

A Divine Cause for Abandoning Reason in Shakespeare's *King Lear*

Shakespeare'in Kral Lear Oyununda Mantığı Terketmek için Kutsal Sebep

Gül KURTULUŞ*

Abstract

King Lear can be considered as one of the most powerful tragedies written by Shakespeare. Written nearly 400 years ago, it appeals to today's literary critiques, psychologists and psychiatrists. Shakespeare's construction of madness is so deep that psychiatrists diagnose the type of madness King Lear suffers from with its various aspects, such as mental disorder, mania, and dementia. One of the elements that triggers his dementia is stress which can be found in Lear's case due to the corrupted relationship with daughters. Lear has unsolved problems with all of his daughters. Lear does not love them as a father, he loves them as a mother would do hence, their abandonment leads to his collapse. In the father-dominant family model of Elizabethan times *King Lear* was written, this idea is emphasized in the play further with the exclusion of a mother. King Lear does not only maintain kingly authority but also as the only head of the family and care-giver for his daughters, he maintains both a father's and mother's authority role. King Lear does not have a wife to consult when he's distressed and ask for comfort, however he has his daughters. The play starts off exactly with Lear asking for consolation and love from his daughters. Cordelia's refusal to give a solid consolation to him results in chaos for Lear who is in desperate need to receive affection. From the very beginning of the play, there is a fight between chaos and order in the kingdom and in King Lear's mind. In this chaos, madness does not only act as the accelerating power of chaos but also as the remedy of it. In other words, the madness in the play also leads the play back to order. When talking about madness in the play, King Lear and Edgar come to mind as one goes mad and one pretends to be mad. This essay explores King Lear's madness in the light of new literary studies. It aims to look into the various aspects madness that proceeds from chaos to order through the characters of King Lear and Edgar, and from blindness to healthy eyesight both in metaphoric and literal sense through the characters of King Lear and Gloucester who see better and become wiser in the end.

Key words: King Lear, madness, psychology, tragedy, chaos, power relations, parental roles.

Öz

Kral Lear Shakespeare'in yazdığı trajik oyunların en önemlilerinden biri diye düşünülebilir. Yaklaşık 400 yıl önce yazılan eser günümüzde edebi eleştirmenlerin, psikologların ve psikiyatrların ilgisini çekmeye devam ediyor. Shakespeare'ın eserinde sergilediği çılgınlık örneği öylesine derin ki psikiyatrlar bu hastalığı ruhsal bozukluk, delilik ve demans gibi farklı yönleriyle teşhis ediyorlar. Lear'ın maruz kaldığı demans durumu kızlarıyla arasındaki bozuk ilişkinin sebep olduğu stres dolayısıyla artmıştır. Lear'ın tüm kızlarıyla arasında henüz çözülmemiş problem vardır. Lear kızlarını sadece bir baba olarak değil tıpkı bir annenin hissettiği aşkla sevmektedir. *Kral Lear* Elizabeth döneminin baba-erkek aile yapısını yansıtmaktadır ve baba figürü anne figürünün yokluğunda daha fazla vurgulanmıştır. Lear kendi krallığının en üst seviyesinde olan yönetici ve lider otorite sembolü olmakla birlikte ailesinin yegane ebeveyni ve reisi olarak kızlarına sevgi, şefkat veren anne ve baba rolünü birlikte üstlenmektedir. Kral Lear'ın gergin ve sıkıntılı zamanlarında başvurarak teselli alacağı ve kendini rahat hissedebileceği bir eşi yok ama kızları var. Oyun tam olarak Lear'ın kızlarından sevgi ve avuntu istediği bir sahneyle başlar. Cordelia babasının teselli isteğine olumsuz yanıt vererek çaresizlik içinde sevgi açlığı çeken Lear'ı tam bir karmaşanın içine iter. Eserin başından itibaren Lear'ın zihninde ve yönettiği krallıkta karmaşa ve düzen çatışması belirgindir. Böylesi bir karmaşa ortamında çılgınlık hem karmaşayı artıran hem de sonlandıran bir güç olarak görülür. Bir başka deyişle, çılgınlık oyunda tekrar düzen haline dönülmesi için etkili olur. Çılgınlıkla ilgili düşünürken ve tartışırken oyunda iki karakter ön plana çıkar: Çılgına dönen Kral Lear ve çılgın gibi davranıp o role bürünen Edgar. Bu çalışma King Lear'ın çılgınlık olarak tanımlanan hastalığını yeni edebi yaklaşımlar ve çalışmalar ışığında araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma karmaşadan düzen haline dönen süreçte Kral Lear ve Edgar karakterlerindeki çılgınlıkla ilgili özellikleri ve hem mecazi hem de gerçek anlamda körlükten sağlıklı görme yeteneğine kavuşarak etraflarındaki olayları daha iyi anlayıp daha bilge karakterlere dönüşen Kral Lear ve Gloucester karakterleri incelemeyi amaçlamıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Kral Lear, çılgınlık, psikoloji, trajedi, karmaşa, güç savaşları, ana babaya ait roller.

