

“THOU ART THE THING ITSELF”:
EARLY MODERN POSTHUMANISM IN SHAKESPEARE’S *KING LEAR*

A Thesis
by
COURTNEY LEWALLEN

Submitted to the Graduate School
at Appalachian State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

August 2016
Department of English

“THOU ART THE THING ITSELF”:
EARLY MODERN POSTHUMANISM IN SHAKESPEARE’S *KING LEAR*

A Thesis
by
COURTNEY LEWALLEN
August 2016

APPROVED BY:

Susan C. Staub
Chairperson, Thesis Committee

David Orvis
Member, Thesis Committee

Kathryn Kirkpatrick
Member, Thesis Committee

Carl Eby
Chairperson, Department of English

Max C. Poole, Ph.D.
Dean, Cratis D. Williams School of Graduate Studies

Copyright by Courtney Lewallen 2016
All Rights Reserved

Abstract

“THOU ART THE THING ITSELF”: EARLY MODERN POSTHUMANISM IN SHAKESPEARE’S *KING LEAR*

Courtney Lewallen
A.A., Catawba Valley Community College
B.A., Appalachian State University
M.A., Appalachian State University

Chairperson: Susan Staub

Recent years have seen posthumanism used as a critical term in literary studies, enabling scholars to deconstruct conceptions of anthropocentrism as they appear in humanist thought. Taking the stance that humans, as far back as the early modern period, have always already been posthuman, this thesis offers a posthumanist criticism of Shakespeare’s *King Lear*. With its poignant representations of madness and old age, *King Lear* has long been hailed as an exploration of human nature. I argue, however, that *King Lear* in fact deconstructs humanist conceptions of the human/non-human hierarchy through the use of animal metaphors, and by presenting us with an unaccommodated form of human existence through depictions of Poor Tom. Using animal studies as a critical lens, I examine the use of animal metaphorization as a means of subverting the very notion of a human/animal boundary within the play, while highlighting anxieties associated with maintaining the human/animal divide. Then, by examining the relationship between Edgar/Poor

Tom and King Lear, I discuss the treatment of Poor Tom as Lear's specular other. These ideas culminate into a treatment of human embodiment as the limiting factor that must be overcome in order for humanity to finally transcend into the *posthuman*. By recognizing the inherently primordial state of human embodiment, we can transcend those limitations through the use of technology while minimizing exploitation of our natural surroundings.

Acknowledgments

I would first like to thank Dr. Susan Staub for her undying support throughout the course of my studies, for her exceptional patience and understanding through my writing process, for being a constant source of inspiration, and for contributing to a wonderful undergraduate and graduate experience at Appalachian State University. I would also like to thank my other committee members, Dr. David Orvis and Dr. Kathryn Kirkpatrick, for their patience and enthusiasm, and for dedicating themselves to helping me make this thesis the best it can be. Furthermore, I would like to thank my fellow graduate students for their constant support and enthusiasm. I would finally like to thank my family and Nicholas Forté, whose love, encouragement, and belief in my success helped drive me to continue my studies.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved Papa, Rabun Herring, who passed away in May of 2015.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iv
Acknowledgments.....	vi
Dedication.....	vii
Foreword.....	ix
Chapter One: An Early Modern Posthumanist Perspective.....	1
Chapter Two: Blurring the Human-Animal Boundary in <i>King Lear</i>	15
Chapter Three: Lear’s Mirror Stage, Identity Effacement, and Poor Tom as Specular Other	38
Conclusion: Embodiment and the Posthuman	58
Works Cited	64
Vita.....	71

Foreword

Quotes from *King Lear* come from the conflated Norton Critical Edition, edited by Grace Ioppolo, 2008.

Chapter One: An Early Modern Posthumanist Perspective

What is “human”? We may consider the difference between the human and the inhuman a seemingly easy distinction to make, and one by which humans have long conceived of their own humanness. The semblance of confidence arises in our ability to look at other entities and identify them as being nonhuman. This treatment of the nonhuman situates us within a binary opposition—a binary that often takes the form of a hierarchy that holds humans at the top. However, when it comes to the human/inhuman binary, we must recognize the fragility of the hierarchy we have established, especially when the definition of our own humanness is in question—and it most certainly is. It always has been. It is certainly in question in the early modern period, when writers such as Shakespeare sought to address questions of human nature and explore moments when the human and the inhuman intersect. Their writings inevitably engaged with topics such as the relationship between humans and animals and nature. It is for this reason that ecocritics of early modern literature can identify anxieties within early modern conceptions of human exceptionalism. Ecocriticism and, by extension, animal studies, are therefore an important part of posthumanist thinking, especially where the early modern period is concerned. These approaches participate in antihumanist ideas; however, while antihumanism seeks to critique and undermine humanist anthropocentrism, posthumanism takes this school of thought a step further. Posthumanism suggests that humans can become something other; that is, as Rosi Braidotti puts it in *The Posthuman*, posthumanism, while hinged on antihumanism and the decline of humanist thoughts, proposes and anticipates “alternatives” to humanist ideas of human nature and reason (37).

One text that presents us with an intersection of humanism and posthumanism is Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Frequently hailed as a play that explores the complexities of human nature, *King Lear*'s presentation of humanness in fact denies Cartesian modes of thought, as illustrated by the various transitional states undergone by the character Edgar. Posthumanism, as I use it here, takes on the qualities of a critical term for the deconstruction of early modern humanism. Rather than critiquing humanism directly, I will identify the ways in which *King Lear*'s humanism undermines itself, thereby taking on posthumanist leanings. I focus particularly on the character of Edgar, whose assumption of the role of Tom of Bedlam, while at times appearing to be a calculated, strategic move, actually exemplifies an embrace of the inherently primal human form. This form, and Edgar/Tom's interactions with both the natural world and the character of Lear, demonstrates a posthuman approach to the definition of the human.

Considering all the factors that go into the concept of "posthumanism" and the multitude of approaches to the idea, pinning down a single definition poses difficulties. Because of this complexity, certain concerns may arise at the idea of Shakespeare's works being posthuman. After all, the early modern period was the period of Renaissance humanism. Indeed, we see the word "posthumanism" mostly used in discussions of cyborgs and other aspects of our technological culture—topics that vary greatly from examinations of the literature and culture of early modern England. One approach to posthumanism, however, holds that it is a school of thought that recognizes that humans are not exceptional within the natural world; as such, it displaces and subverts anthropocentrism and refigures our notions of normativity (Braidotti 81). As such, posthumanism engages in anti-humanist thought. This definition of posthumanism is derived from the conception that posthumanism, as a school of

thought rather than a state of being, not only critiques humanism, but resituates humans among our inhuman counterparts. Early modern posthumanism, as I am treating it, and as defined by Stefan Herbrechter in *Posthumanist Shakespeares*, involves the “revaluat[ion], reject[ion], exten[sion], and rewrite[ing]” of early modern humanism through the confrontation of humanism with the “inhuman, the superhuman, the nonhuman in all its invented, constructed or actual forms” (4); humanism, when faced with these entities that it necessarily accounts for, is destabilized by its own ideas, he argues. Indeed, in the early modern period, not only did the definition of humanism change, but the definition of the “human” was reconceptualized, as well; as such, humanist approaches to these non-human others were, in fact, antithetical to humanism itself. Humanist thought, then, might even venture into the realm of what we now call posthumanism.¹

The idea of human “nature” implies that we, as humans, have a natural state that is distinct from animals and other natural forms. Humans seek to control this natural state through the implementation of reason and, in a more material sense, technology. Human “nature,” believed by early modern people as being hinged on the use of reason, rather than supposing that humans can be something more akin to animals, distinguishes humans from our animal counterparts; it assumes that the basest state of humanity is still distanced from and superior to that of animals, even as Montaigne “asserts that there is no defensible distinction between what we call ‘senses’ and ‘reason’” (Shannon 186). Present-day posthumanists are involved with pushing humans *out* of what we would conceive as human

¹ Herbrechter posits that Shakespeare “invented” the posthuman in spite of writing in a humanist era (6). Present-day early modern critics, who exist in a time “after” humanism—that is, being informed by postmodern theory—can use posthumanism as a critical lens through which to examine posthumanist leanings at play in Shakespeare’s work through understanding Shakespeare’s understandings of the inhuman other (9).

nature and into a more evolved, technological state of being. In this sense, posthumanism takes on futuristic attributes—by evolving beyond human nature, we will move from being human, to being *posthuman*. This form of posthumanism makes assumptions about human nature that problematize early modern conceptions of the human; specifically, that humans are inherently primal beings. Futurist posthumanism also assumes that our humanness depends on our bodily forms remaining untouched by artificial modifications. Such a conception of humanness places importance on our material forms, rather than reason, as we see in early modern texts. The natural state of the human body as presented in *King Lear* removes reason, which, as I describe below, is central to Cartesian humanist thought, as well as alters the characters' perceptions of their material bodies. Lear and Edgar adopt primal forms that establish the human as nothing other than an animal.

The futurist leanings of posthumanism are addressed in David Roden's *Posthuman Life: Philosophy at the Edge of the Human*. Roden takes a deliberately futurist stance—futurist, that is, in his act of projecting the future of humanity in a posthuman world. He defines his form of posthumanism as *speculative posthumanism*. Roden's approach to posthumanism as speculative accounts for the idea that we cannot conceive of a futuristic, posthuman world. My question is this: what does it mean, then, when we consider that posthumanism is always already at play? I use the phrase "always already" in the Heideggerian sense, the sense that our present understanding of the human problematizes early modern humanism's notion of human exceptionalism, and in the sense that N. Katherine Hayles uses it in *How We Became Posthuman* when she intimates that the "late evolutionary add-ons of consciousness and reason...allow the human to emerge out of the posthumans we have always already been" (279). Early modern posthumanisms must be

defined according to our present understandings of posthumanism; in this sense, we project backward, rather than forward.

Roden is responding to attempts made by posthumanist philosophers to speculate the possible outcomes of the transformation process involved with becoming posthuman. Nick Bostrom, for instance, conceives of the posthuman as the state of the human condition after undergoing various enhancements to the basic forms of the human. His “Why I Want to be a Posthuman When I Grow Up” presents a variety of possible, speculative bodily, as well as mental and emotional enhancements, that could potentially lead humans to a posthuman existence. By shifting away from the natural human form, humans venture into the next stage, the “post”-human existence.

The idea that the posthuman emerges from improvements to human embodiment implies that a basic human “nature” exists, in spite of various posthumanist critiques of early modern humanist conceptions of human nature, as Neil Badmington argues in “Theorizing Posthumanism.” Herbrechter and Callus’s definition of posthumanism, as stated above, reiterates the treatment of posthumanism by Badmington, who points out that humanism has been—and still is—constantly being rewritten. Badmington’s deconstruction of Cartesian conceptions of human nature—the mantra, “I think, therefore I am”—provides the framework for my approach to humanism’s exclusionary treatment of animals and plants. Badmington, however, deconstructs Descartes’ humanism from a presentist standpoint, implying that humanism was “always already in crisis” because of modern technologies’ subversion of humanist thought (18). My approach to the mantra highlights an important distinction between the human and the inhuman. “I think, therefore I am” tells us that human nature is grounded in reason. Indeed, reason is one of the four kinds of “faculties of Humane

nature” posited by Thomas Hobbes in his chapter titled “Of the state of men without Civill Society,” the other two being “Bodily strength, Experience, [and] Passion” (2). These four faculties differentiate humans from animals; for instance, animals are experienced by humans, rather than experiencing. For this reason, we are able to refer to these faculties as being part of *human* nature, rather than attributing ourselves with animal nature.

Of the four faculties presented by Hobbes, reason is, perhaps, the most distinctive trait that separates humans from animals. Humans might be said to become animalistic once they are removed of reason. Such a transformation suggests fragility in in our definition of humanity, for might an inhuman other transcend the boundary into the human realm? If an animal, for instance, displays a semblance of reason, what is to stop us from saying it possesses human nature? Everything we know about our species is dependent upon our understanding of our environment. When our understanding of the world, environment, or universe changes, so must our definition of human. When humanist concepts of human exceptionalism are challenged, then the idea of humanness is in question, as well.

Let us look, then, at the scene in which Lear meets Poor Tom for the first time—that is, Edgar in disguise. Tom is performed; he does not exist, except for in his interactions with those around him. As such, Tom takes the position of the mirror; he is a signifier, and his signifieds are those who interact with, and as in the case of Lear, identify with him. Tom, being performed, is but a reflection of the Bedlam beggars, according to Edgar’s perception of the various Poor Toms he has come across in his lifetime. He, then, is essentially the whole form of a fragmented body of people; fragmented, that is, in the way that the Bedlam beggars display incompleteness due to their fragmented mental capacities. As Ann Lucksinger points out, “Paradoxically, it is Edgar’s lack that represents wholeness, or

primordial Ideal” (161). Tom’s lack takes the form of his suffering; he is suffering not only because he is presently living in a hovel in the middle of a storm, but because, due to the requirements of his performed character, his state of mind has reduced his communicative prowess to nothing but incoherency. Lear, upon seeing Poor Tom for the first time, asks of him, “Didst thou give all to thy daughters, and art thou come to this?” In these lines, Lear is showing us that he sees something of himself in Tom; as such, Tom is the representation of Lear’s totality. Has his human status changed, then, when his totality is fragmented, relative to the image of the ideal human? Or must we rather reconcile the definition of humanness in order to accommodate the image of the unaccommodated man?

