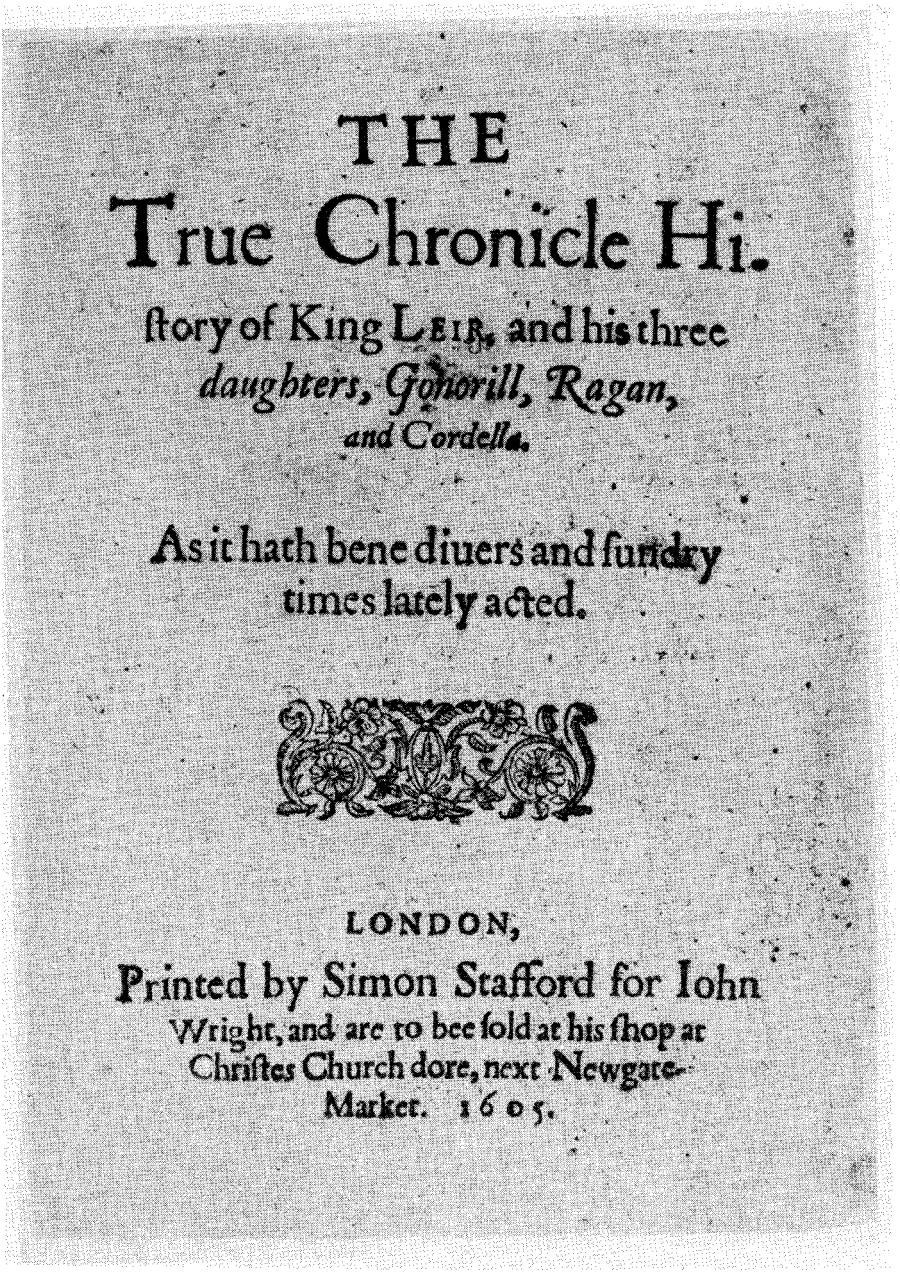


THE
True Chronicle Hi.
ſtory of King LEIR, and his three
daughters, Gonorill, Ragan,
and Cordella.

As it hath bene diuers and ſundry
times lately acted.

LONDON,
Printed by Simon Stafford for Iohn
Wright, and are to bee ſold at his ſhop at
Chriſtes Church dore, next Newgate-
Market. 1605.

