UNIVERZITA PARDUBICE
FAKULTA FILOZOFICKÁ

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

2007   Jindřiška STAŇKOVÁ

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University of Pardubice
Faculty of Arts and Philosophy
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The Intertextuality of Shakespeare's 'King Lear' in Relation to 'The True Chronicle History of King Leir' and Spencer's 'Faerie Queene'

Bachelor Paper

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The Intertextuality of Shakespeare's 'King Lear' in Relation to 'The True Chronicle History of King Leir' and Spencer's 'Faerie Queene'

Intertextualita Shakespearova 'Krále Leara' ve vztahu k 'Pravdivé kronice o králi Leirovi' a Spencerově 'Královně víl'

Bakalářská práce

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2007

Katedra: anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Akademický rok: 2005/2006

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Pro: Jindřiška Staňková

Studijní program: Anglický jazyk pro hospodářskou praxi

Studijní obor: Kulturní studia a literatura

Název tématu: *Intertextualita Shakespearova „Krále Leara" ve vztahu k „Pravdivé kronice o*
králi Leirovi" a Spenserově „Královně víl"

Název tématu anglicky: *The Intertextuality of Shakespeare's 'King Lear' in Relation to 'The True*
Chronicle History of King Leir' and Spenser's 'Faerie Queene'

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Kandidátka v úvodu pojedná o pojetí „autora" a „autenticity" v renesanční Anglii, zvláště ve vztahu k legitimní „výpůjčce" (v protikladu k „plagiátu"). Na tomto základě se bude zabývat vztahem Shakespearovy hry „Pravdivé kronice o králi Leirovi" a Spenserově „Královně víl". Vedle znalosti primárních textů prokáže i přiměřené využití sekundární odborné literatury.

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Datum zadání práce: 30.4.2006

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Abstrakt

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá obviněními Shakespeara z plagiátorství v souvislosti s jeho, některými kritiky považovanou za nejlepší, tragédií Král Lear, které bylo převážně v poslední době možné zachytit od kritiků, a které souvisí se změnami, kterými prošlo chápání a pojetí vlastnictví myšlenek. Tato problematika je velice komplexní a proto se první část této práce zabývá konceptem intertextuality a chápáním autora a autorství v období Romantismu. V navazující části se práce soustředí na pravděpodobně nejtvrdší kritiku Shakespearových schopností a samotného Krále Leara, jejímž autorem je Lev Nikolajevič Tolstoj, a poté se věnuje možným zdrojům, ze kterých mohl Shakespeare čerpat, spolu s terminologií vtahující se k variantám výtisků Krále Leara a datům publikace. V závěrečné části, po zhodnocení Spencerovy Královny Víl a pravděpodobného hlavního zdroje, Krále Leira, se práce zabývá porovnáním Krále Leira a Krále Leara.

Abstract

This bachelor paper deals with the accusation of plagiarism concerning Shakespeare's King Lear in recent history, resulting from changes that the understanding of ownership of ideas has undergone. The matter is very complex and therefore, in the first part of this paper the concepts of intertextuality, Romantic notion of author and authorship are discussed. The following part examines the most serious critique Shakespeare has been subjected to by Leo Tolstoy, and continues centering on the possible sources Shakespeare may have used, along with some terminology concerning the editions of King Lear and the dates of publishing. Finally, after examining Spencer's Faerie Queene and the supposed primary source, King Leir on their own, the paper reaches the point where King Leir and King Lear are compared.

Outline:

1. Introduction

Shakespeare's King Lear - a product of excellent reviser and re-shuffler job rather than of artistic originality? Undoubtedly an issue that has attracted many discussions and scholarly writing in recent years and has cast doubt on the authenticity of the play. It is known that the story of King Leir is an old story in English literature, such that has undergone several different interpretations, but it was no sooner than with the emergence of Shakespeare's version of this story that King Lear or Leir received a lot of attention producing various speculations about the play's creation process.

Critics have accused Shakespeare of plagiarism, a very negative assumption to be made about anyone's work, not to mention when such a claim is made in connection with such a genius writer as Shakespeare, for that is the common picture we have come to take for granted when speaking about his intellectual abilities and writer's technique. But once again, this is another recently discussed issue, that is, whether the reputation that we ascribe to Shakespeare actually matches the man and his abilities in the field of literature or whether it is an inflated reputation attributed to him over the years with little connection to his actual artistic aptitude.

While critics generally agree that Shakespeare must have known Leir and determine it as his primary source, it is not certain how did he get to know it or whether the resemblance of Leir in his own play was intentional or just accidental.

This paper aims to look behind the curtain in terms of creation of both literary works and their intertextuality while also determining the value of Shakespeare's Lear in context of the whole Leir story. The paper thus discusses whether the usage of the word "plagiarism", that has been several times hinted in association with the Lear play, is even appropriate here. It also discusses the concept of author and authorship both during Shakespeare's day and today.

The second chapter introduces the term and the whole concept of intertextuality. It introduces the three terms connected with intertextuality being quotation, allusion and plagiarism and continues with establishing where these terms overlap and what the crucial difference between them is. This chapter then offers information that helps recognize and determine plagiarism in contrast to legitimate borrowing. Another part focuses on the Romantic notion of authorship and author, so important in order to see

the bigger picture of the creative process of a playwright during Shakespeare's day. Lastly, the chapter examines Shakespeare's reputation and the way it came to existence.

The third chapter discusses the critical pamphlet 'Shakespeare and the Drama' written by Leo Tolstoy on Shakespeare's address. The chapter shows what arguments Tolstoy presented in his accusing Shakespeare of plagiarism, but also the outside point of view, pointing out several facts that might make its credibility disputable.

In the fourth chapter, the possible sources of King Lear are discussed, providing also the context of the whole Leir legend. The sources discussed in bigger detail are Geoffrey of Monmouth, Holinshed's Chronicle and Sidney's Arcadia.

The following chapter offers differences between Quarto and Folio editions of Shakespeare's play, since they are very often mentioned in the literature and might be confusing. Furthermore this chapter also provides details of the Leir and Lear publication which serve to support or disprove the idea that Leir was essentially the primary source for King Lear.

The sixth chapter already focuses in greater detail on another source text, Spencer's Faerie Queene, showing which elements might be considered as used by Shakespeare and the differences in the stories.

The next chapter introduces more closely King Leir on its own and discusses its role in the context of the Leir legend.

The eighth chapter focuses on comparison of the Leir play and King Lear pointing out the very similar, as well as, different features of those two texts. This chapter discusses differences in the portrayal of characters and then focuses on the portraying of storm.

Finally, conlusion accounts the main points of the paper and presents its outcome.

2. Intertextuality

2.1. The concept of intertextuality

The term "intertextuality" is derived from the Latin *intertexto*, meaning "to intermingle while weaving". It was firstly introduced by a French semiotician Julia Kristeva in her work "Word, Dialogue and Novel". As she argues there, "any text is constructed of a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (p. 66).

The principal concept of intertextuality is that no text is original and unique-in-itself, rather it is a tissue of inevitable, and to an extent inadvertent, references to and quotations from other texts which all condition its meaning. In other words, the boundaries of texts are permeable, each text exists within a vast "society of texts" in various genres and thus no text is an island entire of itself.

Kristeva referred to texts in terms of two axes: a *horizontal axis* connecting the author and reader of a text, and a *vertical axis*, which connects the text to other texts (1980: 69). Uniting these two axes are shared codes: every text and every reading depends on prior codes.

What is important though, is that there are three other terms closely connected with intertextuality and they are: quotation, allusion and plagiarism. They represent the way by which the connection between the various literary works is achieved. However, when the line is crossed and the similarity between two or more pieces of art (as this applies not only to works of literature, but to all of art) is simply too obvious and, what is more, suspicious, that is when we may discuss the last of the terms – plagiarism.

But, intertextuality refers to far more than just resources or influences of writers on each other. In order to see more deeply into the problematics, we have to consider a few more concepts that are interconnected with intertextuality – the Romantic notion of the author, the notion of authorship and finally also the notion of plagiarism.

First of all, no matter how it may appear, there is nothing new about intertextuality: it is there in the works of Shakespeare as well as in works of other 'famous authors'. As Burstein notes, 'literary history consists of authors reading, rewriting, alluding to, parodying, and saluting each other'. In fact, a lot of scholars

argue that almost everything and anything that can be said, has been said, e.g. that there is, really, only a small number of basic plots in all of literature. It would seem then, that the only remaining creative option is to rejig and manipulate existing narratives, images and texts. This also confirms Barthes:

> 'A text is... a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations... The writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them'
>
> (Barthes 1977: 146)

2.2. Intertextuality = Plagiarism?

Firstly, it is not easy to discover whether the thin line between the mere creativity supported by inspiration from others and plagiarism has been crossed, especially with insufficient evidence. Therefore, it is essential to look at the very definition of plagiarism and its whole concept in a greater detail in order to ascertain whether there is actually any reason for mentioning plagiarism together with Shakespeare's name.

