

Analysis Of Identity Confusion And Mistaken Identities In The Comedy Of Errors

Ammar Muhammad Ra'id Zhafir Nur Haqiki Riyadi

English Literature, Sekolah Tinggi Bahasa Asing Technocrat Tangerang, Indonesia

Author Correspondence : raidzhafir04@gmail.com

Abstract. This academic study explores the issue of identity uncertainty and mistaken identities in William Shakespeare's well-known farce, "The Comedy of Errors," critically. The story, which centers on two pairs of identical twins who were split up at birth, presents a number of humorous and confusing situations that are sparked by misidentification. The research explores the relevance of misidentification, the function of irony in these situations, and the interpersonal tensions and relationships among characters through the use of text analysis and a qualitative technique. This research, which is grounded on Erikson's psychological developmental model and incorporates dramatic aspects, demonstrates the enduring influence of Shakespeare's unique language style in illustrating the complex nature of mistaken identity.

Keywords: Identity Confusion, Mistaken Identities, William Shakespeare, The Comedy Of Errors, Theatrical Elements, Philosophical Commentary, Social Critique, Irony, Interpersonal Conflicts, Relationships, Human Complexity.

INTRODUCTION

This study delves into the exploration of identity within literary works, focusing on the theme of identity confusion syndrome. An exemplary illustration of this theme is found in William Shakespeare's "The Comedy of Errors," where the narrative revolves around two pairs of identical twins separated at birth. Raised in different locales, their reunion in Ephesus, particularly the arrival of Antipholus and Dromio from Syracuse, becomes a catalyst for confusion and intriguing miscommunications. Central to the plot is the root cause of errors and misconceptions – identity confusion. The remarkable resemblance between the twins leads to frequent misidentifications, becoming a primary source of contention throughout the play. The narrative's climax unfolds as the genuine identities of the two sets of twins are eventually revealed, bringing resolution to the conflicts. Employing text analysis as the chosen methodology, this study aims to scrutinize the intricacies of how identity confusion operates in "The Comedy of Errors," exploring the portrayal of identity confusion, the role it plays in the storyline, and the significance of identity uncertainty. The formulated issues and objectives underscore the study's commitment to unraveling the multifaceted exploration of identity within the comedic framework of Shakespeare's work.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The Comedy of Errors

Shakespeare penned *The Comedy of Errors* around 1593–1594, making it one of his earlier and shortest pieces at 1,786 lines. *The Comedy of the Errors* is noticeably shorter than plays like *King Lear*, which has 3,499 lines, almost twice as much. It takes place over the length of a single day in a single city, in contrast to the majority of the plays by Shakespeare, including *The Tempest*. These elements support the idea that the play is essentially a tale even though they could imply a rudimentary plot. "A comic drama work that employs buffoonery and playing with horses, typically with crude characters and wildly impossible situations," is how the Oxford Dictionary of English defines farce, which suggests a type of slapstick comedy that is sometimes written off as having no deeper meaning. (Players et al., 2016)

Drama

According to (Oscar G. & Franklin J., 2008) drama is a type of performing arts in which characters that are on stage interact through actions and dialogues. They both clarified how the plot, characters, topics, dialogue, and backdrop all work together to tell the viewer a tale.

Moulton agreed with Aristotle when he said that theater is about the portrayal of action. The theatrical presentation employs a multitude of codes and symbols, ultimately resulting in a coherent narrative framework that endures from the beginning to the end of the story. Drama is a literary genre that includes a wide range of storylines that reflect the social and everyday facets of human existence. Drama, as a performative art form, emphasizes the cooperation between script and execution, stressing the idea that a gripping story by itself does not provide the whole dramatic experience (Suwardi Endraswara, 2012). Nonetheless, a play's script is an essential source of information for literary analysis study. This study's topic, "*The Comedy of Errors*" is still relevant to the US economy today. The drama's surroundings and characters are strongly related to the social circumstances of a particular time period, especially the present.

Identity Confusion

Erikson's psychological growth model includes identity uncertainty, which is commonly seen in teenagers trying to figure out who they really are and what kind of life they lead (Arto, 2009). Erik H. Erikson's psychological theory of identity vs role confusion is used in this study to investigate the issues. According to (Erik H. Erikson, 1969), identity is a unique sense of self that is observable and consistent in one's personality. It is not something that society easily imposes, thus it must be actively explored. Resolving psychological growth leads to the emergence of the sense of identity, with identification versus uncertainty denoting one

of the eight separate psychological phases people experience. Teens must carefully consider their identity roles in order to avoid the possible risks related to identity confusion.

