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## Araştırma Makalesi • Research Article

### An Enigmatic Play: When Skulls Speak Loudly A Deconstructive Reading of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*

*Esrarengiz Bir Oyun: Kafatasları Konuşmaya Başladığında  
Shakespeare'in Hamlet Oyununa Dair Yapı-sökümcü Bir Okuma*

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#### ÖZ

Orta Çağ ve Rönesans saraylarının şen şakrak ve renkli üyeleri olarak karşımıza çıkan soytarılar, çeşitli eğlence faaliyetlerine ilaveten krallıkların yönetiminde dolaylı ve ön planda olmayacak şekilde söz sahibiydiler. Kalabalıkları eğlendirirken sergiledikleri gösterişli kıyafetleri ve dikkat çeken neşeli tavırlarına rağmen kraliyet yönetimine olan katkıları ikincil ve zekice olmak zorundaydı. Aslında keskin zekalı ve gayet dikkatli birer gözlemci olarak karşımıza çıkan bu insanlar başkaları tarafından dile getirilemeyenleri duyurmak amacıyla mizahlarını bir vasıta olarak kullanmaktaydılar. Uzlaşmaz tabiatlarıyla özdeşleşen nevi şahıslarına münhasır yöntemlerle, saray soytarıları kraliyet baskısı karşısında zaman zaman susturulan yahut göz ardı edilen gerçeğin ve hak olanın savunucuları olarak karşımıza çıkma eğilimindeydiler. Saray geleneklerine ve kraliyet görgü kurallarına gayet aşina bir dönem insanı ve aynı zamanda oldukça yetenekli bir oyun yazarı olan Shakespeare, oyunlarında soytarı karakterine bu doğrultuda son derece incelikli bir rol ayırmıştır. Mevzubahis rol, bir soytarının neşeli sözleriyle maskelenen zekice ve eleştirel şakalarla kendini gösterir. Tüm bunlara rağmen, Shakespeare, merhum soytarı Yorick'i, eleştirisini bir kafatasından ibaret ölmüş bedeni aracılığıyla iletmek zorunda olduğu alışlagelmişin dışında, gayet vahim bir koşulda okuyucunun karşısına çıkarır. Derridacı bir eğilimle anlamın merkezleştirilmesi yönteminden yola çıkarak, bu makale eleştirel bakış açısı eksikliğinin yıkıcı bir dar görüşlülüğe yol açabileceğini göstermek üzere *Hamlet* oyununu bir soytarının eksikliği üzerinden yapısökümcü okumayla ele almaktadır.

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#### ABSTRACT

Being vivacious and colourful members of the medieval and Renaissance courts, jesters served for a variety of recreational purposes in addition to having the oblique subaltern voices in the administration of the kingdoms. Despite their ostentatious clothing and jaunty manners, which they manifested while delivering jokes and tricks, their contribution to the royal administration had to be indirect and clever. Indeed, these men of great observation and acute cunning used their humour in order to voice what cannot be expressed by the others. In their peculiar kind of way that was also associated with their divergent nature, jesters were inclined to act as the advocates of truth which had to be suppressed or ignored at times in face of royal hegemony. As a rather skilled playwright, who was also familiar with the conventions of the court manners, Shakespeare spared an exceptionally subtle role for the character of the jester in his plays. This role reveals itself through witty jokes of criticism masked by the jolly words of a fool. Nevertheless, Shakespeare ascribes a markedly grim condition for his late jester Yorick who has to deliver his criticism through his deceased body, a skull per se. Deriving mobility from the Derridean sense of decentralizing the meaning, the article employs a deconstructionist reading of *Hamlet* through the absence of a jester to exhibit how the lack of a critical perspective may yield catastrophic dim-sightedness.

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## Introduction

As can be expected by the implication of the titles, it is a highly customary axiom for a king to be wise and a jester to be fool thus occupying the antipoles for each other. In essence, the respected prestige and trusted reason of the noble coterie let their elevated status consolidate into visible excellence by means of the comparison to a jester who is an epitome of foolery and buffoonery. Nevertheless, Shakespeare envisages this bond not as a fixed locus by which destined roles bestow privileges and handicaps to certain groups, the way he braces the aristocracy and foolery, however, may well be improvised as two parties on a seesaw. The deconstructive maxim of this similitude lies in the motion of the machinery: as one side rises, the other is to fall. The gradual change in the roles of the King Lear who succumbs to foolishness and his ever-wiser Fool as the play progresses posits a credible instance for the ongoing debate. In this respect, it can be concluded that Shakespeare embraces a deconstructive inclination in the way he handles these roles. Still and all, the highly oblique and grim condition of Yorick, the Fool of *Hamlet*, delves deeper into the deconstructive inclination of the playwright. By annulling the inverse motion of the seesaw and rendering the noble and the lowly equal after the grasp of death, Yorick's silent but epiphanic cautions morph into a third party, namely the dead. Triggering a grim sort of epiphany in Prince Hamlet, Yorick's skull captures the scene as an image that is associated with death and vanity of life. Conventionally, jesters are entrusted with having divergent voices in the administration of the kingdoms. Indeed, the biting humour they cast at royal members' mistakes serves as veiled critiques. However, the appearance of the court fool in the form of a skull has much potential to imply the pertinent absence of diversity of thought or criticism. When the other characters' avid commitment to assist their lords in their schemes is taken into consideration, the vantage point of the claim gains remarkable credibility. Notwithstanding, dead Yorick serves his role in bringing about an animadversion for the society, yet disrupts carnal concerns of the living folks by addressing them beyond a threshold where death proves all efforts to gain more of the world futile as if waking from a dream. Based on this resolution, the study will scrutinize the aforementioned premises in detail in order to exhibit how the cautioned and prophesied vanity of life by means of the skull of a jester marks the end of the play while leaving distinct incentives to seek the reasons in the lack of critical perspective.

Back in Medieval, and even in Renaissance times, it was a quite customary act of a European sovereign to spare room for a fool<sup>1</sup> in his retinue. "More or less permanent members of a royal household," these men of exuberance were held responsible for the entertainment of the royal members as well as court attendants and guests (Towsen, 1976, p. 21). Frederick Warde (1913) displays an ordinary European court jester as a jubilant man whose "physical deformities, colourful clothes ornamented with bells" match well to the "jokes, tricks and pranks" with which he has to entertain the crowds. Besides, while depicting the jester, he ascribes a salient role to "the bauble" he carries. The item is a type of staff resembling a royal sceptre yet carries no political significance or sovereign value save for the frivolity the staff owner is associated with (pp. 4-5).