Primarily, it is essential to understand that intertextuality is an area of considerable ethical complexity and that permission, under specific circumstances, to borrow, adapt and reuse ideas is entrenched in copyright and patenting law. There is evidence that the notion of individual 'ownership' of texts is a relatively recent one. As to the definition of plagiarism, according to Robinson, plagiarism is defined as 'appropriating someone else's words or ideas without acknowledgment'.

Green further argues that 'plagiarism is an ethical question, it has often been described as a type of theft' - it deprives the 'real' authors of a work of credit for that work. The 'victim' may be seen to be the individual creator, deprived of the rigorous construction of new ideas and expression.

We often think that ideas and their expression belong to the author as if they were private property, the author's intellectual property. On this view, plagiarists steal the work of others, taking for themselves the credit of ownership and thereby depriving the original authors of this benefit. If intellectual property is like physical property the

analogy helps explain subtler forms of plagiarism. For example, most people know that taking the exact wording of another person without attribution is plagiarism, but believe that paraphrasing the original is acceptable. Yet taking someone else's idea and changing the wording is like stealing a car and changing its color.

However, literary works that are stolen differ in important ways from physical objects. Ideas are less tangible and identifiable than physical objects. Objects that are stolen remain stolen even if they are taken apart and recombined. Not so with ideas. As Moulton and Robinson argue, there is a major difference between intellectual and other types of property:

> 'if words and ideas were merely property, and plagiarism merely a form of theft, then there would be nothing wrong with buying the rights to authorship from another, as in the case of commercial term-paper services. The original authors sell their claim to authorship for money. The plagiarist who uses these services is not stealing the credit from another person because the original author does not want the credit. But credit for authorship is not something that can be sold or given away. Credit for authorship is so undetectable that even the reverse of stealing, falsely attributing one's own work to another, is also wrong; it constitutes forgery.'

Moreover, it is important to note that we usually remember ideas without remembering where they came from, because recalling the source of an idea is often more difficult than recalling the idea itself. Therefore, it is possible to commit plagiarism without realizing that one is doing so. Learning to avoid plagiarism requires careful training in a system of conventions particular to a field, unlike learning to avoid theft.

This may explain why several great thinkers of the past, as in this case Shakespeare, have recently been accused of plagiarism. Under today's conventions of attribution, what they did constitutes plagiarism. But the conventions of today are not the same as in the past when writers usually cited another person's work only to invoke authority. This confirms Holznecht when he writes: 'With Elizabethans, stories, ideas, even phrases, were regarded as common literary property which anyone could translate or adapt.'

In essence, there is often no way to determine what counts as a new idea and what requires acknowledgment as a variation on an old idea. Conventions for giving

credit vary from field to field. In literature the *form* of the expression is more important than the basic plot idea. To count as plagiarism in literature, a description must steal the form of the original, not just the structure.

Nevertheless, according to Robinson, copying the ideas of an anonymous author, or claiming credit for an idea given to you by a friend who does not wish to claim authorship, is considered plagiarism. Certainly when evaluation is central, it is wrong to take credit for the work of others. And certainly it is important to identify and reward people who do original work in order to encourage that work. On the other hand, it is possible that emphasis on evaluation and credit discourages collaboration and fosters destructive competition and cheating.

What is interesting is the current approach toward plagiarism. Outside the arts and media, textual copying and appropriation are routinised in today's society. There, unattributed use of others' words or ideas is neither morally suspect in itself nor universally perceived as a 'bad thing'. Government ministers give speeches – using the first person – written for them by civil servants or speechwriters; celebrities and sport stars routinely have their words or their lives recreated under their name by ghostwriters. None of these practices is viewed in a particularly negative way but are seen as both routine and necessity. It is what Martin calls 'institutional plagiarism' - 'a feature of systems of formal hierarchy, in which credit for intellectual work is more a consequence than a cause of unequal power and position'. It is even estimated by the global publishing industry that 300 billion pages of text are illegally photocopied per annum, representing a potential loss to publishers of over US$15 billion.

On the other hand, as Pfohl writes 'copyright law reifies existing ways of perceiving art, and in so doing, stifles, rather than encourages, creativity'. Conversely '[the means of] self-expression is often appropriation and redefinition of the images of popular culture'. Indeed there is merit in the use and reuse of ideas, concepts, knowledge, language and symbols: according to Robinson 'building new ideas from old ideas, using existing components and combining them in new ways, might be creativity, not plagiarism' (p. 196).

2.3. Plagiarism vs. Literary borrowing

Now, since plagiarism is not considered legitimate, the attention should also be paid to the method which *is* legitimate, that is, literary borrowing. In his lecture, Coon writes that plagiarism is a literary masquerade when it comes to the identity of the author; it is basically one's attempt to pretend that they are the original author, when they are not. He explains that:

> 'all authorities agree that the term plagiarism generally applies to the intentionally deliberate and unauthorized appropriation by one writer of the words of another, in the process passing them off as if they were his own – a sort of literary embezzlement.'

As he further continues, borrowing of another writer's ideas or words, and employing them in their own material for their own literary ends is, however, not necessarily plagiarism. And that is where the problem arises, for 'literary borrowing' occurs when one utilizes and employs, e. g. "borrows", the ideas or words of another for their own personal ends, in order to make a particular point. It is important to realize this difference, even though some critics claim that by doing so we are merely trying "to make the worse appear the better reason".

2.4. The Romantic notion of authorship

On the basis of what has been said in the previous part, the attention should be paid to a very important issue, that is, how intertextuality and the notion of author and authorship were viewed in Shakespeare's own day.

There is no doubt that the reuse of existing plots, characters and lines in literature was widespread amongst Shakespeare and his contemporaries. In his book, Schwartz lists numerous celebrated authors and public figures who happened to be plagiarists including Coleridge, Poe, Martin Luther King, Laurence Sterne, Eliot, Pound or Wilde (p. 311-315). This information may lead, bringing out the known saying that "art imitates life", to conclusion that intertextuality suggests that "art imitates art".

This only confirms and goes in perfect alliance with the fact that 'authorship' is a historical invention. Concepts such as 'authorship' and 'plagiarism' did not exist in the Middle Ages. We can find that Goldschmidt mentions this in his book:

> 'Before 1500 or thereabouts people did not attach the same importance to ascertaining the precise identity of the author of a book they were reading or quoting as we do now'
>
> (p. 88)

As to the Romantic vision, Boyle writes that art (and authorship in particular) is inimical to commercial concerns. The writer is not seen as a person writing for money, neither as a man interested in anything other than the perfection of their work. The author is presumed to have an almost transcendental insight - something which reaches beyond the earthly world of everyday appearance, a genius that puts them out of society.

The Romantic concept includes strong belief that the author's interpretation governs because it is the author's genius, the author's special knowledge, which created the particular piece of art out of nowhere. The work comes from inside the author as he/she is seen as a transcendent genius full of limitless inventiveness. The romantic author may violate the norms of decorum or social propriety, but never the norms of literary property. In essence, the author is seen as an "Author-God" meaning that the author is the originator of all textual meaning (p. 37).

However, this clashes with the idea that the greatest author of them all would not have enough inspiration or inventiveness and therefore would "borrow" freely from the works of his contemporaries. Furthermore, according to Boyle, authorship in medieval Europe certainly did not have the preeminent importance or the significance we attribute to it today. The early Church writers, who were also the guardians of literacy, saw literary and philosophical creation as a less important task than that of preserving the wisdom of the ancients. As Goldschmidt writes:

> 'They valued extant old books more highly than any recent studies and they put the work of the scribe and the copyist above that of the authors. The real task of the scholars in their view was not the vain excogitation of novelties but a discovery of great old books, their multiplication and the placing of copies where they would be accessible to future generations of readers.'
>
> (p. 86)

As Boyle writes further, the idea of a permanent "work of art" remained, to an extent, foreign to the genre.

> 'Even the courtiers themselves seem dubious about these kinds of literature outside the limits of the intimate circles for which they were primarily intended: maybe the art is too frivolous to deserve the permanence of print.'
>
> (p. 40)

Having said that, if we admit that literature back in Shakespeare's day was not perceived as honorable enough to provoke such notions as "authorship" or "intellectual property", that are common today, we can hardly blame him for doing the same thing as the other contemporary writers. Indeed, authorship was seen differently in Elizabethan times and we cannot excoriate Shakespeare for his failure to live up to another era's concept of literary creation.

2.5. The notion of author in Shakespeare's day

Indeed, well after the Renaissance, there is evidence that the author was just seen as one of the many people who labored together to produce a book with no additional significance. Professor Woodmansee points out that the Renaissance vision of authorship was a strange combination of the notion of "craft" and inspiration. Both craft and inspiration were external - the craft consisted of applying a body of received learning and the inspiration came from the deity or the muse.

