



SCIREA Journal of Sociology

<http://www.scirea.org/journal/Sociology>

December 4, 2022

Volume 6, Issue 6, December 2022

<https://doi.org/10.54647/sociology84938>

The Images of Carnival and Grotesque in the Characters of Fool, King Lear, and Edgar in the Tragedy of *King Lear* by William Shakespeare

Shohreh Haji Mola Hosein*

PhD of English Literature, Department of English Language & Literature, The Faculty of foreign Languages and Literature, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran

* E-mail: shohreh.hajmolahosein@gmail.com; hajmolahosein.sho@ut.ac.ir

Abstract

Worth-reading tragedy of *King Lear* is one of master dramas of William Shakespeare, attracting readers and the audience for its universal and zeitgeist themes. It still suggests unexplored themes which are revealed in different periods of time. The images of carnival and grotesque have made a sublime tragedy representing internal and external causes of King Lear's fall. Subversion of old-officialdom, mask, comic and sarcastic language, off shoot of hierarchical systems, feast of rebirth and restoration are indispensable rudiments of carnival. Grotesque signifies the cycle of birth, growth, improvement, death, disintegration, and rebirth. Mental disorder, madness, melancholy, old age, and the cycle of death and rebirth are the images of grotesque in *King Lear*. Historical features and remarkable themes of carnival haven been clarified by an exiled Russian philosopher, Mikhail Bakhtin and highlighted by Natalia Pikli, Doctor of Philosophy. Grotesque features have been described by Mikhail Bakhtin. Revealing characteristics and language of fools in carnival, witty Fool of the play

has also a self-reflective character of the author refuting current social and political defects in *King Lear*. Fool is a multi-skilled character playing and announcing substantial philosophy of life, family relationship, weak points of human beings, and political mistakes. While making the audience laugh at King Lear by his metaphoric language, Fool undermines monarchical mistakes behind the mask of a jester and uncovers man's idiocy on the whole. His essential difference from the other fools is that he helps the king to find out his inevitable wrong doings and observe the truth. The dethroned egotistical king experiences self-realization and encounters depression and madness before his death or one side of grotesque. Having the potential of restoration in Britain, Edgar is the epitome of rebirth and the other side of grotesque.

Keywords: Carnival, Cycle of Death and Rebirth, Grotesque, *King Lear*, Mask, Melancholy, Self-realization

Introduction

The images of carnival and grotesque in *The Tragedy of King Lear*, written by William Shakespeare, are among those topics explored and elucidated less than other themes in such historic and undying drama. This article reads historical aspects and conspicuous characteristics of carnival through the perspectives of professor Natalia Pikli and accused revolutionary Russian philosopher, Mikhail Bakhtin who was theorizer of literary interpretation, language, and culture study. Carnival is a feast held by people and fools to reject harsh rulebooks of societies and mock and discharge stringent authorities during one day in a year. The article explores grotesque images through Mikhail Bakhtin's standpoints, surveying the traces of grotesque between characters of King Lear and Edgar. Grotesque is the emblem of the perishing part of life which gives rebirth and recreation. Some of the leitmotifs of grotesque, including madness, mask, melancholy, old age, death, and restoration, are examined in the play. The article looks into the personality type of Fool in *King Lear* and compares his behavior and philosophical viewpoint with characteristics of other fools in carnivals and dramas. It concentrates on the characters of King Lear and Edgar and maneuvers on their relationships with multi-functional Fool. Moreover, King Lear's narcissism and family dissociation will be measured. The effects of grotesque on making sublime tragedy, the harmony of sublime and grotesque features in the tragedy, and the

change of personality type in a powerless king are to discuss. In spite of personal psychopath of the king, external causes of his mental disorder are to survey. Fantastic role of the king and Fool and self-reflectional characteristics of the author through Fool will also be discussed.

Carnival, Fools, and Grotesque

As Natalia Pikli has declared:

Carnavalesque events originate in the antiquity: from Greek lampoon (abusive speech) and phallic songs through mime and farcical events to Roman Saturnalia, commemorating the happy reign of Saturn with a season of social inversion. The Saturnalia, which has the most affinities to medieval rites of misrule, began with an election of a Rex Saturnalis, a mock monarch, who was literally or symbolically destroyed at the end. Slaves could wear their masters' clothes and complete freedom of speech was granted to everyone with feasting and banqueting. Social and moral restraints were removed for the duration of the festival ("The Carnival and Carnavalesque Laughter, Falstaff's Mythical Body" 2-3).

