

## ■ A Search for Home: Displacement in *King Lear*

Chih-chiao Joseph Yang  
National Dong Hwa University

### Abstract

According to Gaston Bachelard, home, both as a physical and mental shelter for human beings, involves a real space around which the imagination creates further images of warmth and coziness. The theme of displacement from home is pre-eminent in *King Lear*, and thus the tragedy serves as a striking example of Bachelard's poetics of space. In *King Lear*, although castles appear to be shelters for people, Lear can neither possess nor have access to them after he divides his kingdom and bestows all his property on his two elder daughters, who then banish him and keep him away from both them and their castles. Lear's roaming in the storm ends with his being forced to take refuge in a hovel. Before he reluctantly enters the hovel, contrasting ideas of a comfortable house and of a miserable hut become twisted in Lear's mind and speech. As he realizes the wretchedness of life in a hovel, Lear's previous picture of home as an intimate space is challenged and demolished. A cozy home becomes an unattainable place for Lear, and brings forth ever more destructive thoughts. However, whereas to him castles are now fraught with treachery and disaster, the hovel provides Lear with an epiphanic locus where he reaches certain profound realizations. In the hovel, Lear meets and befriends Edgar, disguised as Mad Tom. Leaving the hovel, Lear roams on the

---

**Chih-chiao Joseph Yang** is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at National Dong Hwa University. His Ph.D. thesis, "*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?*": *Intralocution and the Teaching of Renaissance Poetry in Taiwan*, was finished in the School of English Studies at University of Nottingham, U. K., in 2006. After he attained his doctoral degree, he first taught at National Hualien University of Education. He began to teach at National Dong Hwa University in 2007. His paper, "From Recognition to Reconciliation: Cognitive and Textual Spaces in *Romeo and Juliet*," was published on *Dong Hwa Journal of Humanities* in 2011, and another paper, "Literature as Communication: Response to 'The Passionate Shepherd to His Love,'" was published on *Studies in English Language and Literature* in 2012. He has been working on the interface between English language and literature. His main research interests include literary communication and pedagogy, cognitive poetics, stylistics, English Renaissance literature, and English poetry. E-mail: ccyang@mail.ndhu.edu.tw.

(Received 24 July 2012; accepted 7 November 2012)

heath, which extends his imagination and contemplation. The values of these loci are challenged and remodeled in the play: the supposed sanctuary for Lear now becomes the space of darkness. Because of radical changes in his physical locales, Lear's mental spaces are disrupted. As with the poetics of space, the play becomes a fruitless journey in which Lear looks for a home, with the possibility that he may just find this before the end.

**Keywords:** Bachelard, poetics, space, loci, displacement, *King Lear*

In Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*, home is defined as both a physical and a mental space for human beings to shelter in, and a locus for further imaginings of warmth and coziness:

The house . . . is a privileged entity for a phenomenological study of the intimate values of inside space, provided, of course, that we take it in both its unity and its complexity, and endeavor to integrate all the special values in one fundamental value. For the house furnishes us dispersed images and a body of images at the same time. (3)

According to this definition, human beings establish their sense of intimacy in the space of home. An examination of the significance of the house as a home indicates humans' deep-rooted yearnings for feelings of comfort and freedom. *King Lear* is a play that powerfully represents these yearnings and the attempt to meet them. After Lear divides his kingdom into two and gives the portions, respectively, to his two elder daughters, he keeps seeking a comfortable place to stay; however, he is constantly compelled either to move from one place to another, or else he simply wanders around. The places that Lear travels to are symbolic, for he moves not only physically, but also mentally. For Lear, ironically, home becomes an unreachable place and brings forth ever more distressing thoughts for him; for the audience of *King Lear*, the imagined image of a homely space is shattered. Based on Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*, this article looks at the creation of various spaces in *King Lear* and explores how the different locations in the poetic text appeal to the audience's imagination and sense of pathos.<sup>1</sup> However, as Lear is never really at home, this article starts with Bachelard's concept of intimacy.<sup>2</sup> I will omit Bachelard's probes into the inner spaces of a house, such as drawers, chests, and wardrobes; the essay will examine Bachelard's explorations of house, hut, and universe, and his dialectics of outside and inside: these concepts will be brought to the fore as I analyze the physical and mental journeys undertaken by the main characters in *King Lear*.