> 'Eighteenth-century theorists departed from this compound model of writing in two significant ways. They minimized the element of craftsmanship (in some instances they simply discarded it) in favor of the element of inspiration, and they internalized the source of that inspiration. That is, inspiration came to be regarded as emanating not from outside or above, but from within the writer himself. "Inspiration" came to be explicated in terms of original genius, with the consequence that the inspired work was made peculiarly and distinctively the product -- and the property -- of the writer.'
>
> (p. 425)

2.6. Shakespeare's reputation

One of the things that are always held against the very notion of plagiarism when speaking about Shakespeare is undoubtedly his sound reputation. Surely a great artist would not have stooped to copy the works of his inferiors, many argue.

Ever since the 17th century, Shakespeare has been considered the supreme playwright, and to a lesser extent poet, of the English language. It was precisely during the course of 17th century when it came to be felt that Shakespeare was an outstandingly "natural" writer - 'he was naturally learn'd; he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature' says John Dryden in his *An Essay of Dramatick Poesie* (1668).

Given such reputation, it is hardly surprising that no other dramatist has been performed even remotely as often on the British stage as Shakespeare. Already in the Romantic period, he was the most admired dramatic poet, famous are, for example, S.T. Coleridge's lectures on Shakespeare, even Thomas de Quincey prized him highly.

However, it is important to note that despite his stature as one of the greatest poets of all time, during his own day, Shakespeare was not an isolated genius, much more accurately, he worked in the age of great dramatists. Christopher Marlowe, for instance, set the model that Shakespeare followed in writing tragedies while Ben Jonson was his best known contemporary rival as a writer of comedy.

According to Wikipedia, there are arguments that in his own time, Shakespeare was seen as merely one among many talented playwrights and poets, and the ideas expressed in the former parts of this paper, namely the Romantic notion of authorship could serve to confirm that, but there is evidence that at least towards the end of Shakespeare's life he already began to gain some respect. It is true that he was included in some contemporary lists of leading poets and the patronage of his acting company by the court, culminating in 1603 when James I turned it into the "King's Men", suggests his popularity among higher levels of society as well. Also, the dedicatory poems by Ben Jonson and John Milton in the second folio signal that he was held in unusually high regard for a playwright.

3. Tolstoy's 'Shakespeare and the Drama'

Probably the most famous criticism of Shakespeare's King Lear appeared in the year 1906, when Leo Tolstoy, a renowned Russian novelist, published his pamphlet called 'Shakespeare and the Drama', heavily criticizing Shakespeare and bringing thus to the surface the notion of plagiarism in this Lear play. However, the effect of this "attack" on Shakespeare, as some term it, did not reach particularly large scope in the English world, since the pamphlet was written in Russian. The long forgotten critique did not attract much attention until George Orwell's retelling of what the Tolstoy was saying there in his 'Lear, Tolstoy and the Fool' published in the Polemic magazine on March 1947.

According to Orwell, in this pamphlet, Tolstoy expresses that Shakespeare was not merely "no genius", but not even "an average author" claiming that in order to support this idea, he will examine King Lear. Tolstoy clearly expresses his belief that 'Lear is, in any case, a plagiarism of an earlier and much better play, *King Leir*, by an unknown author, which Shakespeare stole and then ruined.' Furthermore, Tolstoy states that no reader could read the play to the end with any other feeling than 'aversion and weariness'. He continues saying that the same is true about all the other highly praised Shakespeare's dramas, 'not to mention the senseless dramatized tales, *Pericles, Twelfth Night, The Tempest, Cymbeline, Troilus and Cressida.*' (p. 1)

As Orwell says, Tolstoy then turns his attention to Shakespeare's personality and his abilities as a playwright. In Tolstoy's opinion, Shakespeare did have a certain skill which could have stemmed from the fact that he was an actor, but otherwise he does not attribute any higher merit to him. He further says that Shakespeare has no capacity of creating and portraying character or of making words and actions arise naturally out of situations and adds that his language is exaggerated and ridiculous. In Tolstoy's view, Shakespeare constantly puts his random thoughts into the mouth of any character that appears suitable for it to him, and he describes Shakespeare's words as having 'nothing whatever in common with art and poetry'.

In what follows, Tolstoy adds that 'Shakespeare might have been whatever you like, but he was not an artist.' He also claims that Shakespeare's opinions are neither original nor interesting and that his tendency is 'of the lowest and most immoral'. What

is interesting though, is that this last criticism is based upon two other critics' statements, that is, upon Gervinus' and Brandes' statements. Brandes, for instance, uttered that 'Shakespeare's fundamental principle... is that *the end justifies the means*.' This, of course, would go well with the theory of "Shakespeare the plagiator".

However, it is obvious that while reading this pamphlet, one question immediately arises, and that is – If Shakespeare was really the way Tolstoy portrays him, how did he ever come to be so generally admired? Tolstoy offers the answer as well. According to him, there has been an endless series of, as he calls them, "epidemic suggestions", the untrue accounts of Shakespeare's talent and genius that were gradually given to us over the years and deluded us into thinking that Shakespeare was a natural writer with unique literary expressivity. He further says that the reason why Shakespeare's plays continued to be admired over the years is because 'they corresponded to the irreligious and unmoral frame of mind of the upper classes of his time and ours' (p. 2).

When regarding the manner in which Shakespeare's fame started, Orwell says that Tolstoy explains it as having been 'got up' by German professors towards the end of the eighteenth century. Tolstoy claims that Shakespeare's reputation 'originated in Germany, and thence was transferred to England'. Supposedly, the Germans chose to elevate Shakespeare because, at a time when Germany had no prominent dramatists and French classical literature was beginning to seem somewhat artificial, they were captivated by Shakespeare's 'clever development of scenes' and also found in his works a good expression of their own attitude towards life. Tolstoy continues that after Goethe's pronouncing Shakespeare a great poet, all the other critics 'flocked after him like a troop of parrots, and the general infatuation has lasted ever since'(p. 3).

It is always very intriguing when a famous, great author writes a critical comment, a pamphlet or a book about another famous author, even more when what they write can be, to a certain extent, considered plausible. But, in order to get a correct picture and impression of this pamphlet, it would be wise to point out several circumstances that could have affected its overall tone and the harsh criticism that Shakespeare had been subjected to.

When criticizing the plot of King Lear and the play's main issues, such as giving up all of your possessions in favor of someone else and expecting them to treat you

respectfully, expecting them to be grateful for what you have done for them, one cannot escape the impression that similar problems have occurred in Tolstoy's own life. A general resemblance can be found here, as the most impressive event in Tolstoy's life, as was in Lear's life, was renouncement of his estate, his title and his copyright in his old age. But there can be found even a deeper resemblance, which lies in the fact that both Lear and Tolstoy acted on mistaken motives and failed to get the results they hoped for.

As Orwell writes when continuing on, Tolstoy expresses his belief that the aim of every human being is to achieve happiness, which can only be attained by doing the will of God. That, in consequence, means casting off all earthly pleasures and ambitions and living only for others. It seems that Tolstoy was not a good judge of character as he had two children whom he had believed and who ultimately turned against him, though, of course, not in such a horrible manner as Regan and Gonoril. Even more reminiscent of Lear and the ending of his life is Tolstoy's final moments of life – a sudden unplanned flight across country, accompanied only by a faithful daughter and finally, the death in a cottage in a strange village (p. 7).

Although we cannot prove that Tolstoy himself was not aware of this resemblance, there is no doubt that he must have felt strongly about such a theme and also that all this could have ultimately resulted in adopting negative attitude towards Shakespeare's play. Giving up power or lands was a subject on which he had reason to feel deeply and that also might be why he felt more angered and disturbed by the play of King Lear than by any other of Shakespeare's 38 plays.

When attempting to discover other reasons why Tolstoy criticized Shakespeare, it is important to note that Tolstoy was Russian and therefore, the language and probably also cultural differences have to be considered here. As Tolstoy's native tongue was not English, it is not so hard to imagine that he was not particularly moved by Shakespeare's verse and his skill with words and refused to believe that these represented something out of the ordinary (p. 9).

Now, if we consider Shakespeare's indisputable reputation, we may easily arrive at the feeling that in describing Shakespeare as a bad writer, Tolstoy is saying something abundantly untrue. However, it would be a mistake to simply write him off as a mere moralist attacking an artist. It is always hard to dismiss a critique of someone or someone's work when it comes from a person who has something to say on the

matter. As Tolstoy was an acclaimed Russian novelist himself, we cannot just turn our heads in the opposite direction upon seeing or reading his pamphlet. Also, in reality, there is no evidence or argument that could serve to document that Shakespeare, or any other writer, is "good" or "bad". Essentially, there is no test of literary merit except from the survival of the piece in general awareness.

4. Sources of Shakespeare's King Lear

Now, if we choose to believe that Shakespeare did not act differently than his contemporary fellow writers, we arrive at the realization that he must have used a lot of sources for the majority of his works, inclusive of King Lear. This part will therefore focus on the possible sources Shakespeare may have used in order to complete his own version of the Leir story.