* Lect. Dr., Bilkent University, Faculty of Humanities and Letters, English Language and Literature Department, kurtulus@bilkent.edu.tr

Introduction

King Lear Between Sanity and Insanity

Shakespeare, especially in his tragedies, uses the element of mental health in order to create a tragic hero. Through the hero, he questions the human nature and society's expectations as well as its actions. *King Lear*, as a Shakespearean tragedy, uses different types of insanity to give a meaning for people's cruelty and selfishness. Irving Ribner (1947) classifies madness as existing from birth, stimulated, and invented or imaginary which are exhibited by Lear, Edgar, and Gloucester. These types of madness have various roles and suggestions in the play. King Lear's madness which can be seen as a natural one, has several functions such as the indication of power change, punishment and character development. As Niels Herold (1995) indicates in his article, "Madness and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare," nineteenth-century psychiatrists considered Shakespeare as "the most perceptive analyst of human nature, for guidance in the understanding of madness" (Herold, 1995, p. 94). This paper attempts to cast a new light on the interrelated issues regarding the early modern and modern concepts of psychological, textual, public, and private authority in *King Lear*.

Among Shakespeare's tragic characters, like Macbeth and Hamlet who suffer from disturbed mental states, King Lear is one of the most famous when the discussion is on madness. As Kenneth Muir argues in the introduction to the Arden Shakespeare edition of *King Lear*, the concept of madness in *King Lear* leads to debates such as 'madness in reason' versus 'reason in madness,' furthermore he states that "wicked children of Lear are all destroyed" by the end as big sister Goneril going mad kills the second, Regan and then commits suicide, thus madness leads to a punishment for the wicked (Shakespeare, 1991, p. ii). In fact, madness is not only a punishment or a tragic flaw in *King Lear* but also it is a mental state that enables Lear to see the world from a new perspective by giving him awareness thus contributing to his character development with this awareness.

From beginning to end, the concept of power changes which is presented as light motifs. At first, it is only a family crisis caused by Lear's childish acts. Cordelia's honesty raises the problem of unfair treatment and she ends up losing all her power in England. As Lear distributes his lands to his other daughters and their husbands, power change stays no longer as a family issue. It becomes more serious, worse, traumatic, and turns into a political issue. Herold (1995, p. 94) suggests that Shakespeare's characters' personal problems are very much interrelated to a political crisis and these should be interpreted together. The harmony is shattered in the very beginning when Lear decides to distribute his lands which are the symbols of his power. His personal problems make him take rash, in some sense childish, decisions and this leads to a crisis in both political atmosphere and in Lear's mind. As soon as he gives away his power he begins to ask whether he is going crazy or not. Suddenly the king turns into an old, vulnerable madman who desperately needs his daughters' help. Duncan Salkeld (1994, p.81) interprets this situation as, concepts of reason and madness frequently served as metaphors for the ruling power and the threat of insurrection. According to Salkeld (1994), madness and authority are very much interrelated and *King Lear* is a good example. The new power, in other words, authority becomes Goneril and Regan who are represented as wicked characters that cause Lear's madness as well as a disorder in the political arena. The power shift indicates the corrupted side of human nature and instantly Lear becomes a victim of the corrupted authority. Seeing his daughters' true colors, Lear feels powerless and abandoned. His reason, associated with the theme of power, gives way to madness which is seen as a subversion by Salkeld (Salkeld, 1994, p. 82). Lear's madness and crises are clearly caused by the disorders in political and social changes. His destruction takes place in different perspectives.

