

## “Cordelia : Shakespeare’s Metaphor for ‘Nature’ and ‘Grace’ ”

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Chaucer thought of Nature as a kindly Queen, motherly Dame. Since the mid-nineteenth century, we have come to think of Nature as a cruel and dangerously explosible force. The orthodox Elizabethans, for the most part, are nearer to the Chaucerian view. For us Nature is a source of raw power which we can use. For the Elizabethans, on the other hand, Nature was an ordered and beautiful pattern to which we must adjust ourselves.

Where we study Nature in order to exploit it, Bacon and Hooker study her in order to discover their duties and think not of our controlling her but of allowing her to control us. The idea of Nature, then in orthodox Elizabethan thought is always normative for human beings. It is impossible to talk about Nature without talking about pattern and ideal form, about Reason as displayed in Nature, about Law as the innermost expression of Nature, about Custom which is the basis of Law and equally with Law an expression of Nature’s pattern, about Restraint as the observances of Law, and the way to reveal our richest self - fulfilment.

In the sixteenth century, the forces which have produced our view of Nature were, of course, already at work. *King Lear* finds room in its world for the Nature, which is no longer Kindly Dame but the shattering power of

Thunder. The orthodox and benign view is also strongly represented. The purpose of this paper is to examine "Cordelia : Shakespeare's metaphor for 'Nature' and 'grace' ". Lear does not take the ingratitude as an offence against himself. It is a violation of Nature :

O, reason not the need ! Our basest beggars  
Are in the poorest thing superfluous.  
Allow not Nature more than Nature needs -  
Man's life is cheap as beast's. Thou art a lady;  
If only to give warm were gorgeous,  
Why, Nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,  
Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But for true need,  
You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need ! ( II, iv, 259 - 266 )

Lear's exasperated reply to the argument is in complete accord with Hooker's. Patience is of all things the most necessary to a man tried as he is. Patience is the "precious pearl" prophylactic against the moral sin of forsaking Grace and falling into wrath.

Professor Bradley' calls "... *King Lear* Shakespeare's greatest achievement", but, as he further says, "it seems to me not his best play "2 I mean to say that *King Lear* is greater than any of the mature plays - *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *Macbeth* and the fullest revelation of Shakespeare's power like the *Divine Comedy*. Though the character of Cordelia is not a master - piece of invention or subtlety like that of Cleopatra, yet in its own way, it is a creation as wonderful. Cordelia appears in only four (I, i; IV, iv; IV, vii; V, iii) of the twenty six scenes of *King Lear* - in about a hundred lines. And yet no character in Shakespeare is more absolutely individual, fully integrated or more inefficiently stamped on the memory of the audience. The infinite wealth and beauty conveyed by the very refusal to reveal this beauty in expansive speech is obliquely suggested. The blend of natural sweetness and supernatural 'grace' is here achieved in an amplitude of reference which gathers its component images into a single triumphant effect.

Cordelia retires in the end, "with victory and felicity". To die is so exceedingly "uncomfortably", to live, and be a happy wife is so eminently satisfactory. Shakespeare introduces into the world no little ethical code. Such a little ethical code would flutter away in tatters across the tempest and the night of Lear's agony. And Shakespeare discovers the lofty, supreme fact - that the moral world stands in sovereign independence of the world of senses. Cordelia lies upon the breast of Lear. "Upon such sacrifices the Gods themselves throw

incense". Cordelia, forgetting her father might have returned to France, and have lived prosperously, but then, the pure zeal of redeeming ardour, would indeed have ceased to be. She has fulfilled the end of her being. Cordelia had accepted her lot with fortitude.

We are not the first  
Who with best meaning have incurred the worst  
For thee, oppressed King, I am cast down;  
Myself could else out-frown false Fortune's frown.  
Shall we not see these daughters, and these sisters? ( V, iii, 4 - 7 )

To understand Cordelia is to understand the whole play. According to Coleridge, "There is something of disgust at the ruthless hypocrisy of her sisters, and some little faulty admixture of pride and sullenness in Cordelia's 'Nothing' " ( I, i, 87 ), who would like to "Love and be silent" ( I, i, 62 ). Her virtues join with her father's faults and her sisters' wickedness to make her "nothing" - both inevitable and right.

Cordelia's answer, 'nothing', signifies her intense torment that almost devastatingly paralyzes her will which not uncommonly grips a young and emotional girl when she is forced to exhibit her loyalty in public but is also a shocking wound that the parents so often inflict on their children through sheer pride and the reaction or consequence is usually fierce, cruel and incomprehensible. Since the love of Cordelia for her foolish old father is deep, sacred and inexpressible, she cannot exhibit it before a court or her sneering sisters. This paralysis of the will is a terrifying experience.