Most of the critics agree on at least five most prominent sources which, they claim is certain, Shakespeare used in writing King Lear. These would be Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*, Raphael Holinshed's *The Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (further on referred to as '*Chronicle*'), Edmund Spencer's *Faerie Queene* and, of course, the previously mentioned, anonymous *The True Chronicle History of King Leir, and his three daughters, Gonoril, Ragan, and Cordella* (further on referred to as '*King Leir*' or '*the Leir play*').

Aside from these, scholars also estimate that Shakespeare knew, to a certain extent, Samuel Harsnett's *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* and Philip Sidney's *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (further on referred to as '*Arcadia*') as there can be found echoes of both of them in the play. It is highly probable that the Gloucester subplot in King Lear was inspired by reading of Arcadia.

Now, no matter how easy it would be to picture Shakespeare sitting by the table with all these sources on the desk combining their best parts in order to create King Lear, it is much more probable that the knowledge and subsequent usage of some of the elements of the previously mentioned works in his own play was partly unconscious, given the generally accepted belief that Shakespeare had an extraordinary memory. For instance, when discussing the influence of King Leir, W.W. Greg wrote:

> 'it would seem that as he wrote, ideas, phrases, cadences from the old play still floated in his memory below the level of conscious thought, and that now and again one or another helped to fashion the words that flowed from his pen'
> (p. 397)

In fact, it is very probable that Shakespeare had been thinking about the dramatization of the Leir story for many years before he started to write it. But, in order

to see, how much of those plays Shakespeare has used, let the evolution of the whole story be examined here.

4.1. The Leir legend

As Kossick says, the Leir story is often, and probably rightfully, said to be an adaptation of the old folk-tale, common in many cultures, telling about the king with three daughters who demanded to know how much each loved him. In this early fable, the first daughter compares her love to honey, the second to sugar and the third to salt. The foolish king is dissatisfied with his third daughter's response and marries her off to a poor passer-by. In some versions he realizes his mistake when he is presented with a dish prepared without salt. As he tastes the flavorless food he starts to understand fully the significance of what his youngest daughter has said to him and comes belatedly to appreciate the value of her declaration (p. 12). In fact, in search of other culture's tales on this basis, there is no need to go beyond the borders of our own country as it is the very same plot model that can be found in Czech culture as well – it is doubtful that any child in the Czech Republic would not know the famous fairy tale by Božena Němcová – Sůl nad zlato.

The very core plot line that can be found in all known versions of the Leir story is thus by many viewed as having developed out of these old folk-tales and fairy tales. It is hard to determine where even these stories originated, but according to Perrett, there are assumptions that the story of Lear is of Celtic origin and also that there is reason to believe it has been drawn from Welsh tradition current in Geoffrey's time (p. 15).

As has been stated previously, the first appearance of the Leir story in literature is in Geoffrey's work, Latin Historia Regum Britanniae which dates back to 1138. In order to see how the individual versions of the story differ, here is a brief summary of the tale, as it appeared in Wells' King Lear:

> 'Leir, who had governed for sixty years, had three daughters, Gonorila, Regan, and Cordeilla. Growing old, he planned to divide his kingdom among them, and to find them suitable husbands. To see who deserved the best part of his kingdom, he asked who loved him best. Gonorila and Regan flattered him, but Cordeilla said 'Look how much you have, so much is your value, and so much I love you.' Leir disinherited her and married off her sisters, Gonorila to Duke of Cornwall, Regan to the Duke of Albania, or Albany, the northern part of Britain.

Later Aganippus, King of the Franks, married the dowerless Cordeilla for love. Later still, his elder daughters' husband usurped his power, allowing him and sixty soldiers to live with the Duke of Albania. After two years Gonorila reduced his followers to thirty men, dismissing the rest. Leir went to live with his other daughter, but after a quarrel she reduced his train to five. So he went back to Gonorila, who made him manage with just one follower. In high dudgeon, he departed for Gaul to try his fortunes with Cordeilla, while fearing a cold reception. But she, hearing of his condition, wept, and commanded that he should be attended by forty men and generously provided for. Aganippus raised an army to restore him to his kingdom; they succeeded and three years later Leir died. (By this time he must have been very old indeed.) Cordeilla, widowed, buried her father at Leicester. Some years later her nephews rebelled against her, captured her, and put her in prison, where she committed suicide.'

(p. 17)

At this point, it would be good to turn our attention to the individual plays and examine them closer, with the exception of the Leir play and Spencer's Faerie Queene which demand to be discussed separately.

4.2. Geoffrey of Monmouth

According to Perrett, Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* ("The History of the Kings of Britain") is the first time the story makes its appearance in literature about 1135 A. D. Perrett also claims that this so-called history is merely a translation of an ancient book *britannici sermonis* (p. 1).

Essentially, *Historia regum Britanniae* (further on referred to as '*History*') represents a largely fictitious history that Geoffrey constructed for Britons, partly based on the work of earlier medieval historians like Gildas, Nennius and Bede, partly from Welsh genealogies and saints' lives, partly from sources now lost and unidentifiable and partly from his own imagination. Several of the kings described there are based on genuine historical figures, but at the same time, they appear in unhistorical narratives.

As Wells writes, most critics agree that there can be no value ascribed to it as a history; rather, they regard it as valuable piece of medieval literature. It is true that the historicity of Geoffrey's account was often questioned despite the fact that Leir and his daughter and successor Cordeile (a variant form of the name) were regularly listed in

genealogies of the English monarchs and imaginary portraits of them were printed, for example, in *Genealogy of the Kings of England* (printed around 1560) (p. 18).

This literary work, during Shakespeare's day apparently available only as a Latin manuscript until an English translation was printed in 1718, claims to chronicle the kings who lived in Britain over a period of two thousand years. The pseudo-historical narrative starts at the time of Brut, great-grandson of Aeneas and fabled founder of the British race and continues until the Anglo-Saxons assumed control of Britain around the 7th century.

As Kossick writes, Brut is claimed to be the forefather of Bladud, who was a father of Leir, Gorboduc, Cymbeline and many others. As Geoffrey writes, Leir, a sixth king after Brut, was a legendary founder of the city of Kaerleir (Leicester) who reigned in the eight century before Christ. The decision to divide his kingdom comes when Leir had been king for 60 years (p. 11).

According to Hilský, Geoffrey's story centers on the proud king, the love test of his three daughters and the consequences of the political division of the country. In this version, the outcome of the division of the kingdom leads to the older daughters' husbands' revolt against the king. They take away Leir's power, all his rights and privileges forcing him to flee to France to Cordeilla, whom he previously disowned. Together they take over the kingdom once again and Leir becomes the ruler again. After his death, Cordeilla becomes the queen.

Interestingly, the story does not end here, the sons of Cordeilla's sisters – Margan and Cunedag rebel against her, put her into prison. Desperate, Cordeilla commits a suicide. Afterwards, Margan and Cunedag disunite, which produces a civil war that devastates the whole country. Finally, Margan is killed and Cunedag takes over the throne in Britain (p. 14).

4.2. Holinshed's Chronicle

As Perrett writes, this literary work was originally written by Wolfe in 1548, only then, after his death, completed by Holinshed with the assistance of Harrison and finally published in 1577. It is estimated that Shakespeare read its second edition, published in 1587, in three volumes (p. 87).

According to Kossick, Holinshed recounts the story in a quick-moving, matter-of-fact prose that differs in detail only very slightly from that of Geoffrey of Monmouth. Holinshed glosses over the matter of decreasing of Leir's entourage and the end of the story sees Leir reinstated two years before his death. Subsequently, Cordeilla succeeds his father, and, as in Geoffrey's *History,* she reigns for five years until she is dethroned by Margan and Cunedag, who take her as a prisoner. In Holinshed's words, they 'laid hir fast in ward, wherewith she took such girefe, being a woman of manlie courage, and despairing to recover libertie, there she slue herself..' (p. 14).

Kossick also further notes that both in Holinshed's, as well as in Geoffrey's work, only a glancing reference is made to the idea that Cordelia is Leir's favorite child in opposition to Shakespeare, who chooses to place particular emphasis on this preference for Cordelia – 'I loved her most', Lear says (I, i) (p. 15).

4.3. Sidney's Arcadia

The Arcadia is widely considered to be by far Sidney's most ambitious work, as significant in its own way as his sonnets. According to Ford, Sir Philip Sidney wrote it primarily for the entertainment of his sister, the famous Countess of Pembroke. The work is a romance that combines pastoral elements with a mood derived from the Hellenistic model of Heliodorus. As published in the sixteenth century, the narrative follows the Greek model: stories are nested within each other, and different story-lines are intertwined. The work enjoyed great popularity for more than a century after its publication (p. 197).