The poles of sanity and madness...collapse through a historicized King Lear into a proliferation of voices and discourses of disorder – confusion in the moral, psychic, and political orders (Herold, 1997, p. 268).

As the quotation above highlights, Lear's madness is caused not only by political disorders but also by moral changes. After distributing his lands, he loses his daughters who are very dear to him. He realizes Goneril and Regan's moral corruption and he does not want to admit his wrong decision. His supporters warn him about the power change but Lear was not able to comprehend the new order.

Discussing Lear's madness, it is important to clarify why he is called mad or what is wrong with his mind that makes others think that he has gradually gone mad. Indeed, Lear's madness is problematic, therefore it has attracted almost every psychiatric diagnosis; bipolar disorder, organic brain syndrome, acute psychosis, involuntional melancholia or involuntional depression, and even Alzheimer's disease (Jones, 2014, p. 148). Russel Beale, the actor who plays Lear in National Theatre of London's version of *King Lear*, suggests that he worked closely on symptoms of Lewy body dementia (as cited in Jones, 2014, p. 148). Lewy body dementia symptoms include hallucinations and motor disorders. Considering Lear's old age, actually dementia is an accurate diagnosis. From the very beginning he suffers from his wrong and rushed decisions such as dividing the kingdom between the two wicked daughters. As the leader of a fairly strong kingdom, he used to be a very strong king who was able to grow his kingdom stronger, yet his wrong decisions eventually affect his kingdom and himself as well, so although Lear was once a smart man with a sharp mind after a while, he suffers from dementia due to his old age.

Dementia discussed so far as part of Lear's character does not define him entirely and it is not quite his tragic flaw in this tragedy, yet the observable stages of his madness are milestones in the play because they mark certain moments. As a tragic character his hubris described as extreme pride goes hand in hand with his madness (Domínguez-Rué, 2012, p. 668). In the play one of the key moments is where he decides to divide the kingdom between his daughters according to the measure of the love they bear for him: "Tell me, my daughters, / Which of you shall we say doth love us most, / That we our largest bounty may extend / Where merit doth most challenge it?" (Shakespeare, 2008, p. 102). This is indeed a delicate moment because it gives a start to the following conflicts. Lear expects rhetorical shows of affection from his daughters to get their share of the kingdom (Bulman, 1985, p. 148). When he cannot receive the required answer from his favorite daughter Cordelia, he suddenly decides to disown her forever: "Here I disclaim all my parental care, / Propinquity, and property of blood, / and as a stranger to my heart and me / Hold thee from this for ever." (Shakespeare, 2008, p. 105, i.105-107). This is a shocking and an illogical decision, the other characters in the play criticize Lear because of it. France comments on it saying: "This is most strange, that she that even but now / Was your best object the argument of your praise, / Balm of your age, most best most dearest, / Should in this trice of time commit a thing / so monstrous to dismantle / So many folds odd flavour." (Shakespeare, 2008, p. 111). As John Draper evaluates in his article, "The Old Age of King Lear:"

