

ISSN : 2395-4132

THE EXPRESSION

An International Multidisciplinary e-Journal

Bimonthly Refereed & Indexed Open Access e-Journal



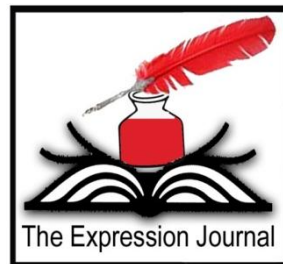
Impact Factor 6.4

Vol. 10 Issue 1 February 2024

Editor-in-Chief : Dr. Bijender Singh

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www.expressionjournal.com



**RE-INTROSPECTION OF HEALTH HUMANITIES IN
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *KING LEAR***

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Abstract

Literature includes a diverse spectrum of creative and intellectual works. It is the written or spoken expression of human creativity and ideas. Its primary goals are to enlighten, amuse, and challenge thinking while offering a window into the human condition and promoting emotional and cultural links. Writing allows people to express themselves, create stories, and explore complex concepts and feelings. Healthcare personnel must be exposed to health humanities to develop empathy and understanding, improving patient-centred care. They assist professionals in navigating challenging healthcare challenges by fostering ethical awareness, critical thinking, and communication skills. Medical education is made more human by including the humanities and arts, which address health and sickness's cultural and emotional aspects. Health humanities generally support more humane, all-encompassing, and efficient medical procedures. Health is frequently used as a metaphor for people's well-being and society in ancient and contemporary literary writings, reflecting the dominant concerns and ideals of their respective times. In *King Lear*, William Shakespeare addresses issues related to mental health and the human condition. The inner struggle and eventual plunge into madness experienced by King Lear illuminated the precarious state of mental health. The performance highlights the enduring value of health humanities in exploring the human experience and is a potent reminder of the significance of comprehending and resolving mental health disorders. Literature and health humanities converge in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, where the character of King Lear's journey into madness and his moving awareness of the transience of human health emphasises the significant influence of mental and emotional health on human life.

Keywords

Human Creativity, Cultural Links, Mental Health, Medical Education, Society, Health, Madness.

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Introduction

The human experience is profoundly reflected in literature, a broad and diverse field of human expression. It includes many written and spoken works embody the spirit of historical cultures, emotions, and ideas, such as plays, essays, novels, and poetry. Literature is more than just words on a page; it is a dynamic fabric that combines linguistic skill, imagination, and inventiveness. It enables people to consider many viewpoints, identify with characters, and consider the intricacies of the human condition. Societies communicate their beliefs, customs, and collective knowledge via literature, promoting a shared cultural legacy. Literature also can transcend geography and time. Literature and health humanities collide at the intersection of narrative, empathy, and comprehensive comprehension of the human condition. People may learn about other viewpoints and how to deal with universal themes like pain, resilience, and the search for meaning via literature. Through the use of narratives, health humanities work to humanise healthcare and develop medical professionals who are sympathetic and culturally aware. Both patients and healthcare practitioners can improve their empathy and develop a more nuanced awareness of the societal ramifications of healthcare and the complexity surrounding disease and healing by immersing themselves in literary works. By embracing the rich tapestry of human experiences, this junction fosters a patient-centred approach that transcends clinical norms and fosters a deeper relationship between caregivers and individuals seeking care.

Through the humanities lens, the multidisciplinary area of health humanities investigates the relationship between health, medicine, and human experiences. It uses various academic fields, including anthropology, history, philosophy, literature, and the arts, to analyse and humanise healthcare procedures. More excellent knowledge of the intricacies of sickness,

The Expression: An International Multidisciplinary e-Journal

(A Peer Reviewed and Indexed Journal with Impact Factor 6.4)

www.expressionjournal.com ISSN: 2395-4132

healthcare delivery, and the human condition is intended to be fostered by health humanities by integrating narratives, cultural views, and ethical issues. This strategy hopes to advance a more patient-centred and holistic approach to healthcare by improving empathy, communication, and moral decision-making among medical practitioners. A more compassionate and comprehensive healthcare system is fostered by health humanities, which promote reflection on the social, cultural, and ethical aspects of health via the study of literature, art, and ethics. In modern study, health humanities combines medical studies with various academic fields, including philosophy, literature, and the arts, to promote a comprehensive knowledge of healthcare. This multidisciplinary approach strengthens medical education by promoting empathy, cultural competency, and ethical awareness among healthcare practitioners. Health humanities provide a more sympathetic and patient-centred approach to treatment by valuing stories and human experiences.

