

MIRRORS OF CHRISTIAN KINGS
IDEOLOGY, THEOLOGY, ROLE-PLAYING:
THE RENAISSANCE KING AND SHAKESPEARE

By



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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents the results of an extensive investigation into the primary materials which were instrumental in defining the theological basis of the nature of kingship as it was perceived in the Renaissance. Source materials include coronation rituals and records, theoretical writings by such writers as Erasmus and Elyot, sermons and polemical works of various kinds, and poems and treatises. These sources collectively confirm that there was an extensive ideology of the nature of kingship in religious terms, the key feature of which is that the king was regarded as a player of a variety of roles, especially roles which were based on divine attributes. This ideology in turn affects the representation of kings in Shakespeare's history plays.

The first four chapters of the thesis are devoted to presenting the background materials which collectively created this ideology, and to showing how in specific ways it informs Shakespeare's presentation of his kings as divine role-players. Each of the four chapters examines a particular facet of the role of kingship as it was understood in Renaissance theocentric politics, and in turn manifested in the theatre. Part two of the thesis devotes five chapters to exploring the ways in which Shakespeare used the theory of the Christology of kingship in the history plays. Henry VI is shown to be a king who was only partially aware of his roles, leaving room in the body politic for the ambitious to attempt the roles he was failing to fulfil. Richard III perverts the ideology by using the roles of king for entirely wicked ends: he is an anti-Christ role-player. In the second Henriad, the ways in which Hal grows into his royal roles is explored, leading to an analysis of how he performs them in *Henry V*. The most extensive use of the theological ideology is found in *Richard II*, which really is a play about how the role of king is perceived. New evaluations of the plays can be thus made in light of the primary material presented in the first part of the thesis, and the evidence presented of Shakespeare's familiarity with the ideology of kingship here described.

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FOREWORD

Yet looks he like a king. Behold, his eye.
As bright as is the eagle's, lightens forth
Controlling majesty; alack, alack for woe
That any harm should stain so fair a show!

(*Richard II* III. iii. 68-71)

Much ink has been poured by modern scholars of Renaissance drama upon the subject of kingship in Shakespearian drama; so much, indeed, that this has come to be considered an exhausted field of study. The divinity of the king, his status as head of an ordered world, his relationship with characters who come in conflict with the kingly ideal, have all been scrutinized through both historical and dramatic perspectives. As in many thoroughly-trodden subjects, it turns out that there often remains at least one area that modern scholarship has overlooked. The role of the king in Shakespeare's history plays has not yet been adequately explored from a theological as opposed to a political point of view. The aim of this thesis is to investigate the theological conception of the royal figure; interestingly, the foundation of Renaissance views on kingship turns out to be conceived in terms of the king as the actor of a divine role or roles.

It is a widely-recognized feature of Shakespeare's kings that they continually cast themselves into roles. The mimetic process which lends his hero kings the character of role-players thus turns out to be one rooted in religious orthodoxy, an orthodoxy which expounds the inherent divinity of the prince as an essential incarnation of God. Drama's mimetic process therefore approximates that of religion, and religion's political wing: just as the king incarnates a mimetic re-creation of the divine, the stage-king expresses his role by adopting others, being most kingly when most feigning. In this way the dramatic, the religious, and the political are more closely aligned than has hitherto been suspected. The relationship between theological expressions of the nature of kingship, and the dramatic representation of the role of the king in Elizabethan drama, is brought most sharply into focus in the history plays of Shakespeare, with their characters who are rulers and who would be rulers, who

adopt for themselves roles justified by religious authority in a complex way. An investigation into the background materials of the period clearly reveals that the king is an actor of God because the royal office *required* it.

This study approaches the history plays from three inextricably-entwined points of view: the historical, the critical, and the theatrical. A revaluation of the history plays is offered, arising from an investigation which sheds new light upon the Renaissance ideology concerning the Christology of kingship, and its relevance to Shakespeare's plays. As Moody Prior has affirmed, "when we attempt to reconstruct the age by means of scholarship, what emerges for the most part is the common denominator".¹ The "common denominator" which has emerged from my researches through the documents of the period is a recurrent picture: a king's role demands performance by a special kind of actor, a mimetic construct of divine proportions. The first part of the thesis demonstrates the pervasiveness of this view of royalty in the period. The way in which this ideology informs the plays is best revealed by considering how the presentation of a king on stage compares with what was so frequently affirmed to be the ideal in real life. That history and theology turn out to be compatible studies should give rise to no alarm: as Tillyard put it, "history in fact grows quite naturally out of theology and is never separated from it. The connection was still flourishing after Shakespeare's death".²

Anyone attempting to write about the relationship between a literary (or dramatic) text and the intellectual and social milieu from which it sprang can hardly fail to be aware, these days, of the challenges posed to this entire concept by developments in modern critical theory. These come in two chief forms, one more radical than the other. The radical challenge might be said to be encapsulated by Derrida's celebrated remark, "il n'y a pas de hors-texte".³ At first sight this observation seems to do no more than reiterate the concepts that underlie the New Criticism, but in fact it is rooted in Saussurian linguistics. Christopher Norris explains it as follows:

¹*The Drama of Power*, xii.

²*Shakespeare's History Plays*, 9.

³Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 73.

If reality is structured through and through by the meanings we conventionally assign to it; then the act of suspending ("deconstructing") those conventions has a pertinence and force beyond the usual bounds of textual (or "literary") interpretation. Maintaining those bounds is the business of a common-sense philosophy which stakes its authority on a stable relation between world and text, the real and the written, object and representation. This mimetic economy is argued out between Plato and Aristotle and becomes, in effect, the grounding rationale of western philosophic tradition.⁴

Clearly it will not do in the age of Derrida merely to ignore the current challenges to "the grounding rationale of western philosophic tradition", any more than it would for a physicist now to follow a Newtonian model of the universe and ignore Einstein or Hawking. There is a difference, however, between the literary scholar and the physicist: the latter is still within that "grounding rationale", trying to define a reality which is perceived as objective, external to the consciousness, and describable in language (even if it is the language of mathematics, which Saussure has nothing much to say about).

A literary scholar who finds the Derridean formulae inappropriate to his view of his activities is in a less fortunate position, since those who are convinced by the doctrines of deconstruction deny any validity to alternative critical philosophies. This brings up the second challenge mentioned above, which can be disposed of briefly. Many of the currently modish critical writers fall with satirical glee upon the work of scholars of the previous generation. An example is the derision that Tillyard's work is now being held up to: he is vociferously condemned as merely writing out the fantasies of his own ideology: recoiling "from the debased values of bourgeois society", and "fearful of radical change", he and others "took refuge in scholastic visions of an ideal

⁴"Post-structuralist Shakespeare: text and ideology". in John Drakakis ed., *Alternative Shakespeares*, 47-8.

hierarchical order".⁵ Tillyard and others of his era are now the favourite targets of those of radical turn of mind, who find in their so-called "liberal humanism" a convenient whipping-boy to disguise their own ideologies.⁶ Many writers choose the method of overtly decrying the "liberal humanist" ideology they deplore as a means to more covertly writing propaganda for their preferred ideology, be it "materialist", feminist, or whatever.⁷ This strategy can be dismissed for the shabby trick it is: crying up one's own wares by denigrating your neighbour's, and it makes it no more acceptable that Leavis practiced it on Bradley, or whoever upon whomever. The dismissal of Tillyard's scholarship because of Tillyard's supposed social attitudes is mere vandalism: what is needed is not rejection of scholarship, but its continual improvement.

I agree that the assumptions about the relationship between a writer and his environment, and the work and its reader, spectator, or critic, is more subtle than used to be assumed, and that recent theoretical writing can usefully re-focus perceptions on this area, especially in the way discourse functions. Barker and Hulme

⁵J.W. Lever, "Shakespeare and the ideas of his time", in *Shakespeare Survey* 29, ed. Kenneth Muir, 80.

⁶Interestingly, Tillyard was groping towards the concept of an ideological apparatus, but he did not perceive in the analogy a strategy of coercion, nor could he comment on the mechanisms whereby this coercion might be internalized psychologically as a system of rules governing behaviour. Rather, Tillyard's 'picture' of culture, though now discredited, is tacitly regarded as a desirable objective coterminous in his own time with an aesthetic which is offered as its natural manifestation." John Drakakis, Introduction to *Alternative Shakespeares*, 15. The massively patronising tone of this remark, together with its paralytically uncomfortable prose style, constitute two of the worst features of much recent critical writing about Shakespeare.

⁷See for instance, in *Alternative Shakespeares*, the essay by Francis Barker and Peter Hulme, "Nymphs and reapers heavily vanish: the discursive con-texts of *The Tempest*" (191-205), which long-windedly says little more than that *The Tempest* is a naughty colonialist play; or Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield's "History and ideology: the instance of *Henry V*", which ends "We might conclude from this that Shakespeare was indeed wonderfully impartial on the question of politics . . . alternatively we might conclude that the ideology which saturates his texts, and their location in history, are the most interesting things about them" (227). "So to conclude would be only another chapter in the sorry history of making literature into something else, as bad as any of the follies that the authors of this collection castigate in their 'liberal humanist' predecessors. And it would conflict with the Derridean principle already mentioned.

remark "each individual text, rather than a meaningful unit in itself, lies at the intersection of different discourses which are related to each other in a complex but ultimately hierarchical way",⁸ and this re-formulation of a familiar concept in modern terms is useful.

The discourses concerning kingship in the Renaissance are ordered by other discourses of a fundamentally theological nature, which then are inscribed in the political discourses of the Tudor era. These discourses are the meta-text of the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, which are re-ordered into dramatic discourses reflective to a greater or lesser extent of their ideology. The notion that ideology is impenetrable to all but modern critics is another impertinence which can be dismissed out of hand; I feel, in common with many generations of scholars and critics, that Shakespeare was uniquely capable of perceiving the ideologies of his time critically, and shaping them *consciously* into drama: Barker and Hulme's "intersection of discourses" is by him intellectually and aesthetically controlled. Yet the plain fact is that people no longer think about kings or the royal function in the ways in which Shakespeare and his contemporaries were able to do. The recovery of that ideology, then, is a critical strategy of consequence, as well as an historical duty.

To experience these texts, either as a spectator in a theatre or as a scholar in a library, is to engage in discursive interaction, in which their ideology informs and challenges our own. To say this is to say nothing new, since Madeleine Doran said much of it before. The only novelty is the perception that the modern scholar *cannot* be a *punctum indifferens*, a purely objective intellect, but rather in his discourse must contribute an ideological colouring of his own to his subject. My ideologies are, I think, probably very self-evident: I believe in the greatness of Shakespeare, and the existence of history.⁹ My position in this study is that, whatever was the situation for spectators in the Elizabethan era, there is *now* a "hors-texte", which must be recovered, presented, and re-integrated into its discourse, and that Saussurian

⁸*Ibid.*, 197.

⁹I imagine that these beliefs make me yet another obsolete "liberal humanist". Actually, I am a Christian, an ideology that is no end of help when it comes to assessing the influence of theology on dramatic texts.

linguistics do not always provide a scholar with all the tools necessary to locate a text in its intellectual milieu.¹⁰

This thesis, then, attempts to explore the ideology of kingship in two distinct but connected ways. The first part presents the background materials which inform the concept of the king as a divine actor. From different sources such as sermons, letters, law-reports, historical and contemporary accounts, coronation records, ballads, liturgical services, and so on, the documentary record displays the attitudes of an age of political and religious thinking from the 1550s to the middle of the seventeenth century. From a purely chronological view, the documentary evidence reveals that the image of the king as an actor of Christ grew progressively stronger and more informative, so that the concept had become a commonplace by the time Shakespeare began to write, and afterwards. The pervasiveness of the idea is proven by the variety and the quantity of the examples offered. Illustrations not only from Shakespeare's history plays, but also from his other dramatic works, help to confirm that he was aware of this ideology and used it in various discursive ways. Part two of the thesis applies the materials presented in part one to Shakespeare's history plays. These discourses occasionally dramatize a milieu in which the ideology is the society's effective principle. More commonly, they reveal individual kings, and would-be kings, who fail to understand it, or who depart from it in a significant way. I treat the plays in the probable order in which Shakespeare composed them, except for *Richard II*, which I leave to the last chapter, for it, more than any other play, illustrates the relationship of the king, as a role-player, with the sacred office. Although I have confined my study to Shakespeare, it was very evident that many of his contemporaries were also fully aware of the ideology of kingship, and used it for similar, though not always as intense, dramatic purposes.

¹⁰The position of modern critical theorists on these issues seems to me often warped by a refusal to consider seriously questions of scholarship and practical fact. The cineaste who attempted analysis of a film made upon a camera that ran at a different shutter-speed from the projector would rapidly become aware of an hors-texte that no amount of theory could circumvent. The same is, of course, applicable to the bibliographical situation of historical and theatrical texts of the Renaissance. More work still needs to be done on the way ideology was translated into discourse at the popular, rather than the intellectual level. Little will be accomplished by pretending that these matters do not exist, or that they are irrelevant.

First editions were consulted wherever possible for the primary materials discussed in the thesis, and reliable scholarly editions of all the plays discussed were used; for Shakespeare's plays, I have used the Arden editions consistently (but have expanded the abbreviated speech prefixes). Throughout the thesis, I use the word "King" with a capital to denote the individual who occupies the office and who plays the role, while lower-case "king" is used to denote the office itself. Like many students of the period, I admire the historical scholarship of Keith Thomas and have, therefore, found his methods of presenting documentary material a helpful paradigm in the first part of this thesis. I am aware of how incomplete this study is, and expect it will need modification after further research, though I am in no doubt that the main outline is reliable. My approach to the plays is in no way a dogmatic one, but simply aims to suggest that the correspondence between theology and the plays offers a new way to re-consider Shakespeare's works, and the "intersection of discourses" which they mark.