The progress of this madness, like the progress of Lear's earlier change from cholera to melancholy develops by fine degrees. In the very first scene, Kent, by a sort of dramatic prolepsis, calls the old King 'mad' though he means foolish rather than insane. At the end of the Act, when the Fool refers to Lear's age and folly, the old man seems first to fear madness: he had always been so certain of himself, and now this certainty is gone. Late in the second act, he feels himself succumbing to hysteria passion, and with deepest pathos beseeches Goneril, "I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad." Some lines later, in bitterness at his unmanly tears, he cries that he'll not weep, but rather he'll 'go mad.' In Act III, as his "wits begin to turn,... His wits 'begin t'unsettle' and finally, late in Act III, his 'wits are gone.' In Act IV, he is 'as mad as the vex'd sea.'" (Draper, 1940, pp. 536-537)

Anyone who observes this turn of events would be surprised to see a man thinking his favorite daughter becomes nothing in his eyes all of a sudden therefore this is a moment when we see his dementia slowly affecting his decision-making. In the final act, however, we see the concept of madness appearing not from the actions of Lear but from the actions of the wicked sisters, and it still is an event that affects Lear directly. The sudden abandoning of an old father could be considered as mad as the sudden disowning of a once favored daughter, therefore Regan and Goneril's action against their father could be claimed as a form of madness, just like Lear's action against Cordelia. This is again an incident that the concept of madness affects both Lear and the play's plot structure. What makes this moment unique is that this time madness does not come from within Lear but it comes from without and still manages to affect his mental state. Receiving a refusal from his daughters raises Lear's awareness, triggering his madness to grow, and it makes him question his decision about Cordelia and the kingdom, therefore madness helps him in this context and contributes to his development.

Lear's Initiation to Awareness

Madness, seemingly, makes Lear suffer, but in fact it gives him an opportunity to reach awareness about people around him. In the article "Shakespearean Tragedies: Dynamics, Identifying a Generic Structure in Shakespeare's Four Major Tragedies," it is argued when madness of wicked sisters Goneril and Regan makes Lear's dementia progress and gives his madness a bigger space in the play, this madness drives Lear back to trusting Cordelia because he gains awareness about the true faces of his daughters, and when events are mapped we can see that if Lear did not go mad he would not be able to see the real intentions of those who are around him (Domínguez-Rué, 2012, p. 669). His daughters like other characters act reflecting their true selves when they think Lear as an old, mad and defenseless man, therefore his madness raises his awareness by giving him a chance to see through people. Lear's madness grows with the increasing effect of Lewy body dementia, stress and sadness. Bertrand Evans in his book *Shakespeare's Tragic Practice* stresses the significance of awareness in King Lear saying: "[Shakespeare] had fixed on a favorite kind of dramatic situation involving a serviceable awareness-unawareness gap that he could work across, back and forth, touching off showers of varied effects at will." (Evans, 1979, p. 148). Moreover, James Bulman in his book *The Heroic Idiom of Shakespearean Tragedy*, stated that banishing himself from Goneril is the threshold of Lear's consciousness (Bulman, 1985, p. 159). His madness starts to grow stronger and more vibrant. As again Emma Rue suggests turning to paranoid and mad forces the Shakespearean tragic characters find a fundamental solutions to their problems (Domínguez-Rué, 2012, p. 675). Lear cannot distinguish between Cordelia and her wicked sisters when he is sane. Lear's madness brings the end of the willful, egoistical monarch and he becomes resurrected as a complete human being (Shakespeare, 2008, p. xii).

Ribner (1947) in the article "Lear's Madness in the Nineteenth Century," categorizes madness as congenital, super-induced, and fictitious which are represented by the Fool, Lear and Edgar respectively (p. 125). Lear's madness is a temporary one and his reason returns at the end of the play, a scene in which one can no longer see a madman but an old wise man. For a while, he really becomes a madman and he uses madness as an unconscious tool of recovery. On the other hand, Edgar pretends to be a madman. Jerome Mazzaro (1985) in "Madness and Memory: Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' and 'King Lear,'" argues that, "[Gloucester's son Edgar] assume[s] a mask of madness in order to camouflage political intentions, achieving in the disguise greater security and a better chance of effecting his will. Success depends upon the pretender's [skill in] giving the impression that he is mentally incapable of any responsible action that might threaten the political motives of his associations" (p. 105). King Lear's madness has several roles such as the indication of power change and character development.

