness" or "evil" reside.

Shakespeare takes the stories and characters of Whetstone and Cinthio and reshapes them. The lofty and detached emperor/king becomes the all-too-fallible Duke, who remains so involved in the story that he is accused by some scholars of being the playwright and director of a play-within-a-play. The magistrates of Cinthio and Whetstone sentence to death a brother who has committed rape; in Shakespeare, the magistrate sentences a young man for an act of mutual love committed with his betrothed. Shakespeare makes his maid a young religious novice who, unlike all her counterparts in earlier versions of this tale, chooses a brother's death over the loss of chastity. And as we come to know *Measure for Measure*, we'll see other inventions: a young

woman named Mariana who loves Angelo and serves in the Duke's plot to protect Isabella and her brother; a fair and decent magistrate named Escalus whom the Duke *could* have appointed as his deputy but does not; and an entire underworld peopled by "undesirables" who break the law and traffic in sin, but who appear somehow more human than their respectable counterparts in Viennese society.

Why these changes? Why does Shakespeare use old stories—and then add, omit and modify? These are questions, like the clues of a good mystery, that are interesting to explore and about which to imagine *possible* answers. This exploration of possibilities is what makes some knowledge of Shakespeare's sources interesting—not just the dry stuff of scholarship. It is in this zone of change where, if we're intrigued at all by the role of detective, we can get glimpses into Shakespeare's creative process.

If Shakespeare was such a good writer, why did he use others' stories so freely? In the Renaissance, when Shakespeare wrote, stories did not "belong" to an individual. There were no copyright laws and material was borrowed freely. But more important was the fact that stories were *meant* to be told and retold—as they had been for centuries and centuries before. Because so few people were yet literate (the printing press was invented only a century before Shakespeare's lifetime), much of history and the tales that people knew were communicated in speech, and passed from one generation to another. Stories belonged, in a sense, to a common pool for all to reach into and create their own stories. Creativity was based not upon new stories but on new tellings and reworkings of the old. ✱

MEASURE FOR MEASURE



What's in a Genre?

A COMEDY? A TRAGEDY?
A TRAGICOMEDY?
A PROBLEM COMEDY?
A PROBLEM PLAY?

Measure for Measure has been called everything in the book—a comedy, a dark comedy, a problem play, a problem comedy. The world of *Measure for Measure* is dark and inhabited by ambiguous, imperfect humans—not the stuff of comedy. The problem that has faced critics and audiences for centuries is this: *Measure for Measure* presents itself as one of Shakespeare's most disturbing, introspective tragedies for its first two-and-one-half acts; then, quite suddenly, the Duke, disguised as a friar, steps in and takes over as director, stage manager and casting agent! Some critics have referred to the play's second half as a "play-within-a-play," so different is it from the first half in tone, language and expected outcome. If we view the play as ending happily in four marriages not doomed to misery, we may be left dissatisfied with its psychological falseness.

We may have a comedy so somber that the festive conclusion seems forced, almost embarrassing; or, as in Romeo and Juliet, a tragedy so full of wit and tenderness that the catastrophe carries with it a sense of outrage. Here, as in most forms of intensive irony, the audience may remain divided in its reactions.

—Northrop Frye, 1965

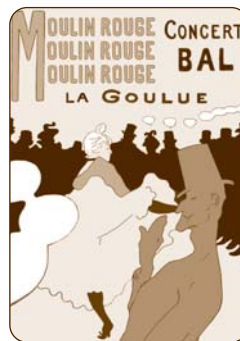
The axiom of tragedy, says Shakespearean scholar Northrop Frye, is that two corpses are better than one: "An Angelo for a Claudio, life for life." Instead, according to Frye, the action of *Measure for Measure* turns upward. No one is killed. Comedy, says Frye, demands its own logical end: a "new" society—replete with new marriages—that incorporates old repressive laws into a more lenient system. So for Frye, *Measure for Measure* is a comedy—no qualification necessary. To scholar Anne Barton, *Measure for Measure* represents Shakespeare's farewell to a comic art form that had served him well in the past, but now hampered the maturing playwright by its inherent limitations. In this light *Measure for Measure*,

which begins as a tragedy, is forced into a comic structure by a writer—and entertainer—not ready to turn his back completely on tried-and-true dramatic structures.

Historically, *Measure for Measure* has been looked upon by scholars as a flawed, imperfect play, occupying an uncomfortable "no-man's land" between comedy and tragedy.

That Shakespear (sic) made a wrong Choice of his subject, since he was resolved to torture it into a Comedy, appears by the low Contrivance, absurd Intrigue, and improbable Incidents, he was obliged to introduce, in order to bring about three or four Weddings, instead of one good Beheading, which was the Consequence naturally expected. —Charlotte Lennox, 1753

It seems to defy every attempt to categorize it. But *Measure for Measure*, like its companion "problem plays" (*All's Well That Ends Well* and *Troilus and Cressida*), was composed during the period when Shakespeare was creating his most magnificent work. *Macbeth* immediately precedes *Measure for Measure*; *Othello* is its contemporary; and *King Lear* would soon follow. This play contains some of Shakespeare's most brilliant verse, and reveals the playwright wrestling with the same mysteries of human life that he confronts in his tragedies. More has been written—and disputed—about this play since the mid-twentieth century than has been written about any other Shakespearean play, with the possible exception of *Hamlet*. ✱



1604 and All That

1604—the year that *Measure for Measure* was first performed and probably the year in which it was written—was pivotal in English history. In 1603, the great Queen's 45-year rule came to an end. Elizabethan England became "Stuart England" with the accession of the new King,

James I. It was a momentous year—a time of transition, uncertainty, and unsettled apprehension about England's future.

James I became the royal patron of Shakespeare's acting company, renamed the "King's Men." The most successful playwright was, in 1604, at the height of his creative

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genius. *Hamlet* was written. *King Lear* and *Macbeth* were soon to follow. *Measure for Measure* takes its place between the "best," in a period of transition and historic change—a time that so commonly spawns art.

As England's new ruler, James I was naturally an object of curiosity and interest to his subjects. He sought to present himself as a philosopher-king, who shaped his rule by Christian doctrine. He wrote a textbook of the political ethics and morals that guided him. James I reportedly went out disguised among his subjects to learn what they were saying, as Shakespeare's Duke Vincentio does. But though interested in his people and how to govern, James I lacked Elizabeth's finesse in balancing the warring religious factions that threatened to disrupt England's peace. The Catholics, Anglican Protestants, and the Puritans all demanded a voice in the political life of England. In this religious climate, capital punishment for fornication was not the stuff of fairy tale. Puritan extremists advocated such policy—and, in fact, in 1650 enacted a law punishing incest and adultery with death.

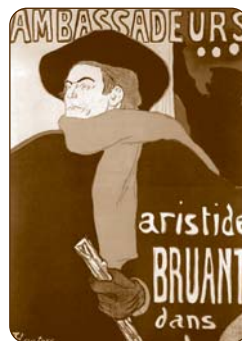
Religion was a particularly sensitive topic to Shakespeare's contemporaries. A royal proclamation in 1559 prohibited the staging of "either matters of religion or of the governance of the estate of the common weale." Puritan extremists believed that the acting of any play was an offense against religion. Puritan pamphleteer Phillip Stubbes wrote: "If they be of divine matter, then are they most intolerable, or rather Sacrilegious, for that the blessed word of God, is to be handled, reverently...not scoffingly."

There were moves intermittently throughout this period to suppress plays, arrest actors and close the theaters. The authorities associated the theaters with public disorder—not to mention a fertile breeding ground for the dreaded bubonic plague. And indeed, for the entire year preceding *Measure for Measure*'s first performance, London theaters were closed in an effort to contain the spread of the "Black Death" in one of the deadliest outbreaks of the disease in early modern England.

This was not the climate, one might think, in which to introduce a play with a title quoting directly from the Bible. And Shakespeare's new play probably aroused suspicion not only from religious extremists but also from the political authorities. Nevertheless Shakespeare was looked upon favorably by the two sovereigns who ruled during his lifetime. James I honored this company of

actors by becoming their royal patron. Only once in his career was Shakespeare's work censored. (The famous deposition scene in *Richard II* that depicts the dethroning of a king by a powerful nobleman was banned from the stage during Elizabeth's reign.)

Some scholars of Shakespeare have suggested that *Measure for Measure* was meant to flatter the new king, who might see himself in the well-meaning, pious Duke/Friar. Others, who read a darker side into Duke Vincentio's character, suggest that Shakespeare's intent might have been less one of flattery than of cloaked warning to those who bear their authority absolutely. Other scholars point to the increasingly powerful voice of the Puritan extremists in 1604 and see it reflected in the play's cast of absolutists: the absolute law of Angelo and the absolute piety of Isabella. We can be certain—absolutely—that the unstable political and religious life of England in 1604 influenced the "Vienna" that Shakespeare imagined as the setting for his *Measure for Measure*. What we *cannot* be certain of is the playwright's intention—and for that reason, this "problem play" has inspired in the past 50 years more discussion and heated debate than any other single work of Shakespeare's. ✱



To Have and To Hold?

THE RENAISSANCE LOOKS AT THE CONTRACT OF MARRIAGE

It is tempting in looking back upon history, particularly history separated from us by 400 years, to try to simplify another culture's code of behavior and morality. But it is more likely that *many* codes of behavior, and *many* moralities, co-existed side by side in a culture in flux, in a world where medieval cloisters were giving way to the discoveries of the Renaissance.

In the case of *Measure for Measure*, it might be tempting to look at Isabella and say, "Even if we can't accept her choice of chastity over her brother's life, in Shakespeare's day she made the only choice she morally could." But in fact it's not so clear that some of

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Shakespeare's audience would have embraced Isabella's absolutism any more than some of us will. The English playwright George Whetstone called his own heroine (Isabel's counterpart) just 25 years earlier, "a chaste ladye"—though Cassandra, unlike Isabella, chose to give up her virginity in exchange for her brother's life. (For more information on Whetstone's play as a source for Shakespeare, see "Something Borrowed, Something New.") So what do we know about chastity, betrothal and marriage in the minds of Shakespeare's contemporaries?

In the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church did not regard the blessing of a priest as essential to the validity of sacramental marriage. Clandestine marriages were common, but they also led to a variety of social problems. The lack of records raised questions about the legitimacy of children and about inheritance. A public marriage blessed by a priest that followed a dissolved clandestine marriage was still considered invalid before God. And so from the thirteenth century on, the official view of the Catholic Church was that marriage ought to be contracted before a priest and two witnesses, following a public announcement of the betrothal and the publication of banns. People who violated these practices were guilty of the sin of disobedience to the Church, but were not regarded as sexually immoral.

In 1563, Catholic Europe adopted the edicts of the Council of Trent, which stated that marriages required a priest and two witnesses. But England was a Protestant country and did not adopt these edicts. The Anglican Church of Elizabeth I and James I continued to hold clandestine marriages valid, even while denouncing them as illicit.

But in spite of Church sanctions, clandestine marriage was common throughout Europe—and evident throughout its literature. The union between Juliet and Claudio represents such a marriage. Indeed the stories of the Renaissance make it clear that clandestine marriages were not only quite commonplace, but also could be consummated without the stigma of immoral behavior—except in the eyes of the Puritans. The society mirrored in *Measure for Measure*, according to Shakespearean scholar Karl Wentersdorf, "is one in which canon law and civil law had existed side by side for centuries."

What we know of law and custom in Shakespeare's time suggests ambiguity rather than moral absolutes. Were

Claudio and Juliet wrong to have a child out of wedlock? Was Mariana wrong to sleep with her once-betrothed Angelo? Was Isabella wrong to choose chastity in place of her brother's life? We cannot divine answers by imagining a particular world view held by Shakespeare and his contemporaries. In *Measure for Measure*, the playwright poses one question after another, but declines to offer simple answers to any of them. We are left, perhaps as Shakespeare's audience was, to dig into our own experience, history, religious beliefs and social values to find our own answers there. ✱



Playnotes

THE DARK GOD AND HIS DARK ANGEL

No one ever understood the tangled web of sex and deception better than Shakespeare. *Measure for Measure* plumbs the murky depths of one manifestation of that web we see as consummately contemporary: sexual harassment. In the central plot, the Duke of Vienna goes into hiding and hands over his power—temporarily—to a deputy named Angelo, in order to enforce laws that the Duke himself has overlooked, to clean up the city's corrupt underworld, and to test Angelo's moral fiber. Angelo ruthlessly prosecutes those who violate Vienna's strictest laws prohibiting illicit sex, but his lust is perversely aroused by the purity and virtue of Isabel, a young novice into the convent. Angelo threatens to have Isabel's brother Claudio beheaded unless she submits to him sexually; she threatens, in return, to expose him, to which Angelo sneers, "Who will believe thee?" Shakespeare is never untimely; we, too, can still easily imagine a man in power saying this to a woman employee. But Isabel, lacking a 21st-century feminist consciousness, let alone legal support, uses deceit to save her honor: she promises to meet Angelo at night, but sends in her place Mariana, a woman whom Angelo previously promised to marry but jilted when she lost all her money.

Isabel's ploy is what Shakespearean scholars call a bedtrick (there's one in *All's Well That Ends Well*, too) and view as nothing but a contrived literary device (one reason why they often call this comedy a "problem play"). I

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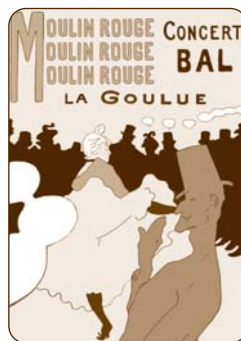
think it is much more. Shakespeare takes what is admittedly a narrative convention, a cliché, but transforms it into a revealing exposé of a sexual hypocrite; the trick works because to a man like Angelo the two women (perhaps all women) are alike in the dark. Moreover, bedtrick plots usually disregard the feelings of the woman who, as sexual surrogate, saves the heroine from a fate worse than death. But Shakespeare shows concern for the surrogate's rights and desires, too: Isabel's need to have Mariana take her place in Angelo's bed is justified by the subplot that makes Angelo not only the object of Mariana's desire but also her unwilling fiancé. Isabel's reaction when she learns that Mariana still hopes to marry Angelo is to say that Mariana would be better off dead, and Angelo is hardly likely to love Mariana any better when he learns that this "imagined person" (as Mariana calls herself) tricked him into bed. (Perhaps he will go on imagining her, pretending to himself that he has Isabel, and not Mariana, in bed.)

The dark side of sexuality—enhanced by a barrage of jokes about syphilis and sexual betrayal—is another factor that makes scholars call this a problem play. As a comedy, it is black as night. The ringmaster in this sexual cabaret is the man aptly referred to by his subject as "the Duke of Dark Corners," the Duke of Vienna, city of sexual intrigues (think Schnitzler, Freud, Fledermaus). Isabel's escape from Angelo proves to be a case of leaping from the frying pan into the fire, for she probably does not escape another, more subtle sexual harassment: she is silenced, literally dumb-struck, at the end of the play by the Duke's offer of marriage; she never says a word after he proposes, "Give me your hand, and say you will be mine." Hers is one of a number of coerced marriages at the end of the play, all of the others commanded by the Duke explicitly in punishment for some offense. Indeed, it is the Duke, not Isabel, who orchestrates her bedtrick—to get her away from Angelo, perhaps, the better to turn his own powers on her.

