HYPOTHESES CONCERNING EVIL IN *KING LEAR*

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Two essays by George Kelly offer an intriguing basis for a re-reading of *King Lear:* "Epilogue: Don Juan," written in 1960 (Kelly, 1969) and "Sin and psychotherapy," written in 1962 (Kelly, 1969).

In the paper on Don Juan, Kelly uses a humorous account of his recent attendance at two quite different performances of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* to demonstrate how difficult it is for us to look at either art or reality without superimposing upon the work, or on the event, either constructs determined by our own previous experience, which may have little or nothing to do with the work or incident we are now called upon to construe, or constructs foisted upon us by authorities of one sort or another who tell us what we ought to see, feel, or think. Kelly tells us that on his first recent attendance at *Don Giovanni* he found himself seated behind a post in the "Met"; the house lights were so dim that he found he could not read his program, and he was unwilling to leave his comfortable seat to go back to the lobby to read it in brighter light. And so he says,

"... not being informed in advance of precisely what I should see, 1 was on my own. What 1 actually did see was probably the faintly coherent patterns of my own particular kind of outlook, reflected off the rapidly shifting events of the play.

(Kelly, 1969, 334)

We all see in art and in every-day events the patterns of our selves reflected off the work, the other person, or the happening we are trying to understand, but too often we believe that we are seeing objective reality. "What really happened?" my students often ask me, puzzling over some ambiguity in fiction. "Nothing happened, nothing at all. This is fiction," I reply. They are not happy with that answer. "It must be that Hamlet was neglected as a child," one suggests. "I know what that feels like." Some critics who might be expected to be more sophisticated than my sophomore student have fallen into the same trap without realizing they were seeing more of themselves than of Hamlet in Shakespeare's drama. The self-reference is always there; the hard part is to realize that it is there.[1]

Kelly, the psychologist, demonstrates the trap of self-reference in his viewing of *Don Giovanni* by retelling the story in social science jargon. He is very aware of what he is doing, however, and says that it is not Mozart's *Don Giovanni* he is telling us about but *his* (Kelly's) *Don Giovanni,* "Or better" he says, "it is the reflection of my personal world shimmering off the polished facets of Mozart's magnificent creation" (Kelly, 1969, 335). Still, not knowing what he is expected to see, Kelly sees it with a "nude mind" insofar as that is possible. He imagines what others who don't know what they are supposed to see might make of the story and what unique stories they might tell if each chose to disclose his/her *Don Giovanni.*

One view of *Don Giovanni* which Kelly discusses is the psychiatric version. Specifically focusing on the Freudian psychiatric version, Kelly says, "Freud's Don Juan dangles helplessly from the end of his biography ..." (Kelly, 1969, 342). This Don Juan/Don Giovanni – or John, as Kelly calls this version of him – is "a patient, a very sick one, who needs professional care ... Where the classical story sets forth the

[1] This tendency to self-reference arises out of the need for a threefold context out of which to form a dichotomous construct which is verbalized in two words – one expressing a similarity to the thing construed, and one expressing a difference from it (see Dichotomy Corollary, Kelly, 1955, 1:59- 64). The student in the example had little but his childhood experience in the way of context from which to draw constructs in order to construe Hamlet, other artistic creations, or reality. As his experience grows, the context from which he can draw becomes richer.

question of man's destiny [and the question of good and evil], the psychiatric diagnosis fetches up John's case history." And further, while the classical Don Juan "challenges our ontology ... The sickly John simply turns us over in bed to have a look at our psychodynamics" (Kelly, 1969, 343). Again, we are reminded of the danger of the unaware self-reference.

The mention of the question of good and evil brings us to the other essay by Kelly which I mentioned: "Sin and Psychotherapy." Kelly begins by discussing another famous story – that of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden. That story, Kelly says, has such significance to us because it deals with a succession of choices mankind, confronting the alternatives presented by bipolar constructs, has had to make and continues to make. First came the choice between loneliness and companionship which brought Eve into being as partner to Adam, second came the choice of knowledge – conveyed by the forbidden apple – rather than innocence, and finally the choice of good or evil. Mankind, as Kelly notes "... is still hung up on that issue." Because the question of good vs. evil has been so difficult to deal with in terms of values, Kelly says that "... man now spends a good deal of his time trying to renege on one or the other of his previous choices in the hopes that he can return to Eden and not have to face the issue any longer" (Kelly 1969, 170).