Gerontology greatly influences literary plots which study ageing and the elderly. Gerontology explores the intricacies of human existence at various stages. Through an awareness of the mental, emotional, and physical changes that come with age, writers may create complex narratives and characters that capture the range of older people's experiences. Gerontology explores topics including identity, memory, family relationships, and cultural perspectives to shed light on the difficulties and pleasures of growing older. Characters that struggle with ageing may give a story more depth and authenticity and help readers relate to the universal features of human nature.

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, England, in 1564. He is recognised as one of the greatest playwrights and poets in the history of the English language. Composed in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, his vast corpus of work included timeless masterpieces, including "*Hamlet*," "*Macbeth*," "*Othello*," and "*Romeo and Juliet*." Shakespeare's plays delve into themes of power, envy, love, and the complexities of interpersonal relationships to examine the complexity of the human condition. His commands of language, lyrical expression, and fantastic ability to create complex characters have had a lasting impression on both play and literature. Shakespeare's works are still performed and studied today despite centuries having passed. This is a testament to the stories he tells and the global appeal he has for his insights into human nature.

William Shakespeare's tragedy *King Lear* examines themes of power, treachery, insanity, and familial ties. The aged King Lear decides how to divide his kingdom among his three daughters according to how much each of them shows him that they love him in the play. Nevertheless, this choice has disastrous and chaotic results. The subplot involving Gloucester and his boys, Lear's journey into madness, and his daughters' treachery all add to the mighty emotional and psychological drama. The drama explores the fallibility of familial relationships, the complexity of human nature, and the results of unbridled ambition. Shakespeare's *King Lear* is still regarded as one of his most influential and enduring plays because of its profound ideas and strong language, which provide a timeless examination of the human condition.

Research Methodology & Discussion

By incorporating subjects like philosophy, literature, and ethics into healthcare education, health humanities investigate the relationship between medicine and the humanities. It helps medical workers develop empathy and communication skills by fostering a comprehensive awareness of patient experiences. Health humanities improve medical practice by addressing healthcare's social, cultural, and ethical aspects via narratives and cultural

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perspectives. Ultimately, it humanises medicine by highlighting the value of compassionate treatment and health's more extensive social background.

Despite their apparent differences, literature and health have a deep interaction that enhances the human experience. Books act as a reflected mirror, illuminating the complex relationship between health and happiness. Books, poetry, and essays allow us to delve deeper into the complex web of mental, emotional, and physical states that make up who we are. Literature is a lens through which we may better comprehend the subtleties of well-being, whether we are reading about the struggles and triumphs of the human body or immersing ourselves in writing that explores the complexity of mental health. Literary works are shaped by a profound comprehension of health, which influences the creation of characters and stories that speak to the universal themes of life, death, and the search for a purposeful existence.

The multidisciplinary study of ageing and the aged, known as gerontology, has changed in response to societal shifts and a growing public awareness of the ageing population. The field of gerontology originated in the early 1900s when scientists started investigating the mental and physical effects of ageing. The demographic trend toward an older population in the mid-20th century gave rise to a surge of interest in the topic. The creation of groups like the Gerontological Society of America in 1945 and notable individuals like Robert N. Butler, who popularised the word "ageism," contributed to the advancement of gerontology as a separate academic discipline. With time, the field of gerontology grew to include sociology, psychology, medicine, and social work, among other fields.

Exploring the profound and universal human experience of growing older, literature plays a crucial part in the diverse field of gerontology, the study of ageing. Literature provides a means of exploring the nuances, difficulties, and pleasures of ageing; this is what gerontology gives. Authors frequently explore the psychological, emotional, and social facets of ageing in their literary works, offering insights into the complex dynamics of intergenerational relationships, the quest for purpose in later life, and the influence of society's views regarding retirement. Writers help readers develop empathy and awareness by including gerontological viewpoints in their literature, which helps create a more complex perspective of the ageing process.