Once so much has been revealed as to the jester, being the nonserious buffoon of the court, he can easily be envisioned as the antipole to the sovereign king. Vicki Janik (1998) highlights the preceding argument with reference to "the logocentric system that is based on

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<sup>1</sup> Experts in the field such as John Doran (1858) John Southworth (1998) and Frederick Warde (1913) use the words "jester, fool and clown" synonymously to define the same character in medieval courts. Therefore, the article employs a similar lexical tendency in order to delineate the Fool character.

hierarchical oppositions” (p. 20). The definition of the dichotomized counterparts is, therefore, bound by the essential contribution of the other. That is to say for wisdom to define itself, foolishness must be presented as the contrasting unit, hence the king and the fool. The mechanics of logocentrism favour “one side over the other” (Janik, p. 20). Nevertheless, once deconstructed, the dichotomies reveal that “these binary beings contain traces” of their antipodes, thus rendering themselves inseparable. Based on the preceding premise, it can be concluded that for the ruling class to consolidate their established authority, they needed the negation of the official identity which was to be made visible by means of the jester figure. In short, while the king and other court members signified order, nobility, and sovereignty; the jester stood for mockery, lowly, and jollity.

As to the origins of the court jesters, John Doran (1858) mentions a myth dating back to the Roman Empire. According to the myth, the gods of the pantheon are not pleased due to the dullness of Olympus. Yet, at the same time, they feel a gradually rising unease as they witness the dalliance of Greek peasants in a valley. Infuriated gods devise a scheme to spoil the fun of the people with a cursed rain, yet they bestow a chance for these ignorant people to avoid their wrath. A priest who foresees the coming rain in his vision cautions the villagers to take shelter for the ones to be drenched under the rain will turn into fools. Except for a philosopher nearby, all the villagers ignore this warning and get soaked in the rain. The rain not only curses them with foolishness but also ruins their clothing. The miserable condition of the victims of the rain brings about a frenzy of laughter among both the gods and the fools. On the other side of the joy, the philosopher who achieves to escape the torment makes a plea for the gods to drench him as well so that he does not stand different from the others and thus enjoys the same blissful folly. The plea of the man is accepted by the gods, and the returning rain turns the man into a fool and ruins his fine clothes, too. However, this man achieves the appraisal of the gods for his wit behind his desire to turn into a fool, and he is therefore awarded by more of wit and wisdom that is cloaked by humour. Thereupon, gods decree his being the first of a group that is to be named *jesters* later on, and they further grant him the privilege to instruct the kings and rulers (pp. 2-4).

Despite the fact that the preceding account bears highly visible evidence to be classified as a work of fantasy, the founding credentials of the court fool provided with it are further assisted by John Towsen who emphasises “the insight and the pungent wit behind the humour” (p. 25). In other words, the premise of the myth that focuses on the jester’s being a man of wisdom veiled by feigned foolishness contributes a deeper dimension to the identity of the fool and what stands as joyous foolery from the outside evolves into a piquant critique inwardly. Warde commentates on the preceding notion as “under the cloak of folly” jesters could tell things “others could not” in addition to approving or ridiculing any scheme the royal house had undertaken (p. 2). Accordingly, Towsen depicts the fool as “a daring jester who took advantage of his free license as a buffoon to engage in satirical comments on the affairs of state” (p. 26). In order to lay the foundation for the biting tongue of the jester, Warde accentuates the jester’s being “a man of great observation, judgment and understanding (p. 3). By the same token, Weiner & Peaslee (2015) commentate on his satire as attempts “to destabilize the status quo and reveal cultural, political, and ethical hypocrisies that society attempts to ignore” (p. 109). The preceding vision is further assisted by Doran who notifies the respected position of the jester for speaking “the truth on all occasions, whoever might wince under it” (p. 51). The merited position of the court fool is, thereof, exalted to a newer dimension where mischief speaks the veiled tongue of satirical criticism, and acts of idle dalliance and humour behind the merry jokes turn out to be attempts to expose the faults of the ruling class and the society. In line with the preceding argument, Towsen reports the presence of anecdotes that “contribute to the court fool’s romanticized image as a daring political jester whose sharp wit served to deflate

the king's arrogance" (p. 29). Correspondingly, Warde attracts attention to the very same notion when he informs that "the motley of the fool of bygone times is now worn by the man of justice as a robe" (p. 3). In light of the preceding argument, both his apparent absence in the court and the grotesque rise from the grave of an aristocrat enables Yorick the fool to exceed even this seemingly novel satirical identity by gaining another dimension of satire in which death taints the intricate pursuits of the living.

While dealing with the identity of the fool, Janik emphasizes the fact that the role of a fool is quite similar to the dynamics of the deconstructionist philosophy in that both parties "resist to clear meaning" (p. 20). Within this resolution, he further elaborates on the fool as a figure to represent the "questioning of the formulaic answers" (p.20). Standing as the counterpart of the innate human condition: "desire to know", a fool is respectively given meaning on "the grounds that assures we do not [know]" (p. 20). He, further, elaborates on the identity of the fool through the deconstruction of the logo-centric system. When dismantled, the long-established hierarchy of the binaries evolves into a platform of dependency on which counterparts possess viability to define the other. On the very same notion, Janik passes the following maxim from which the current study derives the pivotal motive: "the potential disorder, chaos, and distortion emblemized by the fool are the necessary ground upon which we can see a design of order and harmony; order implicitly establishes chaos [and vice versa]" (p. 20). In this context, the absence of the fool posits much liability in disrupting the aforementioned hierarchy. If not negated by its opposite, a certain quality is bound by losing its essence as well. A case example could easily be illustrated by juxtaposing the high and low. In this maxim, the removal of the low will render the high meaningless and the Shakespearean motif of a dead jester promises the same dynamic over the play.

Now that deconstruction has been cited as a medium in the exposing of the veiled side of a court fool, the term necessitates further debate since it will be employed as the main agent, one more time, in the literal and metaphoric unearthing of the skull that belonged to the court jester Yorick. The term deconstruction, coined by Jacques Derrida, derives its justifying motives from the annulment of the long-established belief that "the system of language provides grounds that are adequate to establish the boundaries, the coherence or unity, and the determinate meanings of a literary text" (Abrams, 1999, p. 55). Once again, the decentralisation of the logo-centric hierarchies provides the matrix for the theory. Succinctly, Derrida (1978) envisages the following as to the nature of a non-present centre which enables the theory to have an operative notion on the text:

Henceforth, it became necessary to think both the law which somehow governed the desire for a center in the constitution of structure and the process of signification which orders the displacements and substitutions for this law of central presence- but a central presence which has never been itself, has always already been exiled from itself into its own substitute. The substitute does not substitute itself for anything which has somehow existed before it. Henceforth, it was necessary to begin thinking that there was no center, that the center couldn't be thought in the form of a present being, that the center has no natural site, that it was not a fixed locus but a function, a sort of nonlocus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions came into play (pp. 353-354).