Mistaken Identities

Erroneous identification is a popular plot technique in comic books, most famously in Shakespeare's plays. Shakespeare skillfully employs inconceivable twists, disguises, cunning strategies, and coincidences throughout these tales to the point where believability is almost entirely lost. Using a standard trope of mistaken identities, Shakespeare deftly advances the story, heightens the comedic mood, and give his characters a greater nuance, as seen in "The Comedy of Errors." (Sabatine, 2023)

As to the paper published in the "Journal of The experimental Psychology: Used," mistaken identity occurs when individuals or things are mistakenly recognized or identified due to external factors, situational factors, or emotional states. (Smith et al., 2018),

Mistakes in the identification process lead to mistaken identity in legal situations such as forensic investigations or the introduction of suspects. This occurs when protocols have mistakes or discrepancies that might lead to the incorrect identification of those engaged.(M Klintschar & C Alves, 2010)

(Gary L & Elizabeth A, 2003) state that erroneous identification occurs when observers or witnesses take certain individuals or objects for granted. Accuracy is compromised in these circumstances, particularly when it comes to eyewitness testimony when identification mistakes may arise from inadequate observation or memory.

Mistaken identification occurs when observers or eyewitnesses wrongly recognize persons or goods as legitimate, leading to misleading testimony, based on (Devlin, 2017) study. The authors highlight the value of eyewitness evidence in the context of law and look at the factors that contribute to identification mistakes in court settings.

METHODS

Utilizing a qualitative methodology, this study investigates the aspects of identity uncertainty and mistaken identification in "The Comedy of Errors." The qualitative technique was selected due to its aptitude for examining intricate topics in literary works, enabling a detailed examination of the characters, dialogue, and plot intricacy. William Shakespeare's "The Comedy of Errors" contains the majority of the data, which will be thoroughly analyzed to pinpoint identity confusion and mistaken identification through character interactions, dialogue, and plot development.

To guarantee a thorough examination of pivotal moments, speech and scenes that prominently portray identity uncertainty and mistaken identification were specifically picked for the sample. To find and classify topics pertaining to identity uncertainty and mistaken identification, thematic analysis was used. A thorough investigation of linguistic and also emotional subtleties is required for dialogue analysis.

In order to comprehend character psychological growth and identity conflict resolution in this play, this research incorporates (Erik H. Erikson, 1969) inside the theoretical framework. Theatrical components that lead to identity uncertainty are also interpreted via the lens of dramatic theory.

In order to avoid misrepresentation or misunderstanding, the ethical component is upholding the integrity and correct citation of Shakespeare's plays and other academic literature as well as being sensitive to the cultural and even historical background given in the plays.

By concentrating on identity uncertainty and mistaken identification in Shakespeare's play "The Comedy of Errors," this study advances our knowledge of how these issues are conveyed in literature, particularly within the comedic framework of the play. By using this technique, we want to shed light on the intricacies of identity confusion and mistaken identification in "The Comedy of Errors," enhance academic debates around it, and advance literary studies more broadly.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study takes a close look at the themes of mistaken identity and identity confusion found in William Shakespeare's classic comedy, "The Comedy of Errors." Using a critical lens, the study produces fascinating findings that emphasize how complex the play's characters, story, and underlying themes are.

Identity is a central issue

In "The Comedy of Errors," which causes chaos and uncertainty. The plot of the play centers on two distinct sets of twins who are identical who are oblivious of one another. This leads to a number of confusing and humorous situations where characters constantly mistake one another for one another.

In "The Comedy of Errors," identity confusion exacerbates romantic miscommunications and illustrates the complexity of both one's own and other people's perceptions. Shakespeare creates a chaotic yet enjoyable setting by deftly illustrating the difficulty of realizing one's actual identity. Dialogues in which people misidentify one another

serve as an illustration of this misunderstanding and lend humor and nuance to the play's central theme.

Dialogues 1:

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE: "I am dumb, a girl's crush, and a little confused."

ADRIANA: "Well-liked by ladies? Why do you say "besides yourself" and how does that work?"

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE: "Yes, ma'am, I do belong to a woman; she is the one who takes charge of me, follows me, and demands to have me."

During this exchange, Dromio from Syracuse gets confused for Adriana's husband by a woman. Adriana notices that Dromio is confused and asks who the woman is. This makes Dromio even more confused as he finds it difficult to respond coherently.

Dialogues 2:

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS: "Am I in earth, in heaven, or in hell? Sleeping or waking? Mad or well-advised? Known unto these, and to myself disguised! I'll say as they say, and persevere so, And in this mist at all adventures go."

Antipholus of Ephesus struggles to decide if he is living in reality or a dream and reflects this in a discourse that reflects his identity issue. He feels that his actual self is being hidden, therefore he has to take on a mask to get through the uncertainty and avoid being lost in it.