Madness, caused by his misjudgment and his daughters' actions, is used to describe the power change in both personal and political spheres. The contrast between sanity and madness helps him understand the nature of human beings and makes him a better man by developing his vision. It should be reminded that madness doesn't manifest itself solely in characters. Often it can be seen reflected in or caused by chaos. Lear rapidly loses power, authority, and control over those who were once his subjects – excluding Kent and Gloucester. This type of rejection of political authority is described by Karin Coddon (1989) in the article "Such Strange Designs" as 'an intolerable ignorance, *madness*, and wickedness, for subjects to make any murmuring, rebellion, resistance or withstanding [...] against the most dear and most dread sovereign Lord and king...' (p. 54). Rejection of the power of the King both in Elizabethan culture and the play is a sort of 'political madness' (Coddon, 1989, p. 56) and it is an example of chaos.

While disorder and confusion are important aspects of madness, another is frenzy, and this too is addressed in a chaotic element of the play. At the end of scene vii, a storm breaks out, which critics easily agree is an example of pathetic fallacy. The tempest in Lear's mind (Shakespeare, 2008, p. 186, xi., 12) is matched with the storm. The storm is both a reflection of Lear's state of mind and of his temperament. When insulting Oswald (Shakespeare, 2008, p. 129, iv., 78-80), for example, or when he is cursing Gonoril (Shakespeare, 2008, pp. 138-139, iv., 265-280), Lear's anger is explosive and can easily be directed at anyone, as seen in the very first scene, when he lashes out at Kent as he stands in his way of delivering his judgement on Cordelia. Lear himself is indeed like a storm. Storms do not last forever and madness can be cured. Neely (1991a, p. 778) notes that "unlike insanity, madness is not defined as the opposite of sane and is not exclusively a medical condition: people run mad, fall mad, are beside themselves, and then recover themselves." In *King Lear*, however, this occurs only when Lear has been reduced to near nothing. He himself wonders if (to his people) he has become his own shadow (Shakespeare, 2008, p. 136), and he ends up, indeed as a parody of his former self. In the deepest point of his madness, Lear appears before a blind Gloucester and Edgar-as-Tom wearing a crown of weeds and flowers (Shakespeare, 2008, p. 241, xx., 189); though never seen, the real crown of the King is missed dearly here, and once the ruler of all of England, Lear can now barely be the king of the animals he speaks to. At the edge of a chaotic new era, England is also divided between two sisters and is at war with France, thus currently it becomes a shadow of its former self. At last, however, Lear comes to his senses: 'For as I am a man, I think this lady/ To be my child, Cordelia' (Shakespeare, 2008, p. 250). At last away from the daughters who profess false affection, with nothing to his name, but with the daughter who has offered him nothing but honesty, Lear is cured from madness. His observation at the start of the play comes true as a prophecy. Where the events truly were set in motion by Cordelia's 'nothing' (Shakespeare, 2008, p. 104), they now end with the death of all three sisters, and Lear following shortly after, his final cries of 'no' and 'never' echoing that first 'nothing' (Shakespeare, 2008, pp. 273-274). Foucault says that in Shakespeare nothing ever restores madness either to truth or reason, and that it only leads to laceration and death (as cited in Coddon, 1989, p. 58). With chaos in the play, and the war with France, unresolved, also with the game of fate having one final blow for Lear's mental state, indeed madness in the play remains as an echo at the end.