And like Edmund, Cordelia is not a complex character. She is a compelling picture of young girl - as compelling in her way as Chaucer's Griselda is in the framework of medieval allegory, and acquires meaning beyond expression. Cordelia embodies both "grace" and nature which Edmund denies to exist, and which Lear, though he believes in it, cannot realise when it is before him.

By this it does not mean that Cordelia ceases to be a woman, since the Nature she stands for is essentially human and requires incarnation. This necessitates perfection not only in an individual, but perfection in the community also. That is, Cordelia does not stand for individual sanity without at the same time standing for rightness in relation of man to man - social sanity. In so far as the goodman is necessarily in relation to a bad society - the ideal community Cordelia implies will be a non-existent one. If we call it a Utopia, if we call what we can call it, as the evangelicals and the apocalyptics did,

Jerusalem. Art, like an ethical action, is utopian in intention. Cordelia expresses the utopian intention of Shakespeare's art<sup>3</sup>. Cordelia is a blend of gentleness and toughness - something in the grain of Shakespeare's own nature had. We think of him in his tragic period as a tough - minded man. Like Wordsworth's Lucy, Cordelia stands for Shakespeare's virtue, a metaphor for full woman, and Shakespeare integrated her personality in accordance with the contemporary traditional morality. In the mouths of critics since Coleridge she has been "simple truth miscall'd simplicity." The line from the Sonnet could serve as text, for her rehabilitation. A hundred years' tradition has found fault with Cordelia's action in the first scene.

The source of the accusation of 'pride' is Lear himself, the first person to insist that Cordelia was wrong. "Let pride", he says, "which she calls plainness, marry her" (I, i, 129). Twenty lines later, Kent picks up the word "plainness", and retorts :

When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old man ?  
 Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak  
 When power to flattery bows ? To plainness honour's bound,  
 When majesty stoops to folly .... ( I, i 146 - 49 )

Lear counter - replies to Kent for the accusation of 'pride' : "...thou hast sought to make us break our vow, / which we durst never yet, and, with strained pride, / To come betuixt our sentence and our power, / Which nor our nature nor our place can bear". ( I, i 168 - 71 ).

With complete courage, complete clear - headedness, and implicit confidence both in herself and in the 'simple truth', Cordelia holds out her pose against her father and stands a part from her sisters. In the opening scene of the first act, her toughness becomes inseparable and indistinguishable from her gentleness who as her duties and fulfilment of normal instinct loved her father according to the claim of her 'bond' :

I love your Majesty  
 According to my bond, no more nor less ( I, i, 92 - 3 )

For Lear, according to critics after Johnson, 'bond' rings with a dead note. From the standpoint of the Renaissance prince, too, a 'bond' was not always a binding thing. With the emergency of the period of financial stress, 'bond' began to imply an obligation to pay when reputed by invoking the use of law of nature. As for the Middle Ages and for Cordelia, it means, "I love you as every normal girl loves her father - naturally !" 'Bond' implies both the inclusive scheme of natural law, which king as Citizens can violate

and the absolute claim to full and total obedience. As Cordelia is called on to say :

Good my Lord,  
You have begot me, bred me, loved me.  
I return those duties back as are right fit,  
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.  
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say  
They love you all? Happily 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. ( I, i, 95 - 104 )

Cordelia's "obey you, love you ...." implies the marriage-vow she reminds her married sisters of in the lines immediately following.

Lear should be the first to appreciate her point of view. Cordelia's wooers are awaiting her outside, with her share of kingdom, intended to be dowry. And Cordelia's exposition of her prayer is lost on Lear as her use of the ambiguous 'bond'. Lear, fallen biased of Nature, is dead to the meaning of the traditional belief. The concept, that Cordelia is proud, grows up as a consequence of the dissolution of the notion of nature as understood in the Middle Ages and also in the orthodox thought of the sixteenth century.

And 'bond' Cordelia claims may be said to represent the spirit of reasonable control which Lear's royal status should imply; in Goneril and Regan the passions lurking in the darker recesses of his undifferentiated humanity are given independent life and logical consistency. For Coleridge, "Shakespeare was the most philosophical of the poets."<sup>4</sup> In all Shakespeare's work character as such must be subordinated to the idea to ensure, "the organic coherence of the whole". This idea, in *King Lear*, is the idea of nature. As Bradley said, "character is destiny", he meant to say that character's motives are a product of heredity and environment. Shakespeare did not operate on the assumption that story was explicable as what people did and that what people did was a result of what people were and that what people were could be exhibited by their motives.