Using posthumanism as a lens through which to view early modern literature, scholars inevitably takes on presentist leanings, especially when we engage in ecocriticism. Connections between humans and the natural world are critical in understanding early modern conceptions of the human. Ecocriticism and animal studies, therefore, frequently intersect with and address posthumanist ideas of the human/inhuman binary. A presentist stance, in the case of my research, involves not only using present-day views of humanity and nature, but also the present-day tendency of speculation, innovation, and the ways in which these acts have altered our perceptions of humanness and the human/inhuman divide. If humanist ideas depend on the strict definition of human and the distancing of the inhuman, what happens to humanism when the definition of human nature is contradicted by humanist thought?

If humanism concerns itself with the definition of human and by extension, the inhuman, a close examination of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, and of moments where humans identify with the nonhuman, or else seek to dehumanize and estrange those who might

otherwise be seen as human, provides a crucial space from which to examine the posthuman in Shakespeare. *King Lear* is known for its treatment of ideas related to human nature and for certain acts that subvert the idea of human exceptionalism, particularly in Lear's interrogation of human nature. "Unaccommodated man," as Lear puts it, "is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal" as Poor Tom is—that is, Edgar disguised as a "Bedlam [beggar]," (3.4.100-1, 2.3.14). By recognizing that Shakespeare was writing at a time of shifting views not only of nature, but also, inevitably, of *human* nature—for we cannot redefine the inhuman without also reestablishing the boundaries of the human—we can better identify moments wherein we see the seeds of modern-day posthumanisms. *King Lear* provides several such moments.

While I am treating ecocriticism as a way of engaging with posthumanist ideas, Jennifer Munroe treats posthumanism as the most recent form of ecocriticism in her "Shakespeare and Ecocriticism Reconsidered," calling attention specifically to that area of posthumanism concerned with the treatments of matter and things as agentic. Ecocriticism is a method of assessing the relationships between humans and the natural world. A more specific focus within ecocriticism, animal studies, interrogates on the relationship between humans and animals as represented in texts. Certain ecocritics engage in posthumanist interrogations of early modern literature, especially those concerned with conceptions of the human/inhuman binary, which is often seen as hierarchical, and human and animal embodiment. Ecocritical approaches to these ideas challenge the notion of human exceptionalism, and such scholarship is an important facet of a posthumanist critique of the early modern period.

Looking at the early modern work through the lens of animal studies enables scholars to interrogate the anthropocentrism often found in humanist worldviews. The current state of early modern ecostudies presents us with a dialectic between historicist and presentist approaches. *Ecocritical Shakespeare*, edited by Lynne Bruckner and Dan Brayton, for example, engages with both historicist and presentist criticism of Shakespeare's work, juxtaposing the two perspectives while presenting an activist stance to address our current ecological crisis. Sharon O'Dair's essay "Is it Shakespearean Ecocriticism if it isn't Presentist?" within that same volume points out that Shakespearean ecocriticism must necessarily be presentist—but must also engage in an a presentist, activist approach to public policies (85). In a similar vein, Simon C. Estok's *Ecocriticism and Shakespeare* uses a presentist lens in his act of "theorizing ecophobia" (5). A discussion of ecophobia, a term coined by Estok to convey the contempt with which humans conceptualize nature, enables us to approach this contempt in a political or activist way. Estok argues, as do many ecocritical scholars, that ecocriticism should always be activist. The subversion of early modern anthropocentric worldviews situates humans as part of the animal and natural world. While not necessarily activist, such an approach to early modern texts presents the seed of animal and environmental activist thought.

The activist stance emerges from a society that has been shaped by western humanism's inherent anthropocentrism. Laurie Shannon investigates such anthropocentrism through her conception of the early modern human/animal divide as taking the form of a tyrannical hierarchy. Shannon speaks to the posthuman idea of an *indistinct* divide that separates humans from animals, particularly in her ideas of "human *negative* exceptionalism," which defines humans in opposition to animal nature and conceives animals

as being whole while humans are fashioned as incomplete (175). Similarly, in *Animal Bodies, Renaissance Culture*, Karen Raber investigates the notion of a human/animal divide through her subversion of the notion that reason, the basis for human exceptionalism, undermines the shared embodiment of humans and animals.

Following a similar train of thought, Louisa Mackenzie reveals evidence that humanists did not discount the human tendencies of animals; by recognizing the similarities humans had with animals, in fact, humanists tapped into their anthropocentric worldviews by defining the inhuman not only in opposition to, but also in correlation with, the human. We see in Mackenzie's argument that present-day posthumanism's treatment of the human-animal divide bears similarities to the early modern period. Erica Fudge likewise considers how conceptions of humanity were, in fact, *subordinated* to the treatment and conceptions of animals in early modern England. Her "Renaissance Animal Things" argues that the "objectification" of animals as seen in *King Lear*—that is, the act of using animal-made-things—alters perceptions of human sovereignty (94).

Some recent scholarship on *King Lear*, perhaps necessarily, ventures into the posthumanist realm for its treatment of human nature. Erica Sheen's "Shakespeare's Animations" is one such example of an exploration of the human/animal dualism at work within the play. Andrew Bozio, meanwhile, considers human embodiment and connections with the environment displayed by Gloucester's line, "I see it feelingly." Bozio argues that the environment within *King Lear* is phenomenological and is "reconstituted" through the multitude of ways the characters experience and sense the world around them (263).

Although scholars have begun considering ecocritical issues in *King Lear*, little has been written concerning the character of Edgar along these lines. That being said, recent

years have yielded a greater emphasis on the character in critical study. Nevertheless, we still see the same apprehension of Edgar's character that presented itself in analyses from the 70s and 80s—apprehension, that is, regarding Edgar's motivations. Laurence D. Nee's "The Education of Edgar in Shakespeare's *King Lear*" assesses Edgar's motivations according to a desire for justice and for happiness, highlighting the character's apparent love for reason over nature in his pursuit of the latter—an idea that implies an embrace of humanist ideas. Rather than focusing on his motivations, which draws Edgar into a central position, Annette Luksinger situates Edgar rather as part of a binary in her focus on Lear's attempt to "reaffirm his identity" through him (160). No one, perhaps, puts as close a microscope on Edgar than Simon Palfrey in *Poor Tom: Living King Lear*. Not to be caught up in the characters' assessment of Edgar, Palfrey looks at Edgar as a character who himself senses, rather than simply being sensed, and elucidates the subtlest elements of the character's humanity. Palfrey's treatment of Edgar is concerned, in part, with the character's relationship with nature and the human race as his various disguises take form. This relationship is important to my goal of destabilizing the centrality of the human in the play.

We see very little of Edgar in *King Lear*, and much more of his assumed character, Tom of Bedlam. Yet Edgar remains an almost-constant presence: the audience recognizes that his role of Tom is performed. At times, Edgar even breaks character to offer an aside, or a word to another character. The shift from Edgar to Tom (and back again) problematizes the apparent resignation to the role that we see in Edgar's speech with the line, "Edgar I nothing am" (2.3.21). His dual existence is informed by his willingness to experience the world while assuming the role of a human lacking reason.

The following chapters will conceptualize posthumanism and situate it within the early modern context, providing an examination of the humanist notions at play within *King Lear*. Edmund, often described as humanist for his individualistic approach to politics and humanity, at times destabilizes this perspective by performing deeds similar to those he himself deems “savage and unnatural” (3.3.7). The notion of reason as the basis for human nature comes into question; critical posthumanism can deconstruct the manifestation of this notion as it appears in *King Lear*.

Chapter two critiques the treatment of the human/animal binary within *King Lear*. Taking into account the concept of human negative exceptionalism, the use of animal metaphors within the play subverts the concept of the human/animal boundary that it simultaneously attempts to affirm. In addition, I look at the “thing”-ness of animals treated as property, as well as the subversion of this objectification through the central role of animals not only within the play, but within early modern culture.

I then examine elements that come into play in the dehumanization of Edgar as he degenerates into the character of Poor Tom. This practice will draw Edgar, the character historically pushed into the periphery by Shakespeare scholars, into a more centralized position based on his very *denial* of human identity based on reason. What does it mean that his animalistic role as prey causes him to turn away from the human race, as implied by Palfrey, in order to maintain his life, his wholeness? I will consider the implications behind Lear’s act of associating himself with the disguised Edgar. I will take a similar look at the Edgar/Lear relationship in terms of Lear seeking to “reaffirm his identity” as posited by Lucksinger; however, my question involves more of an examination of the implications Lear’s efforts have for the early modern notions of humanness. Palfrey looks at the soliloquy

where Edgar makes the decision to disguise himself as Poor Tom, and poses the question, “Why *this* disguise?” (28, emphasis in original). The bedlam beggar disguise, according to Palfrey, “will show contempt for humankind. . . . Edgar may be unraveling from comfortable association with his own supposed species: ‘man’ has become cruel and alien” (29). One important aspect of Poor Tom is his role in the degeneration of Lear into madness. Lear looks at Edgar/Tom, spying his wretched state, and sees something of himself within the young man, insisting that Tom has “given all to [his] daughters,” and has gone mad because of it, when in actuality, Lear is describing his own misfortune (3.4.47). This scene calls for a Lacanian examination, as Annette Lucksinger provides in her essay, “Edgar’s Role(s) in *King Lear*.” However, while Lucksinger focuses on Lear’s attempts to “reaffirm his identity” (160), I use Lacan’s construction of the “mirror stage” as a means to break down concepts of human exceptionalism. The fact that there can be no construction of one’s selfhood without defining oneself against the other speaks to the anxieties of “human negative exceptionalism” as presented by Shannon (and as I mention above). Following my examination of the dehumanization of Poor Tom, I will consider the implications behind Lear’s act of associating himself with the disguised Edgar. He recognizes in that same scene the true animal nature of a human, once gotten rid of the “lendings” of animals, and decides to place himself in the very same animalistic position as Poor Tom (101). As Fudge states in “Renaissance Animal Things,” “The animal-made-object, [Lear] seems to believe, can mark and produce human power; and without such apparent markers the king sees all of humanity as uprooted” (98). Yet he “acknowledges his true place” among the animals with Poor Tom. Attempting to “reaffirm his identity,” as Lucksinger puts it, results in his attempting to seize

control over his own humanity by relinquishing those possessions that distinguish him from inhuman animals.

Chapter Two: Blurring the Human-Animal Boundary in *King Lear*

Posthumanism's critical examination of humanist conceptions of humanity, in part, responds to certain anthropocentric values posited by the humanist tradition. One means of responding to this anthropocentrism involves the turning-away from the established human/animal divide, a separation that takes the form of a hierarchy that, inevitably, sets up humanity as the dominant species. Elspeth Graham writes that studies in human-animal relations have "raised questions about the boundaries of the human, both marking and destabilizing ideas about the distinctiveness and special status of humans in the world" (117). The establishment of a boundary between humans and animals not only seeks to distinguish humans from our nonhuman, animal counterparts; it also seeks to push animals into the periphery; essentially, it posits animals as the "othered" entities, in the sense that humans embody normality. The early modern period saw humans beginning to question the idea of inherently human superiority over their animal counterparts. Bruce Boehrer, for instance, points out that the "ethical practice of vegetarianism, the legal protection of animals from cruelty, and the concept of animal rights were all alien to medieval social practice. These would emerge...among the products of a process of social transformation that began in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries" ("The Animal Renaissance" 2). The hierarchical nature of the human/animal divide, of course, remains a widespread worldview to this day; that is, "the increasingly intimate connection between human beings and the natural world remains essentially exploitative—indeed, it grows more exploitative...than ever before"; however, Boehrer points out that the early modern period displays "the early stirrings of an ethical

identification with and sympathy for the plight of at least some other animals” (2-3). Indeed, around the time Shakespeare wrote *King Lear*, we saw proanimal writers who “began to question the basis of man’s superiority.” In particular, certain writers from the period began to identify problems associated with the concept of human rationality, and the distinctiveness of humans that such a concept suggests (Edwards 76). *King Lear* speaks to this line of questioning, calling to attention the fragility of the ideas that surround, as Laurie Shannon puts it, “human negative exceptionality” (*Accommodated Animal* 132); that is, the determination that humans are inherently exceptional due to our lack of animal characteristics.

As stated above, humans have a long history of challenging, intentionally or not, the “parameters” that have traditionally defined human and animal relationships (Braidotti 68). Unintentionally, certain humanist thought processes involve the animalization of the human and the humanization of the animal; that is, there are instances where the human/animal boundary is called into question through humans’ efforts to maintain it. Those parameters that help to mediate human/animal relations, thereby distinguishing between the human and the animal, are problematized; without them, we witness the blurring of the human/animal boundary. As Erica Fudge states, “Qualities of human-ness rely on the presence of the animal, but where there is an animal these qualities which seem to define what is human about the human are revealed to be beastly” (*Perceiving Animals* 143). One way those “beastly” qualities of humanness are brought into focus occurs when humans use animal terminologies in reference to humans, and human terminologies in reference to animals—that is, through the use of “metaphorization” (Braidotti 69). *King Lear* is rife with these moments,

especially because, as I argue, the concept of human animality aligns with perceptions of moral corruption.