CHAPTER ONE

"PLAY": THE COURT AS THEATRE; THE "SHOW" OF MAJESTY

On 16 October 1555, surrounded by a curious throng of spectators in an Oxford street, Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley attested their faith by dying as martyrs at the stake. John Foxe described the scene with this celebrated account of their bravery: "then they brought a fagotte, kindled with fire, and laid the same down at Doctor Ridley's feete. To whome M. Latimer spake in this manner: .Bee of good comfort Master Ridley, and play the man, wee shall this day light such a Candle by Gods grace in England, as I trust shall neuer bee putte out."¹

A moment of intense physical suffering is here defined by artistic language which uses the metaphor of mimesis to express an ultimate truth. How can a dying man "play" a role when *in extremis*? It is difficult to imagine how pretence can be achieved while in pain -- but such is the stuff of which martyrs and heroes are made. The dying Gaunt in Shakespeare's *Richard II* ambles through eleven lines of verbal self-declension, provoking Richard's question: "Can sick men play so nicely with their names?" (II. i. 84). But "Gaunt" is of course only an actor playing at suffering, and the scene does not end with the sort of real death that Ridley and Latimer had to face. However, the Elizabethan was trained from youth to respond to life by imitating worthy models; to adopt a role was a "natural", "real" response to a crisis, even one of life and death.

Contrasting thus between the "real" world and that of the theatre leads nonetheless to a false conclusion. In the Elizabethan period the two worlds merge in the universal image of life consisting in the playing of roles. Mimesis in human nature is theologically rooted; man is made in the image and likeness of God "in righteousness & true holines", as one commentator of the Geneva Bible glosses Genesis. His marginal note directs the reader to Ephesians 4:24 where "this image and likenes of God is expounded" as "putting on the new man".² Jesus, who "put on" manhood, Himself

¹ *Actes and Monuments*, III. 1607.

² Genesis 1:26 note t. References are to the Geneva Bible, facsimile of the 1560 ed.

realized in Gethsemane the painful struggle entailed in the role he was about to bring to completion. Preaching his Lenten sermon before King Edward VI, Bishop Latimer spoke of Christ's passion in terms of a man who becomes surety for the debt of all sins: "such a part played our Saviour Christ with us."³ God is not only a player in *Theatrum mundi* but also its artistic director: "God", wrote Walter Raleigh, "who is the Author of all our tragedies, hath written out for us, and appointed us all the parts we are to play".⁴ Indeed, for Raleigh there is no "other account to be made of this ridiculous world, than to resolve, that the change of fortune on the great Theater, is but as the change of garments on the lesse. For when on the one and the other, every man weares but his owne skin; the Players are all alike".⁵ Men follow idle and false pleasures in the "Stage-play World" rather than "become the shadow of God by walking after him".⁶ It is ironic that Raleigh's approbation of proper action is given in mimetic terms; to be a "shadow" "after" is also to play.

The concept of role-playing appealed to a generation of playwrights fascinated by the idea that theatrical incarnations, in all possible forms, ought to be the stage's subjects. That the world was a theatre and all men mere players was an ideological commonplace by the time Shakespeare came to write his plays and does not need re-establishment here. Thomas Van Laan in his *Role-playing in Shakespeare* counts some seventy-four instances of the verb "play" in an histrionic context in the canon; an average of two instances per play. The "consistency with which this pattern recurs in play after play demonstrates Shakespeare's considerable interest in role-playing, both as a conception of character and as the basis for an action. It suggests, in fact, that he thought of dramatic man as a role-playing animal."⁷ Van Laan's and Anne Righter's treatments of this aspect of Shakespearian dramaturgy are well-known and do not require reiteration. My purpose in this present discussion is rather to illustrate a

³"Seventh Sermon before King Edward VI, April 19, 1594", in *Selected Sermons*, ed. Allan G. Chester, 122.

⁴"Preface" to the *History of the World*, D1^v.

⁵*Ibid.*, D2^r.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷24-8.

hitherto unexplored aspect of this concept, namely the way it relates to the play-world of the royal court of kings, not only in Shakespeare's history plays but also to the world of the real courts which informed their stage counterparts. In the process it will be conclusively demonstrated that the king is the central icon of the court player.

The courtier, as Ferdinand in Webster's *Duchess of Malfy* reminds his followers, should take his cues from the leading player: "Methinks you that are courtiers should be my touchwood, take fire when I give fire; that is, laugh when I laugh, were the subject never so witty" (I. i. 120-23). The actions of men at court can never be entirely their own, for a pre-described code of behaviour determined that one must never reveal one's real intentions. Handbooks on the "art" of the courtier were regularly published in the century. Castiglione suggested that the courtier should "frame himself" to such an art, "though by nature he were not enclined to it".⁸ Masques at court were to be encouraged so that a man through disguise could best "shewe himself" for the benefit of the onlookers' imaginations.⁹ His relationship to the king should be one of readily apparent service:

so that whansoever his lorde looketh upon him, he may thinke in his minde that he hath to talke with him of a matter that he will be glad to heare. The which shal come to passe if there bee a good judgement in him to understand what pleaseth his prince and a wit and wisdom to know how to applie it, and a bent wil to make him pleased with the thing which perhappes by nature should displease him.¹⁰

That this sort of behaviour grew into dangerous flattery of the prince is not surprising. Elizabeth, writing to James VI, cautioned him against such ill-placed reliance in those "who to peril a King were inventors or actors . . . who under

⁸Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. Thomas Hoby, 177.

⁹*Ibid.*, 116. Holinshed, in his *Chronicles*, described some ten masques in the court of Henry VIII, in which the king himself took repeated delight in adopting various disguises, 805ff.-922. Shakespeare makes special use of one of these masques in *Henry VIII*. The King, disguised as a shepherd, unmasks himself in the midst of his court at Cardinal Wolsey's palace (I. iv).

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 124.

pretence of bettering your estate, endangers the King".¹¹ From the time of *Gorboduc* on, dramatists used the stage to warn the monarch against such dangers. In Shakespeare, though the homiletic intent is never overt, the man who plays the king's yes-man is regularly represented as a negative influence. Lancaster, speaking to the rebellious Archbishop of York, nicely couches such sinful action in terms of a false favourite.

That man that sits within a monarch's heart,
And ripens in the sunshine of his favour,
Would he abuse the countenance of the king,
Alack, what mischiefs might he set abroad
In shadow of such greatness! With you, Lord Bishop,
It is even so. (2 *Henry IV* IV, ii. 11-16)¹²

In *Henry VIII* the king turns away from the seeming manipulation of the flattering Winchester:

You were ever good at sudden commendations,
Bishop of Winchester. But know, I come not
To hear such flattery now, and in my presence
They are too thin and base to hide offences;
To me you cannot reach. You play the spaniel,
And think with wagging of your tongue to win me (V, ii. 156-61)

So much was flattery associated with the idea of "play" that the connexion of theatre and court became a commonplace. "Flatterers", wrote Peter Bouaisteau, "are such kinde of vermine, that do nothing else but fyl their [Princes] cares with

¹¹ 11 September, 1592, *The Letters of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. G.B. Harrison, 222.

¹² Cf. in the same speech:

O, who shall believe
But you misuse the reverence of your place,
Employ the countenance and grace of heav'n
As a false favourite doth his prince's name,
In deeds dishonourable (23-6).

unnecessarie pleasures and delights, whose exercise is onely to watche apt houres and tymes to feede them with toyes and fantasies, wherein they do so well play their partes."¹³ Richard III and Buckingham provide a wonderful descant on how villains of the court need to have their histrionic talents at the ready:

Richard. Come cousin, canst thou quake and change thy colour,

Murder thy breath in middle of a word,

And then again begin, and stop again,

As if thou were distraught and mad with terror?

Buckingham. Tut, I can counterfeit the deep tragedian,

Speak, and look back, and pry on every side,

Tremble and start at wagging of a straw,

Intending deep suspicion. Ghastly looks

Are at my service like enforced smiles,

And both are ready in their offices

At any time to grace my stratagems. (III. v. 1-11)

For some, the part becomes an actual character assumed from classical antiquity: the plotting Suffolk in *1 Henry VI* sees his venture to bring home Margaret as "did the youthful Paris once to Greece" (V. v. 104). Warwick is to Henry his "Hector" and his "Troy's true hope" (*3 Henry VI* IV. viii. 25). Even when danger is imminent, the character may articulate his peril in theatrical terms: the betrayed Gloucester in *2 Henry VI* sees the calculating court orchestrating his ruin, where treason is invested in the very looks of the surrounding lords:

But mine is made the prologue to their play;

¹³"To the Reader" of his French trans. of Chelidonius Tigurinus. *Of the Institution and firste beginning of Christian Princes*. English trans. James Chillester, 3. The counterfeiting courtier became the subject of popular songs: "Beware faire Maides of Musky Courtiers oathes. | . . . Their hearts doe liue tenne regions from their tongues. | For, when with othes they make thy heart to tremble. | Beleeue them least, for then they most dissemble" (William Corkine, *The Second Booke of Ayres*, 1612, stanzas 1 and 3); "Long haue I liued in Court, yet learn'd not all this while. | . . . To cloake a poore desire vnder a rich aray" (John Maynard, *The XII. Wonders of the World*, 1611, "The Courtier"). Both quoted from *Lyrics from English Airs 1596-1622*, ed. Edward Doughtie, 391, 381.

For thousands more, that yet suspect no peril,
 Will not conclude their plotted tragedy.
 Beaufort's red sparkling eyes blab his heart's malice,
 And Suffolk's cloudy brow his stormy hate;
 Sharp Buckingham unburthens with his tongue
 The envious load that lies upon his heart (III. i. 151-57)

The Duchess of Gloucester, too, is willing to "play [her] part in Fortune's pageant" (I. ii. 67). Hastings in *Richard III*, mocking his adversaries, will "live to look upon their tragedy" (III. ii. 58). Buckingham's surveyor brings evidence against him to King Henry VIII, for thinking to have "play'd | The part [his] father meant to act upon," by killing the king (*Henry VIII* I. ii. 194-95).

The play analogy extends outside the court to the battlefields of war. Warwick, eager to get back into the fighting in *3 Henry VI*, scolds the retreating forces for standing around as if the "tragedy | Were play'd in jest by counterfeiting actors" (II. iii. 27-8). Henry V is encouraged to invoke the "war-like spirit" of his great uncle "Edward the Black Prince | Who on the French ground play'd a tragedy" (I. ii. 105-6).

Shakespeare did not have to look hard to find in his sources numerous accounts of nobles who were portrayed as actors in the great play that History had written. The famous *Mirror for Magistrates* (1559) was offered as a series of nineteen "tragedies" written to present the voices of the past in dramatic form.¹⁴ In the "Complaynt of Henry duke of Buckingham" his failed court machinations are likened to a play:

Like on a stage, so slept I in strait waye
 Enioying there but wofully god wot.
 As he that had a slender part to playe:
 To teache therby, in earth no state may stay.
 But as our partes abridge or length our age
 So passe we all while others fyll the stage. (43-9)

¹⁴Ed. Lily B. Campbell. The collection of poems was modified and extended throughout the period in various editions: 1563, 1571, 1578, 1587.

And in the poem on Cardinal Wolsey we find:

Shall I looke on, when states step on the stage,
And play theyr parts, before the peoples face? (1-2)

King Edward IV reviews his life thus: "I have playd my pageaunt: now am I past" (73).

Even the very appearance of Elizabeth's own court was dictated by the concept that every noble must dress according to his degree, or, in other words, according to his publicly-accepted role. Henry Chettle recorded that "by expresse Statutes, [the queen] appointed all men and women to be apparelled in their degree and calling".¹⁵ There was a proclamation issued on 12 February 1580 against "excesses in apparel"; it declared, for example, that none under the degree of an Earl could wear "sylke of the colour Purple, cloth of Golde, or Siluer Tissued, nor furre of Sables".¹⁶

If the court was a world of "seeming", where every action was defined in terms of decorum -- the appropriateness of gesture, look, movement, and language -- by virtue of the courtier's social position, how much more significant does this concept become when we consider the star around which the courtier's social structure revolved. The king, and more specifically, the role of king was universally acknowledged, and very fully described. It was the king, who, as accepted master in the play-world of the court, became its greatest actor. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the monarch himself regularly described his office in such terms. Speaking before her parliament on the great matter of Mary's execution, Queen Elizabeth reminded her councillors of the nature of her position:

For we princes, I tell you, are set on stages, in the sight and view of
all the world dulle observed; the eies of manie behold our actions; a
spot is soone spied in our garments; a blemish quicklie noted in our

¹⁵*Englands Mourning Garment*, E1r-v.