As cited on Wikipedia, according to a widely-told story, King Charles I quoted lines from the book as he mounted the scaffold to be executed. *Arcadia* exists in two significantly different versions. Sidney wrote an early version during a stay at Mary Herbert's house; this version is narrated in a straightforward, sequential manner. Later, Sidney began to revise the work on a more ambitious plan. He completed most of the first three books, but the project was unfinished at the time of his death. After a publication of the first three books (1590) sparked interest, the extant version was fleshed out with material from the first version (1593).

Now, after reading these "primary sources" of King Lear, it is easy to notice that none of these versions reveals precisely *how* Cordeilla dies, they only agree that she commits suicide. Another thing worth mentioning, even a bit striking, is the fact that, putting King Lear aside, the differences between them are minor at best as well. While Shakespeare has been accused of plagiarism, no such thing happened with the authors as Holinshed, Spencer or Sidney. It would seem that the greatest of writers or those considered to belong to the greatest writers, are looked at much more closely and therefore often subjected to most harsh criticism unlike the less acclaimed authors.

5. King Lear/King Leir: dates

5.1. Folio vs. Quarto

As problematic as it may be to determine, it is important to trace the process of creation of King Lear since it may affect our view of previously mentioned "borrowing" on Shakespeare's part. In doing so, we have to deal with a few uncertainties.

First of all, it is essential to introduce and explain the terms "Folio" and "Quarto" as it plays an important role in determining the play's date of origin. According to Wells, the play was printed, for the very first time, in 1608, in a volume described as *The True Chronicle History of King Lear*, known as the "First Quarto". This constitutes the base text, which all other versions that came later only adapt. It was reprinted with minor changes, made probably by the printing house staff, in 1619. Furthermore, another text incorporating major changes was printed in 1623, in the collected edition known as the "First Folio" making its appearance seven years after Shakespeare's death.

The changes that occur here are considered to be made with intention to adapt the play to performance. During Shakespeare's time, an acting company could change the script as it saw fit, wit or without the playwright's approval. Thus, it is possible that the editors improved or weakened some of Shakespeare's manuscripts. Therefore, it is not certain that the person who altered the play was the play's original author, but there is reason to believe that it was Shakespeare himself who made these changes, since they display the same level of literary and dramatic accomplishment. We also cannot underestimate the fact that Shakespeare continued to write plays for the company of actors who had originally performed the play and thus, he may have acted in altering the original Folio upon a suggestion of one of his colleagues. With regard to all this, the First Folio text represents the first known theatrical adaptation of the play, and very probably also the only one in which Shakespeare took part (p. 3-6).

As Wells continues, since then and well through the course of the whole seventeenth century, Shakespeare's play of King Lear continued to be available in print in two separate versions derived from the texts of 1608 and 1623. Both of them were several times reprinted with emendation to lesser or larger extent.

However, it was during the 1970s and early 1980s when a mass of bibliographical and other evidence emerged, pointing out the theory that the Quarto and the Folio texts are, in contradiction to the widely spread belief (up until that point) that they represent a single lost play, in fact two distinct Shakespearian versions. It is assumed that the earlier version was printed from his original manuscript before the play had been put to rehearsal, while the other one from a text already incorporating the changes for the performance (p. 6, 7).

5.2. Dates of publication

Determining the date of publication of Shakespeare's King Lear is what ultimately may offer arguments in favor or against the assumption that it is a slightly altered version of the previous anonymous play. However, this is complicated by a number of uncertainties.

As Wells writes, before the Quarto was published, it was entered in the register of the Stationers' Company on 26 November 1607 as "A booke called. Mr William Shakespeare his historye of Kinge Lear as yt was played before the Kinges maiestie at Whitehall vppon St Stephans knight at Christm^{a}s Last by his ma^{ties} servantes playinge vsually at the globe on the banksyde". As we can notice from this entry, and there is no reason to doubt it, the play had been performed at Whitehall 'vppon Stephans knight at [Christmas] Last', which means on 26 December 1606. It is unlikely that this would have been the first performance as plays were normally tried out in the public theatres before being offered at court. On this basis, the play was probably written several months (at least) before December 1606.

As to the anonymous play, by some critics an unquestionable source, it was published as *'The True Chronicle history of King Lear and his three daughters, Gonoril, Ragan and Cordella'* in 1605 and entered in the Register the same year on 8 May as '*the Tragecall historie of Kinge Leir and his Three Daughters*' stating on its title-page to have been "divers and sundry times lately acted". This is supposedly the play recorded in Philip Henslowe's papers, where it is not marked as new, instead, it says there that it has been performed twice at the Rose by the combined Queen's and Sussex's Men in April 1594. Apparently, the plan to publish this play had been there

already in 1594, following the performances, since 'The moste famous Chronicle historye of Leire kinge of England and his Three Daughters' was entered in the Stationer's Register on 14 May 1594. However, the intention to publish this play came to nothing as this entry was not followed by any publication (p. 10).

With this, the fact should be considered that during Shakespeare's day, plays were written for the acting companies whose primary purpose was to stage plays rather than publish them. To print and sell a play in a book form was to give the rival acting companies and theatergoers access to the script, thereby diminishing its potential to profit from stage performances. MacDonald comments on this, explaining the reason why also not all of Shakespeare's plays were printed during his lifetime:

> 'The plays of the first professional companies [in Shakespeare's day] were written mainly by actors themselves. . . . The players were reluctant to allow their dramas to be printed. They apparently thought that if a play could be read, few people would wish to see it acted. They may also have feared that their plays, if printed, would be appropriated for acting by rival companies. This reluctance explains the fact that only eighteen of Shakespeare's plays were printed during his lifetime. They were published in small pamphlets called quartos, which sold for only sixpence a piece.'
>
> (p. 74)

This might have been the reason why the *Leir* play had to wait for its publication until 1605. Now, according to W.W. Greg, as quoted in Wilson's King Lear, there are two odd things concerning the 1605 *Leir* publication, which suggest that Shakespeare's play was in existence before 8 May 1605, contrary to other beliefs.

Firstly, in the entry, the *Leir* play was originally called a 'Tragedie', but was subsequently altered to 'Tragecall historie'. As the *Leir* play is not a tragedy, the reference to the tragic in the Register might have been caused by confusion with Shakespeare's recent performances of the similar story, only with a tragic ending.

Secondly, the entry also refers to the *Leir* play as having been 'latelie Acted', while the title-page of the play, as published in 1605, also states 'As it hath bene diuers and sundry times lately acted'. The claim that the old play had been recently performed may not be true: title-page information is often unreliable and the fact that no company is mentioned arouses suspicion. Now, with this comes another possibility which is that the play performed and subsequently registered in 1594 was not the same play as the

one entered and published in 1605 (p. 12). Greg further comments on this saying 'I find it very difficult to believe that this respectable but old-fashioned play, dating back in all probability to about 1590, had been "divers and sundry times lately acted" in 1605'.

Yet according to Ioppolo, no previous critic of the play has considered the fact that the *Leir* play was an especially topical play and more than suitable for revival in 1603 and afterward, possibly with alterations or revisions to update it (p. 6). Queen Elizabeth I died only recently (in March 1603) at the age of 70 and the topic of the play would appeal to her successor, James I since his wish to unite Scotland with England and the dangers of a divided kingdom were often the topic of his speeches. The notoriety of the 1603 case of Cordell Annesley could also have contributed to a revival of *Leir* play. Cordell Annesley was a daughter of a gentleman pensioner of Queen Elizabeth I, Sir Bryan Annesley, who petitioned against the government to protect her "poor aged and daily dying father" from the cruelty of Grace and the other of her two sisters who tried to get him declared insane so that they could take control of his estate. After the father's death in 1604, Cordell raised a monument to declare her "dutiful love unto her father and mother". Furthermore, critics argue that Shakespeare was familiar with this contemporary story and that it represents another very possible inspiration for him. They continue suggesting that the knowledge of this story might have contributed to his decision to compose a story that draws on similar issues or at least served as an inspiration for naming the king's youngest daughter Cordelia.

According to this, the 1605 claim that the *Leir* play had been lately acted may then in fact be legitimate rather than a publisher's exaggeration or mistake. If the play remained with the Queen's Men, they probably continued acting from their 1594 book, which may have been updated or altered since then. The 1605 printer's copy could have been thus made from this copy at a time when the play had ceased being performed and could be sold off for publication (p. 6).

But, if it was indeed Shakespeare's play that has been sundry times lately acted by the spring of 1605, it is easy enough to believe that the publishers hoped that it would be mistaken for Shakespeare's recent dramatic achievement or at least derive some reflected glory from it (p. 13). Upon this realization, it seems eminently possible that Shakespeare wrote *King Lear* late in 1604 or, at least, early in 1605.