Dialogues 3:

THE DROMIO THE WITH EPHEBUS DURING: "Madame, examine the repercussions, be aware regarding your destiny, and take the admonition such a pigeon; be careful of the approaching punishment."

ADRIANA: "Are you going to continue talking? [Applies a blow]"

DROMIO OF PHESUS: "You know what you want, obstinate one? You are not compassionate. [Blows her out]"

ADRIANA: "By looking pale and menacing, I can tell that the master and the servant are both upset. They must be contained and restrained in a dimly lit area."

Adriana and Dromio of Ephesus become mixed into a scenario of mistaken identification in this interaction, leading to misunderstandings and uncertainty. Adriana believes Dromio is Antipholus of Ephesus, while Dromio mistakes Adriana as a man by the

name of Faustus. They start fighting physically as a result, and Adriana starts to think that they are both cursed or mentally ill.

A lot of irony arising from misidentification can be found in

"The Comedy of Errors." One of the play's most notable examples is when people mistake one other for someone else, creating ironic and humorous situations. This ironic dynamic is especially noticeable when characters act or respond in ways that are contradictory to who they really are because they are unaware of whom they really are.

In "The Comedy of Errors," characters react to one another based on incorrect assumptions, which creates ironic and amusing situations due to mistaken identification. As a result, the play becomes even more confusing and chaotic, with characters frequently acting in ways that are at odds with who they really are. One example of this irony is found in the language, when individuals converse with one another without realizing it and end up causing hilarious miscommunications that occur throughout the story.

Dialogues 1:

The Sicilian Antipholus compares himself to a droplet of water adrift in a huge ocean, searching for another droplet. He unintentionally confuses himself while searching for a friend, staying hidden and inquisitive throughout.

Antipholus of Syracuse presents himself as a lost soul seeking his real self in this discussion. Paradoxically, the audience learns that he is actually Antipholus of Syracuse, searching for his brother who has vanished from sight. The paradox is that Antipholus thinks he is lost when, in fact, he is pursuing someone else.

Dialogues 2:

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS: "Why, mistress, sure my master is horn-mad."

ADRIANA: "Horn-mad, thou villain?"

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS: "I mean not cuckold-mad; But, sure, he is stark mad."

Dromio of Ephesus misidentifies Antipholus of Syracuse as his master in this encounter because he thinks the latter is insane. The irony comes from the reality that Antipholus is Dromio's master's twin brother, creating a confusion of identities. A hilarious plot twist occurs when Dromio believes he is speaking with his master's insane twin.

Dialogues 3:

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS: "I am not mad; I would go to heaven I were! For then, 'tis like I should forget myself: O, if I could, what grief should I forget!"

Even though the audience is aware of Antipholus of Ephesus's doubt regarding his identity, he denies any implication that he is insane in this exchange. Irony emerges from the fact that he struggles to maintain his identity while rejecting the idea that he is insane.

Conflict and Relationships Between Characters

In the drama "The Comedy of Errors," a number of disputes and complex connections arise between the characters. The main source of these connections and tensions is the bewilderment the characters go through throughout the play as a result of misidentifications. The character interactions and tensions in "The Comedy of Errors" are exemplified by the following:

Conflict between Antipholus of Ephesus and Adriana

In "The Comedy of Errors," Antipholus of Ephesus and Adriana, his wife, frequently argue and have confrontations. The root of this dispute arises when Antipholus misidentifies Adriana as his wife, believing her to be Antipholus of Syracuse. Adriana, who feels deceived and doesn't receive the respect one should expect from a spouse, plays a major role in this conflict in the drama.

Relationship between Antipholus of Syracuse and Luciana

In "The Comedy of Errors," Antipholus of Syracuse with his sister-in-law Luciana had a complicated relationship. Although Luciana has love affections for Antipholus, he does not share her feelings and just sees her as a sister. Antipholus' declaration of love for Luciana adds to the complexity of their relationship and exacerbates her sense of self-doubt.

Conflict between Dromio of Ephesus and Luce

In "The Comedy of Errors," Dromio of Ephesus and Luce, Adriana's servant, frequently argue and clash. When Luce believes Dromio disrespects her position as an a servant and constantly treats her rudely, their disagreement gets worse. However, Dromio feels that Luce is too picky and doesn't appreciate her job as a waitress.

The relationship between Antipholus of Syracuse and his lost brother

At "The Comedy about Errors," there is a complex relationship between Antipholus of the of Syracuse with his long-lost brother, Antipholus of Ephesus. In his constant search for his lost brother, Antipholus of Syracuse often runs into situations where he is falsely recognized

as Antipholus of the of Ephesus. The complexity of their connection increases when Antipholus of the of Syracuse claims to be the brother who is missing, which further compounds Antipholus of Ephesus's confusion over who he is.