The act of attributing animals with human emotions, or merely associating emotions with certain animals—as Braidotti puts it, we have traditionally seen “deceitful foxes” and “humble lambs”—presents animals as “metaphorical referents for norms and values” (69). The early modern period was no stranger to the use of animals as metaphor, as shown in part by the numerous animal metaphors in *King Lear*. To quote Juliana Schiesari, “humanists and intellectuals of the early modern period grounded thought in metaphor and analogy, perhaps inadvertently crossing the vertical model,” that is, the hierarchical nature of the human/animal binary, “with a lateral one, and thereby undoing, perhaps unconsciously, any doctrinal theory that would hold secure man’s place on top of everything and everyone” (“Rethinking Humanism” 58). Thinking along these lines, the use of animal imagery within the play contributes to the notion that the boundary separating humans from our animal counterparts is arbitrary. As such, the play undermines the idea of exceptionalism grounded in our conceptions of human nature, while still seeking to enforce the hierarchical binary through the dehumanization and animalization of the character described in animal terms. We see these metaphors take on negative connotations, especially when used to describe Goneril, Regan, or Oswald. These characters’ villainous qualities lead characters such as Lear and Kent to seek to establish a distance between the villains’ species and that of the human.

Animal imagery is used to describe those characters who behave outside of what the characters consider to be the norm. As Zahra Jafari points out, “animal images present in the play demonstrate how negative qualities in man can degenerate him from human status to

that of animals and beasts" (119). I would argue, however, that these "negative qualities" are subjective, and based upon the perceiver's sense of normality. They are dependent on the observer's perceptions of morality and human decency—traits that determine the overall humanness of any character or human subject. The traits that cause characters to attribute Goneril, for instance, with animality are, as Jafari states, "savage and unnatural behavior *in respect to her father*" (120, emphasis mine). The fact that Goneril is savage and unnatural *in respect to Lear* emphasizes not only the arbitrary nature of human morality, but also the fact that behaving in a way that differs from the respected norm—that is, behaving in a way that is immoral—situates characters such as Goneril and Regan as the *othered* entities. Lear uses animal images to distance these characters from his perceptions of human nature; as such, if we view Lear's daughters through his eyes, Goneril and Regan are situated on the other side of the human/inhuman boundary. The metaphors used, however, are not unique to the play. Referring to a human being with animal imagery blurs the human-animal boundary, highlighting those traits that are present in both humans and animals. The act of doing so may be grounded in such notions as human exceptionalism, by employing the idea that certain human actions or traits are decidedly inhuman. In this sense, through attempts to dehumanize certain characters, the language within *King Lear* highlights the commonalities that exist between humans and nonhuman animals.

One such animal image describes Goneril and Regan as "pelican daughters" (3.4.72). According to Grace Ioppolo, this metaphor sets up the two women as "unnatural or cannibalistic" because "pelicans were thought to use their own blood to feed their young" (62). This metaphor, then, presents us not only with animal imagery, but also with the idea of cannibalism, of human consumption. Lear points out that "'twas this flesh begot / those

pelican daughters," claiming his circumstances as "Judicious punishment" (3.4.71-2). While Lear is not the mother of Goneril and Regan, he cannot deny that their existence depended not only on his flesh at the time of conception, but also on their metaphoric consumption of him, of his body politic as well as his body natural. Their success, that is, is the result of their having "fed" on him as both a king and a father. The prevalence in the early modern period of pelicans as representing motherhood, however, sets up Lear as the maternal, rather than paternal figure.¹ As Susan Staub points out, pelicans in the early modern period were the "symbol of the 'good mother,' the pelican who mutilates herself to feed her children with her blood" (19). The "good mother" figure is one who *intentionally* mutilates herself. By describing his daughters in pelican imagery as Lear does here, Lear accepts that the sacrifices he has made for his daughters is, in part, due to his own actions; in order for his daughters to consume him, as pelican young consume their mother, he would have to *allow them to do so*.

Lear's phrasing, while situating him as the consumed, maternal figure, removes his own agency from the pelican imagery, perhaps to distance himself from the animality represented by his daughters. This animality, however, is called into question: as "pelican daughters," Goneril's and Regan's act of feeding on Lear may be connected with ideas of cannibalism. The term "cannibalism," however, necessarily implies a human subject. Indeed, the very idea that he "begot" these "pelican daughters" highlights the fact of Goneril's and Regan's human origins—but this situation does not challenge the fact that he has animalized

¹ The maternal implications of pelican imagery were even attributed to early modern royalty: we see such iconography in the famous Pelican portrait of Queen Elizabeth I, attributed to Nicholas Hilliard (Staub 19). This image invokes the sense of sacrifice from the maternal figure of the queen. The image that I provide here—that Lear is painted as a maternal figure through his sacrifices to his daughters—may allude to the sacrifices of Elizabeth, who passed away just a few years before Shakespeare penned the play.

his daughters. He simply does not account for his own embodiment, animal or human. Lear has, then, effectively removed his own agency from this particular metaphorization of his daughters; as Kevin de Ornellas puts it, “Lear does not even bother to mention the *willing suffering* of the parent pelican” (36, emphasis mine). The play, then, has shifted the connotations of pelican imagery from representing a “maternal and giving” and even “wholly pious” (due to the aforementioned willing suffering) being, to representing “antagonistic greed” (29, 31, 36). The inhumanness of Goneril and Regan, then, may have emerged from their own animality, rather than from their parentage; that is, if we accept Lear as the basis for his own construction of humanness, a person does not inherently display the nature of humanness. However, if Lear's subjectivity situates him as the human subject, in possession of human nature, then one must wonder if Lear, who brought these “unnatural” daughters into being, can really be defined in opposition to their animality.

This question is based on the humanist idea of human negative exceptionalism. Goneril and Regan, from this standpoint, are othered precisely because of what Lear perceives to be inhuman qualities. Their display of savagery makes them less human, but is such a transformation possible? From Lear's point of view, it is, but the metaphoric nature of this transformation only draws attention to the fact that human exceptionalism is both imaginary and arbitrary. The idea of human exceptionalism is insubstantial, especially in the context of *King Lear*, where animal imagery is often interchangeable with human qualifiers. To attribute humans with decidedly inhuman traits, however, is to question further the parameters by which we define humanness. To quote Neil Badmington, “The moment at which humanism insists becomes the moment at which it nonetheless desists” (19). That is, any humanist effort to define a boundary between the human and the inhuman creates a

situation that is bound to fail. When we envision a clearly defined line between humans and animals, then the moment that line is crossed—and it inevitably is—the boundary is reduced to nothing.

Badmington is referring to Descartes's assertion that because neither animal nor machine "could ever exercise rational thought," they are "ultimately inhuman" (Badmington 17). While Cartesian humanism is not fully operative at the time of *King Lear*'s writing, we see in the early 1600s certain anxieties about the relationship between humans and animals that perhaps informed Cartesian thought; that is, in the early seventeenth century, the stirrings of proanimal writings that I describe above were accompanied by similar concepts of human exceptionalism displayed by Cartesian thought. The theory that Badmington uses here is based on the idea that "it is impossible to conceive that there would be enough [organs] in a machine to make it act in all the occurrences of life in the way in which our reason makes us act" (Descartes, qtd. in Badmington 18). Humanist thought, in maintaining ideas related to human negative exceptionalism, is at once faced with the fact that it is "[im]possible to maintain a clear distinction between the human and the inhuman" (18). The treatment of humans and animals within *King Lear* contributes to the breakdown of this boundary. None of the characters enacts this breakdown, however, more than that of Poor Tom.

After Gloucester is blinded, he is guided by an old man to Edgar's side. After hearing the old man's description of Edgar, who is at this point disguised as Poor Tom, Gloucester realizes that he stands near a "Madman and beggar" (4.2.31). He instantly remembers that he saw someone else who fit that description the night before: "T'ht'last night's storm I such a fellow saw, / Which made me think a man a worm" (4.2.33-4). The image he describes

recalls Edgar, naked in the rain, in a moment when worms are most often seen above-ground. Edgar has been in the storm for a while, in his flooded shelter, so the metaphor is suitable on a physical level. Worms in the early modern period were just as undesirable, for health reasons, as they are today. We are just as unlikely to see worms described according to their own agency in the early modern period as we are today; even Topsell's entries on "Wormes" in his *Historie of foure footed beastes* describes not the attributes of worms in and of themselves, but rather the means by which humans might cure animals that have been afflicted with worms. Even in Topsell's descriptions of those rare *desirable* worms, he describes the use of worms as a treatment for other animal sicknesses, rather than treating worms as creatures in their own right. He describe the different types of worms, not for the purpose of animal identification, but rather for the purpose of diagnosis—that is, a calf may be "trobled with wormes" and a horse will "forsake his meate" (390) when plagued by worms. The idea that Edgar's performance as Tom has caused his father to "think a man a worm" shows just how distanced from humanness Edgar has become, especially when we consider the implications of the metaphor of the worm as it has long been used in reference to humans. Ian MacInnes, in his discussion of "The Politic Worm," points out that "[i]nvertebrates were, above all, thought to be creatures of corruption and morbidity.) Renaissance writers, however, acknowledge worms as thriving only in the most amenable environments; that is, as MacInnes points out, "worms may be bred from eggs, but the eggs will not hatch and grow unless the humors that surround them are amenable" (255) The worm-ness of "a man," to quote Gloucester, depends upon his environment; indeed, the nakedness of Tom in the rain contributes to the image of him as a worm. As such, Tom's immersion into nature has created within him an animalistic, even parasitic, status.

It is important to note, however, the only other mention of a worm in the play: Lear's famous line, "Thou owest the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume" (3.4.97-8). This line, which hits on the notion of the thing-ness of animals that I discuss later, attributes "the worm" with more value to humanity than does Topsell. This value, of course, stems from the fact that humans, in their efforts to maintain their distinctiveness in the world, take the silk from the worm and commodify it. Tom's nakedness means that his existence no longer has the distinctiveness of humanity. Lacking, as a human, the silk from a worm, it would appear that he instead takes on the role of the worm—not a silkworm, which provides humans with the materials that help them maintain their distinctive humanness, but rather the type of worm that William Ramesey discusses in his *Helminthologia*: a sort of parasitic worm that arises from the corruption of the host body. Worms, according to Ramesay, "may have their origination...by contagion, from certain animated effluvioms, or vermicular or atome-like corpuscles or ferments which flow out of gross, corrupted bodies, and fly through the Air, whereby they are communicated to bodies capable of, and fitted to receive such impressions: and so by their evil and venomous ferment are inserted" (9). Worms, then, symbolize corruption, whether by emerging from, or creating, the corruption of the host body.

Edgar/Poor Tom could indeed claim corruption to be the cause of his misfortune. In fact, Poor Tom claims no agency in those actions that make him less-than-human. His animal existence, as with the worm, is begotten by his circumstances; even Gloucester, remembering his first encounter with Tom, muses that Tom "has some reason, else he could not beg" (4.1.32). The "evil" and "corrupted" nature of his environment emerges when, in his performance as Poor Tom, Edgar attributes his inhuman tendencies to the "foul fiend":

Who gives anything to Poor Tom, whom the foul
fiend hath led through ire and through flame, through
sword, and whirlpool, o'er bog and quagmire; that hath laid
knives under his pillow and halters in his pew; set ratsbane
by his porridge; made him proud of heart to ride on a bay
trotting-horse over four-inched bridges, to course his own
shadow for a traitor. (3.4.49-55)

The foul fiend is also responsible for Tom's diet: Tom "eats cow-dung for salads, swallows the old rat and the ditch-dog, drinks the green mantle of the standing pool" (3.4.121-3). The behavior that Tom here confesses to goes against the norms of human society. It acknowledges a dependence on the natural world, but rather than painting him as a human who takes agency over the lives of animals (besides the bay trotting-horse); his survival relies on the discarded leavings of animals (the cow-dung), and the near- or already-dead animals. This form of existence, in fact, reduces Edgar to something less than animal—or indeed, to one of the most undesirable of all animals—at least in the early modern period, as exemplified by writings from the period—the worm. When “the foul fiend rages,” Tom is reduced to a scavenger, rather than a hunter or fisherman (3.4.121). This status substantiates Lear’s assertion that Tom does not rely on the lendings of animals since his survival does not disturb the natural order of living animals. This behavior, however, emerges due to his possession by the “foul fiend.”

The foul fiend, I would argue, is the embodiment of the moral corruption that reduces humans to their animalistic state, affirming the idea that morality is one distinctive trait that separates humans from amoral nature. According to Stephen Greenblatt, through the

descriptions of Tom's possession by the foul fiend, Shakespeare has "marked out" possession and exorcism "as a theatrical fraud, designed to gull the unsuspecting" (115). However, considering that Tom is performed, that he is Edgar's disguise, it is important to take his possession as part of his character; that is, in the fiction of Poor Tom's existence, the foul fiend might very well exist. The fiend, whom we take to be Satan, has many names: Smulkin, the Prince of Darkness, Modo, and Mahu; he is also "a gentleman" (3.4.129-132). Tom attributes his behavior, as well as his station in life, to the fiend, and constantly warns his companions of the fiend's influence. Edgar's *choice* to include the fiend as part of Tom's narrative lends credence to the idea that the fiend is a metaphorical figure. Tom the Beggar may have made up the fiend as a means of gulling the unsuspecting, or the fiend may represent the challenges Tom faced up until this point, anthropomorphized through the various monikers attributed to him. The idea that "The Prince of Darkness is a gentleman" is a reminder of the evil that human beings are capable of; even Goneril, Regan, Cornwall, and Edmund previously appeared as respectable, effectively convincing Lear and Gloucester (in Edmund's case) of their innocence. Those actions that make them "evil" are those that render them unnatural or inhuman. The difference between Tom's relationship with the foul fiend and the others' evil qualities is that Tom's animality is not disguised; it is more manifest not only due to his connectedness to nature, but due to his lack of material belongings.