1 The title page of the 1605 quarto of *King Leir*

INTRODUCTION

Date and sources of Shakespeare's *King Lear*

KING LEAR: DATE OF COMPOSITION AND FIRST PERFORMANCE

Although *King Lear* was probably performed earlier at the Globe, the first recorded performance of the play was at the court of King James I on St Stephen's Day during the Christmas holidays in 1606, as indicated in the Stationers' Register (26 November 1607) and proclaimed on the title page of the first quarto (1608). Both the king and the playwright must have brought to the performance a keen sense of occasion.[1] Shakespeare was a leading member of the company of actors honoured by royal patronage, the King's Men, and he knew that his play touched on a number of sensitive issues. In his first parliament, James had declared his intention of uniting the kingdoms of Scotland and England as one realm, Great Britain, restoring the ancient title and unity to the land. While he received considerable support from the lords and judges, the commons were hesitant and did not jump to ratify the proposal. Against this background of political activity, Lear's speech, 'Know, that we have divided / In three our kingdom', must have been startling indeed.[2] James was in a position to see, however, that similar material had attracted theatrical attention as early as Sackville and Norton's *Gorboduc* (1561) and *Locrine* (*c.* 1585) as well as *King Leir* (*c.* 1590); moreover, he would quickly have recognised that Shakespeare's play vividly dramatised the tragic consequences of dividing the kingdom, as opposed to unifying it.

Composition of *King Lear* had begun by spring or summer 1605, possibly sooner. Gloucester's references to 'These late eclipses in the sun and moon' (1.2.91) may allude to actual eclipses in September and October 1605. The anonymous play, 'The moste famous Chronicle historye of Leire kinge of England and His Three Daughters', first entered in the Stationers' Register on 14 May 1594 but performed earlier, was again entered (as 'the Tragecall historie') on 8 May 1605 and published, presumably for the first time, later that year. If Shakespeare's play was responsible for the revival of interest in the old play, whose title page proclaims that it was 'diuers and sundry times lately

[1] In the Christian calendar, St Stephen's Day (26 December) was the first of four festivals ending on New Year's Day that stressed man's folly and worldliness. Biblical readings on St Stephen's Day urged patience in adversity and the festival was celebrated by granting hospitality, especially to the poor. For these and other reasons, *King Lear* was thus an appropriate choice for the evening. See R. Chris Hassel, Jr, *Renaissance Drama and the English Church Year*, 1979, pp. 22–30, and Leah Marcus, *Puzzling Shakespeare*, 1988, pp. 148–59. In his recent edition of Harsnett's *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures*, Frank Brownlow speculates that Samuel Harsnett, then Bishop of Chichester, Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University, and Master of Pembroke College, might also have been in the audience. On Shakespeare's debt to Harsnett, see below.

[2] Compare Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation*, 1984, pp. 64–73, and Glynne Wickham, 'From tragedy to tragi-comedy: "King Lear" as prologue', *S.Sur.* 26 (1973), 33–48, who notes that the two sons of James I were at this time Duke of Cornwall and Duke of Albany. See also Wittreich, pp. 17–24.

acted', then *King Lear* must have been on the boards by early 1605.[1] On the other hand, revival of *King Leir* may have been otherwise occasioned, and composition of Shakespeare's play, clearly indebted to it, may have begun afterwards. It could not have been written before 1603, the date of Samuel Harsnett's *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures*, since much of Tom o'Bedlam's language derives from that document.[2] And if *Eastward Ho* inspired several passages, then composition occurred after April 1605.[3]

THE PLAYWRIGHT'S READING

The great variety of sources of *King Lear* becomes coherent when we recall the use to which the play puts the material. Although *The Chronicle History of King Leir* was Shakespeare's principal source, the Lear story goes back as far as Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Brittaniae* (*c.* 1135). Shakespeare may have read this in the original Latin (no Elizabethan translation exists) or, as Bullough suggests (p. 273), he may have taken details from more recent writers who were themselves directly or indirectly indebted to the *Historia*. Geoffrey was as interested in the political implications of his *Historia* as in the social narrative; therefore, he focuses as much upon the consequence of Leir's action in dividing the kingdom between his two older daughters, as upon the initial love contest. The division eventually leads to insurrection as the two dukes, his daughters' husbands, rise up against the old king and strip him of his rights and dignities. Leir flees to France, is reunited with a forgiving Cordeilla, and finally restored to his kingdom. When he dies three years later, Cordeilla succeeds to his throne.

