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ONE WITH THE TOAD: BEJEWELED BUT VENOMOUS NATURE

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A Thesis

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Master of Arts

In


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Duke Senior's words about the Forest of Arden illuminate the complicated and paradoxical relationship that humans have with nonhuman nature: "Sweet are the uses of adversity, / Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous, / Wears yet a precious jewel in his head" (*AYL* 2.1. 12-4). This image of the bejeweled, poisonous toad encapsulates nature's essence of both the beautiful and the wild. As humans encounter adversity in nature, beauty emerges along with its harshness as humans turn their focus from purely anthropocentric concerns. At the heart of nature's wild essence is its blindness to the human experience in that it has no sympathy for the human. It rains without care for whether the human gets wet. It storms without care for any destruction of humans or their products. It hosts wild beasts without care for whether the humans may be devoured. The human is a part, but not the primary focus, of nature. Conversely, nature's bejeweled side includes beauty that, although unconcerned with human existence, nonetheless provides an alternate focus upon which humans may gaze and within which they may commune. Interactions with nature can produce change in, or for, the human. Ironically, such changes occur as the human turns his or her focus away from anthropocentric chaos and control to an acknowledgement that humans are only one component of nature that is indifferent to the plight of humans. This thesis explores this paradoxical connection in *As You Like It*, *King Lear*, and *The Tempest* between instances of human surrender to nature and the redemption or enlightenment that occurs in the human realm despite nature's apathy toward the human existence.

Upholding the idea that there is a separation between humans and nature, literary criticism focusing on nature in Shakespeare's plays most often takes a pastoral or ecocritical approach. For example, with respect to the Forest of Arden in *As You Like It*, traditional notions

of the pastoral lead to thinking of nature as a place where the exiled other can go for respite from the harsh realities of civilization. Beyond being a haven, as applied to *As You Like It*, Corinne J. Saunders asserts that “Shakespeare interweaves the concept of the forest as a place of sudden vision, penance and redemption with the theme of love” (202). In other words, in the midst of the forest, pastoral tradition says that humans can utilize nature as a place in which to breathe and contemplate life. As noted by Paul Alpers in *What is Pastoral?*, Duke Senior’s words describing the Forest of Arden denote an aura of a “careless” existence (72-3). This common conception that the pastoral is a setting for humans to rest or hide in does not, however, do humans or nonhuman nature the justice either deserves, nor does it completely explain the paradoxical relationship between humans and nonhuman nature in many of William Shakespeare’s plays.

The carefree aspect of nature cannot be its only meaningful contribution to human existence, especially given its vastness and the danger inherent in the earth, the oceans, the skies and the beasts. Alpers admits that reading plays with an eye trained on traditional pastoral concepts can be unsatisfying when he notes with respect to *As You Like It* that “its truest believers, have often felt the need to defend or explain away elements of the play, like the supposed unreality of the pastoral world, the ‘fairy-tale’ nature of its plot devices, and the artificial character of its ending” (134). This sentiment arises, for example, when reading the abrupt change of Oliver’s heart towards the end of the play that results in Orlando getting a windfall of property. Indeed, in Oliver’s interactions, the Forest of Arden is not simply a carefree and restful place, but a place that confronts Oliver with his mortality. Without taking into account the danger inherent in Oliver’s experience in the Forest of Arden and the indifference of nature to Oliver and his human concerns, Oliver’s change of heart seems, as noted by Alpers,

artificial and unrealistic. Rather, it is the paradoxical nature of the Forest of Arden that correlates with Duke Senior's description of the bejeweled and venomous toad.

In addition to traditional pastoral concepts of nature, ecocritical literary readings highlight human exploitations of nonhuman nature, upholding the concept that humans are outside of nature. The notion that humans are outside of nature is relatively new, however. In the context of an ecocritical discussion of *The Tempest*, Sharon O'Dair asserts that at the heart of all contemporary writing about nature, whether ecocentric or anthropocentric, is the "question: should the natural and human be rigidly separated or be understood as intimately and unavoidably interconnected?" (166). O'Dair explains that the prominent contemporary notion that humans and nature are separate and at odds has its roots in Romanticism, which revealed "humans or civilization to be alienated or separated from nature" (167). The conception of nature during the Renaissance, however, was not of the same mind, as is reflected in numerous plays by Shakespeare.

The predominant thought during the Renaissance that humans are a part of, rather than separate from, nature is reflected in Laurie Shannon's "Poor, Bare, Forked: Animal Sovereignty, Human Negative Exceptionalism and the Natural History of *King Lear*." Shannon notes that "[n]atural history writing at the seventeenth century's turn is both 'literature' and 'science,' before those practices had come to be seen as separate disciplines" (178). Thus, in Shakespeare's time, descriptions of nature in literature reflect the idea of the time that included humans within the overall concept of nature. With respect to the human role within nature, Shannon points out "[m]an is 'wretched' not only in his literal nakedness, but also in his general unreadiness and unpreparedness for the world. Recurring evidence for this modulation from literal nakedness to cosmic underprovisioning refers to man's need to be taught, usually under compulsion" (192).

Shannon's observations that humans must learn how to exist within nature can apply not only to learning how to survive but also how to thrive. Specifically, Shannon notes that humans were not superior to or even a superior part of nature, but rather, "in *King Lear* [man] is creation's *negative exception*" (175). From the vantage point of human negative exceptionalism in which nature is not just existing for human use, but rather as a larger setting encompassing more than mere man, human resistance to nature and the cessation of such resistance provides enhanced meaning to certain human aspects of the plays. Despite nature's indifference to the plight of humans, the humans who embrace, rather than seek to control, nature benefit from that change in perspective, reinforcing the concept that humans are a part of, rather than separate from, nature.