The greatness of *King Lear*, as Barbara Everett writes, lies in its poetic effects, for the play successfully arouses our sympathy, and the audience is inclined to identify with the protagonist (162). *The Poetics of Space* in the play present the environment for this cline. "To read poetry is essentially to daydream" (Bachelard 17); thus, the audience of *King Lear* have to adjust their imagination to tune

---

<sup>1</sup> Although A. C. Bradley argues that the exact locality in *King Lear* is vague (221-22), the contrast between "in the house" and "out of the house" is nevertheless clear.

<sup>2</sup> Whereas in *The Poetics of Space*, Bachelard discusses the inside space of a house, a symbol for a written text where the writer and the reader apply their poetic activities (Jones 12-14, 162-63), in this article, I borrow his concept about intimacy and focus on the idea that different locations correspond to mental spaces.

into the powerful images and the inexorable plot development (Mack 1-41). In addition to the images of loci and spaces, which are the main concern of this article, other images in *King Lear*, such as nature, clothing, and animals, also represent the turmoil the play portrays. Russell A. Fraser points out that *King Lear* is a play about different kinds of relations: “parent and child, husband and wife, master and servant, health and sickness, custom and the breach of custom, convention and aberration, the natural and the perverse, the use and the misuse of power, loyalty and sycophancy, chaos and concord,” and all of them are destroyed (66). The destruction of these relations can be seen as occurrences that precipitate the characters’ dislocation. Among the various images in the play, the images of loci and spaces can be seen as pivotal, because other images correspond to their changes in many respects. Mary Thomas Crane proposes that, in reading a play, “our basic spatial sense of ourselves as living in our bodies seems to exist apart from language and to be dependent on integrated communication between various areas of the brain” (39).<sup>3</sup> For example, Marianne Novy argues that Lear “wants to become a child” (87). Lear’s wish to return to the state of childhood is similar to the urge to find a comfortable home. Judy Kronenfeld, on the other hand, talks about the apparel-nakedness image (See also Charney 77-88; Heilman 67-87). Indeed, Lear takes off his clothes in the storm, and this willful return to nakedness, or to the human origin, is also a search for the feeling of home, or as Coppélia Kahn argues, the play is “Lear’s progress toward acceptance of the woman in himself” (105). In this motherless play (Brian 5), Lear is seeking a mother image that can only be fulfilled by “mother nature” and outside the house, rather than by a masculine or patriarchal society within the house. Although Emily Sun claims that *King Lear* opens up “a crisis of sovereignty” (2), Lear actually experiences the challenges to his power and authority from within his family rather than from his country. Subsequently, the changes in the values and ideas in Lear’s mind are also related to the changes in spaces; as Kiernan Ryan argues, “Lear’s disillusioning ‘madness’ expels him into a licensed space outside the perceptual framework contrived by class society, a space in which he is soon joined by the blind Gloucester” (“The Subversive Imagination” 79). I suggest that the images of loci and spaces embody the changes experienced by Lear, as well as by Gloucester—a character who acts as a foil to Lear. This article does not aim to challenge the traditional readings of the play, but attempts to provide another approach that verifies how *The Poetics of Space* relate to the development of plot in the tragedy.

---

<sup>3</sup> While Crane examines the idea of “subjectivity” in Shakespeare’s *The Comedy of Errors*, I try to apply her cognitive approach to the reading of *King Lear*.