William Shakespeare's dramatic tragedy *King Lear* examines themes of lunacy, treachery, and power. King Lear decides at the start of the play to divide his realm among his three daughters, Cordelia, Regan, and Goneril. Their separation will be predicated on how much they claim to love him. However, Lear's ignorance and conceit cause him to misinterpret his daughters' motivations. Lear disowns Cordelia, his youngest daughter, in the first scene when she declines to lavish him with grandiose vows of love. Cordelia is banished from the realm because of her integrity and reluctance to accept hollow platitudes. Lear's choice to split his kingdom between the dishonest lovers Goneril and Regan starts a series of events that will eventually end in catastrophe. Goneril and Regan show their authentic selves as they become more powerful. They mistreat Lear and scheme against one another to obtain more authority. Realising too late that he made a mistake, Lear spirals into madness while he struggles with the fallout from his choices. The drama examines the catastrophic effects of unbridled ambition and the frailty of power. A nobleman named Gloucester and his two sons, Edgar and Edmund, who support Lear, are involved in the subplot. Like Lear, Gloucester misinterprets his kids and chooses the dishonest Edmund above the devoted Edgar. An unfortunate series of events starts when Edmund, motivated by ambition, betrays his brother and father. Edgar assumes the "Poor Tom" identity to elude his father and sibling after being wrongly convicted of betrayal.

Vol. 10 Issue 1 (February 2024)

Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Bijender Singh

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www.expressionjournal.com ISSN: 2395-4132

Lear meets other people who suffer from betrayal by family and politics while he wanders. The Fool, the devoted jester of Lear, highlights the king's foolishness by acting as a voice of reason and wisdom. In addition, Kent, the obedient nobleman of Lear, who is banished for criticising Lear's behaviour, is introduced in the play. Even after being banished, Cordelia never wavers in her love for her father. She brings an army back to England to reinstate Lear, but tragedy befalls them as their reunion is tainted by treachery and conflict. A terrible conclusion results from the growing tension between the soldiers loyal to Lear and those assisting Goneril and Regan. Lear and Cordelia are captured in the play's last act, and their reunion is fleeting. Regan and Goneril die due to a brutal end to their feud. Edgar reveals Edmund's betrayal once he is proven to be Gloucester's obedient son. Lear passes away, overcome with grief over Cordelia's passing, and the play comes to a tragic, deep end. *King Lear* deftly examines the ramifications of unbridled authority, treachery, and the intricacies of kinship bonds. The sad results result from the individuals' shortcomings and poor decisions, and the play offers a timeless analysis of human nature. Shakespeare's *King Lear* is one of his most enduring and influential tragedies because the themes of lunacy, suffering, and redemption are intertwined throughout the story.

One of William Shakespeare's melancholy masterpieces, *King Lear*, examines the intricacies of human nature, familial bonds, and the fallout from treachery and power. The plot of this play, which is thought to have been written between 1603 and 1606, centres on the old King Lear's spiral into insanity and his terrible choices, which significantly impact him and those around him. The main themes of *King Lear* are the repercussions of poor decision-making and the disastrous nature of unbridled authority. In the play's prologue, Lear chooses to split his kingdom among his three daughters according to how much each shows him that she loves him. However, this choice starts a disastrous sequence of events that ends with Lear's death due to treachery and his incapacity to see past flattery.

The play sees a great deal of character growth for Lear. He comes across as a confident, strong man who is used to blind obedience at first. However, part of his demise is due to his poor judgment and lack of awareness of the effects of his acts. His daughters, Goneril and Regan, who take advantage of him to acquire power, are shown to be insincere when the kingdom is divided. Lear's eventual spiral into insanity is a moving illustration of the psychological cost of his errors. The story of Lear is mirrored in the subplot concerning Gloucester and his sons, Edgar and Edmund. Gloucester suffers from betrayal due to his foolish faith in Edmund, his illegitimate son. The genuine son Edgar is made an outsider after being falsely convicted of betrayal. The way these two stories are entwined emphasises the themes of misguided trust's deadly power and familial ingratitude. Shakespeare examines the idea of madness as a result of outside happenings and a reflection of internal conflict. The treachery of his daughters and the unforgiving conditions he encounters on the heath set Lear on his path to insanity. The stormy weather symbolises the confusion caused by Lear's choices. In addition, his lunacy is a reflection of a deep internal struggle as he struggles with his remorse, identity loss, and the harsh facts of life. Throughout the play, Lear's faithful companion, The Fool, acts as a voice of reason and wisdom. The Fool reflects on the nature of power and highlights the foolishness of Lear's judgments with his clever quips and cryptic forecasts. The Fool's presence highlights the sad irony of Lear's predicament, as he is oblivious to the repercussions of his deeds. The complexity of sibling relationships is another topic covered in the play. The struggle between Edgar and Edmund and the rivalry between Goneril and Regan are examples of the devastation that can result from family strife. The fallout from this sibling rivalry enhances the