¹⁶The statutes were carried over from the reigns of Henry VIII and Mary with the introduction of modifications under Elizabeth. Leaves from the proclamation are reproduced in Samuel Schoenbaum's *Shakespeare the Globe & the World*, 66.

doings. It behooveth us therefore to be carefull that our proceedings be iust and honorable.¹⁷

Writing to Cardinal Wolsey in 1528, Henry VIII began his letter with the affirmation that "I have played both the part of a master and friend".¹⁸ King James I, who had a great deal to say on the subject, told his parliament in 1609 that the heart of the king in the hands of God is something he will now "performe for [his] part".¹⁹ In the same speech he re-echoes Elizabeth's use of the familiar simile: "As I have already said, Kings Actions (even in the secretest places) are as the actions of those that are set upon the Stages, or on top of houses: And I hope never to speake that in private, which I shall not avow in publique, and Print it if need be".²⁰ What is interesting about this statement is the implication that even when alone, the king must always be in role.²¹ James saw all functions of the royal prerogative as a variation on this theme; "it is the King's part", he wrote in *A Counterblaste to Tobacco*, "(as the

¹⁷Holinshed recorded the speech of 1586 in his *Chronicles*, 1583. The French ambassador to Elizabeth's court was able to confirm that "she is a princess who can act any part she pleases"; see J. E. Neale, *Queen Elizabeth*, 256. In a funeral song, Elizabeth is said to have been "throwne by Death from her triumphant Stage", Chettle, *Englandes Mourning Garment*, Fl^r. Throughout her reign, Elizabeth remained confident about her role as a monarch. In a letter to James, January 1593, she laid repeated stress on how a king should act: "Think me, I pray you, not ignorant what becometh a King to do, and that will I never omit", *Letters*, 224.

¹⁸*The Letters of King Henry VIII*, ed. M. St. Clare Byrne, 77.

¹⁹*The Political Works of James I*, ed. Charles McIlwain, 306.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 310. James had previously directed his son's attention to this image in *Basilikon Doron*: "It is a true olde saying, That a King is as one set on a skaffold, whose smallest actions & gestures al the people gazingly: and therefore although a King be never so precise in discharging of his office, the people who seeth but the outwarde parte, will ever judge of the substance by the circumstances, & according to the outwarde appearancē", 121-22.

²¹Erasmus stipulates the same behaviour in *The Education of a Christian Prince*, ed. Lester K. Born: "Let him so conduct himself in the privacy of his home as not to be caught unawares by the sudden entrance of anyone", 210. Sir Thomas Elyot, in *The Book Named the Governor*, ed. S. E. Lehmberg Dent, affirms the same: "They [princes] shall also consider that by their pre-eminence they sit as it were on a pillar on the top of a mountain, where all the people do behold them, not only in their open affairs, but also in their secret pastimes", 97.

proper Phisicion of his Politike (bodie) to purge it of all those diseases by Medicine".²²

The king's speech was an important part of his role. "Majesty", wrote Sir Thomas Elyot, is not

in speech outrageous or arrogant, but in honourable and sober demeanour, deliberate and grave pronounciation, words clean and facile, void of rudeness and dishonesty, without vain or inordinate jangling, with such an excellent temperance, that he, among an infinite number of other persons, by his majesty may be espied for a governor.²³

For Erasmus,

the real character of the prince is revealed by his speech rather than by his dress. Every word that is dropped from the lips of the prince is scattered wide among the masses. He should exercise the greatest care to see that whatever he says bears the stamp of [genuine] worth and evidences a mind becoming a good prince.²⁴

In his advice to his son, James stressed the importance of a prince's ability to combine elocution and gestural art;

the next thing that ye haue to take heede to, is your speaking & language, whereunto I ioyne your gesture . . . actione is one of the chiefest qualities that is required in an oratour, for as the tongue speaketh to the eares, so doth the gesture speake to the eies of the

²²See *OED* definition of "politic", 1c.

²³*The Book Named the Governor*, 100.

²⁴*Education of a Christian Prince*, 210.

auditoure. In both your speaking and your gesture then, use a natural & plaine forme."²⁵

The Archbishop of Canterbury, in *Henry V*, praises the King for the kind of oratorical qualities that James describes:

when he speaks,

The air, a charter'd libertine, is still,
And the mute wonder lurketh in men's ears,
To steal his sweet and honey'd sentences;
So that the art and practic part of life
Must be the mistress to this theoric (I. i. 47-52)

The king was not free to take off his role like a costume when he wished: the public posture was a perpetual condition taken on at birth. "After you have once dedicated yourself to the state, you are no longer free to live according to your own ways. You must keep up and preserve the character you have assumed."²⁶ However, Erasmus's exhortation implicitly warns of the dangers if nothing more than the external appearance or title of the kingly person was all that was achieved; and this negative possibility is expressed once again in terms of a play image: "a King, if he have nought but the name of a King to commend him, he shall be no better than *Rex larvatus*, a King on a theatre; or *Rex ludicer*, a King at chesse, a wooden King".²⁷ Machiavelli would have no other kind of king than one who is prepared to lie and deceive and one who knows how to "appear" in front of his people to attain his ends.²⁸ It seems that the image of playing the king suited such a variety of uses that it was impossible to

²⁵ *Basilikon Doron*, 135-36.

²⁶ *Education of a Christian Prince*, 182.

²⁷ John Rawlinson, *Vivat Rex*, 13.

²⁸ *Il Principe*, trans. and ed. Mark Musa, XVIII, "A uno principe, adunque, non e necessario avere in fatto tutte le soprascritte qualita, ma e bene necessario parere di averle. Anzi ardiro di dire questo: che, avendole e osservandole sempre, sono dannose; e parendo di averle, sono utili; come parere pietoso, fedele, umano, intero, religioso, ed essere; ma stare in modo edificato con l'animo, che, bisognando non essere, tu possa e sappi mutare el contrario", 146.

think of the office and the individual who filled it as existing outside the limits of artifice.

Even in the plays other than the histories, examples of the magistrate and king who is a performer of some kind occur regularly. Coriolanus (to put it mildly) does not like the public ceremonial role the people demand of him: "It is a part | That I shall blush in acting" (II. ii. 144-45). Similarly, if Tess noisily, the Duke in *Measure for Measure* does not "relish well" the peoples' "loud applause" and therefore does not like to "stage [himself] to their eyes" (*Measure* I. i. 67-72). Prospero's false brother is said to have "play'd his part" to be "absolute Milan" (*Tempest* I. i. 107-9). The fool in *Lear* admonishes in a song his master's folly, "that such a king should play bo-peep" (I. iv. 173). Lear himself has the famous insight that life is played upon "this great stage of fools" (IV. vi. 180). He threatens Goneril to "resume the shape which thou dost think | I have cast off for ever" (I. iv. 307-8). "Your Highness' part", as Duncan is reminded by Macbeth, "Is to receive our duties" (*Macbeth* I. iv. 23-4). The final "meeting of the two kings" in *The Winter's Tale*, and Perdita's reunion with her father is described as having the "dignity of [an] act worth the audience of kings and princes; for by such was it acted" (V. ii. 79-80).

The history plays are to a great extent *about* the role of kingship (whether badly or well performed by the bearer of the title) so that one finds the image continually employed. Henry VI is a king who can "prettily . . . play the orator" (*Henry VI* IV. i. 175). Richard too will "play the orator as well as Nestor | Deceive more slyly than Ulysses could, | . . . Change shapes with Proteus for advantages" in order to attain the crown (*3 Henry VI* III. ii. 188-92). He is in his own play "determined" to "prove a villain" in his part (*Richard III* I. i. 30). Elizabeth, later in the same play, is described by Margaret as a "poor shadow, painted queen, | The presentation of but what I was; | The flattering index of a direful pageant" (IV. iv. 83-5), "a queen in jest, only to fill the scene" (91). Chatillon accuses King John of "borrow'd majesty" (*King John* I. i. 4) a majesty which in this play is described as a "form" which can be "put on" and "shaped" (V. vii. 26-7, 101-2). The death of Arthur is a "heinous spectacle" of "dead royalty" (IV. iii. 56, 143). Henry IV, on his death-bed, laments that his reign has been "but as a scene" which has acted the argument of kingly cares and rebellion (*2 Henry IV* IV. v. 197-98). Hal, now king, comments that

sorrow so royally appears in his brother-princes that he too will "deeply put the fashion on" (V. ii. 51-2). And occasionally a subject can bestow the role of king upon his superior: Warwick is dubbed the "king-maker", as he plays musical thrones between York and Henry in 2 & 3 *Henry VI*. Buckingham is in a similar position with Richard III, and Hotspur too can resent the fact that he and the other Percies have "given" Henry "that same royalty he wears" (1 *Henry IV* IV. iii. 54-5).

England itself could assume a role: John Aylmer, in his treatise on obedience, had the voice of "mother" England speaking directly to her loyal subjects.²⁹ The country as personification was a long-established image, which yet ties in nicely with the idea that the whole realm, even, is involved in a role-playing process in both the daily events and the overall providential creation of history. "The noble isle doth want her proper limbs" exclaims Buckingham in his (histrionic) attempt to persuade Richard to take the crown (*Richard III* III. vii. 124). "England", says Richmond, lives under tyranny: she "hath long been mad, and scarr'd herself"; the "edge of traitors" would make "poor England weep in streams of blood" (V. v. 37).³⁰

In a very perceptive observation, Robert Ornstein comments: "Shakespeare understood that in politics believing is often seeing".³¹ The ritualistic, public presentation of the awe of majesty was a "tangible expression of political mystery".³²

²⁹wherefore as a friende I exhorte you, and as a mother require you (my dere Englysh chyl dren,) to kny t your selves together with brotherly love, and with unfained obedience, to defende me and my governesse", *An Harborowe for Faithfull and Trewe Subjects*, R2^r. Note that in criticism too, England is personified: Tillyard, in *Shakespeare's History Plays*, argues that England herself is the hero of the first tetralogy, 160.

³⁰Cf. 2 *Henry IV*: "he doth bestride a bleeding land. | Gasping for life under great Bolingbroke (I. i. 207-8); "then you perceive the body of our kingdom | How foul it is, what rank diseases grow" (III. i. 38-9); *Richard II*: England is "This nurse this teeming womb of royal kings" (II. i. 51); "Ten thousand bloody crowns of mothers' sons | Shall ill become the flower of England's face" (III. iii. 96-7); cf. *Macbeth* IV. iii. 39-41.

³¹*A Kingdom for a Stage*, 30.

³²*Ibid.* In a recent article, David Scott Kastan explores how the theatre works to expose the mystifications of power and how its counterfeit royalty raises the possibility that royalty is itself a counterfeit: "Proud Majesty Made a Subject: Shakespeare and the Spectacle of Rule", *SQ*, XXXVII (Winter 1986) 459-75.

Wherever he went, the king was a show of what he represented. A prince, thought Erasmus, should not shut himself up in a palace, but ought to travel about to see and be seen by the people; during this time he was not to appear "extravagant or lavish but splendid".³³ Sir Thomas Elyot included a whole section on the "exposition of majesty" in *The Governor*:

In a governor . . . the fountain of all excellent manners is Majesty; which is the whole proportion and figure of noble estate, and is properly a beauty or comeliness in his countenance, language and gesture apt to his dignity, and accommodate to time, place, and company; which, like as the sun doth his beams, so doth it cast on the beholders and hearers a pleasant and terrible reverence.³⁴

Machiavelli held it to be essential that the prince from time to time mingle with his people in public display, in order to exhibit his humanity and munificence.³⁵ The more the king is surrounded by the brilliant pageantry of his office, the more his superhumanity is made manifest. James reminded his son that "this glistening worldlie glorie of Kings is given them by God, to teach them to preasse so to glister and shine before their people . . . that their bright lampes of godlines and vertue, maye (going in and out before the people) give light to all their steps."³⁶ The display was to have an inspiring effect on the viewer, so that men would rejoice in the mere sight of the sovereign. Gloucester, in *1 Henry VI*, declares that the "presence of a king engenders love | Amongst his subjects and his loyal friends, | As it disanimates his enemies" (III. i. 181-3). A contemporary ballad records how the citizens of London celebrated Elizabeth's return from a lengthy stay in the country: "The people flocked there amain, | The multitude was great to see; | Their joyful harts were glad, and faine . . . To view

³³*Education of a Christian Prince*, 247.

³⁴100 ff.

³⁵*Il Principe*, XXI. "E perche ogni citta e divisa in arte o in tribu, debbe tenere conto di quelle universita, raunarsi con loro qualche volta, dare di se esempio di umanita e di munificenzia", 190.

³⁶*Basilikon Doron*, 5-6.

her princely majesty".³⁷ The many royal progresses which Elizabeth made throughout the realm were a deliberate and expensive means of staging herself to her subjects' eyes; they were lavishly mimetic elaborations in their own right.³⁸ If James VI was to maintain his reign in Scotland, Elizabeth exhorted him (again) to "show" himself worthy the place, in order to secure his subjects' love and fear.³⁹

Majesty, therefore, plays a role; hence the theatre is a fitting place for it to be viewed. Proculeius begs Cleopatra to "let the world see | [Antony's] nobleness well acted" (V. ii. 44-5); Cleopatra desires to die in full costume dress: "show me, my women like a queen: go fetch | My best attires" (V. ii. 226-7). Cymbeline cannot "show" less sovereignty than his subjects for it would "appear unkinglike" (III. v. 4-7). The best explication of staged kingship in the history plays comes in *I Henry IV* when Henry tries to instruct Hal on the finer arts of public relations:

I could not stir
 But like a comet I was wonder'd at,
 That men would tell their children, "This is he!"
 Others would say, "Where, which is Bolingbroke?"
 And then I stole all courtesy from heaven,
 And dress'd myself in such humility
 That I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts,
 Loud shouts and salutations from their mouths,
 Even in the presence of the crowned King.
 Thus did I keep my person fresh and new,
 My presence, like a robe pontifical,
 Ne'er seen but wonder'd at, and so my state,
 Seldom, but sumptuous, show'd like a feast,
 And wan by rareness such solemnity. (III. ii. 45-59)

³⁷A Collection of Seventy-Nine Black-Letter Ballads, No. 52, by Richard Harrington, ed. Joseph Lilly, 36-7.