With these in mind, Derrida suggests that the meaning of the written and spoken language has to be disseminated due to the opposing linguistic features. That is to say, in addition to the semantic surface meaning there would be an indefinite number of varying alternatives none of which stands as the exact or specific meaning (Sallis, 1988). In a broader sense, Derrida attracts attention to the fact that though by means of grammar, language incessantly pursues a series of determinate and referential ascriptions, this struggle is undermined by the rhetorical nature of the language again and the process ends up with a set of disseminated possibilities (Abrams, 1999; Royle, 2004). At this point, Derrida theorizes on a radical ground that literary texts lacked determinate boundaries to generate stable entities, all

accordingly, due to the fact that a text is a battleground for contradicting inner forces and the meaning is inevitably an elusive and non-referential play of words, any attempt to come up with THE correct reading would be a failure while any of these attempts would be A correct reading.

In this respect, a deconstructive reading forms the purpose of this study, focusing on the amalgamation of noble and fool identities through Yorick, as voiced through Prince Hamlet. This convergence takes place within a single body and leads to the emergence of a new identity beyond the threshold of death. The emphasized theme by this new character highlights the earthly endeavours that will culminate in the finitude of life, as both declared and forewarned through a skull. However, considering the obsessive desires of the main characters and the enhancing roles of others in their commitment to this theme, the outcome of the character massacre at the end of the play accentuates the deficiency in a critical perspective willing to accept Yorick's warning. Therefore, Shakespeare stages a play within the play, showcasing a scenario where the dead have a voice, yet their voices get lost amid the noise of the living.

### **Derridean Sense of Decentralizing the Meaning and Shakespearean Fools**

Amidst the confusion of a noise cloud, the hearing of a suppressed secondary voice does not necessitate the silencing of all the others. Rather, it would suffice to give ear to that peculiar tone. The preceding notion does not delineate a rule for the human audition only, it also serves routing for the deconstruction to operate on a literary text. In other words, once deconstructed, the targeted narration does not diminish in terms of the meaning that can be labelled as the face reading or the imminent exposition. However, in accordance with the Derridean tendency to relocate the centre as a non-fixed locus by which meaning exiles itself into substitutes thus bringing an infinite number of sign-substitutions, the new dimension of meaning over the text enables a multitude of interpretations that can be derived over the same literary field.

A case example of the condition was also, provided by Derrida himself who accentuated the following resolution while contemplating on the *Shoes* painted by Van Gogh. The way he deals with the pair brings about a multi-dimensional approach to the image as he perceives two layers of overlapping realities namely: the external and the internal. Once deconstructed, the canvas initially and externally projects the image of a pair of shoes that can be easily associated with the state of *dressings* but at the same time, the pair is portrayed as ragged and away from the feet wearing them thus it, internally, implies nakedness as well. Over and above that, he labours his attention on the image even further in order to duplicate it and render the outcome as shoes per se and the painted image of them, both of which have been etched across the canvas by means of the same lace. Through this amalgamation of realities, he speaks the following language of deconstruction in which dismantled elements contribute freedom for the meaning to stretch across the limits of the frame into reality or vice versa, hence the elusive art of deconstruction.

... the laces go through the eyelets (which also go in pairs) and pass on to the invisible side. And when they come back from it, do they emerge from the other side of the leather or the other side of the canvas? The prick of their iron point, through the metal-edged eyelets, pierces the leather and the canvas simultaneously. How can we distinguish the two textures of invisibility from the each other? (Derrida, 2009, pp. 307-308)

In this context, the skull of Yorick-the- fool functions quite the same as the laces of Van Gogh. Similar to a pin, piling layers of papers together, the skull intertwines binary layers of meaning, all at once in one place: life and death, mockery and criticism, sovereign and the fool, jest and rigor convolute each other thus enable the reader to follow the elusive route for a deconstructive reading in which meaning is ever yet to be located. In general terms, the radical altering of the centre concept results in the annulling of the ultimate destination for the meaning to settle, thus all milestones within this realm stand as a destination themselves (Currie, 2013;

Howells, 1999). In light of the preceding approach; implying his absence with its presence, the skull of Yorick is chosen as a triangulation point to rediscover the Shakespearean play, *Hamlet*.

Before advancing to the depths of the analysis, it should be noted in advance that Shakespeare is a celebrated playwright for his outstanding skill to portray “court jesters in their perfect body and environment” (Warde, 1913, p. 13). Moreover, this depiction takes place in the portraying of a “witty man” behind the mask of a pretended foolery (p. 3) hence the expression:

This fellow's wise enough to play the fool;  
And, to do that well, craves a kind of wit. (Shakespeare 1601/1901, 3.1.65-66)

As frankly stated by Viola who is another character in the play *Twelfth Night*, Feste stands before the readers as the clever and wise fool whose pungent humour not only reveals a highly competent command of the English Language but also passes covert remarks of criticism of the society in which he is living. Though he is a fool from the outside, he proves to be the wisest in the play and he is the one who gives reasonable advice to the other characters. To put it succinctly, he posits an elegant example for the deconstructive blurring of the lines that has hitherto been utilized to gape the chasm between binaries, it is an act of the reversing of the roles in essence: the fool of the play acts the wisest of all the other characters (Shakespeare 1601/1901).

Likewise, Touchstone from *As You Like It* is depicted as a merry court fool who is, also, a careful observer with a quick wit. The way he can manipulate a conversation explicates his being a smart fellow though not an educated one. In his glossary of Shakespeare, Charles Onions (1911) defines an actual touchstone as “stone used for testing gold” and as may well be implied by his name, similar to a touchstone, the fool of the play comments on human foibles and virtues (229). In his esteem “The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool” (Shakespeare, 1599–1600/1919, 5.1.30-31). The paradoxical frame of mind he adopts on particular topics such as wisdom and foolishness lets him transcend the long-established hierarchy of the binary under discussion. Thus, he stands per se as the emancipated meaning from the custody of hitherto unquestioned realms. He is a minor figure in the play with respect to the role he has been attained, nevertheless, he proves the deconstructive reasoning quite well in that “a fool may equally be a wise man who has the ability to show the reality” (Tekalp & Işık, 2012, p. 1171).

