

Chapter 1 : Best Shakespeare Comedies | List of All Shakespearean Comedy Ranking

Elizabethan Era Comedy and Dramas When the great European movement known as the Renaissance reached England, it found its fullest and most lasting expression in the drama. By a fortunate group of coincidences this intellectual and artistic impulse affected the people of England at a moment when the country was undergoing a rapid and, on the.

Comedy Save In a modern sense, Comedy from the Greek: The origins of the term are found in Ancient Greece. In the Athenian democracy , the public opinion of voters was influenced by the political satire performed by the comic poets at the theaters. In this struggle, the youth is understood to be constrained by his lack of social authority, and is left with little choice but to take recourse in ruses which engender very dramatic irony which provokes laughter. Parody subverts popular genres and forms, critiquing those forms without necessarily condemning them. Other forms of comedy include screwball comedy , which derives its humor largely from bizarre, surprising and improbable situations or characters, and black comedy , which is characterized by a form of humor that includes darker aspects of human behavior or human nature. Similarly scatological humor , sexual humor, and race humor create comedy by violating social conventions or taboos in comic ways. A comedy of manners typically takes as its subject a particular part of society usually upper-class society and uses humor to parody or satirize the behavior and mannerisms of its members. Romantic comedy is a popular genre that depicts burgeoning romance in humorous terms and focuses on the foibles of those who are falling in love. Aristotle defined comedy as an imitation of men worse than the average where tragedy was an imitation of men better than the average. However, the characters portrayed in comedies were not worse than average in every way, only insofar as they are Ridiculous, which is a species of the Ugly. The Ridiculous may be defined as a mistake or deformity not productive of pain or harm to others; the mask, for instance, that excites laughter is something ugly and distorted without causing pain. It is in this sense that Dante used the term in the title of his poem, La Commedia. As time progressed, the word came more and more to be associated with any sort of performance intended to cause laughter. They disassociated comedy from Greek dramatic representation and instead identified it with Arabic poetic themes and forms, such as hijra satirical poetry. They viewed comedy as simply the "art of reprehension", and made no reference to light and cheerful events, or to the troubling beginnings and happy endings associated with classical Greek comedy. After the Latin translations of the 12th century , the term "comedy" gained a more general meaning in medieval literature. Aristophanes developed his type of comedy from the earlier satyr plays , which were often highly obscene. He also adds that the origins of comedy are obscure because it was not treated seriously from its inception. Aristotle taught that comedy was generally positive for society, since it brings forth happiness, which for Aristotle was the ideal state, the final goal in any activity. For Aristotle, a comedy did not need to involve sexual humor. A comedy is about the fortunate rise of a sympathetic character. Aristotle divides comedy into three categories or subgenres: On the contrary, Plato taught that comedy is a destruction to the self. He believed that it produces an emotion that overrides rational self-control and learning. In The Republic , he says that the guardians of the state should avoid laughter, "for ordinarily when one abandons himself to violent laughter, his condition provokes a violent reaction. Also in Poetics, Aristotle defined comedy as one of the original four genres of literature. The other three genres are tragedy , epic poetry , and lyric poetry. Literature, in general, is defined by Aristotle as a mimesis , or imitation of life. Comedy is the third form of literature, being the most divorced from a true mimesis. Tragedy is the truest mimesis, followed by epic poetry, comedy, and lyric poetry. Comedies begin with low or base characters seeking insignificant aims and end with some accomplishment of the aims which either lightens the initial baseness or reveals the insignificance of the aims. Divina Commedia is a long narrative poem by Dante Alighieri , begun c. It is widely considered to be the preeminent work in Italian literature [14] and one of the greatest works of world literature. It helped establish the Tuscan language , in which it is written, as the standardized Italian language. Inferno , Purgatorio , and Paradiso. An initial canto , serving as an introduction to the poem and generally considered to be part of the first cantica, brings the total number of cantos to It is generally accepted,

however, that the first two cantos serve as a unitary prologue to the entire epic, and that the opening two cantos of each cantica serve as prologues to each of the three cantiche. The figure of Punch derives from the Neapolitan stock character of Pulcinella. Punch made his first recorded appearance in England in 1662. He just taught us most of it". We in Hollywood owe much to him. Fields , Buster Keaton and the Marx Brothers. Constructions of surreal humour tend to involve bizarre juxtapositions, incongruity, non-sequiturs , irrational or absurd situations and expressions of nonsense. The humour derived gets its appeal from the ridiculousness and unlikeliness of the situation. The genre has roots in Surrealism in the arts. For example, *The Story of the Four Little Children Who Went Round the World* is filled with contradictory statements and odd images intended to provoke amusement, such as the following: After a time they saw some land at a distance; and when they came to it, they found it was an island made of water quite surrounded by earth. Besides that, it was bordered by evanescent isthmuses with a great Gulf-stream running about all over it, so that it was perfectly beautiful, and contained only a single tree, feet high. As a result, much of their art was intentionally amusing. This became one of the most famous and influential pieces of art in history, and one of the earliest examples of the found object movement.