Human acknowledgement that they are part of nature and not in control of any aspect of nature, whether human or nonhuman nature, would seem to place humans in a vulnerable and possibly detrimental position. This thesis explores how the converse is demonstrated in *As You Like It*, *King Lear* and *The Tempest*. In "Politics of Nature: East and West Perspectives," Bruno Latour proposes that:

This is why I take the politics of nature, cosmopolitics, to be simultaneously a *new* phenomenon that forces everyone of us to reinvent politics and science in a new combination so as to absorb controversies about natural issues, and a very *old* fact of civilization that can be experienced through the many different traditions that have always rejected the idea of a human totally detached from her conditions of existence, from her life support, and from fragile artificial spheres. (74)

Beyond the political concern in Latour's work, he nonetheless points out the futility of trying to make sense of the world as a whole while conceptually keeping humans separate from nature given the inherent dependence of humans on nature. Similar to Shannon's point that humans are

lacking basic necessities given to animals, Latour suggests that humans benefit by considering themselves as a part of nature rather than outside of the realm of the natural. Following the arguments of Shannon and Latour, when humans fight against nonhuman nature, that rebellion is against the essence of humanity since humans are part of nature. Julian Yates and Garrett Sullivan note that Latour “embraces a mode of description that refuses the separation of nature and culture, of person and world, subject and object, and embarks instead on an attempt to reconstitute an ecological practice that would remake and remap the world” (23). In addition to Latour’s rejection of separation, Yates and Sullivan state that “[t]he key concept for Latour, gleaned from ecology or systems theory, is that any phenomenon, object, or practice should be grasped not in isolation but as a ‘quasi-object,’ network or folding together of different persons, things, times and places” (23). In other words, viewing humans as part of an interconnected network of nature can enlighten human actions within, and interactions with, human and nonhuman nature since humans are only one part of the network of all nature. If humans are quasi-objects, they are interdependent with other aspects of nature. This interconnectedness can account for instances in Shakespeare’s plays reflecting a redemption, or change for the better, in the human condition when humans shift their focus from purely human concerns and constructs to those of nonhuman nature.

Humans are, however, prone to a self-serving focus on their own human laws, customs and ideals. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines “natural order” as “[t]he order presumed to be present in the constitution of matter and the operation of forces in nature and society” (“natural order,” 1). Who is making the presumptions constituting natural order referenced in the definition? Humans are. In fact, Latour’s idea of nature comprised of human and nonhuman elements begs the question of how human perception develops regarding what “nature” is. In

What Else is Pastoral?, Ken Hiltner asserts that “what is ‘natural’ for each of us is often the backdrop into which we are born . . . [and] when those environs emerge into appearance as the result of a perceived environmental crisis, they can appear as a ‘nature’ worth fighting for” (132). Once again, humans determine what is natural in this context. While Hiltner’s discussion centers on the struggle between humans and nonhuman nature, a correlative thought is that when a natural state is in perceived crisis, such as in the context of ruling hierarchies or familial relations, the restoration of that natural order, as determined by humans, emerges as something worth fighting for. Shakespeare’s plays demonstrate how the reestablishment of natural order in society and family relations, which is determined by and important only to humans, often paradoxically occurs after humans surrender to nature, reinforcing the idea that humans are quasi-objects in nature.

Despite the predominance of pastoral and ecocritical literary criticism that assumes a separation between nature and humans, in “Economies of Nature in Shakespeare,” Jean E. Feerick asserts that “[f]or the premodern world of which Shakespeare was a part, the social, the cultural, and the human were still perceived to be *inside* nature, not separated from it and abiding by a discrete set of principles” (35-6). Like Latour, Feerick says it is a uniquely modern idea that there is a separation between human nature and nonhuman nature. Furthermore, Feerick defines nature not as “the ‘green stuff’ that occasionally appears in Shakespeare’s plays—it is not a ‘thing’ or an ‘object’ that man singularly acts upon. Rather, it is a process that envelops all earthly life—human no less than animal, plant, and element” (36). As humans recognize their place in the bigger process of all components of nature, Feerick notes that “intricate networks of exchange . . . conjoin person and earth across [Shakespeare’s] plays” (37). Related to the

network that Feerick discusses is the paradoxical connection between human surrender to nature and the return to what humans determine to be natural order in Shakespeare's plays.

Whether it be in the Forest of Arden in *As You Like It*, the unprotected outdoors in *King Lear*, or the island setting in *The Tempest*, as certain characters cease anthropocentrically striving against the nature present in each case, such characters experience a redemption, or enlightenment, that results in an improvement in the human condition. Keeping in mind that nature is indifferent to breakdowns in what humans consider to be natural order, the humans in Shakespeare's plays are nevertheless initially and myopically focused on these uniquely human concerns. In *As You Like It*, *King Lear* and *The Tempest* an upending of family relations, rulers or property owners leaves a usurper in a more powerful position than natural order, as determined by humans, would dictate. In *As You Like It*, Oliver seeks the destruction of his younger brother Orlando in part by denying him even the meager rights Orlando is due by virtue of being the second-born son. In this case, there is an absence of filial love and respect for fellow humans, as deemed important by humans. Similarly, the breach in natural order in *King Lear* occurs when Lear banishes the only one of his daughters who actually loves him and puts Goneril and Regan over the kingdom. Leaving the two "wicked" sisters to rule while at the same time believing that Cordelia does not love him is a rupture in the human realm of both social and familial order. Furthermore, the breach in natural order occurs even before Lear's "contest of love" begins. His idea of giving each daughter a portion of his kingdom to rule based on the merits of the daughter's profession of her love for him is a violation of natural order based on concepts of paternal love and familial order idealized by humans. Rather than knowing his three daughters and the nature of his own relationship with each one, Lear decides to rely on a required performance each daughter puts on for him. *The Tempest* begins after the rupture of familial and

social order on the island where Prospero and Miranda live in exile. Prospero's brother, who orders their removal from the kingdom, is at the crux of this break in human determined natural order.

In *As You Like It*, *King Lear* and *The Tempest*, focus remains on the human perception of breaches in natural order, with the balance of each play resting upon how such ruptures are mended. Despite nature's apathy with respect to human ideas of natural order, in each case a character's ironic surrender to nature is the turning point at which breaks in societal rule and family dynamics are redeemed from such alienation. It is only when a human gives up striving and seeking human solutions to a problem, thereby shifting focus and surrendering to the nonhuman nature around him, that uniquely human problems are solved and enlightenment occurs. It is the restoration of Orlando to his rights as second born son and the relinquishment by Oliver of his first born rights, Lear's sudden empathy for others less fortunate than himself and the realization that Cordelia's love for him is sincere, and Prospero's return to Milan without the aid of his "magic" that represent the return to human determined natural order in the plays.

As You Like It presents the traditional pastoral setting of the Forest of Arden as the site of redemptive occurrences. Looking at the forest as a separate entity in conflict with the characters themselves is a common way of reading the forest in this play. For instance, in his article "'Tongues in Trees:' The Book of Nature in *As You Like It*," Paul J. Willis approaches his analysis by examining how each character "reads" the Forest of Arden, thus resulting in many different "books of nature" (70-1). For Willis, nature is something to be interpreted by each character rather than as a separate identifiable entity, as other critics such as Jamin C. Rowan have cast it. Rowan makes ecocentric observations in "Ideas About Nature: an Ecocentric Look at *As You Like It*" similar to those of Willis that results in an inventory of various ideas or views

of nature presented in *As You Like It* (16). Rowan's ultimate conclusion, however, underscores the separateness of nature from humans in that he posits that *As You Like It* advocates "environmental irresponsibility" because the main characters "violate nature to different and varying degrees" by being solely concerned with their own interpretations of nature (24).

