

Parody of the Shakespearean Fool Tradition in an African Society

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ABSTRACT There is always a precursor in any well-established institution, and artistic institution is no exception. The fool tradition itself has its origin in Dionysian phallic rituals, or Greek, Roman and English festivals in general, thus serving as the springboard for the Shakespearean fool. Shakespeare then popularises the fool character in his plays whereby he turns it into an institution. The Yoruba playwrights, like others from any part of the world, seem to have been influenced by the Shakespearean fool tradition to a large extent. This paper, therefore, sets out to draw the Shakespearean parallel that is visible in the Yoruba fool genre with special reference to the appearance, the role and language of fool. Copious examples are drawn from the written and film genres to back up the issue of parody. The paper concludes by paying attention to the mark of departure and what account for such a disparity.