

ENGLISH I

Section Moderator: Dr. James Wells

Room: Inman Health Sciences 340

Time: 7:00 – 7:40 PM

Session Title: Shakespeare

7:00 – 7:20

“The Abdication of King Lear: Why Lear’s Ceremony Subjects his Kingdom to Anarchy”

Wade Sims

Faculty Advisor: Dr. James Wells

This paper examines and defines the effect of natural order in Shakespeare’s tragedy, *King Lear*. The play has often been historically criticized as being too dark, particularly regarding the deaths of Lear and Cordelia. Though many consider the natural order in *King Lear* to be antipathetic because the suffering of Lear and Cordelia seems unwarranted, I conclude through textual analysis and cultural-poetic reference to the monarchial philosophy of King James I that Lear and Cordelia have, through their actions, violently upset the natural order, and that their deaths are a justified rebalancing thereof. When compared to the philosophies laid forth by King James I, Lear’s act of dividing the lands amongst his daughters is a grave affront to his divine right authority. Lear’s actions set forth a fatal conundrum for his subjects, like Cordelia, who choose not to abandon their self-deposed king and instead submit themselves to his denial of divinely appointed regency, thus suffering the results of the natural order’s rebalancing.

7:20 – 7:40

"Ophelia's Controlled Identity"

Logan Franks

Faculty Advisor: Dr. James Wells

In Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Ophelia loses control over her life and identity which causes her to become mad and leads to her sudden death. This paper argues that Ophelia does not only go insane because of her father’s death. Throughout the entire play the characters closest to her control her actions, emotions, and ultimately identity. Ophelia is not considered a person with feelings; she is treated as an object for the other characters to control even after her death. Through Hamlet’s insensitivity and act of insanity, her family’s controlling nature, the death of her father, and the supposed death of Hamlet, Ophelia has no control over her life and identity and dies in true madness.