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FESTE AS WISE FOOL IN WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *TWELFTH NIGHT*

Abstract

This paper focuses on the satirical potential of Feste, a wise-fool in William Shakespeare's comedy *Twelfth Night*, who is not only humorous but also intelligent and witty person. He is the integral part of the play. He is the mouthpiece of the playwright. He not only provides fun and laughter in the comedy but also performs many important functions of it. He amuses the readers and audience by his witticism and tricks. His insight into character is combined with versatility. He readily estimates the company in which he is and suits his bearing to it. In *Twelfth Night* it is irony that the licensed fool, Feste is actually no fool at all but some other characters provide the actual comedy through their idiocy. He is witty and intelligent and being a licensed fool, he is free to speak the truth of the characters around him. He is a shrewd observer of characters and situations. He understands the nature of all the characters and sharply criticizes all their foibles and follies.

Keywords: Fool, Scholar, Identity, Truthfulness, Symbolic expressions

William Shakespeare uses fools or clowns in most of his plays to provide the audience with amusement. It was a tradition in Elizabethan culture to have a non serious character in the play to bring humour. Clowns in Shakespeare's plays are not only humorous but they are also intelligent and witty persons who satirize the follies of the important characters in their philosophical tones. They not only provide fun and laughter in the play but also perform many useful functions in the comedy. By the time of Elizabeth reign, courtly fools were a common feature of English society. These fools or clowns were of two types. The first type could include mentally retarded person or dwarfs. Such fools were often considered as pet