In any event, if we accept that Shakespeare knew this play, the question arises - how did he get to know it? Had he read the play or even acted in it? Wells argues that if Shakespeare necessarily used the printed text, it would prove that he began writing his King Lear no earlier than May 1605. It is certain that he had a close knowledge of this text, but not at all certain that this knowledge was derived from reading it in print. It is possible that Shakespeare had access to manuscript, the other option is that he may have seen the performance of the play, perhaps even more than once, or he may have even acquired familiarity with it by acting in it himself (p. 11). This would mean that Shakespeare would have to have read it manuscript or to have derived his knowledge of it either from seeing it performed long before, or form acting in it. Even though these possibilities may seem unlikely, they cannot be simply ruled out.

According to Britannica Encyclopedia, it is not precisely known what libraries were available to Shakespeare. The Huguenot family of Mountjoys, with whom he lodged in London, presumably possessed French books. Moreover, he seems to have enjoyed an interesting connection with the London book trade. It also cannot escape notice that Richard Field, a son of a close associate of Shakespeare's father and already an established printer of serious literature in London, was an exact contemporary of Shakespeare. He could have been very easily Shakespeare's schoolmate, and although there is no proof that those two were so much as friends, it is more than likely that Shakespeare would be able to use Field's literary contacts to obtain certain manuscripts if he wished so, seeing that Field published Shakespeare's first poems and certain relationship has been established between them.

6. Spencer's Faerie Queene

Faerie Queene is an allegorical epic poem written in praise of Queen Elizabeth I, published first in three books in 1590, and later in six books in 1596. The poem was published with the help of Sir Walter Raleigh, who owned large lands to the east of Spenser's estate. He and Spencer first met in 1589 and quickly became well acquainted with one another's poetry. In a letter to Raleigh in 1589, which can be found in the preface to the epic in majority of its published editions, Spenser introduces his plan for The Faerie Queene, describing his intention to present allegorically virtues through Arthurian knights in the mythical "Faeryeland.". The letter outlines plans for 24 books: 12 based each on a different knight who illustrates one of 12 "private virtues," and 12 more centered on King Arthur presenting twelve "public virtues." When published in 1596, the epic presented six stories, each telling the adventure of one of knights belonging to the court of Gloriana, Queen of *faërie land,* each of whom impersonate one of the following virtues:

- Book I: Holiness
- Book II: Temperance
- Book III: Chastity
- Book IV: Friendship
- Book V: Justice
- Book VI: Courtesy

In its present form, *The Faerie Queene* consists of six books and a fragment known as the "Mutabilitie Cantos". In addition to the above expressed six virtues, the Letter to Raleigh suggests Spencer added another, seventh virtue, the virtue of Magnificence represented by Arthur, which ("according to Aristotle and the rest") is "the perfection of all the rest, and conteineth in it them all", while the Faerie Queene herself represents Glory (hence her name, Gloriana) (Wikipedia).

The Faerie Queene celebrates and memorializes the Tudor dynasty, suggesting that the Tudor lineage can be connected to King Arthur. The poem is deeply allegorical and allusive and many prominent Elizabethans could have found themselves partially

represented by one or more of Spenser's figures. The most prominent example is Queen Elizabeth I - she appears most prominently in her guise as Gloriana, the Faerie Queene herself, but also in Books III and IV as the virgin Belphoebe, daughter of Chrysogonee and twin to Amoret, the embodiment of womanly married love.

Regarding the plan outlined in the letter to Raleigh, it is clear that, like other poets, Spenser must have modified it. The stories actually published were those of Holiness (the Red Cross Knight), Temperance (Sir Guyon), Chastity (Britomart, a female knight), Friendship (ostensibly concerning Triamond and Cambello, although these play a small part), Justice (Artegall), and Courtesy (Calidore). As a setting, Spenser invented the "land of Faerye" and its queen, Gloriana.

The core scheme of *The Faerie Queene* is that Faerie Queene holds her annual feast for 12 days, during which 12 different adventures undertaken by 12 knights happen. The form Spencer chose to express his story in is a completely newly invented nine-line stanza, since then termed the "Spenserian stanza". This stanza consists of eight lines of iambic pentameter followed by a single alexandrine, a twelve-syllable iambic line. The final line typically has a caesura, or break, after the first three feet. The rhyme scheme of these lines is "ababbcbcc." A perfect example of the form is the first stanza of Book I (Britannica).

The Faerie Queene was immediately successful, partly thanks to its finding favor with Queen Elizabeth. She named Spenser poet laureate, and he assumed a position with Geoffrey Chaucer as a premier poet of England.

As Kossick writes, Spencer keeps essentially to the same storyline as Geoffrey, although, in similarity to Holinshed, he also omits details of Leir's gradually reduced entourage. However, it is surprising that Spencer, so often associated with discursiveness, not to say verbosity, managed to condense the entire chain of events into six highly concentrated stanzas without losing any of the main narrative elements (p. 14). It is this version, from which Shakespeare borrowed not only the form of the name Cordelia, so much more attractive and musical than any of the forms used by the chroniclers, but also the manner of her death. In Spencer's portrayal, the reader finds that Cordelia dies by hanging, but he keeps the idea that it was a suicide: 'Till wearie of that wretched life, her selfe she hong.'

7. King Leir

According to Wells, King Leir enjoyed modest success in its own time when the two recorded performances of 1594 drew receipts of thirty-eight and twenty-six shillings respectively. As receipts ranged from three to forty-three shillings, the takings for this play were better than average. When compared to the other stories about Leir, this version remains the longest one, possibly due to the fact that it was the first dramatization of the story (p. 20). Since it is an anonymous piece of literature, discussions over its author took place on numerous occasions. According to Wikipedia, the discussions usually result in attributing it to either English dramatist Thomas Kyd or Robert Greene – an English playwright, poet, pamphleteer, and prose writer.

As Ioppolo writes, the play typifies the repertory of the Queen's Men, presenting a slightly different basic story and bringing in a strong Christian ethos. Although much of the story is adapted from the sources, there appear entirely new characters which cannot be found in any of the source material - Skalliger, Perillus, Mumford, the Messenger and the two watchmen who fail to capture Mumford. Also, the scenes of the attempted murder of Leir by the Messenger, the wooing scene of Cordelia and Gallian king or the reunion scene on the coast of France do not appear in any of the sources (p. 11).

According to Ioppolo, over the years, the Leir play came to be treated as merely a slightly defective touchstone by which to measure the true value of Shakespeare's King Lear, having not been properly evaluated on its own merit. One of the reasons may be the critics' apparent lack of understanding of the numerous sources from which both *Leir* and *Lear* were adapted. That is why the critics have attributed to the Leir author the creation of the plot, character devices, an unlikely love test including the subsequent feud between the king and his three daughters, which the author in fact inherited from his sources (p. 1). It would be a mistake to treat the *Leir* play as a purely original, detached piece of literature that has inspired and influenced work of another playwright not realizing and acknowledging that the *Leir* author had sources to use in the first place as well.

8. King Lear vs. King Leir

Generally, critics differ as to the skill with which Shakespeare constructed King Lear from the sources that were available to him. For instance, John Middleton Murry, as quoted in Kenneth Muir's King Lear, expressed that the result of Shakespeare's work was a failed piece of literature mainly due to Shakespeare's 'terrible primitive revulsion against sex' (p. 245). On the other hand, the claims in favor of Shakespeare's plagiarizing the *Leir* play were contradicted by Lynch, who wrote that 'in rewriting *Leir*, Shakespeare does not merely borrow hints of plot and character, but refutes and counters the source text – in effect, Shakespeare writes an anti-Leir play'(p. 39).

On the whole, however, Shakespeare keeps to the main outlines of the *Leir* play, but the most prominent distinctions that make his King Lear's outcome different from all the previous versions are, firstly, the two plot lines of the play, e. g. the creation of a Gloucester subplot, inspired by the misadventures of the Paphlagonian King in Sidney's *Arcadia*, secondly, Lear's descent to madness and, thirdly, of course, the tragic ending.

As Halio writes, unlike all previous accounts, King Lear concludes not with the old king restored to his throne, but with Cordelia and Lear dead. Though the French in the *Leir* play invade Britain victoriously, no one dies and 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 Cordelia. Avoiding the happy end of the old tragicomedy, Shakespeare seems intent on stripping away every possible consolation from the story and instead chooses to present it with the starkest reality (p. 6).

However, it would be too sciolistic to characterize the differences this briefly, therefore the following subchapters focus on various aspects of the play, comparing it to the *Leir* play.

8.1. Characters and their portrayal differences

As has been previously mentioned, the Leir play has introduced to the story a couple of new characters, such as Skalliger, Perillus, Mumford, the Messenger and the two watchmen, some of which can obviously find their counterparts in King Lear. In

essence, Skalliger can be seen as a counterpart to Oswald, Perillus to Kent, but even Shakespeare introduced a new character – the Fool.

It is interesting that Shakespeare omits several melodramatic incidents, such as Gonoril and Ragan's murder plot against their father or Perillus's offer to let a starving Leir have his arm to eat. Also, the Gallian King has a substantial role in the old play, but Shakespeare limited him to the first scene and in addition 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.