The attempt to escape making moral judgments – or discriminating between good and evil – has, as Kelly points out, led us, through psychology and psychiatry, to the belief that we can turn moral judgments into objective medical judgments. Just think of Kelly's psychiatric John vs. the classical Don Juan. Mankind has tried three types of escape from the issue of good vs. evil according to Kelly. Some have tried to run in the front gate of the Garden: "They talk about absolute permissiveness. ... [and] seek both to enjoy the warmth of human companionship and the safety of a regulated society, without once venturing to do anything for which they might later feel guilty" (Kelly, 1969, 171). Others try the back entrance to the garden: "They advocate complete self-acceptance as the primary principle of life. Presumably they think they don't even need companionship. ... There is no Eve in their Eden, or, if there is, she stays over on her side of the Garden and minds her own business" (Kelly, 1969, 171). There is, according to Kelly, one other possible solution: "To outrun the issue," (Kelly, 1969, 171) as certain philosophers have tried to do, e.g., Nietzsche and his transcendent principle, but that attempt has not proved viable for most of us.

And so unable to avoid the question of good vs. evil, says Kelly, people have developed strategies to try to cope with the problem. Four of these strategies are Law, Authority, Conscience, and Purpose. Kelly has related these to four ethical systems of the West, and so Law corresponds to Judaism, Authority to Catholicism, Conscience to Protestantism, and Purpose to Communism. None of the systems has exclusive rights to the method Kelly has identified it with, and it is clear that all these systems are faulty to some extent, and, although they offer some help, mankind is left trying to distinguish what is good and what is evil.

When he begins to talk about the psychology of sin, and about guilt, Kelly reminds us that he is talking about the personal experience of what we call sin and guilt and not about philosophical definitions of these terms. The person who feels he or she has sinned is one who has failed in some way in his own chosen role in relation to another. Guilt, as Kelly has said elsewhere, is the "psychological exile from one's core role, regardless of where, when, with whom, or in what scenes the part has been played" (Kelly, 1955, 1: 505). Society has reacted to sin and guilt in two basic ways: punishment when the sin or guilt has been viewed through the construct of *crime*; therapy when through the construct of *illness*. Kelly proposes that personal responsibility be emphasized and instead of trying to foist blame on "... the Devil, society, or your ulcers," the sinner "... examine the mistake, and reconstrue the situation so that the possibilities of making a similar mistake in the future are minimized." The task of the psychological therapist, "is to assist the individual ... in what is singularly the most important undertaking in his life, the fullest possible understanding of the nature of good and evil" (Kelly, 1969,186).

And thus I come to *King Lear,* remembering that what I see in that play concerning good and evil must be, as Kelly has pointed out, "... the faintly coherent patterns of my own particular outlook, reflected off the rapidly shifting events of the play" (Kelly, 1969, 334).

It is Kent, speaking as most of the audience would speak if we could invade the play, who first pronounces the name of evil in *King Lear.* Courageously outspoken, he dares the anger of the king who has just disowned his youngest daughter Cordelia because she has failed to heave her heart into her mouth and flatter her father by saying she loves him more than life itself. Kent immediately sees the folly in Lear's giving his whole kingdom to Goneril, the King's first born, and Regan, his middle daughter, simply because they are willing to pretend to a love for their father that they do not feel. "Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least ..." Kent insists (1.1.154). "Revoke thy gift, / Or, whilst I can vent clamor from my throat, / I'11 tell thee thou dost evil," shouts Kent (l.1.164-66). The evil, Kent seems to imply, is not so much in the division of the kingdom as in Lear's inability to construe reality accurately, which for Kent constitutes madness. When Lear upbraids him for his discourtesy in lecturing the king, Kent answers, "Be Kent unmannerly when Lear is mad" (1.1.145).

Lear's failure to construe reality accurately underlies his abdication of power and responsibility – his kingship. He seems to theorize that the king makes the power, not the power the king. Somehow as king emeritus, he imagines that he will live a happy, leisurely life, doing exactly as he pleases, while everyone else will do his will as well. "Unburthened crawl toward death," he says (1.1.43), but he seems to intend that that "crawl" will include pleasures such as riding, hunting, and enjoying the company and service of his hundred knights. But he does not know his daughters, and therefore the predictions he bases on his misconstruing of them are bound to be invalidated. Lear at this point does not seem to have a construction of evil, but he will soon develop one. At this juncture he solves the problem of good and evil, which Kent has tried to bring to his attention, by banishing Kent.