## The Displacement

When Lear expels Cordelia and distributes his kingdom between his other two daughters, he not only gives away his property and power, but also loses his very home and even himself. Like Lear, Gloucester also discovers that he no longer belongs inside his own house, although this happens much later. It is their houses that contain the disorder and that prevent these two main characters from fulfilling their mental needs for home. As Maynard Mack writes,

[T]he play seems to illustrate, with an almost diagrammatic relentlessness and thoroughness, the unforeseen potentials that lie waiting to be hatched from a single choice and act: nakedness issues out of opulence, madness out of sanity and reason out of madness, blindness out of seeing and insight out of blindness, salvation out of ruin. (95)

The rejection of Lear and Gloucester from their houses demonstrates vividly the necessity of their escaping from those loci, and it opens the possibility of significance from new spaces in their lives.

At the very beginning of the play, Lear administers a preposterous test to his three daughters in his own house, and it is from this place that he drives Cordelia away, the daughter whom he actually loves the most (1.1.127) and to whom he wants to give an “ample third” (1.1.82) of his kingdom. Cordelia’s performance not only disappoints and irritates Lear, but also surprises and perplexes the audience, and possibly the other characters. The father and daughter should have known each other intimately long before such a test was carried out; Lear’s decision, on a whim, to listen to his older daughters’ flattery, and to Cordelia’s reluctance to comply with her dear father’s order, is shocking. Lear’s ludicrous decision may have resulted from his need for reassurance of intimacy, and the division of the space of his kingdom reflects his imagined expansion of his own territory—he would have three homes instead of one.

Lear and Cordelia’s prompt responses to each other’s behavior make the situation even worse: Lear is so exasperated with Cordelia that he exiles her, and gives the third part of the kingdom to his other two daughters. Cordelia is banished from the homeland forever, and although Lear tries to retain his king’s title and the trappings of monarchy, the reality is that he has no physical abode anymore. When the fateful decision is made, Lear tells his two inheritors about the arrangement for his habitation (1.1.136-39). Through his plan to stay with his two daughters in turn, Lear’s discourse suggests his anxiety at having a nonexistent home: he has lost his third daughter and is now afraid of the further loss of his other two daughters. Overwhelmingly, he wants a place where he can feel at home. Unfortunately, very soon, he finds out that the two appointed places that

should still belong to him are no longer his home. The “nothing” exchanged between Cordelia and Lear (1.1.89-92) echoes Bachelard’s dialectics of outside and inside:

Being . . . does not stand out, it is not *bordered* by nothingness: one is never sure of finding it, or of finding it solid, when one approaches a center of being. . . . Sometimes, it is in being outside itself that being tests consistencies. Sometimes, too, it is closed in, as it were, on the outside. (215)

From Lear’s perspective, Cordelia’s “nothing” excludes his being; however, not until Lear is cast outside his known being can he begin to see his true self. As Lear’s sense of intimacy is first challenged and then turns to nothingness, although he does not see his own being at that moment, at a later stage he has to move outside to reaffirm his being. Because of his misunderstanding of Cordelia’s “nothing,” he has to seek the meaning of his existence by leaving his supposed home, both physically and mentally, resulting in his descending into madness in the wilderness.

Similarly, in his house Gloucester is deceived by Edmund (1.2) and made to believe that his legitimate son Edgar is a villain, who covets his power and wealth. It appears ludicrous that Gloucester fails to recognize Edgar’s handwriting and character; however, Edgar has to escape from the castle. Gloucester later learns that he has made a fatal mistake, and has to pay for it with his own house, being forced to leave his former home.

### **The Relocation and Re-Evaluation**

Rejected and expelled by his own daughter, Goneril, Lear finds out that he has lost his own identity (1.4.205-09). Being ousted from his former home has also deprived him of his identity. Understandably, Lear decides to leave Goneril’s house for Regan’s; when Regan subsequently asks Lear to go back to Goneril’s place, Lear has to reject the idea of Goneril’s place as a possible dwelling: “Do you but mark how this becomes the *house*” (2.2.353; my italics). Lear would rather be homeless than live in Goneril’s house (2.2.415-18). Lear’s unwillingness to stay under any roof foreshadows his wanderings in the wilderness. Goneril’s rejection has forced Lear to abandon his hope of a home. Furthermore, Regan’s refusal drives Lear out of Gloucester’s house and into the storm (2.2.478-99). Because of his daughters’ treatment of him, his former castle has become, in Kent’s words, a “hard house” (3.2.65).

