

King lear argumentative essay samples

[Literature](#), [William Shakespeare](#)



Introduction

'King Lear' is one of the luminous literary works of William Shakespeare. Shakespeare wrote this tragic play several centuries ago. 'King Lear' portrays the bitter truth of the society and various noted intellectuals consider this play as a rare literature that has ever been witnessed. George Bernard Shaw writes, "No man will ever write a better tragedy than Lear" (Shaw 23). This paper intends to argue for the possibility of greed of a family member or any person to destroy the whole family. In 'King Lear', greed is the cause of family tragedy hence the paper will argue on the positive and negative aspects of the subject.

King Lear is the elderly king of England who has no male heir and wants to divide his empire among his three daughters before going for retirement. He is curious to know who among his three daughters loves him more in order to give her the biggest share of his empire. His daughters Goneril and Regan acted in a fake manner to show their artificial love for their father. Cordelia on the other hand, though she loved his father, is unable to act like her sisters and thus fails to convince King Lear that she loved him. She simply replies to the king, "Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave, my heart into my mouth. I love your majesty, According to my bond; no more nor less". (Shakespeare and Raffel 9).

The King distributes his property among his daughters but exempts Cordelia because she was blunt and could not convince her father that she loved him the most. Cordelia was not given anything and the empire was distributed between her two sisters. King Lear entreats the emperor of France as well as Duke of Burgundy as they had earlier proposed to marry Cordelia. Since her

father disinherited her, the Duke of Burgundy denied marrying her however, the king of France, who was impressed by her truthfulness, weds Cordelia (Shakespeare 36). Here Shakespeare presented how greed of two sisters influenced the decision of their father by portraying a wrong picture. This included faking the reality for the sake of satisfying their material desires. The greed extends its serenity as series of conspiracy and disruptions started on the empire. For instance, The King disowned some of his loyalists who opposed the distribution of the empire between his two greedy daughters only. Greed is the main theme that appears as a reason behind all the disturbances and conspiracies in the play. Greed determines the movements of the story, it causes disruption within the family and greed is the root of the tragedy that is portrayed by Shakespeare in this play.

When King Lear made the decision to distribute his empire among his daughters, his two daughters acted as if they love their father but that was not the reality. Both of them acted in a fake manner because they wanted to take a larger share of the empire. Greed prevails and they succeeded in getting what they wanted. Both of them got their share of the empire and the king was left with nothing but with empty hands. This is actually detrimental in any family setting because it destroys the positive relationship that might have existed before. For instance, it is probable that Cordelia has been never happy with her father and the other two daughters.

Cordelia was not greedy and because of her honesty, she was disinherited by the old King. Here Shakespeare portrays the difference in greedy behavior of Goneril as well as Regan and their love towards their father that was manipulated as per their greed. Those who were greedy, lied and got what

they wanted but the one who was not greedy failed to lie and got nothing (Shakespeare and Raffel 18). Greed though serves to make people get what they desire; it does this by misrepresenting reality.

Greed disrupted the King's family completely and it ended the love that existed among family members. Due to the greedy behavior of the two sisters, Goneril and Regan, King Lear also neglected his loyal employees who were his well-wishers. Greed affected every aspect and the King Lear (Doran 40) neglected Employee like Kent, who advised the king genuinely and always, took care of him. Greed appears to be the ultimate destroyer of the relationship that existed between the King and his servants.

The King of France and the Duke of Burgundy had proposed to wed Cordelia but when her father disinherited her, the duke of Burgundy refused to marry Cordelia. The Greed of Duke forced him to do so because he wanted to marry a rich princess. When Cordelia was not given any share in the empire, the Duke of Burgundy refused to marry her and stayed away from her. However, on the other hand the King of France recognized the honesty of Cordelia and married her unlike the greedy Duke of Burgundy. This confirms that greed can even drive marriages.

King Lear, who was living with his daughters and son in laws, realized that he has been fooled. Goneril and Regan used to talk that their father, the King is a foolish old man and cheating him was very easy for them. King Lear laments and then some conspiracies and crucial situations emerged such that every character in the play was affected. Greed is the main reason behind these emerging circumstances and conspiracies that took place in the state (Peck 220).