Of four court fools that have been cited in this study, the one belonging to the retinue of King Lear occupies a special place for he is the most salient in the deconstructive terms that are employed as the basic dynamics for the argument of the paper. The Fool is not an exception in the way he dresses foolery as a mask to veil his critical wit, however as the play advances and draws an imminent end both for the Fool and the King respectively, the pair gradually swaps their roles. The foolishness expected from a jester is made manifest through the wrong deeds of a king while the fool evolves into a wise and farsighted counsellor. The condition is even inconspicuously delivered to the readers through a Shakespearean wordplay. In order to answer Kent’s question, who wants to learn about the identities of those people who are present, the fool proclaims the following: “Marry, here’s grace and a codpiece; that’s a wise man and a fool” (Shakespeare, 1606/2013, 3.2.42-43). However, the answer of the Fool does not clearly specify who is who and lets perception wander on the possibilities in which both ends pose the same credibility.

In light of the findings cited above, it can be concluded that the aforementioned Shakespearean jesters are extraordinary fools with respect to the deconstructive role they are inclined to play. Despite the fact that they appear in flamboyant clothes that match the duty they are charged with, these men of acute mind make use of humour as a veil and a medium to

manifest both their wit and critiques. Contrary to the common presumptions as to a jester that overlaps unreasonable deeds with the identity of a fool, Shakespeare provides a stage for this subaltern voice to speak the language of reason, though not directly. In this respect, the fool character bears highly tangible significance for he lets the elusive notion of the meaning in flux across binaries. To put it succinctly, a fool that is not a fool is a Shakespearean fool.

### **The Analysis of Yorick-The-Fool**

Despite covering a rather limited place in the play, Yorick from *Hamlet* constitutes an exceptional position in terms of the preceding classification. Readers are informed about his being a joyous jester once through reminiscing of the old days by Hamlet, nevertheless, Yorick's divergence from his counterparts lies in his being a relic in the form of a skull that is dug out from a grave. The moment Prince Hamlet grabs the skull and starts pondering on life and death, the scene frames itself by the striking proximity of the opposite edges where meaning gains effervescent visibility to transcend the binaries.

Before reaching to the depths of the analysis any further, it must be noted here that by the token of the saying *it takes two to tango* this allegoric dance of conveyance unites two parties namely: the living and the deceased. While on the stage there is a meaningful conversation between Prince Hamlet and the grave-digging clowns who play the role of a fool, the destiny of their dead counterparts is projected on them. In other words, though at the façade two parties exchange ideas, this conversation takes place within the aura of the dead predecessors namely, Hamlet's father and Yorick's skull. In a way, by making use of these characters, Shakespeare foreshadows the unfortunate conditions waiting for their respective successors. In brief, despite the fact that two parties indulge in a conversation of words, questions and answers, into the background they cast their late forerunners who echo an alternate narrative in which silent truths subvert and vitiate earthly illusions. At the root of this multidimensional radical alteration in meaning lies the deconstructive change in the identity of the aristocrat and the fool. For these reasons, in order for Hamlet and the grave-digger clowns to be heard, Hamlet's father and Yorick must be given ear first.

In the traditional sense, a prince poses much greater hierarchical value if compared to a court fool. The titles, nobility and sovereignty he is blessed with come by birth and this privilege is not negotiable. As for the fool, though he cherishes protection from their aristocratic patrons, he does not possess a significant place in the courtly hierarchy. He lacks authority over political issues and nobility is not a matter of question either. If juxtaposed in light of the aforementioned depictions, Prince Hamlet occupies the royal house with definitive titles and privileges in the same fashion that his father, the late king, once did; on the other side, however, the gravediggers pose for the negation of nearly every aristocratic qualification that has been cited above. They are simple men of no noble kinship. They do not pose any royal ranking nor have a title with according privileges. Apart from the acute minds criticizing the obvious wrongdoings of the aristocracy of their times, these men have nothing to set them apart from the common people. Even so, this traditional sense loses its bias once the statuses are levelled equal by death. That is to say, a noble bereaved of any title is a common man and death, in this respect is a great leveller.

To get a better grasp of the condition under discussion, the scene has to be stripped down to the Shakespearean backbones where the instantiation depicts a fool digging the grave of another fool so that a noble can lay inside, and the passage between the noble and plebeian is pinned by a skull that serves more than just an image. Once peeled off the flesh, a human skull features the same skeletal face regardless of sex, ethnicity, or title; thus, is anonymous. Besides, it is a reminder of life's vanity and a harbinger of the looming death for the living ones. If reinterpreted from the viewpoint of the preceding resolutions, the skull of Yorick serves similar

to a Chekhov's Gun to speak its share at closure and directly marks a milestone beyond which death levels all equal. This insight is also verbalized through Hamlet's reasoning who fashions a variety of grim probabilities as to the skull. Speculating on potential conditions, he emphasizes heartily that death deprives the living people of all the privileges they hold and harness to sustain their elevated positions. Yet, this enlightenment is subsequent to the parabolic song of the gravediggers. Therefore, the spiritual acquisition of Hamlet needs to be evaluated as an appendix to the overture of the gravedigger's song in which three skulls that are excavated from the grave mark the essential milestones of human life and also guide Hamlet's reasoning.

In youth, when I did love, did love,  
Methought it was very sweet,  
To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove,  
O, methought, there was nothing meet.

....

But age, with his stealing steps,  
Hath claw'd me in his clutch, ... (Shakespeare, 1603/1914, 5.1.69-72/79-80)

The emergence of the first skull takes place to separate the part of the song that delineates the summary of a common life. Initially, love, youth and life are delivered in the course of a sweet but perishable reminiscing since the following line spoils merriment, as age does spoil these fortunes. The hitherto inspected lines give a brief account of a common life and do not pose a divergent custom for this reason, however as the gravedigger advances onto the lines 81 and 82, the words alter their antecedent tone and assumed author, in that, though chanted by a grave digging clown, the song articulates a dead person.