But the story as Geoffrey tells it is not yet over. The dissension that was Geoffrey's leitmotiv from the reign of Brut onwards continues, as Margan and Cunedag, the sons of Cordeilla's sisters, rebel against their aunt and imprison her. Overcome with despair, Cordeilla commits suicide. Further tragedy lies in store for England, as Margan and Cunedag fall out with each other, civil war ensues, and after much of the land has been laid waste, Margan is finally killed. Only then is peace restored to Britain for a prolonged period during Cunedag's reign.

Many of the later accounts of Leir and his three daughters include the episode of Cordeilla's suicide; it is told, for example, in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, Higgins's *Mirour for Magistrates*, and Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (II.x.27–33), all of which Shakespeare knew. It may be from Cordeilla's death in these accounts that Shakespeare got the suggestion for turning the old *Chronicle History* from a tragicomedy into tragedy, although his sub-plot, borrowed from Sidney's *Arcadia*, may also have influenced him.[4] From the old play he got the basic outlines of his fable and adapted it to his own purposes, which were quite different from those of the anonymous author.

[1] W. W. Greg, 'The date of *King Lear* and Shakespeare's use of earlier versions of the story', *The Library*, 4th ser., 20 (1939–40), 377–400.
[2] Chambers, I, 467–70; Bullough, VII, 269–70.
[3] Taylor, 'New source', pp. 396–413.
[4] Fitzroy Pyle, '*Twelfth Night*, *King Lear*, and *Arcadia*', *MLR* 43 (1948), 449–55.

THE TRUE CHRONICLE HISTORY

The old play called itself a 'true chronicle history', meeting a taste for the retelling of 'true' stories from the past with often overt didactic intentions. Holinshed's *Chronicles* incorporates a span of reigns from Geoffrey of Monmouth (including Cymbeline as well as Locrine and Gorboduc), and Shakespeare was clearly interested in this early phase of British history, besides the events of the fifteenth century which he dramatised earlier in the Henriad. Unlike the anonymous *King Leir*, which is thoroughly infused with Christian pieties, Shakespeare's play is neither wholly pagan nor wholly Christian, although at certain points Lear speaks with and for the thunder as if he were indeed the thunder god himself.

Other differences between Shakespeare's play and his principal source are significant. While keeping to the main outlines of the Lear story, Shakespeare not only introduced a major second plot, inspired by the misadventures of the Paphlagonian King in Sidney's *Arcadia*; he also introduced several new characters and episodes that *King Leir* lacks, such as Lear's madness, the storm, Oswald, and the Fool (who may, however, have been suggested by the Gallian King's jesting companion, Mumford, in *King Leir*). The rather low comic relief provided by the scenes of the Watch in the anonymous play is omitted, as are several melodramatic incidents, such as Gonorill and Ragan's murder plot[1] against their father, and Perillus's offer to let a starving Leir have his arm to eat. The Gallian King has a substantial role in the old play, but Shakespeare limited him to the first scene and eliminated the Gallian Ambassador, sent to invite Leir to France, although the Ambassador's fruitless wanderings from France to Cornwall and Cambria resemble the journeys in Shakespeare's second act. In sum, Shakespeare both condensed and expanded his source to exploit its tragic potential, broaden its range, and, as F. D. Hoeniger has shown, explore the primitive aspects of the legend 'in all its depths and terror'.[2]

Perhaps the most significant alteration Shakespeare made in the Lear story is the ending. Unlike all previous accounts, *King Lear* concludes not with the old king restored to his throne, but with Cordelia and Lear dead.[3] Though France in *King Leir* invades Britain victoriously, no one dies in that play – all three sisters are spared. The wicked ones and their husbands become fugitives and are absent from the final scene, which includes no reference to the later fate of Cordella. Unlike his counterpart, Kent, Perillus is not banished, and at the end Leir rewards him for his loyalty. Departing widely from the contours of the old tragicomedy, Shakespeare thus seems intent on stripping away every possible consolation from the action to present it with the starkest reality.[4]