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www.expressionjournal.com ISSN: 2395-4132

play's general sorrowful mood. *King Lear* delves deeply into the human condition, revealing the frailty of familial ties and the potentially destructive nature of power. Shakespeare conveys a timeless lesson on the value of true human connection and the consequences of pride and treachery via the sad travels of Lear and Gloucester. The play's lasting significance stems from its deep understanding of human nature's intricacies and the long-lasting effects of poor decision-making.

The aim of the multidisciplinary areas of gerontology and health humanities is to improve and comprehend the human experience, especially concerning ageing and healthcare. In contrast to health humanities, which examines the relationship between healthcare, medicine, and the human experience via the prisms of literature, art, philosophy, and other humanities fields, gerontology is the study of ageing from a biological, psychological, and social perspective. Addressing the many possibilities and difficulties related to ageing and healthcare requires a relationship between gerontology and health humanities. A common dedication to a comprehensive knowledge of health and well-being is the fundamental link between gerontology and health humanities. The field of gerontology provides the scientific basis for researching the ageing process, including the physiological alterations, cognitive advancements, and social dynamics connected to ageing. The humanistic viewpoint provided by health humanities, on the other hand, enhances the clinical components of healthcare by highlighting the cultural settings, personal experiences, and narratives that influence how people relate to ageing and sickness.

The focus on narrative medicine is one of their connections' most essential features. Healthcare personnel are encouraged by health humanities to acknowledge and cherish patient narratives, particularly those that deal with ageing and end-of-life experiences. Health humanities enhance healthcare practitioners' empathy, comprehension, and communication abilities via literature, art, and storytelling. This improves their capacity to interact with older persons and meet their needs. This narrative method helps gerontology by providing insights into how people interpret and experience ageing.

Moreover, the relationship between health humanities and gerontology supports an interdisciplinary approach to treatment. Healthcare practitioners and gerontologists may create more person-centred and holistic ways to treat the physical, emotional, and existential aspects of ageing by incorporating ideas from literature, philosophy, and the arts. This multidisciplinary partnership challenges prejudices and advances age-friendly healthcare practices, fostering more nuanced ageing knowledge.

The relationship between health humanities and gerontology is also heavily influenced by ethical issues. People must frequently make difficult decisions about their medical care, end-of-life care, and quality of life as they age. By examining literature, philosophy, and ethical theories, health humanities offer a framework for investigating ethical concerns in healthcare. This multidisciplinary approach guarantees that care is not only evidence-based but also morally sound, in line with people's beliefs, and assists gerontologists and other healthcare professionals in navigating the moral issues connected with ageing. The dynamic and mutually beneficial link between gerontology and health humanities improves our knowledge and attitude toward ageing and healthcare. Integrating the scientific rigour of gerontology with the humanistic insights of health humanities can facilitate collaborative efforts by practitioners in the two professions to address the different needs of older persons. This approach can lead to a more compassionate, ethical, and holistic approach to healthcare and ageing. In the end, this multidisciplinary synergy promotes better results for an ageing population by aiding in

creating age-friendly healthcare practices that prioritise the unique experiences and narratives of older persons.