In the wilderness, Lear’s experience of the natural power reigning outside the castle begins. In *The Poetics of Space*, Bachelard laments that people in modern

city buildings “are no longer aware of the storms of the outside universe” (27). By contrast, in *King Lear*, Lear is depicted as suffering from the storm on the heath, with thunder and lightning crashing around (3.2). However, Lear does not realize the significance of this new experience until he enters the hovel.

Kent’s advice to Lear is to take refuge in the hovel nearby, because nature has turned the heath into a place of darkness (3.2.43-45). While even wanderers and animals have lodgings to stay in, Lear has no shelter from the storm except for the hovel. The contrast between the hovel and the house is described by Kent:

Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel:  
Some friendship will it lend you gainst the tempest.  
Repose you there while I to this hard house—  
More harder than the stones whereof ’tis raised,  
Which even but now, demanding after you,  
Denied me to come in—return and force  
Their scanted courtesy. (3.2.63-69)

The “hard house” was supposed to be a place in which Lear could rest and keep away from danger, but now, having experienced horror in the house, Lear is obliged to hide in an unfamiliar little hut and to be received by strangers rather than by his own daughters. This is a counter-experience to Bachelard’s description of the dream of a cozy shelter: “a dreamer of refuges dreams of a hut, of a nest, or of nooks and corners in which he would like to hide away, like an animal in its hole” (30). Those who roam in the field generally look forward to a shelter to hide in, but Lear prefers to stay in the storm rather than enter the hovel. His reluctance is apparently prompted by his imaginings of a comfortable house versus a miserable hut. This thought causes Lear to begin to question his ideas of the value of a house. As Bachelard points out, “[o]ne no longer knows right away whether one is running toward the center or escaping” (214). Lear faces his unsettled attitudes toward his own being. Bachelard elaborates on this kind of fear by asking: “Where can one flee, where find refuge? In what shelter can one take refuge?” and he concludes that “[s]pace is nothing but a ‘horrible outside-inside.’ . . . In this ambiguous space, the mind has lost its geometrical homeland and the spirit is drifting” (218). The idea of a home goes awry in Lear’s mind.

Yet even as Lear wavers over whether or not to go inside, he begins to think of his companion Fool:

Come on, my boy: how dost, my boy? Art cold?  
I am cold myself.— Where is this straw, my fellow?  
The art of our necessities is strange,  
And can make vile things precious. Come, your hovel.—  
Poor Fool and knave, I have one part in my heart  
That’s sorry yet for thee. (3.2.71-76)

Lear's idea of a snug place now becomes ambiguous, and for the first time, he thinks not only of himself but also of the Fool. As Arnold Kettle points out, Lear's words "represent a change in direction," for Lear is moving "away from self-pity, pride, revenge and kingliness, toward fellow-feeling and co-operation, the minimum qualities of humanity" (24). This change forces Lear to meditate on the uncertainty of any comfortable space. He is not sure whether the humble hovel will be a soothing place. Ambivalence impels him to hesitate in front of the hovel. At the door, Lear tells Kent that he considers staying outside may be more appropriate to his situation:

Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand  
 For lifting food to't? But I will punish home.  
 No, I will weep no more. In such a night  
 To shut me out? Pour on, I will endure. (3.4.17-20)

His mind is in a state of chaos, and a hovel cannot replace a home that would withstand the storm raging both inside his mind and outside. He imagines that many poor people are forced to inhabit the wretched hovel. His sense of home is once again challenged, but this time he does not feel pity for himself, but sympathizes with the folk who seek shelter in the hovel:

Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are,  
 That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,  
 How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,  
 Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you  
 From seasons such as these? (3.4.31-35)