Chapter 2 : Four Comedies by William Shakespeare | theinnatdunvilla.com

"Comedy", in its Elizabethan usage, had a very different meaning from modern comedy. A Shakespearean comedy is one that has a happy ending, usually involving marriages between the unmarried characters, and a tone and style that is more light-hearted than Shakespeare's other plays.

Aristotle defined comedy as an imitation of men worse than the average where tragedy was an imitation of men better than the average. However, the characters portrayed in comedies were not worse than average in every way, only insofar as they are Ridiculous, which is a species of the Ugly. The Ridiculous may be defined as a mistake or deformity not productive of pain or harm to others; the mask, for instance, that excites laughter is something ugly and distorted without causing pain. It is in this sense that Dante used the term in the title of his poem, *La Commedia*. As time progressed, the word came more and more to be associated with any sort of performance intended to cause laughter. They disassociated comedy from Greek dramatic representation and instead identified it with Arabic poetic themes and forms, such as *hija* satirical poetry. They viewed comedy as simply the "art of reprehension", and made no reference to light and cheerful events, or to the troubling beginnings and happy endings associated with classical Greek comedy. After the Latin translations of the 12th century, the term "comedy" gained a more general meaning in medieval literature. Aristophanes developed his type of comedy from the earlier satyr plays, which were often highly obscene. He also adds that the origins of comedy are obscure because it was not treated seriously from its inception. Aristotle taught that comedy was generally positive for society, since it brings forth happiness, which for Aristotle was the ideal state, the final goal in any activity. For Aristotle, a comedy did not need to involve sexual humor. A comedy is about the fortunate rise of a sympathetic character. Aristotle divides comedy into three categories or subgenres: On the contrary, Plato taught that comedy is a destruction to the self. He believed that it produces an emotion that overrides rational self-control and learning. In *The Republic*, he says that the guardians of the state should avoid laughter, "for ordinarily when one abandons himself to violent laughter, his condition provokes a violent reaction. Also in *Poetics*, Aristotle defined comedy as one of the original four genres of literature. The other three genres are tragedy, epic poetry, and lyric poetry. Literature, in general, is defined by Aristotle as a mimesis, or imitation of life. Comedy is the third form of literature, being the most divorced from a true mimesis. Tragedy is the truest mimesis, followed by epic poetry, comedy, and lyric poetry. Comedies begin with low or base characters seeking insignificant aims and end with some accomplishment of the aims which either lightens the initial baseness or reveals the insignificance of the aims. Early Renaissance forms of comedy[edit] Main articles: It is widely considered to be the preeminent work in Italian literature [14] and one of the greatest works of world literature. It helped establish the Tuscan language, in which it is written, as the standardized Italian language. *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*. An initial canto, serving as an introduction to the poem and generally considered to be part of the first cantica, brings the total number of cantos to It is generally accepted, however, that the first two cantos serve as a unitary prologue to the entire epic, and that the opening two cantos of each cantica serve as prologues to each of the three cantiche. The figure of Punch derives from the Neapolitan stock character of *Pulcinella*. Punch made his first recorded appearance in England in He just taught us most of it". We in Hollywood owe much to him. Fields, Buster Keaton and the Marx Brothers. Constructions of surreal humour tend to involve bizarre juxtapositions, incongruity, non-sequiturs, irrational or absurd situations and expressions of nonsense. The humour derived gets its appeal from the ridiculousness and unlikeliness of the situation. The genre has roots in Surrealism in the arts. For example, *The Story of the Four Little Children Who Went Round the World* is filled with contradictory statements and odd images intended to provoke amusement, such as the following: After a time they saw some land at a distance; and when they came to it, they found it was an island made of water quite surrounded by earth. Besides that, it was bordered by evanescent isthmuses with a great Gulf-stream running about all over it, so that it was perfectly beautiful, and contained only a single tree, feet high. As a result, much of their art was intentionally amusing. This became one of the most famous and influential pieces of art in history, and one of the earliest examples of the found object movement.