The foul fiend, which has reduced Tom to his less-than-human, animalistic state draws attention to the amoral qualities of nature. Morality, being a human invention, depends in part on social norms and mutual respect. The amorality of the natural world is the very thing that causes anxiety within the play in regards to humanness. We see Edmund, for instance, turn away from the standards of human morality in his first speech:

Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law
 My services are bound. Wherefore should I
 Stand in the plague of custom and permit
 The curiosity of nations to deprive me? (1.2.1-4)

His denial of the “custom,” or, as Grace Ioppolo puts it, “customary beliefs or laws” (13), informs his approach to the legal and moral implications associated with humanness. These morals are constraints on human existence; as David Bevington states, Edmund’s “creed of self-reliance gives him, as he readily perceives, a tactical advantage over those who credulously submit to the moral restrictions of social order.” This advantage comes when Edmund embraces “Nature” over human morality; “Nature,” as Bevington puts it, takes the form of “the sanction that governs the material world through mechanistic, amoral forces,” contrasting with the moral guidance of human society (169). By turning away from those socially sanctioned, moral constraints over human existence, Edmund is then free to behave, as Edgar puts it, as a “most toad-spotted traitor” (5.3.38), or, as Ioppolo puts it, “loathsome as a toad” (108). Edmund, however, does not merit as many animal metaphors as other characters within the play, perhaps due to the calculated means he uses to advance in the human social hierarchy, or perhaps because the only person who knows of his treachery is Edgar. Edgar, that is, who is the very man who, because of this treachery, is reduced to the status of, as Gloucester puts it, a “monster” (1.2.89). The crime of which Edgar is accused renders him inhuman in his father’s eyes, even if momentarily; the audience alone realizes that the true “monster” in this instance is Edmund, for his crimes against his half-brother.

The idea that Tom’s status is the result of a regression from human to animal existence is one that is based on the ideas of normality—in both the early modern period, and

the setting of the play. Normality, as I use it here, encompasses the “custom, reason, kin, and political order” of the play’s social structure (Traub 61). I take this definition from Valerie Traub who, rather than explicitly defining normality, considers these values to be the social paradigms that Goneril and Regan oppose. Tom, I would argue, goes against these same values, particularly custom and reason, as evidenced by the accounts of his fall from being “A serving-man, proud in heart and mind” (3.4.80) to being, as he is, a Bedlam beggar. His previously unethical behavior, that is, as influenced by the foul fiend, has rendered him unsuitable for society. To behave, as Tom does, in a manner counter to the expectations of these social orders, distances one from human society. This distance creates within Tom a distinction between him and humanity by situating him as something other than the normative, socially-accepted human. Lear’s revelation when he witnesses Tom’s breakdown, “Is man no more than this? Consider him well.... Here’s three on’s are sophisticated, thou art the thing itself” (3.4.96-100), however, identifies that very form of animality as an inherently human trait.² The thing-ness of Tom is a reference to his unadulterated embodiment of the true human; as Margherita Pascucci understands it, is “the state of being in which man’s only possessions are his body and his mind” (139). Pascucci’s interpretation, however, is based on her perception of Tom’s physical state as being impoverished: Lear’s understanding of being “unaccommodated,” if we accept Pascucci’s analysis, is to live in a state of poverty. I would argue against this assertion. The term “poverty” implies baseness according to an economical hierarchy. The baseness that Edgar has embraced is indeed caused by poverty, as shown by the lines,

² The act of Lear identifying humanness within Edgar/Tom has implications for the nature of human identity, which I discuss in Chapter 3.

I will preserve myself, and am bethought
 To take the basest and most poorest shape
 That ever penury in contempt of man
 Brought near to beast. (2.3.6-9)

The “shape” he has taken is nearer to beast than it is to that of man. Tom’s humanness, as recognized by Lear, is based on the animality that is revealed due to his lack of possessions—not, as Pascucci argues, poverty itself. Lear’s perception of Tom as “the thing itself” is based on Tom’s utter *separation* from the economy of human society. Lear recognizes in Tom the very baseness inherent in every human. Acknowledging that he and his two companions are “sophisticated” does not imply their inhumanness in contrast to Tom; rather, Lear recognizes that Tom is outwardly embodying unadulterated humanness. The culture and possessions found in more “sophisticated” humans disguise, rather than augment, the true animality of humanness; as Lear says: “Robes and furr’d gowns hide all” (4.6.158). Tom has not redefined humanness; rather, following Lear’s revelation, the only thing that has changed is Lear’s perceptions of the human/animal boundary. The lack of accommodation from the natural world, accommodations that take the form of the “lendings” of other animals, reveals the animality of the human; the divide that separates humans from animals is revealed not necessarily to be nonexistent, but rather insubstantial. The act of obtaining more animal “lendings” is an effort to substantiate the boundary, while simultaneously obliterating it.

The term “lendings” is a generous descriptor of the relationship between humans and animals, implying, as the *OED* explains, that the items at hand are, in fact, “something lent.” This terminology, in fact, has greater implications for Lear, of which I go into greater detail

later in Chapter 3. The “lendings” of which Lear speaks are, in fact, animal “things”—not lent, as the act of lending implies that the lent item will be returned to its original owner. Through the use of the phrase “animal things,” I use Erica Fudge’s terminology to describe the various products that humans have historically used, and continue to use, as part of our day-to-day lives: products such as leather, milk, perfume, silk, and wool. The thingness of those animals that function as instruments for human society necessarily recalls Lear’s act of referring to Tom—and therefore humanity—as “the thing itself.” The difference between the thingness of Tom and of animals, however, is agency. In referring to Tom as “Thou,” and speaking to him directly, Lear acknowledges Tom as *subject*, rather than *object*, while also taking on a familiar, perhaps affectionate, tone.³ Animal “things,” however, are treated as objects in the early modern period, just as they are today, particularly in the commodification of animal products. Erica Fudge, looking for animal objects listed in the *Dictionary of Traded Goods and Commodities, 1550-1820* finds that the names of many animal products, such as one listed as “Aborted vellum” (which is actually “vellum made from the skins of aborted calves or other animals”), provide evidence that “the actual animal’s presence seems to have disappeared, to have been overlaid by human culture” (“Renaissance Animal Things” 86). The animal is only absent, however, from the perceptions of the human. I would argue that any human efforts to displace animals from humanity, in fact gives animals a much more centralized position in human existence. The act of “brand[ing] them as possessions” serves to further humans’ efforts “to declare superiority,” particularly when faced with the

³ One may also argue that the use of the word “thou” serves as dismissal of Tom as being inferior. Such an assertion would necessarily argue that Lear’s speech seeks to maintain a hierarchical social order—one of the very accommodations implemented by humans in an effort to distinguish ourselves from animals.

possibility of human animality (Fudge, *Perceiving Animals* 143). To acknowledge animal agency over humans is to challenge that very superiority; humans, as shown by *King Lear*, are reliant on animals and animal products in order to maintain their concept of humanness.

This reliance on animals not only highlights the prevalence of animals within human society, but it also draws attention to the anxieties humans have of our own place within the world. Considering that human dominion over animals coincides with human dependency over those same animal subjects, humans must acknowledge, as Laurie Shannon puts it, that human bodies are “insufficient” in the face of the natural world (*The Accommodated Animal* 133). We see a humanist approach to this insufficiency in Thomas Browne’s *Religio Medici*:

It is not partiality, but equity in God, who deales with us but as our naturall parents: those that are able of body and minde, he leaves to their deserts; to those of weaker merits he imparts a larger portion, and pieces out the defect of the one with the excesse of the other. Thus have we no just quarrell with nature, for leaving us naked, or to envy the hornes, hoofes, skins, and furrer of other creatures, being provided with reason, that can supply them all. (34)

Humans, then, have no need for animalistic bodily defenses: the ability of exercising reason removes the need for them. In fact, according to Browne’s assessment, reason exists in negative correlation with physical strengths. Lacking those strengths that come from “hornes, hoofes, skins, and furrer of other creatures,” humans must make up for their insufficiencies by taking from animals those “lendings” that they naturally possess.

When Lear sees Tom, then, naked in the midst of a storm, he recognizes the absence of these lendings. As quoted above: “Thou owest the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume” (3.4.97-8). In his transition to the character of Tom,

Edgar relinquishes these animal products, so that he might “with presented nakedness outface / The winds and persecutions of the sky” (2.3.11-2). The most animalistic human form that he can project is that of the Bedlam beggar⁴, who, he has observed, “Strike in their numbed and mortified arms / Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary” (2.3.15-6). Taking this form, Edgar has removed himself from the realm of humanness, instead displaying a “beastlike immunity,” as Shannon puts it, “to such violence against unprotected skin” (*Accommodated Animal* 166). Animals have no need for extra protection; therefore, Tom’s so-called immunity against the natural world (other than his constant complaints of the cold), revealed through his bareness, situates him as an inhuman animal. With his naked body exposed to the elements, he has taken the form of “a poor, bare, forked animal” (3.4.100-1).

The most concerning part of Lear’s declaration that man is “no more than” an animal comes later, when he, having praised Edgar for his independence from animal lendings, calls for “an ounce of civet” in order to “Sweeten my imagination” (4.6.128-9). Civet, the secretion of a civet cat used commonly as a perfume, is also known by Topsell for its medicinal purposes: “It is said to be very excellent against the strangulations of the wombe, and it is good against the collicke, it hath also vertue to purge the wombes of women, to purge the braine, and is applyed to many other diseases and infirmities” (758). According to Karl H. Dannenfeldt, civet “helped epilepsy, enlivened the body, assuaged a headache, intoxicated the brain when taken in with wine, cheered the heart, and in pessaries it was good

⁴ Scholarship has, for centuries, viewed Bedlam as “a place where Elizabethan and Jacobean visitors went to laugh at the mad people from a position of superiority”; according to Derek Peat, this situation was similar to “the way some modern zoo visitors behave towards animals they consider a lower species” (114). Indeed, Robert Rentoul Reed’s *Bedlam on the Jacobean Stage* situates Bedlam as “a place of extraordinary amusement,” offering “spectacular entertainment” to visitors of London (32-33).

for the womb” (427). These benefits, of course, may not be entirely medical: the fact that civet was used to achieve intoxication and cheer the heart shows more than a medical dependency on the secretions of the civet cat. When used as a mind-altering substance, as well as a perfume, civet proves to be a luxury rather than a requirement—but it is a luxury that humans could not do without, nonetheless? Civet effectively permeates the bodily form of the user; as Erica Fudge points out, “civet both constructs and upsets notions of being human....Not only is perfume put *onto* the human body, thus changing its external manifestations—its smell rather than its appearance in this instance. Perfume also enters into the body—as does meat, but here in the form of aroma” (“Renaissance Animal Things” 95). It bears similarities to leather for being an “animal-made-thing” that is worn by humans, while also effecting change in perceptions of human identity, by becoming *part* of that identity. Erica Fudge writes, “Wearing perfume (with its animal foundation) reveals that early modern humans actually *chose* to smell like animals, and thus that the human will, which should keep the human human, seemed to work against them” (“Renaissance Animal Things” 95-6). Following his earlier declaration that man is “no more than” animal, Lear’s call for “an ounce of civet” hints at an inherent need for humans to affirm and reaffirm the boundary that separates humans from animals.

We must consider, then, whether Lear’s descent into madness is, in part, to blame for his wavering approach to the human/animal hierarchy—helping him understand the arbitrariness of said perceived hierarchy—or whether his madness is symptomatic of the uncertain boundary. Indeed, for what purpose would civet serve him, especially after he has decided that true humanity, unaccommodated, has no need for animal byproducts? There is no question that Lear is in a state of madness at this point, for even the stage direction

requires for Lear to enter “mad.” This madness is wrought by the realization of his own daughters’ corruption, which leads him to situate them, as described above, as animalistic in nature; that is, the metaphORIZATION he uses throughout the play highlights animal characteristics in his daughters, but situates these animal characteristics as being synonymous with moral corruption. In spite of this realization, Fudge sees his call for civet as a sign of optimism on Lear’s part—optimism, that is, in the sense that “he still clings to his faith in humanity’s power over the natural world. He believes that his mental clarity (which is part of that natural dominION...) can be reinstated by the presence of the animal-made-object” (99). In spite of the fact that, earlier in the play, Lear appeared to come to terms with the animality of the human, he evidences in this scene how deeply ingrained the concept of human superiority is within the human mind. I would argue, therefore, that in this moment of madness, Lear illustrates the difficulties with which humans can come to grasp their own animality.