Lear comes to realize that these people are the subjects whom he has failed to care for. Away from the castle, Lear is finally able to pay attention to the lives of those outside the castle. The kingly arrogance pervasive in the first two acts is now transformed into royal compassion. He begins to realize that the home of a king is actually *not* a castle. Kettle describes Lear's change: "his direct personal contact with ruling-class inhumanity leads him to question the validity of property itself and the authority and exemption from elementary human moral values it confers" (24-25). Lear is, in A. C. Bradley's words, "in the inmost shrine of love" (247) for he begins to realize his past self-centeredness and to have sympathy for other people. Although both Goneril's and Regan's houses have become unattainable homes for Lear, and these two loci still bring forth repellent thoughts to him, the hovel, as a home for many poor people, serves as a reflection of his current situation.

At this moment of Lear's realization, what has been happening in the houses, in contrast, is treacherous and disastrous. In Gloucester's castle, Edmund has successfully alienated Gloucester from Edgar (2.1); Edgar is forced to disguise himself as Poor Tom and run away from the castle (2.2.174-94). Edmund betrays



Gloucester (3.5), and Gloucester is brutally tortured and finally blinded by Cornwall and Regan (3.7). All these transgressions happen inside the sheltered buildings. Moreover, because of the cruelty of Cornwall and Regan, one of the servants in Gloucester's castle fights with Cornwall; the servant fatally wounds Cornwall but is killed by Regan (3.7.80-91). The loss of the intimacy of a home in the castle has caused further disorder between father and son, between old and young, as well as between master and servant.

On the other hand, Lear finds comfort in the hovel through his meeting with Edgar, who is disguised as a madman (3.4.40-188). The hovel is also the locus where Gloucester meets Poor Tom (3.4.111-44). Even though Gloucester is unable to recognize his son, he reveals his love for Edward (3.4.169-70) and shows his sympathy to Poor Tom (3.4.176-77). As Bachelard puts it, one dreams of living in a haven, away from the crowded places: "in most hut dreams we hope to live elsewhere, far from the over-crowded house, far from city cares. We flee in thought in search of a real refuge" (31). In *King Lear*, the hovel has become a temporary sanctuary for Lear, although later Cordelia assumes that in that place Lear had to stay with "swine and rogues forlorn / In short and musty straw" (4.6.39-40). Lear's sub-conscious thoughts about homecoming are aroused and drastically tested in the hovel. In *The Poetics of Space*, Bachelard points out this inmost yearning is in every individual: "[w]hen we are lost in darkness and see a distant glimmer of light, who does not dream of a thatched cottage or, to go more deeply still into legend, of a hermit's hut?" (31); consequently, a hut "possesses the felicity of intense poverty; indeed, it is one of the glories of poverty; as destitution increases it gives us access to absolute refuge" (32). In moving from the darkness of the storm to the dim light of the hovel, Lear, in his imagination, has come to realize what a home should be for him. What could not be achieved in the great houses is found in the hovel. Symbolically, the darkness in the castle stands in stark contrast to the light in the hovel. The corruption in the castle is only a pretense, or a meditation, for Lear in that "miserable" place. Although, while in the hovel Lear falls into a furious madness, a mental climate that rages like the storm outside, this madness is in fact a challenge to his past reason that was blinded in the castle. Now Lear becomes aware that his trust in his two elder daughters was misplaced, and his desire for intimacy is sharpened and relocated.