Chapter 3 : Shakespeare's Play Types: Comedies, Tragedies, Historic, Roman, Problem

Comedy is not necessarily what a modern audience would expect comedy to be. Whilst there may be some funny moments, a Shakespearean comedy may involve some very dramatic storylines. Usually what defines a Shakespearean play as a comedy is that it has a happy ending, often involving a marriage. The.

Comedy Definition of Comedy Comedy is a literary genre and a type of dramatic work that is amusing and satirical in its tone , mostly having a cheerful ending. The motif of this dramatic work is triumph over unpleasant circumstance by creating comic effects, resulting in a happy or successful conclusion. Thus, the purpose of comedy is to amuse the audience. Comedy has multiple sub-genres depending upon the source of the humor , context in which an author delivers dialogues, and delivery methods, which include farce , satire , and burlesque. Tragedy is opposite to comedy, as tragedy deals with sorrowful and tragic events in a story.

Types of Comedy There are five types of comedy in literature: Romantic Comedy Romantic comedy involves a theme of love leading to a happy conclusion. We find romantic comedy in Shakespearean plays and some Elizabethan contemporaries. These plays are concerned with idealized love affairs. It is a fact that true love never runs smoothly; however, love overcomes difficulties and ends in a happy union. Comedy of Humors Ben Johnson is the first dramatist who conceived and popularized this dramatic genre during the late sixteenth century. It explains that, when human beings have a balance of these humors in their bodies, they remain healthy. Comedy of Manners This form of dramatic genre deals with intrigues and relations of ladies and gentlemen living in a sophisticated society. This form relies upon high comedy, derived from sparkle and wit of dialogues, violations of social traditions, and good manners, by nonsense characters like jealous husbands, wives, and foppish dandies. We find its use in Restoration dramatists, particularly in the works of Wycherley and Congreve. Sentimental Comedy Sentimental drama contains both comedy and sentimental tragedy. It appears in literary circles due to reaction of the middle class against obscenity and indecency of Restoration Comedy of Manners. This form, which incorporates scenes with extreme emotions evoking excessive pity, gained popularity among the middle class audiences in the eighteenth century. Tragicomedy This dramatic genre contains both tragic and comedic elements. It blends both elements to lighten the overall mood of the play. Often, tragicomedy is a serious play that ends happily.

Comedy Examples from Literature Example 1: Their real world problems get resolved magically, enemies reconcile, and true lovers unite in the end. An overpowering suspicion of, and obsession with, his wife " that she might be unfaithful to him " controls Kiteley. Then a country gull determines every decision of George Downright in order to understand the manners of the city gallant. It characterizes extreme exaggeration , dealing with trials of its penniless leading role Indiana. The play ends happily with the discovery of Indiana as heiress. This tragicomedy play shows antics of low-born but devoted Helena, who attempts to win the love of her lover, Bertram. She finally succeeds in marrying him, though she decides not to accept him until she wears the family ring of her husband and bears him a child. Bertram discovers her treachery at the end but realizes Helena did all that for him and expresses his love for her.

Function of Comedy Comedy tends to bring humor and induce laughter in plays, films, and theaters. The primary function of comedy is to amuse and entertain the audience, while it also portrays social institutions and persons as corrupt, and ridicules them through satirizing, parodying, and poking fun at their vices. By doing this, authors expose foibles and follies of individuals and society by using comic elements.

Chapter 4 : Shakespeare's Comedy Plays: Comedy Plays By Shakespeare

In Shakespeare terms the above text's description of a comedy is pretty well-defined in general, the main point being the happy outcome for the good guys. However, in paragraph 4 above, referring to Merchant of Venice, the writer states that poor Shylock, because of one mistake, is punished severely and that the Christians are 'selfish and.