The second overt mention of evil comes from Edmund. Quite unlike Lear, Edmund construes reality with a high (although not perfect) degree of accuracy. As bastard son of Gloucester, he is jealous of his legitimate brother Edgar, and resents the words *base, baseness,* and *bastard* which he has all too often heard others use to construe him in contrast to his legitimate brother. He is determined to take his brother's lands, not because he is unloved by his father, or because he is not generously provided for, but because he wants revenge for not being first. When his father, the Earl of Gloucester, arrives, lamenting the banishment of Kent, Edmund initiates the plot that he expects to bring his brother down. Gloucester, agonizing over what appears to be the treachery of his legitimate son Edgar, offers his own theory of evil, reality, and prediction. There have been eclipses of the sun and moon lately, and these portend – indeed almost seem to cause – the misfortunes that afflict the court, the nation, and the family (1.2.111-27).

When his father has left him alone, Edgar articulates his quite different hypothesis concerning evil:

This is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sick in fortune, often the surfeits of our own behavior, we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and stars; as if we were villains on necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition on the charge of a star. My father compounded with my mother under the Dragon's Tail, and my nativity was under Ursa Major, so that it follows I am rough and lecherous. Fut! I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing ...

(1.2.128-44)

And Edmund, the clear-eyed villain, moves immediately onward with his plot against his brother Edgar. Like Claudius in *Hamlet,* Edmund does not hide behind a veneer of unconscious drives; does not blame the devil, society or his ulcers for his evil. Like Claudius, who at his prayers, declares he knows he cannot be forgiven his sin because he retains the benefits for which he committed fratricide – his kingdom and his queen, Edmund holds a construct through which at one pole he construes evil and good as a matter of human choice, while at the other presently unarticulated pole there lies a suggestion of genetic determinism. Kelly says that the individual will choose that alternative in a dichotomous pair through which he sees the greater extension of

his construct System (Choice Corollary, Kelly, 1955, 1:96). Edmund confronted with a choice between *choice* and *determinism* chooses *choice;* when the choice is between *good* and *evil,* he makes the elaborative choice (as it appears to him) of *evil.*

Like Claudius again, Edmund not only construes himself and the origin of evil consciously; he construes others better than they construe him (Sociality Corollary, Kelly, 1955, 1:64-68). Remember what Claudius says to Laertes of Hamlet:

He being remiss,
Most generous, and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils ...

(4.7.133-38)

Edmund in the later play seems to parallel Claudius' words in construing his victims:

A credulous father, and a brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms
That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty
My practices ride easy.

(1.2.192-97)

And so by the end of the second scene of the first act of *King Lear* we have encountered three hypotheses concerning evil: Kent's *evil as madness* (the inability to construe reality with a high degree of accuracy); Gloucester's *evil as the result of astrological influences;* and Edmund's *evil as elaborative human choice.*

The audience, likely to agree and identify with Kent at this point, can now make some assessment of who construes reality well and who does not. Those who seem to understand themselves, others, and the situation relatively well, include Kent, Goneril, Regan, Cordelia, Edmund, and the King of France. Those who are unable or unwilling to construe reality accurately include Lear, Gloucester, and Edgar. If we imagine an audience that does not know the play, and whose members do not know what they are expected to see, we can understand that they will make certain predictions about the coming course of events: the bad brother Edmund will trick the good brother Edgar into disaster; Lear will learn one way or another that Goneril and Regan do not love him so much as they say; perhaps Cordelia will live happily ever after with the King of France who has accepted her as his wife because of her virtue and in spite of the loss of her dowery. Whatever individual audience members predict at this point, however, will have perhaps as much to do with the reflections of themselves which they see in the play as with the information Shakespeare and the actors have given them thus far.

