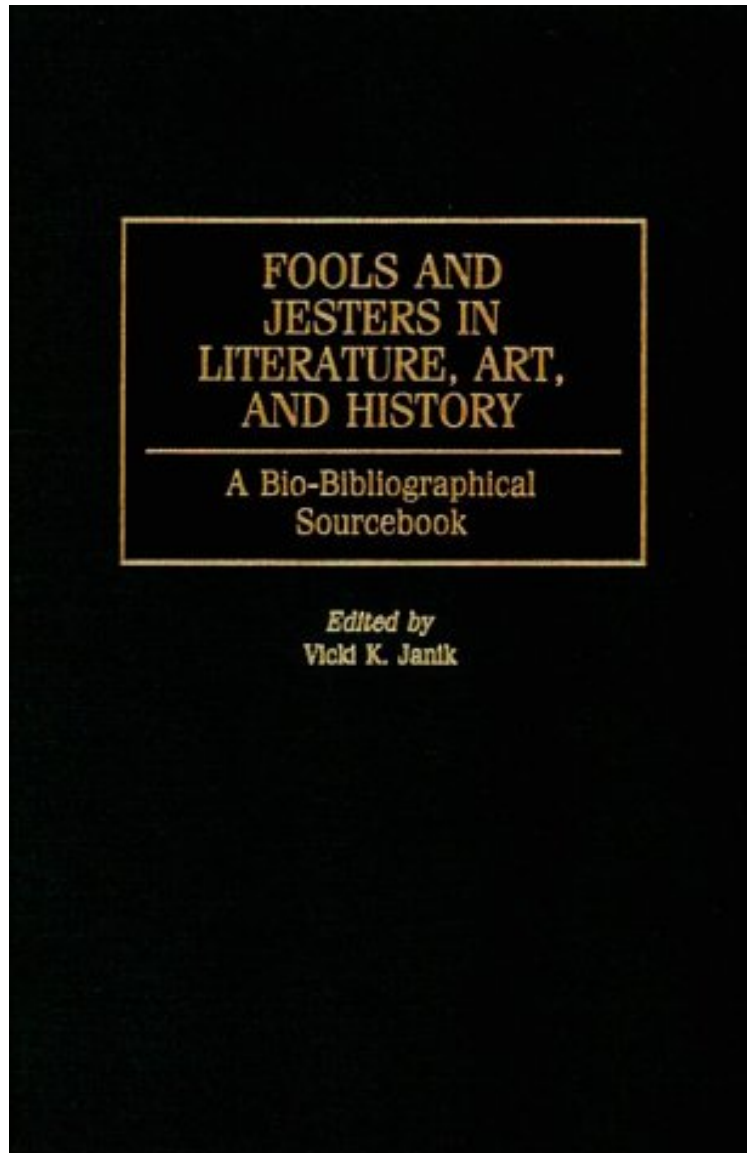


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Fools and Jesters in Literature, Art, and History: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook (Critical Studies in Education and)

Vicki K. Janik

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Vicki K. Janik : Fools and Jesters in Literature, Art, and History: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook (Critical Studies in Education and) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fools and Jesters in Literature, Art, and History: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook (Critical Studies in Education and):

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. High Praise for the Fool By Pippisiel was searching for a Medieval Fool, and found what may be one of the best books on the subject produced to date. The research was meticulous, each point made being supported by quotation and examples. The illustrations are wonderful, absolutely apposite, many of which were quite new to me. Beatrice Otto is a superb example of an author who knows her stuff and has the magnificent gift of making it interesting and entertaining. For the serious researcher - or for someone who just fancies tracing the course of comedy - this is just the book.

Jesters and fools have existed as important and consistent figures in nearly all cultures. Sometimes referred to as clowns, they are typological characters who have conventional roles in the arts, often using nonsense to subvert existing order. But fools are also a part of social and religious history, and they frequently play key roles in the rituals that support and shape a society's system of beliefs. This reference book includes alphabetically arranged entries for approximately 60 fools and jesters from a wide range of cultures. Included are entries for performers from American popular culture, such as Woody Allen, Mae West, Charlie Chaplin, and the Marx Brothers; literary characters, such as Shakespeare's Falstaff, Rabelais' Gargantua and Pantagruel, and Singer's Gimpel; and cultural and mythological figures, such as India's Birbal, the American circus clown, the Native American Coyote, Taishu Engeki of Japan, Hephaestus, Loki the Norse fool, schlimiels and schlimazels, and the drag queen. The entries, written by expert contributors, are critical as well as informative. Each begins with a biographical, artistic, religious, or historical background section, which places the subject within a larger cultural and historical context. A description and analysis follow. This section may include a discussion of the fool's appearance, gender role, ethical and moral roles, social function, and relationship to such themes as nature, time, and mortality. The entry then discusses the critical reception of the subject and concludes with an extensive bibliography of general works.

"By taking fools seriously and by recognizing their value in cultural criticism, the editor has performed a monumental service to the state of learning; fools point to the instability of language and the fallibility of reason, ' and they hold secrets of their societies. A must for all reader levels."-Choice"[T]his books should become a classic and is indispensable for humor shelves in any library."-International Journal of Humor"This work is highly recommended for its extensive coverage and a scholarly, yet readable analysis of who or what makes us laugh--and why."-ARBA"This books should become a classic and is indispensable for humor shelves in any library."-International Journal of Humor?[T]his books should become a classic and is indispensable for humor shelves in any library.?-International Journal of Humor?This work is highly recommended for its extensive coverage and a scholarly, yet readable analysis of who or what makes us laugh--and why.?-ARBA?By taking fools seriously and by recognizing their value in cultural criticism, the editor has performed a monumental service to the state of learning; fools point to the instability of language and the fallibility of reason, ' and they hold secrets of their societies. A must for all reader levels.?-ChoiceAbout the AuthorVICKI K. JANIK is Assistant Professor of English at the State University of New York at Farmingdale, where she teaches courses in Shakespeare, drama, comparative mythology, drama, and other topics.