Some humanists added the ritual of folly and the ridicule of church and court in the Middle Ages to the festival of carnival (3). In Pikli's view, the essential components of carnivals are comic discharge of the king, serious denial of the old systems, transient reign of fools, and festive day of rebirth (3). In Bakhtin's idea, massive humorous exhibitions and feasts are against the strict rules of feudal societies in the medieval period (*Rabelais and His World* 2). The festival of carnival absorbs various forms of "comic rites and cults, the clowns and fools, giants and dwarves, jugglers, and literature of parody" in the Middle Ages (4). It is a world of all classes, minorities, and margins taking part in the feast during specific time (6). All social ranks are considered equal in carnival (6).

Non-official feast, folkloric culture, and folkloric consciousness of carnival have expressions far away from "mysticism, piety", religious dogma, and the bounds of kingdom (7). Carnival embodies the universal condition of rebirth and reinstates the global spirit (7). It is a victorious, jovial, and simultaneously "mocking" and sarcastic display in which official traditions and "ideology" are revealed in a comic genre (12). It turns static hierarchies on their heads (13). As Bakhtin has noted, clowns and fools, who establish humorous culture of the medieval period, are not stupid and uncanny actors (8). Fools are maker of laughter at the stupidity of the old systems (8). They bring peals of laughter from all classes and participants in the world. They make "ambivalent" laughter and parody of every one (12). Fool appears

on stage with new language, personality type, and theme to overcome old procedures (16). Fools utilize “abusive” sentences and make fun of one another with “Relaxed verbal etiquette” and allowed inappropriate words (16). In Bakhtin’s insight, fools’ abusive language is a particular type of “billingsgate” language (16). It was used in ancient nations to tease the deity. This language has double-edged functions by which fools belittle and afflict their masters and obtain restoration (16).

Ambivalent characteristics of insulting expressions are also images of grotesque in the Renaissance period. It was used to show “poles of transformation” from death to rebirth and from demolition to renovation of the world (24). As Mikhail Bakhtin has illuminated, grotesque imageries represent the stages of improvement, death, and rebirth in ancient time (*Rabelais and His world* 25). The attitudes of change and time extend over social and historical events (25). The major components of grotesque images are “copulation, pregnancy, birth, growth, the old age, disintegration, dismemberment”, and rebirth (25).

Carnavalesque Images in King Lear

The images of carnival, observed in the characters of Fool and King Lear, spreads from the first plot to the second plot in which disguised Edgar achieves the throne. The difference between the ancient carnival and carnivalesque traits in *King Lear* is the temporary time of the ancient carnival. Carnavalesque characteristics of *King Lear* are not limited to one day or transient time though the play is performed in one day. An impolitic king inverts his guarded kingdom, authority, and self-worth to be comfortable for the rest of his life. King Lear deprives his dearest daughter (Cordelia) of inheritance and kingdom for not being glib-tongued like her sinister sisters. Fool, appearing in Act one, Scene three, starts poking fun at the king for his recent eccentric actions. He puts coxcomb on Lear’s head instead of the crown.

Lear. How now, / my pretty knave! / How dost thou?

Fool. Sirrah, / you were best take my coxcomb (1. 3. 27).

Fool’s metaphoric and humorous language announces permanent disaster of the king. Coxcomb is a symbol standing for a tumble-down sovereignty. It is not one day festival and temporary removal of the king’s position. Fool, using symbolic, ironic, and sardonic languages from the very beginning, discloses the situation of the king to the audience in *King Lear*. His language has a comic surface and realistic layers of meaning. He sets coxcomb on the head of the king to make laughter and predict the king’s hapless destiny. Fool states,

“This fellow has banished two on; / s daughters and did the third a blessing against his will. If thou follow him, / thou must need wear my coxcomb” (1. 3. 28). He introduces an irrational and unfair king who has exiled his youngest daughter and commiserated with two other daughters. Fool warns the audience against the thoughtlessness of King Lear.

Grotesque images in King Lear

The crownless king's behavior presents opposite images of grotesque. He is an old man with a child-like character whose emotive and temperamental characteristics unveil his disorder of psyche. Although King Lear never feels better and involves in serious psychoneurotic dilemmas, he turns into a wise man recognizing his own mistakes. In royal families' view, King Lear is a troublesome senile man who orders and behaves like a baby. Blinded by thirst of power, the king's daughters cannot see their father's generosity. Under influence of Edmond, Gloucester is also blinded to reality before becoming really blind by Regan and her husband.