Lear’s call for civet is not only a brief reversion to the concept of human superiority over animals. The idea that humans are nothing more than “poor, bare, forked animal[s]” is necessarily accompanied by anxieties about human animality. In the lines leading up to his call for civet, for instance, Lear’s animalization of women displays these very anxieties by associating animality with moral corruption:

Down from the waist they are centaurs,
 Though women all above.
 But to the girdle do the gods inherit;
 Beneath is all the fiend’s. There’s hell, there’s darkness,
 There is the sulphurous pit, burning, scalding,

Stench, consumption. (4.6.122-7).

This passage illustrates the inhumanness of the morally corrupt, while simultaneously recalling the ideas surrounding animal-human mythological hybrids such as “Chiron, the rational hybrid horse-human,” whose mythology, according to Karen Raber, permeates Renaissance literature. The corruption of the women described in the passage above lies not only in their animality, but in the hybridity, the crossing-over of human and animal boundaries. Raber points out that “the centaur’s hybrid nature expresses human triumph in appropriating and exploiting animal power and grace through the aristocratic arts of horsemanship”; that is, on the surface, the image of a centaur reaffirms the concept of human superiority. Lear’s depiction of women as centaurs as evidence of corruption, however, speaks to other uses of the centaur myth. As Raber points out, centaurs “in Renaissance literature register the fragility of the supremacy of human reason, most often undermined by the bodily assaults of lust, gluttony, and rage” (*Animal Bodies* 75). The “lust, gluttony, and rage” described here are the very same animalistic traits associated with moral corruption.

The question, then, is not only of the humanness of the morally corrupt, but the possibility of a hybrid existence—an existence that, arguably, creates a third category, one that combines the human with the animal. The concept of human-animal hybridity threatens the concept of human superiority by suggesting the possibility of cross-species offspring due to bestiality. A centaur’s corruption, then, is perhaps more inherent than an animal’s, if only because it is the product of bestiality and is, by nature, the corruption of both the animal and the human figure. In early modern England, we see just as much revulsion at the idea of bestiality as we see in society today, as evidenced by lawmakers’ writings and court

testimonies.⁵ As early as 1533, “anyone convicted of the offence” of bestiality would, according to law, “suffer such pains of death and losses and penalties of their goods, chattels, debtors, lands, tenements, hereditaments” (qtd. in Fudge, “Monstrous Acts” 21). Bestiality also had religious implications; that is, according to Michael Dalton’s 1618 manual, *The Countrey Justice*, bestiality was “a sin against God, Nature and the Law” (qtd. in Fudge, “Monstrous Acts” 25). These writings illustrate anxieties related to maintaining human superiority over animals by implying, not unreasonably so, that any offender—that is, anyone whose sexual acts cross the human-animal boundary—is morally corrupt. The image of a human-animal hybrid, then, situates not only the person who performed bestiality, but also the hybrid offspring, as the embodiment of that corruption. This view of human-animal hybridity informs Lear’s portrayal of women as being human above the waist, belonging, as with all good people, to “the gods,” while beneath the human façade is evidence of their corruption.

I mention above that lust is one of those animalistic traits that, as Raber points out, undermine aptitude for reason as a distinguishing characteristic for humans. Lear’s centaur musings, however, are focused particularly on women, and so situate women’s sexuality as further evidence of their animality. His centaur metaphor is, of course, due to the betrayal by his daughters, in whom he rightfully can identify the injustice done to him: they are, as such, subject to such dehumanizing metaphorizations—at least from Lear’s point of view. The duality of his daughters’ existence does not evade him: they are woman, and yet they are inhuman for their moral corruption. However, it is also worth noting the details of the

⁵ Erica Fudge examines early modern instances of bestiality in “Monstrous Acts: Bestiality in Early Modern England,” where she identifies hybrid animals “as a cautionary tale against bestiality” during the period (22).

centaur's hybridity, not just in the sense that they appear human while being controlled by "the fiend," but also, while the human torso down "to the girdle" belongs to "the gods," there is still an entire horse's lower body. As Ioppolo points out, having the lower body of the horse makes centaurs lustier than humans (90), but there are greater implications here, involving, in particular, women's sexuality. We have long attributed our humanness with our capacity for reason, and our sexual impulses as the more primal, animalistic traits. To imply, as Lear does here, that a woman's sexuality makes her other-than-human, is to strengthen this idea, especially if we consider the corruption that centaurs necessarily imply due to their hybrid nature. It also, however, draws attention to the unavoidable state of human animality, due to the imminence of the human body; that is, if human sexuality necessarily implies an animal state, then every human is, without exception, an animal.

While ideas of human animality may spawn from notions related to moral corruption, the idea of "corruption" is, inherently, based on conceptions of human normality, or the customs and socially sanctioned concepts of morality. Metaphorization, which serves to highlight the inhuman qualities of any particular human, must necessarily be accompanied by the humanization of animals. How, then, can we continue to distinguish ourselves from animals? *King Lear* troubles the concept of human negative exceptionalism that permeates humanist thought, but it does so by using humanist notions of human superiority—by correlating animality with negativity. Having lost his capacity for reason, as illustrated by his decline into madness, Lear has shifted away from humanist concepts of humanity and embraced, as he sees Tom do, the animality of humanness. The character of Tom, however, was born out of necessity—once Edgar begins to rediscover his place in the human realm, we see Tom melt away. This correlation is important: the animality of Tom is removed only as

Edgar is reinserted into society, where those very attempts at distancing oneself from the animal realm take place. Edgar has not lost his animality, merely disguised it: as always, “Robes and furr’d gowns hide all” (4.6.158).

Chapter Three: Lear's Mirror Stage, Identity Effacement, and Poor Tom as Specular Other

As an exploration of early modern conceptions of human nature, the most elusive, yet possibly the most elucidating, element of *King Lear* is the connection between the story of Lear and the story of Edgar. This connection, which becomes more apparent when the characters meet in the storm, in fact carries on throughout the play. It is, however, unexpected: for while Lear turns against his most loyal daughter, Gloucester is tricked by Edmund into turning against his most loyal son. As such, readers might anticipate Lear's story to more parallel Gloucester's than Edgar's. The connection between Lear's and Edgar's stories cannot, however, be denied. Edgar's fall from human dignity, in fact, *reflects* Lear's; in fact, both characters simultaneously revert to a primal state in their efforts to preserve, or else reaffirm, their identities in the face of an unjust social order. This primitive state takes place first for Edgar, who effaces his own identity at a single point in time, and then for Lear, whose identity is effaced through his systematic separation from the various facets of his kingdom. With no identity to call his own, each character is reduced to a child-like state and must then seek to reestablish his identity based on his relative position to the physical world, what Jacques Lacan refers to as the *Umwelt*, or environment. Especially for Lear, the act of reestablishing his identity relies on his ability to recognize and then assume the image of the one character he can identify with: that of Poor Tom, who himself is the performed reflection of those Toms O'Bedlam, whom Edgar, in his efforts to efface his identity lest he be arrested, seeks to emulate.

While it is true that Lear is with Edgar during one of his most important revelations about human nature, until recently Edgar's story was largely untouched by scholarship—a curious phenomenon, considering the importance placed on Edgar in the full title of the Quarto:

M. William Shak-speare:

HIS

True Chronicle Historie of the life and
death of King LEAR and his three
Daughters.

*With the unfortunate life of Edgar, sonne
and heire to the Earle of Gloster, and his*

sullen and assumed humor of

TOM of Bedlam.

This title draws attention to Edgar as one of the play's main protagonists—a protagonist whose very existence depends on his turning away from human society—essentially, a normative human existence—as well as his personhood,¹ in order to preserve his physical existence. Simon Palfrey draws attention to this title, referring to it as a “twinned presentation,” but one that, while suggesting that “the two stories are coordinate,” still “implies a refusal to choose between living and dying” (8). Indeed, looking at the title, we see a juxtaposition of Lear's life and death with Edgar's “unfortunate life.” This unfortunate life that Edgar lives, we know, ultimately continues through the end of the play. As such,

¹ I go into detail on the erasure of Edgar's personhood, as well as his sense of identity, later in this chapter.

between the two characters, Lear, whose death is highlighted in the title of the play, is the tragic hero. Still, the inclusion of Edgar's tale in the *Historie of King Lear* implies correlation between the experiences of the two characters—correlation, that is, beyond the chronologies of their respective stories. This correlation takes place, firstly, when the characters begin to lose their sense of a normative, human identity.

Normativity is either societal and therefore internalized, or else developed in isolation, based on the subjectivity associated with the conception of the *I*. If developed in isolation, by an individual, the conception of normativity is inherently more autonomous than normativity developed in society. Early modern conceptions of normativity went hand-in-hand with conceptions of the human; that is, the othering of the non-normative is associated with the treatment of the othered as less-than-human. Conceptions of normality in the early modern period, according to Rosi Braidotti, have historically taken a Eurocentric bent, particularly in humanist thought. Pramod K. Nayar, however, finds that humanist conceptions of a complete, normative human are more focused on gender and race² rather than simple Eurocentrism, stating that “[h]umanism centres the white male as the universal human, and all other genders, differently formed bodies and ethnic types are treated as variants of this ‘standard’ model, and also forms/models that *lack* something” (12, emphasis in original). The normative white male, then, embodies the completed human. By humanist standards, he lacks nothing, especially when he displays the ability to exercise reason. Braidotti points out, in the Eurocentric paradigm, “Subjectivity is equated with

² While early modern conceptions of race differed from our present-day ideas, Juliana Schiesari identifies within early modern humanism those “issues of gender, race, and class” that interact with ideas related to “species identity” (4). Such issues correlate with concepts of otherness and the concept of humanness.

consciousness, universal rationality, and self-regulating ethical behavior, whereas Otherness is defined as *its negative and specular counterpart*" (15, emphasis mine). The word "specular" here denotes not only the reflection of one's subjectivity, but also the inevitability of one's identity being based on one's subjective perceptions of the othered entity, just as Lear's conceptions of normativity are based on his own perceptions of his daughters, whose moral corruption renders them animal-like in his eyes, pushing them away from his conceptions of the normative human, as I describe in the previous chapter. However, rather than simply turning away from this aspect of humanness altogether, Lear internalizes the animality presented to him by both his daughters and Poor Tom, realizing, for the first time, the true animality of the human.

The process by which Lear internalizes the animality of these characters may be more clearly articulated by Lacan in "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I," wherein he discusses not only the formation of the Ideal-I, but also, I would argue, the idea that the act of othering depends on the specular relationship between the subject and the othered. I-hood is a trait possessed by sentient beings, namely humans; but the nature of I-hood is such that its presence coincides with the othering of other, external beings. Lacan describes the mirror stage: "We have only to understand the mirror stage *as an identification*, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation that takes place when he assumes an image" (2, emphasis in original). This transformation develops into the child's perception of an Ideal-I that, as Lacan points out, "situates the agency of the ego, before its social determination, in a fictional direction." That is, the Ideal-I that is formed at the mirror stage, is in fact based on *misidentification*; it is, to put it in Lacan's terms, "a mirage" (2). I would argue, however, that one's I-hood takes the form not only of the illusion

of one's self-knowledge as granted by the child's identification with the specular image, but also self-knowledge as informed by the ability for self-referential modes of communication. For my purposes, and in the case of *King Lear* in particular, I would argue that even the specular image, which contributes to the self-formed Ideal-I, can be seen as an external entity, the identification of which is facilitated by a mirror: a physical boundary that simultaneously separates and brings together the subject and the specular image. As such, I-hood depends on the presence of other, external beings with whom to communicate—both in terms of the Ideal-I as described by Lacan, and in terms of the social *I* that is formed through identification with the external world. I would argue, based on Lacan's conceptions of the mirror stage, that the definition of one's I-hood is dependent on these othered entities and their subjective position on the scale of one's I-hood; as such, there can be no pure, autonomous conception of the *I* and the true self, in spite of, or perhaps in correlation with, the fact that our ability to reason grants us autonomous knowledge of the external world.

Considering the distinction between the subject and the specular image, we might call into question the very idea of "human negative exceptionalism," as Laurie Shannon calls it, as a means of defining human nature (175). For, while humans have long defined ourselves *in opposition* to the animal, we have also, inevitably, defined ourselves in *correlation with* the animal, simply through our abilities to identify with our nonhuman counterparts. Just as Braidotti sees "Otherness" as the "negative and specular counterpart" of human subjectivity, we can see reflections of human identity situated in the otherness of animals. That is, humans' need to emphasize the *otherness* of animals situates them as specular in the sense that, without recognizing those characteristics that separate humans from animals, we would not be able to recognize the distinctively *human* characteristics within ourselves. However,

based merely on the specular position occupied by these nonhuman animals, animals do, in fact, occupy a more centralized position than that which the act of othering might initially seek to establish. The boundary that humans seek to maintain between themselves and othered entities is not only blurred, but revealed to be nonexistent through the centralized position granted the othered. The use of the boundary as a means for specular identification—that is, the treatment of this boundary as a mirror by which humans can identify themselves—undermines the boundary’s purpose: to affirm the distinction between humans and the inhuman other.