There is one more important hypothesis concerning evil offered in the play and that is Lear's. He begins by construing evil as his eldest daughter's ingratitude. "Ingratitude! thou marble-hearted fiend, / More hideous when thou show'st thee in a child / Than the sea monster" (1.4.264-66). In construing Goneril's ingratitude he is forced to reconstrue Cordelia and his own reaction to Cordelia's "O most small fault" (1.4.273). He curses Goneril first by asking the gods to make her barren and then, if that is not possible, wishing for her a "child of spleen" (1.4.289) which will teach her, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is / to have a thankless child" (1.4.295-96)

When Lear finds that he cannot expect any better treatment at the hands of his second daughter, the experience of being the victim of ingratitude seems to deepen so that Lear's view of evil comes to encompass on a higher level of abstraction *injustice.* Outraged at finding his newly recruited servant (Kent in disguise, unrecognized by the King) set in stocks before Gloucester's castle where the king has gone to seek his second daughter Regan, the sense of injustice sends Lear into paroxysms of disbelief:

They durst not do't;
They could not, would not do't. 'Tis worse than murder
To do upon respect such violent outrage.

(2.4.22-24)

As Lear begins to understand that Regan, too, intends to be as unkind as her sister, he is forced to abandon his construction of her "tender-hefted nature" (2.4.170), and finally comes to construe both older daughters as "unnatural hags" (2.4.277). *Unnatural,* here, seems to have the meaning of *ungrateful,* or *not according to the bond of parent and child,* the opposite pole of the construct which Cordelia offered when she said, "I love your Majesty according to my bond, no more nor less" (1.1.94-95). Cordelia's – and

now Lear's – construct of *good* seems to subsume *duty;* the opposite pole *evil* seems to subsume *ingratitude* and *failure in duty* which culminate in *injustice.*

Although Lear's construct system has begun to change, he still construes reality through a system of unaware self-references. Just as he did not realize, or would not admit, that he wanted to see himself exalted, and, as Kelly would say, shimmering off the polished surfaces of his daughters' play-acting performances of their love for him, he does not realize now that he is still blinded by his inability to construe others better than they construe him. One moment indignant at Kent's punishment in the stocks, the next conciliatory and patient, Lear seems to be trying on roles in order to discover which will manipulate his daughters more effectively. He does not construe them accurately enough to predict their reactions, while they seem quite confident of his reaction to their manipulations.

Driven out into the storm, Lear, in his passion, dares the storm to buffet him with greater violence, seeing evil embodied in it in a kind of primitive cosmic ingratitude which he wishes to confront, daring it to singe his white hair. At the same time he sees the storm as an instrument of revenge: let it destroy Nature's molds and all "germains spill at once, / That makes ingrateful man." Like his curse of barrenness on Goneril, this apostrophe to the storm seems to seek to destroy ingratitude by destroying the generations of mankind which would otherwise perpetuate the ingratitude of children for the sacrifices of parents. One moment Lear construes the storm as avenger, the next as objective phenomenon which owes him no duty:

Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire are my daughters.
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness.
I never gave you kingdom, called you children,
You owe me no subscription. Then let fall
Your horrible pleasure.

(3.2.15-20)

But in the very next breath Lear reconstrues the storm through a construct of self-reference:

But yet 1 call you servile ministers,
That will with two pernicious daughters join
Your high-engendered battles 'gainst a head
So old and white as this. O, ho! 'tis foul.

(3.2.21-24)

At least for a moment Lear has caught a glimpse of the storm as simple natural phenomenon and has not for that moment imagined that he sees in it the reflection of his strife with his ungrateful daughters. It is a step toward construing reality more realistically.

When Kent arrives to lead Lear and the Fool to a hovel for shelter, Lear is able again to set aside self-reference and self-concern for a bit and think of the Fool: "Come on my boy. How dost, my boy? Art cold? I am cold myself ... Poor Fool and knave, I have one part in my heart / That's sorry yet for thee" (3.2.68-73), but reaching the hovel, Lear wishes to remain out in the storm which seems to act as a counter-irritant to the pain he feels:

Filial ingratitude,
Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand
For lifting food to't? But I will punish home.
No, I will weep no more. In such a night
To shut me out! Pour on, I will endure.

And then again Lear is able to forget himself and feel pity for the Fool and Kent, and this seems to lead him to a new compassion for others:

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;
Expose thyself to what wretches feel,
That thou mayst shake the suferflux to them,
And show the heavens more just.