Character interactions and conflicts influence the convoluted plot of "The Comedy of Errors," creating a compelling and nuanced tale. The play's irony and humor are mostly derived from the characters' misidentifications and perplexity.

Discussion

In this section, the research results are analyzed and the broader implications of the findings are considered. With this framework, the interpretation of the study findings and the examination of their wider implications are the main foci.

Relevance of Theme to Classical and Contemporary Contexts

Shakespeare's "The Comedy of Errors" effectively conveys the idea of identity in the social milieu of his day with its topic of identity uncertainty. At that time, a person's identity was greatly influenced by factors such as social status, physical beauty, and family ties. Identity confusion caused by having two sets of identical twins is portrayed in the play in a humorous and confusing way, reflecting the identity issues that were common in that era's culture.

Influence of Shakespeare's Style

Shakespeare's use of wordplay and complex phrase constructions in his distinctive language greatly influences how the issue of mistaken identity is presented in "The Comedy of Errors." Shakespeare creates humorous and perplexing situations that reflect the widespread societal confusion related to identity at that time period through his intricate and sophisticated use of language.

Example

Shakespeare, for instance, makes use of complex phrase patterns and wordplay in the conversations between characters who misidentify their twins. One particularly noteworthy example is the moment that Dromio of Syracuse says, "I'm an ass, I am a women's male, as well other myself" both (Act 2, Scene 2), implying very subtly that he is experiencing disorientation. Shakespeare also employs wordplay in Antipholus of Syracuse's conversation, as shown in the phrase "Am I in earth, heaven, or hell? Awake or asleep, insane or sensible? Recognized by others, and concealed from me!" (Scene 2, Act 2). This line emphasizes the complexity of Antipholus of Syracuse's situation and reflects the identity uncertainty he went through.

Shakespeare's distinctive use of language in "The Comedy of Errors" creates a confusing and humorous world that serves to emphasize the issue of mistaken identity. Shakespeare's use of complex language and wordplay creates situations that are funny and confused at the same time, reflecting the era's widespread social identity uncertainty. The concept of mistaken identification is made more obvious and understandable for the audience by this amplification.

Shakespeare's distinctive language style still influences how we understand the issue of mistaken identity in the modern world. Even if language in daily life is different, wordplay and complex phrase patterns are still used in modern literature and art to create confusing and funny situations. Shakespeare's unique linguistic style is therefore still relevant for understanding the issue of mistaken identification in a contemporary setting.

Shakespeare's unique linguistic style, therefore, is essential in determining how the issue of mistaken identity is portrayed into "The Comedy of Errors," that its significance endures in our understanding on the theme today.

Philosophical and Social Message

Shakespeare conveys a philosophical and social message by addressing the issue of identity confusion at "The Comedy of Errors," which highlights the complexity of human nature and criticizes the dominant identification standards of his day.

Shakespeare begins by quietly criticizing rigid identification standards and cultural preconceptions. The disarray that results from having two pairs of twins who are identical in the play highlights the brittleness and unpredictable nature of defining one's identity based only on physical characteristics or kinship ties. This might be seen as a critique of identity standards, which often oversimplify the idea by depicting it as something steady and uncomplicated.

Shakespeare also uses the issue of identity uncertainty to convey a lesson about the complex nature of people. Inside "The Comedy of Errors," what results in turmoil highlights how a person's identity is more than just their physical characteristics or their family history. It illustrates how complicated people may be and emphasizes the concept that it's not always easy to understand who someone really is.

Shakespeare thereby conveys a philosophical and social message through the investigation of identity confusion, criticizing the rigidity of identification standards and cultural stereotypes while highlighting the complicated nature of human complexity.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the analysis of "The Comedy of Errors" explores the many layers of misunderstanding behind the play's misidentification. As two sets of twins who are identical navigate through a variety of humorous and perplexing events, the concept of their identity take center stage, causing turbulence and unpredictability. Dialogues reveal a complex examination of perception of oneself and the difficulties of maintaining one's identity. Examples of these dialogues are the humorous exchanges among Dromio of Syracuse and also Adriana or Antipholus of Ephesus' reflections on reality. Misidentification creates a pervasive irony that enhances the plot by causing people to unintentionally behave in ways that are inconsistent with who they really are, creating a chaotic and confused tapestry. In addition, the play's sophisticated storyline is further enhanced by the conflicts and connections among characters, such as the turbulent relationship among Antipholus of Ephesus during and Adriana and the complex dynamics between Antipholus of the of Syracuse and Luciana. The complex and varied nature of human connections is shown by the interweaving of false identities. Essentially, "The Comedy of Errors" explores relationships, identity, and the complexities of human nature in great detail while simultaneously captivating spectators with its hilarious twists.

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