[1] In Shakespeare's play, Gloucester twice refers to such a plot (3.4.147, 3.6.45), but it is not developed.
[2] 'The artist exploring the primitive', in *Some Facets*, p. 98.
[3] In *King Lear*, Harvester New Critical Introductions to Shakespeare, 1988, pp. 6–7, Alexander Leggatt argues that Shakespeare actually compressed his sources, which include Cordelia's later death in prison, and that the happy conclusion of *King Leir* was new.
[4] For more detailed analysis of *King Leir* and *King Lear*, see Bullough, pp. 277 ff.; Muir, pp. xxvi ff.; Dorothy Nameri, *Three Versions of the Story of King Lear*, 1976, 1, 26–121; Stephen J. Lynch, 'Sin, suffering, and redemption in *Leir* and *Lear*', *S.St.* 18 (1986), 161–74.

FOOLISH FOND OLD MAN: FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS

King Lear is not only about a monarch and his divided realm, but also about a father, his property, and his three daughters. Several contemporary analogues exist, of which the most important are the events surrounding Sir Brian Annesley and his daughters, the youngest of whom was named Cordell.[1] An old servant of Queen Elizabeth, Sir Brian held an estate of some value in Kent. In October 1603 his eldest daughter, Lady Grace Wildgoose, or Wildgose, attempted to have her father certified as incompetent so that she and her husband, Sir John Wildgoose, could take over the management of his affairs. The part played by his second daughter, Christian, is unknown, but Cordell opposed the plan, successfully it appears, by appealing to Sir Robert Cecil. She argued that, given his loyalty and long service, her father deserved better than to be judged lunatic in his old age. Sir Brian died in July 1604, and the Wildgooses contested his will, since in it he left most of his property and possessions to Cordell. One of the executors was Sir William Harvey, third husband of the dowager Countess of Southampton, the mother of Shakespeare's early patron. The will was upheld, and after the countess died in 1607, Harvey married Cordell Annesley. It may be that the Annesley case was responsible, at least in part, for the revival of interest in *The True Chronicle* or for Shakespeare's rewriting it (Bullough, pp. 270–1).