(3.4.28-37)

But meeting Edgar in the guise of Poor Tom, Lear reverts to self-reference – to that trick he has of seeing events through the narrow focus of his own situation: "Didst thou give all to thy daughters? And art thou come to this?" (3.4.48-49). His madness speaking, we might say, when he seems to imagine that the only calamity anyone must worry about is having ungrateful daughters. Kent might answer (and Kelly agree), *but that is what madness is – the distorted view of reality obtained through narrow self-*

reference.

Once all four theories of evil are in place (Kent's, Gloucester's, Edmund's, and Lear's), the manifestations of evil proliferate. Evil recognizes and joins with evil as Edmund, Goneril, and Regan organize into an unholy triangle in which depravity seems to act as the Devil's aphrodisiac. Gloucester, betrayed by Edmund, is blinded and turned out to wander the countryside alone; Cordelia's army is defeated, and she and Lear are imprisoned. Finally Cordelia is hanged.

But if evil is on the march, so is good. To balance Goneril, Regan and Edmund, there are Cordelia and Edgar. Because Cordelia exists, Lear comes to experience in her charity and forgiveness the opposite pole to that which he knows as evil (ingratitude and injustice). When Cordelia's army is defeated, Lear is content to give up all else – kingdom, power, and freedom – so long as he can share Cordelia's company in prison. In a rapturous epiphany, Lear turns from evil to good – the goodness of Cordelia which he once had denied.

... Come, let's away to prison:
We two alone will sing like birds i' th' cage:
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'11 kneel down
And ask of thee forgiveness: so we'11 live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news; and we'11 talk with them too,
Who loses and who wins, who's in, who's out;
And take upon's the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spiel: and we'11 wear out,
In a walled prison, pacts and sects of great ones
That ebb and flow by th' moon.

(5.3.8-19)

As one catastrophe succeeds another, some of the character/theorists change their views of good and evil and the origin of good and evil. Kent, who had seen evil as madness (the inability to construe reality accurately), seems for a time to come around to Gloucester's view, when he compares Cordelia's sorrowing over news of her father to her sisters' mistreatment of the king:

It is the stars,
The stars above us, govern our conditions;
Else one self mate and make could not beget
Such different issues.

(4.3.33-36)

Lear, who earlier wanted the storm to "Crack nature's molds, all germains spill at once, / That makes ingrateful man" (3.2.8-9), meets the eyeless Gloucester, and not knowing of Edmund's treachery and Gloucester's blindness because he himself is blinded by narrow self-reference, he slides away to the other end of his construct concerning the causes of ingratitude (evil) in his daughters and the predictions one can make about one's children. Lear begins by forgiving Gloucester for his adultery:

Adultery?
Thou shalt not die: die for adultery! No:
The wren goes to't, and the small gilded fly
Does lecher in my sight.
Let copulation thrive; for Gloucester's bastard son
Was kinder to his father than my daughters
Got 'tween the lawful sheets.

(4.6.112-17)

Lear seems to be trying to run back into Eden by the front door, as Kelly would say, of absolute permissiveness since, somehow, his earlier strategy of reliance on and adherence to law has failed to offer him a sure protection from evil. The rest of Lear's speech lapses into a condemnation of female sexuality which now seems to him the epitome of evil. But he soon slides away again to his view of evil as injustice as he recites a catalog of hypocrisies: "The usurer hangs the cozener ... And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks" (4.6.165-68).

Gloucester, after his blinding, remains staunch in blaming the powers above for his misery, though now it is the gods rather than the stars who are at fault:

As flies to wanton boys, are we to th' gods,
They kill us for their sport.

(4.1.16-17)

It is Edgar who finally offers the audience a resolution of the question of evil and its origins. He seems to rise to a higher level construct where he can reconcile his father's belief that the gods "... kill us for their sport," with his evil half-brother's belief that the individual alone

chooses good or evil without reference to divine or astrological influence. Edgar postulates that the gods offer individuals the choice between good or evil, allowing them to choose or reject "pleasant vices." And, in postulating the power of the gods to offer those choices, Edgar seems to believe that the individual has somewhat less control of his/her life and choice of good and evil than Edmund so arrogantly has believed; and yet Edgar seems to hold the individual responsible for understanding his individual responsibility to recognize good and evil and choose good instead of evil. Let us examine the passage in question. Just after mortally wounding Edmund in the duel into which that traitor is manipulated by Albany, Edgar, the victor, reveals his identity to his illegitimate half-brother and then states his hypothesis concerning the origin of evil:

Let's exchange charity.
I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund;
If more, the more th' hast wronged me.
My name is Edgar, and thy father's son.
The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to plague us:
The dark and vicious place where thee he got
Cost him his eyes.