Thought and Structure of Comedy The Tragic and the Comic fade into each other by almost insensible gradations, and the greatest beauty of a poetical work often consists in the harmonious blending of these two elements. Not only in the same drama may both exist in perfect unison, but even in the same character. Great actors generally have a similar quality, and frequently it is hard to tell whether their impersonations be more humorous or more pathetic. This happy transfusion and interchange of tragic and comic coloring is one of the characteristics of supreme art; it brings the relief along with the pain; it furnishes the reconciliation along with the conflict. Shakespeare seems to have taken a special delight in its employment. No principle of his procedure is better known or more fully appreciated. His tragedies never fail of having their comic interludes; his comedies have, in nearly every case, a serious thread, and sometimes a background with a tragic outlook. Life is not all gloom or all delight; the cloud will obscure the sun, but the sun will illumine the cloud at least around the edges. Still, the Comic is not the Tragic, however subtle may be their intertwining, and however rapid their interaction. They rest upon diverse, and in some respects opposite, principles. Criticism must seek to explain the difference between them for the understanding, and must not rest content with a vague appeal to the feeling of beauty. Tragic earnestness springs from the deep ethical principle which animates the individual. He, however, assails another ethical principle, and thereby falls into guilt. The tragic character, moreover, must have such strength and intensity of will that it can never surrender its purpose. A reconciliation is impossible; death alone can solve the conflict. In Comedy also there is a collision with some ethical principle on the part of the individual; he intends a violation, but does not realize his intention; he is foiled through external deception, or breaks down through internal weakness; to him is wanting that complete absorption in some great purpose which is the peculiar quality of the tragic hero. The common realm of Tragedy and Comedy, therefore, is the ethical world and its collision. Their essential difference lies in the different relation of the leading characters to this ethical world. Here we are brought face to face with the first point which must be settled – what constitutes the Comic Individual? But a single person does not make a comedy; it requires several who are in action and counter-action; hence the second part of the subject will be the Comic Action; thirdly, a termination must be made which springs necessarily from the preceding elements; this gives the Comic Solution. Each division will be taken up in its natural order. The Comic Individual – He is, in one form or another, the victim of deception. He fights a shadow of his own mind, or pursues an external appearance; his end is a nullity, his plan an absurdity; he is always deceived; he really is not doing that which he seems to be doing. His object may be a reasonable one, his purpose may be a lofty one, but he is inadequate to its fulfillment; the delusion is that he believes in his own ability to accomplish what he wills. His object also may be an absurd one; he pursues it, however, with the same resolution. It may be called a foible, a folly, a frailty – still the essential characteristic is that the individual is pursuing an appearance, and thus is the victim of deception, though he may even be conscious of the absurd and delusive nature of his end. The two limitations of this sphere are to be carefully noticed. The Comic Individual must not succeed in violating the ethical principles which he conflicts with; these are the highest, the most serious, interests of man, and cannot even be endangered without exciting an apprehension, which destroys every comic tendency. Successful seduction, adultery, treason – in fine, the violations of State and Family – are not comic; nor is villainy, which attains its purpose. Such an intention of wrong-doing may exist, but it must never come to realization; it must not only be thwarted, but also punished. The delusion, therefore, ought not to go so far as to produce a violation of ethical principles. Nor, on the other hand, ought it to transgress the limits of sanity – a madman is not a comic character. Reason must be present in the individual, though his end be absurd. A rational man acting irrationally is the incongruity which calls forth the laugh – is the contradiction upon which Comedy reposes. There must be, in the end, a restoration from delusion, and often a punishment, both

