Jealousy and Greed

Jealousy and greed are two themes in the play King Lear that effect significant characters in the play and affect them and the people around them.

Jealousy

Character’s who suffer from jealousy in the play include Goneril, Regan and Edmund.

Goneril and Regan

Goneril and Regan experience jealousy between themselves which surrounds their affections for Edmund. Their jealousy causes conflict between them and eventually Goneril poisons Regan in an attempt to keep her from marrying Edmund. The effect that it has on other characters in the play associated with the sister’s include Albany, Goneril’s husband, King Lear, their father, and Edmund.

The effects are not necessarily negative as the relationships between not only the sisters but also the other associates in the play have deteriorated and the characters do not express any emotional loss that suggests their lives are of great loss.

There is also jealousy between Goneril and Regan and Cordelia as Goneril and Regan resent Cordelia’s favouritism by their father. *“He always loved our sister most, and with what poor judgement he hath now cast her off appears too grossly.”*

The impact of Goneril’s death has little impact on Edmund as greed and the search for power are the nature of his affections not genuine attraction or love. *“Which of them shall I take? Both? One? Or Neither?”*

Edmund

Edmund experiences jealousy towards Edgar his legitimate brother. He envies his acceptance from his father for being a legitimate son. *“For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines Lag of a brother? Why bastard? Wherefore base, When my dimensions are as well compact, My mind as generous, and my shape as true...”*

The effect of Edmund’s jealousy causes him to act as a traitor and tell her father that his brother is a traitor and also causes him to allow Regan and Cornwall to pluck out his father’s eyes. Edmund’s jealousy has terrible effects on his family and its destruction. Eventually Edgar’s anger for Edmund’s betrayal of his family leads to him killing Edmund. *“Thou art a traitor, False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father...A most toad-spotted traitor.”*