

## **THE LOVE AND FOOL TRAGEDY IN KING LEAR DRAMA BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

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### **Abstract**

*Literary work is one of the ways to show some phenomena in this world. Social condition in one country or city can be read in a novel or drama. All of the events and situation at the time become basic idea for author to elaborate his idea through imagination. The story which appeared in that work will be didactic matter for some people. The story also can be end by happy catastrophe or sad. The purpose of this written is to know and to gain social event that happened behind the story. The only key to get the meaning of that story is by reading process. Beside that through reading, the meaning of the story in that work will be emerged. Reading is a very important action to check the meaning of literary work or playwright. In this drama the story talks about foolish character which cannot get happiness. The story is so sorrowful and full of tragedy. The main character feels sadness and hopeless. Without reading the meaning of that drama cannot be understood.*

**Keyword:** *meaning; reading; tragedy.*

## **CINTA DAN KEBODOHAN DALAM DRAMA KING LEAR KARYA WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

### **Abstrak**

Karya sastra merupakan salah satu cara untuk menunjukkan kondisi atau fenomena yang ada. Kondisi sosial di suatu Negara atau kota bisadi baca melalui novel ataupun drama. Semua peristiwa dan kejadian di suatu waktu aka menjadi ide dasar dalam penciptaan karya sastra melalui pengalaman imajinasi penulisnya. Cerita yang dihadirkan oleh karya sastra akan menjadi pengalaman hidup atau bahkan mengandung nilai/cerita didaktik bagi pembaca. Cerita bisaberakhir dengan *happy ending* (akhir yang bahagia) atau berakihr dengan kisah pilu. Satu kunci untuk menggali makna yang ada kisah tersebut hanya dengan melalui proses pembacaan. Dengan membaca karya akan menjdi bermakna. Sehinggadalam tulisan ini menggunakan metode membaca untuk memunculkan makna. Tujuan dari tulisan ini aadalah untuk melihat dan menggali peristiwa yang terjadi dibalik cerita tersebut. Membaca adalah sangat penting untuk menemukan makna. Dalam dramaini ditemukan tokoh yang begitu bodoh dalam memaknai cinta sang Ayah sehingga berakhir dengan kisah yang tragis penuh penderitaan. Tanpa membaca makna karya sastra khussnyadrama ini tidak akan bisadipahami.

**Kata kunci :** *makna; membaca; tragedi.*

## BACKGROUND

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, England in 1564-1616. His life is in the English Renaissance or in the Elizabethan Era. And his occupation is a playwright, poet, and actor. Rowse (1963:14) explains that Warwickshire is the heart of England, and it was by one of those historic properties that illuminate things that Shakespeare, in whom the English people are most fully and faithfully mirrored, should have been born there in the Elizabethan Age. These things, place and time--the vary dates 564-1616--are significant.

Reading Shakespeare's works, we will concern with the time or period of his creation. If we want to know about his playwrights deeply, a common explanation must be explored. So, the works of Shakespeare can be divided into four periods, base on his experience and growth of his spirit or principle. In Samekto (1998:28) describe that; the **First period** is called by experiment or beginning period, it is about (1588-1596). In this time, Shakespeare tried his hands at virtually every current kind of dramatic works. Most important works in this era are "*Love's Labour's lost*", "*Romeo and Juliet*", "*Two Gentlemen of Verona*", "*Comedy of Errors*", "*Richard III*", and "*King John*". The **second period** was extending from 1594 to 1601). In this period, Shakespeare's product was occupied chiefly with chronicle - history plays and happy comedies, for example: "*Richard II*", "*Henry IV*", "*Henry V*", "*Midsummer Night Dream*", "*The Merchant of Venice*", "*Much a Do About Noting*", and "*Twelfth Night*". The **third Period** is marked by the depression, and gloomy. It was extending from 1601 to 1608. His work in this era include Shakespeare's great tragedies and certain cynical plays, for example: '*Julius Caesar*', '*Hamlet*', '*Othello*', '*King Lear*', '*Macbeth*', and '*Antony and Cleopatra*'. And the **fourth period** is more about calm condition or quiet time. And it was only extending for two or three years. The work was to express the serene philosophy of life in which he himself must have now taken refuge. The works were the noble and beautiful romance-comedies '*Cymbeline*', '*The Winter's tale*', and '*The Tempest*'.

