



**“SPECTRE OF NATURE”:
THE UNNATURAL, SPECTRALITY AND MADNESS
IN HAMLET, MACBETH AND KING LEAR**

BY

SUTHEYA INTARAKASET

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
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ABSTRACT

Concentrating on the connection between “nature” and “madness” in three Shakespeare’s tragedies – *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, this thesis examines the unnatural and how it contributes to the development of the characters’ madness. From transgressive actions such as murder and betrayal to the supernatural beings and the natural settings, the various forms of the unnatural permit an intricate interlacement of those that are similarly categorized as contrary to the natural – the “unnatural”, the “natural”, and the “supernatural”. As it displays how different ideas and meanings of “nature” are at play when its contraries are mentioned, this interlacement unveils the latent ambivalence of “nature” from which the “specters of nature” emerge. Forced to acknowledge the complex ambivalence of “nature”, the characters’ encounters with the “specters of nature” throw them into confusion since their previous worldviews are challenged. Still, the characters are unable to correctly recognize that ambivalence and accept their own limitations as human beings which prevent them from doing so. Haunted, these characters are engulfed in doubts, anxiety and fear. Finding themselves in hopeless situations, they descend into madness which leads them to their tragic ends.

Keywords: The Unnatural, Ambivalence of Nature, Specters of Nature, Madness

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

With their perplexing mixture of profundity and relatability, Shakespearean plays continue to inspire both academic and non-academic readers around the world to find their own ways of reading the plays. Among his tragedies featuring brutalities, disasters, and misfortunes, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, are probably the most studied. Despite all the visible differences in terms of plot and characters, these three plays similarly involve the “unnatural” which significantly links together the two central themes of the plays: nature and madness.

According to *What Else Is Pastoral?: Renaissance Literature and the Environment*, the question, what “nature” is, has been addressed since the ancient time by Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle whose thoughts become a foundation of natural philosophy. For them, “nature” is “a relentless flux” which involves the endless process of “birth” and “growth” (Hiltner, 2011, pp. 19-28). In other words, “nature” is perceived as fluid, ever-changing or even multiple. Therefore, despite humans’ untiring effort to define and understand it thoroughly, “nature” and its complexity remains (p. 4). This is as well emphasized by Raymond Williams who states that “nature” is “the most complex word, signifying the most difficult concept, in the English language” (2015, p. 164). Acknowledged as incredibly multiple and dynamic by numerous scholars, “nature” contains a vast conceptual and semantic realm. It always carries various sets of notion on which diverse branches of knowledge are predicated. Hence, when talking about “nature”, it is necessary to be careful of not merely “the many uses to which the word can be put” but also the way each discipline conceptualizes “nature” and deploys this word to convey or express that conceptualization (Bartlett, 2009, pp. 1-2; Hanawalt and Kiser, 2008, p. 3). Notably, the simple yet problematic questions of what “nature” is and what human knows about “nature” reflects the unsettled ontological and epistemological skepticism.

The difficulties in conceptualizing or defining “nature”, as a result, lead to the problem about the representation of “nature”. Apart from its countless depictions in art, “nature” is typically represented through the use of language. However, to what extent, language can represent “nature” is still controversial. Hiltner reveals Plato’s doubt whether humans can succeed in representing “nature”, especially by way of language (2011, pp. 4-5). This relates to how “nature” is differently interpreted and represented in literature. In this case, whether “nature” is portrayed as a background or a central image of the literary works, how to represent it has always been a fundamental and demanding task for writers. For Shakespeare, it can be observed that *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, as well as other plays, present, to audiences and readers, their own representations of “nature” which implies a rich variety of the concept of “nature”. When analyzed, the plays’ representations seem to answer the questions: what kind of “nature” the plays refer to, human “nature” or the real tangible “natural” world; and how human “nature” and the “natural” world are correlated according to the concept of “nature”. Nevertheless, when considering “unnaturalness” in the three tragedies, the notion of “nature” is complicatedly ambivalent.

Usually, the term “unnatural” is understood, in its literal sense, as what is opposed to or against the natural. However, in the selected tragedies, this term signifies much more than what it is commonly taken for. This semantic ambiguity apparently stems from the complexities regarding the understanding of “nature”. Such complexities are implied through various meanings and uses of the word “unnatural” in *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. Differently used to describe the characters’ transgressive or “unnatural” actions, the natural settings, and the supernatural phenomena, the word “unnatural” raise major questions about the concept of “nature”: what “nature” or “natural” is; what kind of “nature” these plays refer to, human “nature” or the real tangible “natural” world; how human “nature” and the “natural” world are correlated according to the concept of “nature”; and how such correlations are represented.

To illustrate, *Macbeth* shows an intricate network of the “unnatural” elements: the main characters’ rebellious attempts and misdeeds leading to the tragic end; the supernatural beings and power; and the portentous situations and settings

including a natural backdrop. Though similarly labeled as “unnatural”, they differently engage themselves with diverse meanings of “natural”.

In the play, the wrongdoings of the characters mostly involve murders and treacheries. These acts are considered “unnatural” since they are against the social morality. Such morality is associated with how the conceived relationship between human and nature is woven upon a web of economic and religious imperatives as seen in the practice of husbandry (Scott, 2014, pp. 1-33). Thereby, killing people is morally and legally prohibited. Moreover, the person the Macbeths cooperate in murdering is King Duncan who, as a king, is the highest leader of their community. From a head of primitive agricultural society to a king of the state, the significance of this position “lies in the relationship between father, king and God” where “familial, monarchical and divine order” are overlapped (Peters, 2008, pp.229-30). Thus, the murder of King Duncan is not only regicide but also parricide and deicide. Their act of killing King Duncan is also a violation of trust. Built on “moral conformity”, trust is important to the premodern community because it enables “a boundless set of social interactions” facilitating the operations of the society (Govier, 1997, p. 3; Heckscher, 2015, p. vii). Hence, the violation of trust is forbidden. On the one hand, the heteronormative society condemns killing and betrayal as “unnatural”; on the other hand, it promotes mercy and honesty as “natural” quality of (noble) humans. However, it can be seen that such “naturalness” is, in fact, culturally and socially constructed to maintain the social structure of the existing communal society.

Opposite to “nature”, the “unnatural” and the supernatural are seemingly placed on the same side of the dichotomy and merged in *Macbeth*. Nonetheless, the “unnatural” and the supernatural are not similar. The “unnatural”, as formerly discussed, is generally understood as a form of transgression against what is culturally and socially established as “natural”, whereas the supernatural originally refers to something “above nature” and “miraculous” (Bartlett, 2009, pp. 1-35), as hinted in Banquo’s question, “Are ye fantastical” (*Macbeth* 1.3.53). Even though the supernatural beings in the play are regarded as “unnatural”, it is observable that what accompanies the appearance of the three witches is actually a “natural” phenomenon, “thunder and lightning” (*Mac* 1.1 sd). This concerns how such a phenomenon is typically associated with supernatural agency and, hence, conceived as a sign of the

(natural) disaster and misfortune (Jones, 2015, pp. 10-11, 89-90). Sophie Chiari elucidates in the introduction of *Shakespeare's Representation of Weather, Climate and Environment* that "climate generates fears and superstitions generally assuaged by religious rituals and representations". She also adds that "Shakespeare's contemporaries could find plenty of stories telling of the erratic weather caused by God's wrath" to punish "hubris human" (2019, p. 1). Accordingly, "thunder and lightning" is used in this play to signal the entrance of the witches who possesses supernatural power and foreshadows the punishment for the Macbeths' unspeakable crime and "unnatural" cruelty.

A "natural" landscape or the heath, where the "unnatural" elements are present, further intensifies the complications of the concept of "nature" in *Macbeth*. "Upon this blasted heath" (*Mac* 1.3.77), the three witches gather and perform their magical rituals. As an uncultivated land with no plant except heather and coarse grasses, heath is linked with "unnaturalness" through not only its notoriety for being an abode of witches and vagrants but also its blighted barrenness (Borlik, 2023, pp. 20-21, 34, 37). The heath's lack of growth and fruitfulness mirrors the Macbeths' lack of moral growth and offspring. This lack is viewed as against what "natural" is normally valued for: productivity and suitability for cultivation. Noticeably, the word "blasted" highlights the connection between the heath and divine or supernatural power which is similarly described as "unnatural" in the play. In this sense, the heath's "naturalness" as a part of a "natural" world is denied and replaced with "unnaturalness". Shortly, Macbeth's "blasted heath" is not simply demonized but also unnaturalized.

Observably, the "unnatural" elements simultaneously veil and unveil the naturalization of the notion of what is "natural". On the one hand, the "unnatural" elements in the plays function to reproduce and confirm the discourses of the "natural". By rejecting the "unnatural" as evil and wrong, the "natural" is accepted as good and right. The "unnatural" acts are despicable and prohibited while the "natural" ones are admirable and allowed. Reproduced and emphasized as such, what is believed to be "natural" is easily or even willingly absorbed by people in the society and, hence, stays unchallenged. On the other hand, the "unnatural" elements in the plays function to expose and undermine the discourses of the "natural". In an analysis of such elements, the entanglement of the "unnatural", the "supernatural" and the "natural" is located.

Accordingly, the discourses of the “natural” underlying “unnaturalness” in the plays are questioned, giving rise to the exploration of how the particular concept of “nature” is used as a foundation for forming the normative notion of what is “natural”, as well as the conceived correlation between nonhuman “nature” and human “nature”. Here, “naturalness” is revealed as socially and culturally constructed. Still, the physical existence of the nonhuman “natural” world is undeniable. This relates to the epistemological and ontological skepticism about “nature” in Shakespeare’s time which is tacitly presented through the portrayal of “unnaturalness” in the plays.

From *Macbeth*’s examples, it can be noted that the idea of “nature” underlying “unnaturalness” includes not only nonhuman “natural” world but also human “nature”. Here, the multiple meanings of the term “natural” which the “unnatural” is defined against are at play, allowing the “natural”, the “unnatural”, and the supernatural to interlace. In this way, the natural and the unnatural including nature and culture are not polarized as much as they seem.

Not only in *Macbeth* but also in *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, the latent and ambiguous complexity of “unnaturalness” subtly entails the epistemological and ontological questions regarding “nature” which pervade both in and outside of the academic circle in the Late Renaissance (Watson, 2006, pp. 3-35). It leads to my research questions: how the “unnatural” elements in these three tragedies reflect an unresolved issue about the conceptualization and representation of “nature” in Shakespeare’s time; and what these texts suggest in regard to such an issue.

More importantly, in relation to “unnaturalness”, I want to explore the characters’ “madness”. The connection between them can be seen through how the “mad” characters are, to a certain extent, involved with or exposed to “unnaturalness”. For example, the prophecy, granted by “unnatural” beings or the three witches who assemble on the “unnatural” heath, motivates the Macbeths’ sinful and “unnatural” acts. After cooperating in plotting and committing regicide, the Macbeths gradually alienate themselves from each other, as well as other people, and their “madness” has been developed since then. From this example, it is arguable that the development of the characters’ “madness” is attributed to “unnaturalness” or the characters’ involvements with the “unnatural” elements. However, the “unnatural”, the “natural” and the “supernatural” are interwoven as the “unnatural”, the link between “unnaturalness”

and “madness” in these plays is correspondingly complexified. Here, another research question is raised: how and why “unnaturalness” in the plays brings about the characters’ “madness”.

In an attempt to answer such question, the plays’ narratives of the “unnatural” which contain an intricate interlacement of the unnatural, the supernatural and the natural is taken into consideration. As it challenges and undermines the dichotomy between the “natural” and the “unnatural”, the narratives as such point to the underlying ambivalence of “nature” and its dynamic complexity that resists simple interpretations. This particular function of the narratives of the “unnatural” corresponds to what Weinstock and Wolfreys say about a narrative and its spectral quality. According to them, any narrative always has another untold one lurking beneath, and that narrative opens “a space through which something other returns” (Weinstock, 2013, p. 63; Wolfreys, 2002, p. 3). “Not present, nor presently living, either to us, in us, or outside us”, this something other is a “specter” whose in-between state enables its defiance of an ontological categorization and, in turn, maintains its mysterious identity (Derrida, 2006, pp. xvii-xviii; Shaw, 2018, p. 6). Perpetually in the act of returning, the specter is a trace of “an absent or departed one” that “marks the present with its absence in advance”. In this sense, it brings about a paradoxical phenomenon that disturbs the epistemological and ontological unity, regardless of space and time. Drawing our attention to “the limits of standard perception”, such a disturbance calls into question the accuracy of the existing reality along with its ontological underpinnings (Derrida, 2006, pp. 5-6; Derrida and Stiegler, 2013, p. 39; Shaw, 2018, p. 6). Underlying the entangled narratives of the “unnatural” in the three tragedies, the ambivalence of “nature” opens the gaps from which the “specters of nature” emerge.

Featuring ghosts and brutal bloodshed, the three tragedies are already haunted and disturbing. Nonetheless, the “unnatural” in the plays invokes other hidden wandering ghosts, the “spectres of nature” that secretly haunt the plays and drive the characters mad. Repeatedly, the emergences of such specters force the main characters to acknowledge that formerly unseen ambivalence of “nature”, making them suspicious of their own perceptions or worldviews. Unable to shake off the feeling of uncertainty, these characters are physically and mentally perturbed by their encounters with the specters. Becoming aware of their inescapable conditions, the characters are tormented

by fearful apprehension. This leads to their gradual descent into madness and their final tragic end. In this case, the “specters of nature” is the ambivalent “nature” that becomes spectral and haunts the characters, driving them mad in the process. Hence, it can be said that the characters’ madness reflects their inability to accept or deal with the uncontrollable and ambivalent complexities of “nature”, as well as the inadequacy of their own perception and their powerlessness to go beyond or break away from those complexities.

From these grounds, I would put forward two arguments. Firstly, instead of offering a solution to the problem about the conceptualization and representation of “nature” induced by ontological and epistemological skepticism about “nature” in Shakespeare’s time, the “unnatural” in *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, through its dynamic intricacy, conjures up the “spectres of nature” that haunt the characters in the three selected plays of Shakespeare. Secondly, the analysis of “unnaturalness” and “madness” through theoretical formulation of spectrality and haunting enables the reinterpretation of “madness” of those characters, suggesting a new way to read and compare these plays. Concisely, I propose that there are the “spectres of nature” lurking beneath an intricate network of the “unnatural” elements in *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, and the characters’ “madness” is triggered by the hauntings of such spectres.

1.2 Nature: Concepts and Complications

1.2.1 Nature and the Natural

To analyze the “unnatural” in the three tragedies and how it connects nature and madness, it is useful to discuss the concepts of “nature” and address relevant complications or controversies since the term “nature” is what the “unnatural” defines against.

As “an ancient and central feature of Western thinking”, the concept of “nature” “has been employed in a variety of ways” permitting its permeation in diverse discourses. The word “nature” itself correspondingly has an incredibly wide range of meanings. It “can be a synonym for something as grand as the whole physical creation” or can be specifically employed as in the euphemistic phrase like “answer a call of nature”. The meanings of “natural”, though more fixed in use than “nature”, “range

from ‘not artificially made’ to ‘of illegitimate birth’, from ‘normal’ to ‘native’” (Bartlett, 2009, pp. 1-2). Apart from Raymond Williams who offers a succinct discussion of the varied meanings of the word “nature” in *Keywords*, Bartlett mentions how C.S. Lewis “dedicates fifty pages in his *Studies in Words* to the ‘vast semantic growth’ around the word ‘nature’ and its equivalents”. Hence, in analyzing the word “nature” and its underlying concepts, he writes, “it is always important to be aware of the many uses to which the word can be put” (pp. 1-2). In regard to the concept of “nature”, Hanawalt and Kiser agree that “any attempt to talk about ‘nature’” proves to be “a vexed one, since various disciplines, and even various practitioners within them, differ substantially in the ways they conceptualize ‘nature’ and deploy the word to signify their conceptualizations” (2008, p. 3). Even though the most basic yet problematic ontological and epistemological questions: what “nature” is and what humans know about “nature”, have never been completely answered since the distant past to the present, humans still strive to make sense of “nature” whose meanings enormously influence how they identify themselves and perceive the world they live in.

The first ones who come up with the idea of “nature” in the history of European thoughts is the Greeks. According to Collingwood, the idea of “nature” is originally introduced by three schools of Greek thoughts: the Ionians, the Pythagoreans, and the Aristotelians. Generally, the three schools believe that “nature” has its own life and rational mind. Its vitality causes continuous movement while its intelligence regulates and imposes order “first upon itself and everything belongs to it”. To elaborate, for Greek thinkers, “the world of nature is a world not only of ceaseless motion and therefore alive but also a world of orderly or regular motion, [...] not only alive but intelligence, not only a vast animal with a ‘soul’ or life of its own but a rational animal with a mind of its own” (1960, p. 3). In brief, they typically conceive “nature” as an ever-changing yet orderly entity that closely coexists and, at the same time, interrelates with humanity in several ways (Collingwood, 1960, p. 3-4, 82; Hiltner, 2011, pp. 4-5, 26).

This particular notion of “nature” significantly implies the complications of the later conceptualizations which can be considered separately in two aspects. On the one hand, the mobility and mutability of “nature” suggest the impossibility of the

comprehensive knowledge and the perfect representation of “nature”. On the other hand, the regularity and orderliness of “nature” are taken as a justified basis for establishing and maintaining social and moral order, contributing to the concept of “natural law”.

The mobility and mutability of “nature” are stressed in Plato’s and Aristotle’s views. Influenced by Heraclitus and Cratylus, Plato regards “nature” as “endlessly varied” and “wildly in flux”. Therefore, he is suspicious of the idea that “nature” can be represented by means of language since it is capable of shifting “so quickly that, no sooner have we uttered a word in an effort to signal it, than that which was to be signified has already changed and slipped away” (Hiltner, 2011, pp. 4-5). For Aristotle, “nature” is *physis* or “the birth of that which grows”. Thus, “nature” as such is “process, growth, change” and contains “the endless process of process, whereby everything everywhere is ever coming into and out of being” (Hiltner, 2011, p. 26; Collingwood, 1960, p. 82). With its “relentless flux” and endless changing process, “nature” always resists humans’ attempt to acquire the thorough knowledge of it and accordingly escapes the capture or representation by any symbolic means, especially language. As Hiltner notes, “this issue is at once epistemological and cultural, as it raises both the question of what we know, as well as how we share it, by way of language” (2011, p. 5).

The orderliness and regularity of “nature” imparts how “nature” is believed to be governed by or to embody some rules or laws. Etymologically, the word “nature” in modern English language is a derivative of the Latin *natura* whose lots of its connotations stem from the Greek *physis* with its own idea of nature’s orderly process. Its cross-cultural equivalents, the Sanskrit *dharma* “refers both to the orderliness of the world and that which dictates the appropriate behavior of every kind of thing” (Daston and Vidal, 2004, p. 4). Despite the variations in its concept and definition, “nature” continues to signify the existence of order and the laws that regulates it. The “natural law” theory, of which a starting point can also be traced back to the Greek philosophy, arises and evolves from the signification as such.

Discernibly, the notion of “natural law” and “natural” order resonates in how nature is endowed with authority in human affairs. In *Moral Authority of Nature*, the authority given to “nature” manifests through diverse social apparatuses. Such an

authority develops from nature's "varied and complex meanings" and is acknowledged "as a source of values and a value in itself; as a means of thinking about necessity and freedom; and as a permeable and moving boundary that demarcates individuals and categories" (Daston and Vidal, 2004, p. 5). Noticeably, nature's authority is asserted through how the ideas of natural order and natural law are employed as a conceptual model for various kinds of orders in human society such as moral, legal, or social, etc.

In reference to the shared belief that God – the supreme creator of all things – confers a particular position and power on each of his creations, "nature" is presumed to be representative of a higher hierarchical structure directed by divine law. As a result, "nature" is personified as Goddess Nature or *Natura* – a God's authorized deputy – who intermediates between the divine and human (Newman, 2003, p. 53; Puff, 2004, p. 232; R. Williams, 2015, p. 167). Its significance lies in how such a personification "was in part responsible for 'nature's' emergence as one of the foundational categories of Western thoughts" (Newman, 2003, pp. 51-52).

Not only in Greco-Roman pagan culture but also in the medieval Christian tradition, "nature" adopts diverse roles. It takes shape from a powerful goddess serving Zeus to a vicar of Christian God (Curtius, 2013, pp. 106-27; Economou, 1972, pp. 1-2, 52; Knowlton, 1920, pp. 224-53). In relation to the idea of natural law and nature's moral authority, Nature's roles become more specific. As a loyal "handmaiden of god", this goddess upholds divine order immanent in the natural law (Glacken, 1967, pp. 217-18; Puff, 2004, p. 232-33). Thereby, she often acts as an unbeatable defender or destroyer of a particular set of social values or norms, as well as a forceful arbiter who can generously offer hard-won reconciliations or indifferently exert its judgmental authority over socially moral issues (Cadden, 2004, pp. 207-31; Puff, 2004, p. 232-33). In such cases, Nature is "a goddess of the normative" (Newman, 2003, p. 134). When its nourishing fecundity is taken into account, "nature" is depicted as a dutiful mother goddess who diligently produces both human and nonhuman children from her own chthonic womb or earthly body (Bowen, 2007, pp. 90-91; Park, 2004, pp. 50-73). Although she fosters her children with bountiful love, they cannot avoid her lecturing and punishment when they disobey her laws (Park, 2004, pp. 50-73; Puff, 2004, pp. 232-35). Given an authoritative voice, Nature "moves between being an 'it' – a set of impersonal, immaterial inclinations that determine the sublunary world – and being a

‘she’ – an autonomous agent capable of sometimes capricious activity” (Robertson, 2017, p. 19)

Presupposing Nature’s assigned duty to watch over sublunary realms and regulate their ways of life in compliance with divine “eternal law”, the concept of “natural law” firmly posits “human nature” as their innate rational and moral capacity that allows them to comprehend and act conformingly to this specific set of law (R. White, 1996, pp. 30-31; Puff, 2004, p. 232-33). In this sense, “Man, God, and the physical world were joined in a unity of reason” (H. White, 2000, p. 2). This delineation of the moral relation between human and nature indicates the parallel between natural order and moral order on which the social structure and values are established (Daston, 1998, pp. 157-58, 2019, pp. 1-6). In other words, the idea of human morality, which governs the whole society by prescribing certain sets of socially appropriate or normative conducts of each member of that society, are primarily founded on the notion of natural law and this parallel (Daston, 2019, pp. 1-6; Daston and Vidal, 2004, pp. 1-5). More importantly, it can be seen that the parallel as such not merely affirms the dominant moral authority of “nature” or Nature over human community but also warrants a moral sequence – good is rewarded and evil is punished – of any narrative as its supposedly natural sequence (R. White, 1996, pp.3, 6-8; Herndl, 2014, pp. 13-15, 86-87; Harmon, 2004, pp. 6-8).

However, Hugh White heeds that “Nature [...] is not always benign and reasonable figure, standing for proper moral order and in harmony with Reason” (2000, pp. 2-3). He further observes the inconsistency of the “natural”, illustrating how “human nature” or “natural impulses within human being”, in certain cases, contradicts what Nature typically declares as the “natural” or virtue dictated by God’s laws and purposes. Thus, “the natural here occupies an intermediate moral status” (H. White, 2000, pp. 56-58). From what Stanbury calls “disenchanted skepticism about nature’s benevolence”, Noah Guynn detects how ambivalence or contradiction is internalized to fortify the ideological premise on which the figure of Nature is constructed (Guynn, 2007, pp. 3-4; Stanbury, 2004, p. 13). In this regard, the allegorizing process and the figure are susceptible to a deconstructive reading because this internalized ambivalence can be brought up to subvert the mainstream ideology that oppresses it. Displaying different patterns of the moral relationship between

mankind and nature, literary pieces that follow or argue against the fundamental notion of human nature and natural law, likewise, involve the similar process of ambivalent internalization and, therefore, can be interpreted using the deconstructive method.

Even if the problematic case of the personified Nature partly encapsulates the underlying conceptual and representational ambivalences in relation to the term “nature”, it could be assumed that such ambivalences remain prevalent or even become more jarring as they are transmitted to the Renaissance when the epistemological and ontological questions about “nature” are revitalized. As a result, the general skepticism is markedly amplified, and more vigorous debates over “nature” are kindled in the Renaissance, specifically in Shakespeare’s time.

These are tackled by early modernists, including those in Shakespearean studies, through diverse approaches and disciplines. For many critics, the early modern, precisely the Renaissance, is acknowledged as the era of upheavals due to the clash between the orthodox medieval ideas and the later humanistic visions in several dimensions. According to Lawrence Stone, “the early seventeenth century England was experiencing all the tensions created by the development within a single society of two distinct cultures, cultures that were reflected in ideals, religion, art, literature, the theatre, dress, deportment, and way of life” (2017, p. 119). David Underdown likewise ascribes those upheavals to “the earlier emergence of two quite different constellations of social, political, and cultural forces, involving diametrically opposite responses to the problems of the time” (1987, pp. 40-41). At that time, both old and new schools of thoughts were parts of the reenergized debates over “nature” and relevant subject matters – mainly the relationship between the divine, human, and the natural world. Igniting more controversies than agreements in many disciplines, those debates rapidly spread across several cultural arenas and finally contributed to the extraordinary diversity of interpretations of “nature” (Puff, 2004, p. 234; Watson, 2006, pp. 5-6). These diverse interpretations find its proper place in a literary circle where manifold imaginative representations of nature are presented.

According to Hiltner and Watson, every genre of the sixteenth and seventeenth century’s literary works engages with the ontological and epistemological uncertainties about “nature” (2011, pp. 4, 9; 2006, pp. 3-35). As responses to those

uncertainties, a huge number of literary depictions of nature pose a complicated problem about the means by which and the extent to which nature can be represented. Perceiving nature as an entity that is invariably “in flux”, Plato pinpoints the insufficiency of language as a means for representing nature. This insufficiency, Hiltner further explains, originates from not only what Plato views as its failure to completely capture the always changing presence of the thing it signifies but also the way in which language is used to describe nature (2011, pp. 4-5, 20-21). Simply put, language cannot handle the inherent changeability and heterogeneity of “nature”. Noticing how nature is also mentioned “gesturally”, Hiltner positively introduces a gestural means as possible solution to this representational problem (2011, pp. 5-9, 20-23). On the other hand, Watson pays more attention to the common sentiment that underlies various creative portrayals of “nature” in the late sixteenth and seventeenth century. Greatly affected by the anxiety about the disconnection between humanity and nature, these portrayals, Watson asserts, articulate the nostalgic yearn for their bygone intimacy and the doubt over their available knowledge of nature (2006, pp. 5-6, 78). Although their focuses are different, Hiltner and Watson similarly find clear examples of their arguments in Shakespeare’s works.