The interactions between Edgar/Poor Tom and Lear, too, break the boundary that separates humans from the nonhuman; Lear’s sense of his own humanness, as defined against the nonhuman other, is contingent on his sense of self-identification. As such, humanness not only depends on the distinction that separates humans from the inhuman other, but is capable of being reformulated. This reformulation occurs when our conceptions of the inhuman other is reshaped; when we define ourselves in opposition to a distinctly othered entity, and the definition of that entity is redefined, then so must be our concept of humanness. Jacques Lacan, however, directs us to a distinct difference between humans and non-human animals in his discussion of the mirror stage. Lacan points out the importance of the mirror stage in its temporal position within the total sum of human experience. The fact that the relation between the child and his image occurs when he is “still sunk in his motor incapacity and nursling dependence” instills the *I* within the child during his formative years (1164). Lacan points out that the “jubilant assumption of his specular image by the child” at such a point in his life “would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the *I* is precipitated in a *primordial* form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification

with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject” (1164, emphasis mine). The concept of *I*, as a distinction that separates humans from the inhuman, is one that formulates within the still-developing mind of a child during his or her formative years. We must look, however, at Lacan’s use of the word “primordial,” and in what ways these moments of primordiality are still distinguished from the inhuman. If a child has a concept of I-hood that he or she sees as being represented by an image separate from his- or herself, then is it possible for *I* to exist without this recognition, without the child assuming the image; that is, without the child adopting the image as his or her sense of *self*? The image is not the self, particularly in a mirror; it is reflective, spatially opposite, and distinctly *other*; that is, it is external. Any act of internalization that the child enacts places his or her identity not only within a physical form, but a physical form that he or she is incapable of perceiving without with mediation or facilitation of another separate, external, physical presence. A person’s I-hood, then—that is, one’s sense of identity—is inevitably based on identification with the specular other; or, to use Braidotti’s words, the specular counterpart.

Lacan’s assessment of the human at the mirror stage confirms the insufficiency of humanness in nature: “These reflections led me to recognize in the spatial captation manifested in the mirror-stage even before the social dialectic, the effect in man of an organic insufficiency in his natural reality—in so far as any meaning can be given to the word ‘nature’” (1166). The spatial captation that manifests through the interaction between the human and the image embodies the *I*-centric, or *human*-centric, treatment of space adopted by humans from the time they reach the mirror-stage. Lacan determines that “the function of the *imago*” is “to establish a relation between the organism and its reality—or as they say,

between the *Innenwelt* and the *Umwelt*,” or the “inner world” and the “outer world” (1166). The *imago*, or likeness of the human, presents the “total form of the body” that the human must otherwise perceive, ocularly, in pieces, with only the sight of one’s arms, legs, and torso, without the mediation of a mirror. It is important to note the specular and, similarly, spatial aspect of the *imago*, because while we, through coming to terms with our own sense of identity and I-hood, must come to terms with our presence within our bodies, we must also come to terms with our bodies’ presence within space—space that is, inherently, also occupied by both the human and the nonhuman other. Such is the *Umwelt*: the physical environment in which we exist. Lear’s identity, which in the beginning of the play accounts for, and even depends on, his *Umwelt*, continues to be determined by his relative position within his environment, as I illustrate below.

We can see in Lacan’s work a focus on human (and nonhuman) physicality as a means of self-identification. The physicality of the human body is of great importance in posthumanist thought, important, perhaps, due to the anxieties of human embodiment that arise in Renaissance humanism. Lear, for instance, calls attention to the insufficiencies of human embodiment when he strips naked in the storm alongside Edgar/Tom: “Thou wert better in a grave than to answer with thy /uncovered body this extremity of the skies. Is man no more / than this?” (3.4.95-7). These lines begin by acknowledging the dangers of exposure to the storm without the protection of clothing. To exist without the protection of clothing is, as Lear concludes, humans’ natural state. Present-day posthumanists who are concerned with embodiment, however, are focused more on human capabilities that extend beyond natural survival, but rather survival (and other) abilities that stem from technological and physical enhancements, as shown in Nick Bostrom’s “Why I Want to be a Posthuman

When I Grow Up.” Humans seek these advancements perhaps *because* of the very same ideas of human insufficiency that we see in *King Lear*.

Poor Tom is a character whose humanness is subject to debate not only because of humanist paradigms, but because of the fact that he is performed. He is, at first glance, a work of fiction created by Edgar as part of his escape from society. In one of his more unconventional interludes, Simon Palfrey attempts to describe the character of Poor Tom: “Tom is not a person. He—it!—isn’t even a character” (163). Palfrey calls into question the very identity of Poor Tom, and hits on a very important question about the character of Poor Tom: Is Tom human, or is he not? What, if anything, makes Tom inhuman? He is a character, of course, within the play; a character *performed* by another character. The question, then, as to how performative the role of Tom actually is, and how much of himself Edgar has effaced in the act of *becoming* Tom, comes to mind. Tom, then, can be said to reflect the performative—and constructed—nature of human identity, especially in the context of the human/animal binary.

In the moment when Edgar becomes Poor Tom, Edgar’s own identity is vanished. Firstly, however, let us look at the beginning of the speech when he adopts the identity of Poor Tom: “I heard myself proclaimed, / And by the happy hollow of a tree / Escaped the hunt” (3.2.1-3). In being “proclaimed,” we know that, based on the usage of the word in the period, Edgar has been “denounced” as an outlaw (*OED*). Here, he is placed in the position of an animal; fleeing his father’s men, he takes on the role of prey. Effectively, he has lost his livelihood, and is in danger of losing his very life. Situated in this way, Edgar is stripped not only of his humanness, but also of his wholeness: he is, essentially, fragmented. He is now in a position where he might maintain his fragmentary existence, unable to be fully human by

the humanist definition of the word, due to his suddenly animalistic position. He chooses, however, to “preserve” himself by creating a new character, one whose existence is grounded in the fragmentation of his human form. Edgar finds himself lacking any physical means of escape: “No port is free, no place / That guard and most unusual vigilance / Does not attend my taking” (2.3.3-5). As such, he would be a simple target to identify and arrest. In order to avoid capture, he takes “the basest and most poorest shape / That ever penury in contempt of man / Brought near to beast” (3.2.7-9). Palfrey understands Edgar’s transformation as showing “contempt for humankind....Edgar may be unraveling from comfortable association with his supposed species: ‘man’ has become cruel and alien” (29). I would argue that the contempt that Palfrey is seeing actually spawns from the “penury” that Edgar suddenly finds himself in: penury that has been suddenly thrust upon him, and which is necessarily defined by the social norms from which he distances himself. This penury—or, as I mention in the previous chapter, poverty—allows him to select, without hesitation, what identity he will take on. No other figure might embody the penury Edgar finds himself in than that of Poor Tom. As Edgar states, “The country gives me proof and precedent / Of Bedlam beggars” (2.3.13-4). This precedent not only allows him an easy disguise with which to hide himself, but also provides him with an identity to fill out his suddenly fragmented identity.

The question, then, as stated above, is whether or not Tom is a character in his own right. Understanding Tom’s relationship with human nature can better help us understand Lear, particularly in the apparently specular relationship Lear has with Tom. Whether Edgar was driven mad by his circumstances and degenerated into the character of Poor Tom, or Poor Tom exists independently of Edgar, with his own wants and fears, appears to be irrelevant in Lear’s situation. Either of these conditions would call for the assessment of the

definition of humanness as presented to us in *King Lear*. The lines that, perhaps, provide the most insight into Edgar's mental state at the moment of his transformation, are at the end of this speech: "'Poor Turlygod! Poor Tom!' / That's something yet. *Edgar I nothing am*" (2.3.20-1, emphasis mine). Here, we see the very moment of his transition from Edgar to Tom. From the moment that he is reduced to the role of prey, Edgar's identity has been in question. Now, in his efforts to avoid the consequences of being caught, Edgar effaces his very identity. In addition, with these lines, Edgar attributes *thingness* to the idea of Poor Tom, while referring to his actual identity as "nothing." He has essentially chosen to erase his identity as Edgar and adopt a new identity based on those "Bedlam beggars" he has seen in the country (2.3.14). These beggars, whose "mortified arms" are covered in "Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary" are essentially fragmented due to their inherently hindered mental capacities (2.3.16). Their wholeness is in question; they have adopted roles that are hinged on the absence of reason. Edgar, having adopted this fragmented existence through his performance as Tom, is fragmented in the sense that, while he enacts a turning-away from society, he "cannot forgo his socio-rational persona" and, as such, cannot fully embody the persona he seeks to adopt (Heffernan 154). His performance as Tom is most opaque when he is in the presence of Lear—that is, he does not break character at any point during the scenes the two of them share. As such, he makes the perfect candidate to influence Lear's ever-changing sense of identity.

Reason, then, is an important distinction between the human and the inhuman on the stage of *King Lear*. Humanist thought tells us that human nature is grounded in reason, as shown by Descartes' 1637 *Discourse on the Method*. Indeed, reason is one of the four kinds of "faculties of Humane nature" posited by Thomas Hobbes, as I mention in chapter one,

with the other three faculties being “Bodily strength, Experience, [and] Passion.” While Hobbes was writing several years later than Shakespeare, I would argue that such ideas of human nature as these contribute to the concept of human exceptionality, while suggesting the prevalence of it in the early modern world. Delineating ideas of human nature affords humans the self-formed right to claim the highest position in the human/animal hierarchy. Concepts of human nature such as Hobbes’ four faculties necessarily differentiate humans from animals, with reason being, arguably, the most distinguishing quality that situates humans as being exceptional in nature. Human nature, it would seem, necessarily defines the human, in the sense that to *lack* any one aspect of human nature would call into question the status of one’s humanity. What does it mean, then, when we have, as with Tom, a character who is lacking reason? We must consider that, in humanist thought, were someone missing any of these faculties, then that person is, essentially, fragmented, just as the “primordial” child prior to the mirror-stage is fragmented.

Lear’s identity, as I have stated above, depends on his relative position to the world around him. His sense of self, as a king, may actually be referred to as a majestic *we*; that is, being a king, he uses the plural pronoun when referring to himself. This plurality is appropriate for Lear not only because of his royal status, but because of the nature of his character. Lear sees himself reflected not in one person, but in the multitude of subjects who are loyal to him. Lear’s identity, then, involves the royal “we,” as we see in his very first speech:

Meantime *we* shall express *our* darker purpose.

Get me the map there. Know that *we* have divided

In three *our* kingdom, and ‘tis *our* fast intent

To shake all cares and business from *our* age,
 Conferring them on younger strengths, while *we*
 Unburthened crawl toward death. (1.1.34-39, emphasis mine)

This selection highlights both the king's mortality, as well as marking his plans for abandoning his plurality as king. Prior to giving up his kingdom to his daughters, Lear's sense of totality involved more than his singular personhood. That is, as opposed to that sense of self based on I-hood that most humans enjoy, Lear's identity emerges as the multitude *we*-hood, embodied by his land and his subjects, as well as from his two royal bodies. Indeed, the definition of the king as being in possession of the "two royal bodies" situates him as being fractured; his existence is not only duplicitous, but also divided into two forms, with one body, the body natural, comprising his physical form, while the body politic—arguably more an *idea* than a body of substance—is the immortal body. That is, as Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz puts it, "the king is immortal because legally he can never die," in addition to him being "incapable of *doing* wrong" or "even of *thinking* wrong" (4). This concept emerges from medieval and early modern concept of the king's two bodies, which insists that any physical infirmities that affect the body natural, have no effect on the body politic, as evidenced by the following 16th-century report:

But his Body politic Is a Body that cannot be seen or handled, consisting of Policy and Government, and constituted for the Direction of the People, and the Management of the public weal, and this Body is utterly void of Infancy, and old Age, and other natural Defects and Imbicilities, which the Body natural is subject to, and for this Cause, what the King does in his Body politic, cannot be invalidated or frustrated by any Disability in his natural Body. (qtd. in Kantorowicz 7)

Lear's body natural, however, is a major contributor to his decision to divide his land: while his advanced age suggests infirmity in his natural body, his desire to confer "all cares and business" on those with "younger strengths, while we / Unburthened crawl toward death" (1.1.37, 38-9) implies that the body politic is best held by one who lacks such infirmity. The body politic's lack of a physical form—that is, the mythical (indeed, fictional) nature of the concept of the king being legally immortal, as described above—further fragments the king's identity by situating his agency in the realm of an abstract idea. Nevertheless, this fragmented existence is manifested in the policies the king creates, and in the land and subjects. As such, Lear finds a sense of totality in this existence, spread though it is throughout the kingdom.

In the first half of the play, however, Lear loses that sense of totality. When he divides his land and disperses it among his daughters, Lear is, essentially, fragmenting *himself*, by relinquishing the large part of his body politic and displacing it onto others. His identity, at that point, is disintegrated. He is fragmented both in the Lacanian sense, due to the sight of his "disjointed limbs" (Lacan 1167), but also due to the loss of his kingdom and every benefit it provided him—benefits that take the form of those accommodations I describe in the previous chapter, as well as more lavish accommodations, such as the entourage denied him by his daughters, on which I go into further detail later in this chapter. The removal of this aspect of the king's identity—his body politic—removes him of his *we*-hood, that sense of totality that he previously enjoyed. Once Lear's *we*-hood is stripped of him, his identity is lost; he reverts, then, to a stage in life when he had no sense of identity. As a "child peering into the mirror," Lear reenters the mirror-stage (Lucksinger 161).

