

Shakespeare's twelfth night a play in the genre of comedy assignment

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However, within the play, arguably at the heart of it, there are other themes such as confusion and misunderstanding which lead to the question of whether foolishness is truly at the heart of the play and if there are other themes to consider. Twelfth Night begins to suggest that foolishness and triviality will be at the centre of the play from the beginning due to the many contextual connotations it has relating to the Elizabethan festival, also known as the 'Feast of Fools'.

From this reference, the audience can already begin to predict that not only will there be foolish behavior, but from the word 'feast' they can deduce that there will in fact be a surplus. The festival 'Twelfth Night' occurs annually on the 5th of January where food and drink are typically at the centre of celebrations 'but I rather think it consists of eating and drinking.

Foolish behavior can be expected to result from this over indulgence and is clearly exhibited in Sir Toby and Sir Andrew who are foolish 'drunkards' throughout 'come so early of this lethargy, resulting in some linguistic moodiness as well as many opportunities for physical comedy as a result of foolish behavior.

Furthermore, the historical connotations related with 'Twelfth Night', similarly confirm that 'foolishness lies at the heart of the play' as the Twelfth Night festival involved a large amount of role reversal, this too can be related to the play. Role reversal during the festival, commonly took place between people of vastly different classes; usually between someone of a lower class with that of a much higher status. Within 'Twelfth Night', Viola disguises herself as Cesario, a man.

This class exchange is evident within the play as due to the patriarchal conventions of the time, men were seen of a much higher class than women. During the Elizabethan period, any role reversal of the sort would have caused considerable controversy and to the audience may have seemed exceedingly foolish, consequently portraying Viola as a fool, throughout the play; thus it could be argued that foolishness is present constantly and therefore at the ' heart of the play'.

Dramatic irony created from this foolish misconception further creates humor through-out as the audience is aware of Viola's true identity, ' I am not what am', and the characters appear to be oblivious and completely unaware of the truth, hence creating more fatuous impressions of the characters.