Shakespeare's melancholy drama *King Lear*, which examines the intricacies of ageing, familial connections, and the effects of power, is rife with gerontological allusions. Many aspects of gerontology are embodied by King Lear, who serves as an example of the psychological and physical difficulties associated with ageing. Lear struggles with his senses' waning abilities as he ages, forcing him to reassess his relationships and life decisions critically. Lear's partition of his kingdom among his daughters according to their professed love for him is a remarkable illustration. This behaviour illustrates the ageing-related vulnerability and need for security. Lear's eventual spiral into insanity emphasises the emotional toll that ageing takes on a person and highlights the precarious state of mental health in old age. A significant theme of gerontology and intergenerational tensions are also explored in the play as Lear's relationships with his daughters break down. Lear's relationships with his daughters, especially Cordelia, demonstrate the conflict between conventional authority and the evolving dynamics inside a family. Cordelia's disinheritance and subsequent reluctance to flatter her father demonstrate the generational divide between conventional norms and changing moral principles. This conflict highlights the difficulties in understanding and communicating across age groups, a common theme in studies on the ageing population.

The subplot featuring Gloucester and his sons, Edgar and Edmund, provides more gerontological investigation. Gloucester's blindness, both actual and figurative, acts as a powerful metaphor for the loss of understanding that age may bring. His illegitimate son Edmund's treachery highlights how susceptible the elderly are to deceit and manipulation, providing insight into how society views and treats the elderly. This story thread illustrates how family relationships affect older people's well-being and how society views them, which adds to the more extensive gerontological subject. The play's portrayal of caregiving and filial piety gives its examination of gerontology a new angle. As a result of Lear's spiral into insanity, his devoted supporters like Kent and the Fool bear a terrible burden and end up acting as his de facto guardians. The tense relationship between Lear and his daughters, Goneril and Regan, highlights the difficulties of caring for an aged father when familial attachments are strained. The care-giving dynamic demonstrates the play's application of gerontological ideas by emphasising the value of social support and the repercussions of ignoring the needs of the elderly.

In addition, *King Lear* explores the issue of society's disregard for the old, as seen by Lear's treatment following his abdication of authority. The drama shows the old king as a defenceless outcast who must deal with the weather and harsh reality. This representation addresses problems of elder abuse, neglect, and society's duty to provide care for its aged people, among other broader socioeconomic themes about the treatment of the old. Shakespeare's treatment of these subjects in *King Lear* offers a timeless reflection on society's problems as we age and the importance of a caring and encouraging approach to gerontology. *King Lear* interweaves the social, psychological, and physical facets of ageing into a complex tapestry of gerontological topics. Shakespeare deftly examines the nuances of growing older, intergenerational disputes, caring interactions, and cultural views toward the elderly via the characters of Lear, Gloucester, and their families. The play continues to examine the human condition, provoking viewers to consider the complexities and universal struggles associated with growing older across time and cultural boundaries.

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www.expressionjournal.com ISSN: 2395-4132

Conclusion

In *King Lear*, by William Shakespeare, examining geriatric features is heartbreaking and essential to the tragedy's development. The drama explores the intricacies of ageing, portraying the elderly's social marginalisation and frailty as he deals with the fallout from his own choices, King Lear becomes a symbol of the inevitable deterioration that comes with growing older. The depiction of Lear's spiral into insanity serves as a sobering reminder of how quickly one's physical and mental well-being may deteriorate with age. In addition, the relationships between parents and their children, especially the tense one between Lear and his daughters, highlight the generational tensions that come with growing older. The play emphasises how society disregards the elderly by showing how Lear is abandoned by the people he once thought were closest to him. A further layer of complexity to the gerontological discourse is brought about by the issue of ingratitude and betrayal within familial connections, which implies that older people are vulnerable not only to external societal influences but also to the very people who have raised them.

Shakespeare explores the psychological and emotional aspects of getting older in a way beyond simple portrayal. The gerontological investigation is further enhanced by the figure of Gloucester, who undergoes both literal and physical blindness. Gloucester emphasises the possibility of personal development and transformation even in the face of hardship. "*King Lear*" presents a profound and timeless contemplation on the difficulties and complications experienced by the elderly, expertly capturing the gerontological elements of ageing. We are asked to consider the complexities of family connections, the attitudes of society regarding ageing, and the possibility of personal redemption in later life via the prism of Shakespeare's tragedy. The play will always be relevant because it can speak to audiences of all ages and provide insights into the nature of ageing and the human condition.

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