Two plots merge with one another and devastator malevolent power spreads through conspirators to ruin everything. The division of kingdom stands for the death and disintegration of Britain. King Lear's death is not the end of the play. Edgar gains power and the thrown of Edgar indicates the rebirth of the country. The multiple functions of Fool's language derive from ambivalent style and imageries of grotesque. His language includes a confusing high style which is beyond the ordinary language. Fool says, “Truth's dog must to kennel: / he must be whipped out when lady, / the Brach may stand by the fire and stink” (1. 3. 28). The king's daughter, gaining his father's power, kicks out her father. Fool compares the homeless king to an ousted dog metaphorically. He states, “She that's a maid now, and laughs at my departure, shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut shorter” (1. 4. 40). He means that the departure of Fool does not imply his failure and the dominance of the king's daughters will not last.

Madness

One of the images of grotesque is madness which gives people a new outlook different from mundane and general belief. Mikhail Bakhtin has expressed that the subject of madness is a joyful “parody of official reason and official truth” in folk grotesque (39). There is a deep and gloomy awareness in King Lear's madness making him a several dimensional character. He is a difficult man revealing mound of affection in the end of the play. He is trapped in the

desert of madness including fountains of wisdom. Suffering from his dark destiny, the heartbroken king recognizes the real personality of his daughters and complains of their disloyalty.

Lear. Death, / traitor! / Nothing could have subdued nature to such a lowness but unkind daughters. Is mercy on their flesh? / Judicious punishment! / T was this flesh begot those pelican daughters.

Edgar. Pillicock sat on pillicock-hill: haloo, / haloo, loo, loo!

Fool. This cold night will turn us all to fools and madness (3.4. 79).

Lear becomes insane through the courtiers' viciousness and his unkind daughters. Fool, Edgar, and Lear find the world a merciless place for castaway royalties. Cold night and storm signify ferociousness of the conspirators and Lear's tragic fate. Lear gets a wise despondent man and gains the development of character in his madness. He changes into a self-realized old man and judicious clown presenting comic/tragic treatment. Before his self-realization, his childish behavior and arrogance in his loneliness are comic, but the effect of his comic treatment intensifies tragedy.

Mask

As Mikhail Bakhtin has stated, mask exhibits the core of grotesque and appears in "parodies, caricature, grimaces, eccentric postures and comic gestures" (43). Fool has been shown by the mask of a clown in *King Lear*. Fool shows ambivalent and contrary motives by his mask. His contrasting characteristics range from wise/ fool opposition to comic/tragic dichotomies. The wise Fool is identified as a jester making frivolities for the king while his analysis of events is too philosophical to be considered a simple-minded clown. Fool calls his king fool for his mistake.

Lear. Dost thou call me fool, / boy?

Fool. All thy other titles thou hast given away; / that thou wast born with (1. 3. 29).

Fool sings a song to clear up his sentence. He chants, "Fools had never less wit in a year for wise men are grown foppish, / they know not how their wit to wear; / their manners are so apish" (1. 3. 30). In addition to the verbal subversion of monarchical authority, Fool destabilizes those people who pretend they have prudence. He points to his own witty genius, the duplicity of the courtiers, and the king's fatuousness in his song. He compares the king's realm to an egg without yoke because the golden days of King Lear have been vanished.

Fool says, “I have used it nuncle, / ever since thou madest thy daughters thy mothers: / for when thou gavest them the rod, / and put“s down thine own breeches” (1. 3. 30). He lays the blame on King Lear who draws dreamy attention of his daughters for his neurotic need. He makes fun of the king and hints to his catastrophe on a metaphorical sense. Fool is both absent and present character during the events. He is not in all scenes, but he discerns what happened and what will happen. Fool is a sagacious character knowing all events and characters. He does not reveal his age, background, identity, and family in his fluctuating grade. After the king expels Cordelia from the court, Fool withdraws from the king as an objection and when the king calls him, he reappears.

Fool swings between art and life, between fiction and reality and between comedy and tragedy. He takes on some personas of art and life and plays a lot of roles. He is identified as a commenter, mentor, guide, adviser, protector, and emissary of omniscient voice. Multi-functional Fool has a red nose, big smiling lips, and white and empty face by which many roles can be discovered. Witty Fool looks down on real fools or people around him, but he does not hurt anyone. Like Greek Tiresias, he is an orator with the skill of prognostication. Fool says, “When thou clovest thy crown in the middle, and gavest a way both parts, thou borest thy ass on thy back o’er the dirt: Thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gavest thy golden one away” (1. 3. 30). He is announcing the dreadful consequence of the king’s division of territories. He is a mirror through which the king can see and recognize his inner flaws.

Lear. Who is it that can tell me who I am?

Fool. Lear’s shadow.

Lear. I would learn that: / for, / by the marks of sovereignty, / knowledge, / and reason, / I should be false persuaded I had daughters.