³⁸See John Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, 3 vols. *passim*; Ian Dunlop, *Palaces & Progresses of Elizabeth I*, 120.

³⁹11 September, 1592, *Letters*, 222.

Richard's fault, according to Henry, had been carelessly to tarnish the quality of his public demeanour:

So, when he had occasion to be seen,
He was but as the cuckoo is in June,
Heard, not regarded; seen, but with such eyes
As, sick and blunted with community,
Afford no extraordinary gaze.
Such as is bent on sun-like majesty
When it shines seldom in admiring eyes (74-80)

The players, says Hamlet, "are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time": "he that plays the king" is the recognizable actor of a performing concept of ideals like those of such stock characters of the "adventurous knight", the "lover", the "humorous ~~man~~", the "clown", the "lady" (II. ii. 318-25).⁴⁰ As Anne Richter has recognized, "not only is the actor on the stage committed in the world of illusion to play the king, but the living monarch may see in the player's performance a true dimension of kingship itself".⁴¹ Illusion and reality are the very conditions by which the king's public and private identity were perceived and defined. The Elizabethans were well used to the idea of "a kingdom for a stage": for not only did the public appearances of their princes encourage it; theology required it. It is to this notion of divine imitation that we must now turn.

⁴⁰Robert Tailor's play, *The Hogge hath Lost his Pêrle*, contains an actor who, when warned that he may incur the rancour of his fellows, responds confidently: "I care not, I ha' plaid a Kings part anie time these ten yeeres, if I cannot command such a matter twere poore ifaith", B3^v.

⁴¹*Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play*, 113.

CHAPTER TWO

"HOW LIKE A GOD"

In all but two or three plays written by Shakespeare there is some form of governing, political structure with representative leaders, governors, head magistrates, princes, emperors, and kings in various degrees of power; (*The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and perhaps *Timon of Athens* are the exceptions). Throughout the course of his playwrighting career, Shakespeare presented his audience with the figures of some sixty ruling "governors"; the history plays alone contain the characters of no fewer than sixteen English kings. "Kings", as Maynard Mack says, "are everywhere in Shakespeare: from Scotland to Rome to Antioch, from the days of Priam and Caesar to those of Henry VIII".¹ The word "king", too, is everywhere: it is used 1375 times (a relative frequency of 0.1512).² The business of this chapter is to show how he who played the king automatically elicited from his viewers a predetermined set of responses to the role itself. For an audience who had inherited the royal traditions of rule and was living in a great age of monarchs, certain well-defined concepts of kingship entered into cultural ideology, and these concepts, though they grew more complex -- indeed they became a reified structure by the end of Elizabeth's reign -- were defined by virtually everyone who used them in basically the same ways. "It is the greatest glory upon earth", wrote Robert Sherwood, "to be a King"³, and what an audience perceived as that glory was determined by their religious belief that the king was a special creation of God who existed in an equally special relationship with Him. To say this may seem no more than a truism: since Tillyard, it has been generally accepted in Shakespearian criticism that the king is God's vicegerent. So persuasive was Tillyard, in fact, that very little original research has subsequently been done on the sources and implications of this concept. In addition, and more importantly for the consideration of the history plays in the second part of

¹*Killing the King*, 1.

²Marvin Spevack, *The Harvard Concordance to Shakespeare*, 661.

³Introductory letter to King James I; in his translation of John Bede, *The Right, and Prerogative of Kings*, A3^v.

this thesis, it can be shown that the king was perceived, more often than not, as a mimetic construct of divine dimensions -- as a man whose role demands that he be the actor of Christ.

The Divinity Which Hedges The King

My liege and madam, to expostulate
 What majesty should be, what duty is,
 Why day is day, night night, and time is time,
 Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time. (*Hamlet* II. ii. 86-9)

Despite Polonius's characteristic style of oratory, his observations on kingship and duty are an orthodox expression of accepted opinion; indeed it might be said that his views are so obvious and so much a part of the natural scheme of things that they scarcely merit articulation -- which, of course, is central to the joke. Contemporary belief, established centuries before, professed that the king's sacred right not only originates in a mystery of divine process, but that God's own sacredness is most clearly explicated by describing Him, too, in kingly terms.⁴ To expostulate on descriptions of God's majesty in the Bible and other works of theology were to waste night, day, and time, but a few examples will suffice to make His connexion with His human counterpart clear. What is significant to this thesis is the frequency, in an age in which church attendance was mandatory, with which congregations would be exposed to this religious image, which therefore would become part of a growing ideology -- an ideology that members of the congregation would inevitably take to the theatre.⁵

⁴There is in providence such an admiration and majesty, that not only it is attributed to kings and rulers, but also to God, creator of the world", Elyot, *The Book Named the Governor*, 81.

⁵Shakespeare's own familiarity with the Anglican services is perhaps worth mentioning here. He could only incorporate a religious ideology in his plays if he could rely on his audiences' shared knowledge of the same beliefs. For an extensive survey of this study see Peter Milward, *Shakespeare's Religious Background*: "Only in the plays do we find evidence of a familiarity with the Anglican services, such as he

Elizabethans were enjoined in the service of morning prayer to extol God as a "greate Kinge aboue all goddes"⁶; "the father of an infinite Maiestye", the "kyng of glory", and to acknowledge "heauen and earth" as being "ful of the maiestye of [God's] glory". Prayers at Communion were offered to God's "diuine maiestie" whose "kyngdom is euerlasting". God also maintains the outward and visible signs of kingship: "thy thron, O God is for euer and euer. The scepter of thy kingdome is a ryghte scepter . . . God, euen thy God hath anointed thee with oyle of gladnes aboue thy felowes".⁷ Psalm 93 at evening prayer proclaims, "the Lord reigneth and is clothed with maiestie: the Lord is clothed and girded with power". Propounding the sanctity of earthly kingdoms, the famous *Homily Against Disobedience, and Wilfull Rebellion* reminded the congregation that "GOD himselfe, being of an infinite Maiesty, power, and wisdom, ruleth, and governeth all things in Heaven, and Earth, as the universall Monarch, and onely King, and Emperour over all".⁸ Repeatedly throughout the Bible, analogous descriptions of heaven are of the "kingdom", and the son of God, its eternal King, who has rule and dominion over all creation.

In line with what one still tends to think of as "the Elizabethan world picture" is the application of these beliefs to the human side of things, where the concept of "order" places the King in a position similar to that occupied by God in heaven. Biblical authority which supported the theory of divine right was widespread⁹ as was

could hardly have gained merely by hearsay. His frequent references to the *Psalms* . . . usually follow the version of the Great Bible which was still used in the *Book of Common Prayer*. He also refers, explicitly or implicitly, to almost all the ceremonies prescribed in the Prayer Book, and echoes many passages of the Elizabethan *Homilies* which were read aloud in church Sunday after Sunday to an often weary congregation", 104. Also Richmond Noble, *Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge: And Use of the Book of Common Prayer*.

⁶All references to the *Book of Common Prayer* (hereafter BCP) are to the 1559 edition, reproduced with historical introduction by John Grant, 1909.

⁷Hebrews, I:8-9; it is the epistle used at the Christmas day service.

⁸*Certain Sermons or Homilies Appoynted to be read in Churches*, 278.

⁹1 Samuel 7:10-18, Proverbs 7:15, Daniel 4, Luke 20:25, John 29:11, Romans 13:1-7, 1 Peter 2:13-17, Psalm 1:4; see John Neville Figgis, *The Divine Right of Kings*, 7-8.

the notion that divine right was "founded in the prime laws of nature".¹⁰ God installs the King and nurtures him in his office as part of their direct and unique relationship. In *Sir Thomas More*, More uses this doctrine to admonish the rebellious mob: "For to the King God hath his office lent | Of dread, of justice, power and command, | Hath bid him rule, and will'd you to obey" (98-100). In the apocryphal books of the Bible, we find Ecclesiasticus 10:4 and the Wisdome of Solomon 6:1-3 proclaiming that the "government of the earth is in the hand of the Lord, . . . and when time is, he wil set vp a profitable ruler ouer it"; "heare therefore, o ye Kings, and vnderstand . . . for the rule is giuen you of the Lord, and power by the moste High".¹¹ God, says the homilist, "hath constituted, ordayned, and set earthly Princes over particular Kingdomes, and Dominions in earth".¹² In the Epistle Dedicatory to his *Christian Subjection and Unchristian Rebellion*, Thomas Bilson, the Warden of Winchester, credits Elizabeth with being the protector of God's truth because of the "power he hath giuen [her], and the honor which hee hath heaped upon [her]".¹³ Similarly, the translators of the King James Bible professed their gratitude for the "great and manifold . . . blessings . . . which almightie God, the Father of all mercies, bestowed upon . . . the people of England when first he sent your Majesties Royall person to rule and reign over us."¹⁴

¹⁰Nearing a time of national crisis, the bishops of Canterbury and York summarized the constitutions and canons ecclesiastical "concerning regal power"; *Synodalia*, ed. Edward Cardwell, 389. Figgis says divine right was "able to gain currency by appealing to some of the deepest instincts of human nature. It gathered up into itself notions of the sanctity of the medicine man, of the priestly character of primitive royalty, of the divinity of the Roman Emperors and perhaps of the sacredness of the tribunician power", 256.

¹¹References are to the Geneva Bible, 1560 ed.

¹²*An Homily Against Disobedience, and Wilfull Rebellion*, 278.

¹³*The True Difference Betweene Christian Subjection and Unchristian Rebellion*, A2^r.

¹⁴In a sermon preached at Paul's Cross, Richard Crakanthorp's definition of true loyalty to James is "to looke at our Soueraigne, as at one placed immediately by God, placed in Gods owne Throne, placed in the steede of God himselfe amonge us"; *A Sermon at the Solemnizing of the Happie Inauguration of . . . King James*, G3^r. The title page advertises the book "wherein is manifestly proued, that the Soueraignty of Kings is immediately from God".

Kings are not only sent from God, but derive their power primarily from Him: "he is to come unto his Crowne, and kingdome first, and principally by the grace of GOD, and secondly by the waye of lawfull, and Lineall Succession".¹⁵ Preaching at the coronation of King James I, Bilson (now Bishop of Winchester) found it appropriate "for this present time, and place, to obserue, not onely, how the Princes-function in generall is established by God, but more specially, how the branches thereof, namely, their power, their honour, and their service are ordained and confirmed of God".¹⁶ William Tyndale, showing rather less awe for the person of the monarch than Bilson was subsequently to manifest, declared in 1528 that "Kynges they are but shadowes wayn names and things ydle, havyng no thinge to doo in the worlde but when our holy father needeth their helpe".¹⁷ The homilist of *An Exhortation Concerning Good Order, and Obedience to Rulers, and Magistrates*, uses all the required texts from the Bible to bring home the point in a dramatic way to his congregation: "as it is written of God . . . through me Kings doe reigne, through me Councillers make iust lawes, through me doe Princes beare rule, and all Judges of the earth execute iudgement."¹⁸ In the Eighth Book of Richard Hooker's *Laws*, the divine authority of the king is defined by God's power of dominion, whose source cannot be questioned:

By which of these meanes soever it happen, that *Kings* or governours be advanced unto their seates, we must acknowledge both their lawfull choice to be approved of God, and themselves for *Godes Livetenantes* and confesse their powere his.¹⁹

Inherent in the subject's fealty to his King was an affirmation of world order and faithful allegiance to God; conversely, disloyalty entailed the commission of sin. In *1 Henry VI* the lieutenant of the Tower, on the orders of the Cardinal of Winchester, bars the way of the Lord Protector: for this action the Duke of Gloucester

¹⁵Charles Merbury, *A Brief Discourse of Royal Monarchie*, 40.

¹⁶*A Sermon Preached at Westminster before the King and Queenes Maiesties*, A5^r.

¹⁷*The Obedience of a Christian Man*, fol. 39^{r-v}.

¹⁸*Certaine Sermons or Homilies*, 70.

¹⁹*Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, ed. W. Speed Hill, III, 335.

accuses him of being "no friend to God, or to the King" (I. iii. 25). Later in the same scene, Gloucester confronts the haughty prelate "that regards nor God nor King" (60) and to defuse the ensuing skirmish, the Mayor's officers enjoin a peaceful retreat upon those men "assembled here in arms this day, against God's peace and the King's" (73-4).²⁰ St. Paul's famous assertion on the theme surfaces everywhere in print throughout the period as a constant reminder of the scriptural basis for dutiful obedience -- obedience to God in the presence and person of the King.²¹ For Stephen Gardiner such obedience was an exalted exercise:

In dede God according to his exceding great and unspeakable goodnes towarde mankynde to encrease habundaunce of glorie in us whereby he might establishe present mater for us to exercise our selues godly and thankeworthly in substituted men who being put in autorite as his vicegerentes shoulde require obedience which we must doo vnto them with no lesse fruite for Goddes sake than we shoulde doo it (what honour so euer it were) immediatly vnto him selfe.²²

In a post-script to a letter written to James, Bacon neatly inverted Cardinal Wolsey's famous lamentation on dutiful obedience:

Cardinal Wolsey said, that if he had pleased God as he pleased the King, he had not been ruined. My conscience saith no such thing; for I know

²⁰Cf. *Richard II*; Mowbray and Bolingbroke accuse each other of being a traitor to God and King Richard, I. iii. 20, 24, 40.