Additionally, Hiltner and Watson talk about the revival of pastoral mode in the Renaissance as in parallel with the rise of humanism. Stimulated by the reexamination of classical sources and the increasing sense of alienation between humanity and “nature”, this revival conveys a desperate attempt to search for an effective literary mode that might enable the reconnection with “nature” or satisfy the nostalgic longing for the prelapsarian Eden or mythical Golden Age when humans are believed to possess direct knowledge of “nature” whom they have an intimate and harmonious relationship with (Hiltner, 2011, pp. 5-9; Park, 2004, pp. 71-72; Watson, 2006, p. 78).

Through its idyllic world of shepherds and rural landscapes, each work of pastoral literature expressly or tacitly pictures the imagined connection and interaction between “nature” and human, including “nature” and art, to serve diverse purposes such as didactic, satiric, dramatic, aesthetic, etc. More significantly, “nature” in pastoral texts, represented by the idyllic landscape, usually emulates the Golden Age or the prelapsarian “nature” in the authors’ imagination. Besides, owing to its

versatility, the pastoral mode itself has been broadly applied and transformed to such an extent that it is merged into all kinds of available genres, forms, and structures during the Renaissance (Chaudhuri, 2018, pp. 1-33; O'Callaghan, 2003, pp. 307-16). On these grounds, the pastoral is arguably one of the most important contexts that reflect both conceptual and representational complexities regarding “nature” in Shakespeare’s time. This revived literary tradition also influences several works of Shakespeare, for instance, *As You Like It*, *The Winter’s Tale* and *Love’s Labour’s Lost*.

Besides this, Renaissance perceptions of “nature” were shaped by people’s interactions with actual natural surroundings from husbandry and gardening to their explorations and observations of countless life forms in local and exotic lands. This ecological awareness gives rise to the burgeoning of early modern ecocriticism. Covering “historical, epistemological, and ontological issues”, this ecocritical field has become more heterogeneous in recent years (Remien, 2019, pp. 1-2). The term “ecocentrism” has been brought up by eco-oriented scholars who asserts how the studies of “nature” in literary works should not be only on a thematic, semantic, lexical, or conceptual level but have to consider the actual physical natural world or environment (Remien, 2019, pp. 1-2; Kamps and Raber, 2008, p. 2). Many eco-critics such as Gabriel Egan, Sharon O’Dair, Simon C. Estok further proclaim how ecocriticism should entail or encourage activism and inform the present environmental problems (Estok, 2008, pp. 77, 81-83, 88, 2011, pp. 1-3, 8, 16). For several early modernists, interdisciplinary eco-studies offer them a new interpretative lens and add more flavors to ongoing academic debates. Ecocriticism, Randall Martin writes, “combines historical, post-structural, ecofeminist, post-humanist, and other kinds of theoretical criticism with scientific literacy and cultural analysis” (2015, p. 8). With their ecocritical outlooks, the following studies of the Renaissance’s texts, culture, and environmental contexts delineate how both the conceptual complexity concerning the term “nature” and actual environmental issues shape the early modern perception of the relationship between human and the natural world.

Concerning its environmental contexts, English Renaissance is the era in which “current environmental crisis clearly has its roots” (Hiltner, 2011, p. 2). Because of their overexploitation and mismanagement of natural resources and areas,

the Elizabethans confronted unprecedented environmental crises, for instance, the erratic weather, unpredictable bouts of drought, severe air pollution, widespread fuel shortage, and biodiversity loss in some regions (Estok, 2011, p. 5; R. Martin, 2015, pp. 2-5, 9-23). Discernibly, such ecological turbulences highlight the startling contrast between the two opposite images of nature – the peaceful and nurturing versus the chaotic and destructive. Consequently, they reinforce Elizabethan “multi-faceted” attitudes towards the natural world. The “inhabitants of early modern England”, Borlik notes, “were very much preoccupied with their natural surroundings and far from achieving a consensus about humanity’s place within them” (2011, pp. 2-3). This shows how real environmental situations also play, in Shakespeare’s time, a crucial part in intensifying the persisting ontological and epistemological doubt about “nature”, as well as adding more dimensions its conceptual and representational complications.

Overall, eco-studies display how the physical natural world is, in fact, inseparable from the abstract conceptualizations of “nature” because it unequivocally influences and informs such conceptualizations. More significantly, the conceived relationship between human and nonhuman “nature” is redefined, as the boundaries between human and non-human nature is challenged and rethought as overlapped, interwoven, porous, blurred, or fluid. Since human and nonhuman are no longer distinctly different as the Self and the Other, “nature” and culture correspondingly are turned out to be less dichotomous.

From various contexts above, it is noticeable that the integration between the conceptual knowledge of “nature” and the first-hand experience of the tangible natural world leads to how “nature” is generally perceived in Shakespeare’s day. Obviously, “nature”, as well as its ensuing terms “natural” and “naturalness”, is hard to define since its ambivalence always resists any static definitional or conceptual framework. Denoting the term’s overarching versatility to accommodate every contradiction among its diversified meanings or concepts, this ambivalence has been variedly utilized by Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Arguably, every piece of his drama, more or less, plays with multiple nuances of the word “nature” and the audience’s understandings of each nuance, along with how such a nuance subtly complements the drama’s themes and plot. By consolidating multifarious perceptions

and definitions of “nature”, Shakespeare’s plays successfully maintain nature’s complex ambivalence and, thus, leave an ample room for further textual analyses of “nature” in relation to other topics.

1.2.2 The Unnatural

Unlike other plays, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, and *King Lear* present a significant connection between two major themes of the plays – “nature” and “madness”. Concentrating on that connection in the three tragedies, this thesis examines the way in which the “natural”, the “unnatural”, and the “supernatural” are intertwined as the “unnatural”. Moreover, it will analyze why and how such an intertwinement becomes hidden gaps through which the “specters of nature” repeatedly manifest themselves to haunt the characters and lead them to an eventual madness.

Defining itself against the ambivalent “nature”, the “unnatural” is a complex term. To interpret “unnaturalness” and analyze its functions in Shakespeare’s dramas, one needs to look carefully at how the term “nature” and “natural” are at play, along with how the “unnatural” elements, as their negatives, are employed to accentuate or buttress the “natural” ones. Therefore, it is helpful to survey a conceptual background of the “unnatural”.

Every “nature” has its own opposite or “non-nature” (Watson, 2006, p. 52). The numerous binary oppositions between them range from “nature versus freedom, nature versus art, nature versus civilization, nature versus history, nature versus nurture” to “nature versus society” and more (Daston and Vidal, 2004, p.8). Despite its ambivalence, each meaning of “nature” differently engages with four fundamental aspects: non-human world; “entire physical world”; “essential quality and defining properties of something”; “power or force governing some or all living thing” (Castree, 2014, p. 10). In other words, the term “nature” primarily refers to the “natural”, the natural world, and “human nature”. For the “unnatural”, its prefix un- denotes how the word defines itself against the “natural” which mostly means in compliance or accordance with; originating or deriving from; and constituent of “nature”. However, this straightforward opposition does not elucidate why the “natural” is perceived as socially acceptable, whereas the “unnatural” is deemed socially contemptible.

Examining the normative authority of Nature, Newman notices how the normative relies on the very definition of the non-normative or its opposite. Although they are undoubtedly diverse since “Nature stands over against a variety of Others”, its opposites can be assigned to “three broad categories: the Supernatural, the Unnatural, and the Cultural” (Newman, 2003, p. 54). Differently, Daston categorizes the non-natural into four groups – “supernatural, preternatural, artificial, unnatural” (1998, p. 154). In spite of the differences, Newman’s and Daston’s categories of non-nature share some similarities. Indicative of the agency above or beyond “nature” or “miracles and marvels”, the supernatural and the preternatural are often overlapped and can be considered the same (Daston, 1998, p. 155; Bartlett, 2009, pp. 4-12, 18-20). The cultural and the artificial clearly denote human agency and interference with “nature” while the unnatural refers to “vices” or transgressive actions that only humans are able to commit or engage in (Daston, 1998, p. 158). Thereby, the scope of the dichotomy between nature and its contraries can be reduced to “nature versus man” and “nature versus God”. To put it more plainly, that which can go against “nature” is those who can cause some changes to it.

In her essay, Daston underlines how the unnatural sharply distinguishes itself from other categories of the non-natural in the early modern Europe. Established by God, the natural order was believed to be that from which suitable forms of human relationship can be conceived. Therefore, the unnatural, which refers to actions that are against or deviates from those forms of relationship, is deemed the violation of the sacred order of nature and condemned as heinous crimes. In this sense, the unnatural functions to underpin the natural’s superior moral status and authority in human society (1998, pp. 156-58, 167-68). Despite the shattered boundaries between the categories of the non-natural and the subsequent dissolving of some of them, the “unnatural”, to which “moral sanctions” attached, persisted throughout the early modern period. Its domain, Daston describes, “remained largely the same, still governing familial and sexual relationships” (1998, p. 167). She also brings up in *Against Nature*, how nature is a perfect model at hand for human conception of order. The comparison between human orders and natural order, as a result, engenders a fallacy relevant to the process of naturalization in which nature and its authority are claimed to legitimize a socially preferable set of values or norms. Because of that

process, the unnatural always carries moral implications even if it stands for a chaos in three different orders of nature – specific, local, and universal (Daston, 2019, pp. 3-6).

Interested in the employment of agricultural terms in Shakespeare's works, Charlotte Scott investigates the ideological functions of husbandry that determine a certain set of social and cultural values in the Elizabethan Age. As it illustrates the imagined relationship between human and nature, husbandry suggests a proper pattern of their interactions congruous with that relationship and formulates it as necessary social morality (2014, pp. 3-4, 6-7). For instance, land cultivation allows the comparison between agricultural growth and moral growth. The land and human body are perceived as in parallel, and both should be cultivated in order to reach their highest values or productivity. The first one is through the process of sowing, growing and reaping. The second one is through education (pp. 123-125). Antithetical to the natural, Scott proposes that the "unnatural" in *Macbeth* conveys humans' ambitious endeavor to conquer "nature" and assert their agencies as independent from the existing social morality through transgressive actions. These actions not only challenge the social morality which uses the prevailing and normative ideas of "naturalness" as a basis but also protest against its overbearing obligations that forbid humans to act or behave otherwise (pp. 1-33, 121-151).

Noticeably, these interpretations of the unnatural rely on the analogy between natural order and moral order essential to the natural law and moral authority of nature. Presented as morally wrong and undesirable, the unnatural, on one side, stresses the virtue of the natural and serves as a justification for nature's privileged righteousness to denounce and forbid any action that deviates from its course. Furthermore, it sanctions a control of and a punishment for those so-called perpetrators who commit unnatural acts. On the other side, the unnatural, as a form of transgression, unearths and unsettles the process of naturalization by questioning the values or norms naturalized or verified by that process.

Antonymous to "natural", the term "unnatural" simultaneously hints at and effaces its positive counterpart. With the same dual function, the unnatural in the selected plays reveals and, at the same time, conceals the normalization of what is regarded as "natural" including the reproduction of the discourses that pronounce the

natural as virtuous and decent. It is observable that Scott's interpretation of the unnatural actually places the natural and the cultural on the same side by demonstrating the consistency between the discourses of the natural and the agricultural which cherish the heteronormative and profitable productivity of both human and nature.

However, Scott seems to overlook how various meanings and uses of the "unnatural" are complicatedly overlapped as each defines against the multiple meanings of the "natural". Alluding to both nonhuman "nature" and human "nature", the idea of "nature" and "naturalness" in the play permit an interlacement of those that are similarly characterized as "unnatural" or contrary to the "natural". Here, the word "unnatural" diversely designates the transgressive or "unnatural" deeds committed by the main characters; the supernatural creatures and their unearthly power; the ominous events and settings; the natural landscape where the supernatural and the characters come across each other. Interlaced as such, they challenge our normal understandings of the "unnatural" and the "natural", raising an important question about why and how both of them are depicted as totally opposing or different. Apart from exposing the narratives of the "unnatural" and its dual role in facilitating and disrupting the reproduction of the discourses of the "natural", this interlacement discloses the latent ambivalence of "nature" and concurrently undermines the simple polarization between the "natural" and the "unnatural", as well as "nature" and "culture".

As Greek's *physis* and many more, "nature" always enmeshes in "the endless play of absence and presence" (Hiltner, 2011, p. 28). Behind its "slippery concept", Newman cautions, "lurks the almost equally protean personage" (2003, p. 51). "No one" Watson adds, "can be alone in paradise, it is always two in one – the one we can perceive and name and claim to love and the one that is that it is, moving in mysterious ways" (2006, p. 118). As long as humans are damned by their "fall into cognition", they can never avoid "the uneasy coexistence of green thoughts and green shades" (2006, p. 118). As Bartlett concludes, "concepts of nature and its opposites and exceptions are not susceptible to quick and easy definition" (2009, p. 26). Indeed, their categories and definitions have always been in discussion, as they are "fluid, potentially contradictory, and often indeed unexamined" (2009, p. 26).

Through its intricate intertwinement of the natural, the supernatural and the unnatural, the “unnatural” in the selected tragedies hints at the spectrality of “nature”. As it reveals the complex ambivalence of “nature” hidden beneath its narratives, the “unnatural” opens the gaps through which the “specters of nature” enter and haunt the characters. Compelled to acknowledge the ambivalence of “nature” and its complexities, the haunted characters call into question their own perceptions or worldviews. Unable to cope with growing uncertainty, these characters are disturbed physically and mentally by their encounters with the specters. Noticing the inescapability of their situations, they are tortured by fear and anxiety. This precipitates their descent into madness and ultimate tragic demise. Turning spectral, the ambivalent “nature” manifests itself as the specters of “nature” and drives the characters into madness.

1.3 Specters: Theoretical Background and Conversations

1.3.1 Derrida’s Specter

To understand how “nature” has turned spectral and assumes a “visible invisible” shape of “specters”, the exploration of the conceptual or theoretical background of the term “specter” is necessary. Originally, the theory of “specter” was formulated by Jacques Derrida in *Specters of Marx*. Derrida’s ideas of “spectrality” and “hauntology”, Miller comments, reflects his determination to deconstruct “reductionist essentialist and totalitarian thinking” (2003, p. 1).

Etymologically, the word “specter” is derived from Latin *spectrum* and French *spectre*, meaning an “image”, “appearance”, “apparition” (Harper, 2022). Later, its meaning is generally understood as similar to the word “ghost” referring to the “soul of a deceased person, spoken of as appearing in a visible form, or otherwise manifesting its presence, to the living” (Coughlan, 2016, p. 5). This *Oxford English Dictionary*’s definition of the ghost, however, is not what Derrida means by the “specter”. The specter, Derrida describes, “is neither substance, nor essence, nor existence, is never present as such” (2006, p. xvii). It is a certain other who is “not present, nor presently living, either to us, in us, or outside us” (Derrida, 2006, p. xviii). Such a description is extended by Pierre Macherey who defines the specter as

“an intermediary ‘apparition’ between life and death, between being and non-being, between matter and spirit, whose separation it dissolves” (2008, p. 19). This specter blurs or even erases the “distinction between the real and the unreal, the actual and the inactual”, the material and the immaterial in “the opposition between what is present and what is not” (Derrida, 2006, p. 12). The specter’s “in-between condition”, as “both visible and invisible, both phenomenal and nonphenomenal: a trace that marks the present with its absence in advance”, gives rise to its “paradoxical state” (Derrida and Stiegler, 2013, p. 39; Shaw, 2018, p. 6). As “a paradoxical incorporation, the becoming-body, a certain phenomenal and carnal form of the spirit”, the specter is still “some ‘thing’ that remains difficult to name: neither soul nor body, and both one and the other” (Derrida, 2006, p. 5). “Specters”, Katy Shaw heeds, “do not respect physical and metaphorical boundaries” (2018, p. 6). They are not merely able to “pass through walls” but also “trick consciousness and skip generations” (Derrida, 2006, p. 36). Operating “in the between-spaces that separate recognized boundaries”, the specter “effectively draws attention to the limitations of such ontological categories and the limits of standard perception” (Shaw, 2018, p. 6). Unlike the spirit or “ghost in general”, this specter presupposes “a supernatural and paradoxical phenomenality, the furtive and ungraspable visibility of the invisible” that in turn disturbs the ontological and epistemological unity, regardless of time and space (Derrida, 2006, p. 6).

Citing Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* to clarify his concept, Derrida observes the apparition(s) of a specter or “Hamlet’s father”, including the characters’ encounters with the apparition(s). Referred to as “This Thing” by Hamlet’s acquaintances, the specter – the “non-object” and the “non-present present” – is highlighted as the “being-there of an absent or departed one no longer belongs to knowledge” (Derrida, 2006, p. 5). Its invisible visibility betokens “spectacle” though it is not and never be “present in flesh and blood” (Derrida and Stiegler, 2013, p. 38). Since these characters cannot deny the specter’s “tangible intangibility of a proper body without flesh, but still the body of someone as someone other”, they are forced to adjust their perceptions and responses in every encounter with the specter (Derrida, 2006, p. 6). However, this specter invariably resists their attempts to understand and see through it, to identify it and its purpose.

To recognize and comprehend the specters, we “must not chase” them away. Rather, we must “sort out, critique, keep close by, and allow” them “to come back” (Derrida, 2006, p. 109). Despite our “anxiety and the desire to exclude the stranger”, Derrida declares that we must have “hospitality” that invites and welcomes the stranger, not as strange but as someone who is “already found within” and “more intimate with one than one is oneself” (2006, p. 217).

1.3.2 The Spectral and the Uncanny

Significantly, Derrida’s description of the specter as the stranger within one’s self connects his theory of spectrality to Freud’s theory of “the Uncanny” or *Das Unheimliche* which centers on the strangely familiar including its process and effects (Freud, 2003, pp. 123-159). Thereby, it is useful to examine that connection in order to understand more about the specter and the process of haunting.

Interested in “what evokes fear and dread”, Freud proclaims his attempt to explore and explicate the “uncanny” as one of the proper aesthetic subjects through the combination of two modes of thought – psychoanalysis and aesthetics (2003, p. 123). Disagreeing with Jentsch’s simple conclusion that the uncanny is the fear of the “unknown and unfamiliar” brought about by “intellectual uncertainty”, Freud insists that “something must be added to the novel and the unfamiliar if it is to become uncanny” (2003, p. 125). In his study of the uncanny, Freud comes up with two conclusions. Firstly, the “frightening element” of the uncanny involves “something that has been repressed and now returns”. Secondly, this element “is actually nothing new or strange, but something that was long familiar to the psyche and was estranged from it only through being repressed” (Freud, 2003, pp.147-48). Accordingly, when coming back to the psyche, that element creates the sense of the “uncanny” or the strangely familiar. In line with “Schelling’s definition of the uncanny as ‘something that should have remained hidden and has come into the open’”, this clarifies the odd semantic relationship between the two German words – *heimlich* and *unheimlich* – or “why German usage allows the familiar (*das Heimliche*, the ‘homely’) to switch to its opposite, the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*, the ‘unhomely’)” (2003, p. 148). “The negative prefix un- is”, Freud adds, “the indicator of repression” (p. 151).

The link between Freud’s theory of the uncanny and Derrida’s theory of spectrality is further explored by Julian Wolfreys in his book, *Victorian Hauntings*:

Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature. Quoting Derrida's commentary, "haunting implies places, a habitation, and always a haunted house", Wolfreys brings to our focus how both theories – haunting and the uncanny – predicate on a familiar or "homely" setting and presuppose the feeling of "structural undecidability" (2002, p. 5, 15). Due to its conceptual reliance on "the literal meaning and the slippage of, and within, the German *unheimlich*", the uncanny or the unhomely is identified as that which "emerges in the homely" and can only become as such by that emergence. By the same token, haunting can take place only when there is "the possibility of its internal eruption and interruption within and as a condition of a familiar, everyday place and space" (Wolfreys, 2002, p. 5). Displacing us "in those places where we feel most secure, most notably in our homes", haunting, Wolfreys elaborates, is indeed "nothing other than the destabilization of the domestic scene, as that place where we apparently confirm our identity, our sense of being, where we feel most at home with ourselves" (2002, p. 5).

As it marks "the 'gap' already there", the specter challenges and disrupts "a process of familiarization, of anthropomorphizing domestication" occurring when something is being seen or perceived. "Despite the apparent fact of perception", the specter's "estranging materiality", Wolfreys states, "persists in its disturbance even though we can only acknowledge its effect at the limit of comprehension" (2002, p. 6). As a result, that familiarized and domesticated perception turns out to be distorted and hence no longer valid or reliable. The specter can appear anywhere since that which is "seen" or perceived is automatically familiarized. By being out of place yet "as much at home within the architectural space as we are", the specter makes everywhere "available for the event of haunting" (2002, p. 6). This specter is, Wolfreys continues, "incorporated into the very economy of dwelling, even as its otherness both exceeds and serves in the determination of the identity of place" (2002, p. 7).

Observably, while tracing "the 'architecture' of every form, everything we understand as 'reality', whether it be that of the house, the town, the novel, subjectivity or being", the specter actually lays bare nothing other than "the alterity within subjectivity" and suggests "a departure" from within "the apparent familiarity" (Wolfreys, 2002, p. 6, 12, 19). It can be seen that the specter, despite being an

indicator of the alterity or otherness, is “neither absolutely singular nor completely obedient to the laws of the form from which it departs” (2002, p. 19). This, Wolfreys propounds, is “what makes that which haunts so haunting, so uncanny” for it permits the disruptive operation “from within the most habitual, accustomed structures” (p. 19). Concomitantly, the specter points to “an inescapable condition of the forms which we inhabit, literally or metaphorically, which we need to get along, at home, at work, and in the ways in which we make sense of ourselves in relation to the world” (Wolfreys, 2002, p. 6). As Wolfreys notes, “where we live, where we are supposedly at home, is in ourselves, and yet being is inescapably a haunted house, constituted structurally only through the phantom nothing and its constant, unending returns” (2002, p. 18).

By and large, the Freudian uncanny and the Derridean spectral are analogous in many aspects. In terms of the concept, both of them theoretically predicated on and plays with the slippage within “the homely” – a familiar domestic scene – including other comparable structures such as one’s subjectivity, being, or even reality. Pointing to the unfamiliar or “unhomely” already within the familiar, the uncanny and the spectral rely not only on their own strangeness or estranging quality but also on the power of doubling and repetition which enhance their “ability to disturb”. As “an uncanny pair which double and repeat each other”, doubling and repetition place a specific stress on the iterability of the uncanny and the spectral (Fisher, 2016, p. 9).

Visibly invisible, the uncanny and the spectral, with their estranging or defamiliarizing effects, upset the familiarizing process imposed upon that which is visible to the subject, and, in turn, defy the structure’s familiarized and simplified representation as whole, united, and secure. As a result, they unveil a latent disruptive structure inside every existing architecture. In both the uncanny and the spectral process, the feeling of structural undecidability – uncanny or haunting sensation – is aroused when the subject, facing the uncanny or the spectral, realizes the emergence of the strange within the familiar and intimate setting. This particular feeling, therefore, induces other unpleasant affective responses, for instance, fear, anxiety, or uncertainty. By drawing our attention to the gaps or openings hidden in a certain structure, the uncanny and the spectral raise our awareness of the alterity or the

otherness within, as well as of the structure's unseen complexity. In this way, they challenge us to alter a way we look at our homes, subjectivity, being, and reality. As a result, the possibility of reinterpretation and reformation is suggested. These resemblances between the Freudian uncanny and the Derridean spectral lead to Wolfreys' contention that "the uncanny is not merely a category in its own right but is itself another name, an image without image perhaps, for spectrality and haunting" (2002, p. 15). Conversely, Derrida's specter, in many circumstances, can be treated as or contemplated through the perspective of the strangely familiar or the uncanny.

These theoretical backgrounds of spectrality and haunting help elucidate the process in which the specters of "nature" unsettlingly challenge the characters' perception and force them to acknowledge "nature" as complicatedly ambivalent. Through this process of haunting, the characters face the limitation of their own perception and knowledge, as well as their inability to control or surpass nature which leads them into the difficult situations they cannot escape from.

1.3.3 Shakespeare's Ghosts

In addition to the previous background, the studies of Shakespeare and his ghosts are worth looking at. As implied by Derrida and his spectral interpretation of the ghost of Hamlet's father, Shakespeare and his ghosts continue to haunt western culture. "Central not only to English Studies but also to recent, more subversive, theoretical approaches to literature – new historicism, deconstruction, feminism, and psychoanalysis", Shakespeare's plays prove to be more haunting than ever. Recurringly, they appear in "these pages of many familiar ghosts of poststructuralism – Freud, Lacan, Derrida, Marx, de Man, and Nietzsche – alongside Thomas More, Samuel Johnson, A.C. Bradley, and Superman comic books" (Garber, 2010, p. xxiii). Curious about "the uncanny extent to which these writers are themselves haunted by Shakespeare", Marjorie Garber tries to in her book, *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers: Literature as Uncanny Causality*, investigates how "Shakespearean texts – and especially the most canonical texts of Shakespearean tragedy – have mined themselves into the theoretical speculations that have dominated our present discourses, whether in literature, history, psychoanalysis, philosophy, or politics" (2010, pp. xxiii-xxiv). Seeing them as uncanny, Garber maintains that Shakespeare's ghosts are surrounded by the aura that precisely recall what Freud's terms as "that

sense of helplessness sometimes experienced in dreams” for they are “always already somewhere else, always already gone, and yet, at the same time, always just around the corner” (p. xxiv). Apart from the ghosts in *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, Garber includes “other specters” – “Richard III, King Lear, Shylock”, together with “a host of silenced women from Cordelia to Sycorax, and Shakespeare himself” (p. xxiv). Accenting that her essays are “about ghosts, and about writing”, Garber explores such a relationship through the act of writing – “a sleight of hand through which the dead hand of the past reaches over to our side of the border”, through which ghosts – Shakespeare and his ghostly texts – can continue their haunting as “signs of the lostness and unrecoverability of origins” (pp. xxv-xxvi). This book, Garber encapsulates, enquires into “the uncanny connection between Shakespeare’s propensity to write ghosts and his continuing capacity to write us” (2010, p. xxvi).

