

Chapter V

Conclusion

To sum up, Shakespeare's court jesters and clowns are not presented only to excite the audience and **readers' laughter** upon their actions and witty **speeches**. **They** also make the readers aware of the plays' issues through their comments and criticisms.

The Fool in "King Lear" uses his wit to give wise comments on Lear's decision in banishing Cordelia and giving his kingdom to his two other daughters. He makes Lear aware of his daughters' ingratitude through his imageries. This Fool rebukes and criticizes Lear until the latter gains self-realization especially regarding Cordelia's true love to her father. **The** Fool is loyal in serving Lear. He accompanies the King during his banishment, facing the cold storm together. Through this fool Shakespeare present a paradox by placing side by side the wise man who act foolishly and the fool who speaks wisely- This clear-headed fool is juxtaposed with the insane King Lear, and it heightens the tragedy.

The clown Falstaff in "Henry IV, Part I" has all of the bad characteristics. Yet, the audience and readers love him because of the humour he provides in the play. His deceitful characteristics and his cowardice amuse

the audience and readers of this play. He has the skill to invent excuses to escape shame and trouble. He is also best in flattering people. Shakespeare uses Falstaff's robbery in Gadshill as a parallel of king Henry and the Percys. With this robbery scene, readers are reminded of Henry's usurpation of Richards' throne and also of the Percy's effort to rebel. Falstaff also plays as a contrast to Hotspur with his soliloquies on honour.

Can honour set to a leg? no: or an arm? no: or
take away the grief of a wound? no. What is honour?
a word. What is in that wordd honour? what is that
honour? air (Shakespeare, 1961:701).

Through this speech Falstaff unconsciously enlightens the readers' mind that it is not good to be obsessed by honour, of which Hotspur is. In this way Shakespeare presents Falstaff as his spokesman of the theme on honour.

Touchstone in "As You Like It" and Feste in "Twelfth Night" are skillful in their play of words and presenting arguments. No single character in the play can corner them or enjoy a triumph over them. One has to notice Feste's encounter with liana and Touchstone's debate with Conn, the country shepherd. They also use their wits to criticize and comment against other characters in the plays. Touchstone criticizes the courtiers way of life that is false and artificial.

Through Touchstone, **Shakespeare** ridicules the romantic love. Touchstone's **marriage with** Audrey is used as a parody against **the romantic** love of Orlando and **Rosalind**. Likewise, Feste uses his wit to criticize Olivia's folly in mourning for her dead brother. He also indicates Orsino's melancholy and Sir Andrew's stupidity through his song in response to their love to Olivia.

The last clown, Launcelot Gobbo in "Merchant of Venice" serves as a comic relief before the scene of Jessica's elopement and also the trial scene of Antonio. Launcelot also foreshadows Jessica's elopement and Shylock's ignorance when he deceives his blind father. "It is a wise father that knows his own child" (Shakespeare, 1757:22).

Shakespeare court jesters are used to comment and criticize the other characters in the play. They are given the freedom of speech so that they can bravely speak their opinion and criticize their superiors. Their criticisms make the audience and readers aware of **the** plays issues. Shakespeare also uses these court jesters as the contrasts to his main characters. Shakespeare is fond of presenting characters in pairs to make clear their differences. "Black appears more black when it is placed beside white....(Holzknecht, 1950:256). Thus, the wise fool is placed side by side

with other characters so as to reveal clearly their follies.

In conclusion, Shakespeare's court jesters and clowns do not only function as entertainers. They are also commentators of the plays. Some of them serve as dramatic contrast against the others and some others parallel the main characters and foreshadows important scenes in the play.

It is interesting to note too although the chief role of Shakespeare's court jesters and clowns is to entertain, yet this playwright never portrayed two court jesters or two clowns alike in his plays. Each has his own unique characteristics, which makes them believable and plausible. Herein lies Shakespeare's greatness.