Cordelia impresses us right from the very outset as a character of 'unmingled tenderness and strength'. She is "whom Nature is ashamed/Almost t'acknowledge hers" (I, i, 212 - 13) and 'she is herself a dowry; as France counters :

Fairest Cordelia, thou art most rich, being poor,  
Most choice, forsaken, and most loved, despised,  
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon.  
Be it lawful I take up what's cast away. ( I, i, 250 - 3 )

Cordelia is the other aspect of 'nature' Edmund, Goneril, and Regan ignore. Like Dante's Beatrice, to us and to the Gentleman in Act IV, VI. she was King Lear's daughter, "who redeems Nature from the general curse/ Which twain have brought her to" (IV, vi, 206 - 7). The twain referred to herein are not Goneril and Regan but Adam and Eve.

Critics have called Cordelia's 'pride' in the first scene merely the Dantesque 'selfishness' framed in Nature and reason.<sup>5</sup> She acts in a situation where her father and her sisters act otherwise. Cordelia's invasion of Britain is simply the beginning of righteousness, firm, unconfused and quietly assured, and in Cordelia's terms, "preparation stands/In expectation of them" (IV, iv, 23 - 4). She seems to reconcile Coleridgean contraries - she is both passion and order, innocence and maturity, defencelessness and strength, daughter and mother, maid and wife. Apparently, the proud isolation of Cordelia in the first scene is only one aspect of "the proper love of myself" and the other aspect of the central unity is her compassionate move to redeem the state and restore her father.

The Gentleman (in Act IV, iii) describes Cordelia on being asked by Kent :

Did your letter pierce the Queen to any demonstration of grief ?

Gentleman : Ay, sir; she took them, read them in my presence,  
And now and then an ample tear trilled down  
Her delicate cheek. It seemed she was a Queen  
Over her passion who, most rebel-like,  
Sought to be King o'er her.

Kent : O, then it moved her ?

Gentleman : Not to a rage; patience and sorrow strove  
Who should express her goodliest, you have seen  
Sun-shine and rain at once; her smiles and tears  
Were like a better way; those happy smilets  
That played on her ripe lip seem not to know  
What guests were in her eyes which parted thence.  
As pearls from diamonds dropped. In brief,  
Sorrow would be a rarity most beloved,  
If all could so become it.

Kent : Made she no verbal question ?

Gentleman : Faith, once or twice she heaved the name of father  
Pantingly forth, as if it pressed her heart,  
Cried 'Sisters ! Sisters ! Shame of Ladies ! Sisters !  
Kent ! Father ! Sisters !' - What, i' the storm ? i' the night ?  
Let pity not be believed ! There she shook  
The holy water from her heavenly eyes,  
And clamour moistened, then away she started,  
To deal with grief alone. ( IV, iii, 9 - 32 )

We see Cordelia as a sort of beneficent Goddess of Nature, whose tears can quicken the "unpublished virtues of the earth" and "remediate in....man's distress" (IV, iv, 17 - 18).

Nature is seen here as womanhood of Cordelia in her tears and smile as moistened air, April sunshine and rain. She had her control of passion like "a Queen over her passion" who "most rebel - like sought to be King o'er her" (IV, 1 ii). Her feelings are loyal servants running eagerly to her will - but always to bring out her beauty and queenliness of state "...patience and sorrow strove/Who should express her goodliest" Cordelia constituted the apex of the pyramid that is humanity, "soul in bliss" (IV, VII) as Lear himself acknowledged her. She, as the Gentleman, says to Lear, "redeems nature from the general curse/Which twain have brought her to" (IV, VI, 205 - 6). She in her integrity is "the better way" and her feelings and thoughts like smiles and tears, are snapped strands of that "way". On the contrary, as Albany says of Goneril :

O Goneril,  
You are not worth the dust which the rude wind  
Blows in your face. I fear your disposition :  
That nature which contemns its origin  
Cannot be bordered certain in itself . ( IV, ii, 30 - 34 )

Goneril is one who "contemns its origin". She flouts and rejects the axiom that 'everyman is naturally friendly to everyman'. She, like a branch violently tearing herself away from the tree, is Nature - its withering aspect turning poisonous, and her action like that of the river overflowing its banks - formless and distinctive. Shakespeare conceived of her as bit of chaos, vitalism of lust and power - a withered branch torn from the tree, "the friend' So horrid as in woman" (IV, ii, 61 - 62) and a "Proper deformity" which her "woman's shape doth shield".