Concerning himself only with “the disembodied spirits of dead persons voluntarily returning in order to influence the living”, Jump pays attention to how three key topics: the ghosts’ “objective existence outside the imaginations” of the characters; the similarities and differences between Shakespearean ghosts and other “theatrical ghosts of their time and place”; the textual functions of the ghosts in the plays. As he details the hallucinatory nature of other Shakespearean ghosts, Jump highlights the ghost Hamlet’s father as the most divergent owing to its interactions with other characters beside Hamlet (1970, pp. 339-340). In comparing Shakespeare’s ghosts with those of Seneca, Jump discovers that Shakespeare’s ghosts, to a certain extent, varies from the traditional Senecan models in spite of their “interest in revenge” or retribution. The brevity of their rhetoric and their reticent gestures account for their variations. Correspondingly, the functions of Shakespeare’s ghosts are different from those in the Senecan tradition. “They do not as a rule directly influence the course of events” (pp. 343, 345). The creative variations of Shakespeare’s ghosts, Jump contends, can also be attributed to Shakespeare’s understanding of the audience’s background or “position with regard to ghosts”, which, in turn, enable him “to draw on a variety of sources for his powerful and moving presentation of his ghosts (p. 350).

In “Spirits, Ghosts and Gods in Shakespeare”, Kristian Smidt provides an entire complete list of apparitional, supernatural, magical, and godly figures. One by

one, Smidt reviews how each of them: is shaped by the notable impactful events in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; alludes to or is inspired by other early modern texts such as literatures, history chronicles, and treatises; and their outstanding characteristics and general significances as characters to the overall plot development; reflects Shakespeare's changes of beliefs and perceptions. Finally, Smidt groups these supernatural figures into three categories: spirits, ghosts, gods, which, perhaps, inform Shakespeare's growth or experimental attempts as a playwright (1996, pp. 422-438).

Except that of Garber, the rest of the critical readings of Shakespearean specters cited here do not really participate in the debate of spectrality and haunting. Many readings betray a certain interpretive pattern through which figurative or metaphorical uses and functions of the ghosts are primarily focused on. Some pay attention only to ghosts, apparitions, spirits, or supernatural beings and choose not to take into account other abstract figures that are, sometimes, even more spectral than the rest. Among them, merely a few devote entire works to Shakespeare's ghosts.

Notably, Garber's inclusion of "other specters" broadens our scope of the spectral figures. Likewise, the "specters of nature" protest against how the spectral is often restricted to the figures whose ghostliness or inhumanity is expressly manifested – the deceased, the apparitional, the fantastical, the magical, or supernatural. Here, the specters assume a shape of "nature", which is as intangible as those figures. Perceptible only through their effects of haunting, the "specters of nature", I would argue, sneakily roams about the constructed and complicated narrative network of unnaturalness and naturalness in which every mad character in the three tragedies is entangled whether consciously or unconsciously. Through their encounters with the "specters of nature", these mad characters are forced to confront their own limitations and powerlessness as their misperceptions are laid bare. Consequently, the characters become aware of the inescapable circumstances they embroil themselves in.

1.4 Madness: Ideas and Influences

To see how the haunting relationship between the specters of "nature" and madness is formed, we should, at least, survey the ideas of madness, especially those in Shakespeare's time.

From Polonius's remark, "Mad I call it. To define true madness / What is't but to be nothing else but mad" (*Hamlet* 2.2.92-93), the enigmatic nature of "madness" is observable. Due to its mystery and relation to humans' lives or experiences, "madness" has long been discussed, conceptualized and theorized in an academic circle.

1.4.1 Foucault's Theory of Madness and the "Ship of Fools"

According to *Madness: A Brief History*, Roy Porter suggests a long existence of "madness", stating that it "may be as old as mankind", since its origin can be traced back to the Stone Age when skulls were "trepanned" (2002, p. 10). This long-standing history of "madness" is probed into by Michel Foucault who, in his attempt to define "madness" and gives justice to those who are oppressed by being diagnosed as madmen, writes a book, *Histoire de la Folie*. Its first English-translated version is known as *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* which is, in fact, "based on an abridged French edition from which roughly 300 pages had been removed". Therefore, *History of Madness* is a belated full and complete translation of what Foucault writes about madness at that time. Concisely introduced by Khalfa as "an analysis of the history of madness considered as a cultural, legal, political, philosophical and then medical construct, from the Renaissance to the beginning of the nineteenth century", Foucault's *Histoire de la Folie*, as well as the two English-translated versions, is indisputably influential as it establishes a whole new set of discourses on madness (Foucault, 2006, pp. xviii-xiv).

Assertively announcing that "we have yet to write the history of that other form of madness", Foucault tries to expose that other form "by which men, in an act of sovereign reason, confine their neighbors, and communicate and recognize each other through the merciless language of non-madness". To put it another way, he wants to explore the way in which "Reason" and "Madness" come to be treated as dichotomous, including the way in which this dichotomy prompts the construction of social apparatus that permits or advocates the expulsion and containment of the "mad" (Foucault, 1965, p. ix, 2006, p. xxvii). Before providing more details on how Reason and Madness are situated so far apart from each other in the Age of Reason, Foucault mentions the long of continuation of "the game of exclusion" in which those who are

labelled as social outcasts take their turns playing. Prior to madmen, the role of the socially rejected in this game is taken by “the leper”, and, after the leper, this role can be “played by the poor and by the vagrant, by prisoners and by the ‘alienated’”. As long as these structures of this game remains, Foucault maintains, it “would continue, in a radically different culture and with a new meaning, but remaining essentially the major form of a rigorous division, at the same time social exclusion and spiritual reintegration” (*History of Madness*, 2006, p. 6). Akin to Foucault’s observation here, Porter marks how “all societies judge some people mad” is, indeed, “part of the business of marking out the different, deviant, and perhaps dangerous” (2002, p. 62).

The first image of madness that Foucault describes as influential to the conception of madness in many periods from the medieval to the early modern is the “Ship of Fools” which, in fact, refers to “ships of pilgrimage, highly symbolic ships filled with the senseless in search of their reason”. Because “a place of pilgrimage” comes to be understood as that of “confinement”, this image of the ship connotes how “the departure of the mad belonged with other rituals of exile”. This banishment to “a holy land where madness awaited its deliverance” through “enforced navigation” – rigorous division and absolute Passage unmistakably affirms “the liminal situation of the mad in medieval society”. As they later “take on a new importance for the ambiguousness of their role as both threat and derision” – “the vertiginous unreason of the world, and the shallow ridiculousness of men”, “madness and the figure of the madman” transform the ship full of them into “a symbol of a sudden unease that appears on the horizon of European culture towards the end of the Middle Ages” (2006, pp. 10-13). After that, madness is entrusted to the realm of morality which prescribes its denouncement as “a general form of moral critique”. It, occasionally, is also perceived as indicative of “a difficult, hermetic, esoteric knowledge”. Already possessing the knowledge that is “inaccessible” and “fearsome”, the madmen, in “his innocent foolishness”, are capable of seeing “a whole, unbroken sphere”; in contrast, “men of reason and wisdom see only fragmentary figures that are all the more frightening for their incompleteness” (2006, pp. 13-19). These two dissimilar perceptions of madness, in turn, refashion the image of the “Ship of Fools”:

On the one side is the ship of fools, where mad faces slowly slip away into the night of the world, in landscapes that speak of strange alchemies of knowledge, of the dark menace of bestiality, and the end of time. On the other is the ship of fools that is merely there for the instruction of the wise, an exemplary, didactic odyssey whose purpose is to highlight faults in the human character. (Foucault, 2006, p. 26)

Noticeably, this ambiguousness of madness, though in different guises, is present in the two classical notions of madness – madness as “a form related to reason” and “a form of reason”. For madness as “a form related to reason”, madness and reason “enter into a perpetually reversible relationship” in which each of them implies and measures one another. “All madness has its own reason by which it is judged and mastered, and all reason has its madness in which it finds its own derisory truth”. In “this movement of reciprocal reference”, each of them “rejects the other” but, at the same time, “is logically dependent upon it” (Foucault, 2006, pp. 28-29). For madness as “a form of reason”, madness, “integral” to reason, acts as “either part of its secret strength, one of the moments of its manifestation, or a paradoxical form where reason becomes conscious of itself”. In this case, it “only has meaning or value in relation to the field of reason” (2006, p. 32). As seen, these two notions of madness offer two different versions of the correlation between madness and reason which complexifies their definitions and how both are commonly perceived:

On the one hand a ‘mad madness’ that turns its back on the madness that properly belongs to reason, and which through that rejection, redoubles its power, and through that redoubling falls into the simplest, most hermetic and most immediate forms of madness; and on the other hand a ‘wise madness’ which welcomes the madness of reason, listens to it, recognises its right of abode and allows itself to be penetrated by all its vivid power, thereby protecting itself from madness in a manner far more effective than any obstinate refusal, which is condemned to failure in advance. (Foucault, 2006, p. 35)

Such portrayals of the relationships between madness and reason in the classical age accounts for how the experience of madness in the Renaissance period can be reckoned in two aspects: a critical and a tragic. Citing renown literary works of Shakespeare and others, Foucault elaborates how madness is understood as “a sort of knowledge, akin to some religious experience, that of a possible chaos of the world, obvious in particular in depictions of the apocalypse”. Hence, the mad is “those who have the tragic experience of possible worlds which constantly menace the real one and of the essential frailty of human institutions”. Perceptive of disruptive forces that “threaten the great organisation of the world and of humanity” from within, the mad “seem to reveal and belong to the limits of our world” (Foucault, 2006, p. xvi). This, Foucault assumes, corresponds to how the mad literary characters are surrounded by the tragic eventualities and reveal what the “multiple presence” of madness in “the literature of the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century” appear to convey. Another emerging form of the consciousness of the mad is a critical one (2006, p. 35). Different from its tragic counterparts, the critical consciousness signals what is tackled by several humanist authors – “a discrepancy between what men are and what they pretend to be”. This consciousness is a sort of wisdom that enables man to see his own reason as madness, when compared to the divine boundless one or “an absolute truth”. That is to say, “man is urged to embrace only his own madness: when measured against the truth of essences and God, human order is nothing but madness” (pp. xvii, 29-30). These two different visions of madness denote experiences in which “man was confronted with his moral truth, the laws of human nature and human truth” and realizes “a presence unreason within reason”. As Foucault summarizes, “behind the critical consciousness of madness in all its philosophical, scientific, moral and medicinal guises lurks a second, tragic consciousness of madness, which has never really gone away” (2006, p. 27).

1.4.2 Madness and Literary Representations

According to *Dionysus in Literature: Essays on Literary Madness*, “madness” in literature or “literary madness” functions as “a critical device” that enables an analysis of “madness” in relation to literature in three principal aspects: “mad” writers; “mad” characters; and “the critical method by which psychological terms from the field of medical madness are applied to literary madness” (Rieger,

1994, p. 5). Lillian Feder also joins this critical conversation of literary madness and psychology. In *Madness in Literature*, she pursues how “the treatment of madness in literature reflects human ambivalence towards the mind itself”, including how “recurrent literary representations of madness constitute a history of explorations of the mind in relation to itself, to other human beings, and to social and political institutions” (Feder, 1980, pp. 4-5). Thinking that “portrayals of madness convey in symbolic form human beings’ preoccupation with their own mental functioning, with the enormous range of psychic experience”, Feder views literature as an abundant source of such portrayals that “provides remarkable clues to the mental processes that produces the actual symbolizations of the psychotic” (1980, pp. 4, 6-7).

Regarding the depictions of “madness” in literary texts, before the Greco-Roman period, “madness figures, usually as a fate or punishment, in early religious myths and in heroic fables” (Porter, 2002, p. 10). Later, in Greek tragedies, “madness” is portrayed as “a disruption of equilibrium” caused by “an alterity that destroys the harmony of social force” (Thiher, 1999, p. 30). Such portrayal is influenced by Plato’s four types of “divine madness” ruled by different deities and Hippocrates’ speculation on “the influence of blood, phlegm, cholera, and melancholy on physical disease”. Both ideas emphasize how “madness” or imbalance is produced by external forces (Mazzaro, 1985, p. 98).

1.4.3 Madness and Shakespeare

These concepts of “madness” persisted through the Middle Ages and were reconstructed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when “the discourse of madness gained prominence because it was implicated in the medical, legal, theological, political, and social aspects of the reconceptualization of the human” (Neely, 1991, pp. 317-318). In this period, the fascination with “madness” was manifested:

the treatises on the topic by Battie, Bright, Jorden, Wright, and Burton; in the theatrical representations of madness in the plays of Kyd, Shakespeare, Dekker, Middleton, Fletcher, and Webster; in the large numbers of patients who consulted such well-known doctors as Richard Napier and John Hall [...] with symptoms of mental distress; and in the

widespread references to and representations of Bethlem, or Bedlam, the popular name for Bethlehem Hospital, the main institution in England in this period which confined the insane. (p. 316)

The widespread and fundamental explanation of “madness” was based on Galen’s “theory of the four humours, blood, melancholy, choler and phlegm”, illustrating how the imbalance – excess or deficiency – of four humors affects the “humoral body” and results in both physical and mental illness including peculiar behaviors (Hodgkin, 2007, p. 42; Mazzaro, 1985, p. 98). Neely brings up how “the traditional humoral discourses” became a basis for critics and writers to “rethink the parameters of the human by reimagining madness”, leading to the transformation of “the discourses of distraction” in the Renaissance (2004, pp. 1-2). Through the theatre where mad characters are presented as affected by their own bodily humors, the human is redefined as “a secular subject, cut off from the supernatural and incomprehensibly unstable and permeable, containing in itself a volatile mix of body, mind, emotions, and soul, of warring and turbulent elements” (2004, p. 66). This, in a way, intimates the interrelation between human and nature at that time when “the various ways of conceptualizing the container of the human body” profoundly influence “the ways of conceptualizing the container of the cosmos”. Perceived as interpenetrating “with the environment” or nature, human’s “humoral body” implies the cosmic container as “likewise porous, mutable, and fluid” (Poole, 2011, pp. 14-15).

The spreading prevalence of “madness” in the Renaissance is also characterized by Foucault as a “phenomenon”. Replacing leprosy, madness becomes a “new obsession”, a new object of fear which elicits “similar reactions of division, exclusion and purification”. Nonetheless, before it is “brought under control towards the mid-seventeenth century”, madness is “linked obstinately to many of the major experiences of the Renaissance” (Foucault, 2006, p. 8). Audiences in this era were familiar with “the social codes and conventions of how a mad person might look and behave” and would be able to recognize “madness”. Represented by “mad” characters in the plays and other literary works, such “madness” is merely “a particular ensemble of symbols” or a “historically specific and politically resonant” code. Still, it

significantly reflects how Renaissance people perceive or imagine madness (Salkeld, 1993, p. 3).

Among countless Renaissance representations of “madness”, those in Shakespeare’s plays are deemed the most complex and memorable ones. As an early modern playwright, Shakespeare, who realizes the popularity of madness at that time, “invented for it a new italicized language and reiterated and developed its representations through three tragedies” (Neely, 2004, p. 65). This clarifies Foucault’s statement that “madness occupies an extreme position” in Shakespeare (Foucault, 2006, p. 38). Obviously, “madness” is one of the most popular themes that Shakespearean critics and readers have been engaged with.

In analyzing “madness” in *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, not only the abnormal behaviors of “mad” characters but also the causes of such behaviors should be considered. Although these three plays portray “madness” differently, it can be observed that the mad characters similarly cross paths with the “specters of nature” whose haunting affects the characters’ behaviors and instigates the development of “madness”. Inversely, it suggests that only those who are mad can recognize the specters as such.

1.5 Thesis Framework and Outline

1.5.1 Research Gaps and Departures

After literature that has provided a necessary and useful background of the critical subjects and conversations I hope to engage in this thesis, I would like to inform some departures or gaps that allow this work to join and make its contribution to the already existing conversations of Shakespeare studies in connection with the studies of nature, spectrality, and madness.

Always playing with various meanings of words, Shakespeare ingeniously constructs a complex semantic and conceptual network within each of his literary pieces. His three tragedies: *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear*, are no exception. Shakespeare, in these three plays, obviously engages with the shifting definitions of “nature” – one of the most ambivalent words in the Western history. The ambiguous multivalence of the word “nature” is also highlighted by the deceptive polarization

between the word, “natural” and its supposed opposite, “unnatural”, which, instead of drawing a clear contrast, blurs their semantic opposition and, hence, adds more dimensions to the already complex conceptual and semantic network within the plays. As mentioned earlier in the literature review, the simple word “nature” is, by all means, problematic as it entails so many conceptual and theoretical complications. This problematic nature of “nature” proves to be even more jarring in the time of Shakespeare due to an incredible variety of theoretical ideas and conversations surrounding it. The three Shakespearean tragedies, by engaging with semantic and conceptual dimensions of “nature”, grapple with not only those problematic complications at that time but also unresolved ontological and epistemological questions about nature.

In spite of the richness of Renaissance conceptions of “nature”, the studies of the unnatural or that which is “against nature”, according to Puff, “did not become a stimulus for discussions of nature’s ambivalent intentions, the general applicability of ideas of natural law, or the ruptures between individual nature and human nature” (2004, p. 252). Even though “nature functioned as an argumentative weapon in the arsenal of early modern judiciary discipline”, tensions between several notions of nature, as well as between what exactly is “natural” and “unnatural”, “were often set aside and left unexplored”. Analogously, the “unnatural” often pales in comparison with its counterparts “natural” in Shakespearean studies. However, I would contend that the exploration of “nature” and the “unnatural” through the lens of its counterpart, the “unnatural”, actually leads to a refreshing and insightful reading of “nature”, as it resonates more clearly the complexities of “nature” and the “natural” through its simultaneous function of veiling and unveiling the underlying narrative network of “nature”.

In my observation, another significant gap in the Shakespearean studies of nature is that some critical works, mostly thematic ones, do not really take into account the actual environment or environmental circumstances of the time. Although I previously go through a lot of conceptual complications of “nature”, I maintain that the actual environment plays a very crucial part in shaping the Renaissance’s diverse perceptions of “nature”. By undermining the polarization between the “natural” and

the “unnatural”, my analysis challenges the discourses that promote the “natural” as good and denounce the “unnatural” as bad or evil.

Concerning the studies of spectrality and haunting, the inadequacy of the critical works that centers on the Renaissance literature is noticeable. Rather, most of recent available works focus on either the contemporary or the Victorian writings in relation to the themes such as: changing sense of space, time, and identity; violence and injustices; class, race, and gender; the writing of mourning, trauma, and memory, etc. Although “every period has its ghosts”, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are still quite neglected by scholars on spectrality (Derrida, 2006, p. 192, 241). Furthermore, the intersection between nature and spectrality is mentioned by just a few. Interested in the Anthropocene and “an awareness of the quasi-apocalyptic degree of environmental destruction, including its impact on the human population, reached in the twenty-first century”, those critics seem to ignore the fact that these themes of environmental awareness and destruction, in fact, are also present in the Renaissance literary texts, as evident in other ecocritical works (Lubkowitz, 2020, p.7).

The critical spectral reading that might lie closest to this work is Anneke Lubkowitz’s *Haunted Spaces in Twenty-First Century British Nature Writing* in which “the texts by Iain Sinclair, Robert Macfarlane, Kathleen Jamie and John Burnside counteract an understanding of nature as ‘empty’ space, cleared of social relations and conflict”. With the theory of space and “psychogeography”, the author examines how “the figure of haunting in these texts is implemented by a complex web of images and allusions to human presences which destabilize ‘natural’ space and thus perform a process of dismantling on the level of language and narrative” and propounds haunting as “a way of conveying the sociality and culturality of ‘natural’ space” (2020, p. 3).

Although Shakespeare’s works are viewed as already haunted, a number of the critical readings that interpret those works through the lens of spectrality is unexpectedly not that large. Several works tend to concentrate solely on ghosts or ghost-like supernatural characters such as the deceased Hamlet’s father, the murdered Banquo, and the weird sisters. Some often consider only the figurative functions of

those figures as a way to disclose or articulate the hidden secrets, traumas, history or narratives. This is quite restrictive for the Shakespeare studies of spectrality.

Nonetheless, from Wolfreys' notion of textual haunting and Garber's argument of "other specters", it can be seen that the specter is not limited to the figure of ghosts or ghostly characters in literary texts. Indeed, the specter takes on diverse shapes whether dead or alive, tangible or intangible, visible or invisible. It can be a social outcast, a person's memory, a place, or a voice. To put it another way, any elements of the text, from characters, settings and meanings of words to narratives and the textual format can become spectral. As seen, it is this more inclusive group of specters that the specters of "nature" join.

For me, "specters of nature" embodies and foregrounds the similarities between nature and the spectral. Protean, heterogeneous and multiple, the specter and nature both raise ontological and epistemological questions through their resistance to one's perception. More importantly, the specter's ability to haunt and to disturb within is particularly suitable for elucidating how "nature", through an intricate narrative network, operates in a deconstructive or, in other words, spectral manner. Therefore, I would like to propose the amalgamation of nature and the spectral – "specters of nature" – that haunt the mad characters in the three tragedies. In this sense, the "specters of nature" signify an interpretive possibility that leads to the critical reinterpretation of the characters' madness, as they offer a different explanation of those characters' psychological process and their descents into madness in terms of spectrality and haunting. As Wolfreys underscores, "the reading of spectrality, of haunting, of phantasmic and phantomatic effects addresses the way in which discourse in all its materiality achieves material effects" (2002, p. 20). This spectral reinterpretation of madness concerns how the "specters of nature", through haunting, provoke the feeling of undecidability and disturb the mind of those characters by pointing to their inability to break free from their uncanny relationship with "nature". Here, the haunting of the "specters of nature" is predicated on and hence attends to the complicated conceptual and semantic system underlying the Renaissance perceptions or understandings of "nature". This shows how the mad characters in the plays, as well as the people of Shakespeare's time, are haunted by the same "specters of nature". Operating "between the visible and invisible, between the living and the

dead, without residing or otherwise being assignable to any one location”, the specters of “nature” present nature as ambivalent and, in turn, expose the hidden narratives of the “natural” in which meanings, understandings and perceptions of the “natural” is constructed by defining against and blaming the “unnatural” (Wolfreys, 2002, p. 20). “The ghost, even when turned into a conceptual metaphor”, as del Pilar Blanco and Peeren stress, “remains a figure of unruliness pointing to the tangibly ambiguous” (2013, p. 9).

1.5.2 Theoretical Framework and Chapter Outline

In Shakespeare’s plays, madness “takes place in a dramatic development which pass through the phases of contradiction, uncertainty, and irrationality”. Unlike the comedies in which both madness and conflicts are resolved, his tragedies present how madness “perpetuates the crisis to death” (Salkeld, 1993, p. 2). Full of unnatural-induced disorders and confusions, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *King Lear* similarly portray how the “unnatural” instigates the perpetuation of crisis through which the haunting effects of the specters of “nature” can be seen. In this sense, it is this perpetuation that invites the specters of “nature” to the plays and, thus, links together the theme of madness and nature including the three plays. Unveiling nature and reality as complicatedly ambivalent, these specters prolong and aggravate the characters’ crisis, mostly of their own perception and understanding. Possessing all these elements, the chosen tragedies differentiate themselves from other Shakespeare’s plays. This explains the inclusion of *King Lear* – play without but not without a ghost. Discernibly, the spectral analysis I propose to pursue in my thesis allows us to form a new comparison and connection between the three tragedies in which the characters’ madness can be reinterpreted through the lens of spectrality and haunting.

This thesis contains five chapters. The first one is the introduction in which the arguments, aims, and objects of this study will be introduced, along with the literature review of the three main subjects I focus on: nature, specter, madness. The second chapter, “Committing the Unnatural” is a textual analysis of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, centering on two mad characters: Macbeth and his partner in crime, Lady Macbeth. the next chapter, “Contemplating the Unnatural” is a textual analysis of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* which revolves around two mad characters: Hamlet and his lovelorn lover, Ophelia. The last chapter, “Cursing the Unnatural and

Recognizing the Specters of Nature” is textual analysis of Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, concentrating on the sole mad character, King Lear in contrast to the fake one, Edgar and the wise fool. It also offers a conclusion of how the spectral reading of nature and madness connects together the three plays and enables the comparison between them, along with further suggestions about a future reading of nature, specter, and madness.

Taking an example from Edgar Knowlton’s *Nature and Shakespeare* and Raymond Williams’s analysis of the passage from King Lear in *Keywords*, my work focuses on both thematic or conceptual and environmental concerns in the chosen tragedies. However, this work is not eco-oriented since it does not motivate activism and offers presentist insight through which current environmental issues can be illuminated or informed by the Renaissance ones, and vice versa. Rather, it is a textual-oriented one that aims to interpret and analyze madness and its correlation with the “unnatural” – or the “natural” and “nature” – through the spectral lens. Consisting of different yet comparative textual analyses under the same thematic concerns, this thesis employs interdisciplinary approaches to investigate and interpret the entangled relationship between nature and madness in which the unnatural conjures up the specters whose haunting exposes “nature” as complicatedly ambivalent and drives the characters mad by pressing them to acknowledge and accept that ambivalence. Accordingly, the theoretical framework of my thesis is quite flexible.

In this work, I want to address the unseen conceptual and representational complexities surrounding the conceptualizations of “nature” in Shakespeare’s time and foreground how such complexities prompt the haunting of the “specters of nature” which, in turn, leads the characters into eventual madness. In response to what several critics have suggested about by which means we can talk about “nature”, this work implies that we may speak of “nature” not by representational or gestural means, but by spectral ones. I also hope to motivate future critical analyses and conversations that allow us to rethink the connection between these three main topics: nature, specter, and madness in other literary works.