FOOLISH FOND OLD MAN: FATHERS AND SONS

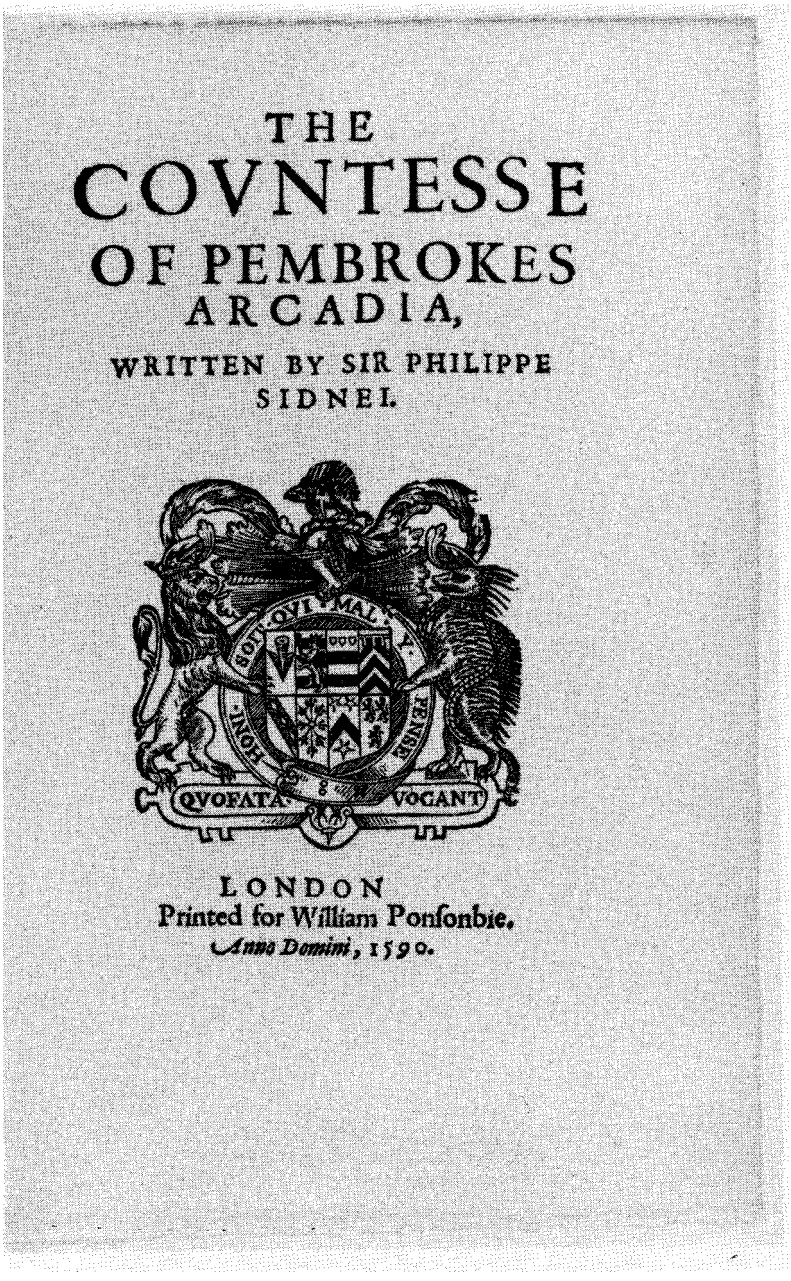
Shakespeare took his second plot from Sidney's *Arcadia*. Sidney's romance suggested not only a chivalric colouring, as in the duel between Edgar and Edmond, but a more epic sweep than that of the old play and its analogues. Furthermore, through the parallel story of the Earl of Gloucester, modelled on that of the Paphlagonian King, Shakespeare universalised his theme and raised it to 'cosmic' proportions: 'Lear's world becomes the entire world, and it becomes clear that Lear's fate may be the fate of any man.'[2]

Book II, chapter 10, of the *Arcadia* (1590) describes the encounter of the princes Pyrocles and Musidorus with an old blind man led by his son, Leonatus. The old man is the deposed King of Paphlagonia, dethroned and blinded by his wicked bastard son, Plexirtus, who persuaded his father first to dislike and finally to seek to destroy his elder, legitimate son. Having accomplished that, Plexirtus systematically took over control of the kingdom so that his father left himself (like Lear) 'nothing but the name of a King'.[3] Still not satiated, Plexirtus took the title, too, put out his father's eyes,

[1] C. J. Sisson, *Shakespeare's Tragic Justice*, 1963, pp. 80–3. G. M. Young, in 'Shakespeare and the Termers', *Today and Yesterday*, 1948, is usually credited with this discovery; but Charlotte C. Stopes quotes Cordell Annesley's letter to Lord Cecil dated 18 October 1603 in *The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's Patron*, 1922, p. 274. Compare also G. P. V. Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 1968, pp. 257–8.

[2] Irving Ribner, 'Sidney's *Arcadia* and the structure of *King Lear*', *Studia Neophilologica* 24 (1952), 67; but compare S. L. Goldberg, *An Essay on 'King Lear'*, 1974, p. 79. In 'The very pompes of the divell – popular and folk elements in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama', *RES* 25 (1949), 10–23, Douglas Hewitt shows how Shakespeare universalises his theme in other ways, e.g. through analogous representation of folk ceremonies, such as banishing the scapegoat, a ceremony still practised in Shakespeare's time. See esp. his pp. 18–20.

[3] Quotations are from Bullough's extracts, pp. 402–14; references are to the facsimile edition published by Kent State University Press, 1970.


THE
COVNTESSE
OF PEMBROKES
ARCADIA,
WRITTEN BY SIR PHILIPPE
SIDNEI.

LONDON
Printed for William Ponsonbie.
Anno Domini, 1590.

2 The title page of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (1590)

and cast him off to feel his misery, 'full of wretchednes, fuller of disgrace, and fullest of guiltines'. Shunned by his countrymen, the king is reduced to seeking alms until Leonatus discovers him and leads him on his way, refusing only to help him commit suicide by jumping off a cliff.