But, for the aim of this paper will be discussed about the tragedy of '*King Lear*' by William Shakespeare. *King Lear* is one of the big tragedy in which it written in the second period, the period marked by the depression and gloomy about 1602-1608. This tragedy shows about proper soul and the development of artistic its writer. Base on the title of this paper, the problem will be depicted are the fool and the madness of the King Lear's tragedy. As we know that, King Lear is a tragedy about a King of Britain, when he was in old condition that he cannot run the kingdom, so he wants to give his three daughter of the heritage. The King's hope to his daughter will continue his empire as he had done.

As I mention above, that the story opens in ancient Britain, where the elderly King Lear is deciding to give up his power and divide his realm amongst his three daughters, Cordelia, Regan, and Goneril. Lear's plan is to give the largest piece of his kingdom to the child, who professes to love him the most, certain

that his favorite daughter, Cordelia, will win the challenge. Goneril and Regan, corrupt and deceitful, lie to their father with sappy and excessive declarations of affection. Cordelia, however, refuses to engage in Lear's game, and replies simply that she loves him as a daughter should. Her lackluster retort, despite its sincerity, enrages Lear, and he disowns Cordelia completely. When Lear's dear friend, the Earl of Kent, tries to speak on Cordelia's behalf, Lear banishes him from the kingdom. (Mabillard, 2012).

According to Irvine (2006:6) base on his guide book, he mentions about the fact character of all the artists of the King Lear's tragedy such as: *King Lear* is the aging British monarch (father of Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia) whose bad judgment and arrogance eventually dooms his family and the security of his kingdom. *The King of France* is the successful suitor for Cordelia's hand in marriage who later helps Cordelia save her father. *Goneril* is Lear's eldest daughter and Albany's wife; a ruthless with her sister, Regan, to strip Lear of all power, pride, and dignity--even leading an armed revolt against her father. *The Duke of Albany* is Goneril's husband, who stays true to his brave and decent nature. *Regan* is Lear's second daughter and Cornwall's wife; as cruel, devious, and evil as Goneril, she joins her sister in seeking Lear's destruction. *The Duke of Cornwall* is Regan's husband, a ruthless fellow who imagines himself a defender the realm Cordelia Lear's youngest (and favorite) daughter, a loyal and trustworthy woman who is disinherited because she refuses to flatter her father. *The Duke of Burgundy* is one of Cordelia's suitors. *The Earl of Kent* a staunch and courageous is member of Lear's court who goes to extreme lengths to support and defend his troubled monarch. *The Earl of Gloucester* is a loyal member of Lear's court who is viciously blinded for his faithfulness to Lear. *Edgar* is Gloucester's elder son, later disguised as Poor Tom, the beggar, who goes to great lengths to protect his father and reign his reputation. *Edmund* Gloucester's younger, illegitimate son--an evil and resentful man who unleashes a cruel plan to have his brother banished in order t gain Gloucester's riches; also joins with the forces working against Lear. *Oswald* Goneril's steward, he relentlessly carries out his mistress's commands, even to the point of his own destruction. *Curan* is Gloucester's servant. *Old man* is Gloucester's tenant. Fool Lear's Jester and confidant who gives the king good advice in a joking manner. And the last, there are *Knights, Officers, Messengers, Soldiers, Servants* and *Attendants*.

From the explanation above, it is obvious that fool and love are the important and interesting aspects to discuss in *King Lear* tragedy. That is why it becomes formal objects in this paper. The problems of this paper can be formulated as: (1) how fool compels *King Lear* to murder by his daughters; (2) How love becomes important role in *King Lear* tragedy?