CHAPTER 2
“COMMITTING THE UNNATURAL”:
AN ANALYSIS OF SHAKESPEARE’S *MACBETH*

2.1 On the Blasted Heath: Landscapes of *Macbeth*

Starting with the appearance of the supernatural beings, the first scene of *Macbeth* gathers several elements essential to this interpretative reading. At the very beginning, “thunder and lightning” (*Macbeth* 1.1 sd) set up a sense of foreboding and a disastrous ambience for the whole play as they accompany the witches’ entrance. Jarringly, these symbolic auditory and visual signals introduce the unnatural and accentuate its association with disorder. Recognizable as stage effects conventionally employed to build “a supernatural context” for theatrical production, thunder and lightning entail a “shifting body of superstitions”. Even if the link between these dreadful natural phenomena and the supernatural power can be traced back to the medieval period, the belief that the witches is capable of conjuring a storm along with thunder and lightning became more popular during King James’s reign (Jones, 2015, pp. 10-11, 89-90; Thomson, 1999, pp. 11-14). Outstanding for its image of “violence and volume”, thunder can be seen as hostile to both the characters and the audience. It can cause temporary deafness or mishearing with an ear-splitting noise and also forecasts an even more “foul weather” – a rain and a thunderstorm. Though unheard in 1.1 and 1.3, this auditory violence remains impactful to the characters. Macbeth’s observation of this unforeseen bewildering climate, “So foul and fair a day I have not seen” (*Mac* 1.3.38), here, is illustrative. In this light, thunder acts partly as a catalyst for the characters’ sensory disorders, conducive to their misperceptions and confusion. Likewise, lightning startles both the playgoers and the characters with its vivid visual of a sudden flash of light. This forceful bolt, Jones writes, “has a range of extremes, from the frightening to the utterly destructive”. Its tearing and penetrative strike could inflict ruination including serious injuries to those who have been hit such as burns, ruptures or fractures, acoustic and ocular trauma, sensory impairment, cardiopulmonary arrest, confusion and memory loss, etc. (Gatewood and Zane, 2004,

pp. 382-97; Jones, 2015, pp. 29-30, 52-58; Ritenour et al., 2008, pp. 587-91). In short, this blinding streak can be eye-damaging and fatal.

Auditorily and visually violent, thunder and lightning, thus, establish not only an unsettling supernatural context but also a “sense of confusion and paradox” which resonates in the witches’ famous chant, “Fair is foul, and foul is fair,” (*Mac* 1.1.9) at the end of 1.1 (Jones, 2015, pp. 10-11, 93). Indeed, these foreboding natural phenomena effectuate the main characters’ sensory disorders leading to the destruction of their usual senses. They can cause, literally and metaphorically, blindness and deafness, resulting in Macbeth’s misperception, disorientation, discomposure and derangement. Here, the word, “senses” include both basic human senses directly related to the characters’ perceptibility and their commonsense or sound judgment. This visual and auditory cue, moreover, forewarns the audience of the upcoming storms – the captain’s natural storm in 1.2, the witches’ supernatural storm in 1.3, and the play’s storm of unnatural events and actions with an emphasis on its rapid and hectic sequences – and build up our expectations about how the characters will face up to their wrecking effects. In other words, with rumbling noises and flashing lights, they render the storms as “necessarily vicious before the effects are seen or heard” (Jones, 2015, p. 29). As a common metaphor for disaster and misfortune, thunder and lightning “generates fears and superstitions” because the erratic weather is normally, in Western culture, believed to be instigated by the wrathful divine to punish “hubris human” or the malefic supernatural to harmfully prank naive victims. Accordingly, they are employed to herald the entrance of the supernatural beings or the witches and imply the grave punishment for the Macbeths’ “unnatural” brutality and overambition (Chiari, 2019, p. 1). Exhibiting the powerful force of nature, the uproarious storm-harbingers also remind the early modern audience of the direful and severe climatic conditions they live in and, therefore, provoke, what Gwilym Jones calls, “environmental irony” which is “the unnerving intrusion of real weather into the playwright’s fictional world”. In this case, the audience’s fear of thunder and lightning dwells in the “blurring of distinctions between real and imagined threats” (Chiari, 2019, pp. 3-4, 18; Jones, 2015, pp. 20-21). Nevertheless, since only the spectators or readers could see “thunder and lightning” or the grim forewarnings of those vicious storms in 1.1, the environmental

irony is intensified from the play's outset. Compared to the knowing audience, the characters are mentally and physically unprepared for the imminent storms representing disorder and disaster. Thereby, the storms will be unexpectedly sudden and extremely nerve-racking for them. Thunder and lightning prove to be all the more disconcerting for people in the early seventeenth century as they evoked the 1605's Gunpowder Plot (Hunt, 2005, pp. 381-83). At that time, the staged thunder and lightning were created by cannonball rolling and firework detonation (Harris, 2007, pp. 466-67; Jones, 2015, p. 102). This likens the Macbeths' treason against King Duncan to the failed assassination plotting against King James (Herman, 2014, p. 114; Holderness, 2021, pp. 31-35; Holderness and Loughrey, 2011, pp. 43-44). The smoke of the detonated fireworks, additionally, enhance the theatrical experience of the early modern theatergoers by offering a strong olfactory and visual byproduct that collaborates with the witches' remark about "the fog and filthy air" (1.1.10) (Harris, 2007, pp. 466-67; Poole, 2011, pp. 137-38). Coherent with the theme of confusion and sensory disorders, this fog-like smoke intimates how the main characters, afterwards, are befogged by the "unnatural" leading to their misjudgments. Blinded by their overconfident and overambitious determination, the Macbeths' visions or judgments, in particular, are foggier than others.

Overall, thunder and lightning are spectralized phenomena, grounding the audience in not only the theme of unnatural-driven disorder and ambivalence-induced insanity but also the effectuality of spectrality and haunting. Verbally reinvoked by one of the weird sisters, "In thunder, lighting, or in rain?" (1.1.2), the already-happened thunder and lightning are projected onto the future as a recurring temporal marker for the witches' next gatherings and their anticipated meetings with Macbeth. Indicative of the impending storms and their catastrophic consequences, these dramatic effects draw our attention to their portentous manifestation and the storms' absence in the present. Mixing up the past, the present, and the future, they disjoint the narrative's linear and chronological timeline and, simultaneously, confuse the temporal orientation of the characters and the spectators. Reminiscent of themselves and the storms elsewhere, thunder and lightning also infuse disturbing supernatural and historical nuances into the play, haunting the audience through their familiarity with the Renaissance harsh and volatile climate, the infamous Catholic treason plot

against the Protestant monarch in 1605, King James's account of the witch-raised storms and the evil supernatural power in *Daemonologie* (Chiari, 2019, pp. 3-4; Estok, 2011, p. 5; Floyd-Wilson, 2006, pp. 143, 146-47; Jones, 2015, pp. 89-90; Laoutaris, 2008, p. 207; Usongo, 2021, pp. 33-35). Perceived as "unnatural" in the play, these natural phenomena with their supernatural overtones blur the boundary between the "unnatural" and the "natural" and, by that, bring to the fore the underlying ambivalence of "nature" previously unknown to the characters. Reverberating through the unnatural "foul weather"—especially the witches' hurly-burly storm, they, in this regard, insinuate the characters' disoriented perplexities when confronting the specters of "nature" whose repeated appearances point out the ambivalence of "nature" as the hidden gap in which the limit of the characters' perception can be recognized.

In addition to amplifying the ominous and mysterious atmosphere of the play, the abrupt entrance of the three witches foregrounds this drama as explicitly motivated by the "unnatural", whose intricate intertwinement leaves a gap for the haunting emergences of the specters of "nature". As a bizarre group of characters that entirely manipulate the first scene, the weird sisters show their supernatural and prophetic power before the actual prophecy about Macbeth's future is given in 1.3. From their private conversation, it can be observed that the place, "Upon the heath" (*Mac* 1.1.6) and the time of their meeting with Macbeth, "When the hurly-burly's done, / When the battle's lost, and won / That will ere the set of sun." (*Mac* 1.1.3-5) are deliberately specified. Spoken of in riddling rhymes, the location and the time of the encounter cooperates with the play's motif of ambivalence and disorder suggested by the unnatural speakers – the witches – and their stormy unnatural accompaniment – "thunder and lightning" including the scene's closing lines, "Fair is foul, and foul is fair, / Hover through the fog and filthy air." (*Mac* 1.1.9-10). Discernibly, the hurly-burly is in an in-between state because nobody, even the audience, know if it is still happening or has already finished. Every battle always has its winners or losers when it comes to an end. "Being neither totally dark or completely lit", the time just before sunset or twilight is the most ambiguous time of the day, denoting both a waning of daylight and an approach of darkness (National Weather Service, 2023).

Viewed as “the sinister abode of witches and fortune-telling vagrants” in Shakespeare’s time, the heath, likewise, is a twilight zone with unique topographical features. Dominated by “a few hardy, low-growing” shrubs, this natural landscape of Scotland is often depicted as uninvitingly strange and dangerously desolate. The travelers who are unacquainted with the heath can find its bare and treeless wilderness deceptive as they can run into unusual terrain and random climate (Borlik, 2023, p. 20). As seen, the time and the location of their encounter reflect the spatiotemporal ambiguities that functions to aggravate a sense of paradox and bafflement.

Notwithstanding the fact that they can be found in a general domestic area, the witches’ familiars – Gray-Malkin and Paddock – are as well oddly ambiguous. Although a black cat might be more evil-looking than the gray one, this grayish color of Gray-Malkin is a mix between black and white signifying an obscurity comparable to the “fog and filthy air”. As “a general name for a cat” in dialect, Malkin is a mocking term for an old untidy woman, or “a woman of the lower classes” normally a servant or a kitchen maid (Harper, 2023; Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2023). The witches, commonly, are believed to be one of these women. Neither an aquatic nor terrestrial, this amphibian Paddock is a toad with lots of wart that may look like those of their supernatural partners. In an ecocritical aspect, “the fog and filthy air” that the three witches hover through evidently alludes to the widespread urban air pollution resulting from the Londoners’ massive coal burning (Hiltner, 2011, pp. 2, 9-10; R. Martin, 2015, pp. 2-3). Considering its supernatural trace, Gray-Malkin and Paddock, as well as the smoky and foul-smelling air, insinuate the encroachment of the peculiar or unfamiliar on the familiar domesticity.

Notably, the witches’ clairvoyant ability is implied through their question, “In thunder, lightning, or in rain?” (*Mac* 1.1.2), showing their prevision of the weather in the future. Foreseeing that the battle will end before the sunset, the witches also know the time when Macbeth and Banquo will be traveling across the heath to return to the castle. Composed of three, the weird sisters seem to be the Fate incarnate, representing the past, the present, and the future (Albright 232; Thompson 3; Whalen 59-61). However, it will unravel later that they are merely imposters trying to impersonate their masters – Hecate and Fate – in order to fool the characters. Similar to thunder and lightning, the three witches project themselves onto the future,

conversing about when and where they shall meet again (Varnado, 2017, pp. 180-81). When they reappear in 1.3, they carry with them the past in which the future events are already predicted. This uncannily disrupts the linearity of the play's narrative and replaces it with a new temporal sequence of the repetitive cycle. As it shatters the coordination of time and space, the repetitiveness of events produces a sense of disorientation significant for the process of haunting (Poole, 2011, p. 140).

To sum up, "the opening of the play sets the stage for a disordered space-time" (Poole, 2011, p. 140). By displaying the jumbling of "time, space, atmospheric conditions and planetary motions", this important scene explicates how a sense of chaos and paradox is engendered by the "unnatural" (2011, p. 140). Besides their obvious function to construct the ambience of dark mystification and menacing doom, it can be seen that the "unnatural" in 1.1 – the witches and the stormy weather – including the heath unearth the ambivalence of "nature" through their embroilments in diverse backgrounds such as the supernatural, historical, and ecocritical, etc. Such embroilments enable the disruptive intrusion of the strange or "unnatural" into the accustomed or "natural". Moreover, with their intimation of the repetitiveness of events and the doubling of paradoxical ambiguities, these "unnatural" creatures and climate preliminarily elucidate the process and effects of haunting. Analogous to the supernatural agents of the "unnatural", the specters of "nature" have already emerged and begin their haunting despite the unawareness of the characters.

2.2 Unnatural Bodies

In 1.2, the repetitive cycle of events is implied by how Macdonald and Thane of Cawdor's mutiny will be reenacted by Macbeth. Through a loud and boisterous boom of a battle and a military upheaval including the captain's anecdote of the "shipwrecking storms and direful thunders" (*Mac* 1.2.26), the unnatural tumultuous weather in 1.1 are still perceptible, suggesting the continuation of unnatural-induced confusion and disorder (Jones, 2015, p. 87). Swarmed upon by "The multiplying villainies of nature" (*Mac* 1.2.11), Macdonald can be deemed as an embodiment the "unnatural" characterized by "evil" behaviors or misdeeds that violate the existing social morality and authority, which, in this case, King Duncan is

representative. By killing Macdonald, Macbeth directly takes on his role of a rebel and an actor of the “unnatural”. Similarly, Macbeth assumes and fulfills the role of “that most disloyal traitor” – the late Thane of Cawdor – a military revolt’s conspirator whom Macbeth inherits his title by “bloody execution”. The news of the late Thane of Cawdor’s disloyalty and death is addressed, by Lennox, as “things strange”, implying that his traitorous act is conceived as “unnatural”. To put it another way, his “unnatural” betrayal is unsettlingly strange as it causes a disturbance within the discursive structure of the “natural” which emphasizes trust and loyalty as vital social virtues.

Reporting the situation of the battle between Macbeth and Macdonald to King Duncan, the wounded captain serves to usher in more graphic imagery of death and bloodshed linked with the “unnatural deeds” Macbeth will later perpetrate. His mentioning of “bloody man”, “quarry”, “bloody execution”, “reeking wounds” and “gashes” tellingly foreshadows Macbeth’s “bloody business” that many characters fall victim to. In addition, the relationship between predatory Macbeth and his unsuspecting victims is portrayed by the captain’s metaphor, “as sparrows, eagles, or the hare, the lion” (*Mac* 1.2.35). By comparing the “unnatural” act of murders with the “natural” predator-prey relationships, this particular metaphor is suggestive of the ambivalence of “nature” through which the line between the “unnatural” and the “natural” becomes less distinguished. Moreover, the captain’s citation of the folk wisdom about the calm before the storm insinuates that the current peaceful state might be superficial or unreliable since a greater upheaval often follows the subdued one:

As whence the sun ‘gins his reflection,
 Shipwrecking and direful thunders,
 So from that spring, whence comfort seemed to come
 Discomfort swells: (*Mac* 1.2.25-28)

In spite of being a predictable phenomenon, the captain’s seasonal storm represents ecological instability familiar to the early modern audience. Coincident with “the sun ‘gins his reflection”, the storm, in fact, can be regarded as “unnatural” owing to its portrayal of the state of turmoil and its relation to the supernatural storm

in 1.3. Here, Shakespeare puts an emphasis on how the coincidence between the turbulences in “nature” leads to nothing but a twofold calamity. Its violent impact is visible in the direful weather and the shipwreck. As seen, it is the weather and the shipwreck that link this equinoctial storm to the witches’ tempest. During the equinox, the globe remains half dark and half light. Comparable to that between the twilight’s daylight and darkness in 1.1, the contrast between the two hemispheres also suggests the intermediateness and uncertainty of the current events. Correspondingly, the captain’s another analogy, “As cannons overcharged with double cracks, / So they doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe” (*Mac* 1.2.37-38) envisages how a twofold destruction arises from the doubling or multiplication of conflicting and chaotic situations. The destruction as such can be self-destructive for an overloaded canon can be exploded at the one loading them.

Representing “unnatural disruptions”, the weird sisters and their hurly-burly storm are again cued by thunder in 1.3 (Thomson, 1999, p. 11). Preceding the conjuration of the storm, the analogy between “a rat without a tail” and one of the witches depicts the witches as oddly and sneakily malignant. The rat’s deformity or its taillessness mark itself as the unnatural other among its natural mischief. Identically, the witches’ otherworldly appearance, verbalized by Banquo in 1.3.39-46, exhibit their unnatural otherness. Owing to the English Renaissance understanding that they are “disease vectors” born out of filthiness and putrefaction, the connection between rodents and witches becomes more prominent during “the height of one of London’s plague seasons” circa 1605 to 1607. Playing “an important role in linking environmental and supernatural accounts of disease”, rats, Cole expounds, “bear an analogous and even homologous relationship to witches” in “their obscure origins” and in “their ability to inflict harm on the human population both directly and indirectly” (2010, p. 65). Regarded as “the Pests” in King James’ words, witches and rodents come to emblemize the advent of pestilence which features a macabre assembly of “disease, plague, and famine”. This concurs with the turbulences, especially ecological and epidemiological, in the sixteenth and seventeenth century England, for instance, “a period of climatological instability”, several bouts of dearth and contagion, along with pervasive miasmatic air pollution (2016, p. 18). To put it simply, the witches, the rats, the “fog and filthy air” and the erratic tempestuous

weather in *Macbeth* are significantly correlated through the early modern discourse of plague and the supernatural (2016, pp. 36-37). Apart from this, there is a widely held belief that witches, possessing shapeshifting ability, can easily transform themselves into “some small creatures” or rats with the aid of the “inspissated” or thickened air, akin to that which the weird sisters appear out of and vanish into. Since a witch in disguise of a rodent can be singled out by its lack of a body part – specifically a tail according to “Elizabethan folklore”, the “rat without a tail” in the play is unmistakably a shapeshifted witch. On these grounds, the analogy between the tailless rat and the witches in *Macbeth* introduces an imagery of infectious illness and epidemic calamity. In this sense, it clarifies how *Macbeth* is affected and afflicted by his exposure to the “unnatural” in a form of the witches, the weather, the air and the “blasted heath”. Clearly, the “unnatural” acts as, to borrow Cole’s phrases, “both carriers and symptoms of a mysterious and destructive mode of contact” (2010, pp. 65-66, 2016, pp. 2, 19, 36-42). Regardless of its connection with witches and pestilence, the rodent without its tail barely keeps its sense of balance and direction (Siegel, 1970, p. 101; Wallace et al., 2006, p. 206; Le Bars and Cadden, 2005, p. 72). In this light, the tail-amputated rat resembles both the “tempest-tossed” sailor and disoriented *Macbeth*. Like Gray-Malkin and Paddock, rats can be seen generally in a domestic and metropolitan area. However, these creatures show up as extremely disgusting due to its association with the supernatural, disease, dirtiness, scarcity and foul air. Displaying a complicated entanglement of the natural, the supernatural and the unnatural, this tailless rat, as the unnatural analog of the three witches, proffers an insidious and plaguelike version of the obtrusion of the unwholesome or the “unnatural” into the wholesome or the “natural”. By that, it undermines the simple division between the “unnatural” and the “natural”, hinting at the ambivalence of “nature” through which the specters of “nature” can manifest itself to both the characters and the spectators.

Distinctly, the witches’ account of how they fool the sailor encapsulates how *Macbeth*’s exposure to the “unnatural” foments his misperception of the ambivalence of “nature” and disoriented confusion which, in turn, give rise to the development of his madness. In their mischievous attempt to make the sailor lose his way home, the three witches send him a windy storm that will steer his ship away

from the right course and throw him into total disorientation. Planning to “drain him dry as hay”, the witches drive the sailor to agitated exhaustion as he “Sleep shall neither night nor day / Hang upon his penthouse lid” (*Mac* 1.3.19-20). Mentally and physically exhausted, the adrift sailor is deprived of his vitality while struggling to find a way back to his home and wife. Suffering both mental and physical decline – “Weary sev’ nights nine times nine / Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine”, the sailor is eventually “Wrecked as homeward he did come” (1.3.22-23, 1.3.29). Noticeably, the witches’ supernatural power lies in their incantatory curse or linguistic performativity that promises the arrival or actualization of a certain phenomenon or incident. By means of language, they are capable of raising or performing the storm, “I’ll do, I’ll do, and I’ll do”, “I’ll give thee a wind”, “I myself have all the other, / And the very ports they blow” (*Mac* 1.3.10-11, 1.3.14-15). Different from their conversation about the weather suitable for their meeting with Macbeth whom they try to lead astray with their beguiling intervention as the prophecy, the witches’ conjuration of the storm is dreadful due to “its unpredictability”, which, in turn, corroborates the witches’ capacity to manipulate and “alter the environment suddenly” and directly (Jones, 2015, p. 24, 93). Nonetheless, saying that “Though his bark cannot be lost, / Yet it shall be tempest-tossed”, the witches are aware of the limit of their supernatural interference. Their direct manipulation of the weather conveys that the witches can trick the sailor only by exploiting his susceptibility to external disturbance. In a similar manner, the weird sisters deceive Macbeth, returning to his castle back to his wife, by taking advantage of his vulnerability to tempting ambition.

Given the prophecy about his future, Macbeth is misled into believing that his hidden ambition is no longer out of his reach and, thus, is motivated to fulfill such an ambition by his own hands to the extent that he can visualize himself carrying out the “bloody business” or unnatural act of regicide, “whose murder yet is but fantastical” (*Mac* 1.3.141). Instead of being skeptical about the ambivalence of “nature” underlying the “unnatural” represented by the three witches, Macbeth ignores that ambivalence and, in turn, wrongly perceives the “unnatural” as in favor of or accommodating to his ambitious desire. Like the “tempest-tossed” sailor when undergoing the witch-conjured storm, Macbeth will be plunged deeper into a state of

sensory disorders and disoriented confusion after each of his direct contact with the “unnatural”, for example, the witches whose questionable equivocation he turns a blind eye to. This signifies that Macbeth is infected by the “unnatural”, and his sensory disorders and bewilderment are symptomatic of such an infection (Cole, 2016, p. 37). In spite of his mental and physical weariness, Macbeth’s restless perturbation impels him to recklessly commit further “unnatural deeds”. Furthermore, As Jones contends that the storm’s “primary function is to separate characters”, the witches’ unnatural storm, splitting up the accursed sailor and his wife, foreshadows the Macbeths’ estrangement from each other, as well as their childlessness because of Macbeth’s growing preoccupation with ambition and power (2015, p. 2).

For Jones, the storms in Macbeth are repetitions, “reminiscent of storms elsewhere”. Perceptible in the ominous thundery weather, the captain’s natural equinoctial storm, and the witches’ supernatural tempest, this iterable storm depicts the repetitive cycle of unnatural-induced disorder and confusion. Corresponding to apocalyptic imagery and biblical allusions, the prophetic implications of the storm as such imparts how disorder and confusion give rise to the tragic disaster and destruction (Jones, 2015, pp. 86, 93-95, 103). As implied in the witches’ unison chanting, “Thus do go, about, about, / Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine, / And thrice again to make up nine” (*Mac* 1.3.34-36), the repetitive circular motion of the storm produces disorienting and dizzying effects which bring about the doubling or augmentation of confusion and chaos. Exhibiting the interlacement of the unnatural, the supernatural and the natural, the storms hint at, through such effects, the underlying ambivalence and spectrality of “nature”.

Signaling the beginning of his sensory disorders and misperception of the ambivalence of “nature”, Macbeth’s remark, “So foul and fair a day I have not seen” (*Mac* 1.3.38) echoes the witches’ chanting in 1.1. Although his ability to observe the coexistent foulness and fairness shows his acknowledgment of the “unnatural” through which the ambivalence of “nature” is implicated, Macbeth still disregards such an ambivalence as trivial, interested only in the attractive prospect of being “king hereafter”. Asking “How far is’t called to Forres?” (1.3.39), Banquo articulates how a feeling of disorientation and anxious uncertainty is aroused by the implication of the ambivalence of “nature” prior to his encounter with the triad of the witches.

Dissimilar to the unsuspecting Macbeth, Banquo, facing the supernatural agents of the “unnatural”, exclaims surprisingly and skeptically:

How far is't called to Forres? What are these,
 So withered and so wild in their attire,
 That look not like th' inhabitants o'th' earth,
 And yet are on't? Live you, or are you aught
 That man may question? You seem to understand me,
 By each at once her choppy finger laying
 Upon her skinny lips. You should be women,
 And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
 That you are so. (*Mac* 1.3.39-46)

From Banquo's description of their physical appearance, the three witches are portrayed as “figures of ambiguity in terms of gender, politics, and substance”. “Not like th' inhabitants o'th' earth”, the witches' withered and wild clothing exudes inhuman unearthliness that makes Banquo curious about their existence and then ask if they are alive and substantial (Bezio, 2013, p.91). Dressing in old and filthy rags, the slovenly witches remind us not only of the “heathens” or wayward heath-dwellers but also the sixteenth and seventeenth century people in times of shortages and ecological crises, particularly the poverty-stricken, plague-ridden, or lower-class ones (Borlik, 2023, p. 23; Cole, 2016, pp. 36-37; R. Martin, 2015, pp. 2-5; Vest, 1985, p. 326). Their dead silence, though a brief one, also prompts Banquo, who detects some uncanny resemblances between him – a human being – and these supernatural shapes, “You seem to understand me” (1.3.43), to further interrogation of their ability to cognition and communication including their gender. Intimated earlier in their comparison to the tailless rat, the weird sisters' ontological and epistemological instability situate them as both “unnatural” and spectralized (Cole, 2016, p. 38).

Staying mutely mysterious while being inquired about their identity and origin, the three witches resist Banquo's and Macbeth's effort to define or categorize them ontologically and epistemologically. They abruptly speak, instead, of the unknown future of those investigating them. Even though it is delivered in laconic and repetitive language, their one-way prophetic speech comes out as more puzzling to

Banquo and Macbeth. Perceptibly, the unnerving eeriness of the witches' "strange intelligence" lies in not merely the clairvoyant power beyond humans' grasp or knowledge it demonstrates but also in the dangerously promising suggestion it puts forward. Coming across as neither dead nor alive, the witch triad oscillates between lifeless incorporeal and animate corporeal. They effortlessly materialize out of and vanish into the air, "Melted", Macbeth comments, "as breath into the wind" (*Mac* 1.3.81-82).