Cordelia, contrasted with the society of Edmund and Lear, also stands for a society outdone by the New man and New Age - herein Edmund, and it is a society which has to exist in tears and sorrows, in rain and storm and moist-based upon unfettered competition, and the war of all against all.

Lear is a feudal state in decomposition, imperfect in form and operation. Edmund is a product of its imperfection, who pays nominal allegiance to Nature and Kindness. Of this Nature and Kindness, Cordelia is the full realisation, the norm by which the wrongness of Edmund's world and imperfection of Lear's is judged. And Cordelia's fight on behalf of her father symbolises the seed and recognition of the humanness in society the medieval world contained. Her perfection of justice, charity and truth requires a New Jerusalem. She belongs to the utopian dream of the artist and the good man. She like Nature is seen between the two half-natures; the one a perverse foe, and the other a wayward but frail dependant. As Cordelia contends:

We are not the first.  
Who with best meaning have incurred the worst.  
For thee, oppressed King, I am cast down;  
Myself could else out-frown false Fortune's frown.  
Shall we not see these daughters, and these sisters?

And Lear wants to slide into escapism:

No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison.  
We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage;  
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down  
And ask of thee forgiveness; so we'll live,  
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh  
At gilded butterflies: ... (V, iii, 9 - 14)

She stands and weeps and goes out with Lear silent. And we see her alive no more. If this is a sort of dumbness of love, it is the same silence her answer to Lear "nothing" implies him, that she loves him "according to her bond, nor more nor less."

The theory of Cordelia's faulty admixture of pride enters the canon. A.W. Schlegel, Coleridge's German contemporary, makes no mention of Cordelia's fault, which Swinburne later says "rescues Cordelia from perfection". When Cordelia, in answer to her father's implied request for flattery, follows up her uncompromising "Nothing" with the equally straightforward assertion:

I love your majesty  
According to my bond, nor more nor less (I, i, 92 - 3)



It is for this that she is banished. Cordelia offers the proportionate love, which is the right and beautiful thing in a particular situation. For Cordelia, bond means 'natural ties' a duty, willingly accepted and cheerly carried out to right instinct. She introduces the central concept of the whole play. The "bond", to which she refers is, far more than a legal obligation. Lear's fatherhood bears a "symbolic" implication or significance identical to that of Duncan's kingship in *Macbeth*. The family, like the Scottish state, is a "symbol" of well-ordered living. The authority of the father is counterpoised by the love of his children and their devotion aspires normally to the grace of his benediction, just as Macbeth's loyalty in the early stages of his career is rewarded by Duncan's bounty.

## II

The crumbling of this pattern of reciprocal loyalties in the opening scene is presented in terms of a conflict between "nature", the true, permanent reality of thing and the vagaries of individual temperament. In Cordelia, objective "nature" and subjective impulse as two elements are truly united. For her, filial affection is a duty, returnable to the parent, who has, in her own phraseologies "begot", "bied" and "loved" her, in form of obedience, affection and respect. To her "bond" is based primarily upon a proper understanding of the constitution of things, and no rhetorical profession can strengthen it. It lies as a condition of health on the basis of human normality. Cordelia's behaviour represents a norm, a plenitude, in relation to which the imperfect or distorted motives of other members of the family are seen in their relative partiality.

In act IV, scene 7, as Lear, in the first meeting since he cast Cordelia out, is lying asleep, she kneels down before him awaiting him to awake. When he opens his eyes, he is sane but dazed. His first sight is Cordelia's face drenched with tears, gazing into his eyes with infinite pity, and his first thought is that she is a blessed spirit come to comfort a poor damned soul :

You do me wrong to take me out o' the grave,  
 Thou art a soul in bliss, but I am bound  
 Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears  
 Do scald, like molten lead.

Cordelia : Sir, do you know me ?

Lear : You are a spirit, I know. Where did you die ?