Rowan's conclusion is unsatisfying because environmental irresponsibility assumes not only the separation of humans and nature but the dominance of humans over nature. Rather, assuming that humans and the nonhuman nature of the Forest of Arden are together part of a whole network, as proposed by Latour and Feerick, the submission to nature by Oliver in the Forest of Arden makes the resulting restoration of societal order and filial love a logical conclusion to the play.

Oliver is an example of a character who is not only at peace with the nature of the Forest of Arden, but also surrenders to it. His surrender to nature is detailed as Oliver tells Celia and Rosalind what has happened to prevent Orlando coming to them as he promised:

Under an oak, whose boughs were mossed with age
And high top bald with dry antiquity,
A wretched ragged man, o'ergrown with hair,
Lay sleeping on his back; about his neck
A green and gilded snake had wreathed itself,
Who with her head, nimble in threats, approached
The opening of his mouth. But suddenly
Seeing Orlando, it unlinked itself
And with indented glides did slip away
Into a bush; under which bush's shade

A lioness, with udders all drawn dry,
 Lay couching, head on ground, with catlike watch
 When that the sleeping man should stir. For 'tis
 The royal disposition of that beast
 To prey on nothing that doth seem as dead. (4.3.103-17)

Oliver's oneness with nature is complete in this passage. That Oliver "seem[s] as dead" as he lay under the tree connotes images of the dead in a grave as well as, more simply, a man at complete rest. There is no struggle against his surroundings. The image of the slithery snake that links itself around Oliver's neck and toys with going into his mouth furthers the position that Oliver has ceased struggling, so much so that he flirts with death—either by his dead sleep appearance or the snake that almost enters into his body. This oneness is in complete contrast to the earlier depiction of Oliver commissioning Charles the wrestler to break Orlando's neck because "I hope I shall see an end of him; for my soul—yet I know not why—hates nothing more than he" (1.1.154-5). Oliver spends much of the first part of the play scheming to permanently get rid of Orlando in order to solve his hatred of him, but ironically is forced to find him—in order to bring him to Duke Frederick—so that Oliver does not lose all of his firstborn rights (3.1). Natural order is upended at least two times over in that Oliver has denied even the meager rights left to Orlando by their father, but at the same time Oliver's own rights to his property are taken away by Duke Frederick and will only be restored by Oliver bringing Orlando to Duke Frederick, "dead or living" (3.1.6). Oliver, thus, enters the Forest of Arden in turmoil because beyond his less than stellar reputation that he feels is tarnished by the people's love for Orlando, his firstborn rights teeter on the brink of extinction because Orlando is missing from Duke Frederick's kingdom. The disorder centers on Orlando, the brother Oliver hates.

Oliver's anthropocentric focus on his unnatural, filial hatred creates the roaring backdrop to his falling into a dead sleep intermingled with the nature of the forest. Oliver's attitude of repose, however, provides the opportunity for Orlando to happen upon the scene, recognize his brother Oliver, and save him from certain death by the lion (4.3.126-30). Despite the lack of brotherly love between Orlando and Oliver, Oliver's enmeshment with nature in the Forest of Arden allows for a return to human conceptions of natural order between the brothers. Oliver himself declares his own redemption when Rosalind and Celia ask him whether he is Orlando's brother that "so oft contrive[d] to kill him" (4.3.133). Oliver replies, "'Twas I, but 'tis not I. I do not shame / To tell you what I was, since my conversion / So sweetly tastes, being the thing I am" (4.3.134-6). Not only does Oliver admit to "conversion" after Orlando's mere presence causes the snake to "[unlink] itself" from his neck, and Orlando kills the lion, but he indicates that he has somehow returned to being himself. In saying that it "So sweetly tastes, being the thing I am," Oliver notes that prior to his conversion, he was not his true self (4.3.136). Thus, beyond mere redemption in the dissolving of his hatred for his blood relation, Oliver feels as if he has been restored to his own human nature. Drawing on the concept that the earth and its humans are part of one network, Oliver's surrender to the earth in the Forest of Arden is the prescription necessary for his own human nature to right itself. Drawing on Feerick's notion that it is "commonplace of the [premodern] period that man was made from dust and would return to dust," it is logical to find in Shakespeare's plays representations of man returning to the earth in acts of surrender such as Oliver's dead sleep with the snake in the Forest of Arden that mark a turning point of redemption for man (Feerick 37).

Oliver's conversion and resulting gift to Orlando of all of Orlando and Oliver's property rights leaves a satisfactory impression that the human perception of natural order within the de

Boys family is restored (5.2). Oliver chooses to stay and live in the Forest of Arden rather than returning to the world of the court. His redemption is internal in his own satisfaction of being at peace within himself and external in relation to Orlando. Refusing his former courtly life is part of his overall redemption as he chooses to remain in commune with the nature of the forest. Similarly, Lear relinquishes all of his kingdom, his daughters and, ultimately, his own life at the end of *King Lear*, but his redemption is not as evident as Oliver's at first glance.

In *King Lear*, the death of Lear and his daughters challenges the idea that there are any redemptive features in the play. Nonetheless, redemption is evident in Lear, who surrenders to nature. At the outset, the human conception of natural order is turned upside down when Lear orders maps of his kingdom brought to him so that he can divide and divest it into three parts “[t]hat we our largest bounty may extend / Where nature doth with merit challenge” (1.1.52-3). Lear announces the unnatural nature of the contest of flattery where “merit” can overtake the natural order of his three daughters. Once again, the humans make and break the ideals of what is considered natural order. Rather than merely divide his kingdom in thirds, giving an equal third to each of his daughters, Lear's pride wants praise. Similar to nature that is indifferent to human concerns, human created primogeniture laws look blindly at the merits of individual siblings, pronouncing the first born the winner of most of a family's fortune. Lear does not even look to the merits of each daughter's husband in this case; he insists that each daughter herself perform a flattery of professed love to the satisfaction of his pride. The winner gets the most land. Natural order, as humans conceptualize it, should be determined based on a loving relationship presumed to be present between a father and his daughters, but it is dispensed with in favor of artificial flattery and praise. This violation of human constructs of natural law is only rectified when Lear turns his attention to nature beyond himself.