Neither a woman nor a man, the bearded witches openly defy the socially acceptable heteronormativity of human's sexuality and gender. In this light, their androgynous appearance is deemed the transgression against the natural order on which that heteronormativity is constructed (Cadden, 2004, p. 211, 231; Park, 2004, p. 56). In connection with the barren heath, these witches, whose gender remains unspecified, symbolically imply the reproductive abnormality and infertility at odds with the abundant fertility "nature" is naturally praised for (Scott, 2014, pp. 123-126, 130). Expressing "the hostility towards life" of the next generations or to "reproductive futurity", this infertility is, for Uotinen and Borlik, starkly "unnatural" (2011, p. 160; 2023, p. 25). Notably, as the supernatural agents of the "unnatural", the witches in *Macbeth* add more dimensions to the unnaturalness of the heath by confirming the early modern belief that this natural terrain is a sinister locale the witches use for their gatherings and ritual performing. Conversely, the heath amplifies the unnaturalness of these supernatural creatures through its suggestion of desolation and reproductive failure (Borlik, 2023, pp. 20, 24-25; Harrison, 1992, p. 103; Scott, 2014, pp. 123-125).

Apart from being the supernatural that frequents the "blasted" natural landscape, the witches share certain similarities with two groups of heath-abiding vagrants or social deviants – the gypsies and the lunatics. For the "gypsies", the witches look like them in terms of tattered appearance, fortune-telling practice and ritual performance. Because the "gypsies" are accused of fraudulent divination during the age of Tudor, the trickiness of the witches' prediction is highlighted by such similarities (Borlik, 2023, pp. 25, 31-32). Likewise, the witches' disheveled appearance is in parallel with that of the mentally ill. This parallel provides the binary oppositions comparable to that of unnaturalness versus naturalness, for instance,

passionate derangement versus self-possessed composure; unruliness versus discipline; rebellious transgression versus conforming obedience; chaos or disorder versus peace or order. Indicative of the conflict between “unnatural” between the “natural”, these binaries depict the “unnatural” as aggressively trespassing on the “natural”.

The binaries as such are applicable to Macbeth as they implicate his transgressive inclination. Misinterpreting the “unnatural”, Macbeth is blind to the ambivalence of “nature”. Simultaneously, his sensory disorders and disoriented bewilderment are worsened. Intoxicated by the “unnatural”, Macbeth reveals his “thrifless ambition” for sovereign power and forsakes thrifty moderation as a loyal subject of King Duncan. Turned into an unhealthy obsession with the throne, his “vaulting ambition” propels him to kill everyone he thinks are in his way. On the one hand, Macbeth’s outrageous treason against the monarch of Scotland – an epitome of the natural order – indicates his embrace of the “unnatural”, which serves as a dark and uncanny stimulant to his rebellious passion. On the other hand, Macbeth’s act of killing proves to be a greater offense against “nature” and its moral authority that strongly censure and forbid behaviors harmful to the life of others. Visibly, the more “unnatural deeds” Macbeth commits, the more his murderous antagonism towards life and self-destructive disorder are developed (Daston and Vidal, 2004, p. 14; Scott, 2014, p. 142, 146; Uotinen, 2011, p. 160).

On the whole, it can be seen that the three witches in Macbeth are the supernatural embodiment of the “unnatural” where the supernatural, the natural, and the unnatural are enmeshed through a variety of contexts and connections discussed above. Such supernatural beings are uncanny to both the characters and the audience who might be acquainted with some stereotypical characteristics of witches yet fail to easily fit the weird sisters into any of them. With their intimation of the ambivalence of “nature”, these unnatural figures of sheer equivocalness contribute to the characters’ misperception and confusion.

Hosting the fateful encounter between the weird sisters and Macbeth, the “blasted heath” demonstrates how a natural landscape is unnaturalized in the play. Notorious for being a habitation of social misfits such as “gypsies” or “lunatics” and a rendezvous for witches in Shakespeare’s days, the heath displays, Borlik writes, a

“struggle between the forces of fertility and sterility” (2023, pp. 20-21, 24-25). Besides its association with the supernatural and nomads, the otherness of the heath is constructed on its topographical peculiarities that distinguish it from other habitats in the British Isles. Barren and treeless, the heath is “an area of open shrubland with poor, acidic soil that renders it unsuitable for cultivation”. Its vegetation includes only “a few hardy, low-growing” types such as heather and coarse grasses.

In the early modern England, this natural landscape became contentious issues between “aristocratic hunters” supported by King James I, “agrarian capitalists” and “poor cottagers”. The contradictory image of the heath as “foul wasteland and fair habitat” is presented through this contention (Borlik, 2023, pp.20, 24-25, 31). Nonetheless, the play foregrounds the foulness of the heath. According to Harrison, this particular locale serves as a “symbolic counterpart” of the Macbeths’ physical and moral sterility (1992, pp. 103-104). Noting the early modern assonance between “Macbeth” and “heath”, Borlik posits both as correlated even in a subliminal level (2023, p. 25). In *Darkness Visible*, Scott explicates how the unnatural hostility of the heath is portrayed through its barrenness. This unfruitful landscape, she argues, rejects “a sustainable nature in which growth governs images of value”. Such a rejection is considered transgressive or “unnatural” in the world where moral and agrarian worth are aligned. By this alignment, “the body” is conceived as “the bare soil on which humans must sow, harvest, and reap the potential of life”. In this sense, the barren heath presents an ultimate failure of both agricultural and moral cultivation (Scott, 2014, pp. 123-125). This “wasteland of no economic value”, Kerridge adds, is “left to bear the moral opprobrium” (2011, p. 209). Notably, the parallel between the heath’s infertility and the Macbeths’ childlessness is equivalent to that between the heath’s lack of agricultural growth and the Macbeths’ lack of moral growth. Therefore, the Macbeths’ moral and physical sterility are reinforced as interconnected. Indeed, the more the Macbeths involve themselves in “unnatural deeds”, the less their reproductive possibility. As “the place of origin for all the crimes that Macbeth will commit against his fellow man”, the heath can be seen as hostile towards life since most of his crimes are killing. However, considering a stress on its barrenness, the heath also opposes growth or “reproductive futurity”. This opposition is consistent with the Macbeths’ fantasy of brutal infanticide and the homicide of Macduff’s

family. With their imaginative and actual act of baby-killing, the Macbeths bring “the destruction of family lineages” upon themselves (Borlik, 2023, p. 25; Harrison, 1992, p. 103).

Concerning its adjective “blasted”, the heath in Macbeth is presented as an uncultivable area with few withered or shriveled plants. This description also underlines the heath’s association with the supernatural. “Witch-haunted”, this natural landscape is “cursed or blighted” by those haunting them, and it is this blight that renders the heath barren (Borlik, 2023, p. 34, 37). To put it another way, the heath’s “naturalness” as a part of a “natural” world is denied and replaced with “unnaturalness” of their occupants. Since the other meaning of the word “blasted” is “to blow or breath on balefully or perniciously”, the heath’s exposure to “climate and wind” is highlighted (Borlik, 2023, p. 37; Price, 2003, p. 7). Through this windswept heath, the erratic and stormy weather, especially the captain’s shipwrecking storm and the witches’ head-spinning tempest, is evoked. In an ecocritical context, the term “blasted” could be understood as “singed, burned, or smoke-damaged”. Advocated by agrarian capitalists, the practice of heath burning is nothing strange to the early modern audience. The “fog and filthy air”, in this case, alludes to the smoke produced by that practice. This adds another “semantic layer” to the smoky fog’s olfactory effect in 1.1 (Borlik, 2023, p. 28, 37). Implicative of human intervention, the word “blasted” offers a traceback to how the heath is formed. In fact, its wilderness is “anthropogenic”, resulting from “centuries of deforestation by humans in the Bronze Age”. In addition to “human impact”, the generation of the heath is assisted by “a cool, wet climate”. Cooperatively, the climate as such induced “peat formation” while the soil, acidified by “manmade clearings”, prevented tree regeneration (pp. 27-29). As the setting of the play, the “blasted heath” is located in times of war and uprisings from which disorder arises. In relation to such political and military conflicts, the term “blasted” denotes how the heath might be “bombed” or affected by the explosion (p. 37). This corresponds to the captain’s mentioning of cannon’s utilization in 1.2. Besides being a reminder of the assassination plot against King James I, gunpowder intimates the “impairment of sustainable cultivation” represented by Shakespeare’s “blasted heath”. Looking at the ruinous effect of warfare on the environment, Martin proposes how “gunpowder militarization” takes part in engendering the early modern

“deforestation crisis”. Countless tons of wood were exploited as a fuel for “the manufacture of gunpowder from saltpeter” (2015, pp. 9, 22-23; McNeill, 2004, p. 393). For him, “the lingering whiff of stage gunpowder” olfactorily links “Scotland’s deep-sticking warrior culture” to “the ecological ruptures of emerging munitions industries” (R. Martin, 2015, p. 106).

From these definitions, the “blasting” of the heath can be seen as caused by the natural, the supernatural or human agency. These different causes complexify Shakespeare’s portrayal of the heath as “unnatural”, emphasizing it as a place of “bewilderment and disorientation” (Borlik, 2023, p. 28, 37). In this light, the natural, the supernatural and the unnatural are again interwoven and, in turn, mark the ambivalence of “nature” lurking beneath them.

Among the heath’s few “low growing plants”, heather is the most outstanding one due to its abundance in the heath. Identical to the name of this “open, uncultivated land”, the great sweep of this plants is also called “heaths”. Actually, both heathland and heather are “almost always the result of human activity”. Owing to wind exposure, tree clearings and grazing animals, heathland’s acidic and low-nutrient soil is developed into a “barren ground” where only acid and wind tolerant species can grow (Gimingham, 1989, pp. 264-65; Mabey, 1998, p. 73; Thomas and Faircloth, 2014, p. 177). This explains how the heath becomes a heather-dominated landscape.

Noticeably, what connects heather to the three witches and Macbeth is its domestic uses. It is possible that the witches’ broom – also a familiar household item – is made of a bundle of heather’s stems. Its roots might be carved into a handle of Macbeth’s dagger like other Scottish dirks (Mabey, 1998, p. 73). Moreover, as suggested by Banquo’s remark, “Or have we eaten on the insane root, / That takes the reason prisoner?” (*Mac* 1.3.85-86), heather brings up the imagery of intoxication and fortification by which Macbeth’s excessive ambition is stirred. Holding “a special place in the mythology of the Highlands”, heather ale is, indeed, a brew of Celtic roots, “ancient legend” and “lost recipes”. Made with heather’s “spikes of honey-scented lilac flowers”, this ale was once one of the Scottish “staple drinks”. Owing to the fact that the heather ale was brewed by “yill wives”, the similarities between the traditional ale brewing and the witches’ potion brewing in 4.1 are underscored (Asala,

1998, pp. 53-54; Mabey, 1998, pp. 75-76). However, the yill wives' brew is meant for merrymaking, whereas the witches' one is for poisonous or mystifying intoxication. Conceivably, it is this unnatural-induced drunkenness that throws Macbeth further into confusion. Apart from the ale, heather was used to make a sweet herbal tea. By this, the witches' brew is likened to household herbal brew, sharpening the contrast between poison and medicine. With its fragrance and softly supporting quality, heather was also used for both human and animal "bedding" (Mabey, 1998, p. 75). Perhaps, the mattress of King Duncan's bed, as well as the Macbeths', is made out of this plant. Flowing from the nearby heath, the fragrance of heather may be what King Duncan smells when he arrives at Macbeth's castle, "This castle hath a pleasant seat, the air / Nimble and sweetly recommends itself / Unto our gentle senses" (*Mac* 1.6.1-3). With this possibility, the latent ambivalence of "nature" is intimated as the pleasant smell of heather is juxtaposed with the unpleasant odor of the heath's "fog and filthy air". Furthermore, if looked at eco-critically, heather hints at deforestation crisis and wood shortage in the late sixteenth and seventeenth century for it was used as "fuel, fodder and building material where wood was in short supply" (Mabey, 1998, p. 73). Growing in the "blasted heath", heather, as "one of basic raw materials of domestic life", discloses the intrusion of the "unnatural" or wilderness into the "natural" or domestic.

Other than the plant, there is an avian species that can be associated with Macbeth's "blasted heath". With "heraldic implication", martlet stands for "the younger son, who has neither claims nor footing in the ancestral land". Thus, in Macbeth, this bird has a double meaning. Since King Duncan chooses Malcolm as an heir to his throne, Macbeth is "without cadency in Scotland". Additionally, Macbeth himself is heirless (E. Williams, 1995, p. 327). Discernibly, its symbolism of hairlessness concurs with the heath's signification of infertility.

By and large, these interpretations of plant and bird species conveys how Macbeth carries with him the "unnatural" he has embraced upon "the blasted heath" and how that "unnaturalness" is pervading throughout his homely domesticity.

Even though Macbeth is taken aback by the witches' freakish look and their sudden "prophetic greeting" (*Mac* 1.3.48-50), his attempt to solicit more clarity or definite meaning from that greeting implies his need to affirm his concealed

ambition. Firmly reiterating the witches in reply to Banquo, “Your children shall be kings” (1.3.87), Macbeth keeps that “great prediction of noble having and royal hope” in his mind. Awarded “Thane of Cawdor”, Macbeth is excited at the possibility of “royal hope” since he sees this title awarding as “happy prologues to the swelling act / Of the imperial theme” (1.3.130-131). Since the prophecy of his “noble having” is proven to be true, Macbeth construes the rest of it – “be king hereafter” – as “a murderous suggestion he must act on” and, therefore, is convinced that “he can control the meaning and the future he believes he is promised and deserves” (Ostovich and Hopkins, 2014, p. 6). Nevertheless, the word “swelling” recalls the captain’s warning about the reversal of the situations. Saying “So from that spring, whence comfort seemed to come / Discomfort swells” (1.2.27-28), the captain cautions us to be careful with our perception because the situation that seems to be “fair” or peaceful can turn out to be “foul” or chaotic. As seen, Shakespeare’s use of the word “swelling”, here, implies the Macbeths’ tragic reversal of fortunes brought about by their misperceptions.

“Presenting two treasonous spectacles”, these two scenes carry on with the paradox of foul and fair. In 1.2, “the treachery of the Thane of Cawdor” is reported to King Duncan by Ross. In the next scene, the three witches greet Macbeth with their “seditious prophecies”. From these two spectacles, it can be seen that “fair news accompanies foul deeds or desires”. On one side, the victory of Scotland over Norway and the previous Thane of Cawdor’s betrayal are concurrently announced. On the other side, Macbeth’s promotion to the Thane of Cawdor inflames his “treasonous desire” (Lemon, 2002, p. 35). Comparable to the captain’s natural storm and the witches’ supernatural tempest, the persistence of the fair and foul paradox foretells how the characters will be thrown deeper into a state of disorder and confusion.

Conjured by the murderous suggestion, Macbeth’s vivid imagination of regicidal “bloody business” implies the intensification of Macbeth’s ambition for power and his determination to carry out the treasonous murder. Even though such an imagination is, at first, unbearably horrifying for him to the extent that he feels demotivated to commit what he is thinking of, Macbeth does not really give up his “black and deep” desire to make himself a king. His feeling of demotivation is only

temporary and soon replaced by his “vaulting ambition”, rekindled when King Duncan announces Malcolm as an heir to the throne.

2.3 Haunted Castle

Describing his imagination of King Duncan’s murder as horrid and horrible in his asides (*Mac* 1.3.132-144), Macbeth realizes the “unnaturalness” of his intended treason. Typically, an act of murder is regarded as “unnatural” due to its transgression against social morality. As seen in the practice of husbandry, the morality as such relates to how the imagined interaction between human and nature is woven upon a web of economic and religious imperatives (Scott, 2014, pp. 1-33). Accordingly, killing people, which are perceived as a valuable productive labor in the heteronormative society, is prohibited morally and legally. As his “kinsman”, “subject” and “host”, Macbeth ought to dutifully offer his loyalty, hospitality and protection to King Duncan – the supreme leader of his community. According to Peters, the utmost importance of this sovereign’s position “lies in the relationship between father, king and God” where “familial, monarchical and divine order” are overlapped (2008, pp. 229-30). Hence, the murder of King Duncan is not merely regicide or an act of treason but also parricide and deicide. This murder is obviously Macbeth’s violation of his duties towards his king, as well as the king’s “double trust”. Established on “moral conformity”, trust is crucial to human community for it permits “a boundless set of social interactions” which facilitates or accommodates the operations of the society (Govier, 1997, p. 3; Heckscher, 2015, p. vii). Thus, a breach of trust is forbidden. On the one hand, the heteronormative society chastises killing and treachery as “unnatural”; on the other hand, it upholds compassion and sincerity as “natural” or innate quality of mankind. Moreover, killing unguarded innocent people in their sleep is sinful and “unnatural” because sleep is supposed to be “great Nature’s second course, / Chief nourisher in life’s feast” (2.2.40-41) or “death’s counterfeit”, not a permanent death.

Observably, Macbeth’s horrified agitation conveys how the imagining of the unnatural deed throw his senses into disarray, leading to the extreme sensory disorders and disoriented confusion in the dagger scene (*Mac* 2.1.31-64). Affected by

the unnatural, Macbeth is gradually mutated into an unstoppable committer of “unnatural deeds”, namely, a treasonous regicide and atrocious murders.

Persuaded by his wife, Macbeth decides to continue his “terrible feat” and abandon his “nature” or “milk of human kindness”. His determination to fulfill his desire is depicted through his soliloquy in 2.1.31-64. Here, his imaginative vision of the “bloody business” is more elaborated. Although the real murder scene is omitted, it can be seen that the more Macbeth is ambitious, the more misguided, hallucinated and disoriented he becomes. His soliloquy is very rich in sensory details that suggests the exacerbation of misperception and sensory disorders. This particular scene is governed by the auditory, visual, kinetic, olfactory and tactile sense. In the beginning of the soliloquy, Macbeth expects the sound of the bell or the auditory cue from his wife. Then, the auditory cue is replaced by the visual image of a dagger that Macbeth sees before him. Trying to clutch the dagger in his hand, Macbeth wants to verify his vision by using the tactile sense. Although he is unable to do so and his sight of the dagger is still unconfirmed, the tactile sense comes into play, as his perception of the dagger becomes clearer. To illustrate, Macbeth perceives the dagger as “sensible / To feeling as to sight” (*Mac* 2.1.37) and “in form as palpable” (2.1.40). The vision and touch are followed by the movement of the dagger, “Thou marshall’st me the way that I was going” (2.1.42). Macbeth’s remark, “Mine eyes are made the fools o’th’ other senses, / Or else worth all the rest” (2.1.44-5) indicates how his perception of the dagger is very real to him. However, the transformation of Macbeth’s vision of the dagger, as he sees, “gouts of blood” on its blade and dudgeon “Which was not so before” (2.1.46-7), acknowledge his vision as unreal. In this case, Macbeth’s perception of the dagger produced by the “heat-oppressed brain” reflects his strong ambition to kill Duncan. The dagger without blood represents the time before the murder while the dagger with blood suggests the completion of the murder.

Saying “Nature seems dead”, Macbeth personifies “nature” as someone asleep and, hence, is unwary of how the unnatural usurps its place during the nighttime. For Macbeth, the silence of the night attests to such unwariness and, simultaneously, signifies the domination of the unnatural over the natural. Unwatched by “nature”, the unnatural takes a full advantage of the situation, “wicked dreams abuse / The curtained sleep” (*Mac* 2.1.50-1). Here, Macbeth likens himself to the

unnatural since he similarly abuses Duncan's sleep. Implied by the word "dead" in his remark, the unnatural not only displaces but also murders "nature" its sleep. This is in parallel with Macbeth's killing of Duncan in order to take over his sovereign position. Assuming the role of the murderer, Macbeth is imagined himself being accompanied by the sound of witchcraft's celebration, the wolf's howling, or Tarquin's ravishing strides. Although they seem to contradict the present silence, these auditory imageries accentuate the night's silence as eerie and unnatural-induced. From this interpretation, Macbeth is completely turned into an embodiment of the "unnatural" through his murder of Duncan. Marshalled by the dagger, Macbeth loses trace of his location in silence (Farabee, 2014, p.101), where "Thou sure and firm-set earth / Hear not my steps" (2.1.56-7). Such soundlessness is replaced by the auditory cue of the bell or "a knell" as expected before the "bloody business" is done. Paradoxically, "a knell" that signals Duncan's death functions as a wake-up call for Macbeth from his hallucination. In brief, the overwhelming of senses or sensory disorders in this scene results in Macbeth's temporary disorientation.

Dislocated, Macbeth goes to his wife's chamber with bloody daggers after the completion of his "bloody business". His psychological condition is aggravated, as Macbeth hears "a voice cry, 'Sleep no more. / Macbeth does murder sleep'" (*Mac* 2.2.36-7) and "every noise appals me" (2.2.59). Noticeably, Macbeth feels guilty and is mildly paranoid. With maritime imagery, Macbeth laments how his "unnatural" deed cannot be undone and how he is burdened by it, "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood / Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather / The multitudinous seas incarnadine, / Making the green one red" (2.2.58-60). The seawater is imagined in "vital colors", green and red, indicates the "unnaturalness" of his deed since green, symbolizing "nature", is contaminated by bloody and incarnadine "red". It "gives us a striking image of human agency affecting the global ocean" (Brayton, 2012, p. 66). Green and red also represent envy and anger in seven deadly sins which remind Macbeth of his desire for Duncan's status and his "undaunted mettle" (2.1.74). Additionally, green and red imply sensory disorder through their association with color blindness (deuteranomaly). Deuteranomalous people have difficulty distinguishing green from red (National Eye Institute, 2023). Comparably, Macbeth's sensory disorder reduces his capacity for color

differentiation. Unable to see green, Macbeth cannot visualize the actual color of the ocean. Preoccupied with his “bloody business”, his vision is restricted to the color “red” which represents his crime. Thereby, Macbeth can only see the ocean as red not green. Despite being short-term, Macbeth’s color blindness denotes the worsening of his preoccupation with murder which leads to his alienation from his wife.

The “unnaturalness” of Duncan’s murder is again emphasized in 2.3 and 2.4 when the disturbance of nature accompanied by sensory disorders is evident:

The night has been unruly: where we lay
 Our chimneys were blown down and, as they say,
 Lamentings heard i’th’ air, strange screams of death,
 And prophesying with accents terrible
 Of dire combustion, and confused events
 New hatched to the woeful time. The obscure bird
 Clamoured the livelong night. Some say the earth
 Was feverous and did shake. (*Mac* 2.3.54-60)

Indicative of a transgression against “nature”, the murder of Duncan is committed at night when the unnatural seizes the natural’s place as seen in the earlier discussion of 2.1. Here, Lennox’s description of the unruly night portrays how such a transgression and seizure engender destructive disorder, “confused events / New hatched to the woeful time”. The blown-down chimneys imply the violent storm along with its ruinous effects. They also picture the impacts of the early modern ecological instability which is believed to originate from both natural and supernatural source (Jones, 2015, pp. 93-94). On the one hand, the words such as “combustion”, “clamored”, “accents terrible” and “scream”, etc. characterize the situation as in a commotion, identical to the battle and political unrest in 1.2. On the other hand, “Lamenting”, “screams of death” and “woeful time” connotes loss and sufferings, as well as desperation. As a creature of darkness, the hooting owl or “obscure bird” is viewed as not only signaling the horror of Macbeth’s unnatural deed but also prophesying the worse to come. In accordance with the auditory images, the earthquake visualizes the turbulent vibration by which all the discordant sounds are produced. Coming from the underground, this feverous earth intimates the unburying

of Macbeth's crime and its horror. As seen, Lennox's report provides striking visual and auditory images of the existing disorder, placing an emphasis on its unnaturalness.

Again, how the "unnatural" dominates "nature" is reinforced by Ross and old man's conversation about the "unnatural" phenomena, for instance, the predominance of the night, a mousing owl killing a falcon, Duncan's horses eating each other (*Mac* 2.4.8-18). From their conversation, the cause of the disorder is evident for those phenomena insinuate the "unnatural" murder of Duncan. The predominance of the night is summoned by the Macbeths to facilitate their acts of treason. A mousing owl killing a falcon suggests regicide while Duncan's horses eating each other signifies parricide.

Macbeth's paranoia becomes more severe when he meets Banquo who witnesses the witches' prophecy of Macbeth being a king. Afraid of betrayal and the possibility that Banquo's son will take after his throne, Macbeth plans the assassination of Banquo and his son. Nevertheless, Macbeth's "unnatural" act of plotting and committing amicide leads to his hallucination of Banquo's ghost in 3.4 which denotes the exacerbation of his sensory disorders due to his more involvement in unnatural deeds. Seeing the ghost alone, Macbeth's estrangement from his wife and the society represented by the lords is increased. Similar to his vision of the "air-drawn dagger", Macbeth's vision of the ghost brings about sensory disorder. Even if he knows that the ghost is a "horrible shadow" or an "unreal mockery", he still feels the presence of the ghost mainly through his visual sense. By comparing it to wild and exotic beasts such as "the rugged Russian bear", "The armed rhinoceros" and "the Hyrcan tiger", Macbeth highlights the ghost as dangerous and uncontrollable. Feeling its uncanny approach, Macbeth doubts his sanity and is filled with fear as he is reminded of his powerlessness. Notwithstanding such a comparison, Banquo's ghost proves to be scarier. Telling it to "Take any shape but that" (3.4.100), Macbeth actually views the ghost as something beyond mere wildness and brutality. Indeed, the sight of Banquo's ghost is unbearable and unnerving for Macbeth because it graphically visualizes his unnatural crime of killing.

In his second meeting with the weird sisters, Macbeth encounters three "unnatural" apparitions that mislead him into believing that no man can kill him.