His identity is therefore at the mercy of his daughters, who are now in possession of those elements that he previously used to identify himself. As Ann Lucksinger points out,

having “relinquished power over the two areas that had most defined who he is—his family and his kingdom—Lear has nothing to support the man he ‘hath been.’ Unsure of his current status, he turns to others to reaffirm his identity” (157). I would argue, however, that Lear’s identity depends upon his subjective (both spatially and emotionally) relationship with those around him, most importantly those he loves. For this reason, when he inquires as to which of his daughters loves him best, he is seeking affirmation that his identity will remain stable once he relinquishes his land; he wants a visual and verbal confirmation of their love, so that he might internalize their words as a child internalizes his or her reflection in the mirror stage. When Cordelia responds with the famous line, “Nothing, my lord” (1.1.85), his identity is suddenly in question: he cannot, emotionally or mentally, perceive of himself as “Nothing,” as shown by his outburst and disowning of his “sometime daughter” (1.1.121). He must therefore seek affirmation elsewhere; that is, in the misplaced trust of his two daughters.

Lear has not only divided himself through the division of his kingdom, but has, in fact, also adopted as part of his identity that sense of nothingness from his encounter with Cordelia, even if he cannot fathom that aspect of his newly fragmented sense of self. In spite of the fact that he has disowned her, Lear internalizes the nothingness that Cordelia gives him in a reserved response to his inquiry, and, by disowning her, generates an absence that contributes to that sense of nothingness that has now become ingrained in his identity. Already fragmented, with his identity in the hands of his other two daughters, his identity “is as constant as his eldest daughters’ love for him,” which is Ann Lucksinger’s way of saying that his identity is all but entirely obliterated (160). At once fragmented and effaced, that nothingness that he has received from Cordelia comes into play when Lear comes across

Edgar in the storm; his identity, at this point, is not only uncertain, but is effectively effaced, just as Edgar's identity is effaced when he adopts the role of Poor Tom.

Let us look, then, at the scene in which Lear meets Poor Tom for the first time—that is, Edgar in disguise. Tom is performed; because he lacks the self-formed I-hood that is created in the mirror stage, his existence is contingent on his interactions with others. As such, Tom takes the position of the mirror; he is a signifier, and his signifieds are those who interact with, and as in the case of Lear, identify with him. Tom, being performed, is but a reflection of the Bedlam beggars, according to Edgar's perception of the various Poor Toms he has come across in his lifetime. He, then, is essentially the whole form of a fragmented body of people; fragmented, that is, in the way that the Bedlam beggars display incompleteness due to their fragmented existences—existence based on the lack of reason and material possessions. As Lucksinger points out, “Paradoxically, it is Edgar's lack that represents wholeness, or primordial Ideal” (161). Tom's lack takes the form of his suffering; he is suffering not only because he is presently living in a hovel in the middle of a storm, but because, due to the requirements of his performed character, his state of mind has reduced his communicative prowess to nothing but incoherent rambling.

When, therefore, Lear sees something of himself within Poor Tom, we can recognize with what affinity Lear's madness enables him to approach the Bedlam beggar. The “primordial Ideal,” as Lucksinger puts it, is that very natural state that attracts Lear to Tom. Lear, upon seeing Poor Tom for the first time, asks of him, “Didst thou give all to thy daughters, and art thou / come to this?” (3.4.47-8). And then, later, “Has his daughters brought him to this pass? / Couldst thou save nothing? Wouldst thou give 'em all?” (3.4.30-1). With these lines, Lear is showing us that he sees something of himself in Tom; namely,

his own miseries, for even after Kent assures him that Tom “hath no daughters,” Lear responds with the assertion that “Nothing could have subdued nature / To such a lowness but his unkind daughters” (3.4.66-8). Tom is Lear’s reflected self; as such, Tom, with his fragmented existence, is the representation of Lear’s totality. Therefore, when Lear looks at the men around him and sees his own experiences reflected in the image of Tom, he “assumes an image” like Tom’s (Lacan 1164)—assumes, that is, in the sense that he adopts Tom’s image not only as the true form of himself, but also of all of humanity.

I state above that Lear, in suggesting that Edgar is unsafe when exposed to the storm, supports the idea of human insufficiency in the face of natural phenomenon. I would argue, however, that the nakedness of Poor Tom serves not only to show the insufficiency of the human body in relation to feathered and furred animal counterparts, but rather to call attention to the animality of humanness. Edgar, when asked what he—that is, Tom, “hast...been,” responds, “False of heart, light of / ear, bloody of hand, hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in / greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey” (3.4.86-8). This assessment of Tom’s character is, as the audience knows, counter to Edgar’s own, yet this is the character that Lear connects with: a character who, as evidenced by his immorality, has been influenced by “th’foul fiend” to the point that his true animal characteristics have been revealed, not only through his previous moral corruption, but through his independence from animal-made-objects. The connection he feels with Tom, which we see earlier, emerges from his own upended sense of identity; upended, that is, due to the actions of his daughters, whose moral corruption is greater even than the fictional corruption of Tom, and whose animality is manifest through metaphorization, rather than action, as we see with Tom.

To see in Tom the image of humanness has greater implications than the acceptance of humanity's moral corruption. Lear, up until this point, has seen himself as the standard for humanity, due to the moral superiority over his daughters—superiority, that is, in the sense that he is not, as described in chapter two, corrupted. It is for this reason that we see him using such phrases as “wolfish” and “vulture” to describe his daughters (1.4.292, 2.4.129). It would appear, then, that he recognizes the animal nature of humans, if only through the metaphorization of animals. One distinction, however, between humans and nonhuman animals, as evidenced by Tom's condition, is his nakedness; that is, not only is he without his own form of protection against the natural elements, but he is also without the protection of animal products. This state invokes Lear's famous lines:

Thou owest the worm no silk,
 the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume.
 Ha? Here's three on's are sophisticated, thou art the thing
 itself. Unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor,
 bare, forked animal as thou art. (3.4.97-101)

While human nature, according to humanist thought, is distinct from animal nature because of our use of reason, the above lines in fact turn away from the humanist perspective, and acknowledge that, instead of reason, the distinction between animals and humans is that humans borrow the “lendings” of animals (3.4.101). In this sense, humans are accommodated. When humans are unaccommodated, as Lear points out, we are nothing more than animals. Here, Lear is making a statement not only on the fact of his and Edgar's lack of accommodation in the world, but also of the animality of humans—an animality that would otherwise be disguised by these animals' accommodations. Lear, of course, is without

accommodation, having been turned away from his daughters' homes; or, rather, having turned away from their homes following their refusal to accommodate his men. The scene, in fact, wherein we see this turning-away of Lear's men, involves the systematic reduction of Lear's identity as the number of men allotted him by his daughters is reduced. When Regan, for instance, states that she will allow for only "five and twenty" men, Lear, who has been offered a place for fifty men by Goneril, turns to his eldest daughter and states, "I'll go with thee. / Thy fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty, / And thou art twice her love" (2.4.254-6). This number, however, is further reduced when Goneril replies, "What need you five-and-twenty? Ten? Or five?" and Regan contributes with the further reductive, "What need one?" (2.4.257, 259). Lear's reaction gives us the precursor to his assessment of the "Unaccommodated man":

Oh, reason not the need! Our basest beggars
 Are in the poorest thing superfluous.
 Allow not nature more than nature needs,
 Man's life is cheap as beast's. Thou art a lady;
 If only to go warm were gorgeous,
 Why Nature needs not what thou gorgeous wearest,
 Which scarcely keeps thee warm. (2.4.260-6)

Here, Lear has recognized the superfluity with which humans base their sense of identity. Grace Ioppolo assesses the lines, "Lear reasons here that to measure everything by need alone, rather than desire, leaves humans stripped of dignity and self-worth" (52). Later, this sense of "dignity and self-worth," of course, appears to Lear to be the result of accommodations of our nonhuman counterparts; when he tears off his clothes and assumes

the natural, “Unaccommodated” form of humankind, he is turning away from those humanist ideas of “dignity and self-worth.” Having seen elements of himself within fragmented Poor Tom, Lear *assumes* the totality presented by Tom’s lack—that is, his lack of human reason, of artificial and animal accommodations. Tom lacks everything that distinguishes the human from the animal, and Lear’s act of assuming Tom’s image requires that he relinquishes the accommodations that he, as a human, has been privileged with. The nonhuman, then, rather than being lesser than humans in a hierarchical binary, is essentially categorized *with* humans; not only is the hierarchy demolished, but the binary is, as well.

Conclusion: Embodiment and the Posthuman

Since posthumanism is a relatively recent term—recent, that is, in that it emerged in the 1990s—analyzing Shakespeare with a critical posthumanist perspective is jarring, perhaps, because of the anachronistic implications of the term. Indeed, conceptions of posthumanism often take a futurist stance, subscribing to the notion that posthumanism is simply the “idea that humanity can be transformed, transcended, or eliminated either by technological advances or the evolutionary process” rather than a “system of thought formulated in reaction to the basic tenets of humanism” (*OED*). I would argue, however, that the futurist definition *emerges* from the latter definition, and necessarily informs the idea of critical posthumanism as I have used it here. Herbrechter’s conception of critical posthumanism turns away from the idea that posthumanism occurs “‘after’ a humanism,” but rather “inhabits humanism deconstructively (*Posthumanism* 7). The deconstruction of humanist tenets implies, as I state in my introduction, that we have *always already* been posthuman. *King Lear* not only interrogates human nature, as I explore in previous chapters, but offers a template for further inquiry into what the human is, what it has been, and what it can be.

In undertaking a critical posthumanist reading of *King Lear*, I recognized the presentist implications of my goal. Indeed, the idea that we have “always already” been posthuman is futurist, just as much as critical posthumanism is presentist. That is to say that the suggestion that we have “always already” been posthuman suggests that we are posthuman today. N. Katherine Hayles would argue this to be the case; her *How We Became Posthuman* takes that very stance, yet she also adopts a futurist outlook, envisioning a

posthuman future through her examination of present-day posthumanism. The idea that consciousness is “an epiphenomenon” is a posthuman concept, with implications for futurist goals of “configure[ing] human being so that it can be seamlessly articulated with intelligent machines” (Hayles 3). The existence of Poor Tom, I would argue, articulates the very idea of consciousness as epiphenomenon—that is, that consciousness, or reason, emerges as a result of, and secondary to, embodiment. Such is the very critique of human exceptionalism illustrated by *King Lear*. The idea of humans being distinct from animals relies on focusing on, and overcoming, bodily restrictions. With a focus on reason as the epitome of human exceptionalism, humans might be said to *endure* embodiment, rather than existing *through* embodiment. Only by revealing the human form for what it is: an animal body, a “poor, bare, forked animal,” can we fully appreciate the arbitrary and exploitative nature of the human/animal hierarchy.

Futurist conceptions of posthumanism, such as that of Hayles, tend to favor *transhumanist* concept known as extropy, which is “a belief that, by means of [technological development], human life will evolve indefinitely in an orderly, progressive manner, beyond its current form and limitations” (*OED*). There is some debate over whether transhumanism is a separate ideology from posthumanism. I use it here in the same way that Max More does when he defines transhumanism as “a class of philosophies that seek to guide us towards a *posthuman* condition” (qtd. in More, emphasis in original). This posthuman condition, which Nick Bostrom describes in his “Why I Want to be Posthuman When I Grow Up,” where, as I describe in Chapter One, he speculates as to the future of the human body, implies human insufficiency in much the same way as *King Lear* by suggesting that the human body is something to be improved upon, whether through evolution or technological affordances. As

I discuss in my second chapter, *King Lear* brings into focus those limitations of human embodiment that serve as the exigence for futurist posthumanism.

What *King Lear* accomplishes is the deconstruction of the human-animal hierarchical binary, as I discuss in my second chapter. This deconstruction is important for posthumanist thought, even futurist posthumanism, due to the effacement of societal paradigms related to the definition of the human. The idea that humans are distinct from animals only through the use of animal-made-things subverts the concept of human exceptionalism by identifying humans' insufficiency in the natural world, and highlighting humans' innate desire to overcome this insufficiency through the exploitation of non-human animals. When Lear, for instance, recognizes the importance of animal "lendings" as the factor that distinguishes humans from animals, he is drawing attention to the human capabilities that they use to distance themselves from their inherent animality—technologies that present-day posthumanists continue to develop, in their focus on extropy as a means of improving the human condition. Only through the accommodation of—or exploitation of—our natural surroundings do we manage a posthuman existence.

The effacement of Edgar's and Lear's humanist identities—that is, identities based on the period's paradigmatic ideas on what defines the human—creates within them a regressed, fragmented human existence. I use "fragmented" here not only in the Lacanian sense, but in the sense that, after their identity effacement, they display only a fraction of the mental faculties that they previously displayed—namely, the exercise of human reason. Once they relinquish their animal lendings, their existence is hinged on their embodiment, rather than on their exercise of reason—embodiment which proves to be nothing more than the "poor, bare, forked animal" that they suddenly reveal themselves to be (3.4.100-1). This

animalization of the human enables us to cast a critical posthumanist lens, as I have done in my second and third chapters, on the relationship between Lear and Poor Tom. Taking critical posthumanism a step further, however, I would argue that *King Lear* offers us not only a posthumanist view of human and animal relationships, but contributes to the proanimal conversations that were occurring throughout the period, as I discuss in Chapter Two. By recognizing the arbitrariness of the definition of the human, especially in terms of human exceptionality, proanimal advocates are provided with a new dynamic with which they can argue against the exploitation of non-human animals: that is, that humans are just as much animals as those we, as a society, exploit.