Heightening the depths of this descent into human constructed chaos, despite their protestations of love for Lear, both Goneril and Regan's merits prove most unnatural of all by human standards. Neither daughter has any semblance of love for her father. Lear's own words "nothing will come of nothing" reverberate throughout this play in the many instances where Lear looks for substance in love but cannot find it until he can see more clearly with empathy those not clamoring for his attention and material possessions (1.1.90). Indeed, it is only when Lear repeatedly surrenders to nature that his metaphorical eyes are opened to see a view that includes others beside himself. Prior to his banishment and surrender to the outdoor elements, the truth is proclaimed to Lear by Kent: "Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least, / Nor are those empty-hearted, whose low sounds / Reverb no hollowness" (1.1.153-5). Lear's pre-surrender status of being separated from nature results in him hearing Kent's precise words of truth without comprehending them. The madness of Lear, thus, could arguably be said to begin at this point when he cannot comprehend something so resoundingly apparent to others.

Besides knowing her own heart and love for Lear, Cordelia also sees the truth that Lear is blind to and admits as much to her sisters when she leaves Lear's kingdom, saying, "I know you what you are" (1.1.271). Subsequent to Lear's disposition of his kingdom but prior to his exit from courtly life, Lear's dialogues with Regan and Goneril regarding how many followers he may keep at either of their castles reveal the depth of Lear's myopia regarding love between parents and children. The upending of human natural order goes beyond Lear's self-placement in the care of Regan and Goneril and turns solely on the allowances the daughters permit Lear to keep. In response to Goneril allowing Lear only fifty followers to stay at her castle, Lear flees to Regan's side for compassion, all the while cursing Goneril (2.2.335). As a child would complain to a parent, Lear unsuccessfully prods Regan to side with him saying, "O, Regan, [Goneril] hath

“...tied / Sharp-toothed unkindness, like a vulture, here” (2.2.323-4). Lear interprets Goneril’s actions as ungratefulness in cutting his retinue in half, which he equates with a lack of love. Lear seems to view love solely as an obligation of a child, rather than as an obligation coupled with a genuine emotional connection between a father and his daughter reflective of the genetic relationship.

This descent into human disorder in the parent and child relationship continues when Regan rebuffs Lear’s pleadings to allow him to live with her and Cornwall. Still blind to the fact that neither love and flattery nor love and possessions are related, Lear addresses Regan saying:

’Tis not in thee
 To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,
 To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes
 And, in conclusion, to oppose the bolt
 Against my coming in. Thou better knowst
 The offices of nature, bond of childhood,
 Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude. (2.2.362-8)

In other words, Lear thinks Regan knows her place as his child, clearly owing him a debt of gratitude. Lear is oblivious to the fact that he has taken her place in the parent /child relationship by giving her dominion over him based on the flattery he insisted upon in the divestiture of his kingdom. Lear’s anthropocentric blindness is the essence of what falls away after his surrender to nature, allowing his redemption by seeing reality instead of the flattered fantasy world in which Lear formerly lives.

The disruption of human determined natural order is not merely a construct of analysis, but is acknowledged by Gloucester as he says, “Though the wisdom of Nature can reason it thus

and thus, yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects . . . The King falls from bias of nature – there’s father against child” (1.2.104-12). Lear’s fool even notes the irregularity of Lear’s actions by describing the game of flattery as when “thou mad’st thy daughters thy mothers,” evoking the picture of the turntable relationship and resulting power that has shifted by Lear rewarding his daughters’ flattering words of love (1.4.163-4). The pitting of father against daughter, and daughters against father, is contrary to what humans consider to be naturally ordered. Edmund, Gloucester’s bastard son, however, reminds us of the arbitrariness of human determinations of what is natural and unnatural when he says, “Why brand they us / With base? With baseness, bastardy? Base, base?” (1.2.9-10). As one whose mere existence begins outside of what humans deem to be natural or acceptable, Edmund declares, “Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law / My services are bound” reinforcing the idea that human laws are of no consequence to nature (1.2.1-2). In this passage, Edmund suggests the artificiality of human engineered order in light of indifferent nature.

Similarly, it is Regan who states that something inhuman will enlighten Lear when she says, “O sir, to willful men / The injuries that they themselves procure / Must be their schoolmasters” (2.2.492-4). As Lear leaves Gloucester’s castle in a rage at the ingratitude of his daughters, he enters into nature, represented by the storm. The storm refers, of course, to the raging wind and rain that is occurring outdoors but also refers to the raging of Lear’s mind that is in tumult because what he thought was true is not. This inner storm is best described by the Knight when he tells Kent that Lear is:

Contending with the fretful elements;
 Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,
 Or swell the curled waters ‘bove the main,

That things might change, or cease. (3.1.4-7)

Although it is not until later that Lear attains full enlightenment that truth lies in the exact opposite of what he thinks, this scene in which Lear's unconscious provokes him to call out to nature to metaphorically devour itself represents what must happen inside Lear himself. As Lear stays out in the wildness and bareness of nature, such a change will begin.

In "Shakespeare Unearth'd," Frederick O. Waage notes that "[t]he intimacy of human bodies with the earth (whether it figures them, or locates them literally, on it or under it, dead or alive) imbues them with a terrocentric identity, and undermines the ideology of human uniqueness" (147). Related to Shannon's concept of human negative exceptionalism, Waage's concept is that by commingling the human body with aspects of nonhuman nature, a higher consciousness can be reached from this terrocentric, rather than an anthropocentric, view. Lear's anthropocentric focus upon the division of his land, the proclaimed and unproclaimed adoration of his daughters and his disappointment in the same, therefore, can not prompt any change in Lear himself. Waage goes further to say that "[p]lays such as *Cymbeline* and *King Lear* are almost topographically determined, in that the movements of their plot and action are closely tied to changes in place as defined by vegetation and topographical features" (149). Indeed, as long as Lear is within the civilized, human world of his former kingdom, Lear cannot truly see the character of his own species. As Lear goes out into the unprotected outdoors with all sorts of nonhuman nature, however, he begins to see the world, including its humans, as such truly exist, regardless of possessions, land or wealth.

Upon first engaging with the storm outside, Lear acknowledges the domination of the natural elements over humans and their products in his famous speech beginning "Blow winds and crack your cheeks!" (3.2.1-9). Lear notes that the strength of the storm can destroy churches,

eliminate human thought with its fires, and ultimately cause the implosion of the earth, including its human inhabitants. This first step of acknowledging his own minute place in the world that is controlled, not by man, but by nonhuman elements is the beginning of Lear's surrender and enlightenment. In fact, Lear admits the fiercest elements in the storm owe him nothing, unlike what he perceives he is owed by his daughters, and says to fierce nature, "Here I stand, your slave" (3.2.19). At this point, Lear admits that he would do better to put himself at the mercy of the outdoor elements of the storm than to submit to the control of his two ungrateful daughters. This admission that he has misassessed the relationship between himself and Goneril and Regan is an initial step in the dismantling of Lear's ego-driven, anthropocentric view of the world. Acknowledging that his place is in and among nonhuman nature because it will in essence be kinder to him, even though it owes him nothing, begins Lear's surrender to nature.