Cordelia : Still, still, far wide ! ( IV, VII, 45 - 50 )

Old age has crippled Lear's capacity for self-control, making him as soon as he is crossed the prey of an anger, rooted in the blood, where as, Cordelia "a queen/Over her passion", "most rebel-like/Sought to be king o'er her" (IV, iii, 13 - 15). Lear moved to disclaim "propinquity and property of blood" (I, i, 114) to break bonds which precede reason and order, and upon which depends the unity of the family. The firmness with which Cordelia clings with unadorned simplicity to the position she aptly regards as sanctioned by "nature" is as much hereditary as the passionate devotion of her sisters to the selfish ends they have proposed to themselves. Her love for her father must have been mingled with pain and anxiety. She never knew the bliss of young love. There is no trace of such love for the King of France. She had knowingly to wound most deeply the being dearest to her. He cast her off. And after suffering an agony for him, and before she could see him safe in death, she was brutally murdered. To say in Bradley's terms, "with the tenderness of Viola or Desdemona she unites something of the resolution, power and dignity of Hermione, and reminds us sometimes of Helena sometimes of Isabella, though she has none of the traits which prevents Isabella, from winning our hearts."<sup>6</sup>

Cordelia's assertion of truth and right, her devotion to them touch of severity that characterises it, instead of being a compelling respect or admiration, become adorable in a nature so loving and inviting as Cordelia's. If Cordelia's behaviour tantamounts to a balanced and subjective conception of reality, Regan and Goneril, while unlike their father - perfectly conscious of their own motives, are fully unaware of the existence or validity of any universal norm to which these may be related. That is, Cordelia's quiet insistence on the "bond" is viewed to be the "spirit of reasonable control"<sup>7</sup> that Lear's regal status should imply, in Goneril and Regan, the passions lurking in the darker recesses of his undifferentiated humanity in terms of life and logical consistency.

Cordelia is a thing "enskyed and sainted" and yet we feel no incongruity in the love of the King of France for her as we do in the love of the Duke for Isabella. We think of Cordelia as quite young and as "slight and small".<sup>8</sup> Cordelia, with her "voice" "ever soft,/Gentle and low - an excellent thing in woman" (V, iii, 270 - 1), of all Shakespeare's heroine knew least of joy. Cordelia's dead body, "dead as earth" (V, iii, 259) is an "image of that "horror", "Fall" called the "promised end" of life - the answer to a question on the problem of death asked in *Hamlet*.

### III

The memory of Cordelia becomes detached in a manner from the action of the drama. Since Shakespeare's was the tragic point of view, as evident in

the opening scene, a situation tragic for Cordelia as well as for Lear, Cordelia incorporates the traditional ideals of what John F. Danby calls "natural theology"<sup>9</sup> necessitating perfection in the individual in relation to the community. Ripeness indicates the riches implied in "pearl from diamonds dropp'd". Cordelia's tears become "holy water" dropping from her "heavenly eyes" - the practical metamorphosis of natural emotion into its spiritual distillation.

Our main attention must concentrate on Shakespeare's conception of love. As in Sonnets 20 and 36, what amounts to is: "I am sorry that normal sexual intercourse between us is impossible" and so far as intercourse is considered, as a necessity of the richest love - life. In the Christian scheme, God, the Father, is Dionysian, God the son - for the Apollonian is visionary-Apollonian, and the Divine Sophia, the poetic fusion. As Cordelia confirms her love to Lear :

Ay, my good lord.

Lear : So young, and so untender ?

Cordelia : So young, my lord, and true. ( I, i, 106 - 8 )

Yes, "heavenly true". But truth is not the only good in the world, nor is the obligation to tell truth the only obligation. The matter here is to keep it inviolate but also to preserve a father. And if truth were the only obligation, to tell much less than truth is not to tell it. And Cordelia's speech not only tells much less than truth about her love, it actually perverts the truth when it implies that to give love to a husband is to take it from a father. As compared with Isabella's hatred of impurity, Cordelia's hatred of hypocrisy and, in turn, her position is infinitely more difficult, and on the other hand, there is mingled with her hatred a touch of personal antagonism and of pride. Lear's words, "Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her" ( I, i, 129 ), are monstrously unjust - but they contain one grain of truth.

Indeed, it was scarcely possible that a nature, so strong as Cordelia's, and with so keen a sense of dignity, should feel here nothing whatever of pride and resentment. She, like Lear, has attained exceptional strength through suffering. We know that she has suffered and attained in his days of prosperity. It is simply the feeling that what happens to such a thing does not matter. All that matters is what she is. How this can be when, for anything the tragedy tells us, she has ceased to exist, we do not ask. But the tragedy itself makes us feel that somehow it is so. For it is necessary to tragedy that we should feel that suffering and death do matter greatly, and happiness and life are not to be renounced as worthless.