Edgar's constantly shifting identity does hint at his exercise of reason, shown most explicitly when he declares, in an aside, "Why I do trifle thus with his despair / Is done to cure it" (4.6.33-4), and then, later, when three gentlemen come to fetch Lear and bring him to Cordelia, Edgar drops all pretense and asks of the First Gentleman, "by your favor, / How near's the other army?" (4.6.205-6). The latter instance is the first moment in the play that we see Edgar show any interest in the state of civilization—not just civilization, but the state of the kingdom, which befits his noble status. I argue in Chapter Two that, in spite of this apparent return to his previous existence—that of Edgar, without any form of disguise—Poor Tom has not been erased. Edgar has changed; not only does he no longer foster any trust for his brother, as he did before Edmund's betrayal, but his words hint at leadership abilities that were not evident in the beginning of the play. His closing remarks open with the lines, "The weight of this sad time we must obey, / Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say" (5.3.325), providing an emphasis on humans' natural emotional reaction to an event, as opposed to those polite or empty words that are dictated by society. Edgar, here, displays an

understanding of his place in society, and allows for a critique of the social paradigms adopted by Goneril and Regan—namely, their dismissal of Lear as merely an “Idle old man” (1.3.17). Edgar’s final words, “The oldest have borne most; we that are young / Shall never see so much, nor live so long” (5.3.327-8), emphasize his own insufficiency, even within a societal context, due to his age. So, even if he were to follow the expectations of society and take over for his father, perhaps even sharing rule over the kingdom with Albany, he is still at the mercy of his bodily form: while Lear endured similar hardships to Edgar throughout the course of the play, Edgar must acknowledge that he will never share the same experience as someone of Lear’s age. As such, Edgar is able to see past his social standing, and acknowledge that his existence is hinged on the accommodations of the world around him—and that he, too, will die. He is subject to the restrictions of the body, regardless of his social standing.

The value of using critical posthumanism on Shakespeare’s works involves more than just turning away from early modern humanism. Indeed, the early modern period does more than give us the *seed* of present-day posthumanism; the emphasis on science and reason, in fact, is aligned with posthumanist endeavors, as shown by Max More and Natasha Vita-More’s introduction to *The Transhumanist Reader*, where they highlight the importance of “[h]umanism and scientific knowledge” in transhumanist thought (More). Humanism, then, is not necessarily obliterated through the implementation of posthumanist, or even transhumanist worldviews; rather, through its deconstruction of humanism, posthumanism is able to extend and transform humanist thought. As such, what I have done here is not the total subversion of humanism as a school of thought. Rather, I have sought to establish a link

between present-day posthumanism and *King Lear*, Shakespeare's most poignant analysis of the human condition.

Works Cited

- Badmington, Neil. "Theorizing Posthumanism." *Cultural Critique* 53 (2003): 10-27. *Project Muse*. Web. 20 November 2015.
- Bevington, David. *Shakespeare's Ideas: More Things in Heaven and Earth*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008. Print.
- Boehrer, Bruce. "The Animal Renaissance." *A Cultural History of Animals in the Renaissance*. Ed. Bruce Boehrer. New York: BERG, 2007. 1-26. Print.
- Borlik, Todd A. *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature: Green Pastures*. New York: Routledge, 2011. Print.
- Bostrom, Nick. "Why I Want to be a Posthuman When I Grow Up." *Medical Enhancement and Posthumanity*. Eds. Bert Gordijn and Ruth Chadwick. New York: Springer Publishing, 2008. 107-137. Print.
- Bowerbank, Sylvia. *Speaking for Nature: Women and Ecologies in Early Modern England*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP (2004). Print.
- Bozio, Andrew. "Embodied Thought and the Perception of Place in *King Lear*." *Studies in English Literature* 55.2 (2015): 263-284. *Project Muse*. Web. 21 November 2015.
- Braidotti, Rosi. *The Posthuman*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2013. Print.
- Browne, Thomas. *Religio Medici*. London: N.p., 1642. *Early English Books Online*. Web. 19 April 2016.
- Bruckner, Lynne and Daniel Brayton. *Ecocritical Shakespeare*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011. Print.

- Dannenfeldt, Karl H. "Europe Discovers Civet Cats and Civet." *Journal of the History of Biology* 18.3.
- Egan, Gabriel. *Green Shakespeare: From Ecopolitics to Ecocriticism*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.
- Estok, Simon C. *Ecocriticism and Shakespeare: Reading Ecophobia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Print.
- "extropy, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2016. Web. 20 April 2016.
- Feerick, Jeane E. and Vin Nardizzi, eds. *The Indistinct Human in Renaissance Literature*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. Print.
- Fudge, Erica. *Brutal Reasoning: Animals, Rationality, and Humanity in Early Modern England*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2006. Print.
- . "Monstrous Acts: Bestiality in Early Modern England." *History Today* 50.8 (2000): 20-25. *MLA International Bibliography*. Web. 19 April 2016.
- . *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture*. Urbana, IL: U of Illinois P, 2002. Print.
- . "Renaissance Animal Things." *New Formations: A Journal of Culture/Theory/Politics* 76 (2012): 86-100. Web. *MLA International Bibliography*. 13 October 2015.
- Graham, Elspeth. "Reading, Writing, and Riding Horses in Early Modern England: James Shirley's *Hyde Park* (1632) and Gervase Markham's *Cavelarice* (1607)." *Renaissance Beasts: Of Animals, Humans, and Other Wonderful Creatures*. Urbana, IL: U of Illinois P, 2004. 116-137. Print.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. Berkeley, CA: U of California P, 1988. Print.

Harris, James F. *The Ascent of Man: A Philosophy of Human Nature*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2011. Print.

Hayles, Katherine N. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1999. Print.

Heffernan, Julián Jiménez. "'The Naked Fellow' Performing Feral Reversion in *King Lear*." *Comparative Drama* 49.2 (2015): 133-162. *MLA International Bibliography*. Web. 5 April 2016.

Herbrechter, Stefan. *Posthumanism: A Critical Analysis*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013. Print.

---. "Shakespeare Ever After." *Posthumanist Shakespeares*. Eds. Stefan Herbrechter and Ivan Callus. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. Print.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Philosophicall rudiments concerning government and society. Or, A dissertation concerning man in his severall habitudes and respects, as the member of a society, first secular, and then sacred. Containing the elements of civill politie in the agreement which it hath both with naturall and divine lawes. In which is demonstrated, both what the origine of justice is, and wherein the essence of Christian religion doth consist. Together with the nature, limits, and qualifications both of regiment and subjection*. London: J.G., 1651. *Early English Books Online*. Web.

Jafari, Zahra. "Metaphorized Animals: An Investigation of Animal Metaphors in *King Lear*." *Journal of International Social Research* 7.32 (2014): 117-126. Web. 15 April 2016.

Kantorowicz, Ernst H. *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1957. Print.

- Kelley, Shannon. "The King's Coral Body: A Natural History of Coral and the Post-Tragic Ecology of *The Tempest*." *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 14.1 (2014): 115-42. Web. *Project Muse*. 13 October 2015.
- Klemettilä, Hannele. *Animals and Hunters in the Late Middle Ages*. New York: Routledge, 2015. Print.
- Lacan, Jacques. "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience." *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Vincent B. Leitch. 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 2010. 1163-69. Print.
- Lucksinger, Annette. "'Robes and Furr'd Gowns Hide All': Edgar's Role(s) in *King Lear*." *Quidditas* 33 (2012): 152-171. *EBSCOHost*. Web. 20 November 2015.
- MacInnes, Ian. "The Politic Worm: Invertebrate Life in the Early Modern English Body. *The Indistinct Human in Renaissance Literature*. Ed. Jean E. Feerick and Vin Nardizzi. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 256-274. Print.
- Mackenzie, Louisa. "The Fish and the Whale: Animal Symbiosis and Early Modern Posthumanism." *Sixteenth Century Journal: Journal of Early Modern Studies* 45.3 (2014): 579-597. *MLA International Bibliography*. Web. 12 November 2015.
- More, Max and Natasha Vita-More, eds. *The Transhumanist Reader: Classical and Contemporary Essays on the Science, Technology, and Philosophy of the Human Future*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013. *ProQuest Ebrary*. Web. 25 April 2016.
- Munroe, Jennifer. "Shakespeare and Ecocriticism Reconsidered." *Literature Compass* 12.9 (September 2015): 461-470. *Wiley Online Library*. Web. 11 November 2015.

- Munroe, Jennifer, Edward J. Geisweidt, and Lynne Bruckner, eds. *Ecological Approaches to Early Modern Texts: A Field Guide to Reading and Teaching*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015. *ProQuest Ebrary*. Web. 12 November 2015.
- Nayar, Pramod K. *Posthumanism*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2014. Print.
- Nee, Laurence D. "The Education of Edgar in Shakespeare's *King Lear*." *Shakespeare and the Body Politic*. Ed. Bernard J. Dobski and Dustin A. Gish. New York: Lexington Books, 2013. 221-240. Print.
- O'Dair, Sharon. "Is it Shakespearean Ecocriticism if it isn't Presentist?" *Ecocritical Shakespeare*. Eds. Lynne Bruckner and Dan Brayton. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011. 71-85. Print.
- Ornellas, Kevin de. "'Fowle Foules'?: The Sacred Pelican and the Profane Cormorant in Early Modern Culture." *A Cultural History of Animals in the Renaissance*. Ed. Bruce Boehrer. New York: BERG, 2007. Print.
- Palfrey, Simon. *Poor Tom: Living King Lear*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2014. Print.
- Pascucci, Margherita. *Philosophical Readings of Shakespeare: 'Thou Art the Thing Itself.'* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Print.
- "post-humanism, n.1." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2016. Web. 20 April 2016.
- Raber, Karen. *Animal Bodies, Renaissance Culture*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania, 2013. Print.
- Roden, David. *Posthuman Life: Philosophy at the Edge of the Human*. New York: Routledge, 2015. Print.

- Ramesey, William. *Helminthologia, or, Some physical considerations of the matter, origination, and several species of wormes macerating and direfully cruciating every part of the bodies of mankind ... together with their various causes, signs, diagnosticks, prognosticks, the horrid symptoms by them introduced : as also the indications and method of cure, all which is medicinally, philosophically, astrologically, and historically handled.* London: John Streater, 1668. *Early English Books Online*. Web. 19 April 2016.
- Reed, Robert Rentoul. *Bedlam on the Jacobean Stage*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1952. Print.
- Schiesari, Juliana. "Rethinking Humanism: Animals and the Analogic Imagination in the Italian Renaissance." *Shakespeare Studies* 41 (2013): 24-63. *MLA International Bibliography*. Web. 4 April 2016.
- Shakespeare, William. *King Lear*. Ed. Grace Ioppolo. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2008. Print.
- Shannon, Laurie. *The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopolity in Shakespearean Locales*. Chicago: University of Chicago P, 2013. Print.
- Sheen, Erica. "'Why Should a Dog, a Horse, a Rat, Have Life, and Thou No Breath at All?': Shakespeare's Animations." *Renaissance Beasts: Of Animals, Humans, and Other Wonderful Creatures*. Ed. Erica Fudge. Urbana, IL: U of Illinois P, 2004. 87-100. Print.
- Staub, Susan C. "'My Throbbing Heart Shall Rock You Day and Night': Shakespeare's Venus, Elizabeth, and Early Modern Constructions of Motherhood." *The Literary Mother: Essays on Representations of Maternity and Child Care*. Ed. Susan C. Staub.

- Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2007. 15-32. Rpt. in *Shakespearean Criticism*. Ed. Michelle Lee. Vol. 140. Detroit, MI: Gale, 2011. 305-316. Print.
- Traub, Valerie. "The Nature of Norms in Early Modern England: Anatomy, Cartography, *King Lear*." *South Central Review* 26 (2009): 42-81. *MLA International Bibliography*. Web. 18 April 2016.

Vita

Courtney Lewallen was born in Virginia Beach, VA. She is the daughter of Paul Lewallen of Hudson, NC, and Yvette Wood of Hull, GA. She graduated with Honors from Fred T. Foard High School in Newton, NC in 2007 and entered Catawba Valley Community College of Hickory, NC in the spring of 2011 to pursue an Associate of Arts. She graduated from CVCC with High Honors as a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, and went on to Appalachian State University in Boone, NC to pursue a Bachelor of Arts in English. There, she accepted the Cratis D. Williams Scholarship for 2014-15 and was accepted into the Accelerated Master's program, as well as the English Honors program, for her senior year. She was awarded a Teaching Assistant ship for spring of 2015, and became a Graduate Teaching Faculty Associate for the 2015-2016 school year. She was awarded the Graydon and Daisy Eggers Scholarship for 2015-2016 and was awarded her Master's degree in August of 2016. Courtney is a member of Tau Sigma Honor Society and Golden Key International Honor Society.