Any kindness in nature is disputed by the disguised Kent accompanying Lear on his sojourn in the storm as Kent speaks of "[t]he wrathful skies / Gallow the very wanderers of the dark, / And make them keep their caves . . . Man's nature cannot carry / Th'affliction, nor the fear" (3.2.43-9). Lear, already more on the side of nature rather than man, responds saying, "Let the great gods / That keep this dreadful pudder o'er our heads / Find out their enemies now" (3.2.49-51). In this exchange with Kent, it is clear that Lear trusts the natural elements to judge humans based on a vision of justice that Lear deems better placed in the hands of nature than of man. It is only logical at this point in Lear's inner turmoil that he no longer trusts his own judgment. This call for judgment and discerning of enemies by nature indicates that Lear is aware of the interconnectedness of humans and nature. Lear's progression to enlightenment continues. Nonetheless, Lear's admission that he is "[m]ore sinned against than sinning" demonstrates that he has not completely surrendered as he continues to assert his innocence in

focusing on his anthropocentric concerns (3.2.59). Lear's violation of the human laws of natural order by insisting on a theater of flattery in order to give away his status as both father and king to his daughters must still be acknowledged.

In addition to Lear's continued insistence on his innocence, an element yet unseen in Lear's character is compassion for others. From the nature of the flattery game to his insistence that if his daughters loved him they would allow him to keep as big a throng of men as he wished, Lear's pre-surrendered mode centers on himself. It is only after acknowledging reverence to nature's judgment over man's in the midst of the pelting storm that Lear acknowledges that another human might be suffering. When Kent finds a shelter from the storm, Lear worries that his Fool is cold and says, "Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart / That's sorry yet for thee" (3.2.72-3). Such words of compassion by Lear are unheard of until he is dwelling in and embracing his place in nature. Empathy for any other parts of nature besides himself, including other humans, would be challenging for a human while his sole focus remains on himself and his uniquely human concerns. For instance, even in his prior concern that Cornwall and Regan put Kent in stocks, Lear only cares that it is disgraceful to him that his messenger has been placed in the stocks. It is not of great concern for Kent, himself, but rather that one of Lear's own servants has been taken, thus resulting in an insult to Lear himself. When Kent first addresses Lear from the stocks, Lear replies "Ha? Mak'st thou this shame thy pastime?" (2.2.197). Less than concerned, Lear mocks Kent. Furthermore, Lear then says to Kent, "What's he that hath so much thy place mistook / To set thee here?" (2.2.202-3). This reference to Kent's place in society is to Kent's place as one of Lear's servants. Lear does not remark on the dehumanizing element of punishing Kent's body but rather on the affront to Lear's sense of societal order and hierarchy. Lear's own reputation is dishonored because his servant is

in the stocks. Thus, Lear's ego-centered, hierarchical view of the world is the only issue in the scene of Kent's being put in the stocks. Concern for the human Kent is absent. Therefore, that Lear is suddenly concerned about his Fool's health while they are both out in the storm is a drastic change from what we otherwise know of Lear.

Additionally, this change in Lear is noteworthy because it is an abrupt departure from his personality demonstrated prior to emerging into the outdoors. Shannon discusses that the underlying element in any such transformation is man's negative exceptionalism (196). More specifically, Shannon notes "*Lear* thus not only anatomizes man, philosophically, and finds him wanting; it taxonomizes man, literally, and finds him naked . . . [and] exposes an abject humanity's underprovisioning in the face of the environment and its sheer incapacity before the great dramas of self-fashioning" (196). Similar to how Lear acknowledges that nature is in a better position to judge human enemies, the environment, according to Shannon, takes care of its own. The gap between the concept of unprepared humans and Lear's new view of himself as part of nature disappears by embracing the concept that humans are a part of nature. Lear's personal progression in the play demonstrates this change in perspective. Shannon observes "[b]eneath the 'extremity of the skies,' man is that unready animal who lacks a coat" (196). Shannon focuses on the idea that man is less equipped for the world than beasts of the wilderness, as evinced by Lear's descent from the top of his kingdom into a state that is certainly no better than an animal, and perhaps worse. That humans are not at the center of anything related to earthly concerns is Shannon's emphasis and is underscored by Lear himself. If humans are considered as separate from nature, then humans are out of place and unready for dwelling among nature. By taking Lear's point, however, that he is part of nature, he is less incapable in the face of nature and poised for enlightenment.

Lear's vulnerable humanity is prominent as he admits that the storm is penetrating his body: "Thou think'st 'tis much that this contentious storm / Invades us to the skin: so 'tis to thee, / But where the greater malady is fixed, / The lesser is scarce felt" (3.4.6-9). The wind and water of the storm "invades" those out in the storm. This imagery of the elements infiltrating the human body is reminiscent of the snake slithering around Oliver's body and almost wandering into his mouth. The picture of human oneness with nature is heightened as Lear kneels to pray for his fellow man that must also be in the midst of the storm's relentless rain. Lear prays, "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?" (3.4.28-32). As similarly pointed out by Shannon, the nakedness of humans in the midst of the environment is a pitiable existence (196). Lear, all of a sudden, realizes that there are those, like him now, who have no shelter from storms. While he does not know of any such people other than himself, his Fool and Kent, he is aware of this situation and shows concern by praying from a humble position on his knees. Furthermore, Lear continues speaking to himself in a speech that the Lear of Acts 1 and 2 would not have delivered: "Take physic, pomp, / Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel, / That thou mayst shake the superflux to them / And show the heavens more just" (3.4.33-6). In a figurative way, Lear is putting himself in the shoes of those less fortunate and stating his wish to provide justice by giving the excess of what he has as king to those who have nothing. Elizabeth D. Gruber notes that "[t]he coinage "superflux," which is only used once by Shakespeare, conveys the injustice of a radically imbalanced distribution of resources" (105). This display of empathy and acknowledgement of others is in direct contrast to the King Lear who was enraged at Goneril when she suggests he decrease the size of his followers (1.4.286-302). Prior to surrendering to

nonhuman nature, at the mere suggestion of decreasing his splendor by fifty followers, Lear erupts in rage and curses his own daughter. It is only after the wind and rain have penetrated Lear's body that he kneels in prayer worrying about the inequality in provisions for his fellow man.