Ironically, the three apparitions actually portend his misfortune and tragic end. With his overconfidence, Macbeth continues to his “unnatural” deed by ordering the massacre of Macduff’s family and becomes more tyrannical. The conversation between the Thanes in 5.2 shows how Macbeth is more troubled by sensory disorders. The worsening of his symptoms is described as “he’s mad”, “valiant fury”, “He cannot buckle his distempered cause / Within the belt of rules” (*Mac* 5.2.15-6), “His pestered senses to recoil and start, / When all that is within him does condemn itself for being there” (5.2.22-4). One of the most extreme conditions of Macbeth’s “madness” is presented in his reactions to his wife’s suicide. Here, Macbeth notices how he has changed after involving with many “unnatural” elements, “I supped full with horrors; / Direness familiar to my slaughterous thoughts / Cannot once start me”. Emotionally flatness and completely alienated from his wife, Macbeth reacts to the news of his wife’s death with emptiness conveyed by his speech of how life is “a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury / Signifying nothing” (5.5.25-7).

Although Lady Macbeth is not the one who performs the unnatural acts and does not encounter the witches. Her relation to the “unnaturalness” in the play is presented through her attempt to defeminize and denaturalize herself, as well as her position as an accomplice of Duncan’s murder. In 1.5, after Macbeth tells her about the weird sisters’ prophecy, Lady Macbeth conjures the “unnatural” elements or “spirits / That tend on mortal thoughts” (*Mac* 1.5.40-1) to “unsex” herself. Rejecting her naturally maternal and female body represented by breast milk and “visitings of nature” or menstrual period, Lady Macbeth denies “her primary role as carer and nurturer” and transgresses “an encoded moral boundary associated with maternity”. Since milk is associated with nurturing and human’s kindness, Lady Macbeth transposes her milk for gall, “sustenance for poison”, “life for death” and nurturing spirits for murdering ones to psychologically prepare herself for Duncan’s murder (Scott, 2014, pp. 131-33). Lady Macbeth also asks the spirits to stop her periodic flow and block the passage of “visitings of nature” because “menstruation is the most apparent natural visitation associated with her sexuality”. “If the thickened blood blocks the passage of the womb, then, it also stops up the access to the heart from which remorse could flow” (La Belle, 1980, pp. 381-82). The extremity of Lady Macbeth’s rejection of biological constraints or denaturalization is portrayed in her

brutal imagination of herself committing infanticide and prolicide by smashing the baby's head. Together with the Lady Macbeth's defeminization, the Macbeths' alienation from each other leads to their childlessness and is similar to the sterility of the "unnatural" landscape or the "blasted heath" (Scott, 2014, pp. 131-33). In brief, with her unsexed body, Lady Macbeth embraces dauntless masculinity and become the unnatural conspirator who urges her husband to fulfill his treacherous ambition.

The unnatural stoppage of blood and the pollution of the breast milk causes Lady Macbeth's "slumberry agitation" and "perturbation in nature" which enhance the sensory disorders. In her sleepwalking, Lady Macbeth revisits the events of Duncan's murder. Although "her eyes are open", her senses are shut. In other words, she is not aware of external reality. This resembles the dagger scene when Macbeth's senses are directed toward the dagger and unable to perceive his surroundings in reality. This suggests that the more her senses are shut on the external world, the more vivid her vision of Duncan's murder is. The vividness of Lady Macbeth's vision in her somnambulism is also emphasized by her description of the olfactory perception of what she experiences in her sleep. The sharp contrast between "smell of blood" and "perfumes of Arabia" reveals the tension between senses caused by sensory disorders. Therefore, her suicide implies the aggravation of the sensory disorders after realizing her husband's "unnatural" deeds other than regicide.

The role reversal of the Macbeths suggests how the two characters can be interpreted as a mind and a body of one person. Due to their marriage and former intimacy, they symbolically become each other's other half. Before Duncan's murder, Macbeth represents emotion and the mind of the Macbeths, whereas Lady Macbeth represents the body and action. However, after Duncan's murder, Lady Macbeth becomes more emotional while Macbeth becomes less. Also, they repeat each other's action before the murder. On one hand, Macbeth imitates Lady Macbeth's summon of darkness in 3.2.47-57. On the other hand, Lady Macbeth is panic like Macbeth in her sleepwalking. Hence, their estrangement from each other symbolizes how the mind and the body is severed.

Compared to Macbeth, Banquo does not fall prey to the "unnatural" which entails the haunting of the specters of "nature" even though he witnesses the same strange events and hearing the same prediction. Sensing the unseen ambivalence

of “nature” even before he meets the witches, Banquo keeps questioning the actuality of this surreal meeting and the truthfulness of the prophecy. By that, he regularly checks the accuracy of his own perception. After the witches’ prophetic hailing of Macbeth’s future, Banquo, in suspicious disbelief, again inquires, “Are ye fantastical, or that indeed / Which outwardly ye show?” (1.3.52-54). In order to check whether their fortune-telling power is a trickery, he challenges the witches to also tell him about his future. Moreover, as soon as the witches’ incorporeality is unveiled by their disappearance “into the air”, Banquo immediately feels unsure of his perceptual experience and asks if “Were such things here as we do speak about? / Or have we eaten on the insane root, / That takes the reason prisoner?” (1.3.84-86). As seen, “Banquo perceives his environment as a possible mutation of his own cognition”. As seen, when the “physical body” of the three witches is “shown to be unstable, susceptible, and vulnerable”, his perception and rational faculty come into question (Scott, 2014, p. 123).

This correlates with how the witches abuse humans’ exposure to external disturbances or their ability to perception in the sailor’s and the Macbeths’ case. The exposure as such conveys human’s tendency to internalize, consciously or not, those disturbances and, thus, are affected by them. By this internalizing process, the outer turmoil causes inner conflicts and confusion. In both cases, the impact of such internal disturbances is manifest in a form of physical and mental disorder. This is in sync with the Galenic theory of humors in the early modern England, whose influences are obvious in many of Shakespeare’s plays (Hodgkin, 2007, p. 42; Mazzaro, 1985, p. 98; Neely, 2004, pp. 1-2).

Analogously, the haunting of the specters is enabled by human’s sensitivity and ability to perception. Embracing the “unnatural” along with its significance of disorder, the characters or, to be more specific, the Macbeths are affected mentally and physically. Consequently, they are transformed into the embodiment of the “unnatural”. As their unnatural deeds becomes uncontrollable, the Macbeths’ internal disturbance is visible through various physiological and psychological symptoms, for example, restless agitation, hallucination, infertility, sleepwalking, alienation, delusion, paranoia, emotional numbness and madness, etc. If we think of human’s body and mind as a united single structure, we will see how the

outer disturbance is turned into an inner or structural one through the process of internalization. In this light, the haunting of the specters of “nature” is uncanny because it involves the process through which the “unnatural” intrudes into the “natural” and causes a structural disturbance by that intrusion. This is comparable to the intrusion of the unhomely or unfamiliar into the homely or familiar in Freudian terms. Bringing with them the hints of the ambivalence of “nature”, the “unnatural” creates disorder that disturbs the orderly structure of the characters’ perception. In this process, the “unnatural” becomes uncanny or disturbing. With or without their awareness, the specters of “nature” always challenges the characters’ perception. While resisting the characters’ definition or conceptualization, the specters unearth the underlying complexities or, in this sense, the ambivalence of “nature”. Through this, the specters of “nature” demand the characters’ recognition of that formerly unseen complexities. By the recognition as such, the specters point to the limit of the characters’ perception, as well as their perceptual knowledge and experience. In other words, the specters of “nature” haunts the characters into their realization and acceptance of the complexities beyond human’s perceptual capacity.

“Unnatural deeds / Do breed unnatural trouble” (5.1.71-2) is a suitable summary of how the “unnatural” in the play engender the characters’ sensory disorders and misperception, contributing to their descent into madness. here, the “unnatural” in the play functions to highlight the odd interlacement between the natural, the supernatural, the unnatural. This interlacement, consequently, unveils the dynamic ambivalence of “nature” that underlies the play’s problematic narrative of the unnatural revolving around what is natural and what is not and, by this, it also undermines the simple division between the “natural” and the “unnatural” in the play. Such an interlacement, thus, proves to be that from which the specters of “nature”, signifying the complex ambivalence of “nature”, emerge and exert their haunting effects in an uncanny way. Madness in the play, therefore, can be reinterpreted as caused by the “specters of nature” and, accordingly, the mad characters are those haunted by these specters. The Macbeths, here, are the actors and agents of the “unnatural”, as well as its witnesses and victims who cannot escape a tragic and inevitable ending of madness and death.

CHAPTER 3

“CONTEMPLATING THE UNNATURAL”: AN ANALYSIS OF SHAKESPEARE’S *HAMLET*

3.1 Enter the Ghost

From the previous chapter, it can be seen that *Macbeth* begins with the sudden emergence of the “unnatural”, composed of the witches and the thundery weather, as well as the heath. This very first scene of the play makes the audience anticipate the fateful meeting between Macbeth and the witches “upon the heath”. The first scene of *Hamlet* does the same as it warns the audience of the encounter between Hamlet and the ghost of his father in 1.4 and 1.5. Still, there are some noteworthy differences between the two.

Unlike that of *Macbeth*’s witches, the entrance of ghost in 1.1 is not unforeseen. Asking “Who’s there?”, Barnardo awaits the ghost’s appearance during the hour of his watch. Immediately, his question raises an unsettling suspicion about the identity of the unseen yet expected presence. It is this question that implies the ghost’s presence as if it was already there among us, lurking in the dark. Being asked as such, we would have to look around and then back to ourselves to make sure of our own presence and of that other than us. In other words, once the doubt about the mysterious other’s appearance is aroused, the validity of our perception and the solidity of our presence are challenged. To get rid of their doubt, Barnardo and Francisco want to see the unseen, to know the unknown. They need self-revelation, “Nay answer me. Stand and unfold yourself” (*Hamlet* 1.1.2). Even though the tension is reduced when they recognize each other, Barnardo’s ironic answer – “Long live the King” (1.1.3) – actually evades Francisco’s request of self-revelation. It is possible that Barnardo steps out of darkness as soon as he hears Francisco, or Francisco may recognize him by his voice or way of speaking. However, Barnardo’s words disclose nothing of his identity. Rather, it imparts the coming of the late king’s ghost and, simultaneously, suggests the evasiveness of such a ghostly presence.

To borrow from Derrida, *Hamlet* begins with “the expected return of the dead King”. As a “revenant”, Old Hamlet’s ghost “comes by coming back”. Its appearance “figures both a dead man who comes back and a ghost whose expected return repeats itself, again and again” (2006, p. 10). Waiting for the ghost to come (back), the characters, as well as the audience, are anxious about and fascinated by how “the thing (“this thing”) will end up coming” (p. 2). The tension, again, is risen when Horatio and Marcellus join Barnardo in the wait. Notably, Horatio’s first line, “Friends to this ground” reinforces the ghost’s otherworldliness. Such a thing is the supernatural other since it no longer exists in the same ground with the characters or the living ones. To put it another way, the fact that the ghost exists and comes from a different ontological ground sets it apart from the characters. According to Derrida and other spectral theorists, this ghost belongs to no ground at all. “Not present, nor presently living, either to us, in us, or outside us”, the ghost is a certain other whose intermediateness removes the division “between life and death, between being and non-being, between matter and spirit” (Derrida, 2006, pp. xvii-xviii, 12; Macherey, 2008, p. 19). This allows the ghost to travel across any ontological and epistemological boundary, as well as through time and space. Hence, the ghost itself is “a paradoxical incorporation” and is disturbing because its manifestness, as suggested by Barnardo’s remark, reveal nothing other than obscurities (Derrida, 2006, p. 5; Shaw, 2018, p. 6).

In response to Barnardo’s question of himself being there, Horatio says, “A piece of him” (*Ham* 1.1.18). Such a reply hints at the representativeness of the ghost’s presence. Metonymically, “A piece” stands for the whole being. In this sense, the ghost’s “original presence” is a representation or a trace of itself. “Two nights seen”, the ghost’s coming is already a return. Thus, every appearance of the ghost is “a repetition” (Montag, 2008, pp. 70-71, 79). Observably, it is this repetitiveness that provokes the characters’ anxiety. Horatio’s remark, “What, has this thing appeared again tonight?” (1.1.20), expresses their anticipation and uncertainty that makes them “sick at heart” (1.1.7). Although the characters expect the ghost to come, they are uncertain about the possibility of its coming. They do not know exactly whether the ghost will come, when it will come and what will happen when it really comes. As they make a guess about the outcome, their uncertainty becomes more intense.

Insisting that “I have seen nothing” (1.1.21), Barnardo stresses how the ghost vacillates between the invisible visibility and the visible invisibility, or between being seen and being unseen. On the one hand, as that which will come, the ghost “is still nothing that can be seen when one speaks of it”. On the other hand, as that which already had left, it is “no longer anything that can be seen” when spoken of (Derrida, 2006, p. 5). Though expected, the ghost’s repetitive “comings and goings” are uncontrollable and, therefore, no less shocking. As what the characters “fear and hope for”, such a repetition produces an uncanny effect significant for haunting (p. 11). Since the ghost is “twice seen”, its two appearances in 1.1 clearly repeats its previous appearances. Through repetitive comings and goings, this ghostly image of the late king is doubled or multiplied in the characters’ perception and memory. This doubling is enabled by how the ghost itself is already the late king’s other or his double. To be precise, it is a representation of someone whose physical existence is no longer. In repetition, each representation is rendered further away from the thing it represents. “Far from revealing the presence of spirit”, the representation as such “marks instead its erasure, the trace of an origin which was never present”. Accordingly, every representation is irreducible to each other (Montag, 2008, pp. 73-74, 79).

Unnervingly, the ghost actually comes when least expected. It does not come when the clock “struck twelve” or in “not a mouse stirring” silence Horatio believes necessary for its appearance – “Tush, tush, ’twill not appear” (1.1.29). Ironically, it enters when Barnardo and Marcellus start to talk about their “dreaded sight twice seen” (1.1.24). Interrupting the characters’ conversation, such an entrance indicates not only the ghost’s disrupting intrusiveness but also its resistance to definition and description. Even if it seems to signal the entrance of the supernatural being as noted in *Macbeth*, Barnardo’s account of the “dreaded sight” and the portentous atmosphere is cut short by the ghost’s emergence. Without description, the ghost is designated as “this thing”, “this apparition” and “dreaded sight”. By the designation as such, the ghost is “something, between something and someone, anyone or anything, something”. “Neither soul nor body, and both one and the other”, this ghostly presence “remains difficult to name”. Remaining questionable and “unnameable”, the ghost refuses to be defined by those who have seen it (Derrida,

2006, p. 5). Concurrently, it forces Horatio – the one who has not seen it yet – to see it with his own eyes.

As an “apparition”, the ghost is a representation perceptible by the characters’ sight. Characterized as “dreaded”, the sight of the ghost becomes a haunting spectacle that disturbs and challenges the characters’ perception (Derrida and Stiegler, 2013, p. 38). Seeing the ghost together, Barnardo, Marcellus and Horatio are the witnesses of the ghost’s uncanniness. “In the same figure like the King that’s dead” (1.1.40), the ghost roams about just to be seen. Indeed, it appears as an image of strange yet familiar someone. Because it represents “the body of someone” whose body is invisible or “without flesh”, this visible image is “someone other” (Derrida, 2006, p. 6). Saying “Looks ’a not like the King? Mark it, Horatio” (1.1.42), Barnardo articulates his need for confirmation, whether Horatio sees the same thing he has seen. This unveils Barnardo’s and Marcellus’s doubt about the reliability of their own perception, suggested in “He may approve our eyes” (1.1.28). With his reply “Most like. It harrows me with fear and wonder” (1.1.43), Horatio verifies the ghost as the uncanny other that triggers his fear and astonished confusion. Directly experiencing its uncanny presence, he can no longer disregard the ghost as a mere fantasy – “Before my God, I might not this believe / Without the sensible and true avouch / Of mine own eyes” (1.1.55-57). Though unbelievable, the presence of the ghost is undeniable. This undeniability pressures the characters to accept the limit of their perception as it situates the ghost as something beyond human’s imagination and perceptual knowledge.

Entreating Horatio to speak to the ghost, Marcellus and Barnardo do not “ask him merely to speak to the ghost, but to call it, interpellate it, interrogate it, more precisely, to question the Thing that it still is” (Derrida, 2006, p. 12-13). From the ghost, they want to solicit a hidden truth or a meaning behind the mystery. They want to know its identity, meaning and purpose. As he charges it to speak, Horatio tries to “inspect, stabilize, arrest the specter in its speech” (p. 13). Yet, as if “offended” by his verbal charge, the ghost vanishes. Here, Horatio’s attempt to challenge the ghost to reveal itself reiterates Francisco’s command, “Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.” (*Ham* 1.1.2). Observably, the ghost’s entrance and exit are similar in regard to their interrupting function. Intimated in Marcellus’s comment – “Tis gone and will

not answer” (1.1.51), the ghost’s disappearance puts an end to further interrogation and maintains its unrevealing muteness. In addition to its stern silence, the armor depicts the ghost as impenetrable. This armor “prevents perception from deciding on the identity” of the ghostly presence wearing it. With dissimulating and protecting function, the armor gives the ghost “the power to see without being seen”. In the armor, the ghost proves to be authoritative (Derrida, 2006, pp. 7-8). By delimiting the perception of those trying to identify them, it exposes the insufficiency of their perceptive capability. Also emphasized by the armor, the invulnerability of the ghostly figure is in juxtaposition with the characters’ vulnerability. As Marcellus states, the ghost “is as the air, invulnerable” (1.1.144). Therefore, the characters’ intention to see through or probe into it is merely “vain blows” and a “malicious mockery”.

Appearing and disappearing in such a manner, the ghost divulges nothing but strange ambiguities. Horatio’s failure to find out what it really is and what it comes for signifies how the ghost actually stays outside human’s knowledge and understanding. Even a man of knowledge like Horatio cannot decipher it. “This being-there of an absent or departed one”, Derrida asserts, “no longer belongs to knowledge”. It “comes to defy semantics as much as ontology, psychoanalysis as much as philosophy” (2006, p. 5). In other words, the ghost withstands familiarization. Such a defiance compels the characters to adjust their perceptions and responses in every encounter. At the same time, it opens a space for the characters’ speculative interpretation.

Horatio interprets the strange appearance of the ghost as foreboding disorder or “some strange eruption to our state” (*Ham* 1.1.68). Taking its “fair and warlike form” into consideration, Horatio assumes the political unrest and military threats as a cause of the ghost’s “martial stalk” at night. This assumption is supported by Marcellus’s observation of the state’s preparation for warfare. For example, the “strict and most observant watch”, “daily cost of brazen cannon”, “foreign mart for implements of war”, “impress of shipwrights”, “this sweaty haste / Doth make the night joint labourer with the day” (1.1.69-77). Obviously, Horatio’s assumption is based on his memory of the dead Danish king when he was fighting with Fortinbras, the previous Norwegian ruler – “the very armour he had on / When he the ambitious

Norway combated” (1.1.59-60). He informs the other characters about the rumor of young Fortinbras who intends to wage war against Denmark to reclaim the lands his father had lost. Here, Barnardo concludes, “this portentous figure / Comes armed through our watch so like the King / That was and is the question of these wars” (1.1.107-10). Such portentousness of the ghost is amplified by Horatio. He compares the supernatural and apocalyptic-like phenomenon that foreshadow the death of Julius Caesar with the ghost’s strange appearance. For him, this ghostly presence serves as “precurse of feared events, / As harbingers preceding still the fates / And prologue to the omen coming on” (1.1.120-22). It emerges to demonstrate both the ongoing turmoil and impending disaster “unto our climates and countrymen”. However, the ghost resists Horatio’s assumption as such. As seen, Horatio’s confidence decreases when the ghost stays unresponsive to his verbal charges. At first, he firmly asks the ghost about “the country’s fate” he believes it foreknows. Getting no reaction from the ghost, Horatio shifts the focus of his inquiry from political and social to the economic one. More imploringly, he asks about the treasure the ghost may have hoarded when it was alive.

Evidently, Horatio’s interpretation links the ghost to the “unnatural” and its implication of chaos. Viewed as both a supernatural figure and a part of the ominous phenomenon, the ghost vanishes when the cock crows. This vanishment is construed by the characters as testimonial to the ghost’s unnaturalness. Here, the ghost is categorized into a group of “th’extravagant and erring spirit” (*Ham* 1.1.153). Heralded by the crowing cock, the sacred daylight is what “a guilty thing” or a damned spirit is believed to be afraid of. In contrast to the day, the night is described as “dead hour” or unwholesome time during which the ghost comes. From after midnight until dawn, this dead hour is, in fact, the witching hour or the time when the supernatural such as witches, demons, or apparitions, etc. are present. In Christian belief, it is natural for the dead, particularly the properly buried or cremated, to rest in their graves until the Day of Judgement. Therefore, the ghost is basically regarded as unnatural. Even though the connection between the ghost and Claudius’s crimes is not yet unfolded, the ghost of the former king is perceived as “unnatural” by the supposition that it is in sinful damnation or nonredemptive state. In this ghostly figure, the supernatural and the unnatural is intertwined. Embodying such an

intertwinement, the ghost of Hamlet's father hints at the underlying ambivalence of "nature" from which the other specters emerge.

Coming back to Denmark to attend his father's funeral, Hamlet has already suspected that there is something wrong with his father's death. However, his suspicion is still unconfirmed. In grief, Hamlet laments his father's death and continues to wear a mourning outfit. His act of mourning is in stark contrast to the celebratory mood of the royal coronation and marriage between Gertrude, his widowed mother and Claudius, his uncle.

In his opinion, his mother's remarriage is done with the "most wicked speed" and, therefore, unacceptable. This hasty remarriage makes Hamlet look at his mother with reproach and contempt since he sees it as a sign of the lack of her love for his father. In addition, Hamlet strongly disapproves of the fact that his mother remarries with his father's brother. For him, this matrimony is incestuous and, thus, "unnatural". Here, the so-called incest violates the society's sexual ethics which is predicated on "the law of nature". As the unnatural, the incest is "not the impossible but the undesirable" (Daston, 2019, pp. 11-12; Roth pp. 91, 97-99). Moreover, Hamlet considers Claudius a man inferior to his father whose greatness is unparalleled, "but no more like my father / Than I to Hercules" (*Ham* 1.2.152-53). His father is a perfection like the god of sun, "Hyperion". On the contrary, Claudius is compared to a "satyr" – a half-animal half-human creature, full of hideous flaws. Shocked and disappointed by her choice of husband, Hamlet condemns his mother for promiscuity and fickleness. Hamlet also thinks of Gertrude and Claudius as too indulgent in the carnal lust. Such an indulgence leads to their deviation from proper sexual conducts from which incest is excluded. From his rebuking remark – "Fie on't, ah, fie, 'tis an unweeded garden / That grows to seed, things rank and gross in nature / Possess it merely" (1.2.135-37), Hamlet not only accentuates the unnaturalness of this improper remarriage but also illustrates how such unnaturalness has thoroughly corrupted his native land. Portraying Denmark as a garden, this metaphor relates to the English Renaissance notion of horticulture. As a display of "paradise imaginary", a garden in the early modern period is "important in terms of political and philosophical ideologies" (Tigner, 2012, p. 1). The garden of Denmark is a political garden which acts as a microcosm of "the whole kingdom and its monarch". Therefore, Hamlet's

“unweeded garden” conveys how Denmark is contaminated by the unnatural and, hence, in a state of disorder (Tigner, 2012, pp. 10-13). Recalling how his father dearly loves his mother, Hamlet expects his mother to be faithful to him even after his father’s death. Because of this, Hamlet may accuse his mother not only of incest but also adultery. In this case, the adultery between royalties brings about the adulteration of the state. Aware of how the unnatural is suggestive of chaotic and disastrous consequence, Hamlet heartbrokenly bewails “It is not, nor it cannot come to good” (1.2.158).

Informed of his father’s ghost by Horatio, Hamlet prepares to see it for himself. By its appearance, his suspicion about his father’s death is confirmed, “My father’s spirit – in arms! All is not well; / I doubt some foul play” (*Ham* 1.2.254-55). Accordingly, he expects “some impartment” from this encounter, “foul deeds will rise / Though all the earth o’erwhelm them to men’s eyes” (1.2.255-56). Again, the ghost comes to interrupt. It appears while Hamlet is speaking and is about to reveal something. In this way, the ghost’s “interruption of the presentness of the present” unearths “another narrative” lurking beneath “the surface of received history”. This narrative is “an untold story that calls into question the veracity of the authorized version of events” (Weinstock, 2004, p. 5). Confronting the ghost, Hamlet repeats Horatio’s attempt to investigate its identity and intention. He tries to analyze whether the ghost is benevolent or malevolent, “Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned, / Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell, / Be thy intents wicked or charitable” (1.4.40-42). Despite his lingering skepticism of the ghost’s “questionable shape”, Hamlet designates this ghost as his deceased father by calling it “Hamlet, King, father, royal Dane”. By giving the ghost an identity, Hamlet hopes for a communication. He wants to break its silence and find the answer to his suspicion about the death of his father. For him, the ghost seems to withhold an important secret. He presumes that such a secret is what prevents the ghost from its eternal rest and obliges it to revisit the mortal world, “What may this mean / That thou, dead corpse, again in complete steel, / Revisits thus the glimpses of the moon” (1.4.51-53). Addressing himself and others as “fools of nature”, Hamlet not only acknowledges the ghost as “the one no longer to that which one thinks one knows by the name of knowledge” but also admit the limit of his perception (Derrida, 2006, p. 5). His

admission is implicated in how he sees the ghost as “with thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls” (1.4.56). In front of the ghost’s ambiguous presence, Hamlet desperately asks for information and clarification, “Say why is this? Wherefore? What should we do?” (1.4.57).

3.2 Unweeded Denmark

Building dramatic suspense, Marcellus’s statement, “Something is rotten in the state of Denmark” (1.4.90) foretells how the ghost’s disclosure of the reason behind its return is relevant to the corrupted and the chaotic condition of the country. Suggested earlier by Hamlet’s metaphor of “unweeded garden”, Denmark’s corruptness stems from the king’s and queen’s overindulgence in lust, as well as alleged incest and adultery. Caused by the monarchs’ transgression against sexual ethics, the state’s corruptness is unnatural. Apart from this, the word “rotten” implies the decomposing body of the dead king. In the early modern England, the monarch is imagined as having “two bodies, the body natural and the body politic” (Tigner, 2012, pp. 12-13). Since these two bodies are in parallel, the rotten body natural reflects the decay of the body politic. In this light, the ghost acts as a manifestation of such rottenness. To put it another way, the late king’s ghost unveils the latent corruption of the state.