²¹Romans 13:1-4; "Let euerie soule be subiect vnto the higher powers: for there is no power but of God: & the powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist, shal receiue to them selues iudgement." Cf. *Certain Sermons or Homilies*, "the violence, and iniury that is committed against authority, is committed against GOD, the common-weale, and the whole Realme, which GOD will have knowne, and condignly, and worthily punished one way or other", 75. Also the *Homily against disobedience and wilfull rebellion*.

²²*De Vera Obedientia in Obedience in Church & State: Three Political Tracts by Stephen Gardiner*, ed. Pierre Janelle, 89. Cf. Thomas Bilson, *The True Difference Betweene Christian Subjection and Unchristian Rebellion*, "emperours commaunde the selfe-same that Christ doeth: because when they commaunde that which is good, it is Christ himselfe that commaundeth by them", P4^r.

not but in serving you I have served my God in one.²³

Not only is God in the person of the King, He is also manifest in the King's speech and language: "a diuine sentence *shalbe* in the lippes of the King: his mouth shal not transgresse in iudgement" (Proverbs, 15:10); David says the "spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his worde was in my tongue."²⁴ Thomas Bilson wrote in 1585 that "God him-selfe speaketh and commaundeth by the mouthes and heartes of Princes".²⁵ The image of God turning and ruling the King's heart is a recurrent one when duty to the Prince, and the Prince's duty to God is described: "the heart of the Prince is in Gods hands, which way forever it shall please him, he turneth it".²⁶ Collects at the communion service express this desire on the subjects' behalf for Elizabeth, their Queen:

Almighty and euerlastinge God, we be taughte by thy holy word, that the hartes of Princes are in thy rule and gouernaunce, and that thou doest dispose, and turne them as it semeth best to thy Godly wisdom: we humbly beseeche thee, so to dispose and gouerne the harte of Elizabeth, thy seruante, our Quene and governour, that in all her thoughtes, wordes, and workes, she may euer seke thy honoure and glorie.²⁷

Judgement and righteousness are gifts which God bestows on the monarch by which he is "essentially" recognized: Elizabeth's "Christian wisdom" was "well perceiue[d] to be the assured signe of Gods fauour".²⁸ Carried in the pockets of most subjects, the Queen's own coin, stamped with *deo gratia*, was a constant reminder

²³*The Works of Francis Bacon*, eds. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, Douglas Denon Heath, XIV, 299.

²⁴Geneva Bible gloss: "meaning, he spake nothing but by the motion of Gods Spirit", note b.

²⁵*The True Difference Betweene Christian Subiection and Unchristian Rebellion*, p4^r.

²⁶*An Homily Against Disobedience, and Wilful Rebellion*, 280.

²⁷BCP, second collect. Cf. Litany, "that it may please the. to rule her hart in faith, feare, and loue, that she may euermore haue affiaunce in the".

²⁸Thomas Bilson, *The True Difference*, Epistle Dedicatory to the Queen, A2^v.

of the divine and human relationship shared only by prince and God; the double rose noble read in abbreviated Latin, "this is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes". In the *Book of Common Prayer* subjects were constantly asked, in devotional service, to pray for their Queen's protection and safety, which remained in the hands of God.²⁹ According to the translators of the Geneva Bible, God had given Elizabeth a great charge in making her the "builder of his spiritual Temple", a "noble work which he hath begun by [her]".³⁰ "Therefore euen aboue strength", they advised her, "you must shewe your selfe strong and bolde in Gods matters".³¹

Elizabeth herself was never at a loss, thanks to the variety of language of which she was mistress, to express her perception of herself in this divinely-sanctioned role. Speaking before her lords at her accession in 1558, she declared that:

the burdaine that is fallen upon me maketh me amazed; and yet, consydering I am God's creature, ordeined to obay his appointment, I will thearto yelde, requiringe from the bottome of my hearte, that I may haue assistance of his grace, to be the minister of his heavenlie will in this office nowe committed to me.³²

In the Golden Speech of 1601, she denied an interest in the outward office of a king: "for myself, I was never so much enticed with the glorious name of a king or royal authority of a queen as delighted that God hath made me this instrument to maintain His truth and glory".³³

²⁹Songs too, carried a similar message: "The seruant of the mighty God, | Which dooth preserue her day and night, | . . . In many dangers hath she been, | But God was euermore her guide; | He wil not see our gracious queen | To sufer harme": *A Collection of Seventy-Nine Black-Letter Ballads*, No. 52.

³⁰Epistle, "To the moste vertvows and noble Quene Elizabet", ii^f.

³¹*Ibid.*, ii^v.

³²*Nugae Antiquae: Being a Miscellaneous Collection of Original Papers*, John Harington, I, 66-7.

³³*The Public Speakings of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. George P. Rice Jr., 109.

It was just one step from this generally-accepted picture of God's relationship with the King, to a perception of the King himself as a god on earth. By virtue of his spiritual grace, the King is deified in consecration and transfigured above all other men to the level of "*Christus*" -- a God-man.³⁴ James I told his parliament in 1609 that "Kings are not onely GODS Lieutenants vpon earth, and sit vpon GODS throne, but euen by GOD himselfe they are called Gods".³⁵ The political ends to which the doctrine of divine right was put is not the subject of this thesis. Rather, its focus is upon the language in which this theological-political ideology is inscribed, which in turn made it accessible to creative artists. Throughout Shakespeare, the king-god image is expressed with evident confidence that the concept was universally accessible: Antiochus's sin is all the more horrible because his actions as a king should be ruled by the divinity of his office, for "Kings", as he is reminded by Pericles, "are earth's gods" (*Pericles* I. i. 104);³⁶ "There's such divinity doth hedge a king", says Claudius, "That treason can but peep to what it would" (*Hamlet* IV. v. 123-4);³⁷ Angelo in his guilt now sees the Duke "like power divine" over his sins (*Measure* V. i. 367). The great scheme of worldly action spanned in the history plays centres around the king, who in his society is the elect of God: when Gloucester is asked to give up his staff of office as Lord Protector, Margaret confidently proclaims that now "God and King Henry govern England's helme!" (*2 Henry VI* II. iii. 30); Richmond, marching in the name of God against the usurper Richard, relies on the "true hope", for "Kings it makes gods" (*Richard III* V. ii. 22-4); King John depends upon the solitude of divinity to maintain his power:

³⁴The Norman Anonymous Tractates, IV "De Consecratione Pontificum et Regum": "In una quippe erat naturaliter individuus homo, in altera per gratiam Christus; id est Deus-homo"; see Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 46. Both the tractates and Kantorowicz's seminal study on the political theology of kingship will be treated with more detail later on.

³⁵*The Political Works of James I*, ed. Charles Howard McIlwain, 307.

³⁶Cf. *Rape of Lucrece*, "Thou seem'st not what thou art, a god, a king; | For kings like gods should govern every thing", 601-02.

³⁷Cf. Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Maid's Tragedy*, III. i. 233-41:

King: Draw not thy sword; thou knowes't I cannot fear
A subject's hand . . .

Amintor: There is a Divinity about you that strikes dead
My rising passions.

But as we, under God, are supreme head,
 So under Him that great supremacy,
 Where we do reign, we will alone uphold
 Without th'assistance of a mortal hand (*King John* III. i. 81-4)

Richard is "God's substitute, | His deputy anointed in His sight" and for Gaunt, who utters these words in *Richard II*, the office is sacrosanct even if the person who occupies it fails to act appropriately, "for I may never lift | An angry arm against His minister" (I. ii. 37-41).

King James could always be relied on, like Elizabeth before him, to add an imaginative flair to his descriptions of his view of the nature of kingship: "Kings are in the word of God it selfe called Gods, as being his Lieutenants and Vice-gerents on earth, and so adorned and furnished with some sparkles of the Diuinitie";³⁸ "therefore (my Sonne) first of al things, learne to know and loue that god, whom to ye haue a double obligation; first for that he made you a man; and next, for that he made you a little God to sit on his Throne, & rule ouer other men".³⁹

By the time that the authority of the King, established on these grounds, had been brought to question and violent disputation, the church threatened suspension and excommunication for any "parson, vicar, curate, or preacher" who did not voluntarily preach on the "sacred order of kings".⁴⁰

³⁸A speech before parliament in 1605, *The Political Works of James I.* 231. Cf. 53, "Kings are called Gods by the propheticall King *Dauid*, because they sit vpon God his Throne in the earth, and haue the count of their administration to giue vnto him".

³⁹*Basilikon Doron*, 4.

⁴⁰*Synodalia*, "Constitutions and canons ecclesiastical, treated vpon by the archbishops of Canterbury and York, 1640", 389-92. Congregations were sure to hear such sermons on the authofity of the king several times a year: "We do further ordain and decree, that every parson, vicar, curate, or preacher, vpon some one Sunday in every quarter of the year, at morning prayer, shall, in the place where he serves, treatably and audibly read these explanations of the regal power here inserted".

A Divine Imitator: The King As Mimetic Construct

Marlowe's Tamburlaine is told that "to be a king, is half to be a god". What appeals to the Scythian shepherd, however, is the performance of kingship as an artistic process, by which he can "ride in triumph through Persepolis". Tamburlaine is a king in a "tragic glass", a mirror for magistrates; and his artistic impulses are exactly right for the image of a god-king: the two concepts cannot be mutually exclusive. It is by virtue of the King's inherent divinity that he is *necessarily* a divine imitator, and the role itself a mimetic construct. Throughout the writings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and earlier, the words that keep appearing in the context of descriptions of the King and his role are those which also apply to the world of the play: "image", "pattern", "mirror", "shadow", "counterfeit", "shape", "figure", "form", "resemble", "imitation", "incarnation", "translation", "actor", and so on.

In the scriptures, Christ Himself is the primary imitator, for He is said to be the "brightnes of the glorie, and ingraued forme" of the Father's "persone". Gloss "d" to this passage from Hebrews 1:2 in the Geneva Bible explains the "ingraued forme" as the "liuelic image and paterne so that he that seeth him, seeth the father".⁴¹ Nature itself becomes a means of imitation by which God's majesty is reflected: "O Lord my God, thou art exceeding great, you are clothed with glorie & honour". The gloss for "clothed" is that it means "sheweth that we nede not to enter into the heavens to seke God, for asmuch as all the ordre of nature, with which proprietie and placing of the elements, are moste liuely mirrours to se his maiestic in."⁴² Like nature, man too, reflects the image of God, an image described by the minister John Woolton, as the "stampe & imprint [of] the radiant beames of his wisdome, rectitude and liberty of will".⁴³ That image of God in man is a "consideration of mans mind" which "should be

⁴¹Cf. John 14:9 (to which the gloss directs the reader): "Jesus said vnto him, I haue bene so long time with you, and hast thou not knowen me. Philippe? he that hath sene me, hath sene my Father: how then saist thou, Shewe vs thy Father?"

⁴²Psalm 104.1, note a.

⁴³A. Newe Anatomie of the Whole Man, AS^v-A6^f.

as it were a glasse wherein we may beholde him"; in this "God hath adorned & beautified us, in imparting to us his owne similitude and likenese".⁴⁴ The "true Christian", Erasmus reminds the prince, is one "who emulates [Christ] by his pious deeds".⁴⁵ If this was true for the common man it was more so for the king himself, who is set above his subjects as an extraordinary act of creation: "of all the creatures of the Universe", Robert Sherwood wrote, "none draweth neerer to the Creator then man; neither any degree of men, so much as doth the King, whether wee consider his person or his Office."⁴⁶

As the lord's anointed, David was the "true figure of [the] Messiah"⁴⁷ and was therefore the only one, as Calvin affirms in his commentary to the New Testament, "adorned with the title" of King, "for that annoynting in times past was but a shadowe of this. Whereby it is gathered, that that which was begunne in David, was a paterne and figure of Christ".⁴⁸ As descendants of David, all kings became sharers in this mimetic quality. By the time the New Testament kings came to be described, they no longer appeared as "foreshadowers" of Christ, but rather as the 'shadows', the imitators of Christ. The Christian ruler became the *christomimetes* -- literally the 'actor' or 'impersonator' of Christ.⁴⁹

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, A5^{r-v}. The image of the "glasse" almost certainly derives from St. Paul's famous metaphor, but cannot but recall Hamlet's "mirror up to nature".

⁴⁵*The Education of a Christian Prince*, 153.

⁴⁶John Bede, *The Right, and Prerogative of Kings*, trans. Robert Sherwood, Introductory letter to James, A2^v.

⁴⁷"The Argument" to the First Booke of Samuel, Geneva Bible, 121^r.

⁴⁸*A Harmonie Vpon the Three Euangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke with the Commentarie of M. Iohn Caluine*, trans. E.P., 58.6, 579.42.