...And [Age] hath shipped me intil the land,  
As if I had never been such. (Shakespeare, 1603/1914, 5.1.81-82)

At this point, the grave digger gives pause to his song by throwing up the first skull from the pit he has been digging. The timing for the emergence of the skull carries intriguingly high implications. Firstly, it serves similar to a comma so that the clown can separate between the parts of his song in certain meaningful terms and at this point, the hitherto told tale summarizes the vanity of life. Secondly, it strikes the attention of not only Hamlet but also the readers with the grim face of an image that can easily be associated with death. Though there is a living person who starts singing and keeps digging deeper and deeper, down the ground; suddenly a lifeless bone face pops up the pit to claim the rest of the song and the ongoing tale of it. What starts as the celebrated felicitousness of the living, therefore, quickly turns into the grim jeremiad of the dead. The scene has much potential to symbolize life on Earth. As implied by the Shakespearean instantiation in which the gradual sinking of the clown into the earth is abruptly concluded by the upright rise of a skull; in the course of time, age by age, every living being gets closer to death and the grotesque appearance of the skull marks this end quite definitively.

Finally, though not by the order of importance, the skull stands as an alternator for the meaning to switch between contexts. If ignored, the last line of the song refers to the withered welfare of youth, however, when the last line of the song is taken into consideration accompanied by the skull, it may indicate the singer's final rueful condition too. For the pre-argued reasons, the scene promises much credibility for an alternate reading in which the speech and acting of the dead are articulated and staged by the living and correspondingly Hamlet passes the following remark that "... the skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once" (5.1.83) however if the vantage point is altered in the foretold fashion, the scene stages a skull still singing through the mouth of a living person.

The same wordplay fashions the second pause which is also marked by a skull. The gravedigger, who continues his chanting delightedly, mentions the basic and ubiquitous needs

of a burial. Quite assuredly by the expertise of his job, he cites a pick-axe, a spade, and a shroud in order to complete a pit of clay which is also as simple and modest as the tools that are required to build one. Into this humble cocoon, Ophelia, a member of the aristocracy is to be laid. Knowing well for whom he is digging, the clown finishes the song saying “for such a guest is meet” (Shakespeare, 1603/1914, 5.1.105). In simple terms, the Shakespearean wordplay invites aristocracy with all its grandeur and grace to the ultimate annihilation of titles and privileges where simplicity and uniformity render everyone equal and the argument is reinforced by the grotesque emergence of the second skull which also posits a viable potential to divert and canalize the meaning in the pre-told fashion.

When the line “for such a guest is meet” is reinterpreted with reference to the skull that appears right after it, the line directly indicates who the guest is and it proves valid for the fact that, once buried, the beautiful face of Ophelia is bound by turning into a skull eventually. And the last line of the song winds layers of meaning on each other by locating the skull beneath Ophelia’s face so that the newly emerging magical context obliges the gentry to the evenness of the same being. In doing so, Shakespeare provides ground for the readers to gain insight into the vanity of earthly blessings. He not only undermines the social strata that separate people in hierarchical terms such as lowly and elite but also redeems the gap between the groups by emphasizing the same humanity that lingers beneath the titles and privileges. To this end, he even visualizes his message by means of a skull and the song of the dead vocalized by the gravediggers finds an audience when Prince Hamlet echoes the jeremiad in his own verses.

While talking to his courtier Horatio, Hamlet conducts far-sighted reasoning through the channel that has been opened by the gravedigger’s song and the skull. In tune with the undead revelation, he asks if Alexander-the-Great looked in the same fashion by indicating the skull. Thereupon he starts referring to the variations as to the identity of the skull and among the possibilities he mentions the upscale members of the society such as a lawyer, a tradesman, a politician and expands the logic further to include even the court members. Without referring to a name, he implies that the skull may belong to Horatio for the expressions he assumes the skull may have used before resonate the expressions Horatio uses to address his Lordship Hamlet. In order to emphasize the role of death as a great leveller to the maximum, he further mentions the names of ostentatious figures of history namely Alexander and Julius Caesar, and aligns the possibilities that the ashes of these majestic people may be used for trivial purposes such as corking a bung-hole or a wall patch.

To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may  
not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander,  
till he find it stopping a bung-hole? (Shakespeare, 1603/1914, 5.1.223-225).

The glimpses of the awakening Prince Hamlet has caught loom bigger to size a frame in which the anonymousness of the subject becomes ever more visible by including the prince this time. Leaving much doubt as to who the speaker is again, a divergent conversation takes place between the grave digger and Hamlet. At the core of the conversation lies the question “whose grave is it?” When asked for the first time, the clown claims the grave repeating the last two lines of his song.

O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet. (Shakespeare, 1603/1914, 5.1.104-105).

It is not clear if the clown addresses his art of digging a grave or his own burial chamber for the answer may imply both. As mentioned above, the grave is being built for Ophelia who has claimed her life. Yet, as the clown digs deeper, the remnants of long-deceased people come in sight thus the condition raises uncertainty as to the true owner of the grave. If operated the deconstructive-wise, the utterance has much potential to deliver one more answer in which the

guest is Hamlet and the digger measures a grave for him. The rest of the conversation bears tangible evidence assisting the preceding claim for the fact that by means of a clever double entendre, the clown manipulates an accused *lie* and diverts it skilfully back to Hamlet's *lie* in a grave, death per se.

HAMLET: I think it be thine, indeed; for thou liest in't.  
 First Clown: You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not yours: for my part, I do not lie in't, and yet it is mine.  
 HAMLET: 'Thou dost lie in't, to be in't and say it is thine: 'tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.  
 First Clown: 'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away gain, from me to you. (Shakespeare, 1603/1914, 5.1.131-137).

The rest of the play proves the claim true when Hamlet dies in a close future and the clown's last remark "this is a quick lie and it will gain away from me to you" (5.1.136-137) conjures up the scene. In a course of indirect delineation, gravedigger's thwarting a made-up lie to refer the final resting of Prince Hamlet bears the trademark of the deconstructionist theory of decentralization. With this context, the chasm between the elevated position of a prince and the lowliness of a peasant in a grave evanishes to render each equal within the realm of death, and the tangible proof to the newly-perceived condition is presented by means of a skull that belonged to a former court member. In this regard, the skull obtains the role of a messenger to keep the living abreast of their own mortality, yet secondarily it functions for a side purpose to highlight death as a stern equaliser regardless of nobility riches or poverty. After all, the anonymity of the skull, reinforced by the base simplicity of the grave itself consolidates this mental ground and the hypothetical pit of the clown unravels the parabolic enigmas when it literally absorbs nearly all the members of the court who, somehow, become a part of the plots.