Here as in so much else, the Duke and Angelo are brothers; if the Duke is God (at the very least, he certainly enjoys playing God), Angelo is his dark angel. The sexual substitution of Mariana for Isabel is echoed in the political substitution of Angelo for the absent Duke. But there are other substitutions, too, such as Isabel's (sexual) maidenhead instead of Claudio's (political) head (though Claudio has not, in fact, been beheaded). When at the end the Duke proposes to cut off Angelo's head to pay for Claudio's but, instead, makes Angelo marry

Mariana for having raped her (thinking he was raping Isabel), the surrogations seem to cancel one another out: Angelo's head in payment for Claudio's, Mariana's maidenhead for Isabel's, but also, criss-crossing the political and the sexual, Angelo's head for Isabel's maidenhead. Sex and politics turn out to be equally treacherous bedmates. This, too, is a lesson for our time. ✱

—Wendy Doniger, 2004
The University of Chicago



Playnotes BETWEEN THE LINES

Measure for Measure, Shakespeare's last play traditionally categorized as "comedy," was written in 1604, between *Othello* and *King Lear*. As the play opens, the Duke of Vienna transfers his power to Angelo, "who scarce confesses that his blood flows," so that his surrogate can restore law, order, and family values in Vienna. As it concludes, the Duke resumes his authority, enforces three marriages, and proposes a fourth to Isabella, a nun-in-training. The play's tragi-comic plot, its settings (religious cloisters, a prison, the palace, and the city streets), and its performance before the newly crowned King James I, all emphasize the tough questions it asks. How can or should sexuality, marriage, and procreation be regulated? by the ruler? the law? the church? individual conscience? community moral standards?

Measure for Measure has often been called a "problem comedy" because it does not resolve these issues. The play resonates with our own passionate debates about the appropriate regulation of sexual behavior: debates about sexual harassment, rape, abortion, AIDS, gays in the military. It addresses directly topics current when it was first written: control of prostitution and venereal disease, prevention of illicit sex and illegitimate children, clarification of confusing marriage laws. Legal marriage then could be accomplished by vows exchanged privately between the couple followed by sexual consummation. But such private "spousals" were customarily ratified by financial agreements and a church wedding providing community and religious sanction to the match. Because three marriage "contracts" in the play

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

are ambiguous and disrupted, they serve as test cases for law and morality.

But solutions are elusive. Angelo revives a neglected statute and condemns Claudio to death for fornication, a punishment Puritans in Shakespeare's audience would have approved. But the conventional Elizabethan punishment for pre-marital sex was not death but public penance in Church and hasty marriage. Isabella, Claudio's sister, argues persuasively against abstract justice and for Christian mercy and forgiveness on the grounds that all humans share "natural guiltiness." Angelo, abandoning justice and mercy alike, offers her a quid pro quo: her body in return for Claudio's life. When she threatens to expose him, he, all-too-familiarly, flaunts the power of his office: "Who will believe thee, Isabel?" Trapped by his desire to "raze the sanctuary" of the virgin, Angelo will do what he condemns in others. Trapped by Claudio's demand that she risk her soul to save his life, Isabella refuses the mercy she advocates in others: "more than our brother is our chastity."

Into this legal and emotional impasse steps the Duke, disguised as a Friar, to relieve the characters from death through a bed-trick and a head-trick. But the Duke's maneuvers and the play's ending raise new questions. If those who exercise authority are corrupt like Angelo (who reneges on the deal) or deceitful like the Duke (who lies to everyone), is justice possible? Is the Duke, arranging the bed-trick ("this maid will I frame and make fit for his attempt") any different from Pompey the pimp, soliciting for prostitutes? If illicit sex is universal—"it is

impossible to extirp it quite until eating and drinking be put down"—are all attempts to regulate it or to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable sexual encounters futile?

In the last act, the Duke bypasses the law, dispenses forgiveness, and orders marriages which feel like punishments. Angelo, his guilt exposed, desires death. Claudio is silent. Lucio puns, "Marrying a punk, my lord, is pressing to death, whipping, and hanging," and Kate Keepdown, the prostitute who has borne his child, has no voice at all. The other women's repentance, love, and mercy may redeem the marriages and provide the "remedy" the play seeks. Juliet confesses her sin, but "takes the shame with joy." Isabella humbles herself, kneeling to second Mariana's request for mercy. Mariana, loving Angelo, forgives him, claiming "best men are molded out of faults." However, the Duke's final power play, a last-minute proposal to Isabella, goes unanswered in the text. Productions, dramatizing Isabella's silence, implicitly reveal their stand on the play's issues. Isabella can refuse and return to the nunnery, asserting women's rights to control their bodies and to reject coercive sexual bargains. She can accept gladly and become the Duke's wife, affirming that "happy" marriages lead to comic resolutions. She can remain undecided and leave questions about justice, mercy, and sexuality unresolved and in the hands of the audience. ✱

—Carol Neely, 1994
University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign



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WHAT THE CRITICS SAY

1700s



That Shakespear (sic) made a wrong Choice of his Subject, since he was resolved to torture it into a Comedy, appears by the low Contrivance, absurd Intrigue, and improbable Incidents, he was obliged to introduce, in order to bring about three or four Weddings, instead of one good Beheading, which was the Consequence naturally expected.

—Charlotte Lennox, 1753

1800s



The piece takes improperly its name from punishment; the true significance of the whole is the triumph of mercy over strict justice; no man being himself so free from errors as to be entitled to deal it out to his equals.

—A.W. Shlegel, 1809

Shakespear (sic) was in one sense the least moral of all writers; for morality (commonly so called) is made up of antipathies; and his talent consisted in sympathy with human nature, in all its shapes, degrees, depressions, and elevations. The object of the pedantic moralist is to find out the bad in every thing: his was to shew (sic) that 'there is some soul of goodness in things evil.'...In one sense, Shakespeare was no moralist at all: in another, he was the greatest of moralists. He was a moralist in the same sense in which nature is one. He taught what he had learnt from her. He shewed (sic) the greatest knowledge of humanity with the greatest fellow-feeling for it.

—William Hazlitt, 1817

[Measure for Measure]...is to me the most painful—say rather, the only painful—part of his genuine works. The comic and tragic parts equally border on the [detestable],—the one being disgusting, the other horrible; and the pardon and marriage of Angelo not merely baffles the strong indignant claim of justice—for cruelty, with lust and damnable baseness, cannot be forgiven, because we cannot conceive them as being morally repented of; but it is likewise degrading to the character of woman.

—Samuel Coleridge, 1818

But whilst our play in the first place recommends moderation in the exercise of justice, it occupies at the same time a far more general ground, and extends this doctrine to all human relations, exhibiting, as it were, the kernel of that opinion so often expressed by Shakespeare, of a wise medium in all things. It calls us universally from all extremes, even from that of the good, because in every extreme there lies an overstraining, which avenges itself by a contrary reaction...

—G.G. Gervinus, 1849–50

*[The] malevolence of Shakespeare is to be found in the play of **Measure for Measure**. We agree with Hazlitt, that this play seems to be written, perhaps more than any other, con amore [with love], and with a relish; and this seems to be the reason why, notwithstanding the unpleasant nature of its plot, and the absence of any very attractive character, it is yet one of the plays which take hold on the mind most easily and most powerfully.*

—Walter Bagehot, 1853

True justice is dependent upon just those finer appreciations which poetry cultivates in us the power of making.

—Walter Pater, 1874

1900s



In this play there is thus no single character through whose eyes we can see the questions at issue as Shakespeare saw them. His own thought is interwoven in every part of it; his care is to maintain the balance, and to show us every side. He stands between the gallants of the playhouse and the puritans of the city; speaking of charity and mercy to these; to those asserting the reality of virtue in the direst straits, when charity and mercy seem to be in league against it. His attitude is critical and ironical, expressed in reminders, and questions and comparisons. When we seem to be committed to one party, he calls us back to a feeling of kinship with the other...Measure for measure: the main theme of the play is echoed and re-echoed from speaker to speaker, and exhibited in many lights.

—Walter Raleigh, 1907

WHAT THE CRITICS SAY

1900s
(continued)



Rendering by Costume Designer Virgil C. Johnson

The trouble with *Isabella* is partly of course the trouble with all women in story who have to debate whether they will 'give themselves' for a consideration. The situation in itself makes virtue theoretical—and makes their own goodness problematical, a thing to be discussed, a commodity to be weighed and measured. The paradox of goodness is that when it is the most real it weighs the least, and thinks least of itself...We do not see her in her goodness; we only hear her telling like a termagant against those who doubt it. This is because Shakespeare is not primarily in love with it in his capacity as poet...The atmosphere of Vienna is the thing. It curls like acrid smoke through all the crannies of the plot, and in more secret ways than we know presents itself to our senses...And it hangs like a bitter scent above the humor of the play, which is as rank and real as anything in Shakespeare.

—Mark Van Doren, 1939

The rustling of that straw will be louder in our memory of **Measure for Measure** than Claudio's outcry in the face of death, or Angelo's perverse mutterings, or Isabella's panegyrics to her chastity. It is the permanent symbol for a city, itself all earth and rotting straw, with which Shakespeare at the moment can do no more than he had been able to do with the diseased bones of Pandarus' Troy. All he can do is stir it until its stench fills every street and creeps even into the black holes of prisons. In a tragedy, he might have done more, for tragedy is a cleansing stroke, like lightning...But comedy has its lightnings too, and none of them strikes Vienna. The bank of dark cloud above her forehead is never burned away.

—Mark Van Doren, 1939

It is probably true to say that **Measure for Measure** is that play of Shakespeare's which has caused most readers the greatest sense of strain and mental discomfort...The most obvious reason for this discomfort is to be found in the conflicting attitudes towards the main characters that seem to be forced upon us...

—L.C. Knights, 1942

When Angelo, in his determination to remove the causes of social disintegration, proceeds to enforce the statutes by pulling down the familiar houses of resort and punishing those who trafficked in them, he challenges instincts which lie at the very root of man's normal nature. The real problem is once more that of liberty. To enforce the law without convincing the guilty that they should freely accept it, that their mode of life involves a tragic neglect of spiritual possibilities which can only lead to ruin, is ultimately to deny all moral responsibility; and this is precisely what Angelo seems forced to do.

—Derek A. Traversi, 1942

Overdone! It might be the name of most of the leading characters of the play. Each of them is too something-or-other. And what they do is likewise overdone. Good and evil get inextricably mixed throughout **Measure for Measure**, for virtue is no exception to the rule, and, pushed to the limit, it turns into vice.

—Harold C. Goddard, 1951

Measure for Measure...is closely bound to Hamlet. It is as if Shakespeare, having exposed in that masterpiece and the plays that culminated in it the futility of revenge as a method of requiting wrong, asked: what then? How, when men fail to keep the peace, shall their quarrels be settled, their misconduct penalized, without resort to personal violence? To that question the all but universal reply of the wiser part of human experience seems to have been: by law. In place of revenge—justice... 'A government of laws and not of men.' It sounds august. But there never was, there is not, and there never will be, any such thing. If only laws would construe, administer, and enforce themselves! But until they do, they will rise no nearer justice than the justice in the minds and hearts of their very human agents and instruments.

—Harold C. Goddard, 1951

WHAT THE CRITICS SAY

1900s
(continued)



Rendering by Costume Designer Virgil C. Johnson

Much has been said about the difficulties of **Measure for Measure**. But, in truth, no play of Shakespeare shows more thoughtful care, more deliberate purpose, more consummate skill in structural technique, and finally, more penetrating ethical and psychological insight.

—G. Wilson Knight, 1962

Unlike Milton or Dante, Shakespeare had no ambition to be a systematic theologian or philosopher. He preferred to 'hold the mirror up to nature.' It was a many-faceted mirror that changed the passage of time, and the nature [that] it changed, reflected and recorded was a pluralistic mystery. What he gives us is not a religious system; it is more like an anthology, a collection of different points of view, an assortment of commentaries on the human predicament offered by persons of dissimilar temperament and upbringing.

—Aldous Huxley, 1964

To deny law is to deny society, to reject public experience; but it is only within the controlling network of law and society that individual experience can have meaning. Law is the articulation of the relations between things: particularly of the relations between private and public experience, personal behavior and society, self and others. Without law, personal experience can only remain fragmentary, socially irresponsible.

—Terence Eagleton, 1967

Outside of time, Shakespeare establishes a link with meanings about to be lost, and whose continuity will no longer survive except in darkness. But it is by comparing his work, and what it maintains, with the meanings that develop among his contemporaries and imitators, that we may decipher what is happening at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

—Michael Foucault, 1971

The Duke refuses to admit failure, but Shakespeare seems perversely to stress the hollowness, in a sense the falsehood, of the happy ending of this comedy.

—Anne Barton, 1974

Shakespearean comedy is in general deeply distrustful of absolutes, of characters who attempt to guide their lives according to rigid (and usually unexamined) ideals of conduct. **Measure for Measure** is no exception.

—Anne Barton, 1974

Like calls to like between them, and it is precisely this affinity which, as he senses himself, makes her so deadly to him...Beneath the sober and inflexible deportment of the lawgiver lurks a frustrated sensualist. Beneath the habit of the nun there is a narrow-minded but passionate girl afflicted with an irrational terror of sex which she has never admitted to herself. In collision over Claudio's fate, these two absolutists elicit from each other the unacknowledged and destructive aspects of their respective personalities. Angelo plunges into depravity, Isabella merely into hysteria and intolerance. In the course of the play both undergo a painful process of education.

—Anne Barton, 1974

The Duke suggests an obvious parallel with Shakespeare himself. There is something forced and blatantly fictional about the Duke's ultimate disposition of people and events—and so there is about Shakespeare's. The Duke refuses to admit failure, but Shakespeare seems perversely to stress the hollowness, in a sense the falsehood, of the happy ending of this comedy. He suddenly imposes upon a play which hitherto has probed uncomfortably deep into the dark places of society and the human mind, which has been essentially realistic, an ending which is that of fairy-tale: conventional, suspect in its very tidiness, full of psychological gaps and illogicalities.

—Anne Barton, 1974

Critical efforts to exorcise the play's demons, to disregard Shakespeare's illumination of the darker regions of the soul, in effect deny the play one of its boldest claims to truth. And to impose any external—thematic, formalist, or theological—solutions on the manifold and enduring problems

WHAT THE CRITICS SAY

1900s
(continued)



posed within it is, in fact, to deny this play its rightful claim to greatness. Finally, it seems impertinent to consider it the duty of criticism to solve problems that Shakespeare himself refused to solve. What remain pertinent are the problems posed.
—Harriet Hawkins, 1978

[The director Barry Kyle] saw Isabella as somebody who was very repressed, who didn't acknowledge a lot of things about herself, and who was maybe quite old, 'old' meaning forty. She was someone who had longed to go into a convent. (That would automatically make her an extremist. We were all pretty busy being promiscuous in 1978. There wasn't an awful lot of sympathy for chastity.)...Barry Kyle had this idea that Claudio was a terribly young and innocent boy, just in case the audience would side with Isabella too much. He cast him very young and moon-faced. For Barry I was very much the older sister. Which is nonsense. Isabella should be in a very strange position, being asked to redeem a rake.
—Paola Dionisotti, 1988 (Isabella in the RSC's 1978 production)

All of Isabella's main assumptions—that Angelo was condemned, that the Duke was a committed celibate, that her brother was dead, and that she herself would remain chaste for life—are challenged, if not negated, in the space of five lines. She remains speechless, a baffled actress who has run out of lines. The gradual loss of her personal voice during the course of the play has become, finally, a literal loss of voice. In this sense, **Measure for Measure** is Isabella's tragedy...the eloquent Isabella is left with no tongue.
—Marcia Riefer, 1984

If we can pardon Angelo, we can pardon everyone else, including each other, and ourselves.
—Harriet Hawkins, 1984

As a dramatist figure, the Duke perverts Shakespeare's established comic paradigm in that he lacks certain essential dramaturgical skills and qualities previously associated with comic dramatist figures—qualities necessary for a satisfying resolution of comedy...The prime victim of the Duke's flawed dramaturgy is, of course, Isabella, who, more than any of Shakespeare's heroines so far, is excluded from the 'privileges of comedy,' namely the privileges of exercising control over the events of the plot—privileges from which, Linda Bamber claims, it is Shakespeare's men who are typically excluded.
—Marcia Riefer, 1984

Outside the prison walls are more walls: Isabella's convent, Mariana's moated grange, and Angelo's double-locked garden and chamber. By the end of the play, although some of the characters will elect to remain in their enclosures, or will exchange one enclosure for another, most of the original doors will be opened, and the inmates will be allowed to leave.
—Phoebe S. Spinrad, 1984

In the Vienna of **Measure for Measure**, unrestrained sexuality is ostensibly subverting social order; anarchy threatens to engulf the State unless sexuality is subjected to renewed and severe regulation.
—Jonathan Dollimore, 1985

...[sexuality] appears to be that which power is afraid of but in actuality is that which power works through. Sin, especially when internalized as guilt, has produced the subjects of authority as surely as any ideology.
—Jonathan Dollimore, 1985

From the point of view of the sexual revolution of the early 1970s, it was very clear that several characters had sexual hang-ups, that the duke was a quasi-fascist and that the people who had a lot of sex were the heroes. It's not about that now. I think it's become a completely different play. That's why you can never aim for a definitive production of a Shakespeare play.
—Anthony Hytner, 1988 (Director of the RSC's 1987 production)

WHAT THE CRITICS SAY

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(continued)



All the choices in **Measure for Measure** are extreme. It seems paradoxical, but I think the play ultimately is about balance, some idea of harmony, the reconciliation of opposites. Ethically, Shakespeare always comes back to the middle ground. Theatrically, though, he comes back having explored the outer reaches, the extremities.