Lear's concern for the less fortunate and their exposure to the raw elements is extended in the stage direction "[*Tearing at his clothes, he is restrained by Kent and the Fool.*]" (3.4.107.1). Lear is seeking further enmeshment with nature so that the rain falling onto his bare skin can further penetrate him. Gruber notes that "one of the most direct explorations of the divide between *zoe* and *bios*¹ shifts into focus when Lear strips naked in the storm, tangibly divesting himself of the last vestiges of kingly authority" (108). Nonetheless, Lear's redemption is not complete at this stage; he remains deluded regarding the truth of love. When he encounters Edgar, disguised as Poor Tom, Lear sees the drastic, ragged, animalistic nature of Poor Tom and asks him, "Didst thou give all to thy two daughters? And art / thou come to this?" (3.4.48-9). Clearly, Lear's surrender has not yet produced the clarity of thought necessary for his complete redemption. He remains fixated on concepts that his daughters are at fault, rather than himself, despite his sudden empathy for other humans. While Lear has made a partial surrender, his anthropocentric perspective still overreaches the complete thought of his place within nature. His incomplete surrender is evident when he says to Edgar, "Why, thou wert better in a grave than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies" (3.4. 99-100). Lear does not see the change that can occur; he has surrendered to nothing other than the idea that this oneness with the elements is worse than death. He accepts that his position teeters on the edge of humanity,

¹ Citing Giorgio Agamben's *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Gruber says that "[z]oe' pertains to 'bare life,' as it invokes 'the simple fact of living common to all . . . beings,' while 'bios' refers to 'the form or way of living proper to an individual or group'" (99).

but Lear has not yet figured out that not only were his two daughters deceptive in their flattery, but that Cordelia truly loves him as a daughter naturally would. This restoration of human natural order is the missing element in Lear's complete redemption of character that will occur as Lear remains in a unified state with nature.

Remaining outcast among the uncivilized nonhuman environment, Lear insists on a sort of mock trial with the disguised Kent and Edgar acting as judges of absent Goneril and Regan. Lear's depth of reasoning begins to emerge as he insists, "Then let them anatomize Regan; see what breeds / about her heart. Is there any cause in nature that make / these hard hearts?" (3.6.73-5). Lear turns his attention from the mere deprivation of followers that his daughters insisted upon to the underlying explanation for their callous disregard of him as their father. With this less superficial questioning, Lear's enlightenment truly begins to take hold of him. As Lear looks beyond mere material wealth to explain his demise, the recognition of his own wrongdoing dawns on him as he draws closer to nature and in fact loses some of his humanity through madness. After Cordelia arrives in the kingdom to defend Lear against her own sisters, Kent describes Lear's state of mind: "A sovereign shame so elbows him. His own unkindness / That stripped her from his benediction, turned her / To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights / To his dog-hearted daughters, these things sting / His mind so venomously that burning shame / Detains him from Cordelia" (4.3. 43-8). Shame is a powerful signifier that connotes sin, failure, stupidity and other such exemplars of the human condition. Since nature is apathetic to whether or not a human sins, it is paradoxical that Lear is only able to sense his shame and its underlying causes after he has become one with nature. Nevertheless, at last, Lear knows his own fault and not just the faults of Goneril and Regan. Lear is aware that he misjudged his daughters as he was blindly looking only to superficial evidence of love. Lear is sorry, and thus, his redemption is upon him.

While the stage directions “*Enter Lear mad [crowned with wild flowers]*” would seemingly argue that Lear could not possibly be in his right mind enough to experience any sort of redemption, Lear still knows who he is, declaring, “I am the King himself” (4.6.80, 83-4). As Edgar says, “O matter and impertinency mixed, / Reason in madness,” a part of Lear’s surrender to nature is the surrender of his reason—at least his reason as he knew it (4.6.170-1). Lear’s prior reasoning is what leads him to conduct the ill-fated flattery contest. Thus, such reasoning seemingly could be surrendered without harm. In fact, as Lear’s “madness” continues, he becomes more lucid regarding the nature of his own daughters. Lear drifts in and out of madness, but nonetheless knows who he is. More importantly, the picture of Lear as reported by Cordelia is that he is “Crowned with rank fumiter and furrow-weeds, / With burdocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers, / Darnel and all the idle weeds that grow / In our sustaining corn” (4.4.3-6). Lear’s oneness with nature is now beyond the rain piercing his skin in that it has become his outerwear. He is wearing nature; the lack of his own coat has been supplemented with the flowers and herbs he has found in nature. With his environmental coat, he then meets with Cordelia. Armed with nature, Lear can confront his past wrongs and enjoy his enlightenment in the restoration of the human conception of natural bonds between father and daughter. Lear hints at his new insight into the plight of humans when he says, “When we are born we cry that we are come / To this great stage of fools” (4.6. 178-9). Lear reinforces the idea of negative human exceptionalism because all, including Lear himself, are just fools in nature.

Of foolish Lear, Cordelia calls him her “child-changed father” underscoring the uneasy natural order that has been disrupted through Lear’s folly (4.7.17). As the reconciliation of father and daughter continues, Lear states to Cordelia, “You must bear with me, Pray you now, forget and / forgive; I am old and foolish” (4.7.83-4). Ultimately, Lear asks for Cordelia’s forgiveness,

admitting he was wrong. Their reconciliation is thus complete. Despite their deaths at the end of the play, Lear's spiritual journey is one of hope in that he does not die unloved. In the face of imprisonment, Lear tells Cordelia they will "sing like birds i'the cage. / When thou dost ask me blessing I'll kneel down / And ask of thee forgiveness. So we'll live / And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh" (5.3.9-12). The imminent death of Lear's human body is of no importance to him since he is assured that Cordelia loves him as her father. Thus, his descent into nonhuman nature paradoxically redeems Lear's spiritual nature by restoring familial love to him. Lear will sing like a bird in a cage. Images of nonhuman nature doing the exact thing Lear proposes embodies the concept that a surrender to nature results in redemption.

In addition to the unique instances of redemption in human determined natural order in *As You Like It* and *King Lear*, the connection between surrendering to nature and yet another portrayal of redemption occurs in *The Tempest*. It is not, however, solely that Prospero and his brother Antonio experience redemption that results in Prospero's return to his primogeniturally determined position in Milan, but there are other instances of surrender and resulting redemption that occur throughout *The Tempest*. This peppering of examples comes after Shakespeare casts nature's role as encompassing that of human's while the magical tempest ordered by Prospero roars over those on the ship. The Boatswain rebuffs the distractions of Alonso, Antonio, Gonzalo and others by saying, "if you can command these elements to silence and work the peace of the present, we will not hand a rope more" (1.1.21-3). By underscoring that the natural elements are not under the dominion of human control, anthropocentric superiority is cast aside. The concept of dominant nonhuman nature is immediately contested, however, when Prospero emerges as the orchestrator of the storm (1.2.28-9). Unlike the animals that seek to devour Oliver and the storm that crushes down on Lear, the storm that causes the wreckage of the ship carrying King Alonso,

Ferdinand and the others is not solely a result of nature but is due to magical or supernatural powers that Prospero acquires while on his island of exile. Prospero's magical arts stem from his intensive study of the books that Gonzalo smuggles onto the boat when Prospero and Miranda are sent from Milan (1.2.166-8). Similar to Lear's pre-surrendered focus on his anthropocentric concerns, Prospero is all consumed with his "secret studies" prior to his ultimate surrender to nature (1.2.77). Prospero's pre-surrendered focus is upon his magical dominance over nature, highlighting the artificial separation between man and nature. While it is tempting to discount nature's role when the magical is afoot, Shakespeare gives other instances of non-dominant humans interacting as one with nature.