A Close Relationship Between Madness and Chaos in Lear's Declining Mental Status

Madness in the play is often analysed through Lear's natural madness, and Edgar's performance of madness. While this approach has proven fruitful in analysis of Shakespeare's tragedies, it should be reminded that madness doesn't manifest itself solely in characters. Often it can be seen reflected in or caused by the narrative. In *King Lear*, madness can be observed from both within and without Lear, and the term 'chaos' compellingly connotes mad-

ness in the outside world. One of the prime reasons why both the characters' inner world and the outside should be taken into consideration when discussing madness in *King Lear* is that Lear is a political figure in the play. As the monarch, he cannot be thought separate of his kingdom. Storozyński (1991) notes that because of his position, Lear 'is symbolic of the world and its ordering' (p. 168). Any ailment that the King faces can also be found in the nation, an obvious example of which can be found when Lear divides the kingdom between his daughters. A complete division of the kingdom based on flattery is indicative of Lear's deteriorating mental health, which is against any political stratagem that sustains the national benefits. To have a divided kingdom is inevitably a basis for a chaotic ruling system. It is indeed the initial step of a fragmentation within families, England, and Lear's mind. Lear rapidly loses power, authority, and control over his daughters, Gonoril and Regan who become the new legal rulers of the split land, and as a king symbolises the nation, his children, as 'parts of him', symbolise parts of the nation. When Lear asks Gonoril if she is his daughter (Shakespeare, 2008, p. 135, iv., 210), and what her name is (Shakespeare, 2008, p. 136), in both cases he is trying to re-establish his authority as a father and the King by reminding Gonoril of their relationship. In both cases, however, she doesn't answer. Thus, she rejects Lear's authority and power, both as a daughter and the new representative of the land. This type of rejection of political authority is described by the writer of *Exhortation* 'an intolerable ignorance, madness, and wickedness, for subjectes to make any murmuring, rebellyon, resistance or withstanding [...] against there most dere and most dred soveraygne Lord and king...' (cited in Coddon, 1989, p. 54). Rejection of the power of the King, both in Elizabethan culture and the play is a sort of 'political madness' (cited in Coddon, 1989, p. 56), to borrow Smith's terminology, and an example of chaos.

Chaos prevails when there is distortion of the norm. Gonoril decides that she 'must change arms at home, and give the distaff/ Into [her] husband's hands,' (Shakespeare, 2008, p. 217) reversing roles with her husband and assuming a soldier's role herself. In addition, Lear lacks a roof over his head in his own kingdom at the end of scene xvi (Shakespeare, 2008, p. 177). On the one hand, Lear leaves on his own accord and therefore could be said to be making one last decision for himself regarding the relation between himself and his daughters. On the other hand, he suffers 'the final humiliation of having doors shut behind him, a gesture which in itself demarcates space or place, and reinforces division' (Storozyński, 1991, p. 166). Not only does this scene provide an example of how the norm is distorted, it also is a reminder of how the frenzied, deteriorating mind of Lear is reflected in the outside world.

When the nature of Lear's madness is scrutinized within the family circle, though, Lear's madness has a different basis that depends on maternity and paternity. Cordelia's disappearance from Lear's side and the void it creates for Lear as well as the reason why and how her absence dearly matters for Lear can be explained through the initial absence of a mother in the play. In "The Absent Mother in King Lear," Coppélia Kahn (2012, pp. 242-243) observes the absence of mother and the presence of a demanding father and in accordance with the lack of a maternal affection Kahn examines Lear's madness: "When Lear begins to feel the loss of Cordelia, to be wounded by her sisters, and to recognize his own vulnerability, he calls his state of mind hysteria, 'the mother'. Lear, referring to his mental state as hysteria in the course of the play, gives the depiction of madness a feminine nature. As Kahn (2012) observes the term's usage refers to the womb and childbearing of a mother and the distress that comes with it. Likewise, Lear's distress is closely connected with his children's doings as discussed earlier in this paper. In this sense Lear identifies his sorrows like sorrows of a mother and/or sorrows of a motherless child. Though Lear identifies himself with the mother he fails this role as he isn't really successful as a motherly figure because of his demanding nature which is in fact unlike a motherly unconditional love for children and indeed more of a

child who seeks a motherly love, and this illustrates his masculine nature that is in stark contrast with Lear's taking on a mother's role. Furthermore, according to Kahn (2012) what Lear essentially demands can be defined as two diverse urges that are mutually exclusive as he both wants to have control over those close to him and to be dependent on them in terms of emotional consolation (pp. 447-448). This leads to conflict, and Lear's distress renders more intense when he cannot maintain any of his wishes. He loses both the emotional support of Cordelia and his power over his daughters. Having faced with this loss, and also the loss of a wife figure to console him makes his sense of loneliness even more poignant. With his favorite daughter Cordelia's absence Lear finds no one to go for comfort which has already been an underlying issue for him. As he has always been dependent on his daughters, mostly Cordelia, for consolation, when he could not receive that treatment, care, and affection from Gonoril and Regan he simply cannot maintain his healthy mental state any longer.