In light of this, the grave can be re-envisioned as a mechanical instrument to level the different social classes of the living and the mechanism is erected and operated by a peasant from the low social stratum. In simple terms, a clown digs a grave for a member of the aristocracy who has to forfeit all her titles and privileges the moment she lies in it. If the scene is unveiled, it promises much for an altered vision in which aristocracy succumbs to the plebeian. It is an otherwise acting in which shades of the play stage the compulsory renunciation of the elitism in which confiscation is allusively executed by the lowly.

### The True Gentry

Another aspect of the play that lets the lowly rise over the high social classes stems from a debate questioning the true gentry. As can be expected from the natural course of life too, the play issues similar norms as to the gentry and lets the aristocracy hold this privilege in their dominion. The criteria delineating the definition of the gentry necessitate owning power, riches and a higher social status for a person to claim to be gentle (Scott, 1982). However, the play advertises an alternate approach to handle the gentry concept. In this attempt, the forecited criteria are ignored for they are prone to withering and prove inefficacious upon the death of the holder. Accordingly, while digging a grave, the clowns pass the following comment about Ophelia by addressing her being a member of the aristocracy (gentry).

...If this had not been  
 a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o'  
 Christian burial. (5.1.26-28)

Later on, one of the clowns subtly undermines the established convention of the gentry by disclosing his ideas as to the origins of it. His argument constitutes unity with the situation he is in, and the grave he is digging presents a concrete example for the defended idea.

...Come, my spade. There is no ancient  
 gentleman but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers:

they hold up Adam's profession. (5.1.32-34)

The inner motives for the clown to date the gentry back to Adam and let this title be shared by lowly labours such as gardening or grave making are revealed to readers through a riddle. Struggling to outwit his workmate, the first clown asks about the person who can build stronger than a mason, shipwright, or carpenter. Though he fails to find the correct answer, the second clown attempts to come up with one which seems to assist the argument about the otherwise gentry indirectly. The gallows-maker is posited as a strong builder. The answer is enveloped through a blending of irony and black humour. The clown resembles a gallow to a house that can outlive thousands of tenants. Though at the core lies the surge of a grotesque joke, the connotational periphery of the answer associates permanence and durability with the threshold of death. As a matter of fact, the correct answer is given in the same direction with *a grave*, which is an object in which death manifests itself more markedly by nature when compared to the wrong answer.

Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull  
 ass will not mend his pace with beating; and, when  
 you are asked this question next, say 'a  
 grave-maker: 'the houses that he makes last till  
 doomsday... (5.1.63-67)

One may be endowed with a life of long years and live up to 100 or more. Yet, there is an inevitable end waiting for all to come. Every soul will taste death beyond of which worldly titles, nobility or riches prove vain. *A pit of clay* in Shakespearean simplicity will be all that suffice to level the glory of the highness and the misery of the lowly. Contrary to the assets of the living, the grave stands for the ultimate material gain for the dead and is expected to last till doomsday. It is also quite ironic, in that the granting of access to a grave nullifies the possession of other worldly assets. Besides, while commodities are cherished objects by the owner in his life, the grave reverses these roles and sets the individual as its object by depriving him of the title of *the holder*(owner).

The point of divergence subverts the conventional perception of property and property owning. The newly cast roles condemn worldly possessions as temporary thus illusionary gains and undermine this inclination by fostering the fact that a pit of grave is to be all that a soul can end up with. After all, by staging such an intriguing scene with numerous allusions, Shakespeare encourages the art of deconstruction to re-orient spectacles on the periphery of the text so that beyond what is staged, embedded in the shades of the background, the sexton rises again through an alternate course of meaning and with each strike of the spade he buries aristocracy into the realm of nullification where he posits himself as the other gentry. This is a direct act of reversing the roles in which death inverses societal roles by rendering the upscale lowly and vice versa.

The newly lit aura to alter the roles intervenes in the scene by drawing a line in the form of a threshold whereby the stratification of the high and the lowly is deconstructed to give way to the rise of a third classification. In this embodiment, the lowly plebeian appears as the gentry of the stale truths and the aristocratic bodies turn into even-commons once deprived of their previous titles. The advent of the amalgamated positions is made visible to the readers through the epiphany of Hamlet's character. Though he is a prince, he vocalizes the speech of the dead, therefore, ordinary beings. In doing so, he lets the illusionary gentry melt into the common traits of humanity by means of a transition in which the melting pot turns out to be grave itself. With this in mind, the answer of the clown to claim the ownership of the grave he is digging for Ophelia morphs into the articulating of a grievous truth rather than a wisecrack joke. It is a veiled act of mental transmutation from the illusionary to the real, and the newly explored realm ranks lowly over the aristocratic for being closer to the truth: the vanity of life. Therefore,

despite being trivial peasants from the outside, the clowns of the play utilize the periphery of meaning as a secondary route by which they rise over the high social class.

When the last skull graces the scene with its grim presence, Shakespeare delivers the final magical touch to compensate for the gap completely between the elite and the lowly. The skull turns out to be Yorick's who was once a member of the court but not of a noble birth. In other words, he locates the position of the man in the middle, belonging to neither group fittingly. Apparently, it has been a while since he passed away and quite intriguingly, he stands before the readers as a skull. The image itself has much potential to summarize the deconstructive inclination of the play. It serves as a reminder of the Fool's own death as well as the imminent end for the other living beings. The location for the skull to be excavated bears another mainstream implication in that the pit, which has hitherto held three skulls inside, is dug again in order to lay a member of the aristocracy. Having gained insight as to the aforementioned premises, Hamlet contributes to this conscious by drawing parallels between Yorick's and Emperor Alexander's skull. At that moment, Shakespeare makes a subtle move to alter the conventional pattern of life by placing the skull of Yorick in Hamlet's hands.