Fool. Which they will make an obedient father (1. 3. 32).

Fool symbolizes Lear’s glasses by which he discovers a viewpoint to see atrocious reality of the world too. The declined king has nothing except a Fool who can be detected as an allegory of the universal collective consciousness with his broadened mind hidden behind his mask or his clownish guise. Fool announces the awkward reality of the world for penniless people. He says, “Fortune, / that arrant whore, / never turns the key to the poor” (2. 4. 58). He is a clown analogous to all clowns and a caricature of miseries and joys. His clownish face shows smiling lips and tearful eyes signifying ups and downs of life. He is supportive of King

Lear and suppressor of his imprudence. Fool's loyalty to King Lear separates him from the other fools who subvert the authoritarians and laugh at their decadence in plays and carnivals.

Fool and Lear enter the hovel of Edgar in storm. Fool says, "Marry, / here is grace and a cod-piece; / that's a wise man and a fool" (3. 2. 72). He calls King Lear a fool again and introduces himself a wise man. Fool has an affinity to the king calling him uncle. He flouts him without fear while he is not King Lear's real kinship. He is involved in the events, but he does not manipulate the incidents. Fool informs Kent to control the events though Kent's effort is futile. Fool says, "We'll set thee to school to an ant to teach thee there is no laboring in the winter ... But I will tarry; / the fool will stay, / and let the wise man fly: / the knave turns fool that runs away; / the fool no knave perdy" (2. 4. 52). He makes claim that he is neither a fool nor a knave character but a devoted comrade. Fool offers Kent to run away and he himself stays with King Lear. Shifting of his roles grants him flexibility and perseverance in hard time. King Lear's self-awareness is led to the horrendous state of mind and depression. It seems that Fool is responsible to rescue King Lear's soul rather than his mentality.

Fool, showing the ludicrous chaos of the world, invites the audience to the realm of rationality. He says, "Prithee, / nuncle be contented; / tis a naughty night to swim in. Now a little fire in a wild field were like an old lecher's heart; / a small spark, / all the rest on's body cold" (3. 4. 80). King Lear is surrounded in a ruthless storm, a dark night, and an oppressive context. Fool enlightens the atmosphere through his insight and defines Edgar as fire in the cold night. Edgar is another embodiment of light and honesty in the darkness among the pretenders. When Fool's mission is completed and when there is no room for his bleak humorous language in the heart of tragic dimness, Edgar appears.

Narcissism of the King

As Wilson Knight has mentioned, King Lear's calamitous fate begins with his own injustice (118). Knight assumes that King Lear's fault is his egotistical temperament (118). Caught in retarded mentality and egoism, the king avoids broadening his mind, developing his perception, and being judged at the beginning of his misery. The causes of the king's narcissistic behavior may be loyal pampering and over protection. The king has been flattered by the courtiers and remained a spoiled and stubborn child. His ego has been enlarged and made him a big-headed king who does not accept his bloopers. The ill-judgmental king draws identity from his lost position and commands the earth, the sky, the gods, and heaven as if they are his militaries. He lives in the phantasm of being outstanding king and nothing

comes from nothing.

When King Lear confronts the truth, a duality between his expectations and reality comes to his consciousness. He is an undiplomatic king whose sentimental desire of being cherished changes into a hollow ocean. Fool illustrates the king's dejection in a song. He sings, "He that has a little tiny wit with hey, / ho, / the wind and the rain, / must make content with his fortunes fit, / for the rain it raineth everyday" (3. 2. 73). When the king is thrown away by his daughters, he cannot get on with the world and his own entangling qualms.

Richard Levin argues that King Lear's suppression of Cordelia at the beginning of the play is not based on patriarchal traditions and orthodox demeanor of father and daughter (52). The king's verbal attack on his daughter is "shocking abnormality" for onlooker characters including Kent, Gloucester, Burgundy, Goneril, and Regan (52). As Levin remarks, assumed patriarchal opinions and structures do not enforce the king to have such announcement (52). The king does not depose Cordelia for her gender. His rage also surrounds Kent who is his loyal counselor.

Kent. My life never held but as a pawn to wage against thy enemies; / nor fear to lose it, / thy safety being the motive.

Lear. Out of my sight (1. 1. 7).