—Juliet Stevenson, 1988 (Isabella in the RSC's 1987 production)

The 'modernity' of **Measure for Measure** derives from its approach to both moral and aesthetic questions. It is profoundly distrustful of moral absolutes, like chastity and justice, and recognizes the self-delusion and hypocrisy that dependence on such absolutes can lead to.

—Anthony B. Dawson, 1988

There were contemporaries who would have agreed with Angelo that death was not an excessive penalty for fornication, but they were the same zealots who were most vehement against the theater. They would not (it seems safe to say) have been part of the audience for **Measure for Measure**. To the extent that London theatrical audiences resented the reformers' endless campaigns against the public 'enormity' of stage plays, they may have found it easy to applaud the duke's exposure of a civic leader who was overly precise. The place of the duke's highly theatrical trial just outside the jurisdiction of the city was, in London, the place of the stage itself. There is a natural topographical alliance between the theatricality of the duke and the institution which brought him to life on stage on the outskirts of London.

—Leah Marcus, 1988

Isabella's power, place, and value in society are so determined by her chastity that its forfeiture would constitute for her a form of social and psychological suicide. What is ironic about Isabella's commitment to her chastity is her self-righteous assurance that this commitment is governed exclusively by her religious convictions; what her language subversively reveals is that it is psychically and socially determined. In other words, she is ignorant of how she, as subject, is constituted and subjected by her chastity.

—Barbara Baines, 1990

Distrust of sexuality remains so much in force that Shakespeare deliberately minimizes his one chance for a conventional happy ending: though Claudio and Juliet enter together, there is no indication that they have noticed one another; they remain as separate at the end as at the beginning, unjoined by the Duke who specializes in joining only those who do not want to be together.

—Janet Adelman, 1991

So pressing is the personal aspect of the Duke's attitude towards Angelo throughout the play that we need to remind ourselves of the political stakes of the contest. These are real and high. For if Angelo never displays the slightest disrespect for the Duke, either as a man or as a ruler, it is nonetheless apparent that against the background of the latter's avowed negligence such a transcendent reputation for righteousness is one of his officials is bound implicitly to 'do in slander' the Duke himself, with potentially dangerous practical consequences.

—Richard Hillman, 1992

Isabella is reduced by the attitudes of Lucio, Angelo and Claudio to a sexual being at the very point in her life when she has chosen abstinence from sex as a way of life. Isabella is reduced, not because sexual activity is essentially reductive, but because all other aspects of identity are being denied her.

—Linda Macfarlane, 1993

The logic of comedy may require that Isabella, Mariana, and Juliet progress from their unstable marital roles and sexualities into the nominally stable marital role and sexuality of the 'wife.' Yet Mistress Elbow demonstrates that such a resolution is fictive, for she provokes, instead of dispelling, the anx-

WHAT THE CRITICS SAY

1900s
(continued)



Rendering by Costume Designer Virgil C. Johnson

ieties that surround and interpret Juliet's active sexual desire on the one hand and Isabella's virginity on the other.
—Mario DiGangi, 1993

The public parade and imminent execution of Claudio focuses the issues...This scene helped me get a sense of how massively the Duke has failed. I began to form a picture of a man who was a recluse, an intellectual, and a celibate; a man with a rapid mind, but who has, in a sense, thought himself into paralysis and inaction...Above all things the Duke lacks certainty. Angelo, on the other hand, seems absolutely certain of how to live and govern. Perhaps fourteen years ago the Duke was certain too.

—Roger Allam, 1993 (the Duke in Nicholas Hytner's 1987 production at the RSC)

People often used to ask me whether [the Duke and Isabella] married or not, annoyed at our denying them a happy ending, or suspicious at our being over optimistic. We thought probably they did, but only after a very long conversation.

—Roger Allam, 1993 (the Duke in Nicholas Hytner's 1987 production at the RSC)

A fascination with the substitutability of one body for another is recurrent in Shakespeare. In many of his comedies, it reflects a primary irony of sexual desire: that the lover's vivid conviction—or illusion—of the beloved's uniqueness conflicts with a kind of eros perhaps best described as depersonalized genital attraction.

—Katherine Eisaman Maus, 1995

*One symptom of the Duke's limitation, and the theater's, is the way that the characters' inwardness, apparently so entirely divulged to his (and our) omniscient, managing vision, recedes almost instantly into unknowability in the midst of what is structured as a scene of revelation and pardon... In the final lines of **Measure for Measure** most of the characters resist, even repudiate our scrutiny. Shakespeare seems deliberately to puncture the illusion of complete revelation, reasserting the problem of unknowable inward truth just at the moment when it might be supposed to disappear.*

—Katherine Eisaman Maus, 1995

...since no modern company or director would wish to present a purely 'archaeological' production, even if this were possible, and since we are necessarily the products of our own time, like the contemporary critic, a modern production will interpret the text in a manner which will reflect our own interests and attitudes.

—Peter Corbin, 1996

*Casting an actor in a role may support certain lines of interpretation and encourage a specific audience response, but it also limits other possibilities. To cast the Duke in **Measure for Measure** as an elderly man may suggest a weariness with the intractability of role as his motivation for handing over power to Angelo; cast as a young man, the audience may more easily receive the impression of an inexperienced ruler attempting to escape responsibilities.*

—Peter Corbin, 1996

The text's play-world, although located in Vienna, thus allowing Isabella the opportunity of taking the veil, is very much that of early Jacobean London. ...The world of the play is one in which there is a gross discrepancy between an official Puritan zeal and an extreme social moral laxity, between a theological orthodoxy, largely alien in our society, and a plea for a generous recognition of the imperfectability of man. The moral nub of the play sharply focuses on the experience of two resting places and their implications, the bed and the block..

—Peter Corbin, 1996

...the play nevertheless raises dramatic and moral questions, and has engendered sharp criticism...The answer to these concerns, and the defense of the play, lies with understanding how Shakespeare used equity to ameliorate the harshness of traditional rules and to allow for an idea new to societies emerging from the early Renaissance: the idea of tolerance...In fact, the entire plot might

WHAT THE CRITICS SAY

1900s
(continued)



be seen as establishing, in a primitive way, the idea of tolerance. To tolerate an act is not necessarily to endorse or approve it. ...The traditional analogue to what we now consider toleration is, of course, mercy. Mercy allows us to condemn the act but pardon the actor.
—Joel Levin, 1996

Although it is not entirely clear in the play whether mercy or women are more threatening to the order of things, that these tensions remain unresolved becomes most clear in Angelo's ensuing sexual assault on Isabella.
—Nicholas Radel, 1996

Whatever the cause of the Duke's withdrawal, its effect is one of displayed potency. His friarly masquerade conduces to—and perhaps aims at—an effect of rejuvenation, a recovery and legitimation of patriarchal authority.
—David McCandless, 1997

Both tragic and comic elements coexist not only in the same play but in the same scenes, and they make up a very complete but very bizarre world.
—Tim Ocel, 1998

A thorough history of Shakespearean criticism, Stanley Cavell once wrote, 'would be part of a full description of Western cultural history since the Renaissance.' Criticism of **Measure for Measure** would make a peculiar—but certainly instructive and fascinating—contribution to that history, demonstrating just how crowded with vexed issues at the heart of Western culture a single play can be.
—Richard Wheeler, 1999

2000s
(to be continued)



The poetry, often as fine as any in the canon, is all in the tragedy.
—Frank Kermode, 2000

...**Measure for Measure** might have been written in order to vindicate Foucault's analysis of the origins of the carceral society. The play provides a textbook instance of the transition from a culture in which power asserts itself through spectacular, public displays of punitive violence, to one which secures subjection by subtler strategies of surveillance, concession and repressive tolerance.
—Kiernan Ryan, 2001

In *Angelo*, Shakespeare portrayed the Puritan as inquisitor, who must legislate sex in order to control its dangerous power. His tyranny is a cryptic mode of self-discipline: the rational mind conquers the rebel loins. Angelo's ruthless rigidity would be carried by England's Puritan émigrés to America, where it can be seen in the show trials of Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* or Special Prosecutor Kenneth Starr's marathon investigation into Bill Clinton's dalliances.
—Camille Paglia, 2004

There is no love in this play. Its subject—I repeat—is punishment.
—John Berger, 2004

For me the play's greatest speech is Isabella's tirade against politicians: "Man, proud man, dressed in a little brief authority..." World leaders please note.
—John Carey, 2004

Apart from **Measure for Measure**'s seminal role as the mother of all plays that pose questions and give no answers, its exploration of the tension between honesty and bullshit has nurtured my own recurrent theme.
—Film maker Mike Leigh, 2004

Indeed, it is the Duke, not Isabel, who orchestrates her bedtrick—to get her away from Angelo, perhaps, the better to turn his own powers on her. Here as in so much else, the Duke and Angelo are brothers; if the Duke is God (at the very least, he certainly enjoys playing God), Angelo is his dark angel.
—Wendy Doniger, 2004

A PLAY COMES TO LIFE



A Look Back at *Measure for Measure*

Measure for Measure's underworld, with its brothels, disease, prisons and hangmen, was no more unfamiliar to

Shakespeare's London audience than to his Viennese characters. In fact, London's urban geography necessitated familiarity: it placed its theaters beside its brothels, hospitals, prisons and leper-houses in an area of the city called "The Liberties." Here at the city's edge were placed the parts of its life that it could not entirely control—nor entirely eradicate. And so, Shakespeare's audience on its way to and from the Globe Theatre on London's Bankside experienced a world that looked very much like the "Vienna" it saw on stage.

The only performance of *Measure for Measure* during Shakespeare's lifetime that any surviving written record documents took place at the London palace of James I. "Mesur for Mesur" by "Shaxberd" was performed for the new king—and patron of Shakespeare's acting company—on St. Stephen's Night, December 26, 1604. But it is likely that *Measure for Measure*, written late in 1603 or 1604, was performed first at the Globe Theatre—quite possibly in the summer of 1604, when London theaters were allowed to open after a devastating year of plague and death. It was not unusual for the theaters to be shut down during outbreaks of the plague, and from the summer of 1603 to the following summer, the stage of the Globe was "dark." The plague was a fact of life and death in Shakespeare's London. And the theaters, gathering places of people from all walks of life, were viewed as breeding grounds for the killer. Did Vienna's disease-ridden underworld seem so very far away from London's? Probably not.

The Renaissance theater was eyed with suspicion by public authorities, who feared not only the spread of disease, but also its influence upon an impressionable population. But to religious extremists, its pageantry was viewed as sacrilegious, an unnecessary evil that should be outlawed. And so it was in 1642, following Cromwell's overthrow of the monarchy. When theater was legalized again 18 years later, Shakespeare, dead for

nearly two generations, was considered a bit old-fashioned and ripe for adaptation. After the first recorded performance of *Measure for Measure* in 1604, no later documentation remains until a performance in 1662—an adaptation by William Davenant, Shakespeare's godson (who also claimed to be the illegitimate son of his godfather). Following in his godfather's footsteps, Davenant apparently had no qualms about taking bits of one story here and another story there and concocting a stew all his own! Import Beatrice and Claudio from *Much Ado About Nothing* into the Vienna streets of Isabella and Angelo (now the brother, incidentally, of Claudio...), and you're well on your way to creating the surprising world of Davenant's *The Law Against Lovers*. Davenant's play was one of many such adaptations of Shakespeare that commanded the stages of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Stage performance, like all other art, is a product of its times and culture. A director's vision may be influenced by political events, social movements, or current schools of thought among scholars. To the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the subject matter of this play was considered thoroughly indecent. Anna Jameson in 1836 wrote an entire chapter on Isabella, and never once mentioned the kind of bargain Angelo proposed. As the nineteenth century progressed, Shakespeare's play, with all its allusions to venereal disease, poverty and sex as a commodity, was not the stuff that an urban middle class, sexually prudish and anxious about its newfound status, wanted to acknowledge or watch for its entertainment, and *Measure for Measure* fell into disfavor. But in 1929, Shakespearean scholar G. Wilson Knight wrote a book that influenced the interpretation of Shakespeare's play for a generation to come. Knight viewed the play as a religious allegory and its ending as neither inconsistent nor illogical. Knight saw a play of Christian mercy and forgiveness—and a Duke who represented a prophet guiding other characters' spiritual growth.

In 1950 England's Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) brought to life Knight's vision—an interpretation by director Peter Brook that held the stage consistently for the next 20 years, and still influences many productions. Brook cut lines freely from the text (such as Isabella's "I had rather my brother die by the law than my son should be unlawfully born") that might otherwise tarnish this idealized vision of the Duke and Isabella. The climax of this production took place each night just before

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Isabella knelt beside Mariana to plead for Angelo's pardon. Brook instructed his Isabella to pause as long as the audience could stand—sometimes as long as two full minutes of silence—before kneeling. Thus Brook dramatically portrayed the Duke's lesson of mercy as painfully learned by an Isabel who now at last experienced the real meaning of charity.

By the latter half of the twentieth century, western culture had changed enough to take still another look at *Measure for Measure*. Audiences familiar with Freudian psychology took a very different look at Angelo, Claudio and the Duke. The anti-war movement of the Vietnam Era shaped a cultural perspective that no longer revered its leaders but looked instead for leaders' feet of clay—and usually found them. The Women's Movement gave us the ability to look at Isabel's silence and see in it something other than grateful compliance. A woman might reject a man—even a duke. *Measure for Measure*, historically viewed as one of Shakespeare's worst plays, enjoyed a popular revival among modern audiences, and something "so radical as to amount to a rediscovery" among Shakespeare scholars.

By 1970 a major production, responding to the feminist consciousness of the times, came to look at the play through ironic versus rose-colored glasses of the past. Directed by John Barton at England's Royal Shakespeare Company, the Duke became a "study of inconsistency"—and the lines deleted from Brook's production in 1950 returned to Barton's stage. When the Duke proposed marriage to Isabella, she did not answer. At his first proposal, Isabella buried herself in her brother's embrace. After his second proposal, there followed a long pause. Eventually, the Duke uttered a resigned, "So," followed by another pause, "bring us to our palace" and walked alone off stage. Isabel, too, was left alone, bewildered and looking out at the audience. The play's so-called "happy ending," however unconvincing it may have been to earlier audiences, to contemporary audiences had become meaningless. Barton's re-interpretation of Isabella's silence helped modern audiences rediscover this ambiguous and difficult text, spotlighting the powerlessness of a young woman in a world ruled by men.

Following in Barton's tradition, Keith Hack's 1974 production at the RSC in Stratford was performed, darkly, in the style of Bertolt Brecht. The Duke was portrayed as the actor/manager among a group of disgruntled actors

performing in a Victorian stock company. Hack, who saw in Shakespeare's *Measure* a fable of social oppression, was never asked to direct again at Stratford, his vision too harsh for the time that bred it.

In stark contrast four years later, director Barry Kyle's production on Stratford's stage was a welcomed relief as it mined the script's unexplored comedy. Kyle cast a young, mischievous romantic lead in the role of the Duke. Together, he and Isabella clearly enjoyed their mutual plotting—and giggling together. Peering out from her constricting wimple's small cutaway, a tight-faced Isabella was portrayed as someone much in need of a way out of her deeply repressed sexuality: a playful Duke provided the cure.