The parallels so far to the Gloucester–Edgar–Edmond plot in *King Lear* are evident, but the differences, too, are important. Edgar conceals his identity from Gloucester during almost all of their journey together; Edmond shares Plexirtus's ambition and informs on his father but is not present at the blinding; Edgar assumes the identity of Tom o'Bedlam, feigning madness, a recourse that Leonatus does not seek. As Sidney's chapter continues, Plexirtus attempts to hunt his brother down and kill him, but he and his troops are repulsed by Pyrocles, Musidorus, and their allies. Eventually, Plexirtus is defeated, Leonatus is placed on his father's throne, and the old king dies, 'his hart broken with unkindnes and affliction, stretched so farre beyond his limits with this excesse of comfort, as it were no longer to keep safe his roial spirits'. A seemingly penitent Plexirtus, with a rope around his neck, surrenders to Leonatus who, ever loving and kind, forgives him on the promise of an amended life.

Other incidents from Sidney's epic romance influenced Shakespeare's play. Queen Andromana's lust for both Pyrocles and Musidorus in chapter 20 is the mirror image of Gonerill's and Regan's lust for Edmond; her death by stabbing herself after her son Palladius is killed may have suggested Gonerill's suicide after Edmond's defeat. The mortal combat ending in mutual forgiveness between Plexirtus's allies, Tydeus and Tylenor, in chapter 22 resembles the duel between Edgar and Edmond, just as the vivid descriptions of the storm in chapter 7 may have suggested Lear's experience in Act 3. From the story of Plangus, King of Iberia, in chapter 15 Shakespeare may have got the idea for Edmond's deception of Gloucester, and in chapter 12 the verse of Basilius and Plangus anticipates Gloucester's despairing thoughts and attitude.[1] But these parallels and several verbal echoes apart, Shakespeare's greatest debt to Sidney is the hint he found in the *Arcadia* for the kind of mould in which he could shape his tragedy.

THE THEATRE OF FOLLY

Apart from the altered ending and the parallel plot, Shakespeare's introduction of the Fool is his most important contribution to the Lear story. In addition, he conspicuously extends the king's own foolishness into madness ('folly' in its extremest degree) when, exposed to rain and cold, Lear calls upon divine power. The development of King and Fool in the play derives partly from the long tradition of the court fool, but Shakespeare's handling of both character and theme is unique.

As Enid Welsford has shown in her classic study, *The Fool: His Social and Literary History* (1935), the court fool can be traced back to ancient times. By the late Middle Ages, the jester was a familiar figure, and in the Renaissance the fool had become a domestic servant in the homes of many aristocrats, in Britain as well as on the continent. The motley coat, eared hood, bells and *marotte*, or bauble, were traditional, but fools might also be dressed like other household servants. Regarded as pets or mascots, they

[1] Muir, pp. xxxix–xli.

served not simply to amuse, but to criticise their masters and mistresses and their guests; Queen Elizabeth is said to have rebuked one of her fools for not being severe enough with her. On the other hand, they might be whipped for excessive behaviour, as Lear threatens to punish his Fool. Mentally deficient and/or physically deformed, they were 'exceptional' in almost every respect, requiring the protection of powerful patrons to avoid social ostracism or abuse.

Distinctions can be, and were, made between the 'natural fool' and the 'artificial' or professional fool, as well as between the fool and the clown (the rustic, or country bumpkin), but the principal feature that is relevant here is the fool's privileged status in a royal or noble household. While his folly could be disregarded as the raving of a madman, it could also be seen as divinely inspired: the natural fool was 'touched' by God (or 'tetched', in American dialect). Lear's 'all-licensed fool' enjoys a privileged status, much to Gonerill's annoyance (1.4.160), and his characteristic idiom suggests he is a 'natural' fool, not an 'artificial' one, though his perceptiveness and wit show that he is far from being an idiot or a moron, however 'touched' he may otherwise be.