Furthermore, as Reibetanz writes, the reader of King Lear sees actions of many characters as if through the dark glass. For instance, the affair of the heart between the king of France and Cordelia, as well as Edmund's affairs with Regan and Goneril take place literally behind the scenes, encouraging thus reader's active participation in understanding the play in order to keep up with the author (p. 52).

Leir

As Lynch writes, probably the most distinctive feature of the Leir play, in opposition to King Lear, is in the extreme piety and virtue of the king. Apart from his rash response to Cordella during the love test, the Leir in the old play is not once depicted out of temper. Right from the opening scene, Leir is depicted as a king of immense, almost unwavering piety, which he himself claims, and at no point in the play does anything make the reader doubt it (p. 39). This is what Leir says:

> For her except, whom I confesse I wrongd,
> Through doting frenzy, and o're-jelous love,
> There lives not any under heavens bright eye,
> That can convict me of impiety. (376)

Similarly, Leir's main motives for resigning his throne are devout, almost saintly: "I would fayne resigne these earthly cares / And I thinke upon the welfare of my soule," "And here I do freely dispossesse my selfe....And take me to my prayers and my beades" (337,350). There is also a difference in depicting the love-contest. In the *Leir* play the love contest is not originally the king's idea. Leir's queen has died and the funeral has just taken place, his three daughters are unmarried and he wants to resign his

crown and devote himself to the contemplative life. By doing this – marrying his daughters and dividing his kingdom thus escaping the responsibility of a ruler, he wants to kill two birds with one stone. One of his lords, Skalliger advises him to modify his plan. He recommends him:

> To make them each a jointure more or less
> As is their worth, to them that love profess. (1.35)

However, the virtuous Leir insists upon dividing his kingdom into equal shares, acting against the advice of Skalliger:

> No more, nor lesse, but even all alike,
> My zeal is fixt, all fashioned in one mould:
> Wherefore unpartiall shall my censure be,
> Both old and young shall have alike for me. (1.37-40)

But he subsequently decides to conduct the contest and when he announces that, he speaks as if the idea had been his from the very start:

> I am resolv'd, and even now my mind
> Doth meditate a sudden stratagem,
> To try which of my daughters loves me best. (1.75-77)

However, according to Wilson, the playwright of the *Leir* play is inconsistent. No writer of the pre-Shakespearean versions gives any reasonable excuse for Lear's rejection of Cordelia and that is true for this play as well. Having given the king a rational and goodhearted motive for arranging the love contest, he makes him react to Cordella's honesty in an intemperate way which goes in the opposite direction from Leir's so far reasonable actions. The probable reason for this is that the author does not provide the reader with a consistent characterization of the king at the start. It is clear that Shakespeare does not follow this pattern since he manages to present the reasons for the love test perfectly clearly, to the king's disadvantage (p. 18).

Also, Leir's wrong appraisal of the love test situation is presented in the play not as a sign of deep-rooted foolishness, but as isolated slip of judgment in an otherwise virtuous king. He is the, however, quick to realize his mistake, contrary to Shakespeare's

Lear. Generally, *Leir* seems to be a much stronger king than *Lear*, less prone to suffer a nervous breakdown or to go insane when something goes wrong.

Lear

Shakespeare, on the other hand, in reworking the source text rejected both the Christian context of the play and the Calvinist piety of the king. According to Lynch, Shakespeare portrays what is seen as a single error of Leir as only one of Lear's many character vices, he delineates Lear as a king of immense pride and customary impatience, as a king who easily succumbs to flattery and accepts it rather than being able to recognize that he is not loved by all of his daughters, only by one of them. Lear organizes the love test as a spectacle of vanity, as an attempt to wring the public adoration at how much he is loved. Contrary to the Leir's refusal of unequal dowries, Lear arranges a contest for larger shares, even though he, quite ironically, has already divided the map, apparently with the God-like presumption that he can predict the responses of his daughters. Shakespeare refashions the king from a man possessed with overwhelming grace who, after realizing foolishness of his actions, returns to a state of grace almost instantly, to a man in whom the struggle for salvation is a strenuous and ongoing process. Contrary to the prayerful and retiring king in the *Leir* play, who retains not even a single servant, Lear struggles to retain all the privileges and benefits of royalty, while free from all cares and burdens (p. 42).

Furthermore, Lynch observes that while the king of the old play suffers primarily from outward physical hardships, mainly in a form of hunger: "I do faint for want of sustenance", "How neere they are to death for want of food", "Vouchsafe to save us from the gripe of famine" (389-90), Shakespeare's Lear endures rather inward "rage", a "tempest in the mind", in which he is "cut to brains" (21.76, 11.12, 20.181) (p. 51).

Also, while the pious Leir spends the most of the play in the faithful company of Perillus, Lear goes through many phases of companionship, starting with the worldly and pragmatic Fool, then spending time in a company of wise Edgar and culminating in reunion with Cordelia. When that happens, Cordelia offers her father forgiveness which he does not deserve and which is in contradiction to the rationalist philosophy of the

opening scene. Indeed, Lear may be really a man "more sinned against than sinning", but he is definitely a man forgiven than he deserves (p. 52).

Cordella/Cordelia

As Lynch writes, in the *Leir* play, Cordella is portrayed in a similar pious and saintly way as the king is, only more so. Yet, and probably exactly because of that, she is remarkably passive, a sort of embodiment of passive faith instead of active works. She does not venture on a journey to England to rescue her father, she only accidentally happens upon him while on a country walk (p. 50).

Lynch continues that Shakespeare, although departing from the overall Christian atmosphere of the *Leir* play, describes the pre-Christian Cordelia also in a series of highly suggestive Christian images. Basically, she is conceived as a Christ-like figure, which is indicated either by words applied to her by other characters or by words she herself speaks. Nevertheless, together with Kent, she represents the only character in King Lear with which a Christian portrayal can be associated. The following verses indicate it, although the first of them was deleted in the Folio text (these are from Quarto). The first one shows Cordelia's grief over her father's suffering, the second even echoes words of the child Christ quoted in the second chapter of St Luke:

> There she shook
> The holy water from her heavenly eyes
> That clamour moistened. (17.30-31)

> O dear father,
> It is thy business that I go about. (18.24-25)

> Thou hast one daughter
> Who redeems nature from the general curse
> Which twain hath brought her to. (20.194-96)

These images evoke the saintliness of Cordella, giving Shakespeare's Cordelia an air of reformational faith and virtues of counter-reformational works. While her counterpart in the old play relies on fate, Cordelia raises an army to go about her father's business, taking active measures to redeem nature (p. 51).

Perillus/Kent

According to Lynch, Shakespeare reflects and completes the Christianity of the king of France in the figure of Kent, whose service and self-sacrifice well exceeded the virtues of his counterpart, Perillus (p. 44). Even though Perillus is briefly threatened by Leir, he is never banished. Instead, he is rather embraced by the king as a faithful friend and companion throughout the play. Kent, in contrast, is despised and rejected and returns as Caius to serve a considerably less deserving king.

Gonoril, Regan

According to Wilson, both sisters are in the *Leir* play presented as ordinary in their littleness, envious and competing with greater natural beauty of Cordella, whom they regard as "proud pert Peat", while Shakespeare depicts them as moral monsters having quintessential evil in their hearts, thus withdrawing from them the kind of real-life actuality that they have in the old play. On the other hand, Shakespeare's encouragement of reader's imagination makes them seem frighteningly real to us in a deeper sense (p. 19). Lynch adds that 'while in *Leir* the evil daughters maintain a unified alliance and at the end escape unharmed, in *Lear* the unholy alliance of Gonoril and Regan quickly breaks down in "likely wars" (6.10) and sexual rivalry, and in the end murder and suicide'(p. 54).

Gallian king/King of France

There is also a difference in the portrayal and importance placed on the character of the French king. According to Lynch, in the *Leir* play, the Gallian king is not even present during the love test and instead arrives several scenes later to woo Cordella, while in King Lear, the king of France becomes a major player from the start (p. 43).

8.2. Portrayal differences of storm in the story

While the thunder serves in the old play as a well-timed strike upon the would-be assassin, Shakespeare's storm has no effect upon Oswald or Gonoril or Regan or Edmund. It is during the storm, when Lear's sufferings reach their climax making thus the storm the centre of the play.

In the old play, only faint indications of the storm can be found. There, a 'Messenger or murtherer' is instructed by Ragan to kill Leir and Perillus. When he is about to do so, Leir and Perillus try to dissuade him, describing to him the pains of hell, and at that moment 'it thunders'. The Messenger 'quakes, and lets fall the Dagger' and Leir and Perillus are saved. As Wilson says, in the *Leir* play, we have thunder and lightening which appear to be the voice of the Divine intervening to save Leir and his friend, but, of course, on a lower level this can be seen as merely serving the purpose to keep alive a hero destined to survive and to repossess his crown.