Following the ghost to more isolated area, Hamlet leaves all his company behind and faces the ghost alone. As if it waited for this moment, the ghost starts to speak and confirm its identity, “I am thy father’s spirit” (1.5.9). The ghost’s untold story is about its unnatural and untimely death. Died without proper reckoning of his sin, Hamlet’s father is “Doomed for a certain term to walk the night / And for the day confined to fast in fires” (1.5.10-11). In a purgatory state, the ghost seeks revenge for “his foul and most unnatural murder”. Characterized as “most foul, strange and unnatural”, this murder is committed by Hamlet’s uncle and the late king’s brother, Claudius. After sneaking into the orchard where his victim is resting, Claudius kills him by pouring a deadly poison into his ear. To cover up his treasonous crime, he invents and spreads the story that the king was stung by a snake. Similar to the poisoned physical body of old Hamlet, the garden of Denmark is, in this case, not

only untended but also poisoned by Claudius's unnatural deed. For its unmatched cruelty, it can be said that it is this murder that corrupts the state's garden and makes it ranker in the first place. By exposing "Claudius's machinations against the departed king", the ghost offers "a "plausible" account of the death of the former king". Since it stays "dumb and speak not" to other characters except Hamlet, this ghost can be conceived as "an external representation of Hamlet's interior suspicions" (Usongo, 2021, p. 72). Explicitly, the ghost's disclosure of the murder marks Claudius as a target of its revenge, "Thus was I sleeping by a brother's hand" (1.5.74). Like Hamlet, it complains how the state and the queen's virtue are spoiled by her and Claudius's lustfulness and sexual misconducts, "Let not the royal bed of Denmark be / A couch for luxury and damned incest" (1.5.82-83). Nevertheless, the ghost's appearance remains indisputable. Though uncommunicative, the ghost is perceptible to other characters.

As that which "looks at" and "concerns" its listener, the ghost needs "serious hearing" (Derrida, 2006, p. 5). Before the declaration of its identity and impartment of unnatural murder, the ghost utters, "mark me" (1.5.2). Its first utterance is already an imperative, commanding Hamlet to pay attention to what it "shall unfold" and what it will ask for. Unveiling the unnatural murder, the ghost wants Hamlet to exact a revenge on the murderer. By that, it obliges Hamlet "to do justice, to put things back in order" (Derrida, 2006, p. 23). Obviously, the ghost demands his promise and his responsibility. From Hamlet, it requires not only a commitment but also a fulfillment by his words and deeds. On the one hand, by telling him its demands, the ghost answers Hamlet's question, "Say why is this? Wherefore? What should we do?" (1.4.57). On the other hand, by listening to and remembering the ghost's demands, Hamlet is turned into its inheritor. Taking on a shape of his father, the ghost is the departed other who "comes before" Hamlet and makes him who he is by inheritance. Therefore, this ghostly presence is that which Hamlet is indebted to (Derrida and Stiegler, 2013, p. 41). Through his swears, Hamlet reaffirms and memorizes his debt. This reaffirmation allows the ghost to come back, to haunt him in his "mind's eye" or memory. Through haunting, the ghost repeatedly "provokes the one it haunts to a response or reaction". As noted by Gordon, the haunting as such is

“distinctive for producing a something-to-be-done” (del Pilar Blanco and Peeren, 2013, p. 13).

Contending that “we do not believe in ghosts, we are haunted by them”, Gunning points to how the ghost as “revenants of things past” exerts its spectral effect on us through our “memory” (2013, p. 232). Analogously, the ghost of old Hamlet haunts the characters through how they remember it and the dead king. Manifesting itself in a form of the previous king, the ghost urges the characters to revisit their memory. By its appearance and gesture, the ghost replicates that particular memory and, at the same time, overwrite it. Consequently, the characters are impelled to review and rememorize their past. In this case, their memory of the late king when he was alive and had died are overlapped. Such an overlapping is not only where the uncanniness of the ghost can be felt but also where its haunting is located.

After his first encounter with the ghost, Horatio recalls the previous king’s triumph over the Norwegian lord and the forfeiture of the lord’s lands. In his memory, the valiant king was wearing the same armor as the ghost. As he notices the identicalness between the ghost he has seen and the late king he once saw, Horatio senses the ghost’s uncanniness. Thus, he exclaims, “Tis strange” (1.1.63). From here, the ghost’s haunting begins as it makes Horatio reflect further on its very appearance and the country’s current condition. Giving him no answer, the ghost permits Horatio to make his own guess about the details and the possible causes of “strange eruption” (1.1.68). After the ghost vanishes, Horatio is left with fearful uncertainty which propels him to report this strange occurrence to Hamlet.

In Hamlet’s case, the ghost of his father has already haunted him since before he is aware of its return to the living world. Although he does not know about the ghost, Hamlet has seen his father in his “mind’s eye” or his memory. While listening to the story of his father’s ghost, Hamlet immediately feels its uncanniness and reiterates Horatio, “Tis very strange” (1.2.219). His uneasiness is articulated as he utters, “but this troubles me” (1.2.223). This reaction is triggered by Horatio’s insistence on the similarity between the ghost and Hamlet’s father, “These hands are not more like” (1.2.211). After hearing that the ghost appears in “a figure like your father / Armed at point, exactly cap-à-pie” (1.2.198-99), Hamlet starts to call into

question his and Horatio's remembrance of the dead king. Asking Horatio for more details about the ghost's outward appearance and countenance, Hamlet rechecks his memory with him. In his encounter with the ghost, Hamlet makes sure of his memory by addressing the ghost as "Hamlet". Later, the ghost commands him to remember it and its demand, "Adieu, adieu, adieu, remember me" (1.5.91).

Hamlet's idealization of his father conveys the persistence of the ghost's haunting in his memory. As previously mentioned, the late king is a figure of perfection and excellence in Hamlet's mind, "So excellent a king" (1.2.139). Compared his father to Hyperion or God of the sun, Hamlet depicts him as glorious and caring. He remembers how his father treats his mother with love and warmth comparable to that of the sun, "so loving to my mother / That he might not beteem the winds of heaven / Visit her face too roughly" (1.2.140-42). Such remembrance is painful to Hamlet since he now sees his mother remarries with his uncle, Claudius. Hamlet regards his father with the highest value or the best quality, whereas Claudius is deemed the lowest or the worst. Alone with Gertrude, Hamlet restates the flawlessness of the dead king in juxtaposition with Claudius' defectiveness. Here, he compares his father to several mythical gods such as Hyperion, Jove, Mars, Mercury. By that comparison, Hamlet he idealizes his father's physical features from his graceful visage to upright stance. Emphatically, he says his father is "A combination and a form indeed / Where every god did seem to set his seal" (3.4.59-60). Such idealization demonstrates how Hamlet memorizes his departed father and his own past. Here, what traumatizes Hamlet is his own remembrance of his dead father for it sharpens the contrast between his past and his present. In this sense, it can be said that his father represents the nostalgic past. Contrarily, his uncle reflects hurtful and unwanted present. As Gunning encapsulates Schmitt, "hauntings are the result of an inability to forget, due to an incomplete process of memorialization" (2013, p. 232). Unable to forget his father and deal with his sorrow, Hamlet is haunted by his father's ghost. Observably, the more Hamlet ponders about his father, the more his mind is tainted by the unnatural. to be more precise, he is troubled by the ghost's demand for a revenge and remembering, as well as by its revelation of Claudius' heinous crime and Gertrude's alleged impurity.

3.3 Unnatural Couple

As a perpetrator of the unnatural crime, Claudius is portrayed as a man full of flaws and vices. Such a portrayal is in sharp contrast with is Hamlet's idealization of the former king. Compared to old Hamlet, Claudius is very lacking and, hence, unfitting for the role of the king and Gertrude's husband. By analogizing him to a satyr, Hamlet associates his uncle with lustfulness and debauchery since this mythical creature is known for its insatiable appetite for sexual pleasure. Hamlet also reproves Claudius for his excessive merrymaking. From his criticism – "This heavy-headed revel east and west / Makes us traduced and taxed of other nations" (1.4.17-18), it can be seen that Hamlet views such drunken merrymaking as not only a deplorable defect of his uncle but also a major blemish on his nation or even mankind. Making human abandon rationality and "the form of plausible manners", this drunkenness proves to be "vicious mole of nature" which "Doth all the noble substance of a doubt / To his own scandal" (1.4.37-38). In this light, the drunkenness is deemed unnatural since it transgresses against "nature" whose law cherishes human capability of reason and moderation (Floyd-Wilson, 2006, pp. 131-32; Lemon, 2013, pp. 104-5).

Besides a man who overindulges in sensual and drunken pleasure, Claudius is a villainous murderer and usurper. With "witchcraft of his wits" and "traitorous gifts", he plots an assassination of Hamlet's father and successfully murders him in his sleep. His devious scheme makes people believe the story that the former king was bitten by a venomous snake. Thereby, Claudius can get away with his treason. Claudius' murder of the late king is "most unnatural" because it severely transgresses against "nature" in many levels. Constructed on the concept of natural law and moral authority of "nature", the existing social morality is regarded as natural and inviolable (Daston, 1998, p. 158). Thus, an offense against social morality is equivalent to an offense against "nature". Killing the late king, Claudius commits what is legally and morally forbidden. Immoral and illegal, his crime is heinous because it is not only treason and regicide but also fratricide and deicide. Visibly, Claudius's act of brother-killing is a flagrant breach of trust and his social duty towards his kins and his king. Instead of being ambitious for his throne and wife,

Claudius, as his brother and his subject, is supposed to be loyal to and protective of old Hamlet. As Gertrude's brother-in-law and Hamlet's uncle, he should not kill and break their family. How Claudius' murder is also conceived as deicide is clarified by Hamlet's comparison between the late king and gods. As seen, this comparison reminds us of the early modern notion that the supreme ruler of the nation is equal to God or the supreme ruler of the universe (Peters, 2008, pp. 229-30). As an act of treason and regicide, Claudius' killing of the previous king destroy both the monarch's body natural and body politic. By "juice of cursed hebona", the king's body natural or "smooth body" is transformed into a body with "vile and loathsome crust". In parallel, his body politic or Denmark is contaminated by Claudius' unnatural murder and, as a result, is in a corrupted condition. The other unnatural crime of Claudius is usurpation. Whether he is motivated by jealousy or ambition, Claudius commits a treasonous murder to take over both his brother's position and wife. Killing old Hamlet, Claudius robs him not only of his life, his crown and his queen but also his opportunity to settle his sins or worldly affairs. Additionally, he steals, from his nephew, Hamlet, a succession to the throne. As Hamlet berates, Claudius is "A cutpurse of the empire and the rule, / That from a shelf the precious diadem stole / And put it in his pocket" (*Ham* 3.4.97-99). Called "that incestuous, that adulterate beast", Claudius is chastised by the ghost for his "shameful lust" and craftiness. The seductive power of Claudius' "wicked wit and gifts" is implied in the way he kills Hamlet's father. His action of pouring deadly substance into the late king's ear resembles how Satan's serpent whispers into Eve's ear and tempts her to disobedience. Serpent-like, Claudius uses his crafty wits and gifts to win Gertrude's heart. In this sense, Eve's disobedience is comparable to Gertrude's fickleness.

Taking into account his unnatural crimes and seduction of Gertrude, Claudius can be perceived as evil and sly as Satan. As a villainous murderer, traitor, usurper, adulterer and "a vice of kings", Claudius explicitly transgresses against "nature" and is demonized by both Hamlet and the ghost. This demonization conveys, Daston writes, "the inability to imagine or acknowledge humanness of the perpetrator and how both the natural order and the moral order are believed to be violated at once". Owing that inability, "a human perpetrator of an unspeakable crime is transformed into or called a monster" (2019, p. 41).

Since she remarries with her husband's brother, Gertrude is suspected by Hamlet for being an adulteress and accomplice of Claudius' murder of the former king. Hamlet rebukes Gertrude for her quick change of heart, which he sees as indicative of her unfaithfulness to his father. In Hamlet's thought, Gertrude has become a hypocritical and promiscuous adulteress who is capable of forgetting her husband as soon as he passed away. With disdainful disappointment, Hamlet denigrates her as lower than "a beast that wants discourse of reason", which he thinks "would have mourned longer" for its loved one's death (1.2.150-151). In addition to being an unfaithful and lustful cheater, Hamlet considers his mother a perpetrator of a sexual misconduct or incest. Later, his father's ghost reiterates these accusations. According to the ghost, Gertrude is no longer the "most seeming-virtuous queen" for she has fallen into lust and dissoluteness. This makes her choose Claudius over her deceased husband.

By and large, Claudius' misdeeds and Gertrude' alleged wrongdoings are regarded as "unnatural". composed of killing, usurpation and misconducts, these unnatural deeds can be look at as "bestiality". In one respect, this term is usually associated with abnormal sexual intercourses, especially between human and animal. In the other respect, bestiality refers to behaviors that are cruel or like that of animals. In this way, Claudius' crimes, along with Gertrude's so-called adultery and incest, can be categorized as "bestiality" because they transgress against "natural" humanity. This natural humanity is based on how human is conceived as a being with rational and moral faculty. Natural to humans, this specific capacity separates them from other creatures and makes them a superior being or, in Hamlet's words, "the paragon of animals". Apart from human's capacity for reason and morality, Hamlet speaks of other attributes that distinguish a human being as an epitome of divine creation. Saying "What piece of work is a man", Hamlet notes the limitlessness of man's capability and his useful physical features, "how infinite in faculties, in form and moving" (*Ham* 2.2.270-71). With features as such, humans are capable of doing anything they want, and what they do are "express and admirable". As God's image, a man is "the beauty of the world" and is even equal to angel in terms of their ability to comprehension. Setting apart by such differences, human and animal should not be on the same level. However, human's perpetration of bestiality undermines this

conception. Here, Claudius and Gertrude are transformed into beasts by their transgressive actions which reflect their lack of reason and morality. Only beasts will kill each other and enjoy themselves blindly in carnal lust without restraint. Thereby, the fact that a human being is capable of committing murder and sexual misconducts traumatizes Hamlet who tries to emphasize the difference between human and animal.

By uncovering and restating these unnatural deeds, the late king's ghost "calls into question" not only "the possibilities of a future based on avoidance of the past" but also the simplicity based on avoidance of ambivalence and complexities (Weinstock, 2013, p. 64). As it introduces the unnatural – the ghost self and Claudius' and Gertrude's transgressive actions, the ghost points to the ambivalence of "nature" that underlies the conceptual division between the natural and the unnatural, as well as human and animal. Consequently, it leaves a gap from which the specters of "nature" emerge. As stated by del Pilar Blanco and Peeren, the ghost is "a figure of unruliness pointing to the tangibly ambiguous". Such a figure "has insight to offer, especially into those matters that are commonly considered not to matter and into the ambiguous itself". Since "its own status as discourse or epistemology is never stable", the ghost "questions the formation of knowledge itself and specifically invokes what is placed outside it, excluded from perception". By challenging "the sanctioned, acknowledged", the ghost gives rise to reinterpretation and reimagination (2013, p. 9).

Observably, the characters' perception of the unnatural leads to their recognition of the ambivalence of "nature". In fact, Hamlet has already noticed the ambivalence of "nature" since before he finds out about the ghost's appearance. Contemplating the paradox between the funeral and the remarriage, Hamlet begins to question the differences between natural humanity and unnatural inhumanity, pretenses and sincerity, as well as representation and reality. This paradox is made obvious by Claudius' announcement of his marriage with Gertrude and his criticism on Hamlet's mournful behaviors. From his announcement, the contradiction between the "green" memory of the late king's death and the discretion or "remembrance of ourselves" can be seen. Positing that "discretion fought with nature" (1.2.5), Claudius identifies emotion with "nature" and discretion or reasonable actions with its opposite. However, this opposition is rendered ambiguous by the coincidence between the funeral and the wedding which, in turn, creates a sense of paradox and confusion:

Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,
 With an auspicious and a dropping eye,
 With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
 In equal scale weighing delight and dole, (*Hamlet* 1.2.10-13)

In juxtaposition, the contrast between the funeral and the marriage becomes even more outstanding. The funeral is held to memorize and mourn for the departed, whereas the wedding is a ceremony for celebrating the new beginning of the living. Indeed, these two events should not be taken place at the same time due to their conflicting purposes. The funeral prevents its attendants from a total joyful celebration while the wedding deprives its guests of a completion of their mourning. Here, the confusion arises since the attenders of both events has to express both “delight and dole”. In Hamlet’s opinion, such an expression is hypocritical since he thinks it is impossible for an honest person to be wholeheartedly happy and sad at the same time. Disregarding the paradoxical atmosphere, Claudius concludes it with a hint of conflict and chaos, “Our state to be disjoint and out of frame” (1.2.20). By provoking a sense of confusion and disorder, the paradox between the woeful funeral and the joyful marriage resembles that of fair and foul in *Macbeth*.

3.4 (Non)human Hamlet

This paradox is intensified by the clash between Claudius’ criticism on Hamlet’s “obstinate condolment” and Hamlet’s disapproval of the remarriage. Despite his description of Hamlet’s grief as “sweet and commendable in your nature”, Claudius criticizes Hamlet’s mourning as prolonged and “unmanly”. To grieve over one’s death this long, Hamlet, Claudius lectures, is doing “A fault against the dead, a fault to nature” (1.2.102). In other words, Hamlet’s mournful behavior is unreasonable and “unnatural”. Stressing the “naturalness” or commonness of one’s death, both Gertrude and Claudius disagree with how Hamlet particularizes his father’s death. In response, Hamlet states the superficiality of one’s acts and appearance and expounds how one’s sincere feeling cannot be conveyed simply by representations, “These indeed ‘seem’, / For they are actions that a man might play, /

But I have that within which passes show” (1.2.83-85). In contrast to Claudius’ idea of discretion and “unmanly grief”, Hamlet censures both his uncle and his mother for their lack of human’s natural sympathy and emotion which makes them no better than “a beast that wants discourse of reason” (1.2.150). From this, it seems that Hamlet values emotion more than reason. Nonetheless, Hamlet’s distinction between “bestial oblivion” and “godlike reason”, as well as his several attempts to draw the line between human and animal, is inconsistent with his former appreciation of human’s natural emotion and his promise to forget everything but his father’s revenge (Bertram, 2018, pp. 167-68). Once the boundary between the natural and the unnatural and between human and animal becomes less distinct, the ambivalence of “nature” is implicated. Furthermore, Hamlet distrusts both deeds and words since they can be mere pretenses not truthful reality. Here, another dichotomy is present as Hamlet sets the imperceptible or inner reality apart from the perceptible or outer one. Unable to find a reconciliation, Hamlet continues to brood over the conflicting distinctions between the natural and the unnatural; human and animal; reason and emotion; words and deeds; representation and reality; internal reality and external reality. Indeed, the more he broods, the more his mind is confused and troubled by contradictions and complications. As a result, his absorbed brooding leads to his inaction and indecision. In this case, Hamlet’s encounter with the ghost, together with his awareness of Claudius’ and Gertrude’s bestial vices, raises more doubts and conflicts since it brings to the fore the ambivalence of “nature” Hamlet has caught a glimpse of. Repeatedly reminding Hamlet of the complex ambivalence of “nature”, the haunting of his father’s ghost permits the haunting of the specters of “nature”.

Hamlet and Ophelia are haunted by the specters of “nature” they encounter through their perception or witnessing of the unnatural – the ghost and other characters’ transgressive acts. This makes both of them resign to their inner worlds. However, their inner worlds become less coherent and more fragmented as they cannot really escape from the persistent haunting of the specters in their thoughts or memory.

To avenge his father’s death, Hamlet feigns an antic disposition and tries to prove whether Claudius is guilty of fratricide and treason. In addition to his pretended antic disposition, Hamlet’s preoccupation with his father’s death and his

mother's so-called incest makes him more self-absorbed and contemplative, as exemplified by his soliloquy "To be or not to be" (3.1.55-89). It can be observed that the more Hamlet feels pressured to do something the more he retreats to his inner life. In perceiving or seeing an object, Hamlet jumps from one thought to another. Therefore, when he articulates what he thinks, his speech resembles stream of consciousness. The comparison can be made when Hamlet meets the Gravedigger in 5.1. Different from Hamlet who always uses wordplays to deconstruct other people's remarks, Gravedigger takes everything in the literal sense. Such a difference reflects how Hamlet always philosophizes his thoughts and asks questions that he has no answer. The unfinalized thoughts or unanswered questions are cumulative in his mind. Thus, when Hamlet is thinking about one thing, his other thoughts simultaneously pop into his head. Overwhelmed by his own thoughts, inward disorders are present through the fragmented flood of thoughts. Thus, Hamlet remains paralyzed and undecided throughout the play.

Entering the court with disheveled appearance, Ophelia breaks away from her former silence. Singing ballads about unrequited love and the death of the loved one, Ophelia is unable to separate the loss of her love from the loss of her father. Her confusion in thoughts relates to how she is traumatized by the man she loves who commits an "unnatural" act of killing her father. Hamlet whom she loves abandons her and forces her into alienation since he kills her father, the only person in her life, and her brother lives far away from her. The tension between her love for her father and her love for Hamlet leads to her inner conflicts which she cannot reconcile. Her inward disorders are conveyed through her untidy appearance, broken and incoherent speech, senseless ballad singing, and distracted gestures. Her distribution of flowers is to express what she cannot articulate. Tormented by inward disorders, Ophelia decides to end her life. Despite her suicidal attempt, her hope to return to "nature" is presented through the flowers with curative properties she gives to other persons. "Each of them, in some capacity, serves as an anodyne; many of them simply with their scent alone were thought to ease the pains of the head and heart, more generally of the 'inward parts'" (Laroche, 2011, p. 216). With meaningful and medicinal flowers, Ophelia recreates a beautiful remembrance of her own past to alleviate her sufferings and traumatic experiences. In this light, Ophelia uses natural bodies – her

own body and flowers – to embody “nature” in order to communicate to the uncommunicable and make peace with herself. By this, she finds her ultimate redemption. Tragic yet oddly peaceful, the death of Ophelia can also be construed as an attempt to purge or purify the contaminated garden of Denmark.

Contrarily, Hamlet finds no redemption as he is still undecided to the last moment of his life. Unable to choose between deeds and words, Hamlet tells Horatio to do both. Like how the ghost makes him promise to revenge, Hamlet makes Horatio promise to let other people see a tragic spectacle of slain dead bodies and hear the story of unnatural crimes and revenge. He requires both tangible and intangible evidence. Here, Horatio and young Fortinbras becomes Hamlet’s inheritors. One falls heir to his throne and fortune. The other inherits his story.



CHAPTER 4

**“CURSING THE UNNATURAL AND RECOGNIZING THE
SPECTERS OF NATURE”: AN ANALYSIS OF SHAKESPEARE’S
KING LEAR AND A CONCLUSION**

4.1 An Opening of Unnatural Child

Although it is not as shocking as that of the two plays – *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* – in which the appearance of the supernatural can be observed, the opening of *King Lear* is no less complicated. Presenting the problem about the definition and expression of “love”, *King Lear*’s first scene immediately implicates the unnatural and disorder. By this implication, this play is constructed, like the other two plays, as unnatural and haunting.

Before its capital love-expressing and kingdom-dividing part, this first scene begins with Kent’s mentioning the two dukes and Lear’s affection towards them. This paves the way for the comparison and division of “love” and preference made by Gloucester and Lear. Speaking of how the duke’s qualities shape Lear’s decision of the kingdom’s division, Gloucester has already drawn a comparison between Lear’s two sons-in-law, Albany and Cornwall. This comparison of qualities becomes more obvious when he mentions his two sons – Edgar and Edmund. Saying that he is “so often blushed to acknowledge” his own son, Gloucester implicitly shows his awareness of the society’s sexual morality and admits his brazen offense against “nature” or natural law which normally prohibits any sexual intercourse outside the marriage (Klevar, 1972, pp. 117-18). This is also noticeable in his following explanation of Edmund’s unnatural breeding, “a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed” (*King Lear* 1.1.14-15). In spite of such awareness, Gloucester does not really put the blame on himself. Although he knows he is “a married man”, Gloucester “had procreated Edmund in an adulterous union which he still considered only as a sporting activity”, not an unintended mistake: “Though this knave came something saucily to the world before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair, there was good sport at his making” (1.1.20-22). In other words, he “lightly consider the

bonds of his matrimonial union” and, thereby, sees his “nuptial breach” as enjoyable and quite acceptable (Klevar, 1972, pp. 117-18). Gloucester’s question, “Do you smell a fault?” (1.1.15), associates his sexual misconduct and its transgressive unnaturalness with a reek or an unpleasant odor. Through such an olfactory evocation, *Macbeth*’s “fog and filthy air” and *Hamlet*’s corrupted garden are perceptible. Characterized by the foul smell, the air, the garden and Gloucester’s “nuptial breach” identically function to stress the unnatural as undesirable and unwholesome. As a result of that undesirability and unwholesomeness, Edmund is recognized as an unnatural child or a “whoreson” whose blotted origin is in need of effacement or oblivion. Despite “the issue of it being so proper” (1.1.16-17), Edmund’s illegitimate conception and birth are stigmatized by his father which, in this case, represents the society in general. By his question of a smelling fault, Gloucester “displaces his own ‘fault’ in his son’s conception” and “implicates his son as shameful”. Asking Kent “if he can still smell Edmund’s mother’s body” or “her fault”, Gloucester shamelessly discusses “the sexual taint on his own flesh, on his son’s flesh, or even in the air” (Kennedy, 2010). Unfortunately, Edmund cannot alter his faulty origin. This inalterability is emphasized by Kent’s “the fault undone” and Edmund’s soliloquy in 1.2. His unnatural birth is different from Macduff who had been torn out of his mother’s womb. Born out of the “unnatural nuptial breach”, Edmund is regarded as worse (Klevar, 1972, pp. 117-18). Thus, this particular character displays the unnatural or the transgression against “nature” in several layers. Preceding the kingdom division event, Edmund’s appearance insinuates the intrusion of the unnatural into Lear’s natural domesticity and authority, as well as the later unnatural-induced perversion of that domesticity and authority.