Fools or jesters had appeared occasionally but not often in Elizabethan drama, as in Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* and *James IV*. With the advent of Robert Armin, who replaced Will Kempe in the King's Men and made a speciality of fools (as distinguished from Kempe's clowns), the character became more popular on the stage between 1598 and 1605. Armin successfully undertook the roles not only of Touchstone, Feste, and Lavatch in Shakespeare's comedies, but of Carlo Buffone in Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humour* and Passarello in Marston's *The Malcontent*.[1] Whether or not he himself played Lear's fool (see p. 32 below) is less important than the fact that by 1605 the character had become both a popular and a significant one in plays performed by the King's Men. Shakespeare then developed the role and extended it in *King Lear* so that folly became a dominant theme in his tragedy.

Lear's folly – his foolishness in giving away everything to two daughters and banishing the third – is the Fool's persistent early refrain. This foolishness turns into madness and leads directly to the commentary in Act 4 upon 'this great stage of fools', which Lear delivers to Gloucester, his counterpart in the second plot (4.5.174 ff.). If Shakespeare derived his use of 'fool', as William Empson and others claim,[2] from a rather generalised memory of Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*, he developed it in ways only glimpsed or implied by Erasmus. The ironic inversions of folly and wisdom that abound throughout the play cast darker shadows. Shakespeare had experimented with bitter fools in *Troilus and Cressida* (Thersites) and *All's Well That Ends Well* (Lavatch), but the Fool in *King Lear* is a more complex creation than these bitter fools – more affecting in his vulnerability and his closeness to Lear, yet with a perception of the horror of the situation which drives him to a relentless goading of his master.

Enid Welsford relates the central scenes of Acts 3 and 4 to the culminating moments in the *sottie*, a type of comedy especially popular in Europe from the end of the fifteenth

[1] Enid Welsford, *The Fool: His Social and Literary History*, 1935, reprinted 1961, pp. 245–6; Wiles, pp. 144–58.
[2] *The Structure of Complex Words*, [1951], p. 124. Compare Leo Salingar, *Shakespeare and the Traditions of Comedy*, 1974, pp. 246–7, and Walter Kaiser, *Praisers of Folly*, 1963, pp. 21–2, 99.

century to the beginning of the seventeenth. The theme of the *sottie* is the universal sway of Mother Folly, and it ends with the reduction of every class of person to 'the man in cap and bells'.[1] *The Praise of Folly* is a derivative of the *sottie*, which flourished more on the continent than in Britain, although it influenced Sir David Lindsay's *Satire of the Three Estates* (Welsford, p. 233). Whether Shakespeare consciously contrived his tragedy according to the vision of the *sottie*, we cannot know, and in any case we must guard against believing that there must be a specifically identifiable source for everything. The topsy-turvy world is implicit in the opening scene (from which the Fool is notably absent), proceeding inexorably from Lear's actions and reaching a climax in Acts 3–4. After 3.6 the Fool disappears, and after 4.1 Edgar drops his pretence of madness, leaving the stage of folly to Lear and, less obviously, to others.

THE THEATRE OF EXORCISM

All of the Fool's efforts prove incapable of preventing Lear's descent into madness, which accelerates after he meets Edgar in disguise as Tom o'Bedlam in Act 3. The purgation, or exorcism, that Lear requires is highlighted by the assumed madness of Edgar, who screams that he is possessed by devils. Exorcism had become a form of popular theatre, as priests gathered audiences to watch demonstrations of their power over evil spirits. The Anglican church vigorously opposed such demonstrations, and Samuel Harsnett exposed the practice as fraudulent in a treatise usually referred to by its shortened title, *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures*.[2]

Harsnett was chaplain to the Bishop of London and part of his job was reading and licensing books, including plays. His *Declaration* followed enquiries begun in 1598 into a series of exorcisms in 1585–6 practised by Father William Weston *alias* Edmonds and performed in the household of Sir Edward Peckham. Harsnett's *Declaration* characterised exorcism as a stage play 'fashioned by cunning clerical dramatists and performed by actors skilled in improvisation'.[3] It thereby attempted to expose what Harsnett saw as its falsity and emptiness. Nevertheless, the illusion was gripping, as Shakespeare doubtless realised when he borrowed from Harsnett's exposé much of the language of possession for Edgar's masquerade as Poor Tom.[4] At the same time, he appears to support Harsnett's position in the *Declaration*, that evil is of this world, not a nether world of devils and demons, as Catholic priests like Father Weston believed.[5]

[1] Welsford, *The Fool*, p. 220.