of which are precluded by the notion of insanity. Many readers feel that Don Quixote is too much of a lunatic. In general, therefore, the Comic Individual must not be a criminal, nor must he be a madman. We are now to take a glance at the instrumentalities of Comedy "at the means which renders the Individual comic. His deceptions can arise from two sources "from the senses and from the mind. It thus may have an external cause, namely, the situation in which he is placed; or it may have an internal origin, namely, his caprice, his imagination, his understanding. Here we have the two essential kinds of Comedy "that of Situation and that of Character. The former seeks its instrumentalities outside of the individual; he is determined by them externally; hence freedom almost disappears in this form of the drama. But, in Comedy of Character, the Individual is self-determined; his situation, in its essential points, is the consequence of his own action "of his own folly or weakness; he is not plunged into it from without, by fate or by accident. In this sphere the Individual will find a realm of freedom. In Comedy of Situation, therefore, a person is placed in circumstances over which he has little or no control, and is made to pursue absurd and nugatory objects without any direct fault of his own. His deception is brought about through the senses; his mistakes arise from false appearances which hover around him "in general, that which is phantom seems reality. He now follows up his delusions as ends; he meets and collides with others who have similar ends, or with others who have rational ends. The result is an infinite complication of mistakes and deceptions, which is the peculiar nature of Comedy of Situation, or, as is more commonly called from its intricacy, Comedy of Intrigue. The special forms of this sensuous deception ought also to be classified. In the first place, things may be disguised. The natural and artificial objects which ordinarily surround a man may be so changed that he imagines himself a different person, or in a strange world; sudden transition into a new country, or into a new condition of life, may be made to appear actual, though wholly unreal. Christopher Sly, the drunken tinker, who, being suddenly surrounded by the luxury of a palace, comes to consider himself a lord, is an example. But this phase is quite subsidiary "it is a mere setting for other and greater effects. The second, and chief, instrumentality of Comedy of Situation is the mistake in personality, or, as it is sometimes called. One person is taken for another; thus two persons lose their relations to the society around them, and this society loses its relation to them. The effect is wonderful. The whole world seems to be converted into a dream "into fairyland; the natural order of things is turned upside down; the ordinary mediations of life are perverted or destroyed. A man with a strong head, it is true, may preserve his equilibrium in the confusion; such an one, however, is not a comic character. You go upon the street; you are taken for somebody else; are familiarly addressed by persons whom you have never before seen, and about matters of which you have never before heard; presents are given you; payment is demanded of you for unknown articles; you are met by a woman who calls herself your wife, and, when you indignantly repudiate, her the law is invoked; you are dragged before a court of justice, where her claim is successfully established by many witnesses, and, finally, you are in danger of being lynched by an angry populace. The other person for whom you are taken has also corresponding difficulties; his relations in life are thrown into serious confusion; his business is crossed; his dear wife seems to have gone astray; still, the disturbing influence is to him a total mystery. Society, too, is drawn into the same whirl of delusion. Law, Family, State "the highest institutions of man "become the wild sport of accident. Such a condition of things cannot last long, but, while it does last, there is fun for those who are in the secret. What is the matter? Mistaken Identity, which, however, the parties caught in the complication must not think of, else the spell is broken. The mistakes of identity are produced mainly in two ways "by Natural Resemblance and by Disguise. The first is an accident, and lies outside of the knowledge of the individuals who happen to be like one another. They are, therefore, the unconscious victims of an external influence; they are involved in a confusion of which nobody knows the origin. But Disguise is intentional "at least on the part of one person, namely, he who has disguised himself. All the other characters of the play may be victimized by the mask, and take the appearance for the reality; or a part of them may be in the secret, and enjoy the sport with the audience. One individual, however, is not deceived "is free; has a conscious purpose of his own, which he is realizing. Disguise has a thousand shapes; it is the most common artifice, not merely of Comedy, but of the Drama generally. It may run through a whole play and constitute the main point of interest, or it may be employed for a subordinate object in a single scene. Its manifold forms show the originality of the writer of

Comedy. Here is his province " the creation of novel disguises and situations. They all, however, have the one common characteristic " deception through a false appearance. But Disguise has its limits, which will be manifested often beneath the most adroit concealment. The person in mask is usually supposed to be the master of the complications which he weaves around himself, and so he is ordinarily portrayed. But an unsuspected resemblance may come in and disturb his plans. Thus Viola, in Twelfth Night, notwithstanding her disguise, is lost in the comic labyrinth by the appearance of her brother, whom she supposed to be drowned. But the true dissolution of Disguise is manifest when character reveals itself beneath the mask, and the internal nature of man shows itself stronger than any external covering. Then the Disguise becomes nothing " it quite disappears. Rosalind, in As You Like It, betrays herself when she faints at the story of the bloody handkerchief; both her sex and her love shine out beneath her doublet and hose. The disguised mother at a masquerade will be apt to manifest some peculiar interest in her daughter, and thus reveal both herself and the daughter. The same may be said of many other relations of life. This has a supreme comic effect; it is the climax of Comedy of Situation, and, at the same time, the transition into a deeper principle. The external Disguise has melted away before the internal Character. It will thus be seen that Comedy of Situation is logically incomplete, and is inadequate to express the more profound comic elements of human nature. Moreover, it is wanting in freedom. That man should be represented as placed in a world of deception and appearance, which cajoles him and leads him astray without any fault on his part, does not satisfy reason or true Aesthetic feeling. Mistakes through sensuous delusion may be very laughable, but they lack the highest comic principle. We all think that a person ought not to be responsible for that which is external and accidental. Such is sometimes the reality, however, though by no means the deepest and truest reality of human existence. Man must be reached by his own act; he must himself be the cause of his own difficulties. Thus he is moved from within, is self-determined, and is to blame for his follies. Anything short of freedom will not completely satisfy us; it conflicts too strongly with our rational nature. From these observations it will easily be inferred that, in Comedy of Situation, there can be but little portraiture of character. A person may be caught in a train of ludicrous circumstances, be his disposition what it may. He is, no doubt, a laughable object to the by-standers, but such an occurrence is not determined by his character, nor designates it in any way.