### **Intimacy and Immensity**

Meanwhile, the situation indoors turns even fouler than before: the English camp, built and dominated by Edmund, represents an extension of the domain

of the castle. After the death of Cornwall, Regan becomes Goneril's opponent in their respective relationships with Edmund (4.4; 5.1), and Edmund, making use of his advantage, tries to win the favor of both sisters and to eliminate Albany. By contrast, in the wilderness, Lear imagines himself as a real king (4.5.96-215). In a sense, he is the king, as long as he is beyond the boundaries of any house, but he has entered the extension of a real home. Bachelard discusses the relationship between house and universe: "the house converses about immensity with the world. . . . [T]he house . . . opens its doors to the world" (69), and he further claims the significance of the sense of intimacy: "[t]he house, even more than the landscape, is a 'psychic state,' and even when reproduced as it appears from outside, it bespeaks intimacy" (72). With imagination, Lear at last redefines his idea of a home, which is found in nature rather than in any human-built house. He has become a king without the confinement of walls. In the open landscape, Lear finds out more about himself. In Lear's case, the wildness of nature is where he can achieve intimacy. According to *The Poetics of Space*, the "daydreaming" begins in "the space of elsewhere," and "[w]hen this *elsewhere* is in *natural* surroundings, that is, when it is not lodged in the houses of the past, it is immense" (184). When Lear runs away from any shelter, he begins to daydream and transforms his sense of intimacy. Bachelard elaborates on his idea of "intimate immensity": "[w]hen a relaxed spirit meditates and dreams, immensity seems to expect images of immensity. The mind sees and continues to see objects, while the spirit finds the nest of immensity in an object" (190).

Correspondingly, it is in the landscape that Gloucester finds the will to live (Goldberg 145-57; Heilman 43-45). Outside of the houses Lear finds reconciliation with his beloved daughter Cordelia, and Gloucester recognizes his dearest son Edgar. In this way, both find their physical and mental intimacy. In the landscape, their interpersonal relationships are re-established. On the one hand, the house has become "hell" and "darkness" for Lear (4.5.140); on the other hand, as Kenneth Muir argues, "[t]he old Lear died in the storm" but "[t]he new Lear is born in the scene in which he is reunited with Cordelia" (xlix; see also Everett 160). Significantly, when Lear first sees Cordelia, after a long sleep, he thinks he has seen some "Fair daylight" (4.6.53). Representing to him the idea of a home and a sense of intimacy, Cordelia has brought the light back to the darkness that Lear has been through. Likewise, Gloucester regains his life by meeting the disguised Edgar, who leads him to "Bear free and patient thoughts" (4.5.93). In a place where the old man has the feeling of belonging, he finds a sense of intimacy.

In addition, Lear and Gloucester meet each other and discover more about themselves while in the countryside. When Gloucester hears the voice, he says,

“The trick of that voice I do well remember: / Is’t not the King?” (4.5.119-20), and then Lear claims himself “every inch a king” (4.5.121). After they meet, Gloucester, although blind, sees the world “feelingly” (4.5.162), while Lear, although insane, recognizes Gloucester: “I know thee well enough: thy name is Gloucester” (4.5.189). As Robert Keith Brian states, “[t]he heath is, above all, exposure to elemental realities. Gloucester loses his eyes but begins to see” (15). Both Lear and Gloucester regain their insights through nature.

### Homeward Bound

At the end, Lear and Cordelia are arrested and imprisoned; they are led back to a confined and corrupted house. However, for Lear, finding his true daughter is the culmination of the journey of his homecoming. The outside world, without Cordelia, even with its immensity, remains a prison for him. This experience is similar to Christian S en echal’s description of Supervielle: “Precisely because of too much riding and too much freedom, and of the unchanging horizon, in spite of our desperate gallopings, the pampa assumed the aspect of a prison for me, a prison that was bigger than the others” (qtd. in Bachelard 221). Hence, through his imagination, Lear tells Cordelia how happy he is as they can be in the prison together (5.3.9-20). At this moment, the physical experience has been transformed to a mental realization for Lear. As Stanley Cavell describes, “[t]he fantasy of this speech is as full of detail as a daydream, and it is clearly a happy dream for Lear” (69).<sup>4</sup> According to the poetics of space, “[i]t is our unconscious force that crystallizes our remotest memories” (Bachelard 16). Lear almost fulfills his daydream of a comfortable home: “[h]e loses the world and gains his soul” (Muir 1). Unfortunately, Cordelia is murdered, and Lear’s homecoming journey is interrupted. After the death of Cordelia, Lear is released from prison but has nowhere to go: he can only move towards the end of his life. The disorder displayed through Lear’s loss at the beginning of the play ultimately leads to a process where he regains a home, but ultimately his mental journey breaks down.<sup>5</sup> For some time, towards the end, he experiences some happiness at the promise of an

---

<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to see how Cavell tries to consider this daydream as an expression of Lear’s intention to shun others; in this article, I consider the daydream as an expression of his urge to go back home. It can be argued that both interpretations lead to Lear’s search for solitude.