The subsuming of humans within nature is first referenced in the introductory descriptions of both Caliban and Ariel. Of course, neither Caliban nor Ariel is human as we tend to think of them. As a fairy creature, Ariel is arguably not human at all. However, even in his magical essence, his fairy body, like that of humans and animals, is capable of being trapped. Likewise, Caliban is the son of a witch and is also arguably not human. Similar to Ariel, Caliban's human body, as grotesque as it is, is not free and is capable of being constricted by nature. Prospero tells the story of how he finds Ariel painfully confined in a pine tree (1.2.286-93). The reference to Ariel's pain and constriction in a tree alludes to the suffering of humans as they also contend with nature. Prospero says that Caliban is "not honoured with / A human shape," but he talks, and otherwise has human, albeit uncivilized, interactions (1.2.283-4). Giving rise to comparisons of Ariel trapped inside a tree, Caliban's initial scenes in the play are as he is "confined into this rock" (1.2.362). The footnote clarifies that this terminology "implies that Caliban lives in a cave," but in any event it depicts a oneness with nature, as opposed to Caliban living in a home or any other manmade shelter (197). Similar to Lear's unprotected

existence out in the storm and Oliver's sleep in the midst of the Forest of Arden, Caliban lives with nature as his only protection. Thus, the human-like Ariel and uncivilized Caliban are literally within nature at the outset of the play. Even after the tree is opened and Caliban escapes his cave prison, neither is free yet. It is only later, when Prospero "releases" them both that their freedom is complete. While Prospero's release is elemental to the physical redemption of Ariel and Caliban, it cannot occur until after Prospero's own surrender to nature and resulting redemption.

Just as in *As You Like It* and *King Lear*, *The Tempest* has a disordered human society at its center. The overthrow of Prospero by Antonio disrupts the kingdom of Milan as well as the filial relationship between the brothers. Just as Oliver's encounter with the Forest of Arden allows for the resulting restoration of the human conception of natural order and as Lear's enmeshment with the elements of nature is the prelude to his own enlightenment and return to familial order, Antonio's exposure to nature's capabilities at the hand of Prospero's magic acts to soften his heart enough to reconcile with Prospero, leading to the restoration of natural and filial order. While nature is seemingly manipulated by Prospero as he creates the storm that causes the shipwreck, Antonio is unaware of Prospero's role in creating the storm. Antonio is, therefore, reacting to the nature he sees and experiences. Alternately, Prospero's power in successfully simulating the storm reveals his pre-surrender state in preserving the division between humans and nature. This divide is reinforced in the reluctance of Prospero to forgive Antonio. Similar to Orlando's initial reluctance to come to the rescue of his former tormentor Oliver, Prospero's reluctance to forgive Antonio is noted. Lois Feuer describes the reluctance as: "Prospero's forgiveness of his brother, grudging though it may be" (277). It is indicative of human nature that humans are reluctant to forgive. Contrastingly, nature can instantaneously move past its "target,"

as in the case of the snake on Oliver and the storm *King Lear*. Not surprisingly, Prospero's storm dissipates much easier than Prospero's own bitterness at the actions of his brother. Nonetheless, in the end, Prospero and Antonio are reconciled, and as Prospero relinquishes his magical powers, he returns to where he hailed from, in accordance with the restoration of natural order prescribed by humans.

Prospero's agency in conducting the sequence of events leading up to redemption is echoed by Feuer when she reflects on "the family strife that serves as motive for the action and whose resolution is Prospero's goal" (272). As she looks at *The Tempest* against the story of Joseph in the Bible, Feuer goes even further to posit, "both Joseph and Prospero redeem themselves as they work toward their enemies' regeneration" (272). Slightly different from Feuer's proposition that Prospero redeems himself during his time on the island, Prospero's interaction with the island itself, even being on the island, may be cast as a concession to nature by Prospero. Initially, a question looms from the beginning of the play: if Prospero has the ability to cause a storm to arise bringing a shipwreck to the island, then why couldn't he use his magical ability to effect a rescue of himself and Miranda from the island? Prospero does no such thing, which leads to the deduction that he embraces his new home on the island. It is, however, challenging to think of Prospero as surrendering to nature on the island due to his continued use of magic and his tyranny over Ariel and Caliban, who are both representatives of humans at one with nature. Prospero's clashes with the island and its inhabitants are not dissimilar to Oliver's confrontation with the lion and snake that seek to devour him or to Lear's encounter with the raging storm that almost engulfs him. Looking past these less than attractive interactions with nature, Prospero partially succumbs to the nature in which he finds himself. He stays on the island, but, like Lear, his complete surrender occurs in a progression.

After sixteen years on the island, Prospero finally uses his magic to facilitate his own return to civilization. His time on the island is perhaps similar to any time spent in a pastoral setting, regardless of Prospero's unique ability to magically control nature. Vin Nardizzi notes, "Prospero could have magically knocked down and divided innumerable trees in the prehistory of the play or still be doing so on the island while other characters occupy the stage" (122). Nardizzi emphasizes the potential that lies within Prospero's control; in fact, Prospero arguably has more power in the exiled pastoral island setting than he did as the Duke of Milan. As such, he is unable to protect himself and Miranda from being put in a rickety boat and sent away. On the island, Prospero seems to at least partially adapt to nature by surrendering to his placement there. Gabriel Egan also notes the curiosity aroused by Prospero remaining on the island in observing, "Howsoever the expected action of a shipwrecked man in possession of wood is to make a boat, nothing in the play suggests that Prospero is doing this" and "Prospero's magical power necessarily forces the audience to consider just what keeps Prospero on the island" (156, 157). Taken in this light, Prospero's voluntary stay on the island is at once more intentional than the surrender of Oliver and Lear. Perhaps the more intentional the surrender to nature, the more complete the evidence of redemption in the play?