[2] *A Declaration of egregious Popish Impostures, to with-draw the harts of her Maiesties Subiects from their allegeance, and from the truth of Christian Religion professed in England, under the pretence of casting out deuils. Practiced by Edmvnds, alias Weston a Iesuit, and diuers Romish Priests his wicked associates.* . . . At London Printed by Iames Roberts . . . 1603.

[3] Stephen Greenblatt, 'Shakespeare and the exorcists', in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman, 1985, p. 169.

[4] See Kenneth Muir, 'Samuel Harsnett and *King Lear*', *RES* 2 (1951), 11–21, and Bullough, pp. 299 ff. In his forthcoming edition, Brownlow argues that the *Declaration* does not represent a 'source' for *King Lear* in the ordinary sense; rather, the play is the result of an encounter with that text, a kind of dialogue between cleric and poet, in which Shakespeare delivers a 'massive reply'. Its effect was to undo Harsnett's book and reopen matters the cleric had meant finally to close.

[5] Greenblatt, 'Shakespeare and the exorcists', p. 177.

The effect of Shakespeare's use of Harsnett in *King Lear* is yet more complicated, Greenblatt says, in so far as Harsnett's position seems there to be reversed. Since scepticism, an instrument of seekers after truth, is expressed through the villainous Cornwall, Gonerill, and especially Edmond, whilst possession and exorcism, regarded as fraudulent practices of the wicked, are given to the legitimate Edgar, Harsnett's arguments against exorcism are curiously 'alienated' from themselves. 'In Shakespeare, the realization that demonic possession is a theatrical imposture leads not to a clarification – the clear-eyed satisfaction of the man who refuses to be gulled – but to a deeper uncertainty, a loss of moorings, in the face of evil.'[1] We are not comforted by the knowledge that Edgar's performance is precisely that – a performance – any more than we can find comfort in the fact that Lear's prayers, like his curses, remain unanswered throughout the play. In any event, his exorcism, or purgation, such as it is, comes not at the hands of a priest, but through the ministrations of Cordelia, unassisted by either a 'Doctor' or by music in the Folio revision; and Gloucester's is effected by his son Edgar. Both are extraordinarily, though differently, dramatic.

THE THEATRE OF THE BLIND

When Edgar in his disguise takes his father to Dover, he means to perform a kind of exorcism, telling Gloucester, for example, that there stood behind him on the cliff 'some fiend' from whom he has miraculously escaped (4.5.66–74). The old man's resistance, here and later, after his 'fall', is confused because he has lost his eyes. The blind figure is taken from Sidney's *Arcadia*, but Shakespeare develops and dramatises his source not only in the mimed 'leap', but later in the confrontation between the unseeing old man and the mad king. Their meeting becomes the climactic spectacle in the play's theatre of folly, to which Montaigne also was a major contributor. It was in Florio's translation of Montaigne that Shakespeare found that a dog could be 'obeyed in office' (4.5.151) and that a man could see with no eyes (144–5). Similarly, Montaigne several times refers to unrighteous judges (146–8), and elsewhere Shakespeare seems indebted to the French essayist not only for phrases and ideas but for the sceptical attitudes that pervade the play.[2]

SALT AND CINDERELLA

Folklorists towards the end of the nineteenth century noticed the connection between the old Leir story and some versions of the Cinderella tale. Although Shakespeare makes no direct use of these versions, Geoffrey of Monmouth in his *Historia* must have drawn upon a related body of folklore and folktales for which no record any longer exists.[3] The affinity between the story of Leir and his three daughters and the ancient Cinderella tale, moreover, has recently aroused much interest among anthropologists

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 179. John J. Murphy comes to an opposite conclusion in *Darkness and Devils: Exorcism and 'King Lear'*, 1984, pp. 200–1. Compare Brownlow, cited above.
[2] See Muir, pp. 249–53, and Salingar, pp. 107–39.
[3] See Alan R. Young, 'The written and oral sources of *King Lear* and the problem of justice in the play', *SEL: Studies in English Literature* 15 (1975), 309–19.