The English director Jonathan Miller set his 1975 production in 1912—in the Vienna of Sigmund Freud, "a society where instinct is stifled by the code of correct behavior." Never taking her eyes off the Duke even after his exit from the stage, Isabella backed away from him step-by-step toward the convent, never to re-emerge. A decade later, another production (directed by Michael Bogdanov at Canada's Stratford Festival) portrayed a Vienna of leather-clad transvestites and whores—and a Duke who enjoyed watching the licentious activities of his subjects. The entire theater was transformed into a brothel-nightclub, and the final act



Chicago Shakespeare's 1994 production of *Measure for Measure*, directed by Artistic Director Barbara Gaines

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was staged as a grand theatrical show managed by the Duke. The play's final lines, spoken from the aisles with the house lights up, were intended to emphasize the embarrassment of so public a setting for so private a revelation.

In sharp contrast to Bogdanov's interpretation was Adrian Noble's 1983 production in Stratford, England. Noble's production, set in late eighteenth-century Vienna, approached the story through a humanistic lens instead. Noble's Duke was testing Isabella, much as Petruchio tests and shapes his Kate, preparing her for a harmonious marriage. This was a *Measure for Measure* that accepted its association with the genre of comedy, embracing marriage as a happy resolution to society's darker conflicts.

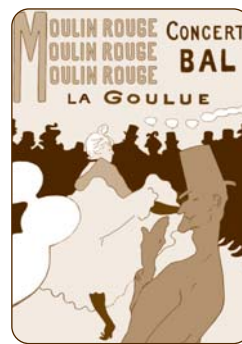
Three years later, also at Stratford, Nicholas Hytner's staging challenged Noble's optimism. Set in a bleak, modern city with obvious fascist overtones, this Vienna's underworld was dismal, sordid and devoid of real pleasure or life. Hytner created a realistic, contemporary prison, where Claudio was abandoned to strip searches and drug dealers. A men's public toilet set beneath the teeming urban street was home to Hytner's "rent-boy" whores, with Pompey as their pimp. Hytner's Isabella was not reviled so much by the thought of sex as by the entire patriarchal system entrapping her.

When Hytner became the artistic director of the Royal National Theatre, he turned to *Measure for Measure* once more, with a 2004 production in collaboration with Theatre Complicite, and directed by Simon McBurney. It was a play that prompted the Evening Standard theater critic to write, "I can't remember when I was last so shocked, startled or disturbed by Shakespeare." Set in contemporary dress, the two-plus-hour production was played without intermission at a "ferocious pace." McBurney brought a sense of feverish sexual repression to the play's authority figures, as he portrayed a group of characters destroyed by the dangerous conjunction of sex and death. His Isabella was passionate and earnest; his Angelo as psychologically insightful as he was sadistic.

Chicago Shakespeare Theater first staged the play in 1994, directed by Artistic Director Barbara Gaines (who also directs the Theater's 2005 production). Gaines chose to set her production in Victorian Europe, a time and place of sexual repression—and expression. The

dark and drab formal cutaway coats of the sober Court gave way to the hot, exotic floors of Vienna's unrepressed underworld, with its garishly painted whores, influenced in this production by the world of French artist Toulouse-Lautrec and the darker, introverted vision of Viennese painter Egon Schiele. Gaines often opens her productions with an extra-textual scene that communicates, without words, the emotional climate of the world of the play. In *Measure for Measure*, two nuns were accosted by a group of thugs in the dark city streets. She cast the duke as an older and rigidly pompous man, an ineffectual leader who stood ominously beside Isabella as prey, removing her wimple as she stood immobile and silent.

The same playwright and the same words have been understood and brought to life in countless ways for four centuries. The never-ending search for meaning in Shakespeare's language and his psychologically complex characters is testament to the playwright's power and genius. Each time a director approaches Shakespeare she hopes to bring to light something previously hidden. What is remarkable about Shakespeare's art is that, 400 years later, directors still succeed in doing just that. ✱



Shakespeare Revisited...

IN WHICH BENEDICK
AND BEATRICE MEET
ANGELO AND ISABELLA

Following the English civil wars and an 18-year hiatus when the theaters of London were closed by Parliamentary decree, drama—along with the restored monarchy—returned. The England of the Restoration was not the England of Queen Elizabeth and her Stuart successors, James I and Charles I. Nor was its theater or theatrical tastes those of the Elizabethans. Shakespeare's Globe, razed in 1644, was no more, and was soon to be the site of tenements. Shakespeare's plays did return, but were considered by now a bit old-fashioned—and ripe for adaptation.

Enter William Davenant, godson to Shakespeare and, by Davenant's own claim, the Bard's bastard son.

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Davenant's "The Duke's Company" was one of two London theater companies licensed by Charles II immediately following the restoration of the monarchy. The Duke's Company performed Shakespeare's work—now adapted for its modern audiences. *The Laws Against Lovers* was Davenant's own reworking of his putative father's *Measure for Measure*. The story is a familiar one to *Measure for Measure* audiences, with a few variations on the theme...

Beatrice (of *Much Ado about Nothing* fame) is imported, along with her Benedick (who now, incidentally, in brother to Angelo), the ringleader of a rebellion that overthrows Angelo's pitiless rule. The rebels storm the prison, free Isabella's brother Claudio, and incarcerate Angelo. In chains and in love, Angelo is deeply remorseful. HE had only meant to test Isabella's virtue, never to violate it. As in Shakespeare's tale (but not, interestingly, in any of his sources), Davenant's Isabella passes the test with flying colors.

When the Duke returns, he pardons all at the play's end, and the "wedding disease" is caught by almost everybody: Benedick and Beatrice, Claudio and Juliet—and the repentant Angelo and his Isabella. And the Duke? He is left to govern. ✱



An Interview with Director Barbara Gaines

The director of a play approaches a text with his or her own vision. Shakespeare's words, like those of other playwrights, are written on a page for us to read and speak aloud. But a play's words, like most human communication, are open to interpretation. Plays are written to be enacted. It is the work of a director and her designers and her actors to "decode" the play and bring the play creatively to life.

The director reads the play closely and, from the printed words on the page, begins to create a living, visual image—or rather, a series of images that eventually unfold before us, alive on stage. She develops a "concept," a basic, central interpretation that helps us

approach the play and enter its world with both feet—and our imaginations.

She plans closely with her designers—the artists who visually create the world of the play—through stage settings, costumes, lighting and sound. Working together, the director and designers "physicalize" the abstract ideas and make them a concrete part of the theatrical experience that surrounds the actors and us.

Violations of power, perhaps more than crimes of the heart, expose the dark world of *Measure for Measure*. *Chicago Tribune* cultural critic Julia Keller interview Director Barbara Gaines about the shadowy subject.

Q: Why does *Measure for Measure* have such resonance and meaning for you?

A: What interests me most is the nature of power: What is power and how do we use it once we've got it? And why does power so often corrupt? These are questions that challenge us today just as they challenged people 400 years ago because they are the themes of mankind.

Q: We all know the saying, "Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely." But why? Isn't there such a thing as power for good?

A: Most people, I believe, start out with good intentions. But as we see so often in Shakespeare, once people get power, they don't want to lose it. It's what we do to *keep* power that corrupts. That journey from civic duty to self-interest has been made over and over again throughout world history. It is the Achilles' heel of so many.

Q: In *Measure for Measure* we see power politics at a systemic level playing out all the way down to the most intimate, personal level.

A: A wonderful scholar, Harold Goddard, wrote about *Measure for Measure* that if you want to know a man, give him power. The Duke of Vienna backs away from his power because he doesn't want the people to hate him. He gives his deputy the dirty job of cleaning up the city. Angelo comes in and starts enforcing Vienna's laws—including one that prohibits all sex outside marriage, an offense punishable by death. Then, Isabel, a young woman about to enter the convent, comes to Angelo pleading that he spare her brother, who is sentenced to die for having committing this offense. She is compelling—and suddenly Angelo feels power-

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less. All the emotions he has repressed his whole life rise to the surface. He can't control them. He breaks the law and his own personal code of conduct when, at long last, he becomes a feeling person. But he makes a mistake of hubris by assuming those laws are for others, and not for him.

Q: Power in the form of sexual politics is so prevalent in *Measure for Measure*.

A: And it is still. Isabel, a young woman about to enter the convent, doesn't have a voice. After Angelo tries to seduce her, she responds, "I will tell the world aloud, what kind of man thou art." And you know what he says? "Who will believe thee, Isabel? My unsoiled name...and my place in the state..." He says that no one will believe her story when placed against his; she's just a woman, a nobody. Left alone, she says, "To whom should I complain? Did I tell this, who would believe me? O perilous mouths." It is so poignant. I see this as a metaphor for all people who don't have a voice within their community. To whom should they complain? How should they affect change in their lives? *Measure for Measure* is known as a "problem comedy," but to me it's a tragedy, because it is inhabited by characters who have no say about how they live their lives. How do you speak up when no one listens? That is the antithesis to power.

Q: And what does the exercising of real power look like to you?

A: I think real power is a reverence for life—taking care of the lives and the people around you. That's the only thing in the world that makes sense to me. ✱

On December 3, 2004, Director Barbara Gaines met with the cast of *Measure for Measure* at "first rehearsal." She shared this quote with them:

When power leads man toward arrogance, poetry reminds him of his limitations. When power narrows the areas of man's concern, poetry reminds him of the richness and diversity of his existence. When power corrupts, poetry cleanses, for art establishes the basic truths which must serve as the touchstone of our judgment.

—John F. Kennedy, 1963



An Interview with Costume Designer Virgil C. Johnson

Director of Education and Communications Marilyn Halperin and Publications Manager Kelly Lewis talked with Costume Designer Virgil Johnson in October about his upcoming design work for *Measure for Measure*.

Q: First of all, could you describe what you're trying to create in your costume world for *Measure for Measure*?

A: I haven't designed this play before, so I'm anxious to see how we solve the problems in it. It's an interesting play, a play that has three worlds—like most of Shakespeare plays have multiple worlds: groups of people who represent either a social class or a group of like-minded people.

This play has three groups: the testosterone-high crowd, all of the men who are running the police state. And we have to believe that the central male figure, because of his look and because of his intensity, is probably going to be a good leader. He turns out, of course, for complicated psychological reasons, not to be. Then, we have the world of Isabella and the nuns, and this is a world that is, in a sense, standing outside the real world of the state. And because Isabella—as Barbara [Gaines] once said to me—views herself as being married to Jesus, they're on a spiritual plane that's their own world. So consequentially, we're designing for them a world of white—purity, unblemished, unmarred. The third group is the one that includes all of the bordello scenes and essentially the sort of giant comic characters, the good character parts. And that world is a world of life. Admittedly it's pretty raw because it's all whoredom, not respectable, but at the same time it's in this illicit world that there's color, that people are saying and doing what they think and feel, as opposed to the other worlds, which are very austere, all in blacks and dark grays.

The people surrounding Angelo and the black-clad crowd are as limited in their thinking and their expan-

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siveness as Isabella is restricted and limited in her thinking. Generally, the Isabella-type woman who has intensity with no moderation becomes a Joan of Arc, and they always get burned at stakes. And so the question is, where is the middle ground? You have these three extremes, the illicit world, the world of the police state, and the world of salvation. And where is the middle ground? And it might be a play about that, pausing us to think, “What is it?” We don’t have evidence in the play that any of the characters finds it. The play has a tragic ending to me.

Q: Where does your process go from there?

A: Once you get the structure of the play worked out and you understand how the director is viewing it, then the question becomes, “How do I design three groups?” I felt the design should be rather simple. It’s not *My Fair Lady*; it’s not *Romeo and Juliet*. It’s a very austere play, so consequently I think that if my work is successful, the world is so effectively created that no one will even remember what the clothes were! Well, I suspect that you’ll remember some of the tarts and bordello scenes because all sorts of body parts will be out, but basically the idea of the design is to not be intrusive, but to be clear. And that’s hard, too. It’s easy to sew sequins on things and put a red costume on stage or a white dress—those are all ways of pulling the focus for a designer or a performer, and I’m not doing that for this show. It’s *groups* of people.

Q: Where and when will this production be set, and how is that choice influencing your design?

A: We’re setting the play in 1900 Vienna, but it isn’t really specific, and there’s nothing architecturally that states specifically that we’re either here or there. But the clothes were largely based on two influences: one was the Austrian court at the turn of the twentieth century, and the other was in the Parisian bordello life of the French artist, Toulouse-Lautrec. So we have Toulouse-Lautrec sort of marrying Gustav Klimt, however that works! My research was to fully flesh out both of those worlds and to figure out a way to make them look like they’re “a” world. So I don’t think you’ll say, “Gee, it looks like we’re in Paris,” or “I think we’re in Vienna.” But my research and the elements, the shapes, the feelings of things, are all taken from those two cities at the turn of the century. The point is that

it’s still “modern” dress. The men will be wearing uniforms, and the women, such as they are, will be in turn-of-the-century dress.

Q: Are you drawing parallels between the costuming of Angelo and Isabella, though they represent two different worlds?

A: The Angelo and the Isabella don’t really pull together in any way visually—but you’re right, they do represent extremes in points of view, inflexible and unaltering. It’s interesting that you ask. His costume is kind of monk-like: it’s like a religious outfit even though he’s not a religious person. It’s buttoned up and high-necked. He’s totally enclosed: he’s enclosed as a person and he’s enclosed in his clothes. In a sense it’s “the clothes that make the man”; they tell us who he is. Inside he’s rotten to the core, and he wrestles with that. He’s smart enough to know that what he’s doing is not acceptable, but he can’t contain himself. She does the same thing. When faced with choices in the play that could demonstrate maybe smarts, or some latitude—and I’m not suggesting that she go to bed with the jerk to save her brother’s life, but there are ways of talking about it that she doesn’t do—they’re both black and white characters (which, I guess, is why it ultimately turned out to be a black and white design). But she, too, is closed up to the neck. They’re kind of made for each other even though they’re opposites. ✱

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES



Theater Warm-ups

A brief physical and vocal warm-up can help your students move from a “classroom mode” to a “studio mode.” It sets the tone for a student learning Shakespeare in a theatrical sense as well as a literary sense.

Every actor develops his/her own set of physical and vocal warm-ups. Warm-ups help the actor prepare for rehearsal or performance not only physically, but also mentally. The actor has the chance to focus on the work at hand, forgetting all the day-to-day distractions of life, and beginning to assume the flexibility required to create a character. The body, the voice and the imagination are the actor’s tools.

PHYSICAL WARM-UPS

Getting started

- * creates focus on the immediate moment
- * brings students to body awareness
- * helps dispel tension

Begin by asking your students to take a comfortable stance with their feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointing straight ahead, knees relaxed. Ask them to inhale deeply through their noses, filling their lungs deep into their abdomen, and exhale through their mouths. Repeat this a few times and ask them to notice how their lungs fill like a six-sided box, creating movement in all six directions.

Warm up from the top of the body down

(This entire process should take about seven to ten minutes.)

- * gentle movement helps increase circulation, flexibility, and body readiness
- * increases physical and spatial awareness

(a) Begin by doing head-rolls to the left and to the right, about four times each way, very slowly. Then do a series of shoulder rolls to the back and to the front, again very slowly, and emphasizing a full range of motion.

(b) Stretch each arm toward the ceiling alternately, and try to pull all the way through the rib cage, repeating this motion six to eight times.

(c) Next, with particular care to keep knees slightly bent, twist from the waist in each direction, trying to look behind. Again, repeat six to eight times.

(d) From a standing position, starting with the top of the head, roll down with relaxed neck and arms until the body is hanging from the waist. Ask the students to shake things around, making sure their bodies are relaxed. From this position, bend at the knees, putting both hands on the floor. Stretch back up to hanging. Repeat this action about four times. Then roll back up—starting from the base of the spine, stack each vertebra until the head is the last thing to come up.



Rendering by Costume Designer Virgil C. Johnson

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

(e) Repeat the deep breathing from the beginning of the warm-up. Ask the students to bring their feet together, bend their knees, and keeping their knees together ask the students to rotate their knees in a circle parallel to the ground six to eight times. Repeat in the other direction. Return to standing.