Once framed and inspected with reference to the deeper allegorical meaning layers, the elements of the scene may be re-constructed as an ultimatum of the dead which will evolve into an intervention in the end with the operating principles of Chekhov's gun. The ceremonial holding of the skull by Hamlet marks him as a spokesman for Yorick. Even though the observations and comments belong to the prince, the targeted message is by death that manifests itself bitterly through Yorick's skull and speaks by means of Hamlet's tongue. Hamlet's reminiscing of the old days can be refashioned as the withering of life, privileges and joy. The rhetorical questions he asks about Yorick's silence are not answered audially, yet the grimace of the skull suffices enough not only for Hamlet but also for readers to come up with an answer. Though a word to the wise is enough, in Shakespearean sense, however, this time only silence delivers what has to be told. When he utters "To what base uses we may return, Horatio! (5.1.225)", it can be concluded that Prince Hamlet hearkens to the ultimatum of death. Upon this, he projects the insight he has gained back on the other characters for he knows well that the end symbolized in the form of a skull shall be covering all sooner or later. That is why the prince requests Yorick's service to get himself to his lady's chamber with the following lines:

...Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let  
her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must  
come; make her laugh at that... (Shakespeare, 1603/1914, 5.1.213-215)

The way he posits the wish and addresses a woman vaguely as *my lady* enables double entendre to canalize the meaning in two different ways. Evidently, there are two women Hamlet can address with this courtesy namely, Ophelia and his mother Gertrude. The aporia resulting from the indefiniteness of *the lady* is not a failure of literacy but letting the elusive shades between the lines make a trade so that meaning can reconcile in multiple ways with the text. Presumably, Hamlet may have urged his dead fool to remain in Ophelia's grave and amuse her with his skeletal face, implying that the grace of the lady has to fade away in time, till a similar grotesque grin exposes beneath the rotting flesh. Or, Yorick may have been requested to visit the queen's chamber and remind her of the mortality of life. In either case, the bitter awareness of the prince has been raised thanks to the divergent interference of the lowly class with the lives of the elite ones. Therefore, the skull posited carefully into the hands of the prince hints at the potential of a similar fate for those who have been lulled by the felicity of life at large. As a matter of fact, the intervention of death takes place right at this time when members of the court fall victim to the schemes they have been devising in order to strengthen their privileged positions. Within minutes, the characters who have committed plotting feel obliged to forfeit

their titles and worldly pleasures within the grasp of death. Indeed, with this scene, the Chekhovian Gun fires a skull whose silent prophecies eventually come true.

The reflection of a mirror inside another is nothing but a mirror. In the same fashion, the vanity by death resonating through the skull of the dead over the living beings brings about the same stale levelling of the individuals regardless of who they have been before. In the play, the people who can be labelled as lowly conduct a life that is closer to that truth and the condition is made clear by the remarks they cast on life and death. Apparently, in the esteem of the plebeian, aristocracy and being a gentle member of the high class is an illusionary accordance, wake of which, ironically, necessitates the touch of death. The secondary, thus ignored, status quo places the low strata of the society in a more-favoured position because the life they keep does not entangle with the sweet deceptions of fabricated titles. These people trace the gentry back to the awareness of life's vanity and death as the great leveller, and Shakespeare does not let these scoffed people prove false when he clusters all his upper-class characters together within the grasp of death.

The frame in which Prince Hamlet holds the skull of Yorick-the-Fool and exchanges words with grave-digging clowns delineates a field promising much potential for a deconstructive-wise eye to alter the long-established hierarchies between the high and the low. As cited earlier, the court fool that is indeed not a fool can be posited as an already highly deconstructive phenomenon in that the actual existence of these people is outside the norms and generally takes place by converting the expected foolery into a latent wit beneath the mask of humour. Words of jokes pass crucial counseling for an ear eager to hear. If inspected in light of this premise, both Yorick by his grievous silence and grave-digging clowns with their grotesque jokes and parabolic songs regain identities as men of acute caution. Because they are enmeshed with death for long and thus grow a kind of conscious which is closer to the fact that life is vane, these people can be repositioned ahead of the prince and other courtly characters who are too busy with devising plots to discern their mortality.

When Hamlet encounters the clowns first, he resents the way they conduct their art because one of the diggers sings a song. The prince esteems it as an act of frivolity, if not profanity, and assumes the motive behind it as *easiness due to custom*. He may have made a point with this resolution by judging the outward scene; however, with respect to its words, the inward spirit of the song regains another dimension that is didactic, cautionary and prophetic. Literally, the song complains vanity of life, and implicitly warns the prince against his own death, furthermore in regard to the final scene of the play, the song delves deeper to lay a prophecy to oracle death's intervention to mark the end for all. Judging by the interior monologue of Hamlet who fashions the same fate for himself that has once claimed Alexander and Caesar, it can be concluded that the wake of the prince is procured by the mockery of the lowly. The condition, therefore, redefines the clowns and the fool as aware bodies while inherently condemning the court members as people unaware of these truths. The oblivion of aristocracy under discussion is not a mere lack of knowledge, but rather a kind of chronic dim-sightedness due to the failure to notice their mortality for being overly concerned with living in prosperity.

The deciphering of the deeper allegoric dimension of the play necessitates the redefining of the roles in relation to the preceding resolution. The line that separates the high class from the lowly, on the basis of being oblivious to the vanity of life, brings about an indirect and according specification of the groups as bound and free. Once the generally accepted notions are taken into consideration, the high class in society is expected to enjoy a more independent life when compared to the lowly members of the society whose will is under the dominion of their sovereign masters. The phrases of courtesy "my lord!" by Horatio to address Prince Hamlet and "your majesty!" by Guildenstern and Rosencrantz to address King Claudius can be

suited as the literal manifestations of this yoke. Correspondingly, these people act in accordance with their masters as if they shared a heart that projected the same mentality across minds. However, once the inner motives of the elite persons are traced back to their origins, worldly avarice exposes itself as the sole excuse. In other words, despite their outward independence, these people are captives of their earthly pleasures and blinding ambitions. The backfiring of the plot that was supposed to kill Prince Hamlet yet ended up claiming Guildenstern and Rosencrantz indicates King Claudius as the deviser of the scheme. The reason that drives King for this machination is an invincible dependence on his worldly gains which he cannot relinquish:

My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer  
Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder?  
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd  
Of those effects for which I did the murder,—  
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen. (Shakespeare, 1603/1914, 3.3.51-55)

“It's only after we've lost everything that we're free to do anything!” says Chuck Palahniuk (2003) and accordingly, a man from the bottom has no fear of sinking any further. The play operates a likewise logic while delineating the lowly folks. The mindset of the clowns that are not guided by the obsession of power or riches shows high awareness as to the real essence of life, that no gain remains for good. Therefore, they think that real gentility lies in discerning this truth. The proof for this mentality is provided on the grounds that the fictitious titles of an illusionary nobility wither away when the person wakes within the realm of death and the equalizing grasp of it is symbolized as a pit of a grave, builders of which are, again, the common-lowly people. Maybe, it is the same notion that made Elizabeth I wish to be a beggar than a queen.