Chapter 5 : Shakespearean comedy - Wikipedia

About Four Comedies. The Taming of the Shrew Robust and bawdy, The Taming of the Shrew captivates audiences with outrageous humor as Katharina, the shrew, engages in a contest of wills-and love-with her bridegroom, Petruchio, in a comedy of unmatched theatrical brilliance, filled with visual gags and witty repartee.

Of the three types of plays recognized in the Shakespeare First Folio -- Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies -- the last has been the most discussed and is clearest in outline. Tragedy must end in some tremendous catastrophe involving in Elizabethan practice the death of the principal character. The catastrophe must not be the result of mere accident, but must be brought about by some essential trait in the character of the hero acting either directly or through its effect on other persons. The hero must nevertheless have in him something which outweighs his defects and interests us in him so that we care for his fate more than for anything else in the play. The problem then is, why should a picture of the misfortunes of some one in whom we are thus interested afford us any satisfaction? No final answer has yet been found. Aristotle said that the spectacle by rousing in us pity and fear purges us of these emotions, and this remains the best explanation. Just as a great calamity sweeps from our minds the petty irritations of our common life, so the flood of esthetic emotion lifts us above them. It will be remembered that the first part of Tamburlaine ends, not in his death, but in his triumph, and yet we feel that the peculiar note of tragedy has been struck. We have the true tragic sense of liberation. Kyd also asserted the independence of the spirit of man, if he is prepared to face pain and death. It is possibly true that Lear is a better man at the end of the play than he was at the beginning, and that without his suffering he would not have learned sympathy with his kind; but this does not apply either to Hamlet or to Othello, and even in the case of King Lear it does not explain the aesthetic appeal. That depends on something more profound. The student, after getting the story of the tragedy quite clear, should concentrate first on the character of the hero. Ask yourself whether his creator considered him ideally perfect -- in which case the appeal probably lies in the spectacle of a single human soul defying the universe; or flawed -- in which case the defect will bring about the catastrophe. It is true that in the Revenge Play type we have frequently the villain-hero, but the interest there depends rather on his courage and independence of man and God than on his villainy. This is particularly true of pre-Shakespearean plays. It is remarkable that the post-Shakespearean drama was apt to combine plots involving unnatural crimes and vicious passions with a somewhat shallow conventional morality. They may end in catastrophe or in triumph, but the catastrophe is apt to be undignified and the triumph won at a price. Again, we may say that in the Histories Shakespeare is dealing with the nation as hero. The hero in this case is immortal and his tale cannot be a true tragedy; while on the other hand there can never be the true comedy feeling of an established and final harmony. Apart from Shakespeare, Histories are almost entirely inspired by patriotism, often of a rather rabid type. There is the greatest variety in the section entitled "Comedy," and critics generally distinguish sharply between Comedies and Romances in Reconciliation plays. We are apt to expect a comedy to aim chiefly at making us laugh, but, although there are extremely funny passages, it is clear that this is not the main character of any but one or two early plays. Romances are always concerned with two generations, and cover the events of many years. There is an element of the marvellous in them, and the emphasis on repentance and forgiveness is very marked. But they are, indeed, the natural development of the plays of the great period. In the earlier play the stress is laid on the actions and emotions of the younger folk, while in the later plays the older generation is most fully portrayed. But before Shakespeare arrived at this conception of Comedy, he had tried various types. In "The Comedy of Errors," founded on a translation of a Latin comedy, he had produced an example of pure farce. The humour in a farce generally consists of violent action provoked by misunderstanding of a gross kind. Probably the original conception of the "Merchant of Venice" was much the same. A youthful Shakespeare was probably pleased with the outwitting of the churlish old miser Shylock. It is the theme of youth and crabbed age. An older Shakespeare must have revised it and seen the story more through the eyes of Shylock and of Antonio, and the unity of the play has been destroyed. At the beginning of the play there is always an element of discord, which is resolved before the close. As in History the hero of the play is rather Society as a whole than

any person in it, and because of this we get at the end a sense of "happiness ever after."

Chapter 6 : Types of Shakespearean Plays - Common elements in Shakespearean tragedy, comedy, and I

Indeed, the comedy of Shakespeare's time was very different from our modern comedy. The style and key characteristics of a Shakespeare comedy are not as distinct as the other Shakespearean genres and sometimes determining whether one of his plays is a comedy can be a challenge.