(f) Pick up the right foot, rotate it inward six to eight times, and then do the same with the left foot. Repeat with outward rotation of the foot. Take a few moments and shake out the entire body.

VOCAL WARM-UPS

Your vocal warm-up should follow your physical warm-up directly

(This entire process should take about seven minutes.)

- * helps connect physicality to vocality
- * begins to open the imagination to performance possibilities

(a) Ask students to gently massage and pat the muscles of their faces. This will help wake up the facial muscles.

(b) Ask students to stick their tongues out as far as possible—repeat this with the tongue pointing up, down, and to each side. (This process will probably seem strange, but can be made silly and fun, while accomplishing the necessary vocal warm-up. When students see you going through these exercises with commitment, that's often all they need to draw them in.) Repeat this exercise once or twice.

(c) Ask students to put their lips gently together and blow air through them, creating a “raspberry.”

(d) Next, hum, quietly, loudly, and across the entire vocal range. The vocal instrument loves to hum. Explore all the resonating spaces in the body, by moving the sound around. Humming helps to lubricate.

(e) Create the vowel sounds, overemphasizing each shape with the face —A, E, I, O, and U—with no break.

(f) Choose two or three tongue-twisters—there are some listed below. Again overemphasizing the shape of each sound with the lips, tongue, jaw, and facial muscles, begin slowly with each tongue-twister, and gradually speed up, repeating until the speed is such that the enunciation is lost.

Tongue twisters

- red leather, yellow leather ...(focus on the vertical motion of the mouth)
- unique New York...(focus on the front to back movement of the face)
- rubber, baby, buggie, bumpers...(focus on the clear repetition of the soft plosives)
- Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers...(focus on the clear repetition of hard plosives)

One of the actors at Chicago Shakespeare Theater likes to describe the experience of acting Shakespeare as the “Olympics of Acting.” Shakespeare’s verse demands a very flexible vocal instrument, and an ability to express not only the flow of the text, but the emotional shifts which are suggested by the variations in rhythm and sound. In light of the sheer volume of words, some of which are rarely—if ever—used in modern vocabulary, the actor must also be prepared to help the audience with his body, as well. An actor acting Shakespeare must go through each word of his text, determine its meaning, and then express it clearly to his audience. This requires a very physically demanding style. The physical and vocal warm-up is the actor’s basis for each performance.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Stage pictures

- * shows how varied interpretation is: there is no wrong answer
- * encourages the students to interpret concepts with their whole bodies
- * begins to show how the body interprets emotion

You will need a list of very strong descriptive, colorful, emotional words from the script for this activity. Ask your actor-students to begin walking around the room. Ask them to fill up the entire space, exploring pacing, what it would feel like to be a different weight, a different height, and ask them to move the center of their body into different places. Encourage them to see if they feel any emotional differences within these changes. Giving them about three minutes to explore these changes, see if you notice any particularly interesting discoveries. Encourage these discoveries without necessarily drawing focus to individual students, as this is a self-reflective activity, but perhaps suggest to the group they might “Try what it feels like if you slow your pace, hunch your shoulders, droop your head, and move your center into your knees.”

After a few minutes of this exploration, ask your actor-students to find a “neutral” walk. Explain that they are going to create a stage picture as an entire group. You will give them a word, and then count down from seven. After those seven beats, you will say freeze, and they must create a photograph of the word you have given them, with their entire body, collectively. Comment on the emotions you feel from their stage picture. After a couple of words, split the group in half—half will be in the space and half will be audience. Repeat the process, encouraging the audience’s reactions after each tableau. This might be a good time to discuss balance, stage direction, and the use of levels as effective variation for the audience’s visual interpretation. (*This activity should take about ten minutes.*)

Shakespeare’s characters are often very physically broad. There were crippled characters, old people, clowns, star-crossed lovers, and more. These characters call for the actors to figure out how they move. If the character is greedy, should his center be in a big fat belly? The actor must be prepared to experiment with the character’s body.

Mirroring

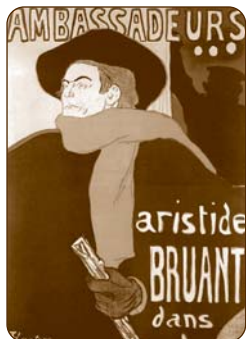
- * helps build trust within the ensemble
- * encourages the students to “listen” with all their senses
- * helps the students reach a state of “relaxed readiness,” which will encourage their impulses, and discourage their internal censors

Either ask your actor-students to partner up, or count them off in pairs. Ask them to sit, comfortably facing their partner, in fairly close proximity. Explain to them that they are mirrors of each other. One partner will begin as the leader, and the other partner will move as their reflection. Explain to the actor-students that they must begin by using smaller, slower movements, and work up to the maximum range of movement that their partner can follow. Encourage the partners to make eye-contact and see each other as a whole picture, rather than following each other’s small motions with their eyes. Switch leaders and repeat. After the second leader has had a turn, ask the actor-students to stand and increase their range of movement. Switch leaders and repeat. After the second leader has had a turn, tell them that they should keep going, but there is no leader. See what happens, and then discuss. (*This activity should last about ten minutes.*)

Many actors will tell you that learning the lines is the easy part; making it come out of their mouths as if for the first time is the hard part, especially with Shakespeare. Shakespeare can sound like a song, but how do you make it sound like real people talking to each other? Actors listen to each other, and try to respond to what they hear in the moment of the play. Listening is a very important part of acting; it keeps the moment real.



Rendering by Costume Designer Virgil C. Johnson



Theater Exercises

Each of these exercises is meant to open and expand your students' imaginations, increase their sense of "ensemble" or teamwork, and bring them "into the moment." These are some of the most fundamental and crucial elements of an actor's training. Their imaginations will allow them to believe the situation of the play, their sense of ensemble will bring them together with their scene partners to create the relationships necessary to the movement of the play, and their willingness to be in the moment will allow them to live in the play in such a way as to make it believable to their audience.

In each of these exercises the use of students as audience, and constructive reflection from that audience, will be helpful to the ensemble of your classroom. Remember, there is no wrong answer, only different interpretations—encourage them!

ZING! BALL

(This exercise requires a soft ball about 8-12 inches in diameter.)

- * helps the ensemble grow together
- * helps the students let go of their internal "censor" and begin tapping into their impulses
- * brings the physical and the vocal actor tools together

Ask the students to stand in a circle, facing in. Explain that the ball carries with it energy. This energy is like a feedback loop that increases the energy, speed, and focus of the entire group by the amount that each actor-student puts into the ball. The idea is to keep the ball moving in the circle without letting the energy drop. There should be no space between throw and catch. There should be no thought as to whom the actor-student will throw the ball to next. As the ball is thrown, to keep the intensity of the energy, the actor-student must make eye contact with the person he is throwing the ball to, and at the moment of release, the throwing actor-student should say "Zing!" Note: Encourage the actor-students to experiment with the way they say "Zing!" It could be loud or soft, in a character voice, or in whatever way they wish, as long as it is impulsive and with energy. *(This activity lasts about five minutes.)*

Shakespeare has love scenes, sword fights, betrayals, and all sorts of relationships in his plays. An ensemble must have the trust in each other to make a performance believable, without any of the actors getting hurt. They must be able to experiment, follow their impulses, and create character without the fear of failure. Shakespeare wrote many clues about his characters in his text, but the actor must be given license to find his character, and his relationship with the rest of the characters in the script.

ZING! BALL WITHOUT A BALL

(This activity takes five to seven minutes.)

- * asks the students to make their imagination clear to the ensemble
- * focuses the students on physical detail

This exercise builds on Zing! Ball. Take the ball out of the circle and set it aside. Take an imaginary Zing! Ball out of your pocket. Grow this ball from a tiny rubber ball into a huge balloon. Using "Zing!," toss the ball to an actor-student across the circle, and as it floats down, ask the actor-student to catch it with the same weight and speed as you threw it. Then ask that actor-student to recreate the ball into a different weight and size, making it clear to the rest of the circle how they've changed it. In the same way as Zing! Ball, work around the circle.

The wide range of vocabulary in Shakespeare's plays can often be intimidating as one reads the scripts. The actor's job is to make the language clear, and this is often accomplished by very specific physical gesturing.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES



Before You Read the Play

These "Before You Read" activities are also helpful in preparing students who will not be reading the play.

AS A CLASS

1. *(To the teacher: Excerpt 30 lines from the play that are rich in Shakespeare's language or are descriptive of character. Distribute a line or lines to each student on a slip of paper, not revealing the character who spoke it.)* Look at your line/s and, as you walk around the room, say it aloud again and again without addressing anyone. Now walk around the room and deliver your line directly to your classmates as they do the same. Regroup in a circle, each reading his/her line aloud in turn.

Sit down in the circle and discuss the lines. What questions do you have about the words? Imagine what this play is about based upon some of the words you've heard its characters speak. What do you imagine about the character who spoke your line? Did you hear lines that seemed to be spoken by the same character? All ideas are encouraged, and none can be wrong! This is your time to listen to the language and begin to use your imagination to think about the world of the play you've just entered... **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1ab, 2ab, 4ab)**

2. Who would be you? Suppose you had to choose one of your classmates to secretly take your place while you stole away for a week on private business. Whom would you select? How did you choose? Think of all the ways your substitute could take on your identity. Can you imagine recruiting someone who might be better equipped to achieve some task that's always posed a challenge for you? As a class, discuss your ideas. **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1b, 2b, 4ab)**

3. On slips of paper, write down some professions that come to mind. Compile all your ideas and then select one randomly. Now, set up a "bus stop" in your classroom. As members of those professions, wait for the bus, three at a time. No dialogue is allowed. After a few minutes, a new group of students and professions will wait for the next bus. How do you communicate your profession nonverbally? Is it in your stance, your walk, what you do while you wait? How do we "read" other people through our own experiences and expectations? *(To the teacher: for the last couple of rounds, include a nun, a friar, a duke, an executioner, and a judge in the slips of paper distributed.)* **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1b, 2ab)**

4. "What does all this have to do with us?" The people in Shakespeare may seem very far removed from our lives in the twenty-first century, deep in a city that has its own set of problems. *Measure for Measure* can be read as a play about power and the impact of power upon its victims. Encourage your students to think about contemporary examples of power and its abuse. What happens to people when they become powerful? How can we be safe in the face of power? Is power basically negative? If not, what seems to be the essential difference? **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2b, 4ab)**

IN SMALL GROUPS

5. In groups of 4/6: Practice aloud—at each other with feeling!—the insults below that characters from *Measure for Measure* sling at each other. If the meaning of a word is not clear, don't get stuck! Keep repeating the insult and you'll be closer to the meaning than you might think... Stay in your group, but now take turns



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CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

throwing out each insult. The others, and as quickly as you can, imagine a contemporary situation that might have provoked such a rebuke! (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab, 4ab**)

I think thou never wast where grace was said.	1.2.18–19
I have purchased...many diseases under her roof.	1.2.42–43
Thy bones are hollow. Impiety has made a feast of thee.	1.2.52–53
Come, you are a tedious fool.	2.1.115
Your bum is the greatest thing about you, so that in the beastliest sense you are Pompey the Great.	2.1.214–16
Thou hast neither heat, affection, limb, nor beauty To make thy riches pleasant.	3.1.37–8
I'll pray a thousand prayers for thy death/No word to save thee.	3.1.145–6
Thy sin's not accidental, but a trade.	3.1.148
Canst thou believe thy living is a life, So stinkingly depending? Go mend, go mend.	3.2.25–6
She hath eaten up all her beef, and she is herself in the tub.	3.2.54–5
He was begot between two stockfishes.	3.2.105
It is certain that when he makes water, his urine is congealed ice.	3.2.105–7
He's more, had I more name for badness.	5.1.61–2
That's somewhat madly spoken.	5.1.92
[You have] a blasting and a scandalous breath.	5.1.125
Silence that fellow. I would he had some cause to prattle for himself.	5.1.182–3
[You are] a fleshmonger, a fool, and a coward.	5.1.331–2
Away with those giglets.	5.1.345
Show your sheep-biting face, and be hanged an hour!	5.1.353
Do not recompense me in making me a cuckold.	5.1.514–5
Marrying a punk...is pressing to death, whipping, and hanging.	5.1.520–1

6. In pairs as an actor and understudy for a part, select a character from the *Dramatis Personae* to explore through the play. Skim through the play and mark speeches or lines that appear characteristic. Select 3–4 small segments that seem to best portray your character and prepare to present to the class and defend your ideas! This is the way that Elizabethan actors learned their roles. They were given just their own lines with the cue lines that preceded theirs, and were never handed an entire script. (At the end of your study, go back and repeat this exercise with the same character. Present again and discuss the differences now that you've read the play.) (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab, 4ab, 5abc**)

7. *Measure for Measure* depicts some very different worlds—the convent of the sisters of Saint Clare (1.4), the court of law (2.1), and the streets of Vienna (1.2)—each with its own code of behavior and images that Shakespeare uses to describe it and set the tone. Shakespeare juxtaposes these three worlds to show their differences—and perhaps, some surprising similarities between them.

Divide the class into three groups and each take one scene above. Find two or three moments comprising no more than a line or two that seem to portray your particular world. Enact the parts for the rest of the class, while your classmates look for the words or phrases to describe the world that Shakespeare portrays. (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1ab**)

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

8. *Measure for Measure* confronts us with some complex questions. As a group, first discuss your own ideas for definitions for four words that recur throughout the play: "restraint" and "scope," "justice" and "mercy." Then, look up a number of different definitions, and using your ideas along with these, create a definition for each concept. Imagine what this play might be about based upon your discussion. Each group choose one word to create a **tableau** (a wordless picture composed by bodies that together create a strong visual image of your idea). Present your tableau to the class. (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab)
9. In groups of six, think about a law that may challenge our nature or instinct as human beings. In your opinion, can morality be legislated? In small groups, come up with examples of such laws, either in our society today, historically, or in other cultures that you know about. Choose one to debate, with half the group taking one side of the argument (pro-legislation), and the other half arguing against such legislation's effectiveness or morality. (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1bc, 2b, 4ab, 5ab)
10. In your small groups, brainstorm and list as many possibilities as you can about why someone would want to assume a disguise. What are the possible problems? Imagine yourselves assuming a disguise. What would it be? What situation would you enter into? What would you want to accomplish? (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1bc, 2ab)

IN PAIRS

11. In writing his plays, Shakespeare moved back and forth between **prose** and **verse**. It's easy to see on the page: the prose has margins justified on both the left and right; the verse has shorter lines, justified on the left margin only, and with capitalization at the beginning of each new line. There is no hard-and-fast rule that dictates Shakespeare's choices, but sometimes prose characterizes the speech of commoners; verse, the upper class. But he also uses the two forms to set a different mood, or to indicate a change in the character's state of mind. In *Measure for Measure*, the switch from verse to prose is dramatic. Watch for it in Act III and think about possible explanations.