In relation with Lear's above-mentioned demand of a close relationship a parent has with his/her offspring and also his/her demand to be loved in turn, the two sisters' nature as daughters, children of a once strong king, and how they are further related to Lear's madness should be discussed. Kahn (2012) observes this in the light of Freudian concept and suggests that the child's sense of gender develops through mother. Both Regan and Gonoril refuse to take care of their father, provide him with a place to accommodate after he has lost his lands which results in a manner that highlights lack of tenderness. Indeed, both sisters want to remove Lear from his powerful attachments such as reducing the number of Lear's men at a moment when Lear is in need of a place to live in with his loyal men. When Lear is told by Gonoril that he is not allowed to keep this much men in her castle, out of rage he curses her saying that she may or will not carry a child ever and if she does he prays that it will be a painful carriage for Gonoril (Shakespeare, 2008, p. 139). Lear's aggression here is a maternal based aggression. Whenever his wishes are not satisfied or not considered by his daughters, Lear thinks of a related offensive language in his dialogues with his two girls. In brief, because Lear is not properly given care though he has always been an unconditionally loving figure, he prays that Gonoril's child, if ever she owns one, wouldn't give her a care she desires, as well (Kahn, 2012, p. 250). Moreover, in these scenes female characters' dominating power over Lear's power and a conversion of roles can be seen. Petra Puckova (2015, p. 11) discusses the two sister's ambitious natures and their will to have power, and says that the sisters rather govern more of masculine traits unlike most female figures of the times the play is written, which can be explained by Kahn's argument about the absence of a mother. In scene iv where Lear is trying to hold his tears back in front of sisters when he says: "I am ashamed / That thou hast power to shake my manhood" (Shakespeare, 2008, p. 140).

Therefore, Lear is not only forced to be homeless and left without a person for consolation but also his manly, sovereign power is ridiculed and this adds up to the loss of his mental state. Literally he is ashamed of losing his power which is taken away by his daughters. Thus, it can be claimed that Lear's madness is rooted in feminine and masculine sensations. Lear himself is a depiction of this contradiction that is attached to him through being both a mother and a father. He lacks a wife and therefore has to take up the mother role for his daughters and simultaneously because of a lack of a woman to consolidate his losses, demands, needs, and wishes he expects to gain, receive, and obtain from his daughters. On the other hand, his daughters make fun of his power. Furthermore, they misuse and overrule Lear's masculine power and authority.

Madness and Death of the Two Fathers

Lear's madness is associated with his blindness in both literal and metaphoric sense, like Gloucester's blindness of losing his ability of visually seeing what happens around him. Both fathers lose their vision and their worlds become dark in a sense. Lear's madness can be

explained in terms of his becoming blind to the outside world, yet it can be said that his going mad makes him realize the real world that surrounds him. His blindness is an eye-opening situation for him. Gloucester's blindness leads to awareness about his misjudgment regarding disowning Edgar. Only after going blind he understands that he was wronged by his favorite son, Edgar. He has believed in the words of a wicked son, Edmund who has fooled him, saying that Edgar is planning to kill him while it is Edmund who wants Gloucester to die. Like Gloucester, Lear believes in the wrong daughters and disowns the only daughter who loves him most and like Gloucester he starts to see the events clearly when he becomes blind. Bennett (1962) in "The Storm Within: The Madness of Lear" argues that "Shakespeare has dramatized it more clearly than has any playwright since Sophocles, not only by contrasting Lear's blindness with Gloucester's, but by contrasting the patient understanding and tenderness which the disinherited and banished Edgar shows to his father with Lear's lack of sympathy with his devoted vassal and distrust of the help which his equally wronged daughter is trying to give him" (p. 150). Both fathers, after going mad and/or blind, want to see their only loving children and they want to apologize to be forgiven. Both die near their loving children, happily in a sense. Through the play, King Lear fluctuates between madness and sanity. His wrong choices lead him to his sufferings. After losing everything and after becoming "nothing," Lear realizes he only has Cordelia, his only daughter who truly loves him, a realization that comes with his madness. Loss of his eyesight coincides with his understanding reality in all its clarity. The doubling of Lear and Gloucester function in reflecting the tragic yet happy end of the two fathers who die next to their most beloved children.