Kent is expelled from the court after all services he has done to the king. The king's narcissistic expectations from his daughters and the courtiers are unpredictable. In Roy Schafer's view, the king's burst of anger and fury is the consequence of inadequate attention of Cordelia to a narcissistic grandiose position (1503). Cordelia's silence shatters the king's great position and leads him to an impulsive anger and immediate reaction. His verbal violence on Kent and Cordelia implies impulses of mental disorder, narcissism, and neurotic anxiety. According to Levin, Knight, and Schafer, the king's arrogance breaks the walls of his sovereignty. In other words, his fall is the result of his personal and mental immorality. Nonetheless, Shakespeare exhibits more reasons for the king's tragic destiny than classical interpretation of Aristotle.

Sublime Tragedy

Wilson Knight states: "A shifting flash of comedy across the pain of the purely tragic scene both increases the tension and suggests a resolution and purification" (116). According to knight, when the comic and tragic traits come together, they increase the significance of the play and revise the meaning (116). The consequence is a neo- sublime play. In Knight's view,

Fool points to the outrageous and the despairing world realistically (119). Metaphorically, he comments on the mishaps of the past and the present to the audience. Fool strengthens the distress of the tragedy with his bleak humor and establishes a bitterly cold troposphere. *King Lear* is a master piece in which Fool makes an opportunity for sublime tragedy by his amusing roles and functions. Furthermore, Shakespeare undermines the supremacy of ancient gods, the authority of provinces, and astrological effects on human's fate by the king's words. Overthrowing all mythic superstitions about gods, fortune, pagan stars, and their impacts on man's destiny, Shakespeare creates tragic character whose idols are mute and insubordinate. Such mockery condition raises the influence of tragedy and makes a superb drama.

According to Sean Lawrence, *King Lear* represents a movement from idolatry to "true transcendence" (143). In Lawrence's view, Shakespeare does not stand in the Middle Ages. He is a modern man that departs from the authoritarian church to the secular drama. Lawrence argues that gods do not answer to the expectations of Lear (143). Before self-realization, Lear orders nature, gods, and stars to grant him what he longs for. Since Lear finds himself a vital creature, he does not see his distance from the sky and the difference of his intention from the will of heaven. Lawrence accentuates that whenever King Lear calls his gods for help, he is confronted with more serious involvements than he has been entangled (143). King Lear utilizes humorous words unconsciously in the illusion of being an important king in his narcissistic and quixotic world because he has not realized his abject situation yet. It shows his disorder of mentality in the opposite worlds. He curses his daughter and feels remorse, but the result is a comic scene. King Lear says, "Blow, / winds and crack your cheeks! / Rage! / Blow! / You cataracts and hurricanes, / spout till you have drenched our steeples, / drowned the cocks!" / No, I will be the pattern of all patience, / I will say nothing" (3. 2. 37). Knight views humorous scenes in the fluctuating behavior of the king (121). Comic words of King Lear and Fool aggravate gloomy atmosphere. King Lear is mocked by Fool, yet Fool's role is not just making laughter at the king's misfortune. Fool is struggling to improve the audience and the King's perception. He disdains the king and gradually shows the crack between King Lear and his daughters and the beginning of his homelessness, displacement, and vagrancy. Nevertheless, Fool is not indifferent to King Lear. He is similar to a gadget which raises the king's humanity.

The change of Personality Type in a Powerless King

Roy Schafer finds King Lear an arrogant, egomaniac, and difficult man (1510). However, King Lear is easily humiliated and aggressively subverted. His weird sense of love and curse

for his children cannot be measured. His insanity and misery separate him from the monarchy and transfer him to the lowest rank of society among the poor. Lear's dinky appearance, deplorable settlement, and nasty fate are worse than the situation of destitute people. The ruthless plot of Lear's daughters for his rejection changes his character from a heartless king to a lonely wanderer. The helpless and isolated king makes room to receive sympathy from the audience.

There is no sign of apathy in the old man in the desert. He is turned into a clown, an old dotage, and an invalid man who is neither part of people's texture nor the royalties. He rises to be watched and sympathized by the audience at his bottomless misfortune and hardship. He loses his family, properties, honor, self-esteem, the lands, health, and ability to fight. It is an appropriate plan to arouse the audience's feeling of empathy. As Schafer claims, the king's curse returns to the king in the shapes of intrigue, loss, nomadic life, and psychosis problems (1508-1514). However, Lear's misfortunes are more than the atonements of his verbal violence and folly. He is not a conceited king who ordered nature, gods, and stars to rotate around him anymore.

