

# King Lear

Lecture on Tuesday 24 April 2012.

We will focus on two scenes in Act IV: the first part of Scene 6, where Edgar guides his blind father through despair by making him believe that he is jumping off a cliff, and Scene 7, where Cordelia, a Doctor and Kent, attempt to make up for the wrongs the old King has suffered. Healing is the mode and subject of this scene, and Cordelia's forgiveness strikingly reverses the beginning of Othello's murdering speech by saying 'No cause, no cause'.

Please examine these two scenes for the imagery, language and theatrical effects. We will ask particularly how the audience is made to share the experience of forgiveness and healing.

## Oxford English Dictionary:

### heal, *v.1*

**Forms:** OE *hælan*, ME *hælen*, ME–15 *hele(n)*, ME ( *helien*), *healen*, ME *haile*, ME *heel(e)*, (*Sc. heile, heyle, hel*), (ME *ɶ ele*),

15–16 *heale*, (*Sc. heil(l)*), 16– *heal*. ([Show Less](#))

**Etymology:** A Common Germanic vb.: Old English *hælan* = Old Frisian *hēla*, Old Saxon *hēlian* (Middle Dutch *hēlen*, *heilen*, Dutch *heelen*, Low German *helen*), Old High German *heilan* (German *heilen*),

Old Norse *heil* (Swedish *hela*, Danish *hele*), Gothic *hailjan*, derivative of *hail-s*, Old Germanic *\*hailo-z*, Old Saxon *hāl*,

*hale n.1*, *whole v.2*

## Parable of the Prodigal Son

And he said: A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father: Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his substance. And not many days after, the younger son, gathering all together, went abroad into a far country: and there wasted his substance, living riotously. And after he had spent all, there came a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want. And he went and cleaved to one of the citizens of that country. And he sent him into his farm to feed swine.

And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him. And returning to himself, he said: How many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger? I will arise, and will go to my father, and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee: I am not worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And rising up he came to his father. And when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and running to him fell upon his neck, and kissed him.

And the son said to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, I am not now worthy to be called thy son. And the father said to his servants: Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry: Because this my son was dead, and is come to life again: was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field, and when he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing:

And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said to him: Thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe. And he was angry, and would not go in. His father therefore coming out began to entreat him. And he answering, said to his father: Behold, for so many years do I serve thee, and I have never transgressed thy commandment, and yet thou hast never given me a kid to make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son is come, who hath devoured his substance with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

But he said to him: Son, thou art always with me, and all I have is thine. But it was fit that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead and is come to life again; he was lost, and is found.

Luke XVI, Rheims translation of 1582 by Gregory Martin.

## Evangelium podle Lukáše, kpt. 15, 11-32 (podobnoství o ztraceném synu)

Řekl také: „Jeden člověk měl dva syny. Ten mladší řekl otci: ‚Otče, dej mi díl majetku, který na mne připadá.‘ On jim rozdělil své jmění. Po nemnoha dnech mladší syn všechno zpeněžil, odešel do daleké země a tam rozmařilým životem svůj majetek rozházel. A když už všechno utratil, nastal v té zemi veliký hlad a on začal mít nouzi. Šel a uchýtil se u jednoho občana té země; ten ho poslal na pole pást vepře. A byl by si chtěl naplnit žaludek slupkami, které žrali vepři, ale ani ty nedostával.

Tu šel do sebe a řekl: ‚Jak mnoho nádeníků u mého otce má chleba nazbyt, a já tu hynu hladem! Vstanu, půjdu k svému otci a řeknu mu: Otče, zhřešil jsem proti nebi i vůči tobě. Nejsem už hoden nazývat se tvým synem; přijmi mne jako jednoho ze svých nádeníků.‘ I vstal a šel k svému otci. Když ještě byl daleko, otec ho spatřil a hnut lítostí běžel k němu, objal ho a políbil. Syn mu řekl: ‚Otče, zhřešil jsem proti nebi i vůči tobě. Nejsem už hoden nazývat se tvým synem.‘ Ale otec rozkázal svým služebníkům: ‚Přineste ihned nejlepší oděv a oblečte ho; dejte mu na ruku prsten a obuv na nohy. Přiveďte vykrmené tele, zabijte je, hodujme a buďme veselí, protože tento můj syn byl mrtev, a zase žije, ztratil se, a je nalezen.‘ A začali se veselit.

Starší syn byl právě na poli. Když se vracel a byl už blízko domu, uslyšel hudbu a tanec. Zavolal si jednoho ze služebníků a ptal se ho, co to má znamenat. On mu odpověděl: ‚Vrátil se tvůj bratr, a tvůj otec dal zabít vykrmené tele, že ho zase má doma živého a zdravého.‘ I rozhněval se a nechtěl jít dovnitř. Otec vyšel a domlouval mu. Ale on mu odpověděl: ‚Tolik let už ti sloužím a nikdy jsem neporušil žádný tvůj příkaz; a mně jsi nikdy nedal ani kůzle, abych se poveselil se svými přáteli. Ale když přišel tenhle tvůj syn, který s děvkami prohýřil tvé jmění, dal jsi pro něho zabít vykrmené tele.‘ On mu řekl: ‚Synu, ty jsi stále se mnou a všechno, co mám, je tvé. Ale máme proč se veselit a radovat, poněvadž tento tvůj bratr byl mrtev, a zase žije, ztratil se, a je nalezen.‘ (Čs. ekum. překlad)