Contrary to the common expectations from them, the lowly folks of the play prove to be smartly cynical, farsighted, modest and aware of the mortal fate that awaits all. The embodied example of the laudable plebeian appears before the reader as a cautionary gravedigger who hands Prince Hamlet a skull of a deceased court member to trigger a wake to the solid truths of life. As stated earlier, these traits are expected from a court fool who projects the praised traits behind a mask of humour. However, quite ironically, the fool of the play makes his appearance as a dead body, yet fully able to speak through his grotesque humour through Prince Hamlet. In this respect, Hamlet can be regarded fortunate enough to be informed about the vanity of life. However, his dedication to avenging his father outweighs the wise counselling of the dead Yorick. That's why the Checkovian gun fires and the silent prophecy of the skull comes true in the form of a surge of death claiming the high members of the court.

From a different angle, the elevated members of the court are depicted as either obsessed with their privileged positions or under the guidance of these obsessed sovereigns. These people neither have nor contribute to the critical point of view. In essence, they resonate their master's mindset in higher volumes. The displeasure of King Claudius against Hamlet evolves into a bitter kind of hatred and anger with Polonius and Laertes. His malicious intentions bring about a bloody ambush with the help of Guildenstern and Rosencrantz. Above all, his avarice for his gains unites him with Queen Gertrude with a tie of connivance. When the relationship between these characters is scrutinized, there appears a salient lack of a plurality of thought. Therefore, the characters weave a chain of like-minded bodies with likewise inclinations. The pattern of thought they follow has no room for divergence, plurality, or critical approach. The supporting characters of the play catalyse the hidebound constancy of the noble folks who have been corrupted after worldly avarice. If the fact that Shakespeare tends to provide the plurality of thought by means of a jester is taken into consideration, the staging of Yorick-the-Fool in the

form of a skull has direct implications to interpret the scene as the silencing of the critical point of view.

If scrutinized piecewise: Yorick occupies an exquisite place among all characters. He is dead yet able to speak through the others who are living. While other characters appear on the stage in elegant clothes as obsessed beings with their worldly gains, he strikes the audience with his naked perishment by death. When alive, he was supposed to criticize the wrong-doings of the court; as a dead relic, he articulates the grievous preaching of death. If compared with his Shakespearean counterparts, Yorick stands aside for having the most serious tone in dealing with human mortality. Though he does not use gambols, jokes or merry songs to put a curious bug in noble ears; the grotesque, lifeless, thus ironic grin of his face suffices to disclose the caducity of life. As a matter of fact, the message he stands for can be best put into words by the remarks of Hamlet who fashions a grim wish from the deceased jester to remind the living ones of their mortality and make them laugh at this if they can.

..is this the fine of his fines, and  
 the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine  
 pate full of fine dirt?...  
 ...  
 Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let  
 her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must  
 come; make her laugh at that. (Shakespeare, 1603/1914, 5.1.114-116/213-215)

If all these pieces are brought together in one piece to reconsider Yorick's gestalt, the Fool of the court morphs into the wise harbinger of the vanity of life and thus rises above the noble characters of the play in terms of being closer to an inevitable future. Death he cloaks is emphasized as a great leveller rendering all equal within the realm of stale truths. In this respect, Yorick stands as the epitomized mediation of the argued condition. His absence from the court, and grotesque rise from a grave that has been built for a member of aristocracy, stimulates a strong intellectual motive to interpret the deceased jester as an incarnate example of having intolerance towards the divergence of thought.

### Conclusion

Shakespeare is undoubtedly one of the greatest writers of all time, but his ability to blend layers of meaning by combining events and characters holds particular significance for this study. It will provide the necessary motivation to uncover the meaning's hidden layers through a deconstructive reading. Therefore, the skull in the hand of a prince explicates more than a haphazard coincidence. Despite not being a full character, Yorick-the-Fool achieves to penetrate into the mind of the protagonist through his grotesque appearance in the form of a skull. The epiphany he triggers in Hamlet inspires the perception that the dead fool miraculously achieves to coalesce into the prince and speaks through his mouth. The way he graces the scene leaves an ultimatum for the living. The lifeless skeletal face tailors a bitter message not only for the characters who are alive but also for the readers that death awaits all as the great leveller. Additionally, if the fact that nearly all major characters of the play fall victim to a surge of death is taken into consideration, it can be concluded that the ultimatum delivered by death turns into an invincible intervention when the neglected warnings of the silent dead seize the scene for the end. In this respect, the image of the skull advances further than a sign of beware into the foreshadowing messenger.

The way Shakespeare stages the fool character draws great similarities to the actual conventions of the medieval courts. In colourful motleys, fools appear as men of recreation. They stand as jocular counterparts of the sovereign court members. Nevertheless, with their presence, they contribute to the consolidation of the respected noble identity on the grounds that opposites define each other. As a matter of fact, most court fools demonstrate an ironic

inclination to hide behind feigned foolery and mockery in order to pass wise judgments and criticisms that other court members dare not. The general trend Shakespeare deals with the fool character converges on the dualistic nature of these men. Therefore, the fool character in Shakespearean plays bears a highly deconstructive respect for bringing together two binaries in one body namely: fool and wise. Feste, Touchstone, and the Fool in King Lear's retinue can be cited as elegant examples of the following condition. However, the trend carries the allegoric depth of the fool character even further once Yorick-the-Fool from *Hamlet* appears before the readers as a skull. Even so, by means of the condition he is in, Yorick harbingers the transience of life and ridicules grotesquely the illusionary elitism of aristocracy. Despite the fact that Yorick's caution has been heard well by Prince Hamlet, his dedication to avenging his father suppresses the insight he has gained. Therefore, he joins among the other characters who perish in death due to the lowly obsessions they have.

In light of these, the staging of Yorick-the-Fool promises a viable potential to interpret the scene as silencing the critical point of view. When the relationships between the court members are taken into account, each connection is distinguished by what appears to be a lack of diversity of thought, differing points of view, and animadversions directed at the wrongdoings of the gentry. The characters either contribute to or connive at the wrong decisions and culprit deeds of the ruling class. This catalyses the inherent corruption of the gentry, and the gradual decadence of aristocracy brings about the end for all the characters who are defiled both because of a lack of critical point of view and growing an unquenchable obsession with worldliness. The obsession of King Claudius with his throne and other bloody gains and the dim-sighted commitment of others with a hideous contrivance to assist the King for this sake morph into a sinkhole that is also symbolized by the skull. Those who get caught up retire from the stage with an awakening ended by death that has been foresighted. In this context, the Shakespearean motif to stage the court fool as a skull may indicate the lack or intolerance of a critical point of view. Clearly, the playwright cherishes plurality of thought as a wise man's deed. He not only condemns silencing of it but also takes this absence responsible for the dim-sightedness which tends to develop an excuse for a catastrophic bitter end.

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