Shakespeare, on the other hand, transforms this nature's intervention into a mighty tempest, which thus achieves to have a much more remarkable dramatic function. The storm also mirrors the turmoil in the mind of Lear. The world of physical elements reflects the disharmony that has been produced in the world of men (p. 36).

9. Conclusion

This bachelor paper discussed the issue of plagiarism in connection with Shakespeare's King Lear. The second chapter dealt with the concept of intertextuality and definition of plagiarism and literary borrowing showing how these two can be distinguished. It has been said that it proves extremely hard to determine which idea is new and which is just a variation of any previously expressed idea. The next part of this chapter is devoted to notions of authorship and author during Shakespeare's own day and today, shedding light at the values of society concerning creative writing in 16th century and beyond, which seem to justify Shakespeare's writing technique.

The following chapter concerns Leo Tolstoy's pamphlet 'Shakespeare and the Drama' representing probably the most harsh critique Shakespeare and his King Lear have received so far. Tolstoy claims that Shakespeare cannot be regarded a genius, not even a natural writer, saying that his language does not show anything common with poetry or art. He claims that King Leir is a much better play in comparison to King Lear and that not only did Shakespeare plagiarize it, he ruined it. On the other hand, it has to be taken into account that Tolstoy felt probably much stronger about King Lear as a result of his own personal experience and that he obviously was not the most credible critic of this play as well, since his mother tongue was not English, but Russian.

In what follows, the paper deals with the evolution of the Leir story and closer attention is paid to three of the five most prominent sources critics claim is certain Shakespeare had used in his construction of King Lear – Geoffrey of Monmouth, Sidney's Arcadia and Holinshed's Chronicle .

The next chapter offers greater details on the publication dates of both King Lear and King Leir and also explains the difference between the Folio and Quarto editions of King Lear.

Chapters six and seven centers on Spencer's Faerie Queene and King Leir, discussing their value on their own and showing the possible similarities with Shakespeare's play. It is remarkable that Spencer managed to condense the Leir story into mere six stanzas while not omitting any important moments in the story, King Leir, on the other hand, represents the longest version of the story.

The last chapter focuses on comparison of King Leir with King Lear starting by general overview of the plays' plots and then focusing on characters and particularly the role of the storm in the story.

Bringing all the arguments expressed in this paper together, it seems quite clear that what Shakespeare did was most certainly not plagiarism. It has been stated that period during which Shakespeare lived did not place such an importance on the author and their identifying. The audience did not care whether the play they were watching was using some ideas from another play or discussing similar issues as long as it had anything new to say as well. They did not question whether the author using ideas of another has asked the original author for permission to use them as we do today.

It appears most probable that as any creative artist, if we choose to believe his sound reputation, Shakespeare was constantly seeking new and new impulses and inspiration. Thus, what appears to have been the case was that he was simply struck by this theme, motive he had encountered, whether as a spectator watching the play, actor or having read it in manuscript , and he felt intrigued to further develop it.

It is fairly common in today's society that the same works are being re-worked by others again and again, whether it is in art, music, film or literature and hardly anyone seems to stop and think about it in terms of plagiarism. I t is a freedom of expression that allows an artist to take deliberately a work of someone else and re-fashion it in their own way, bringing in new ideas, new artistic value and enriching the society and culture we all share.

Although some may still regard King Lear a patchwork, a well-mixed cocktail of the source material, we cannot diminish the artistic value and, despite reasoning of some, a rather different approach to the tale, it would seem fair to say that Shakespeare showed sufficient amount of originality in order to be discharged from such claims.

10. Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá otázkou plagiátorství v Shakespearově díle Král Lear, což bylo mezi kritiky v poslední době předmětem mnoha diskuzí. Příběh o králi Leirovi je velice starý příběh spjatý s anglickou kulturou. Vychází ze starých povídek o králi se třemi dcerami, který chce zjistit, která z nich ho miluje nejvíce, i když se objevují i názory, že Leir byl skutečnou historickou postavou. Již v roce 1135, byla vydána Historie velké Británie, jejímž autorem je Geoffrey z Monmouthu. Od tohoto okamžiku se příběh objevuje v mnoha dílech, až v roce 1606 Shakespeare vydává Krále Leara. Je známo, že Shakespeare je považován za výjimečného dramatika a básníka, a proto mnohé zaskočilo zjištění, zejména s ohledem na současnou společnost a její morální hodnoty, že mnoho z Shakespearových děl čerpá z předchozích příběhů, mnohdy více než bychom očekávali.

Současná doba klade veliké nároky na originalitu a přisuzování uznání skutečným autorům nových myšlenek, a na odhalování a zamezování plagiátorství. Proto fakt, že kritici označili Shakespeara za plagiátora, pokud ponecháme stranou fakt že samotná identita Shakespeara je zpochybňována, vyvolal další vlnu akademických diskuzí.

Tato práce se tedy zabývá otázkou intertextuality, která je úzce spojena právě s pojmem plagiátorství. Nejprve práce nabízí definici intertextuality a její celkový koncept, poté přechází k plagiátorství a jeho rozpoznávání. Je nutné si uvědomit, že je velice složité rozpoznat co je nová myšlenka, a co už může být považováno za variaci myšlenky vyjádřené dříve někým jiným. Dále je také vhodné si uvědomit, že vše co činíme, ať už ve sféře umělecké či v jiné oblasti je nevyhnutelně ovlivněno dřívějšími podněty a je tedy možné, že při např. psaní románu či básně neuvědoměle používáme výrazy či slovní spojení, které jsme dříve viděli v jiných dílech. Plagiátorství je někdy přirovnáváno ke krádeži nejde však o totéž, jelikož není zdaleka tak jednoduché cíleně se naučit vyvarovat se plagiátorství myšlenek jako krádeži fyzického objektu. Dále se práce zabývá rozdílem mezi plagiátorstvím a legitimním vypůjčením idey. Poslední část první kapitoly je věnována pojetí autora a autorství v době Romantismu, která poskytuje argumenty ve prospěch Shakespeara. Jistě není překvapivé, že pojetí autora nebylo v 16.

a 17. století stejné jako dnes, v této době byl autor chápán jako jeden z mnoha, kteří se podílejí na tvorbě knihy, přičemž určení autora určitého příběhu nebyl přikládán takový význam.

Třetí kapitola se věnuje brožuře Lva Nikolajeviče Tolstoje "Shakespeare a Drama", který je patrně autorem nejtvrdší kritiky Shakespearova Krále Leara i Shakespeara samotného. V této kritice Tolstoj uvádí, že Shakespeare nemůže být právem považován za génia, dokonce ani za přirozeného spisovatele, a že jazyk který používá není v žádném případě poetický či umělecký. Tolstoj argumentuje, že Shakespeare Krále Leara ukradl a opsal podle mnohem lepší hry Král Leir. Jako každá kritika, i tato má dvě strany mince a Orwell, který přeložil brožuru z ruštiny do angličtiny poukazuje na důvody,které tento "útok" na Shakespeara staví do poněkud jiného světla.

Čtvrtá kapitola se soustředí na možné zdroje, ze kterých Shakespeare čerpal, jelikož jich bylo více, přestože se akademici obecně shodují, že vliv Krále Leira je nejmarkantnější. Kapitola představuje Sidneyho Arcadiu, Holinshedovu Kroniku a Geoffreyho Historii Velké Británie spolu s vývojem příběhu o králi s třemi dcerami. Tato část zkoumá rozdíly v pojetí příběhu a poukazuje na elementy, které z nich Shakespeare použil.

Následuje bližší pohled na data vydání obou her, což je velice důležité při určování, zda vůbec měl Shakespeare přístup k textu Leira či jak důvěrně tuto hru mohl znát. Dále je zde objasněn a charakterizován rozdíl mezi dvěma edicemi Krále Leara, tj. kvartovým vydáním a foliovým formátem, jelikož je možné, že se jedná o dvě odlišné verze Krále Leara.

Kapitoly šest a sedm se věnují každá samostatně dvěma nejvýznamnějším zdrojům Krále Leara, a to Spencerově Královně víl a Leirovi. Tato část se zabývá podstatou těchto děl a jejich místem v soudobé literatuře.

Poslední kapitola, kapitola osm, se již soustřeďuje na porovnání Krále Leira a Krále Leara. Zkoumáno je odlišné spodobnění postav, jiná úloha bouřky ve hře a celkový charakter her.

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ÚDAJE PRO KNIHOVNICKOU DATABÁZI

Název práce	The Intertextuality of Shakespeare's 'King Lear' in Relation to 'The True Chronicle History of King Leir' and Spencer's 'Faerie Queene'
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Rok obhajoby	2007
Vedoucí práce	doc. PhDr. Bohuslav Mánek, CSc.
Anotace	Práce se zabývá otázkou plagiátorství Shakespearova Krále Leara.
Klíčová slova	Shakespeare – Král Lear – Plagiátor – Intertextualita – Král Leir