



# The Fool in European Theatre

*Tim Prentki*

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## **The Fool in European Theatre** Tim Prentki

Every civilization in every age has discovered the need for fools to expose its excesses and hold its sacred truths up to the light of laughter. In Europe since medieval times the theatre has been a favoured site for these playful antics. This book, by concentrating upon the functions of folly, is able to make exciting and original connections across periods, genres and frontiers. Whether tricksters, clowns, fools or facilitators, life and art throws up figures whose destiny is to make us laugh but, in the act of laughing, to realize that we are implicated in the follies that maintain the injustices and inequalities of living according to systems that rob us of the possibility of becoming fully human. Playwrights have attempted to depict this illusive quality in every age – Shakespeare's Falstaff, Feste, Lear's Fool; Brecht's Azdak; Fo's Madman; Beckett's double act of Vladimir and Estragon.

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