In fact, *The Tempest* provides a happy ending for all of the characters in terms of returning each character to a better position than he or she was in at the opening of the play. All those who were shipwrecked will return to Naples or Milan because their ship is not in fact wrecked. Additionally, Miranda and Prospero will leave the island of their exile and return to civilization. Furthermore, Caliban and Ariel are delivered from Prospero's mastery and remain on their island home, free at last. In that each of the characters returns to where they belong in the human realm, *The Tempest* provides a more comforting look at redemption than either *As*

You Like It or King Lear. *King Lear*'s redemption is comforting in terms of human perceptions in that Lear ultimately knows that Cordelia truly loves him as a daughter should, but it is at the same time mournful in that Lear only learns of this true love immediately prior to both Cordelia's death and his own. Additionally, the redemption at the conclusion of *As You Like It* does not result in a return of every character to where he or she first came from. Rather, Oliver, Jacques and Duke Frederick stay in the Forest of Arden. While this shifting of homesites for these characters can, at least in the case of Oliver and Duke Frederick, indicate that they need more time in nature for a purpose of which we can only guess, one hypothesis is that their prior treachery in violating the human determined natural order of societal and familial relationships requires further reflection and perhaps penance in nature for their own redemption to be complete. This proposition is, however, focused solely on human concerns to which nature remains indifferent. Whatever the actual reason, the play ends with some characters not returning to their original homes. Thus, in contrast, *The Tempest* provides at least a human satisfaction of knowing that all are returning to their original homes. All is forgiven, and the ruptures in human conceptions of natural order are mended.

Such a neat and tidy ending is satisfying but incomplete without an examination of how Prospero's magic interacts with nature and redemption. Beyond indicating Prospero's partial surrender to nature by him not using magic to build a boat to take himself and Miranda back to Milan to resume his place in that society, Egan notes, "[t]he greatest claims for Prospero's magic are made just as he abjures it," referring to Prospero's own description of the many wonders of nature he has created (Egan 167, *Tmp.* 5.1.33-51). While Egan claims that Prospero's supposed feats of natural wonder would most likely be unbelievable to the play's audience, the focus

should remain on Prospero's own belief and proclamation regarding them (Egan 167). Prospero believes:

I have bedimmed
 The noontide sun, called forth the mutinous winds,
 And 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault
 Set roaring war; to the dread-rattling thunder
 Have I given fire and rifted Jove's stout oak
 With his own bolt. (5.1.41-6)

Given Prospero's belief, his staying on the island for sixteen years is an act of surrender to nature as far as he is concerned. However, it is the abandonment of his magical powers that indicates Prospero's complete surrender to nature.

While Feuer casts Prospero's relinquishment of magic as symbolizing his redemption, another way to state it is that Prospero's redemption is evident by virtue of the fact that he no longer needs the magic that artificially maintains his separation from nature (Feuer 273). While Feuer focuses on the fact that "Prospero is, like everyone else who visits [the island], changed by the island," the magical qualities of Prospero's "arts" and of the island itself do not diminish the fact that Prospero has indeed been living on the island, surrounded by nature, studying nature in the context of applying his magic, and communing with nature through his magic for sixteen years (Feuer 273). Whether his magic is considered supernatural, a hoax, or something else, magic is Prospero's initial connection to nature that ultimately leads to his changed perspective. Prospero's pre-surrender anthropocentric focus is on the "arts" he learns from his books while on the island. His magical manipulation of nature indicates his flirtation with nature's encircling breadth while maintaining the last vestiges of his separation from nature in exile. While Feuer

calls Prospero's evolution a "self-redemption," it could equally be that Prospero's transformation and enlightenment begins as he communes with nature and becomes content in his exiled life on the island (Feuer 273). That Prospero's magic and nature are, thus, closely connected in his development is evident when Prospero says:

But this rough magic
 I here abjure; and when I have required
 Some heavenly music (which even now I do)
 To work mine end upon their senses that
 This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
 Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
 And deeper than did ever plummet sound
 I'll drown my book. (5.1.50-7)

Prospero will bury his magical staff deep in the ground and drown his book of magic in the depths of the ocean. The sources of magic, and Prospero himself, will literally become one with nature as a result.

Magical feats involving nature are at once what separates Prospero from nature and what draws him closer to nature. In the Epilogue, Prospero announces his return to the mere state of being human, subject to all-encompassing nature, when he says:

Now I want
 Spirits to enforce, art to enchant;
 And my ending is despair,
 Unless I be relieved by prayer,
 Which pierces so that it assaults

Mercy itself, and frees all faults. (Epilogue13-8)

Prospero's intent focus on studying his books, a uniquely human endeavor, was the original impetus for Antonio taking over the governance of Milan from Prospero. Prospero's declaration that he was "A prince of power" as the Duke of Milan reinforces the concept that he had an anthropocentric, not to mention egocentric, perspective prior to his exile (1.2.54). By Prospero burying and drowning the accoutrements of his magical studies prior to his return to Milan, he is literally putting his anthropocentric treasures in the earth and sailing away from them. In giving up his magical power over nature, Prospero takes his place within nature and the separation between man and nature is erased. As noted by Steve Mentz, "those who struggle against the sea . . . get wrecked (or nearly so), but those who submit to it, like Prospero and Miranda, get rescued" (10). As with Oliver and Lear, Prospero's surrender to nature in abandoning his magical power provides the pivotal moment that removes the artificial separation of man from nature and allows for the redemption of the human natural and filial order.

The integration of the human into nature as a form of heightened existence and ultimate living is reflected by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Lowell Duckert when they state, "For better and for worse: we must continually take (new) positions *with*, and occasionally renew our vows to, the elements that make love and war, that engender both joy and misfortune" (16). Underlying Cohen and Duckert's assertion is the concept that humans need interaction with the "elements" of the world outside of ourselves, whether for good or bad. By acknowledging the interconnectedness of the network that comprises nature, human focus enlarges beyond constructed human concerns. Egan notes that while the concept of biological recovery is emphasized in many of Shakespeare's plays, "the key fact about these apparent transmutations is that they are only apparent, not real" (150). Egan focuses on ideas of transformative power of the

theater in particular (150). This thesis asserts, however, that there is a real transformative power in surrendering to nonhuman nature. When humans perceive that their constructed natural order is in crisis, a surrender to nature by one who has breached the human determined natural bonds of family or society is ironically the catalyst for redemption among family relations and societal order. The setting of nature amongst the raw elements of a forest, storm, wilderness or isolated island is where human chaos is often paradoxically realigned, thereby satisfying human concerns with natural order. The primitive state of surrendering to nature, or altering focus so that the human feels a oneness with nonhuman nature, allows for a redemption of conditions that humans consider to be ruptured.

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