External Causes of Mental Disorder

In addition to King Lear's narcissistic personality, conspiracy and unaffectionate treatments of Goneril, Ragan, and the courtiers to the king after division of kingdom run him depressed. A mental disorder makes another mental disorder. Lear's self-absorbed imagination is shattered and his self-dignity is vaporized by conspirators. He keeps on complaining about the world and his complaint represents his self-defense. Lear says, "more sinned against than sinning" (3. 2. 58). Roy Schafer defines Lear's self-defense as a sign of "depressive anxiety" in "paranoid- schizoid" state of mind (1506). First, the king resists accepting his fault, but he gradually realizes his mistakes. Then, he is involved in his self- punishment pressure for dismissing Cordelia after his self-realization. Cordelia's unexpected death makes another inner storm in his mentality which is not subsided.

Recurring themes of melancholy and madness are relevant to social causes rather than inner problems in the Renaissance period. The chaotic world, the king's lost kingdom, the real hurricanes, and the degradation of Lear intensify his mental disorder. The themes of mental anxiety and melancholy (the images of grotesque) are unavoidable subjects in the Elizabethan period and prevalent in Shakespeare's plays. Nonetheless, melancholies and their causes are not alike. Mad characters are not analogous with one another even with their conventional

roles. Richard C. McCoy compares King Lear's fantasy of a paradise in jail to William Butler Yeats' "Sailing to Byzantium". Lear says, "We two alone will sing like bird in 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, and hear poor rogues" (4. 3. 136). In the poem of Byzantium, an offended old man flees from gloomy drawback of this world to the eternal world of art. Like the old man, Lear articulates a perpetual world in which birds sing and gilded butterflies fly.

Lear imagines a paradise in which he has been forgiven and his lovely daughter has happy days with him. The difference between this scene and the first scene of the play is the King's transformation. Although he has no understanding of his deadly future, he knows how to use soft words to make his daughter glad. He identifies his enemies and his honest daughter too late. Lear says, "He that part us shall bring a brand from heaven, and fire us hence foxes. Wipe thine eyes; the good- years shall devour them" (4. 3. 138). The king's prediction comes true this time and Edmond and the king's wicked daughters die by themselves and the cycle of vitality returns to the land. King Lear's dreary fate is not arranged just from his own faults. His brutal daughters and inhumanity of Edmond were also the causes of his annihilation. To all his baneful moments, death seems soothing end for Lear. The king fades at the peak of wisdom and the depth of madness.

The Other Side of Grotesque

Mikhail Bakhtin, referring to Victor Hugo's view on grotesque believes that grotesque is everywhere: it displays shapeless and horrible creatures and uncovers their "comic and buffoon-like" aspects (43). Hugo illustrates grotesque as a tool opposing "sublime", nonetheless, grotesque and sublime complete each other (43). The harmony of grotesque and sublime is seen in Shakespeare's drama while literary classism before Shakespeare does not exhibit such unity (43). As Bakhtin elucidates, the playwrights in the Renaissance period have physical and spiritual understanding of the other world (48). Death turns into rebirth at the peak of grotesque body. Grotesque body is a funny picture or a funny shape or character with the subjects of hilarity, blasphemy, and ambivalent stages as well. On the one hand, it forces the stages of degradation, degeneration, and disintegration which are connected to the material level, death, and decay. On the other hand, it is substituted with power, renewal, spirituality, morality, abstract meaning, and moral advisement (53). Grotesque implies a lonely, odd, and outlaw character from community and also relates to the other pole and the sequence of bloom and growth.

Edgar is the other side of grotesque in the figure of beggars. Edgar reminds the audience Horatio or Hamlet's confident friend who remains to recycle rebirth of the kingdom after the death of the king and the prince. Among all displaced characters, Edgar remains to reform disarray made by his brother and Lear's daughters. He struggles between the opposite poles of victim (Gloucester) and victimizer (Edmond), and the conspirator (Edmond) and conspired (Edgar) to disclose the truth. Edgar states, "Bless thy five wits! / Tom's a cold-o, / do de, / do de, / do de". Bless thee from whirlwinds, / star-blasting, / and taking! / Do poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes: / there could I have him now- and there- and there again and there" (3. 4. 57). Edgar, confronting Lear, Fool, Kent, and his own father, does not disclose his true identity till the extermination of the main conspirators. The other side of grotesque is hidden in the womb of grotesque and comes to the world when disintegrated odds vanish. However, this side itself is another odd thing among durable wonders. Edgar has to wear his mask till the world let him be there.

Self-reflectional Characteristic of the Author

According to Cecilia Sayad, some authors typecast themselves by fools who incarnate the authors' perception of the world, life, and identity (21). The fools' otherness is concealed in the authors' unrest treatment and resurrection of people (21). Fool's occupation provides expressive jokes and elucidation of events taking the audience right to "reality and their existence" (21). The authors and directors appear on stage through the marginalized role of the fools unveiling their honest self- expressions (21).

