

UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS  
UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS

the triumph of order over disorder, and the Christ-like atmosphere with which the character of Cordelia is invested rather on the cruelty and suffering of Lear and Gloucester, which is presented with all immediate intensity in order to stress<sup>that</sup> the process of regeneration is purgatorial one.

King Lear who appears at the beginning of the play as an embodiment of egotism, violates the natural order by dividing his kingdom between the 'pernicious daughters', and by rejecting Cordelia, the lovable daughter. This egotism and violation of natural order are considered to be deadly Christian sins and for these sins he has to suffer a great deal.

Lear learns this lesson very slowly, often in the process he advances and relapses. In Act II, he cries out, "You heavens, give me that patience". Soon he rejects the idea of patience and wants God to touch him with 'noble anger'. But on the Heath he says, "No I shall be the pattern of all patience". Lear's course is thus punctuated with efforts to retain patience and constant failure to do so, until he meets the blinded Gloucester and says to him, "Nay, thou must be patient." This idea of the attainment of spiritual health through patient suffering is Christian.

This theme of redemption has been reinforced by the subplot. Gloucester commits