

The Introduction of a Sub-plot in Shakespeare's Play *King Lear* and its Dramatic Effect

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Abstract

There has been so much controversy about the inclusion of a sub-plot in Shakespeare's play *King Lear*. Some critics think that having a secondary story, woven within the main story, is a defect and lessens the dramatic effect of the main plot in particulars, and the whole story in general, while others believe that it is an advantage and it enhances the dramatic effect of the main story. To come up with a clear idea and to answer the research question, which is, whether Shakespeare should have included a sub-plot in his tragedy, and in order to account for this intuition, and to substantiate the assumption that the sub-plot adversely affects the main plot, the drama's form and structure have been thoroughly analyzed and critiqued through analyzing and examining the plot of the play. The research concluded that including a secondary story within the main story is an advantage, and that the two plots (the Lear story and the Gloucester story) greatly resemble each other, in so far as in both cases an infatuated father proves to be blind towards his good-hearted and well-meaning child, Lear in the case of the main plot, and Gloucester in the case of the sub-plot, while the unnatural child, whom he prefers, causes the ruin of all his father's happiness. The paper also concluded that the two stories support each other, and that the sub-plot enhances the main plot's tragic or dramatic effect rather than weakens it.

Keywords: Dramatic effect, Form, *King Lear*, main plot, William Shakespeare, structure, sub-plot, tragedy