Fool represents self- reflection of Shakespeare who makes both tragedy and comedy, both joke and cutting criticism. Fool criticizes hierarchical distance, royal tyranny, narcissism of the king, impolitically decisive commands, hypocrisy, betray, degeneracy of humanity, and man's folly. Shakespeare's role as an author, who has been connected to the court and different classes of people, is not unrelated to Fool. Shakespeare echoes his own motto, wisdom, intellect, and insight by Fool's words. The author comes from people, but he entertains both ordinary people and the royalties. Fool is a means of uncovering Shakespeare's philosophy about the self-important king and the courtiers.

The author is not indifferent to the fate of his country and people's misery. King Lear's diasporic situation is an alarm or a chance for King James and the royalties to imagine their own displacement for hours and replace themselves in the lowest status. Shakespeare displays the disingenuous treatment of the courtiers and imprudent division of kingdom in the time

period of Richard II. Shakespeare advises the audience including people, the king, and his flatterers through Fool. The only character who owns as many roles as possible is Fool representing a creative author.

Fool's words denote fluctuations of life as the author involves in the oscillations of life. Fool disappears when the king comes to his senses in the end of the play. Fool's ethical motto shows the author's humanity. Fool criticizes social context with his bird's eye view. His name (fool), job (fool), and role (fool), are the same, but every one of them outspreads to multiple concepts and tasks in various times. His comic and instructive roles are well-matched with ancient philosophy that extends over modern intermediary role between the audience and the playwright. He instructs the audience circuitously.

Fool. Sirrah, / I'll teach thee a speech.

King Lear. Do.

Fool: Mark it, / nuncle: / Have more than thou showest, / Speak less than thou knowest, / Lend less than thou owest, / Ride more than thou goest. Learn more than thou thowest. Set less than thou throwst: / Leave thy drink and thy whore. And keep in-a-door, / And thou shall have more than two tens to a score (1. 3. 28).

The king lets Fool instruct him and Fool advises Lear directly and the audience indirectly. Fool defines madness as a yeoman who trusts in distrustful things. Fool is both old and young because he calls the king uncle and my boy and cares him parentally. Miscellaneous identities of Fool are complementary to the egotistical king. Fool's roles are transfigured and arranged to the level of their importance and contextual need. Fool reveals Goneril's intention in the language of proverb and metaphor. He says, "For, / you trow, / nuncle, / the hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long, / that it's had it head bit off by it young. So, out went the candle, / and we were left darkling" (1. 3. 32). He compares the king to hedge-sparrow and compares Goneril to the cuckoo which is fed with hedge-sparrow (the king), but she drives him away. Fool is an insert -author character with proverbial and metaphoric language indicating critical and warning humorous tone of Shakespeare. He is a character without possession and position and the fool of no importance in the eyes of sycophants.

Fool undermines himself to make the greatest laughter and mocks extravagant talks and despotic discourses to expose social and political flaws. He is the one who makes bridges over high culture and low culture and crosses the limits to show the parody of everyone. He teases man's over-lusty temptation and says, "Ha, ha! / He wears cruel garters. Horses are

... tied by the heads, / dogs and bears by the neck, / monkeys by the loins and men by the legs: / when a man, s over-lusty at legs, / then he wears wooden nether- stocks” (2. 4. 56). He is the one who deflates all authorities by their faults and man’s vice generally. He possesses the lowest position to have permission for the most complaint. He is called fool with the legislation of abusive words to make fun of man’s mistakes. He fulfills one of the major functions of the theatre in the Elizabethan period. Drama is a means of business and entertainment and playwright makes effort to please the king and people in a broader view. Shakespeare is free to sting the corruption of man, the tyranny of the monarch, and hierocracy in the guise of fool.

Fantastic Role

David Robb declares: “The clown’s illusiveness, hybridity or transmutability may form a critical counterpart to rigid social homogeneity or ideological dogma” (1). The role-play of Lear and Fool subverts homogenization.

Fool. Come hither, / mistress, / is your name Goneril?

Lear. She cannot deny it.

Fool. Cry your mercy, / I took you for a joint-stool (3. 4. 88).

Lear and fool play fantastic role of a judge in an unreal court to defeat prevailing rule and vent their anger. The awakened king imagines a court to arraign his daughters. This play within a play represents a hollow and unjust world in which Shakespeare speaks from the mouth of Fool. If the real world, where is the outside of the theater, is considered another play, they are playing in the collection of the images of plays far from their aspirations in the fantasy of madness. The court is a play (the imaginary world of the king) within a play (the drama of Shakespeare) within another play (the real world). Roberth Cheesmond particularizes that madness of Lear, Hamlet, and Titus Andronicus represent their exchanging role with clowns to encounter their neurotic disorders which are too destructive to be controlled (16).