While introducing Edmund to Kent, Gloucester also talks about his other son, Edgar. By that, he automatically places them in comparison. Edmund is an illegitimate bastard, whereas Edgar is “a son, sir, by order of law” (1.1.18) and, hence, a rightful heir. Even if Gloucester claims that he loves his two sons equally, his indirect introduction of Edmund and his direct mention of Edgar contradicts his claim. As seen, Gloucester’s comparison of his two sons and his claimed equal share of love for them foreshadow Lear’s comparison of his children’s love for him.

4.2 Unnatural Challenge

By his imperative, “Give me the map there” (1.1.36), Lear establishes his supreme authority as a king and a leader of this kingdom division event. Acknowledging himself as old and is crawling “toward death”, Lear announces his “fast intent / To shake all cares and business from our age, / Conferring them on younger strengths” (1.1.37-39). As he divides his kingdom into three parts – “Know that we have divided / In three our kingdom” (1.1.36-37), it is clear that Lear intends to give each part to each of his daughters – Goneril, Regan and Cordelia. Two of his daughters have their own marriage partners – Albany and Cornwall – who can help them rule and watch over the territory they will be given. Hence, Lear finds this event a suitable opportunity to settle a marriage for Cordelia, his last daughter. The tension arises when Lear informs his children about how they can obtain their deserved shares of the kingdom. Deliberately, he proposes “Which of you shall we say doth love us most, / That we our largest bounty may extend / Where nature doth with merit challenge” (1.1.51-53). To take the territory, his three daughters are required to take part in his challenge to prove their love for him through their speech. From this challenge, it can be seen that Lear wants a confirmation of his daughters’ honesty and loyalty towards him.

Nonetheless, Lear’s love-proving challenge is very problematic. As he asks for his daughters to express their love as equal to their share of the kingdom, Lear overlooks how he wrongly aligns the tangible and dividable with the intangible and undividable. Able to be put onto a map, Lear’s kingdom has a clear and fixed physical boundary which makes its division possible. Although the map is only a representation of his actual territory, Lear still can divide his kingdom simply like he divides a cake on his plate. On the contrary, love is one’s abstract feeling and, therefore, has no physical boundary which renders it dividable. Only through feeling, love can be shared, and this sharing is incomparable to the physical division. Indeed, love can be conceived as in a paradoxical state. It is something that can be felt but cannot really be perceived by senses. In equating the division of his kingdom with the division of love, Lear reproduces human’s same old fallacy. Notably, Lear’s fallacy is

analogous to what Daston calls the “naturalistic fallacy”. This fallacy refers to the process in which “cultural values are transferred to nature, and nature’s authority is then called upon to buttress those very same values” (2019, p. 4). Like love, “nature” is, in fact, abstract. Its abstractness is variously conceptualized and defined by humans to suit their uses. Naming this and that as “nature”, humans objectify it and construct its materiality in the process. Likewise, nature’s famous personification – Goddess Nature – demonstrates an attempt to put “nature” into another concrete ontological frame, to give it a human-like body whose imagined corporeality is understandable by humans. Such an attempt is noticeable in Lear’s equation of his kingdom with his daughters’ love. In order to anatomize something, one needs to give it a body. For his kingdom, Lear gives it a dissectible body by putting it onto a map. For love, Lear asks his daughter to put it into words. He wants them to give this feeling a verbal body which he misperceives as similarly partitionable. As seen, the parallel between a mapped body of the kingdom and a verbal body of love is fallacious. The kingdom becomes more tangible when written down as a map, whereas love is no less intangible when put into words.

In the first place, there is an unbridgeable chasm between representation and reality. Because of its slipperiness, language itself is already an insufficient and unreliable means of representation. Instead of reaching the actuality of the thing it signifies, language takes us further away from it (Hiltner, 2011, pp. 5-6). Ironically, humans can never escape a cage of linguistic representation as long as they need to communicate, to express themselves, or to state something. Discernibly, one can define something as something only by comparison and metaphor. Indeed, the more abstract the thing they want to define, the more metaphors and comparisons they employ to define it. Goneril’s speech of her love for Lear is illustrative:

Sir, I do love you more than word can wield the matter
 Dearer than eyesight, space and liberty,
 Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare,
 No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour.
 As much as child e’er loved, or father found,
 A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable,

Beyond all manner of so much I love you. (1.1.55-61)

In the very first line of her speech, Goneril confesses the indescribability of love. To describe the indescribable, Goneril openly uses a variety of comparisons and metaphors. In fact, every line of her speech contains at least one comparison or metaphor. Those various uses are indicated by the terms such as “more than”, “beyond”, “no less than” and “as much as”. With these metaphors and comparisons, love is characterized as invaluable and inestimable. According to Goneril, its value is beyond what human generally regards as most precious, for instance, a vision, a land property, or a freedom. To elaborate, Goneril asserts love as equivalent to “life”. Moreover, she summons an assemblage of abstract quality – grace, beauty and honor – to foreground the considerable significance of her love. Before the conclusion of her speech, Goneril actually restates the impossibility of verbalizing the feeling of love, “A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable” (1.1.60). Again, love is emphasized as unspeakable. Such unspeakableness denotes not only the inadequacy of words as a means of representation or communication but also the profundity and intensity of a feeling of love itself.

Offering an extended version of Goneril’s speech, Regan speaks after her, “I find she names my very deed of love” (1.1.71). With a complicated imagery, Regan proclaims herself as “an enemy to all other joys / Which the most precious square of sense possesses” (1.1.73). Her killjoy self, she continues, “find I am alone felicitate / In your dear Highness’ love” (1.1.75-76). As it provides no exact meaning of love, her speech complexifies how the feeling of love can be put into words. Here, Regan insists on the concreteness of love. By transforming Goneril’s words of love into her “deed”, Regan describes the feeling of love in spatial terms such as “square”, “possesses” and “in”. In this sense, love becomes a vast and comfortable space in which she can happily situate herself. Although Regan tries to give “love” a tangible body of space, she still falls short of making that body fathomable and dividable. Despite Goneril’s and Regan’s attempt, love’s resistance to verbalization and definition persists as it remains unfathomable and indescribable.

Aware of the linguistic representation’s limit, Cordelia notes “I cannot heave / My heart into my mouth” (1.1.91-92). Unlike her sisters, she expresses her

truthfulness through her genuine silence and honest reply to Lear's order to speak, "Nothing, my lord" (1.1.87). When Lear asks her to verbally elaborate her love for him, Cordelia responds with a plain truth, "I love your majesty / According to my bond, no more nor less" (1.1.92-93). For her, deeds and words are entirely different. Without any metaphor or imagery, she explicitly states the very acts of love between a father and his children in accordance with her role and duty as Lear's daughter. She also adds how her love, together with "care and duty", is going to be shared between her father and her future husband. Compared to Goneril and Regan, Cordelia is the only daughter that successfully depicts the love for her father as she states the fact of familial relationship and duties, as well as the way she really acts towards her father. In spite of its sincerity, Cordelia's answer enrages Lear since it is not what he expects from her whom he considers loves him the most.

Dividing his kingdom into three parts, Lear splits his own love and preference for his children. The most bountiful territory will be bestowed on the most honest or, in Lear's expectation, eloquent. Besides his division of love and kingdom, Lear places his daughters and their love for him in comparison. By that, he breaks their unity and brings them into a bitter conflict. As seen, it is Lear who creates a tension between each of his daughters and a disturbance inside his own family and regime. In short, he cracks his own "moulds". This serves as an overture to the ultimate perversion of Lear's authority and domesticity including his tragic downfall.

From the responses of Lear's daughters, it can be seen that love cannot be precisely conveyed by means of language. When represented by words, it only recedes farther away from what it really is. To put it another way, words can never fully embody love and its indescribability. Asking his daughters to give him their verbal proof of love, Lear seems to wish for the unmediated truth that lies outside the boundary of language. However, his request is problematic since it ignores the distinction between representation and reality. By that ignorance, it erroneously equates the substantial with the insubstantial; the dividable with the undividable; the definite with the indefinite. In order to make it understandable and fathomable, Lear forcefully puts "nature" or, in this case, natural affection into and an unnatural body of words whose symbolic significance is constructed by humans. This results in the perversion of love or natural affection in relation to that of Lear's authority and

domesticity. Since words are mere representation and, therefore, can be twisted anytime. Instead of truth, Lear receives blatant lies from his two daughters. Here, natural affection is turned into unnatural affectation. On the contrary, the only daughter who offers the truest depiction of natural affection is condemned as “untender” or unnatural by Lear himself.

4.3 The Reign of Unnatural Children

In furious disappointment, Lear declares the disownment of his youngest daughter, Cordelia. Here the role reversal between Edmund and Cordelia is implied. Labelled as unkind and unnatural, Cordelia leaves the castle with the king of France. At the same time, Edmund is determined to take over Edgar’s position, “Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land. / Our father’s love is to the bastard Edmund / As to the legitimate” (1.2.16-18). Socially branded by his bastardy, Edmund calls into question the unnaturalness of his conception and birth. Seeing that he has nothing inferior to Edgar, Edmund protests against the social norm or “the plague of custom” that associates a child outside marriage with “baseness” or unnaturalness. In his rejection to the social stigmatization, Edmund asserts his virtue in his conformity to natural law and conjures “Nature” to legitimize his ambitious determination. Notably, Edmund’s announcement, “Edmund the base / Shall top the legitimate. I grow, I prosper” (1.2.20-21), intimates the reversal of power hierarchy as the base is going to displace the top. Ironically, Edmund later violates the natural law which he claims to be obedient to and becomes an unnatural villain who betrays his own family and reenacts his father’s unnatural nuptial breach with both Goneril and Regan. From Edmund’s question of the unnaturalness of his bastardy, the ambivalence of “nature” is unveiled.

Aware of how the denial of filial love and duty or ingratitude is understood as unnatural, Edmund makes the role reversal between him and Edgar happen by using this understanding “as part of his subterfuge against his brother and father”. Accusing Edgar of “plotting the fratricide”, Edmund succeeds in deceiving his father and taking over his brother’s place (Paffenroth, 2021, p. 92). He turns a familial and political hierarchy upside down as his status shifts from a social outcast or an illegitimate son to a legitimate heir of Gloucester. Conversely, Edgar adopts a

role of a lunatic – another sort of an outcast – to protect himself. In a way, this role reversal reminds us of Foucault’s notion of “the game of exclusion” in which different groups of the socially rejected take turn playing (2006, p. 6). Signifying the absence of natural affection and the rejection of filial duty, Edgar’s incriminatory betrayal is strongly condemned by Gloucester as “Unnatural, detested, brutish” (1.2.76).

Also suggested by Edmund’s proclamation to usurp his brother’s position, the reversal of power hierarchy is visible in another role reversal. Conferring his authority on the younger generation, Lear, in his old age, retrogresses to a stubborn childishness. In contrast, his two daughters become more authoritative. As they assume the role of a kingdom ruler, Goneril and Regan takes on another dominant role in the household. Reversibly, they are turned into Lear’s mother, whereas Lear becomes their unruly child. This role reversal illustrates the perversion of Lear’s authority and domesticity which, in turn, foretells the kingdom’s political turmoil.

Deemed “unnatural”, the rejection of filial love and duty, together with the perversion of filial relationship, leads to a doom and chaos. This is elaborated by Gloucester who views the acts of “son against father” and “father against child” as a portent of greater conflicts and “all ruinous disorders” – “Love cools, friendship / falls off, brothers divide: in cities, mutinies; in / countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond / cracked ’twixt son and father” (1.2.106-109). Gloucester adduces an “unnatural” or uncommon meteorological phenomenon – “These late eclipses in the sun and moon” (1.2.103) – to explain and foreground the unnaturalness of such perversion of filial relationship and the reversal of power hierarchy. In disagreement, Edmund questions the assumptions about “planetary influence” that “make guilty of our disasters the sun, / the moon and the stars” (1.2.120-121). In fact, he sees such assumptions as humans’ attempt to offer themselves an excuse for their wrongdoings by shifting all the blame onto “nature” or natural phenomenon. Here, another fallacy is laid bare.

4.4 Brutish Villains and Ungrateful Monsters

Compared to *Hamlet* where an emphasis is placed equally on reason and natural affection, *King Lear* solely highlights natural affection as human nature. On

the one hand, this affection or the feeling of love represent one's humanity. On the other hand, its absence indicates inhumanity. Hence, those who shows no natural affection are turned into a brutish beast or is perceived as "animal-like, having a nature appropriate to some creature but not a human one" (Paffenroth, 2021, p. 92). Once their "monster ingratitude" is revealed, Goneril and Regan are depicted by Lear as non-human creatures or centaurs whose "But to the girdle do the gods inherit, beneath is all the fiend's" (4.6.122-123). Their "sharp-toothed unkindness" is inhuman and, at the same time, dangerous. These images of monstrosity, Hoover asserts, serve as "an effective symbol of the corruption, brutality, and bestiality" of Lear's daughters (Hoover, 1989, pp. 349-350). Likewise, Gloucester's revilement of his son's brutish villainy is transferred to Edgar when Gloucester learns about his treachery. Moreover, Gloucester's exclamation, "Tis strange, strange!" (1.2.117), reinforces the uncanniness of the unnatural as that which intrudes into and disturbs the political and familial order representative of the natural one. Clearly, Goneril, Regan and Edmund are the real unnatural children who openly denies their responsibilities toward their fathers.

Thinking of himself as "So kind a father!" (1.5.31), Lear juxtaposes his fatherly kindness with his daughters' ungrateful unkindness. From this juxtaposition, it is discernible that Lear situates himself as natural or right and his daughters as unnatural or wrong. In this case, Lear fails to observe his errors of judgment and "the fact that it was he who acted unnaturally" (Paffenroth, 2021, p. 91). Disinheriting Cordelia and cursing his other daughters, Lear shows how "toward an unnatural being, one should also behave unnaturally, the way one would toward something that only appeared human, but was not" (Paffenroth, 2021, p. 91). As noted by Knowlton, "when a daughter has behaved toward her father as Goneril has toward Lear, she has acted unnaturally, contrary to Nature, and therefore she deserves to be punished by Nature for violating filial duty, loyalty, and affection" (Knowlton, 1936, p. 737). For Lear, her fitting punishment is to be infertile – "from her derogate body never spring / A babe to honor her" (1.4.272-273) or to be treated unnaturally by her own child – "If she must teem, / Create her child of spleen, that it may live / And be a thwart disnatured torment to her" (1.4.273-275).

4.5 Into the Raging Storm

Observably, Lear's confrontations with the unnatural call into question his perception of nature and the natural. By this, the ambivalence of "nature" comes into his sight. Still, his vision is mostly clouded by his inability to see his demands on his daughters and others as unnatural; his misjudgment of Cordelia's honesty; and his clingy attachment to words and authority.

Extremely shocked by his two daughters' monstrous unkindness, Lear furiously curses them and tries to exert his authority through his maledictions and conjuration of the storm. As soon as the storm is perceptible, Lear declares his madness, "O Fool, I shall go mad" (2.2.475). Even in his genuine decline, Lear still preoccupies with verbal performance and performativity since it is a way that he can wield his authority. Notably, the external tempest is in parallel with Lear's internal storm of inner conflicts and madness. As the knight comments, "One minded like the weather, most unquietly" (3.1.2). To gain control over the storm, Lear gives it a human body. Through words, Lear anthropomorphizes the storm. As he orders it to "blow", "rage", "spit" and "groans", Lear puts it into a "bellyful" body with cracking "cheeks" and a spitting mouth. In this light, the storm is transformed into "an enraged human being" which Lear mirrors himself to (Viguers, 2000, p. 343). Nevertheless, his attempt is negated by the natural body of the storm which is chaotic and uncontrollable. This violent storm is now "foul", as Lear complains that it becomes the "servile ministers / That will with two pernicious daughters join" (3.2.21-22) (Kordecki and Koskinen, 2010, p. 15). Instead of the storm, Lear is "humanised, paradoxically refusing to seek shelter from the storm in the very moment that he fully acknowledges his powerlessness over it" (Jones, 2015, p. 78). Lear's question, "What is the cause of thunder?" (3.4.151), can be construed as not only "seeking out the atmospheric conditions which produce storms, but also questioning which side is taken by thunder, which purpose thunder is advocating" (Jones, 2015, p. 77). "Indicative of the process of disillusionment that he has gone through in the storm", this particular question, Jones argues, conveys Lear's two different acceptances. First, the storm is "not subject to human command". Second, it is "not subject to his command" but to "someone else's" (2015, p. 77). These acceptances, however,

identically intimates Lear's inability to maintain his authority and his position of power including the collapse of his regime and the former political order.

“Representing how human bodies interact with the natural world”, *King Lear*'s storm scenes provide an “intense portrayal of disordered nature” that displays “a shift from a pastoral vision, in which nature resembles a pasture or garden, to a meteorological one, in which nature changes constantly and challenges the body at its boundaries” (Mentz, 2010, p. 139-40). By transforming “sterile dualisms and static ecosystems into pluralized and dynamic conceptions of self and nature”, these scenes mark the hidden ambivalence of “nature” through which the specters make an entrance (2010, p. 140). “Materially involved in the affective and political dimensions of Lear's stripping naked in the storm”, the storm combines the monarch's two bodies of Lear into an aging and vulnerable human body deprived of power and protection (Hamilton, 2017, p. 65). This is noticeable in how Lear's deliberation on human's frailty similar to that of animal, “the finitude of an individual life, the tragedy of our earthly condition and the politics of exposure and shelter” (Hamilton, 2017, p. 6). “Not pure timeless atmospheric chaos but tumult held within a particular frame”, the storm in *King Lear* also illustrates the process of haunting that presupposes disturbances within the existing structure or frame (Hamilton, 2017, p. 31).

Wandering about the vast stormy wilderness, mad Lear faces “the threat and terror of ‘hurricanes’, ‘cataracts’ and roaring thunderclaps” (Chiari, 2019, p. 150). As seen, Lear “sits in the middle ground and posits that man and weather are in constant interaction” (2019, p. 158). In the thunderstorm, Lear's naked bodies denotes the exposure of his vulnerability and mortality. “This contentious storm”, Lear utters, “invades us to the skin” (3.4.6-7). For the first time, Lear, though in demented rage, sees a true form of his humanity without worldly embellishments. In his “uncovered body”, he becomes an “unaccommodated man” who is “no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal” (3.4.105-106). In this case, a human being is merely an ordinary creature in the world of “nature”, and, thus, his significance is no different from that of animals. Lamenting that he is “a man / More sinned against than sinning” (3.2.59-60), Lear projects himself as the natural that falls prey to the unnatural which is his daughters' maltreatment and monstrosity. In addition, other characters such as Kent, Gloucester and the knight think of him as a victim not only of unfair treatment but

also of “the raging elements” of the natural forces which he tries in vain to command and control (Chiari, 2019, p. 158). With Lear’s storm, “Shakespeare”, Chiari summarizes, “represents the dissection or anatomy of a mind gradually losing control and ending in perdition” (2019, p. 168). This illustrates the undeniability of the substantial impact of the weather on one’s life and perception of its outer environment or “nature”.

Occupying several scenes of the play, the persistence of the violent external and internal storms represents the repetitive cycle of Lear’s heartbroken agony or “heart-struck injuries” (3.1.17). Appearing as “a throneless monarch overpowered by environmental forces”, Lear “yields to folly and, in his blind rage, estranges himself from those who truly love him” (Chiari, 2019, p. 150). Indeed, Lear is haunted by the specters of “nature” as he misrecognizes the unnatural as natural and, at the same time, tries to unnaturalize the natural. This misrecognition contributes to the perversion of Lear’s authority as a king and a father including the development of his madness.

4.6 Figures of Madness and Wisdom

Although there are many aspects as to which Lear, Poor Tom and the Fool can be placed in comparison, Lear’s obsession with verbal performance and performativity draws our attention to how these three different characters make use of or express themselves by means of language.

From his declaration of madness in the storm scenes, it can be seen that Lear’s madness is verbal. Indeed, Lear is very self-expressive and communicative about his madness and inner conflicts that trouble him mentally and physically. In his madness, Lear rages against both the storm and his two elder daughters since he considers both “pitiless”. After speaking out against the injustice he has suffered, Lear clearly states how his mind is filled with nothing but the unnatural or Goneril and Regan’s “filial ingratitude”. Even though he becomes more confused and tries to stripped himself naked, Lear is still able to articulate his feeling of wrathfulness and powerlessness. He can also narrate and act out the imaginative trial of his ungrateful daughters. Discernibly, Lear’s expressive madness denotes the persistence of his

preoccupation with words, or, to be more precise, verbal performance and performativity through which he establishes and exerts his supreme authority as a head of his family and kingdom. Falling victim to his own preoccupation and errors of judgment, Lear overlooks the trickiness of language. Simultaneously, he misrecognizes the natural as unnatural, and vice versa. Due to his erroneous vision and misrecognition, Lear does not see the ambivalence of “nature”, suggested by the complexities regarding the division between the natural and the unnatural; between reality and representation; and between words and actions. This is the gap through which the specters of “nature” manifest themselves to haunt Lear, driving him into agonized madness.

Implied by how Lear addresses him as a “noble philosopher”, Edgar’s madness is feigned. Disguising himself as a lunatic or Tom o’ Bedlam, Edgar accidentally encounters Lear’s company and has to take the same shelter. As seen, Edgar’s performance of madness requires not only his unkempt appearance and clothing but also verbal representations. He speaks of nonsense and tells everyone that he is followed by “the foul fiend”. It can be noticed that the fiend he mentions is Edmund and Gloucester, as well as the knights, who are chasing after him. In this case, words serve as a guise of madness by which Edgar conceals his real identity. Unlike Lear, he is aware of the trickiness of language and makes good use of it.

As the character who is the most conscious of language’s trickiness, the Fool always plays with the slipperiness and equivocalness of words’ meanings. In spite of the fact that he is the Fool, what he says to Lear and other characters are, in fact, words of wisdom or witty criticisms that challenge them to carefully reflect on themselves and their relationship to others. Ironically, the Fool is the wise while other characters, especially Lear, are the foolish ones.

Thus, *King Lear* presents three different figures of madness and wisdom. Lear is an expressive mad man whose cloudy and foolish vision becomes clearer through his furious madness. Another is Edgar who makes effective use of verbal representations to protect himself and find out the truth behind his accusation. The last but not least is The Fool who gives equivocal yet perceptive comments on other characters’ life and situations.

4.7 A Conclusion and Further Suggestions

Observably, the selected tragedies offer us different forms of madness. As the action-oriented play filled with vivid sensory details, *Macbeth* presents a physical form of madness in which the main characters are unable to correctly perceive and interpret the unnatural. In their disoriented confusion and sensory disorders, the Macbeths disregard the ambivalence of “nature” as unnoteworthy and also misperceive the unnatural as supportive of their intended unnatural deeds. Ultimately, the Macbeths realize their ignorance and misperceptions as fatal. *Hamlet* provides us with a mental or psychological form of madness as it portrays the main characters’ introspective and contemplative sorrow which makes them retreat to their inner worlds. Ophelia makes peace with and finds her final redemption in “nature” while Hamlet finds no conclusion in his inner world full of uncertainties and undecidability. For *King Lear*, the title character’s obsession with verbal performance and performativity contribute to his misjudgments and misrecognition from which a linguistic form of madness has developed. This form of madness shows how the problematic representativeness of words complexifies and takes us farther away from the truth and direct contact with “nature”. In other words, language prevents us from fully recognizing, understanding and accepting the ambivalent “nature”.

Among all the mad characters, Ophelia comes closest to the truth beyond linguistic representations. However, if she thinks about the meanings of the flowers she gathers, she might still cannot break free from a linguistic or symbolic cage. If not, she succeeds in her attempt to go back to and find her ultimate liberation in “nature” outside humans’ conceptualizations and definitions.

Despite the different forms of their madness, these mad characters are similarly haunted by the specters of “nature” which forces them to recognize the complex ambivalence of “nature” that underlies their perceptions or understandings of what is “nature” and “natural”. At the same time, these specters compel them to acknowledge and accept their own limitations as human beings. Pointing to the limit of human’s perception, knowledge, language and power, the specters expose the characters as vulnerable, uncertain and anxious. All in all, the mad characters are those who cannot admit the fact they misconceive “nature” as simple, stable, orderly

and uncomplicated. Unable to embrace it as complicatedly ambivalent, the characters are haunted by “nature” that turns spectral. Here, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *King Lear* similarly engage with three different levels of haunting: the haunting reality the mad characters live in; as the readers’ haunting textual experience; and as the audience’s haunting theatrical experience.

Instead of being scared away, we should keep in mind that the specters of “nature”, by directing our attention to our own inescapable condition, implicitly urges us to acknowledge and face the stranger, the other, or the alterity from within, who, in each of his unavoidable and unpredictable visit, perpetually asks for our “hospitality” and “responsibility”. It, to consider it another way, adjoins us to find a way to live with it and with ourselves (Derrida, 2006, p. 217; Shaw, 2018, pp. 9-10; Wolfreys, 2002, p. 12). Thereby, we should think of the specters of “nature” as the endless possibilities of reinterpretation.

Through this analysis that presents the interrelation between nature, specter and madness, it is visible that the opposing categories such as art and nature; nature and culture; human and nature; human and non-human, etc. turns out to be obscure or even interwoven, as the fact that they are, more or less, socially constructed is revealed. The blurring or blending of such categories implicates posthuman potentialities of the studies of “nature” in the Renaissance era which permits the interdisciplinary convergence between posthumanism and ecocriticism. Likewise, indicating insightful experiences or perceptions that are markedly different, madness may imply a posthuman transition through which the predominant humanistic views of the world is negated. This intertwines further with the posthuman thinking that dismantles the opposition between humanity and nature. Madmen or madwomen that are deemed “unnatural” or “non-human” in the early modern period might come to represent the future posthuman prototype of mankind with posthuman mind and vision. Possibly, humanity may be redefined by madness, instead of reason. The specters, unassignable to any ontological category, probably become a new posthuman agent or subject.

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