In this paper will discuss about the two of main issue of King Lear's tragedy. Here will focus to explain and to describe it. The issues of love and fool are one of important problem in this tragedy. How Shakespeare shows to the audiences about true love and sacrifices to survive love. It is not only about love to



husband/prosperity or reign, but it also love to parents, in this case especially love to her father.

### **The Concept of Shakespearean Tragedy**

Tragedy is one of a serious play with a sad ending. (Bradley in Levin, 1960:149-160) describes about some of the Substance of Shakespearean Tragedy; first Shakespeare's tragedy represents a nature of the tragic aspect. Second it's content about dramatic view. Third the story begins from the outside, such a tragedy brings before us a considerable number of persons, but it is pre-eminently the story of one person, the "hero", or at most of two, the "hero" and "heroine". Forth it always rest of the single stars. Fifth the story, next, leads up to, and includes, the death of the hero. And Sixth, Shakespeare's tragedy is concern always with persons of "high degree"; often with kings or princes. All of these characteristics of the tragedy may be found in some of Shakespeare's tragedy commonly. It's also enable us to know the point or the meaning and the value that we can take from the story.

In addition, Holrnan (1972:531) defined Tragedy is to arouse the emotions of pity and fear and thus to produce in the audience a catharsis of these emotions. Such a definition as this is broad enough to admit almost any drama that is serious and that ends with an unhappy catastrophe, although it's various formulations have been interpreted from time to time in terms of the attitudes and conventions of the age in which the formulations have been made. It means that, the reality or the main subject of the story cannot be separated from background problem has emerged. Such as like in the Death of Salesman by Miller, it is show with the condition of the non-classis Renaissance, and of course Hamlet, King Lear, and others were an age of Elizabethan England.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

King Lear begins in the same as many fairy tales do: "Once upon time, there was a great king who had three daughters. The two older daughters were ugly and mean, but the youngest daughter was beautiful and kind". Shakespeare takes this story, however, and turns it into one of the most moving, horrifying, and despairing tragedies of the English language. We know in the King Lear's tragedy there are many issues can be analyzed, but in this part, the main issue will be discussed the fool of the Lear. How his two older daughters unbelievable or make Lear become fool by villain act for serving him. And other issue will be discussed here is about 'love'—a love with the three daughters of King Lear to him. This issue can be seen in the explanation below:

1. **The problem of King Lear's three daughters' Love to him**

Act one, Scene I

The Earl of Kent and the Earl of the Gloucester discuss how King Lear will divide the kingdom. Gloucester introduces Edmund as his illegitimate son. Although he is a bit ashamed that he had a son out of wedlock, Gloucester acknowledges Edmund to his son. King Lear enters. He announces that will divide his kingdom in order to prevent any problems. His plan is to retain the name of King and keep a retinue of the one hundred knights, but to leave matters of government to his sons-in-law. He wishes to give the best third of the kingdom to the daughter who loves him the most. The King asks an eldest daughter to say how much she loves his father.

*GONERIL. Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter;  
Dearer than eye-sight, space, and liberty; Beyond what can be valued,  
rich or rare; No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour; As  
much as child e'er loved, or father found; A love that makes breath  
poor, and speech unable; Beyond all manner of so much I love you.  
(Act one, Scene I, p.5)*

The quotation above, describes that Goneril very love her father. He invites Goneril, his eldest daughter, to express her love first. She uses very flowery language to express her love, and King Lear gives her a third of the kingdom. Goneril says she loves her father "more than words can wield the matter", but she keeps right on speaking. Cordelia actually loves Lear "more than words can wield the matter" and she shuts up. Goneril's statement to her father is only flattery or persuades her father. She loves her father because any something that she really want it. Love base on material requirements. But, Lear didn't realize that her daughter really love him or not.