(5.3.168-74)

Edgar realizes, as his father Gloucester never seemed to do, that the choice of an evil action, in this case adultery, is likely to have evil consequences. "There was good sport at his making," brags Gloucester, introducing Edmund to Kent at the beginning of the play, but the result of that "sport" is Edmund – a child not evil in himself as Edmund seems to believe, but who chooses evil revenge on parent and sibling because of his predictable resentment concerning the unfavorable situation into which he has been born. At the same time, Edgar offers his half-brother the construct that he (Edmund) is neither inherently evil nor so much the author of evil as he has supposed. Edgar does not seem to condemn his father, remaining loyal in his love for him, but he notes sadly the consequences of his father's "sport" – sport which made manifest Gloucester's moral blindness to good and evil that resulted ultimately in his physical blinding and death.

Even Edmund is moved by Edgar's understanding and his offer "to exchange charity," and by his telling of how he, in disguise, followed and served his blinded father. Edmund now seems to have come to some idea of himself as having a nature, perhaps inherited, which has at least partially determined his choice of evil, but wishes to exercise his choice to do good, and tries now to countermand his order that Lear and Cordelia be killed in prison:

I pant for life; some good I mean to do,
Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send,
Be brief in it, to th' castle; for my writ
Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia:
Nay, send in time.

5.3.245-48)

Edmund's decision to embrace good rather than evil has come too late of course. Lear enters bearing Cordelia's dead body in his arms. Mourning her; willing her to live, but seeing the reality of her death and expressing it in, "Thou'lt come no more, / Never, never, never, never, never," Lear himself dies. In the tableau of the dying king holding the body of his dead daughter most members of the audience will experience powerful preverbal constructs. These will be compounded of emotions concerning good and evil, innocence and guilt, life and death. Into these preverbal constructs as we view the *mise en scene* will come memories of all the Pietàs we have ever seen, and somehow one branch of our preverbal constructs will be associated with those representations of the sinless Virgin Mother and her innocent dead Son who will rise from the dead, while on the opposite branch of our preverbal constructs we will see a once proud and foolish man and his blameless, lifeless daughter who will never, never, never, never, never arise again. We could do worse than try to bring to verbal expression these preverbal constructs concerning good and evil.

Kent, Albany, and Edgar are left on stage to make some sense out of the tragedy for the audience. The evil ones: Goneril, Regan, Cornwall, Oswald, and Edmund are dead. We could say with Edgar that the gods are just, except that Gloucester and Lear are dead too after much suffering. They were unwise, foolish, proud, but not intentionally evil; they chose evil because they failed to understand the consequences of their actions; they failed in what Kelly says is the

"singularly most important undertaking in ... life, the fullest possible understanding of the nature of good and evil" (Kelly, 1969, 186). But then Cordelia is dead, too, and we must, because of her death, question the justice of the gods. Perhaps Lear was right after all and somehow evil is best defined as injustice.

In the play Edgar has the last word and the advice he gives as a part of that final speech is good advice if we ever expect to discriminate good from evil:

The weight of this sad time we must obey.
Speck what we feel, not what we ought to say ...
(5.3.325-26)

And that advice brings us back to where we started with Kelly's reminder to be wary as we watch *Don Giovanni* (or *King Lear,* or the real events of our lives) of seeing our own reflections on the stage or in the life event and thinking that we see reality, and also to be wary of seeing only what certain authorities tell us we ought to see. Kelly does not mean that we must always rebel against authority, rather he means that we must be aware of what we are doing when we accept our own reflections or the opinions of others as reality. And never is this awareness more critical than when we attempt to discriminate good from evil. Perhaps we might paraphrase Edgar's last speech in *King Lear* and in addition to speaking what we feel, not what we ought to say, remind ourselves to see what we see, not what we are told we ought to see.

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