Fool. If thou wert my fool, / nuncle. I’d have thee beaten for being old before thy time.

Lear. How’s that?

Fool. Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst been wise (1. 4. 40).

It is too late for King Lear to resist the inner and outside chaotic situation from the time he is called fool by Fool. However, justice is declared within plays by witty Fool and self-realized

wise king in an imaginative court.

Conclusion

Characterization of Fool, King Lear, and Edgar disclose many images of carnival and grotesque in the unsurpassed tragedy of *King Lear* belonging to all periods of time. Fool is a multi-role character presenting the images of carnival and grotesque in *King Lear*. Fool represents incarnation of light in a dark container, transfiguration of the king's ratiocination, personification of logical predominance, embodiment of morality, picture of loyalty, and a multi-functional clown who comes and goes and hints to the reality of the demoralized world both vertically and horizontally. His gleeful and doleful face blanks his grade as a jester and unveils other countenances under his mask with sneering and sardonic torque, soft heart, and limpid soul. He reproaches Lear and stings his daughters and the courtiers to enlighten the king and the audience and alarm at man's silliness.

Lear's madness, melancholy, and death are the imageries of grotesque. At noon, Lear's shadow vanishes and he turns into a self-discovered old man. Nasty reality comes to Lear's consciousness and external scare breaks the old narcissist king. The wise mad king melts into his Fool showing king's faults. The depressed king becomes one with his wise Fool designating perception. The cause of noble man's fall is not just his hamartia in *King Lear*. Shakespeare highlights the conspiracy of the courtiers as another reason for Lear's mishap too. Fool also dissolves in the king, in the spirit of time, history, events, drama, theatre, the audience, and the author to be escalated in another cycle of time-space. Fool is Shakespeare's peep-show to reveal fact and fiction and show mirth and misery. He is in the misty margin of ups and downs of life. He implies life with its rhythms of transmutation. Edgar is the image of an outsider whose major function is revitalization after storm and reformation after uprooting his vicious brother. He is the other side of grotesque whose role is needed to complete the harmony of the play.

Works Cited

- [1] Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Translated by Helence Iswolsky, Indiana: Indiana UP, 1965.
- [2] Cheesmond, Robert. "Where the Antic Sits". *Clowns, Fools and Picaros; Popular Forms*

- In Theatre, Fiction and Film*. Edited by David Robb, Amsterdam-New York: Brill, 2007, p.16. doi.org/10.1163/9789401205399-OC.
- [3] Knight, Wilson. "King Lear and The Comedy of the Grotesque". *Twentieth Century Interpretations of King Lear: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Edited by Janet Adelman. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1978, pp.116-124.
- [4] Lawrence, Sean. "Gods that We Adore: The Divine in *King Lear*". *Renascence*, vol. 56, no. 3, 2004, pp.143-159. doi.org/ 10.5840/renascence200456314.
- [5] Levin, Richard. "Feminist Thematic and Shakespearean Tragedy". *Modern Language Association and Jstor, PMLA*, vol. 103, No. 2, 1988, p.127. doi.org/ 10.2307/462429. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/462429.
- [6] McCoy, Richard C. "Look Upon Me, Sir: Relationships in *King Lear*". *Journals Division, JSTOR*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2003, p.52. doi:10.1525/rep. 2003.81,1.46. www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/rep.2003.81.1.46.
- [7] Pikli, Natalia. "The Carnival and Carnavalesque Laughter, Falstaff's Mythical Body". *The Prism of Laughter, Shakespeare's Very Tragical Mirth*. Natalia Pikli, Saarbrucken: VDM Verlag, 2009, pp.1-4.
- [8] Robb, David. *Fools and Picaros Popular Forms in Theatre, Fiction and Film*. Edited by David Robb, Netherland: Rodopi, 2007, p.1
- [9] Sayad, Cecilia. "The Auteur as Fool: Bakhtin, Barthes, and the Screen Performances of Woody Allen and Jean-luc Godard". *Journal of Film and Video*. vol. 63, no. 4, 2011, pp. 21-32. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/jfilmvideo.63.4.0021.
- [10] Schafer, Roy. "Curse and Consequence: King Lear's Destructive Narcissism". *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis, Semantic Scholar*, vol. 91, no. 6, 2010, pp.1503-1514. doi.org/10.1111/j. 1745-8315.2010. 0004.x.
- [11] Shakespeare, William. *King Lear*. E-Book, Global Grey, 2016.