The pessimism about *King Lear* is not by any means the whole spirit of tragedy, which presents the world as a place where heavenly good grows side by side with evil, where neither extreme evil can long endure nor all that survives the storm is good, if not great.

As *Tempest* gives us an impression of the man to be but a dream and apparently incurable evil in the monster whom Prospero had tried in vain to raise and soften, and in the monster's confederates, it is this experience of treachery and ingratitude that troubles his old brain, and forces on him the sense of unreality and evanescence in the world and the life that are haunted by such evil. Nor, though Prospero can spare and forgive, is there any sign to the end that he believes the evil curable either in the monster, the 'born devil', or in the more monstrous villain, the 'worse than devils', whom he so sternly dismisses. He learns patience to regard his anger and loathing as a weakness or infirmity, and would not have it disturb the young and innocent. And so, in the days of King Lear, as Bradley<sup>10</sup> "contends that it was the power of "monstrous" and apparently cureless evil in the "great world" that filled Shakespeare's great soul with horror as to force him sometimes to the infirmity of misanthropy and despair, to cry "No, no, no, life!" (V, iii, 303) and to indulge in the fitful fear - that is dream that must soon fade into a dreamless sleep.

*King Lear* is a great tragedy precisely because it is a play about human "nature" before being a play about the abuses of government or social inequality. It is this "nature" that is being revealed indeed, stripped and exposed to the prevailing "cold" for consideration. The state of "sophistication" beyond and through which Lear now sees, is more than the mere pride of position or the abuses of wealth. Both these things are normal attributes of human nature, part of the conventional superstructure in which a man hides his own true character which he owes to the brute creation, and there by he protects his otherwise "uncovered body" from the "extremity of the skies". Critics like Swinburne<sup>11</sup> call Cordelia, "the breathless Antigone of our stage", who has "one passing touch of intolerance" for what her sisters were afterwards to brand as indiscretion and dotage in their father, which redeems her from the charge of perfection - no longer inhumanly divine from the sense of divine irritation as of Imogen.

In condemning his daughters, Lear is tacitly condemning the unjust social order in which they stand. Edmund's soliloquy reflects a new rationality opposed to the old fashioned Reason of Lear. Goneril and Albany's argument similarly puts one common-sense against a common sense that has nothing

in common with it. The reasons of Edmund and Goneril belong to a view with which post Darwinian thinkers can sympathise to show that the sisters are more sinned against than sinning. However, Edmund and sisters are the villains of the play. The ideal for man is not the beggar but the King. Though Nature involves self-control and self-limitation, it does not demand self-mutilation. Society in fact must conform to what the reasonable man, by God's light would recognise as Natural.

Shakespeare is at pains to make them eminently normal people. They are normal in the sense that they behave as we unfortunately expect people to behave. Lear could not survive, without metamorphosis, in the same context as Cordelia. King Lear reflects moods that are not only anti-authoritarian, and anti-social, but also anti-sexual. Grace is left with none of the Spenserian glamour except in relation to Cordelia and the revulsion is expressed crudely - as by Lear in his mad speeches. The Fool stands for the unlimited head - the intellect - as Lear is the soul, and Cordelia the spirit. He can discern in his cold light the alternative between which he cannot choose. Nature in him is an arrest of motion. The sort of thing he would long will not admit to exist. Cordelia as Shakespeare's metaphor for Grace and Nature is the be all and the end all. She incorporates the traditional ideal of "natural theology" - which requires not only perfection in the individual but perfection in the Community also.

### Notes and References

1. William Shakespeare, *King Lear* (ed.) G.K. Hunter, Penguin Books, 1972. All textual references in future are to this edition only. The page number is mentioned in parentheses.
2. A.C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, Macmillan, London, Melbourne, Toronto, New York, 1952, p. 169.
3. John F. Danby, in *Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature : A Study of King Lear*, Faber and Faber, London, 4th impression mc ml x i, p.125 is of the opinion that there is always a discrepancy between the truth the person aims at and the actual setting which makes it necessary to have that truth for an aim,
4. Ibid., p.123.
5. Ibid., p.132.
6. A.C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*,

- p. 264.
7. D.A. Traversi, *An Approach to Shakespeare*, 2nd edition, Doubleday & Co., Inc., New York, 1956, p. 185.
  8. "Our last and least" (according to the Folio reading): Lear speaks again of "this little seeming substance." He can carry her dead body in his arms.
  9. *Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature; A Study of King Lear*, p. 125.
  10. A.C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, p. 276.
  11. Clyde K. Hyder, *Swinburne As Critic*, The Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1972, p. 261.

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