Comedy is a game played to throw reflections upon social life. Meredith When we talk about "comedy" in a drama course, we are not simply referring to plays that make us laugh. Although laughter often is a product of comedy, our use of the phrase in here will usually be in reference to a dramatic form, a structure. At the conclusion of these plays, marriage is celebrated, as is the family as a whole, not just as a "personal" event, but as a social occasion. Put briefly, we might say that comedy traces the movement from distress to happiness, from "bad" to "good. And yet, this "definition" presupposes that each of us will react in the same way to a comedy--that we will all find the good good and the bad bad. The definition seems to point to a play that is static, unequivocal. Yet, as you will hear me say again and again over the course of the term, Renaissance drama--especially Shakespearean drama--is never unequivocal, it never gives us one single answer to any problem. So, having "defined" comedy for you, I want to now complicate things by asking a much more productive, though less definitive, question: The answers--there are many and not one is definitive--have a great deal to do with who we are and when we are living, but there are ways of generalizing a bit that will be helpful to our own speculations on comedy. In what follows, I want to take you through three different ways that critics have answered that question. The happy ending approach to the comedies fully embraces the notion of complete resolution. A critic taking this approach would say that the tension of any given comedy is fully, harmoniously, unequivocally resolved by the reconciliations of the concluding act. The Anthropological Approach This approach to comedy--and particularly Shakespearean comedy--became popular with the work of two very important critics: This approach--or approaches, as there are many variations on the anthropological approach--begins to complicate many of the pat assumptions of the happy ending thesis. The anthropological approach begins to historicize comedy and not see it simply as a coherent vision of happiness. It is, if you wish, a macro view of comedy. The work of Barber and Frye is highly dependent on what both critics identify as universal patterns of ritual in human life. I have been led into an exploration of the way the social form of Elizabethan holidays contributed to the dramatic form of festive comedy. To relate this drama to holiday has proved to be the most effective way to describe its character. And this historical interplay between social and artistic form has an interest of its own: Both Barber and Frye, despite their reliance on what they see as constant patterns of ritual, are willing to entertain the possibility that the ending of a comedy may be ironic, a notion considered anathema by the critics in the "happy ending" camp. More recently, critics taking an anthropological approach to Renaissance comedy have moved away from the universalist models of, especially, Frye and paid more attention to the specific social rituals of early-modern England. An excellent example of this much more "historicized," more political, approach is represented in the article you have been asked to read by the prominent Renaissance critic Louis Montrose, "The Purpose of Playing: Reflections on a Shakespearean Anthropology. The "Skeptical" Approach I will spend the most time talking about this approach, both because it is less easy to summarize than the other two and because it is the approach that will most inform the work we do in this course. This is an approach that some of you, especially those of you who have taken English 86, will recognize as being more broadly "theoretical"--post-structural, to be specific--than the two above. You do not, however, need to have English 86 in order to understand, and ask for yourselves, the kinds of questions that this more theoretical approach will ask of the comedies. In fact, I want you not to be so concerned with what we might "call" this approach and more with the general set of assumptions that informs it. Until we realize--perhaps by reading a play, perhaps from our own experience--that terror and joy are incredibly complex experiences. The critic taking this approach is not looking for simple resolution to those competing forces, but concedes, instead, that the circumstances represented in the plays are far too complicated to be resolved in any pat conclusion. The skeptical critic sees the comedies as open-ended, leaving questions unanswered, or unanswerable. In this course, my own skepticism about these plays we call

comedies will take the form of certain issues that we will investigate in each of the plays. My questions will be informed by an understanding of the comedies as places where ideology is produced. Ideology is what the ruling class--not just the government, but those in other positions of power as well--encourages a society to believe in, it is the picture most members of a society carry around in their heads of what they are supposed to be. Built in to any ideological position is the belief that it is "natural," that it is "right," that it is the only right way. The definition of ideology that I have provided, however, reveals those positions to be constructed, not god-given, and usually constructed in the interests of the ruling class. Taking this now to the comedies, one of the issues that will concern us in this course involves the complications and transgressions of love and how, in particular, no act of love in the plays is ever without social implication. All of the playwrights seem aware of the precariousness of the institutions--mainly marriage--by which desire is socialized and the ways in which those institutions serve the ruling class. This reading of the plays is not so skeptical that it discounts the possibility of love; it does, however, cast a very skeptical eye on the ways in which our culture authorizes and legitimates love. One of the ways comedy in particular encourages us to ask such skeptical questions is by drawing attention to its own artifice. So often, as we will see, the plays refer to themselves as plays; we are rarely allowed to forget that what we are watching is just a bunch of guys acting. Leo Salingar explains it this way: It is a representation of life outside the theatre, partly by way of explicit comment, mainly by way of an imitation of speech and action, more or less literal, more or less figurative. At the same time, it is the text for a performance which is to exist, for the time being, as an end in itself. It provides for a series of gestures, physical and verbal. On this plane, a comedy may approximate to ritual or to pastime, celebration or entertainment; but it draws its meaning from its occasion, as a performance by actors before an audience, and ultimately from the general tradition of similar occasions, rather than from the particular story, the imaginary life-situation, of the characters the performers are impersonating. Shakespeare and the Traditions of Comedy 7