References

- Bennett, J. W. (1962). The storm within: The madness of Lear. *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 13 (2), 137-155.
- Bulman, J. C. (1985). *The heroic idiom of Shakespearean tragedy*. Newark : University of Delaware Press. EBSCOhost. Retrieved from search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat00040a&AN=bilk.184457&site=es-live.s
- Coddon, K. (1989). Such strange desygns. *Renaissance Drama*, 20, 51-75.
- Domínguez-Rué, E. & Mrotzek, M. (2012). Shakespearean tragedies dynamics: identifying a generic structure in Shakespeare's four major tragedies. *International Journal of General Systems*, 41 (7), 667–681. doi:10.1080/03081079.2012.703386.
- Draper, J. W. (1940). The Old Age of King Lear. *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 39 (4), 527-540.
- Evans, B. (1979). *Shakespeare's tragic practice*. Oxford : Clarendon Press, Retrieved from: search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat00040a&AN=bilk.115876&site=eds-live.
- Herold, N. (1995). Madness and drama in the age of Shakespeare. A Review Article. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 37 (1), 94–99.
- Herold, N. (1997). On Teaching the Madness of 'King Lear.' *The Journal of Narrative Technique*, 27 (3), 249–275.
- Jones, R. (2014, May 28). The Madness of the King: King Lear. *British Journal of General Practice*, 64 (620), 148. doi:10.3399/bjgp14X677644.

-
- Kahn, C. (2012). The Absent Mother in King Lear. In Jay L. Halio (Ed.), *Critical Insights King Lear*. (pp. 239-263) US: Salem Press.
- Mazzaro, J. (1985). Madness and memory: Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. *Comparative Drama*, 19 (2), 97–116.
- Neely, C. T. (1991a). Did madness have a renaissance? *Renaissance Quarterly*, 44, 776-791.
- Neely, C. T. (1991b). Documents in madness: reading madness and gender in Shakespeare's tragedies and early modern culture. *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 42 (3), 315-338.
- Phillips, A. (2011). Acting Madness: The Diary of a Madman, Macbeth, King Lear. *The Threepenny Review*, 126, 14–17.
- Plato. (1992). *Republic*. (G.M.A. Grube, Trans.). Cambridge, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, INC.
- Puckova, P. (2015). Family issues in King Lear. Masaryk University, Faculty of Education, Brno, Masaryk University. Retrived from: https://is.muni.cz/th/is3ng/Bakalarska_prace.pdf
- Ribner, I. (1947). Lear's madness in the nineteenth century. *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, 22 (3), 117–129.
- Salkeld, D. (1994). *Madness and drama in the age of Shakespeare*. UK: Manchester UP.
- Shakespeare, W. (1991). *King Lear* (Kenneth Muir, Ed.). London: Routledge.
- Shakespeare, W. (1999). *A midsummer night's dream*. US: The Pennsylvania State University.
- Shakespeare, W. (2005) *Hamlet*. (Harold Jenkins, Ed.). London: Methuen.
- Shakespeare, W. (2008). *The Oxford Shakespeare King Lear*. Oxford, NY: Oxford UP.
- Storozynsky, L.M. (1991). King Lear and Chaos. *Critical Survey*, 3, 163-169.
-