In pairs, read aloud the verse passage below that has been stripped of all punctuation. Read it again several times aloud, listening for the rhythm and to discover its sense. When you feel you've grasped the meaning, punctuate and compare with your text. The words are spoken by Angelo, 2.4.1-17. (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1b, 2a, 3a, 4ab)

When I would pray and think I think and pray
To several subjects heaven hath my empty words
Whilst my invention hearing not my tongue
Anchors on Isabel heaven in my mouth
As if I did in only chew his name
And in my heart the strong and swelling evil
Of my conception the state whereon I studied
Is like a good thing being often read
Grown sere and tedious yea my gravity
Wherein let no man hear me I take pride
Could I with boot change for an idle plume
Which the air beats for vain oh place oh form
How often dost thou with thy case thy habit
Wrench awe from fools and tie the wiser souls
To thy false seeming blood thou art blood
Let's write good angel on the devil's horn
'Tis not the devil's crest how now who's there



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CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

YOUR OWN THOUGHTS ON PAPER

12. Before you read *Measure for Measure*, it's helpful to think about some of the play's central ideas as they relate to your own life and personal experience. Jot down some of your thoughts about one of the following situations. (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1bc, 2b, 3ac)
- Think back to a time when you suddenly realized that you were in the same boat as someone else you once criticized for the same behavior or belief. Did that experience affect the way you thought about the other person? About yourself? About them or that particular belief?
 - Have you ever been in a situation where it was your word against someone else's? Whose word was believed? What decided the outcome? Was personal reputation or status a factor? The relationships between you? The actual account you each gave? Did any kind of prejudice come into play?
 - In your own experience, has there been someone you've personally known whose new status or honor (e.g., a school or class office, a social honor, acceptance into a particular group or club, etc.) went to their head? Describe how the person's behavior changed toward you or others.
13. Create a collage using photos, clippings, words—even found objects—that, for you, expresses opposing worlds of “power” and “powerlessness.” What images and words in our world today connote these two realms? (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1ac, 2ab)
14. Read through the quotes listed in “What the Critics Say,” and find one that provokes a strong personal reaction in you. Write a letter to that critic and discuss your response to his/her statement. This isn't about Shakespeare's play, but instead it's about your own personal life experience that makes you react—either positively or negatively—to a particular point of view. Then, As you move deeper into the world of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, see if you would make any changes in your letter. (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1bc, 2ab, 3abc)



As You Read the Play

—ACT I—

AS A CLASS

15. As a class, discuss the question: “What would *you* do if your brother or sister were going to be executed and you could save his life by having sex with the judge?” Now think about this question but from a different angle: “How do you know that you can trust the judge to even keep his/her word?” or “What if you were about to commit your life to the Church?”¹ (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1bc, 2ab, 4ab)

IN SMALL GROUPS

16. *Certainly the shadow of the tragedies Shakespeare was to write after Measure for Measure seems to hang over it. Much of the action takes place in a prison, and the comedy as a whole is obsessed with the idea of death.* —Anne Barton, 1973

In your small group, trace through Act I and highlight all the references you can find to death. As a group, present the idea to the rest of the class. You may use some/all of the lines you've highlighted, repeat some, read some

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

in unison to emphasize their importance, or present a **tableau** (see Exercise #8). Then, as a class, discuss the possibilities about why a society might be focused upon death. (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab**)

17. Look back through Act I and create a typical gesture for each of the characters you've met. Present your group's ideas to the rest of your class. Return to this exercise again after each act, and compare your "typical gestures" as they may evolve along the way. (At the end of the play, you may want to present one character's five "typical gestures" as a progression—a kind of animated comic strip that suggests movement when the speed's turned up.) (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1bc, 2ab**)

18. Some scholars believe that careful studying of "**first lines**" in a piece of literature reveals the truth of the entire work. This kind of detailed study requires reading each word beneath its surface: to explore symbols and unconscious meaning. In Act I, we are introduced to many of the main characters of the play. In small groups, explore the first words of each, word by word. Look for the meanings of words out of the context in which you now see them. Brainstorm the possibilities! Why might Shakespeare give these words to his characters as their first in the play? What might the word or words suggest about the speaker, about another character, about the play in general? Write down your hunches. Now as a class, compare your ideas. (At the end of the play, return to these first lines, and practice this exercise again. What clues are borne out as the character and his role become better known to us?) (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab, 4ab**)

ESCALUS: "If any in Vienna be of worth..."
ANGELO: "Always obedient..."
LUCIO: "If the Duke..."
CLAUDIO: "Fellow, why dost thou show me thus..."
PROVOST: "I do it not in evil disposition..."
ISABEL: "And have you nuns no farther privileges?"

19. When we read a sentence, we expect not only the words but also their position will help us get the meaning. A word's positioning usually tells us its role in the sentence, and its relationship to other words with roles. "Sam ate the fish" means something different to us from "the fish ate Sam"—simply because of word order. But the characters in Shakespeare often play with the order of words in some unexpected ways—sometimes to emphasize particular words, sometimes to achieve a particular rhythm that Shakespeare was trying to build in his poetry. "Sam ate the fish" might be phrased, "Ate Sam the fish"—and despite its unusual word order, it means the same thing. In groups of three, take this sentence: "I ate the sandwich." One person assumes the "I" role; another, "the sandwich" role; and the third, the "ate" role. There are no fewer than six ways that this sentence can be arranged by moving those three parts around—and still mean the same thing, "I ate the sandwich." Practice moving yourselves around and saying your "parts" in different order. Present your findings!

In *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare wastes no time in getting down to the business of unexpected word order!

DUKE: [Of government] [the properties] [to unfold]
[Would seem in me t'affect speech and discourse]
[Since I am put to know that your own science
Exceeds, in that, the lists of all advice
My strength can give you.]... (1.1.3-7)

It will be interesting to see if the Duke turns out to be any more straightforward in his dealings with people than he apparently is in his speech!—but meantime, let's play with unscrambling his words. On five slips of paper, write down the five



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Present your findings to the class.² (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2a, 3a)

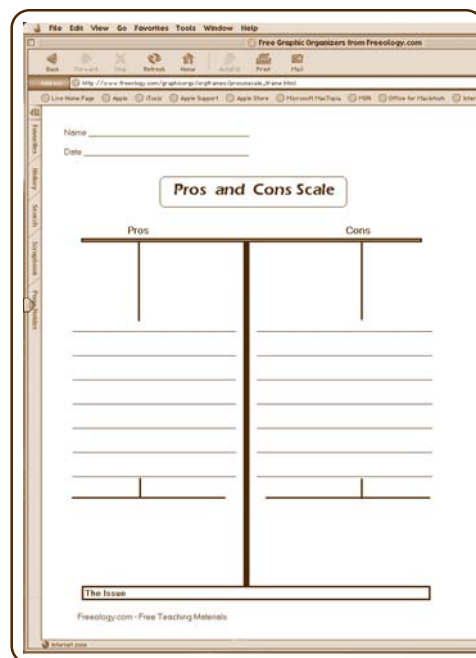
20. Look back at Act I. In your group, come up with just one word that describes the mood or atmosphere of each scene. Then title each scene, choosing a title that reflects both the mood and the action. How does each scene inform the scene that comes before it? That comes directly after it? (This is an exercise that can be used throughout the play, but is particularly useful again in Act IV.) **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1bc, 2a)**

YOUR OWN THOUGHTS ON PAPER

- 21.** Shakespeare's ambiguous title suggests (among multiple readings) the scales of justice, meting out punishment for crime. Creating your own graphic organizer, weigh out the pros and cons for Angelo as he considers how to respond to Isabella's plea. As you read into Act II, add additional arguments—pro and con—as you learn more about Angelo's struggle. Start a second set of scales for Isabella, as she weighs out her response to Angelo. At the end of the play, do a second set of scales for each as they weigh out their options in response to the Duke. (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1bc, 2ab**)

22. Shakespeare has a way of looking deep into people and seeing common threads that we might not immediately notice ourselves—often in two of his characters who are engaged in a great struggle. Isabel and Angelo are two such characters. We will get to know some of their similarities as the play goes on, but even in Act I we can begin to notice some shared traits. Both are propelled from their very private lives into a public arena by the expectations and entreaties of others.

Take Angelo's lines (1.1.42-75) and Isabel's (1.4.68-90) and compare the two. Choose particular lines from each to construct a scene in which the characters mirror each other's actions as they speak. **Intercut** the two scenes, repeating lines or deleting lines as you play with the possibilities.³ (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab, 3bc, 5c**)



This graphic organizer is available among others for printing out at letter-size on www.freeology.com.

—ACT II—

AS A CLASS

23. *There are few passages in Shakespeare that give a more inescapable impression of coming from the poet himself than Isabella's great speech to Angelo on power. It is the speech perhaps above any other in his works that seems written to the twentieth century and that the twentieth century should know by heart.*
—Harold C. Goddard, 1951

As a class, turn to Isabel's speech, 2.2.114-127, and discuss it in light of Goddard's quote. (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2b, 4ab)

24. *'It is the law, not I, condemn your brother.'* The entire play might be said to have been written to italicize that lie. The angel-villain tries to hide behind it as behind a shield. So-called civilization tries to do the same. But civilization—as Emerson remarked—crowed too soon.
- Harold C. Goddard, 1951

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

As a class, discuss what you think Goddard means. What is the distinction that Angelo tries to draw—and Goddard forcibly tears down? Do you think the law is separate and distinct from the person who administers it? From the person/s who create it? Discuss examples in our times or recent history where people have drawn the same distinction as Angelo does. (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab, 4ab**)

25. Angelo's soliloquy in 2.2 is one of the most tortured visions of an individual into his soul that Shakespeare wrote. As a group, walk around the room, saying the words of Angelo to yourself, but aloud. Next, repeat the exercise, but this time change your direction by at least 90 degrees at every punctuation mark. As a group, discuss any differences you may have sensed the second time around.

Next, sitting in a circle, repeat Angelo's speech once again—this time, each person speaking only one word, and then "passing" the speech to the next person as though you were a single voice. Repeat again, but this time "pass" the speech to your classmate beside you at each punctuation mark. And again—but this time, as you pass the speech, give the person beside you a bit of a push as you propel the speech from person to person. And once more—this time, as a group, hitting the floor with the palm of your hands simultaneously as an important word is spoken along the way around the circle. Finally, divide Angelo's soliloquy not by word or punctuation, but by "**sense units**." Repeat the exercise, passing the voice along after each sense unit—and entering the center of the circle as you speak your unit. Now, discuss what you've discovered along the way. (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab, 4a**)

IN SMALL GROUPS

26. Every production of *Measure for Measure* must take a very careful look at the first encounter between Isabel and Angelo, 2.2. The director's interpretation of these two characters must be consistent with a number of theatrical decisions that have to be made here. In your small groups, choose one of the questions below, and explore several ways that you might answer this question in your production. Think of at least two or three different possible approaches, and present small segments of the scene that illustrate contrasting choices. (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab**)

- Exactly when does Angelo's desire first strike him?
- Is Isabella in any way implicated, or is she entirely innocent?
- Is Isabella's hesitation due to shyness, cold indifference, or strategy?
- What is Lucio's role in this scene? How does Isabella respond to his interventions?

27. In groups of 6–7, play with lines 60–81 in 2.2 where Isabel tries to convince Angelo to spare her brother's life. One person is Angelo, and the others are Isabel, whose task it is to convince! Surround your Angelo and speak your lines in turn, each person reading up to the next punctuation mark, then handing on the speech to the next person. Angelo turns to face each Isabel as she speaks. Experiment with different styles of delivering Isabel's words (angrily, reasonably, desperately, etc.). Try different ways of speaking Angelo's lines in response to Isabella's approaches to the same text.⁴ (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1ac, 2ab, 4ab**)

28. Shakespeare's texts contained many clues to help his actors, who often had only a few days to learn and rehearse a play. He wrote much of his plays in **blank verse**—unrhyming lines containing typically ten syllables (give or take a couple of syllables here and there). Have you noticed lines that are indented, starting well to the right of other lines? Sometimes, the ten syllables are divided between two lines of text and are shared by two speakers. By sharing a line, Shakespeare indicated to his actors that the pace was fast and the two **shared lines** were meant to be delivered



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CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

as one. Sometimes, a line is noticeably shorter than 10 syllables, with no other character meant to complete it because the next line again contains the full ten syllables. These **short lines** break the rhythm and often occur at a critical point in the play, alerting actors to take a dramatic pause, to think, listen, or perform an action.

The exchange between Angelo and Isabel, 2.2.48-67 is one such place in this text of confrontation to explore the ways that Shakespeare uses both shared and short verse lines. Look at the lines below and count the syllables in each. Two lines forming one shared line are spoken in quick succession. Two lines are short lines, requiring a pause either before or after them. In threes, play with these lines, taking turns being Angelo, Isabel and Lucio, and imagining what each is thinking or doing during the pauses. Might there be an action by one of the characters that takes up the missing beats before or after the short line? What are the possibilities?

(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab, 4ab)

ISABELLA	Must he needs die?	
ANGELO	Maiden, no remedy.	
ISABELLA	Yes: I do think that you might pardon him, And neither heaven nor man grieve at the mercy.	50
ANGELO	I will not do't.	
ISABELLA	But can you if you would?	
ANGELO	Look what I will not, that I cannot do.	
ISABELLA	But might you do't, and do the world no wrong, If so your heart were touched with that remorse As mine is to him?	55
ANGELO	He's sentenced, 'tis too late.	
LUCIO	[To Isabella] You are too cold.	
ISABELLA	Too late? Why, no; I that do speak a word May call it again. Well, believe this: No ceremony that to great ones longs, Not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword, The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe Become them with one half so good a grace As mercy does.	60
	If he had been as you, and you as he, You would have slipped like him, but he like you Would not have been so stern.	65
ANGELO	Pray you be gone.	

29. In his brief soliloquy in 2.4.19-30, Angelo describes his physical and emotional state using metaphors that paint graphic images of his discomfort. In your small groups, create a **tableau** that pictures his two images. Present one to the class. As you read *Measure for Measure*, think about all the ways that isolation and overcrowding come into play. You may want to highlight the words and passages that depict these opposites throughout. What are your thoughts about a society characterized by isolation on the one hand, and overcrowding on the other? Do you see any parallels in our society today? (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab)

IN PAIRS

30. Just as we do in our conversations with each other, Shakespeare's characters typically repeat words that they want to emphasize. Looking for repetitions in a speech is a good way to begin to "decode" some of its meaning. By echoing **repetitions** aloud, they become apparent as they ring in our ears. In pairs, look at Escalus' speech to Angelo in 2.1.4-16. One person reads aloud lines 8-16. The other echoes every "you" and "your." Repeat, exchanging roles—and then discuss your ideas about what Escalus wants to say to Angelo.⁵ (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab, 4ab)

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

31. Shakespeare used "**duologues**"—the conversation between two people—to heighten a play's intensity and to reveal information about each character and about the complexity of the relationship between them. Often, the two are left alone together on stage. The duologue can have the feel of a duel between two combatants whose "swords" are their words.

Working in pairs, take the duologue between Angelo and Isabella, 2.2.27-166. Explore the movement of a duologue by standing up, and each taking a part. But this time, read in silence. As you read your lines, move in relation to the other character. Begin to get a feel for the way the lines position for attack and retreat, and as you move, imagine that your weapon is a great broadsword, perhaps, rather than the words you find to speak. The lines, like two swords, "cut and thrust." (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1ac, 2ab, 4ab**)

32. Another place to see **repetition** in action is in the lines below, spoken by Isabella and Angelo, 2.4. Using several color highlighters or pens, mark out all the words and phrases that the two keep echoing. Then, between you read these lines aloud, and as one character speaks the shared words, the other character echoes them. As a class, discuss why Shakespeare might give the same words and phrases, again and again, to his two characters, so entangled here. (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab, 4ab**)

ANGELO	Answer to this:	60
	I, now the voice of the recorded law, Pronounce a sentence on your brother's life. Might there not be a charity in sin To save this brother's life?	
ISABELLA	Please you to do't, I'll take it as a peril to my soul, It is no sin at all but charity.	65
ANGELO	Pleased you to do't, at peril of your soul, Were equal poise of sin and charity.	
ISABELLA	That I do beg his life, if it be sin, Heaven let me bear it. You granting of my suit, If that be sin, I'll make it my morn-prayer To have it added to the faults of mine And nothing of your answer.	70

YOUR OWN THOUGHTS ON PAPER

33. In one sentence, write the conclusion of these two sentences for each of the main characters:

- "What I most want is..."
- "What I'm most afraid of is..."