This distancing from real life which at the same time imitates real life has the effect of leading us to question the authenticity of that so-called real life: Perhaps that artificiality also leads us to question the authority that decrees the final reconciliation in a play: The most skeptical of the questions we will ask in here, however, goes right to the heart of the happy ending thesis and wonders whether the plays are really happy at all. With plays like *Twelfth Night* we are forced to deal with "anti-romantic" characters, characters like Malvolio or Sir Andrew who suffer the most demeaning kinds of humiliation. Thinking about the ways in which these characters function in the plays leads us again to larger social questions. The Shakespeare critic Richard Levin explains it this way: According to the festive-romantic account, the celebration at the end of the comedies commemorates the emergence of an ideal society. The alternative I am suggesting is that the plot of the comedies traces the struggles for inclusion into society and that the celebration merely establishes the identity of the winners. In this interpretation, success depends on such considerations as birth, wealth, good looks, intelligence, cunning, and on occasion the willingness to forsake ideals--to adhere to them. This interpretation relates to certain changes that have taken place in the understanding of Renaissance England. A few decades back, literary scholars presented the Elizabethan age as a conservative one in which Tudor orthodoxies won wide acceptance

Love and Society in Shakespearean Comedy

Chapter 7 : The Main Characteristics of Shakespearean Plays: Comedy, Tragedy, History | Owlcation

Comedy was traditionally a 'lower' genre than tragedy or history, and so these comedies by Shakespeare's contemporaries justified themselves by their satirical ambitions. Satire was a higher genre than other kinds of comedy, commended by classical authors as morally improving.

Types of Comedy for Drama Class by Studying comedy can be one of the most enjoyable units of work in any high school drama program. One of the advantages of comedy is there are so many sub genres of this form that can be isolated for investigation and performance at different levels of schooling. I find the more visual and physical forms of comedy are enjoyed by junior students, while understandably senior students often find literary and sophisticated forms of comedy rich and rewarding in their drama studies. One of the main challenges of studying comedy is that the end product should not just be entertaining, but humorous for the audience. Often a visual or highly physical work. Appropriate for all year levels. Most suitable for the middle and senior years. Parody is similar to satire as it is a work that deliberately imitates another work for comic effect, sometimes delivering a message. Suitable for middle and senior year levels. Stand-up is a type of comedy normally involving one person performing a comic routine before a live audience. Suitable for the middle and senior years. Sometimes related subject matter, though often not. Suitable for all year levels. Offensive to some, hilarious to others. Suitable for senior year levels. Arlecchino the harlequin servant made it famous! Most suitable for middle and senior year levels. Focus on the origins of burlesque in England as satirical comedies. Suitable for senior years when studying the history of theatrical entertainment. Travesty is a work that misrepresents serious subject matter via parody. Tragicomedy as the name suggests is a work comprising a mixture of both comedy and tragedy. From to about , these plays were also known as Restoration comedies William Wycherley, etc. Suitable for middle and senior years. Comedy of Humours is a historical comedy linked to Elizabethan playwright Ben Jonson. Based on the premise that the human body consists of four liquids, all representing a different type of humour, in turn affecting the types of characters represented in the drama. Richard Sheridan wrote a number of comedy of character works. Court Comedy Comedy written to be performed at the court of kings and queens. Old Comedy Around 5th century BC, Old Comedy was the first phase of Athenian comedy popularised by Aristophanes whose works satirised public people and events. Menander introduced New Comedy to Greece.

Chapter 8 : Paul Elder & Co – Elizabethan Humours and the Comedy of Ben Jonson ()

William Shakespeare's play, A Midsummer Night's Dream, is a good example of a romantic comedy, presenting young lovers falling comically in and out of love for a brief period. Their real world problems get resolved magically, enemies reconcile, and true lovers unite in the end.

Chapter 9 : Comedy | Revolv

Elizabethan comedies were actually rather far-ranging and demonstrated the creativity and inventiveness of the playwrights. The most common comedic forms were based on love stories, and had the.