⁴⁹Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 47. Kantorowicz refers to the political and theological expression and evaluation of kingship in the *Norman Anonymous Tractates*, [Tractatus Eboracenses, IV "De Consecratione Pontificum et Regum"]; a twelfth-century manuscript owned by Archbishop Matthew Parker and bequeathed, with the rest of his library, to Corpus Christi College at Cambridge. These indicate clearly that the concept of the actor-king long antedates the sixteenth century, and in written form to boot. Most of the Tractates were published in 1897 by Heinrich Bohmer, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, XIII, 662-79, from which I quote some Latin sentences illustrative of the concept, not found in Kantorowicz. Though

Examples from the period prove how commonplace the idea was, and how it could be used to edify subjects in their proper duty, and therefore in their proper behaviour to their Prince. The homily *Against Disobedience and Wylfull Rebellion*, for example, preached that,

Princes themselves, in authority, power, wisdom, providence, and righteousness in government of people, and Countreys committed to their charge, should ressemble his heavenly governance, as the Maiesty of heavenly things may by the baseness of earthly things be shadowed, and resembled, And for that similitude, that is betweene the heavenly Monarchy, and earthly kingdomes well governed, our Saviour Christ in sundry parables sayth, that the kingdome of Heaven is resembled unto a man, a King: and as the name of a King, is very often attributed and given unto GOD in the holy Scriptures, so doth GOD himselfe in the same Scriptures sometime vouchsafe to communicate his Name with earthly Princes, terming them gods: doubtlesse for that similitude of government which they have, or should have, not unlike unto GOD their King.⁵⁰

The duty to one's neighbour, explained John Mayer, was to "honour and obey the King" for he is the "Magistrate, bearing the Image of [God's] authorite and power

the actual Greek term "*christomimetes*" does not appear, of course, in the manuscript, the Norman Anonymous explains the King's role in precisely similar terms: *Rex autem ille et sacerdos, qui huius Christi, id est Dei et hominis, imago et figura erat* (665, 28-9); *in his igitur omnibus per figuram christus Domini fuit et Christi futuri vices exercuit* (666, 39-40); *in spiritu et Christus et deus est, et in officio figura et imago Christi et Dei est* (667, 8-9); *Christi nature imitatio sive potestatis emulatio* (667, 24); *Rex enim principaliter sequitur Christum, id est ex eius vice et imitatione, episcopi vero, etsi secuntur Christum, hoc tamen faciunt interposita vice et imitatione apostolorum* (670, 5-7).

⁵⁰*Certaine Sermons or Homilies*, 278. Also in the same passage: "Unto the which similitude of heavenly government, the neerer, and neerer that an earthly Prince doth come in his regiment, the greater blessing of GODS mercy is he unto that Countrey, and people over whom he reigneth".

whence he is said to bee a God. Princes are set on the throne to be "representours of his Image"⁵², where "he-resembleth God in . . . sole gouernment".⁵³ Indued with a kind of divine perfection, the King, said Henry Valentine, "is *Imago Dei*, the bright Image of God, and the most magnificent and conspicuous representation of the Divine Majesty".⁵⁴ Like the sun which was placed as "a beautiful likeness of [God] in the heavens", wrote Erasmus, "among mortal men he set up a tangible and living image of himself -- the king."⁵⁵ By having power of life and death, the king was a "God by similitude, or likeness".⁵⁶

The more these images of representation cluster around the figure of the king, the more he appears as an artifact, an objective correlative of the mimetic basis of the divinely created universe. Under the heading, "The picture of the Good Prince", Erasmus advised that the king's tutor, in his capacity as instructor, should "paint a sort of celestial creature, more like to a divine being than a mortal".⁵⁷ In a sermon preached in honour of Charles's I inauguration, Henry Valentine asserted that

wee joy in the Pictures of our friends, when we can not behold their Persons.

⁵¹*The Englishe Catechisme Explained*, 302.

⁵²Stephen Gardiner, *The Oration of True Obedience*, 89.

⁵³Robert Parsons, *A Conference About the Next Succession to the Crowne of England*, 20-1.

⁵⁴*God Save the King*, 5.

⁵⁵*The Education of a Christian Prince*, 159. Descriptions of the King as "image" were the most frequently used throughout the period: "a good Prince is an Image of God", Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, 314; "our Prince . . . is the Image of God on Earth, and as it were *vn minor essemplio* of his almightie power", Charles Merbury, *A Brief Discourse of Royall Monarchie*, 43; "Their [princes] Authoritie is derived from GOD, resembling his image", Thomas Bilson, *The True Difference Betweene Christian Subjection and Unchristian Rebellion*, A5^r.

⁵⁶John Rawlinson, *Vivat Rex*, 11.

⁵⁷*The Education of a Christian Prince*, 162.

All Governours . . . are Gods *Pictures*. Inferiour and subordinate Magistrates are halfe pieces drawne from the head to the shoulders, or middle; but *Kings* are the *Pictures* of god at length, and represent him in such due proportions, that as *God* is our *invisible King*, so the *King* is our *visible God*.⁵⁸

Thomas Heywood, in his history of Elizabeth's reign, describes the person of the king as a "liuely Embleme of the high and glorious Majesty of God in heaven".⁵⁹ The king's inner being, too, was something that could be determined in terms of similitude for the "Spirit", wrote Thomas Bilson, "which Princes receiue from God . . . sheweth [my emphasis] their Resemblance with the Sonne of God."⁶⁰

Tyndale had enjoined all kings to follow "after the ensample of Christe".⁶¹ Erasmus also, in setting forth the "likeness of the perfect prince" demands of the king that, "you, too, must take up your cross, or Christ will have none of you."⁶² By his just actions and by following the right course, and by his beneficence, the prince showed how he was the "living likeness of God", and His "vicar", and showed evidence of the "pains" taken to "correspond" to the "wonderful archetype".⁶³ All the king's actions, when viewed in this light, are part of a constant process of imitation: kings "ought too indeuer", one authority directed, to "shewe themselues towardes their subiects, as [God] hath done hymselfe towardes his. This is the true Mirror and

⁵⁸*God Save the King*, 5-6.

⁵⁹*Englands Elizabeth*, 46.

⁶⁰*A Sermon Preached*, A7^v.

⁶¹*The Obedience of a Christian Man*, 51^v.

⁶²The Dedicatory Epistle to *The Education of a Christian Prince*, and 154.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 157-8; cf. 159, 191: "In his *Laws* Plato forbade any one to name God as the cause of any evil, because by nature He is good and kind. But the prince (if he is a real prince) is a sort of likeness of God. How inconsistent with this prototype are they who manage things in such a way that whatever evils spring up in the state arise from their misdeeds?"

purtraicte whereby they shoulde frame their actions and order their lyves.⁶⁴ In his account of Elizabeth's daily activities, Chettle described how the Queen went about her subjects in a Christ-like manner:

The multitudes of poore daily relieued from her purse, the numbers of sicke persons yearely visited, and by her owne hand their corrupt sores toucht, the washing of poore womens feete, and releeuing their wants, was a signe that she was humble, as well as charitable.⁶⁵

To the lawyer, Henry Finch, it was only logical that the king, by virtue of his indueed divinity, had "a shadow of the excellencies that are in God, in a similitudinary sort given him".⁶⁶ In the *Learned Prince*, the first of *Three Moral Treatises* published by Thomas Blundeville in 1580, a poem described the role of the Prince primarily in terms of "likeness":

For justice is of law the end,
The law the Prince's work, I say.
The Prince God's likeness doth portend,
Who over all must bear the sway.

And like as God in heaven above
The shining sun and moon doth place
In goodliest wise as best behove
To show His shape and lively grace.

Such is that Prince within his land
Which, fearing God, maintaineth right
And reason's rule doth understand.

⁶⁴Chelidonius Tigurinus, *Of the Institution and Firste Beginning of Christian Princes*, trans. James Chillester, 16.

⁶⁵*Englandes Mourning Garment*, C2^r.

⁶⁶*Law, Or a Discourse Thereof*, 81.

Wherein consists his port and might.⁶⁷

If the king was a divine imitator, then it followed that the whole political structure of government and indeed, the entire kingdom on the terrestrial stage reflected, or resembled, the Kingdom of Heaven. The "excellency" of monarchy, wrote Robert Parsons in 1594, "is not only proued by the perfection therof in it selfe, as for that it is most ancient simple and conforme vnto nature, & most resembling the gouernment of God himselfe".⁶⁸ According to Bacon, "lawful monarchies are a shadow" of the "government of God himselfe over the world".⁶⁹ No one should "take their pattern of government from anyone except [God], who alone is in all ways to be imitated".⁷⁰

Far from engaging in a deceitful practice, the actor-king gains his subjects' favour and reverence by "good emulation".⁷¹ Elizabeth was praised by her subjects in these terms, in numerous adulatory writings: in his epistle dedicatory to the *Discouerie of Witchcraft* in 1584 (which shows that the image was not confined solely to political-religious works), Reginald Scot appreciates "how much . . . [we are] bound to God, who hath giuen us a Queen, that of iustice is . . . the very perfect image & paterne".⁷² In a series of commendatory poems, collected by John Nichols, Elizabeth is "her majesty

⁶⁷Cited by Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture*, 86.

⁶⁸*A Conference About the Next Succession to the Crown of England*, 18. Cf. "it resembleth the perfection as it were of God himselfe", 22.

⁶⁹Argument in the case of the Post-Nati, as cited in Francis D. Wormuth, *The Royal Prerogative 1603-1649*, 7-8. Cf. Richard Taverner, *The Garden of Wysdome*, "nothyng can be found cyther fayer or more profitable then the gouernaunce of one person called a Monarchie, for as muche as it moste resembleth the diuine and heauenly kyndome of God", C6^v.

⁷⁰Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, 177.

⁷¹Thomas Elyot, *Governor*, under the section "What very nobility is", 104.

⁷²Da Capo Press facsimile, Aii^v.

resembled to the crowned pillar";⁷³ "her majestic, for many parts in her most noble and vertuous nature to be found, resembleth to the spire";⁷⁴ "a general resemblance of the roundel to God, the world, and the Queene".⁷⁵ Elizabeth's official letter to her Lord Deputy, Thomas Butler, Earl of Ormonde, is typical of her attitude toward God, in her self-proclaimed mercy and benevolence towards the rebels in Ireland. "We can be content," she wrote, "in imitation of God Almighty (Whose minister we are here on earth, and Who forgiveth all sins) to receive the penitent and humble submission of those traitors that pretend to crave it".⁷⁶

No other prince paid as much attention to the aesthetic aspects of the divinity of kingship as did James I. He not only pored over all the orthodox writings on kingship, but also remained consistent in employing the network of images which describe it. "A *Monarchie* (which forme of government, as resembling the Deuinitie, approacheth nearest to perfection"; "*Monarchie* is the trew paterne of Diuinitie".⁷⁷ A king, said James to his Star Chamber, should imitate God both in a "literall" and "mysticall" sense".⁷⁸ In the "Argument" of *Basilikon Doron*, James instructs his son how to imitate God, for "God giues not Kings the style of Gods in vaine . . . Obserue the statutes of your Heavenly King . . . Since his Lieuetenant heare ye should remaine. | Reward the iust, be steadfast, true and plaine: | Represse the proud, maintaining ay the right. | Walke alwaies so . . . And so ye shall in princely vertues

⁷³*The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, III, 51. Most of the entries are unattributed but show how recurrent it was to make the Queen into a verbal artifact on paper; the poems often take the shape of the metaphor applied to Elizabeth (such as the crowned pillar, the spire, and the roundel). Nichols reproduces commendatory works throughout the three volumes.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 52.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 53.

⁷⁶29 December, 1597. *Letters*, 256.

⁷⁷*The Political Works of James I*, 53, 54.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 326. Also in the same speech: "Therefore all good Kings in their gouernment, must imitate God and his Christ".

shine. | Resembling right your mighty King divine". With such behaviour the king will "set forth the true shaddowe" of his "vertuous disposition".⁷⁹

Most helpfully, in view of its importance to the subsequent discussion of *Richard II*, James loved to use the image of the mirror, the glass in which the face of monarchy is viewed by kings and subjects alike, throughout his writings on kingship. The biblical books of Kings and Chronicles are to be read, advises James, "for there will ye see yourselfe (as in a mirrour) either among the Catalogues of the good or euill Kings".⁸⁰ In a speech to his parliament in 1609, James offered himself as the very "mirror" of a Christian King:

I now called you here, to recompence you againe with a great and a rare Present, which is a faire and a Christall Mirror; Not such a Mirror wherein you may see your owne faces, or shadowes; but such a Mirror, or Christall, as through the transparantnesse thereof, you may see the heart of your King.⁸¹

The speech which follows is the performance of his part, as he describes it, in setting "*Cor Regis in oculis populi*", and concludes with a return to the mirror image: "thus have I now performed my promise, in preaching you the Christall of your Kings heart", and cautions the lords before him on the proper care of such a glass:

Yee know that principally by three wayes yee may wrong a mirrour.

First, I pray you, looke not vpon my Mirrour with a false light: which yee doe, if ye mistake, or mis-understand my Speach, and so alter the sence thereof.

But secondly, I pray you beware to soile it with a foule breath, and vncleane hands: I meane, that yee peruert not my words by any corrupt affections, turning them to an ill meaning.

⁷⁹*Basilikon Doron*, 154.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 12.

⁸¹*The Political Works of James I*, 306 ff.

And lastly, (which is worst of all) beware to let it fall or breakē: (for glasse is brittle) which ye doe, if ye lightly esteeme it.⁸²

A king imitates God even in his death, especially if it is considered in terms of a martyrdom. John Foxe includes towards the end of his book of the "true Martyrs of Christ" the chronicle account of Elizabeth's "miraculous preservation . . . from extreme calamitie and danger of life, in the time of Queene Mary".⁸³ The connexion with Shakespeare's Richard II, who puts himself in the role of martyr-king, is obvious. The great public opportunity for a martyrdom spectacle brought out the actor-Christ in Charles I:

My next comfort is, that he [God] gives Me . . . the honour to imitate his example in suffering for righteousness sake, . . . The glory attending my death will farre surpasse all I could enjoy, or conceive in life. . . . If I must suffer a violent death, with my Saviour, it is but mortality crowned with martyrdom.⁸⁴

⁸²Cf. the dedication "sonet" to *Basilikon Doron*:

Lo here (my Sonne) a mirrour viue and faire:
Which sheweth the shaddow of a worthy King.
Lo heere a Booke, a patterne doth you bring
Which ye should preasse to follow mair on mair.