*REGAN. I am made Of the self-same metal that my sister  
is, And prize me at her worth. In my true heart I find she names my  
very deed of love; only she comes too short; that I profess. Myself an  
enemy to all other joys, Which the most precious square of sense  
possesses; And find I am alone felicitate; In your dear highness's love.  
(p. 6).*

Base on the statement above, Goneril and Regan's empty adulation is more than mere sound to stuff the ears. It is also sweet acid to blind the eyes. Ironically, Goneril says her love for Lear is "Dearer than eye-sight, space, and liberty". Yet instead of sacrificing these precious things for her father, she takes them all away from him. Once Lear is deprived of his eye-sight through flattery, everything else can be easily stolen from him. False love is possessive; true love is silent.

The central personal relationship in the play is expressed in the line, "As much as child e'er loved, or father found." In one sense, King Lear is a play

about a child's love for her father, and a father's discovery of his child's unbreakable love. It's meant that Lear has been blind about her two older daughters' love.

*Although the last, not least; to whose young love The vines of France and milk of Burgundy Strive to be interest's; what can you say to draw A third more opulent than your sister? Speak*

*Now, our joy,*

*CORDELIA. Nothing, My Lord. LEAR. Nothing! CORDELIA. Nothing. LEAR. Nothing will come of nothing: speak again. (p. 7).*

Addressing his daughter Cordelia as "our joy, Although the last, not least,," King Lear does not realize that Cordelia will be his last and greatest joy. Before Lear can come to his final joy, he must re-evaluate the nature of real love.

Speaking in radical absolutes, Cordelia quietly tells her father that her love based on "Nothing". She can only say "Nothing" when Lear asks her what she can say to "draw/A third more opulent than [her] sisters." Lear grossly and blindly misunderstands Cordelia. For Lear love must be based on something, in this case, greed for lands. For Cordelia, love is unconditional, based on no-thing. A Cordelia's "Nothing" means no-thing, or spiritual love. No-thing can measure love because love is infinite. Lear's "Nothing" means material love which must be based on something. Lear's value system is materialistic, a system that blinds him to the intangible values that have no physical cause at all.

*CORDELIA. Good my lord. You have beer got me, bred me, and loved me: I return thus duties back as are right fit, Obey you, love you, and most honour you. Why have my sister's husbands, if they say they love you all? Haply, when I shall wed, that lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry. Half my love with him, half my care and duty: Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters, to love my father all. (p. 9).*

From the quotation above, that was tell us about "Love" and this statement also describes with Cordelia's love. She has divided her love into two ways. First love is to her father and half's love to her husband. Apparently, Cordelia divides her love just as King divides his kingdom—in percentages. Her husband gets half and her father gets half. The profound difference is that what Lear divides is finite and what Cordelia divides is infinite. Spiritual values increase, not diminish, the more they are divided. A miser enjoys gold by hoarding it, but a music lover enjoys a symphony by sharing it.

*The weight of this sad time we must obey; Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say. The oldest hath borne most: we that are young; shall never see so much, nor live so long. (p...).*

Based on that statement reader find out a truly feeling to whom people we love. People can consider everything that happen after they feel loose of something, and they always wake after rejecting from whom they believe

before. It also happened to Lear, he never realize that the children who expresses their love to him will rude and arrogant. After Goneril and Regan get a king that her father gives her, they forget about love that they say to their father. In this tragedy, Shakespeare explicitly told to people that love make somebody friendly or honest. Lear, as a father feel regret to choose which love is really love and false. Finally, Lear can imagine that his young daughter more love him than others. It is become an irony to Lear and so sad when he knows the act of his all daughters to himself. Although Lear feel failure to educate his daughter, he feel satisfy till the end of his live. The main point of this quotation is to show how love really important than material achievements. Yet, people must consider the true or false of love, so they can stay and live longer with whom they love.

## 2. Fool as a representation in King Lear Tragedy

In King Lear tragedy, Shakespeare wants tell us about the problem that any a King which is led by his daughter. The 'King' also becomes stupid with his daughter's attitude; he doesn't know that a loyalty and affection look like. He become mad and never think of which one is better before making a decision to children. He just sees who has much love and most love him that will receive a kingdom. As matter of fact, the two elder daughters didn't care her father. Until, one day when her father comes to her castle to present a dinner, it has been failure.