Take a risk—there's not just one right answer! Could it be that two characters want (or fear) the same thing? Could one character want and fear the same thing? (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1c, 2ab**)

34. Act II opens with Angelo describing the neglected law as an old and useless scarecrow (2.1.1-4). Draw the image that Angelo's words conjure up in your imagination. Think about other parts of the picture—the field, the sky, wildlife. What might they represent in your drawing?⁶ (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc**)



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CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

35. In 2.2, we again meet the Provost who supervises life within the prison walls. He is approaching his superior here with some question about the men's judgment—risky business for anyone in a situation where the scales of authority are unbalanced. Obviously, this is a matter of concern to the Provost who has probably thought about this conversation quite a bit before it takes place. Imagine that you are the Provost writing in your journal the night before. (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1c, 2ab, 3abc)
36. "The law hath not been dead, though it hath slept." Discover a law on the books today that is no longer enforced. It might be on a local, state or national level. Write about what effects you might expect if the law were enforced again. You may want to interview a policeman, an attorney, or a paralegal at a legal aid clinic. (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 3abc, 5ab)

—ACT III—

AS A CLASS

37. The problems that this so-called "problem play" poses are many, and heatedly disputed among Shakespearean scholars. But what almost all scholars of *Measure for Measure* point to is the apparent break in the play that occurs at 3.1.153 when the Duke, disguised as a friar, intervenes in the exchange between brother and sister. Even visually, you can trace the break on the page: **verse** gives way to **prose** (for much of the rest of the play). As a group, discuss the possibilities at this point based on what you know by the end of Act III. What could be possible reasons for Shakespeare treating the first part of this play so differently from the second half? (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1bc, 2ab)

IN SMALL GROUPS

38. **Soliloquies** were important tools in Shakespeare's dramatic technique. The soliloquy was ideally suited to a thrust stage, where the actors could approach the audience and speak intimately with them, as if one-on-one. On the proscenium stage where there is much greater distance between the actor and the audience, the soliloquy tends to become a moment when the character talks aloud to himself. The soliloquy allows the audience to learn about the character and his motivations privately—that is, without the knowledge of other characters. It allows us to get as close to the essence of a character as he/she can psychologically permit. And the soliloquy, because it is spoken to us alone, is wrapped in a kind of intimacy, and serves to build the relationship between that character and us.
- The Duke's soliloquy that ends 3.2 is very different in its structure and language from Angelo's in 2.2 and 2.4. In your small groups, discuss the effect of these soliloquies—upon the speaker, upon the audience who hears them. What purpose does each voice seem to be serving? (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab, 4a)
39. Shakespeare's characters use words to build vivid images—particularly at times of high emotion. Language filled with these images is called **heightened language**, and it can be very difficult to wade through until we learn to create mental images that help bring the words to life. In small groups, work on creating **tableaux** (see Exercise #8) for the following lines from Act III. Present your favorite to the rest of the class. (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab, 4ab)
- Would bark your honor from that trunk you bear/And leave you naked. (3.1.71-2)
 - And the poor beetle that we tread upon/In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great
As when a giant dies. (3.1.78-80)
 - If I must die/I will encounter darkness as a bride/And hug it in mine arms. (3.1.82-84)
40. Some scholars have considered Claudio's description of death (3.1.118-132) to be perhaps more horrifying than Hamlet's famous soliloquy (3.1.57-91). Both characters are facing death and are terrified of what they see. In groups of approximately 10, first read through Claudio's speech, then Hamlet's (through line 84, "Thus con-

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

science does make cowards of us all.") Split your group in two, one half taking Claudio's words, and the other, Hamlet's. In each sub-group, divide the speech up between you into "**sense groups**," and either memorize your section or jot down the lines on a card.

When you are familiar with your lines, join together with your partner sub-group. First, simply take it in turn to speak alternately, **intercutting** one speech with the other. Then, work out ways to present them dramatically to the rest of the class. You can repeat particular words or "sense units," speak in chorus, use movement, cut lines, etc. (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab, 4ab**)

- 41.** "Full-length" Shakespeare is something of a misnomer: his plays uncut would last 3–4 intermissionless hours. Most directors cut lines from Shakespeare's texts. In the making of a film, scenic panoramas and silence pace the action, and still deeper cuts are required. Choices have to be made. Lines are more likely to be cut if they do not support a particular vision. What you don't hear on stage or in a film is an important part of the director's interpretation—and what makes comparing productions of the same play so interesting.

Suppose you are a group of actors that has decided upon a more traditional view of this play. You want to portray Isabella as saintly, and the Duke as an all-knowing and kindly character. Review 3.1. What lines might you be tempted to remove from your script to support your particular interpretation? (Once you've tried this exercise, read "Performance History" describing some directors' decisions in past productions of *Measure for Measure*.) (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2a**)

- 42.** Often Shakespeare places scenes side by side to suggest a parallel or contrast between them. In your group, review 3.1.176 to the end of the scene, followed by 3.2.1-176. Summarize each. Discuss what Shakespeare might have intended by placing these two **juxtaposed scenes** together. What are the possibilities? (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1bc, 2ab**)

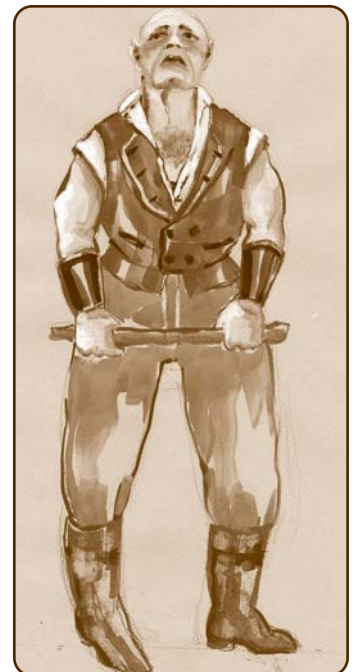
YOUR OWN WORDS ON PAPER

- 43.** The Duke's speech to Claudio that opens Act III is intended to comfort Claudio and prepare him to face his death. Review his speech, and write down his key arguments. Now, imagine that you must comfort someone facing death. Set the stage and write something briefly about the situation. Who is it you are comforting? How old is he/she? What is your relationship to the person? Then, think about what you would say to comfort this person. Would you use arguments similar to the Duke's? (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab, 3ab**)

AS A CLASS

—ACT IV—

- 44.** *Measure for Measure* is full of references to family relationships, but strangely devoid of intact ones. The four references to father, brother, daughter and husband in the space of seven lines (4.1.63-69) provide a place in the text to explore this idea. Review these lines at the end of 4.1. (Included are references to religious "fathers" and "daughters," as well.) Discuss your ideas about the effects of no intact family relations anywhere—upon the Viennese society that Shakespeare portrays, upon Mariana and Isabella and the decisions they make. Would this have been a very different Vienna (and play) if Shakespeare had placed his children within families? Discuss your ideas. (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1bc, 2b, 4ab**)



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CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

45. In groups of 7-10, take the parts of the Duke and Isabella as they read aloud lines 4.3.103-128. The rest of the group listen carefully and hiss whenever they think the Duke is telling a lie. Afterwards, talk about what you think of the Duke at this point, and what you would want to tell Isabella about him.⁷ (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab, 4ab**)

46. *(To the teacher: Type the following words from Angelo's soliloquy at the beginning of 4.4 on a piece of paper, duplicate about eight copies, then cut into small slips of paper—deed, unshaped, unpregnant, dull, deflowered, maid, eminent, body, enforced, law, tender, shame, maiden, loss, tongue, dares, authority, credent, bulk, scandal, touch, breather, riotous, youth, dangerous, sense, revenge, dishonored, ransom, yet, lived, alack, grace, forgot, nothing, right, would, would not.)*

In 4.4, Angelo returns to the stage after his long absence for 1-1/2 acts. His soliloquy returns the play to the poetry of its first acts. From the pile of words on slips of paper, randomly pick one word at a time. Walking around the class, speak the word aloud over and over to classmates (who are also speaking their words as they wander from person to person). Listen to the sound of the word, and enjoy it! Experiment with lots of different inflections and ideas behind it. When you've had enough of one word, throw it on the floor, and go and pick another—at random. Repeat with several words.

Now, return to your text, amid a sea of discarded words on the floor! As a group, first walk around the room, saying the words of Angelo to yourself, but aloud at your own pace. Be aware of the words you've been playing with by themselves, and watch how Angelo puts them together for his own meaning. Next, repeat the exercise, but this time change your direction by at least 90 degrees at every punctuation mark. Come back together then as a group and discuss any differences you may have sensed the second time around.

Next, sitting in a circle, repeat Angelo's speech once again—this time, each person speaking only one word, then "passing" the speech to the next person as though you were a single voice. Repeat, but this time pass the speech to your classmate beside you at each punctuation mark. And again—but this time, as you pass the speech, give the person beside you a bit of a push as you propel the speech from person to person. And once more—this time, as a group, hitting the floor with the palm of your hands simultaneously as a word with any double meaning is spoken. Finally, divide Angelo's soliloquy not by word or punctuation, but by "sense units." Repeat the exercise passing his speech along after each sense unit. Discuss what you've discovered along the way. (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1ab, 2ab, 4ab**)

IN SMALL GROUPS

47. "A bawd, sir? Fie upon him..." *Measure for Measure* is a play about people judging others on the basis of behavior, gender, social status, profession. Abhorson, the hangman, looks critically upon Pompey's career. In Abhorson's mind, there is a hierarchy that exists in the respectability of human professions.

Most cultures do assign a kind of hierarchy to professions, a hierarchy that says a great deal about the values in that culture. In our own society, what professions do we esteem above others, and which do we look down upon? What does that professional hierarchy suggest about our own values? If you're a member of a minority or immigrant group, can you think of an example of a profession that's looked at differently in your own culture separate from the dominant "American culture"? (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 2b**)

48. In your small groups, review the play since 3.1.154 when the Duke steps in and takes charge of the action. Compile a list of the Duke's actions from 3.1.154 through Act IV. Discuss the idea that many scholars propose that the Duke becomes a kind of stand-in for Shakespeare in his own play: a playwright, director and casting agent who remains supremely in charge of this "play-within-a-play." What do you think? What is the evidence in the play for or against this position? (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab**)

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

ON YOUR OWN

49. "Oh place and greatness, millions of false eyes are stuck upon thee." The Duke bemoans the price of prominence in his soliloquy, 4.1.57-61. A student of this play in England wrote: "It's just like Royalty and politicians and the popular press and television. It exactly describes what happens today." Could an American student have written that same comment? To test the truth of her claim, collect examples from our newspapers and magazines, and caption them with phrases from the Duke's soliloquy.⁸ (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1ab, 2b)

—ACT V—

AS A CLASS

50. In one of the most influential productions of *Measure for Measure*, staged by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1950, Director Peter Brook instructed his Isabella to wait "as long as the audience can stand it" before she made her decision to kneel beside Mariana and appeal for Angelo's life. Some evenings, Isabella's internal debate lasted for two full minutes. As a group, become that audience. Three volunteers read the lines of the Duke, Mariana and Isabella, 5.1.421 ("Gentle my liege...") through 5.1.438 ("As if my brother lived"). (The person playing Isabella should have a watch or clock discreetly in his/her line of vision for greatest effect.) First, speak the lines without much pause before Isabella kneels—the length that seems natural to you. Repeat the lines, this time waiting one full minute before you kneel. Repeat the lines again, this time waiting two full minutes. As a class, discuss the effect of the lengthening pause. Why might Brook have directed this moment as he did? (For more information on Brook's production, see "Performance History.") (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 2ab, 4ab)

IN SMALL GROUPS

51. Have you ever noticed while listening to the speeches of political candidates, the president or a minister, how words and phrases are repeated for power and emphasis? When Isabella begins her public appeal before the Duke, Shakespeare strengthens her speech by **repetition**. In groups of three, look at lines 5.1.30 ("Hear me yourself...") to 5.1.46 ("To th'end of reck'ning."). **"Score"** the text first, as our actors do for their own parts as they learn them, by marking the repetitions. (There are five words repeated by Isabella over and over.) One person now reads aloud Angelo's lines, another, Isabella's, and the third echoes and emphasizes Isabella's words that she repeats. Discuss the effect of the repetitions in Isabella's language. Why do you think she chooses this particular group of words to repeat? (As a companion exercise, you may want to explore the language of a famous speech like Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" or, more recently, Barak Obama's address at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, available on Obama's website.) (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1ab, 2ab, 4ab, 5a)
52. *Measure for Measure's* Act V is filled as much with **silence** as with words—and in that silence, a great deal is said. It is left up to the director's vision—and to us as students of the play—to imagine the possible meanings behind that silence. Angelo remains silent from 5.1.36, when Isabella pleads to tell her story before the Duke. Review 5.1.36-125. In groups of three, take parts and imagine what Angelo is thinking as he listens. As the Duke and Isabella read their lines, pause at the end of each for Angelo to express his thoughts.⁹ (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 2ab, 4ab)
53. When you see *Measure for Measure* performed on stage, you'll probably have no trouble following who is saying what to—or about—whom! The actors by their body language and their position on stage visually to explain the path of a conver-



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CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

sation to us. But in reading the text of a play, we must create in our minds our own imaginary path of conversation, deciphering all the "you's," "they's" and "she's" to truly understand who is saying what about whom.

One way to help track the path of a conversation is by pointing at people representing each of the characters (called "**deixis**" and pronounced "dā-yē-sis"). Try this in groups of five with Escalus' lines, 5.1.301-309. Sit in a circle, with one as Escalus reading, and the other four as Angelo, the Duke, Isabella and Mariana to whom Escalus' speech refers. Pause each time a person is mentioned by name or pronoun while everyone points to the character mentioned. Try this with other speeches, too.¹⁰ (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1ab, 4ab**)

- 54.** In Act V, a second man (this time, the Duke) proposes his terms of agreement to Isabella. In groups of three, take a look at Angelo's and the Duke's lines below. Experiment with the lines. **Intercut** them. Repeat lines if you'd like. Speak them aloud, pausing after the Duke or Angelo has spoken, and give Isabella an opportunity to give voice to unspoken thoughts in response to each man's words. What do you discover? (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1ab, 2ab, 3b, 4ab**)

ANGELO Fit thy consent to my sharp appetite,
Lay by all nicety and prolixious blushes
That banish what they sue for, redeem thy brother
By yielding up thy body to my will,
Or else he must not only die the death
But thy unkindness shall his death draw out
To lingering sufferance. Answer me tomorrow,
Or by th'affection that now guides me most
I'll prove a tyrant to him. (2.4.162-170)

DUKE If he be like your brother, for his sake
Is he pardoned, and for your lovely sake
Give me your hand, and say you will be mine,
He is my brother too. But fitter time for that. (5.1.483-486)

- 55.** The events in Act V force private affairs into the most public of arenas. People are very much on their guard, but nonetheless exposed. In groups of 8-10, assume the roles of the characters in the final moments of the play. Create two pictures for the *Vienna Daily News*: first, a posed shot in which each of you present the picture of yourself you want the rest of Vienna to see; next, a candid shot when your "public face" isn't on. Present your two versions to the rest of the class, and discuss your decisions. (*To the teacher: If you have a digital camera, this is a fun exercise to record on the spot.*) (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 2ab, 4a**)

YOUR OWN WORDS ON PAPER

- 56.** The nineteenth-century English poet, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, was deeply inspired by Shakespeare's Mariana. He wrote two poems about her, "Mariana" and "Mariana in the South." The first two of seven stanzas of "Mariana" are transcribed below, but the poem in its entirety is available in any library's collection. Tennyson's Mariana, hopelessly awaiting her former lover, writes her poem before the Duke orders Angelo to marry her... But what if Mariana were to write another poem, a final stanza, 10 years after *Measure for Measure* ends? Being true to Tennyson's voice, what does Mariana write? (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 2ab, 3bc**)

With blackest moss the flower-pots
Were thickly crusted, one and all:
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the pear to the gable-wall.
The broken sheds looked sad and strange:
Unlifted was the clinking latch;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

She only said, 'My life is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!'
Her tears fell with the dews at even;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
She only said, 'The night is dreary,
he cometh not,' she said;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!'