⁸³*Actes and Monuments*, 1895.

⁸⁴"Meditations upon Death", *Eikon Basilike*, 259-64. The precise form of these observations may be attributed, in part, to John Gauden, the Bishop of Worcester, who edited and added to Charles's draft of the work. Cf. in the same work, "Upon the Armies Surprisal of the King": "What part God will have me now to act or suffer in this new and strange scene of affaires, I am not much solicitous; some little practise will serve that man, who onely seeks to represent a part of honesty and honour", 223. The symbolic frontispiece contained in the first edition and frequently reproduced in subsequent editions portrays Charles as the suffering martyr. The King is kneeling at prayer, his crown is at his feet, his eyes are fixed to a heavenly crown that awaits him, while at the same time he holds an emblematic crown of thorns. See also "An Elegie on the sufferings and Death of King Charles", J.D., *The last Counsel of a Martyred KING to his Son*: "The scene was like the *Passion-Tragedie*. His Saviour's Person none could Act, but He", 7. Charles even went to death in costume, wearing a specially-knitted silk shirt.

Subjects could look up to the monarch not only as the central actor of Godly actions, but also as a source for imitation in their own lives. "Go through your ancient history", Erasmus recommends, "and you will find the life of the prince mirrored in the morals of his people. No comet, no dreadful power affects the progress of human affairs as the life of the prince grips and transforms the morals and characters of his subjects."⁸⁵ "Teach your people by example", wrote James, "for people are naturallie inclyned to counterfeit (like Apes) their Princes maners, according to that old verse, *Regis ad exemplum*";⁸⁶ and "let your owne life be a Law-booke and a mirrour to your people, that therein they may read the practise of their owne Lawes; and therein they may see by your shaddow what life they should leade."⁸⁷

Within their work, Shakespeare and other writers integrated such widely disseminated ideology, together with its accompanying linguistic formations, for a variety of dramatic purposes: an examination of these will comprise the second part of this thesis. At this point, it is sufficient to observe that there are enough occurrences of this ideology, both in and outside the history plays, to assert Shakespeare's awareness of the religious basis for the concept of the actor-king. The *Booke of Sir Thomas More*, for instance, talks of the person of the king as a "figure" lent by God (102);⁸⁸ and the good King Simonides in *Pericles* speaks of princes that are "a model which heaven makes like to itself" (II. ii. 10-11). In soliloquy, the Duke in *Measure for Measure* condemns the "seeming" Angelo as one who has failed to carry out the representative duty of his office: "He who the sword of heaven will bear | Should be as holy as severe: | Pattern in himself to know, | Grace to stand, and virtue, go" (III. ii. 254-57). The quality of mercy which best shows how the king imitates God is given

⁸⁵*The Education of a Christian Prince*, 157.

⁸⁶*Basilikon Doron*, 28.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 72. Also 100: "And as your companie should bee a patterne to the rest of your people, so should your person be a lampe & mirrour to your companie, giuing light to your seruants to walke in the path of vertue, and representing unto them such worthy qualities as they should preasse to imitate." Holinshed described the qualities of Henry VI as "right worthie of imitation, not onlie of such as are singled out from among infinite thousands, to be magnified with roialtie; but also of priuat and meane men that conuerse and liue one with an other in the world". *Chronicles*, 691.

⁸⁸Cf. *Faerie Queene*. Book V, introduction, 10: "That powre he also doth to Princes lend | And makes them like himselfe in glorious sight".

its most famous expression in Portia's courtroom speech: that mercy which is above this "sceptred sway" of ritual kingship

is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice (*Merchant of Venice* IV. i. 190-93)

The king is a source of imitation for his subjects. The Earl of Oxford reminisces about how Henry IV was a "mirror to the wisest" (3 *Henry VI* III. iii. 83-4);⁸⁹ Henry V tries to persuade the French princess Katherine to a different mode of public behaviour than she is used to, for "nice customs curtsy to great kings. . . . you and I cannot be confined within the weak list of a country's fashion: we are the makers of manners, Kate; and the liberty that follows our places stops the mouth of all find-faults" (*Henry V* V. ii. 284-89).⁹⁰ When Helena manages to cure the King of France in *All's Well*, the news is greeted by the publication of a broadsheet ballad; the title, as Lafew reads it, is *A showing of a heavenly effect in an earthly actor* (II. iii. 23), which nicely draws together some of the concepts so far discussed. The king is thought to be so much a part of a system of "play" in a divine sense, that the counterfeit image jolts with the sincerity of its intent, as it does in Samuel Daniel's "A Panigyrike Congratulatorie" on James's accession: "But God that rais'd thee up to act this parte, | Hath given thee all those powers of worthinesse, | Fit for so great a

⁸⁹Cf. *Rape of Lucrece*. For princes are the glass, the school, the book, | Where subjects' eyes do learn, do read, do look" (615-16).

⁹⁰Hall's description of Henry V goes beyond this: "he was the myrror of Christendome . . . and a glasse to them that should succede", *The union of the two noble families of Lancaster & Yorke*. 81^v. Cornelia, in Webster's *The White Devil*, laments the corruption of the court that surrounds her: a court devoid of a leader whom subjects may imitate:

The lives of Princes should like dyals move,
Whose regular example is so strong,
They make the times by them go right or wrong (I. ii. 273-5).

Cf. Antonio De Guevara's title, *The Diall of Princes*, trans. Thomas North.

worke".⁹¹ A prince must learn, says Erasmus, that "it is divine to play the part of king";⁹² it remains now to examine the physical nature of that role as it manifests itself to the eye of the awe-inspired subject and to the spectator who views him in the theatre. For the king's imitation consists not only in the essence of his nature but also in the "signes, which they have in common with Christ".⁹³

⁹¹London: [V. Simmes for E. Blount], B3^r. Cf. *Basilikon Doron*, "play the wise King's parte described by Christ", 68. This notion also applies to kingdoms; Thomas Nashe, in 1590, elaborates on the idea: "But when Christ saith there, His Kingdome is not of this world, he takes it to be spoken in respect of the transitorinesse of worldly kingdome, that must passe over the stage with all theyr pompe, and come to a winding up at last; when his kingdom shall have no end". *The First Part of Pasquill's Apologie*, as cited in Anne Righter, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play*, 116.

⁹²*The Education of a Christian Prince*, 174.

⁹³Thomas Bilson, *A Sermon Preached*, A5^v.

CHAPTER THREE

THE OUTWARD AND VISIBLE SIGNS OF THE ROLE

Coronation

There are not many scenes of coronation in Shakespeare. More than likely the great cost of staging such a visual extravaganza, both in terms of the expense of the costumes and of the number of people required on the stage, deterred the company from presenting them.¹ There are, however, several coronation progresses over the stage in the plays which were very much a part of the real-life ritual itself. The visual delights of Anne Bullen's coronation in *Henry VIII* are commented upon as elements in a show, one of whose functions is to permit the signs of majesty to be enjoyed: "You come to take your stand here, and behold | The Lady Anne pass from her coronation?" The "citizens", says the first gentleman, "have shown their royal minds . . . In celebration of this day with shows, | Pageants and sights of honour" (IV. i. 2-3, 7-11). An unusually elaborate stage direction, some 21 lines long, is needed to detail the stage-action. Shakespeare (or perhaps Fletcher)² has a lively flourish of

¹Some plays' structures seem absolutely to require them. *Richard III*, for example, builds towards such an event in the first half of the play, yet the first time we see Richard as king is at the beginning of IV. ii. when he enters "in pomp" already crowned. Bill Alexander's celebrated 1984 RSC production included a splendid coronation scene, which completed the building up of the action, and gave the whole a wonderful sense of appropriateness. There is only one coronation scene in Shakespeare; in France, the young Henry in *I Henry VI* is crowned on stage, but the whole process is cut short (with symbolic effect) by the interrupting quarrel between Talbot and Sir John Falstaff. As it stands, the ceremony is only eight lines long, at the beginning of IV. i.

²The authorship of *Henry VIII* remains a controversial subject. The play was printed as Shakespeare's in the Folio, and not until the middle of the 19th century were any questions raised about its status. Spedding launched the debate by drawing attention to Fletcher's prosodic style in certain sections of the play; the joint attribution has since become common, though the precise distribution of the scenes is still not agreed. Cyrus Hoy argues that the linguistic evidence strongly suggests that Fletcher's work in the play was essentially secondary: touching up scenes, and revising passages: he allows his presence in only six of the play's scenes. (See "The Shares of

trumpets cue the train of nobles, who are splendidly clad and who carry the regalia before the Queen. The Queen herself, "richly adorned with pearl" and "crowned", walks under the canopy in procession. Acting very much like modern news commentators covering a royal wedding, the two gentlemen call attention to the regalia with their questions and observations on the sceptre, the rod, the cloth of honour, and the coronets and on the nobles who carry them." Reaction to the coronation itself comes with the appearance of the third gentleman, who has just arrived from "Among the crowd i'th' abbey, where a finger | Could not be wedged in more" (57-8):

- 2 *Gent.* You saw
 The ceremony?
3 *Gent.* That I did.
1 *Gent.* How was it?
3 *Gent.* Well worth the seeing. (59-61)

The third gentleman goes on to describe the ceremony, including in his account details about the ritual choreography, the appearance and saint-like postures of the Queen, the people's view of her, the "holy oil, Edward Confessor's crown, | The bird of peace and all such emblems | Laid nobly on her" (62-94).³

In less detailed fashion, Shakespeare has Henry V. newly come from his coronation, "pass over the stage" with his train (2 *Henry IV* V. v. 40.1). King John appears at the beginning of IV. ii. "once again crown'd | And look'd upon", he hopes, "with cheerful eyes" (1-2). When the King's surrounding nobles protest at "this once again" coronation, the "double pomp" of a "superfluous" gesture, an action which "gild[s] refined gold" and "throws perfume on the violet", the King ignores them in the

Fletcher and his Collaborators in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon." *Studies in Bibliography*, XV (1962), 71-88.) It seems appropriate, therefore, to treat *Henry VIII* as primarily a work of Shakespeare's imagining, though Fletcher very likely aided in its execution.

³Shakespeare uses Holinshed's account of the coronation for most of his description, but it might be worth noting here that the audience themselves had recently enjoyed the spectacle of James's own coronation a few years earlier. The King's Men, wearing the royal livery, would no doubt have been part of that procession. We can thus assume Shakespeare had first-hand knowledge of what a coronation was all about. Holinshed includes various accounts of the coronations of English kings; the most detailed is that of Richard II, *Chronicles*, 416-17.

What emerges from the coronation spectacle is a sense of common reliance on, and belief in, the public definition of the figure of the king's power, as it manifests itself in the symbols of the office: to re-echo Ornstein's phrase here -- "believing is seeing". Any discussion of the signs of the kingly role must begin with an investigation of the coronation service itself, which induces the king with the license to wear them in perpetuity. The theatrical nature of such ritual is obvious, but it must be stressed that theatricality was indeed an essential element in the adoption of the kingly role. "For what purpose", asks Elyot,

was it ordained that Christian kings (although they by inheritance succeeded their progenitors kings) should in an open and stately place before all their subjects receive their crown and other regalities, but that by reason of the honourable circumstances then used should be impressed in the hearts of the beholders perpetual reverence, which . . . is the fountain of obedience; or else might the kings be anointed and receive their charge in a place secret, with less pain to them and also their ministers? Let it be also considered that we be men and not angels, wherefore we know nothing but by outward significations.⁴

Biblical accounts of the coronation rites of kings form the basis for subsequent historical enthronements: consecration with oil was the general and accepted custom, starting with Saul and continuing with David and Solomon. 2 Kings gives the fullest account of a coronation, complete with a crowning, and some mention of regalia.

⁴*The Book Named the Governor*, 163. In the anonymous play, *Lochner*, something of this idea is made clear: as he bestows the crown upon his son, Brutus says,

Then now my sonne thy part is on the stage.
For thou must beare the person of a King
Puts the crowne on his head
Loocrine stand up, and weare the regall Crowne,
And thinke, vpon the state of Maiestie. (B3^v)

Regal bracelets, ornaments, shields and spears appear in 2 Samuel.⁵ As a service of the English Church and State, the coronation was a re-creation or incarnation of all the biblical anointings, in which the king takes on not only his divine right but also a divine duty which he promises to perform. In this way, the act of anointing brought with it symbolically the biblical conception of the ideal king. The service mirrored (as it still does) an historical process which symbolizes the "mutual relations of Sovereign, Church and People, and of all three to God", and a national order and continuity "considered *sub specie Christianitatis*".⁶ Divine sanction is achieved through visible symbol; the truth of the divinity is expressed by semiotic means, in a visual metaphor -- the unwashable balm of holy unction.⁷ In the process of becoming a *Christus Domini*, as the Bible expresses it, the king becomes a different man who enters into a new status set apart for him by God. As Percy Schramm has pointed out, "as the ruler is outwardly changed by the hand of the priest, so inwardly he is the same time changed -- cleansed, that is purified, and so forth -- through the grace of the Holy Ghost. The anointed person becomes another man".⁸ Talking of the spiritual aspects of her rule, Elizabeth had described her coronation as a "great alteration":

When I first tooke the scepter, my title made me not forget the giuer:
and therefore began, as it became me, with such religion, as both I was

⁵ See Reginald Maxwell Woolley, *Coronation Rites*, *passim*, his survey of biblical coronation rites, which provides the information concerning the rituals as they were first used. Briefly they are: Judges, 9:15 (parable of the anointing with oil); 1 Samuel 9-11 (Saul anointed by the prophet Samuel, endowed with special gifts, recognized or accepted by the people, covenant with God made); 1 Samuel 16:13 (private anointing of David by Samuel); 2 Samuel 2:4 (the public anointing of David by the men of Judah); 2 Samuel 5:3 (the public anointing of David as king over all Israel); 1 Kings 1:38-40 (Solomon's anointing with the description of a royal procession); 1 Kings 19:15-16, 2 Kings 9:1 ff., 11:12 ff., give accounts of anointings and ceremonial acts; 2 Samuel 1:10 (the crown and regal bracelets of Saul are mentioned); Ezekiel 21:26 (crown and diadem are mentioned); 1 Kings 22:10,30 (reference to royal robes distinctive of kingly rank).