<sup>5</sup> Although Muir thinks that Lear’s “actual death-blow is not his bereavement but his joy when he imagines that Cordelia is not dead after all” (liii; see also Bradley 253), whether Lear dies happily or not still remains controversial. However, as he can meet his exiled daughter, Lear does have a glimpse of a final illusion of being home again before he dies.

intimate space, but, as the tragedy develops to its denouement, the intimacy is extinguished, after all, by the death of his beloved daughter. Although all his life Lear has never felt at home, in the course of the play he experiences a new level of self-understanding and a search for intimacy. Even though he does not attain it, his physical and mental journeys correlate with the poetics of space.

Gloucester's death is similar to Lear's. According to Edgar, his father died out of joy at recognizing his true son (5.3.210-15). Although it is arguable whether Gloucester's death is caused by his actual reunion with Edgar, their meeting is still rendered through Gloucester's imagination, as he is blind and cannot really see Edgar. While Bachelard argues that Baudelarie pursues his daydream "with closed eyes" (195), Gloucester attains his imagined dream through his real blindness. Gloucester's experience is similar to Baudelarie's: "When the dreamer really experiences the word immense, he sees himself liberated from his cares and thoughts, even from his dream. He is no longer shut up in his weight, the prisoner of his own being" (195). In this sense, Gloucester begins to "see" when his eyes are gouged out<sup>6</sup> and fulfills his dream of "seeing" Edgar well when he really feels Edgar at his side. At the end, both Lear and Gloucester nearly approach their homes just before their deaths.

The ending may upset the audience's sense of completion, as the deaths of Gloucester and Lear seem to ruin any possibility of intimacy (Ferrell 99-100). As Kent comments on Lear's death: "Vex not his ghost: O, let him pass! He hates him / That would upon the rack of this tough world / Stretch him out longer" (5.3.334-36) and Edgar on Gloucester's death: "his flawed heart— / Alack, too weak the conflict to support— / 'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief, / Burst smilingly" (5.3.212-15), both Lear and Gloucester have suffered enough in this world. The calling of an intimate home has kept them searching thus far. Now that their imaginings of a home are about to be realized, no further changes of loci are required. *King Lear* represents the loss and the subsequent recognition of an illusionary or anticipated home, for, as Bachelard claims, "we do not change place, we change our nature" (206). The intense desire for intimacy is finally terminated, following first Gloucester's and then Lear's death; however, as Edgar's last speech shows, the younger generation will have to go on (5.3.346-49). Those who survive will have to return to their human-built houses, and to seek for their true homes in their hearts for the rest of their lives.

---

<sup>6</sup> Immediately after he loses his sight, Gloucester cries out: "O, my follies! Then Edgar was abused" (3.7.101).