After You Read the Play

AS A CLASS

57. Where does the law stand at the end of this play? What are the results of the Duke's abdication upon future government and justice in Vienna now that he returns? As a class, discuss your ideas. "**Hot seat**" a volunteer Duke or two and interview him about his plans for reformation in his government. (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 2ab, 4ab)

IN SMALL GROUPS

58. *Overdone! It might be the name of most of the leading characters of the play. Each of them is too something-or-other. And what they do is likewise overdone. Good and evil get inextricably mixed throughout Measure for Measure, for virtue is no exception to the rule, and, pushed to the limit, it turns into vice.*
—Harold C. Goddard, 1951

Brainstorm in three minutes the longest list of "too's" about the character that your group chooses. In "double time" present to the rest of the class your list as a series of **statues** without words. There should be no need to identify the character you choose! (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 2ab, 4ab)

59. "Go to, sir, you weigh equally: a feather will turn the scale." The prison's Provost speaks these words to the executioner Abhorson who is critical of Pompey's profession as a bawd. *Measure for Measure* is a text filled with references to weighing the worth of one object against another. In your small groups, return to the play and highlight as many of these references as you can find. Present your findings to the class either through a short play, a story, or a series of **tableaux** (see Exercise #8).¹¹ (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1ab, 2ab, 3abc, 4ab)



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CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

60. *Lucio and Barnardine win us because they are precisely what they present themselves as being.*
—Harold Bloom, 1987

In your small groups, discuss your ideas about Bloom's assessment. Would you exclude either—or both—of these men from such a description? Would you want to add anyone from the play's cast of characters? (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 2ab, 4ab**)

YOUR OWN THOUGHTS ON PAPER

61. *Certainly, after this deed, there was no more show for this man. The eyes of the tester would no more leave him; [Angelo] would deceive no one again. He has henceforth only the prospect of becoming a great criminal or of raising himself to lasting virtue and honour.*
—G.G. Gervinus, 1849

What was the course of Angelo's life, do you think? Write Angelo's obituary for the *Vienna Tribune* or present the eulogy spoken at his funeral. How did he spend the rest of his life? How did he die? What family or close personal friends or associates survived him? (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 2ab, 3abc**)

62. *Measure for Measure...is closely bound to Hamlet. It is as if Shakespeare, having exposed in that masterpiece and the plays that culminated in it the futility of revenge as a method of requiting wrong, asked: what then? How, when men fail to keep the peace, shall their quarrels be settled, their misconduct penalized, without resort to personal violence? To that question the all but universal reply of the wiser part of human experience seems to have been: by law. In place of revenge—justice... 'A government of laws and not of men.' It sounds august. But there never was, there is not, and there never will be, any such thing. If only laws would construe, administer, and enforce themselves! But until they do, they will rise no nearer justice than the justice in the minds and hearts of their very human agents and instruments.*
—Harold C. Goddard, 1951

Goddard points to one of the most difficult questions raised by Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*: can law be somehow protected and separate from the fallibility of human beings who create and administer it? What do you think? And are there other questions that you think Goddard's quote raises? (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 2b, 3abc**)

63. *Shakespearean comedy is in general deeply distrustful of absolutes, of characters who attempt to guide their lives according to rigid (and usually unexamined) ideals of conduct. Measure for Measure is no exception.*
—Anne Barton, 1974

Think about Barton's quote in light of your understanding of the characters in *Measure for Measure*. Write an essay responding to Barton's point of view. (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 2ab, 3abc**)

64. *All of Isabella's main assumptions—that Angelo was condemned, that the Duke was a committed celibate, that her brother was dead, and that she herself would remain chaste for life—are challenged, if not negated, in the space of five lines. She remains speechless, a baffled actress who has run out of lines. The gradual loss of her personal voice during the course of the play has become, finally, a literal loss of voice. In this sense, Measure for Measure is Isabella's tragedy...the eloquent Isabella is left with no tongue.*
—Marcia Riefer, 1984

Is *Measure for Measure* Isabella's tragedy? Is it, from your point of view, the tragedy of another character? Write an essay discussing your ideas, using the text to support your thoughts. (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 2ab, 3abc**)

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES



Preparing for the Performance

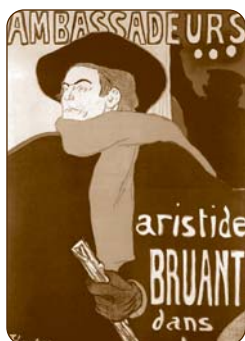
JUST TO THINK ABOUT

65. In traditional Shakespearean theater, members of the audience (unlike that in a modern auditorium) are always in view of each other. The experience of theater is one of community. We all are present and watching together a story that has been enacted many, many times for hundreds of years and in hundreds of cities all over the world. The thrust stage at Chicago Shakespeare Theater is much like the stages of Elizabethan theaters—and situates the action of the play with members of the audience facing each other around the stage. When during the performance do you become aware of other audience members? How does this affect your own experience? (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 4ab)

IN SMALL GROUPS

66. In Shakespeare's time, the text of a play was intended for the stage and was with each performance a fluid and changing element. Directors of Shakespeare follow in his footsteps when they modify parts of the text in an effort to make the play more understandable to its audiences. One of the main tasks of the director is to "theatricalize" a printed text—that is, to make clear visually what appears on the page. To Director Barbara Gaines, the opening lines of a play are particularly critical to theatricalize effectively, because the audience is not yet used to the world of the play or its language.

You will see in Chicago Shakespeare's production of *Measure for Measure* that Barbara Gaines introduces us—before any lines are spoken—to the atmosphere and world of the play by creating an **extratextual scene** without words. Before you see Ms. Gaines' vision, create your own. Imagine that you want to develop a brief, wordless vignette that will help your audience sink into the world of *Measure for Measure* before Shakespeare's play begins. Create a scene. Who and what would it depict? What mood would it convey? (Its characters don't have to be the main characters of the play.) (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1c, 2ab)



Back in the Classroom

WHOLE CLASS/SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

67. In collision over Claudio's fate, these two absolutists elicit from each other the unacknowledged and destructive aspects of their respective personalities. Angelo plunges into depravity, Isabella merely into hysteria and intolerance. In the course of the play both undergo a painful process of education.

—Anne Barton, 1974

Think about Barton's quote in light of your own interpretation of the play, and the production you've just seen. Does either Isabella or Angelo gain new knowledge through the journey each makes in the course of the play? What is your evidence in the play you've seen? Be as specific as you can about the clues. Did this interpretation work for you? If so, why? If not, why not? (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 2ab, 3abc)

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

68. The Duke orders Angelo's death. Then Mariana pleads for clemency. Then Isabella pleads for clemency. Then the Duke "fires" the Provost. How much is the Duke directing his own play? How much are the actions of the other characters beyond his control? Different productions portray the Duke's directorial talents in very different ways. How is he portrayed in Chicago Shakespeare's production? As a director in full control of his characters? Or as a man quite befuddled by the course of events spinning out of his control? What were the clues specifically? Did this interpretation work for you? If so, why? If not, why not? **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 2ab, 4ab)**

69. *Angelo asks only for death, never for marriage to Mariana; Isabella's response to the Duke's proposal is silence. In the end, as in the beginning, they seem, oddly, two of a kind.* —Harriet Hawkins, 1978

Do you think Director Barbara Gaines sees Angelo and Isabella as "two of a kind" as Hawkins states above? If so, what aspects of the performance suggested this commonality to you? If not, how in the way these two characters were brought to life did they seem quite different? **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 2ab, 4ab)**

70. *In this play there is thus no single character through whose eyes we can see the questions at issue as Shakespeare saw them. His own thought is interwoven in every part of it; his care is to maintain the balance, and to show us every side. . . . When we seem to be committed to one party, he calls us back to a feeling of kinship with the other.* —Walter Raleigh, 1907

As a group, discuss what you think Raleigh (a descendant, incidentally, of the Sir Walter Raleigh we know through colonial history) means. How might a story look different if it were told purely from the point of view of one character? Can you think of an example? Now, return to your impressions of Chicago Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. Did this production help you see the play from different points of view? If so, how? If not, why not? **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 2ab, 4ab)**

IN SMALL GROUPS

71. Working in groups of three, brainstorm your ideas and write an ad for the *Chicago Tribune* about the play you saw. Remember that you must characterize the play and attract a large audience in just a few words. What visual image from the play would you choose for your photo? **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1c, 2ab, 5c)**

INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

72. Create a travel brochure for Shakespeare's Vienna in *Measure for Measure* that would entice tourists to plan their vacations there...Use your knowledge from the play—and then do some creative spin-doctoring! **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1c, 4abc)**

73. Create a quote book. Look for photos, headlines, stories in current magazines and newspapers that "mesh" with particular quotes from the play. **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab, 5a)**

SOURCES AND INSPIRATIONS:

1, 3–11 Adapted from Cambridge School Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, edited by Coles and Gibson, 1993.

2 Adapted from concepts presented in Randal Robinson's *Unlocking Shakespeare's Language: Help for the Teacher and Student*, 1989.

TECHNO-SHAKESPEARE



CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER

Chicago Shakespeare Theater's website

<http://www.chicagoshakes.com/>

Check out our "*Romeo and Juliet* Multimedia Program for Teachers and Students" for a look backstage at CST and some fun activities that can readily be applied to any Shakespeare study.

COMPREHENSIVE LINK SITES

William Shakespeare and the Internet

<http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/>

Shakespeare in Europe Sh:in:E (Basel University)

<http://www.unibas.ch/shine/home>

Touchstone Database (University of Birmingham, UK)

<http://www.touchstone.bham.ac.uk/welcome.html>

Sher's Shakespeare Index

<http://www.websher.net/shakespeare/>

BBC1 Web Guide

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/webguide/schools/search.html?query=Shakespeare>

Absolute Shakespeare

<http://absoluteshakespeare.com>

TEACHING SHAKESPEARE

The Folger Shakespeare Library

<http://www.folger.edu/education/getarchive.cfm>

ShakespeareHigh.com (Amy Ulen's revamped "Surfing with the Bard" site)

<http://www.shakespearehigh.com>

Web English Teacher

<http://www.webenglishteacher.com>

Shake Sphere

<http://sites.micro-link.net/zekscrab/illustrations.html#Shakespeare%20Paintings>

Proper Elizabethan Accents

<http://www.renfaire.com/Language/index.html>

The English Renaissance in Context: Multimedia Tutorials (University of Pennsylvania)

<http://dewey.library.upenn.edu/sceti/furness/eric/teach/index.htm>

TECHNO-SHAKESPEARE

The History of Costume by Braun and Schneider
<http://www.siue.edu/COSTUMES/history.html>

The Elizabethan Costuming Page
<http://costume.dm.net/>

The Costumer's Manifesto (University of Alaska)
<http://www.costumes.org>

Rare Map Collection (The University of Georgia)
<http://www.libs.uga.edu/darchive/hargrett/maps/maps.html>

Blue Mountain Shakespeare Sonnet eCards
<http://www.bluemountain.com/category.pd?path=34889>

Spark Notes
<http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/>

Shakespeare Resource Center
<http://bardweb.net/plays/index.html>

SHAKESPEARE AND ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust
<http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/>

The Elizabethan Theatre
<http://www.uni-koeln.de/phil-fak/englisch/shakespeare/index.html>

Mr. William Shakespeare and the Internet
<http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/life.htm>

Queen Elizabeth I
<http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/eliza.htm>

Shakespeare and the Globe: Then and Now (Encyclopedia Britannica)
<http://search.eb.com/shakespeare/index2.html>

Elizabeth I: Ruler and Legend (The Newberry Library's exhibit commemorating the 400th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's death)
<http://www.elizabethexhibit.org>

Shakespeare's Globe Research Database
<http://www.rdg.ac.uk./globe/>

TEXTS AND EARLY EDITIONS

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Massachusetts Institute of Technology site)
<http://the-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/works.html>

TECHNO-SHAKESPEARE

Treasures in Full: Shakespeare in Quarto (British Library)
<http://www.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/homepage.html>

The First Folio and Early Quartos of William Shakespeare (University of Virginia)
<http://etext.virginia.edu/frames/shakeframe.html>

Furness Shakespeare Library (University of Pennsylvania)
<http://dewey.lib.upenn.edu/sceti/furness/>

The Internet Shakespeare Editions (University of Victoria, British Columbia)
<http://ise.uvic.ca/Foyer/index2.html>

Shakespeare: Subject to Change (Cable in the Classroom site)
<http://www.ciconline.org>

What Is a Folio? (MIT's "Hamlet on the Ramparts" site)
<http://shea.mit.edu/ramparts/newstuff3.htm>

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

Alexander Schmidt's Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary (Tufts University's Perseus Digital Library site)
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.03.0079>

Word Frequency Lists (Mt. Ararat High School)
<http://www.mta75.org/curriculum/english/Shakes/indexx.html>

SHAKESPEARE IN PERFORMANCE

The Internet Movie Database: William Shakespeare
<http://www.us.imdb.com/find?q=Shakespeare>

SHAKESPEARE IN ART

Shakespeare Illustrated (Emory University)
http://www.english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/Shakespeare.html

The Faces of Elizabeth I
<http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/elizface.htm>

Tudor England: Images
<http://www.marileecody.com/images.html>

Absolute Shakespeare
http://absoluteshakespeare.com/pictures/shakespeare_pictures.htm

SUGGESTED READINGS



Barton, Anne. "Introduction," *Measure for Measure* in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 1974.

✱ Berry, Ralph. *Changing Styles in Shakespeare*. London, 1981.

✱ Bevington, David. *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. New York, 1992.

Bloom, Harold, ed. *William Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure."* New York, 1987.

✱ Boyce, Charles. *Shakespeare A to Z*. New York, 1990.

✱ Coles and Gibson, eds. *Cambridge School Shakespeare: "Measure for Measure."* Cambridge, 1993. (This excellent series, used extensively as a resource in Chicago Shakespeare's education efforts, currently includes many of Shakespeare's plays, with more to follow each year. Available in the United States through Cambridge University Press website, www.cambridge.org. Chicago Shakespeare Theater gratefully thanks Cambridge University Press for permission to reprint and adapt the classroom activities annotated throughout this Teacher Handbook.)

✱ Darrow and Milne, eds. *Shakespeare for Students*, Book III. Detroit, 2000. This is part of an excellent three-book set, published by the Gale Group, offering students a compendium of historical and contemporary criticism on a number of Shakespeare's plays. A great resource for the classroom or school library.

Dawson, Anthony. *Watching Shakespeare: A Playgoer's Guide*. London, 1988.

Frye, Northrop. *A Natural Perspective: The Development of Shakespearean Romance and Comedy*. San Diego, 1965.

_____. *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare*. New Haven, 1986.

✱ Gay, Penny. *As She Likes It*. New York, 1994.

✱ Gibbons, Brian, ed. "Introduction" in the Cambridge University Press edition of *Measure for Measure*. Cambridge, 1991.

✱ Gibson, Rex. *Discovering Shakespeare's Language*. Cambridge, 1998.

✱ _____. *Teaching Shakespeare*. Cambridge, 1998.

✱ Goddard, Harold C. *The Meaning of Shakespeare*. Chicago, 1951.

Hawkins, Harriet. *Twayne's New Critical Introductions to Shakespeare*. Boston, 1987.

✱ Hills and Öttchen. *Shakespeare's Insults: Educating Your Wit*. Ann Arbor, 1991.

✱ Jackson and Smallwood, *Players of Shakespeare* 3. Cambridge, 1993.

✱ _____. *Players of Shakespeare* 2. Cambridge, 1988.

✱ Michaels, Wendy. *The Theme of Honour's Tongue: Workshop Approach to Henry IV, Part I*. New South Wales: St. Clair Press, 1991. (This series is an excellent resource for classroom teachers for Shakespeare's commonly taught plays.)

✱ Mullaney, Steven. *The Place of the Stage*. Chicago, 1988.

✱ Ornstein, Robert, ed. *Discussions of Shakespeare's Problem Comedies*. Boston, 1961.

Robinson, Randal. *Unlocking Shakespeare's Language: Help for the Teacher and Student*. Urbana, 1989.

✱ Rutter, Carol. *Clamorous Voices: Shakespeare's Women Today*. London, 1988

Van Doren, Mark. *Shakespeare*. New York, 1939.

Wentersdorf, Karl P. "The Marriage Contracts in *Measure for Measure*: A Reconsideration." *Shakespeare Survey* 32. Cambridge, 1979.

Wheeler, Richard, ed. *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's Measure for Measure*. New York, 1999.

✱ Available as reference in our Teacher Resource Center

rendering: Costume Designer Virgil C. Johnson



Chicago Shakespeare Theater
on Navy Pier
800 East Grand Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611