.....  
.....

*OSWALD. He's coming madam; I hear him*  
*GONERIL. Put on what weary negligence you please,*  
*You and your fellows; I'd have it come to question;*  
*If he dislike it, let him to our sister,*  
.....  
*Old fools are babes again; and must be used*  
*With checks as flatteries,--when they are seen abused,*  
*Remember what I tell you. (p. 30).*

Base on that quotation above, Lear try to visit his first daughter to see and know how the attitude of his daughters for him. Especially, in which one of his daughter serves and honorable to him. After Lear divides the kingdom to his daughter, he feels worry about the situation can be happened at the end of the wealthy. He cannot belie that his daughter will survive and do the father willingness. When Lear arrives to his first daughter's castle, his daughter had prepared something to him. Goneril and her servant have done bad thing to her father, she dislike to her father's appearance. She never prepare about what her father want and hope. She feels angry and doesn't really want to see her father at the time. Indeed, she drives out him. So, Lear realize that his daughter behavior changeable directly.

*KENT. This is nothing, fool.*

.....  
*LEAR. Why no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing.*

*FOOL. (To Kent) Prithee, tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to: he will not believe a fool.*

*LEAR. A bitter fool!*

*FOOL. Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a bitter fool and a sweet fool?*

.....  
*LEAR. Dost thou call me fool, boy? (p. 35-36).*

*LEAR. Follow me; thou shalt serve me: if I like thee n worse after dinner, I will not part from thee yet. Dinner, ho, dinner! Where's my knave? my fool? Go you, and call my fool hither. (p. 32).*

The explanation of the quotation of the tragedy above, Lear becomes fool and old man in foolish. Two of his daughters never appreciate him seriously. He knows that the true and really he was love is the lady had never thought before. The young lady is more honest and friendly for him. Lear had been used by two old daughters only for take a king and heritance property. Lear feels sad when he knows his daughter never obey to him again. He never imagines that this will be occurred to him. The ending of this tragedy is Lear finds his young daughter—which is loved him surely. But Lear didn't really if his young lady really loves him before. Her love never been end and never compare with something else.

It is fact that, Cordelia didn't want to say her love to her father. Love is base on the material and property only. So, she says that her love is not about king, not about reign, and material status. She just really wants to obey and do hard what she will shows to her father. The true love is not about something, because something or everything never same with love. Her father becomes consider which love is true and which love is false. Lear look feel and regrets about his attitude to his young daughter—Cordelia. Lear looks fool and little bit foolish because of his two old daughter's deed. Indeed, He never finds that her two lady is very cruel and have heart stingy before.

## CONCLUSION

The problem of King Lear is how to purge the unplugged world. Existence must be transformed; creation must be recreated. Two blind fathers must be made to "See better" A double irony leads the way to truth. The first the fathers think they can see, but they cannot. They are blind and do not knows it. The second, their blindness leads them unknowingly to sight. The way to truth or through error; the way to wisdom is through folly. A King (King Lear) argues that





his love's daughter will save him. But in fact, it is cannot be believed to maintain and survive his life. The King measure love with something---a material thing--can fulfill his life and can makes his happy after resign from the throne. Lear has failed in the one achievement worth the while—love. Act I sets forth the major follies divide the families and the kingdom. Lear's folly is pride and vanity; he divides his kingdom for false, flattering love. He gives all his lands to the hypocritical, selfish Goneril and Regan. He gives nothing to the honest, loving Cordelia. A father that fails in love has failed in everything. Lear's great moment of proud triumph is ironically his moment of failure. Lear is portrayed in Act I not merely as a fool, but as an ironic fool. If we disregard Lear's selfish, human motive for giving away his kingdom, the act itself of giving up all material and worldly wealth is superhuman.

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