In 'King Lear', two greedy daughters of the king, use all their tricks, lies and do not hesitate from abusing their powers and position in order to achieve their share of the empire by ditching their father. Goneril and Regan lied to their father and once they got their share, their greed drives them towards other illegal activities. These greedy sisters conspired and involved in some very dirty games that ultimately resulted in the destruction of the empire as well as their own life.

William Shakespeare's play, 'King Lear' is full of greedy characters apart from two main greedy characters, Edmund, Edgar and several others are involved in greedy activities and keep conspiring in order to achieve their desired gains. The Duke of Burgundy is also portrayed as a greedy man who initially proposed to marry Cordelia but when he came to know that she has been disinherited by the King and has nothing with her, the Duke refuses to marry Cordelia.

Edmund is portrayed as another greedy man who is looking for his father's realm and keeps conspiring to get it. Edmund does not hesitate to dupe and conspire against his father in order to capture the realm. Edmund also involves in the conspiracies of Goneril and Regan in which these sisters involve after they are married. Shakespeare portrays that Edmund also faces the same consequences that other greedy characters faced.

William Shakespeare suggests through the characters of this play that greed happens to blind people thus they cannot see anything else except material gains. The author portrays that, a greedy person can do anything at his or her reaches to achieve materialistic gains. Greedy people can kill others directly or becomes a cause for killing others merely because their greed has

made him or her blind and sees nothing beyond riches.

Some critics may say that Shakespeare portrays only negative aspects of the human behavior in this play but reality is different. Shakespeare portrays characters like Cordelia and Kent who are loyal and not greedy like others. These characters represent a bright side of humanity. Shakespeare suggests that neglecting and insulting loyalists is not only harmful but it may further create several untoward incidents.

A number of scholars do not accept that only greed ruined King Lear and his empire. Some scholars believe that King Lear was a gullible man and he ignored his loyalists who loved him in a realistic manner and this proved to be the reason of all disruptions. King Lear failed to understand and realize who his real well-wisher is and who can deceive him for greed. The King did not believe that Cordelia loves him the most and her bluntness is natural. She did not lie to him in order to acquire properties.

King Lear is portrayed by William Shakespeare as a gullible king who insults true love and failed in understanding the Cordelia who was blunt but used to love him the most. Cordelia never acted like her sisters but always loved her father. King Lear also neglected, insulted and fired his loyal servants like Kent who used to advise the king in a very realistic manner. King's incapacity to recognize his real love was the reason of his devastated empire and dead family members.

Shakespeare in King Lear portrays greed but also he gives much importance to the true love and he focuses on king's incapacity that was wrong in judging people at a number of occasions. Greed alone was not responsible for the sufferings of the king but his incapacity of judging people and true

love also contributed equally. King Lear only believed in his two daughters who lied to him and got their share of the empire.

King Lear did not realize their lying and deception, which ultimately ruined his family and his empire. The king was killed along with his family members. King Lear also did not believe in his true servant Kent who always served him with good intentions and advised him genuinely. Thus, King Lear invited all problems by not recognizing true love. The sheer negligence of King Lear brought some very unpleasant changes in the empire. He realizes his guilt but it was too late. He is portrayed lamenting at the end of the play carrying Cordelia's dead body in his hands, " Howl, howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stones: Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone forever! I know when one is dead, and when one lives; She's dead as earth" (Shakespeare and Raffel 189).

After having observed the above-mentioned detailed analysis of the subject matter, it can be concluded that William Shakespeare has portrayed greed as something that ruined the whole empire of King Lear. Greed destroys individuals, Kings and their empires. Shakespeare portrays greed and King's incapacity to judge people in a dramatic manner that keeps audiences intact and once the play is over, it teaches a lot of things to the audiences. King Lear is one of the great plays that this world has witnessed over and the play is a very realistic portrayal of traits, characteristics and behavior related to human beings.

Works Cited

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