## Works Cited

- Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space: The Classic Look at How We Experience Intimate Places*. Trans. Maria Jolas. Boston: Beacon, 1994. Print.
- Bradley, A. C. "King Lear." *Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth*. 3rd ed. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992. 208-89. Print.
- Brian, Robert Keith. *King Lear: Rejection, Abandonment, Projection and Paranoia*. 4th ed. London: The Psychotherapy Centre, 2002. Print.
- Cavell, Stanley. "The Avoidance of Love: A Reading of *King Lear*." *Disowning Knowledge in Seven Plays of Shakespeare*. Updated ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003. 39-123. Print.
- Charney, Maurice. "We Put Fresh Garments on Him: Nakedness and Clothes in *King Lear*." *Some Facets of King Lear: Essays in Prismatic Criticism*. Ed. Rosalie L. Colie and F. T. Flahiff. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1974. 77-88. Print.
- Crane, Mary Thomas. "No Space Like Home: *The Comedy of Errors*." *Shakespeare's Brain: Reading with Cognitive Theory*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001. 36-66. Print.
- Everett, Barbara. "The New *King Lear* (1960)." *Shakespeare: King Lear*. Ed. Frank Kermode. Rev. ed. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992. 159-76. Print.
- Ferrell, Lori Anne. "New Directions: Promised End? *King Lear* and the Suicide-Trick." *King Lear: A Critical Guide*. Ed. Andrew Hiscock and Lisa Hopkins. London: Continuum, 2011. 99-117. Print.
- Fraser, Russell A. *Shakespeare's Poetics: In Relation to King Lear*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962. Print.
- Goldberg, Jonathan. "Perspectives: Dover Cliff and the Conditions of Representation." Ryan, *King Lear* 145-57.
- Heilman, Robert Bechtold. *This Great Stage: Image and Structure in King Lear*. Seattle: U of Washington P, 1963. Print.
- Jones, Mary McAllester. *Gaston Bachelard, Subversive Humanist: Texts and Readings*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1991. Print.
- Kahn, Coppélia. "The Absent Mother in *King Lear*." Ryan, *King Lear* 92-113.
- Kettle, Arnold. "The Humanity of 'King Lear'." Ryan, *King Lear* 17-30.
- Kronenfeld, Judy. *King Lear and the Naked Truth: Rethinking the Language of Religion and Resistance*. Durham: Duke UP, 1998. Print.
- Mack, Maynard. *King Lear in Our Time*. London: Methuen, 1965. Print.
- Muir, Kenneth. Introduction. *King Lear*. Ed. Muir. London: Methuen, 1972. xiii-lviii. Print.
- Novy, Marianne. "Patriarchy, Mutuality, and Forgiveness." *William Shakespeare's King Lear*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea, 1987. 85-95. Print.
- Ryan, Kiernan. "'King Lear': The Subversive Imagination." Ryan, *King Lear* 73-83. \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *King Lear*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993. Print.
- Shakespeare, William. *King Lear. The RSC Shakespeare*. Ed. Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2009. Print.
- Sun, Emily. *Succeeding King Lear: Literature, Exposure, and the Possibility of Politics*. New York: Fordham UP, 2010. Print.

## 家的追尋：《李爾王》裡的流離失所

### 摘要

根據巴舍拉的空間詩學，「家」既是物質的場域，也是心靈的空間，提供人類一個真實的場所，讓人有溫暖及舒適的感受與想像。以巴舍拉的理論來閱讀《李爾王》，更能凸顯及深化其流離失所的主題。在《李爾王》劇裡，原本是生命庇護所的城堡，李爾卻因將國土與財產分給他的兩個女兒後，淪落到被摒除在外，不得其門而入，震撼了他對家的認知。爲了遮風避雨，李爾只能勉強躲進一間鄙陋的小茅屋，於是他的內心與言辭中就交錯著舒適的房子與卑賤的小屋的價值定位。溫馨的家對他來說，已經遙不可及，甚至讓他感到嫌惡。當城堡裡發生了一連串陰謀背叛、離心離德的事時，李爾反而在荒野的小茅屋裡遇到了裝瘋的艾德格，找到某種寄託，重新領略生命。離開了陋鄙小屋，當李爾流浪在荒原中，他的心靈與想像反而得以舒展。此劇空間的轉換將所有場域的價值質疑、顛覆，原本安撫人心的空間卻成了陰暗的角落，李爾的心智也因此被瓦解與重塑。這趟艱辛的身心空間歷程，直到李爾臨死之際，才彷彿追尋到片刻對家的憧憬與期待。

**關鍵字：**巴舍拉，詩學，空間，場域，流離失所，《李爾王》