⁶ Edward C. Ratcliff, *The Coronation of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II*, 23.

⁷ See Jocelyn Perkins (Sacrist of Westminster Abbey) *The Crowning of the Sovereign of Great Britain*: "The deep significance of this outstanding feature of the Coronation Service cannot possibly be overestimated. The sanctity thus bestowed, in the words of St. Augustine, a 'sanctity not of his life, but of God's sacraments which is holy even in evil men', is inalienable. By no possibility can it be effaced", 105.

⁸ *A History of the English Coronation*, trans. Leopold Wickham Legg, 6-7.

borne in, bred in, and I trust shall die in. Although I was not so simple, as not to know what danger and perill so great an alteration might procure me.⁹

Hal emerges from his coronation, in 2 *Henry IV*, with a warning to

Presume not that I am the thing I was
For God doth know, so shall the world perceive,
That I have turn'd away my former self (V. v. 56-8).

Henry turns away from his riotous past, not only because it is time to, but also because he is an "altered" person in his new role as king.¹⁰

It is not hard to see why the coronation took on the characteristics of a great drama which focused on the translation and sublimity of a king.¹¹

⁹A speech to her Parliament in 1586, recorded in Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 1585.

¹⁰Other kinds of "alterations" occur at the hands of the king himself. When, for example, someone is knighted by the monarch, the person rises no longer as the same man he was before the sword touched his shoulder. The change which the process of ritual effects here is similar to that of coronation. See *King John* (I. i. 160-2):

King John From henceforth bear his name whose form thou bearest:
Kneel thou down Philip, but rise more great,
Arise Sir Richard, and Plantagenet.

Also 1 *Henry VI* (III. i. 169-73):

King Henry Stoop then and set your knee against my foot:
And in requerdon of that duty done
I girt thee with the valiant sword of York:
Rise, Richard, like a true Plantagenet,
And rise created princely Duke of York.

Other similar instances occur in 1 *Henry VI* (III. iv. 25-7); 2 *Henry VI* (I. i. 63-4), (V. i. 78); 3 *Henry VI* (II. ii. 58-62).

¹¹Schramm, *A History of the English Coronation*, 97-8. See also Edward G. Ratcliff, *The English Coronation Service*: "Like all ancient rites and ceremonies which are performed on rare occasions, it exhibits features, both in phraseology and act, which strike those unacquainted with them as proper to an historical play. We may readily admit that it is not inaccurate to describe the Service as an historical drama, provided that by the term we mean an action summing up in itself, and revealing the significance of, an historical process", 27. Also Robert Withington, *English Pageantry*, II: "From the early years of the thirteenth century to the accession of Queen Elizabeth, the most notable development of pageantry was seen in the 'royal-entry'. The splendor surrounding these events was great long before 1200", i. 124.

Three divisions appear throughout the history of the coronation rite: the promises made by the king and his acceptance by the people; the consecration and the anointing of the king; the vesting, coronation, and enthronement, followed by homage and communion.¹² The document which provides the rubrics for the service is the *Liber Regalis*, which was used for the coronation of Edward II in 1308; it was translated into English for the coronation of James I and remained in use until 1685.¹³

The *Liber Regalis* typifies how, through ritual, the king assumes a role which he must visually perform; in addition, the historical accounts of English coronations corroborate the details and impact of the outward process:

*now the king on the day before his coronation shall ride bareheaded from the Tower of London through the city to his royal palace of Westminster in suitable apparel offering himself to be seen by the people who meet him.*¹⁴

The route followed was Cornhill, Cheapside, St. Paul's, Ludgate Hill, Fleet Street, and the Strand to Whitehall.¹⁵ In preparation for Elizabeth's coronation procession, "in Christmas week scaffolds began to be made in divers places of the City for pageants".¹⁶ Richard Tottell records the theatrical nature of Elizabeth's majesty on display:

¹²See *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 348 for a concise description. A more complete examination of the service is Leopold G. Wickham Legg, *English Coronation Records*. For a contemporary survey and history of English and Continental coronation rites, see John Selden, *Titles of Honor* (London: 1631).

¹³The Latin and English texts are reproduced in Legg, *English Coronation Records*.

¹⁴"Rex autem precedenti die coronacionis sue. de turri londoniensi per mediam ciuitatem uersus palacium regium westmonasterii in cultu decentissimo equitabit. plebi occurrenti se offerens intuendum capite denudato." Legg, *The Liber Regalis*, in *English Coronation Records*, 82, 113.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, Introduction, xxi.

¹⁶Recorded in John Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, III, 34.

if a man should say well, he could not better tearme the cite of London that time, than a stage wherein was shewed the wonderful spectacle, of a noble hearted princesse toward her most louing people. & and the people's exceeding comfort in beholding so worthy a soueraigne, & hearing so princelike a voice which could not but haue set thenemie on fyre.¹⁷

Her progress throughout the city was constantly interrupted by the pageants presented in her honour and by the recitations of speeches and the playing of music. What emerges from descriptions of these events of pageantry is Elizabeth's eagerness and fondness for display¹⁸, as she responded in a princely, but also in a theatrical manner to having all eyes gazing upon her. "For all her passage", wrote Tottell,

she did not only shew her most gracious loue toward the people in generall, but also priuately if the baser personages had either offred her grace any flowres or such like . . . she most gently, to the common reioysing of all the lookers on, . . . staid her chariot, and heard theyr requests.¹⁹

What Elizabeth "shewed" most of all, according to Tottell, was how "mindfull" she was of God's "goodnes and mercie" in placing her in the "seate of gouernment ouer this realme": "amongst all other, two principall sygnes thereof were noted in this passage":

first in the Towne, where her grace before she entredher chariot, lifted up her eyes to heaven and [gave thanks to the Lord for her merciful deliverance as he had saved Daniel from the lion's den]. The second was the receiuing of the Bible at the little conduit in cheape . . . At

¹⁷*The Passage of our Moste Drad Soueraigne Lady Quene Elyzabeth*, A2^v-A3^r. Holinshed uses the same passage to describe Elizabeth's procession, *Chronicles*, 1172.

¹⁸Robert Withington acknowledges this as a contributing cause towards directing Elizabethans "to devote their energies to developing the possibilities of pageantry", *English Pageantry*, I, 198.

¹⁹*The Passage of our Most Drad Soueraigne*, A2^v.

the receit wherof, how reuerently did she with both her handes take it, kisse it, & lay it vpon her brest to the great comfort of the lookers on.²⁰

When the king was finally alone he was still required to perform, even in his private meditations. In the evening before the coronation the *Liber Regalis* instructs that the Prince "Shall give himself up to heavenly contemplation and to prayer. . . . In his prayer he shall imitate the prudence of Solomon".²¹

The Abbey itself, meanwhile, was transformed into a theatre prepared to receive its principal actor.

First there is to be prepared a stage somewhat raised between the high altar and the choir of the church of St. Peter at Westminster near the four high pillars in the cross of the said church. At the ascent of the stage there are to be steps from the middle of the choir on the west side by which the prince that is to be crowned can ascend to the said stage at his approach, going through the midst of the choir. There are also to be steps on the eastern side by which the prince can descend to the high altar, in front of the said altar when he is about to receive with due devotion the solemnity of his holy anointing and coronation at the hands of the Metropolitan or Bishop that is to consecrate him.

In the midst of the said stage there shall be prepared a lofty throne, that the prince may sit in it and be clearly seen by all the people.²²

²⁰*Ibid.*, E4r-v. Cf. Holinshed, *Chronicles*, "And hir grace likewise of hir side in all hir graces passage, shewed hir selfe generallie an image of a worthie ladie and gournour. But priuatelie these especiall points were noted in hir grace, as signes of a most princelike courage", 1179.

²¹"In oracione autem salamonis imitetur prudencia", Legg, *Liber Regalis*, in *Coronation Records*, 82, 113.

²²"In primis preparatur pulpitum aliquantulum eminens inter magnum altare et chorum ecclesie beati Petri westmonasterii, videlicet contiguum ex omni parte quatuor columpnis principalioribus infra crucem ecclesie prelibate. ad cuius quidem pulpiti ascensum fiant gradus de medio chori a parte occidentali per quos princeps

In his historical treatise of the crowning of English monarchs, Arthur Taylor describes the arrangements within the church for placing those who are engaged in the ceremony as a *mise en scene*:

in the upper part of the chancel, between the choir and the high altar, and under the tower, is a large platform called the Theatre; in the midst of this are placed the royal thrones, the king's being elevated by five steps ascending all round . . . On the south and north sides of the theatre are benches for the peers and peeresses, and against the four great pillars which support the tower are seats for the officers at arms.²³

Extant diagrammatic drawings of the Abbey's interior, set up for Elizabeth's

coronandus + in aduentu suo transiens per chori medium dictum pulpitem possit ascendere ac etiam fiant alii gradus a parte orientali per quos princeps prefatus descendere possit uersus maius altare ibidem ante gradus dicti altaris sacrosancie unctionis ac sue coronacionis solempnia. a metropolitano siue episcopo ipsum consecratur debita cum deuotione accepturus.

In medio uero dicto pulpiti erit preparatus thronus excelsus. ut in eo princeps residens clare ab omnibus possit intueri." Legg, *Liber Regalis*, in *Coronation Records*, 81, 112. The "apparatus in the Church of Westminster", described in the *Coronation Order of Charles I*, provides further details: "There is a Stage to be set vp foure square, close to the foure high Pillars between the Quire and the Altare; The Stage is to be spread with Tapestry, and to have Railes about it richly couered; it is also to have staires out of the Quire vp to it, and downe to the Altar from it. . . There is also a Traverse to be sett vp in St. Edwards Chappell, for the King to disrobe himselfe in after the Ceremonies of his Coronation be ended.

Where there is also, a Traverse, Faldstoole, with Quishions, and a Chaire, to be set vp for the Queene to pray at, and to repose herself, while the King disroboth and newe arrayeth himselfe." Legg, 246-47. Cf. 1 Kings 10:18-20, for a biblical description of the elevated throne.

²³The *Glory of Regality*, 178-79. What is significant here is of course the use of word "theatre" which Taylor surveys within various coronation rites: "In our old Latin ceremonials this is called *pulpitem*; in that of Charles V of France, *solium in modum eschafaudi*; and in a later French book it is said, *'au pulpitre ou jube de l'eglise, audessous du crucifix est dresse et pose le throne du roi'*; in the Roman Pontifical it is termed *thalamus sive suggestum*; and in the ceremonials of the Greek empire, *anabathra*, which is defined as *'ascensus, seu tabulatum, seu pulpitem'*", n179.

coronation, curiously resemble designs for the stage of a theatre (see Figure 1).²⁴ The sacramentality of the coronation scene, amidst a setting complete with a "travers" (see Figure 2), and oddly enough, a "trap dore", and surrounding paraphernalia (see Figure 1), must have been perceived as a ritual mimesis of the highest order. Within the spiritual significance of the coronation sacrament are embedded theatrical codes, yet the two are not perceived as distinct or separated: the theatrical *becomes* sacramental in this ceremony.

On the day of his coronation, the king is placed in a

*lofty seat . . . on which the king that is to reign is to be raised with all gentleness and reverence, after having first bathed as is the custom; and after being clothed with spotless apparel and shod only with socks. This is to be observed in every way, that, as the prince's body glistens by the actual washing and the beauty of the vestments, so his soul may shine by true and previous confession and penitence.*²⁵

Here, and throughout the service, the nature of his inner sanctity is always described in terms of an outward and visible expression. The regalia comprise the symbols of his office, the signs by which the king's presence is made manifest, and precede his entrance into church.²⁶ His acceptance by the people is accomplished with his turning

²⁴British Museum, Egerton MS. 3320. The drawings are part of an incomplete book of ceremonies for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth. A good part of the drawings are of the procession from the Tower through the city, and show Elizabeth riding in her horse-drawn litter.

²⁵"*Huius sub uniuersorum concordia peractis. prouideatur quod in aula regia maiori sedes eminens sit pannis sericis et inauratis decenter ornata: super quam dictus Rex regnaturus cum omni mansuetudine et reuerencia eleuetur: ipso tamen prius ut moris est balneato et induto mundissimis uestibus et caligis tantummodo calciato. Hoc modis omnibus obseruato quod sicut in principe per actualem locionem et uestimentorum decorem corpus nitescit sic per ueram et preuiam confessionem ac compuncionis dolorem anima ipsa splendescat.*" Legg, *Coronation Records*, 83, 114.

²⁶This is significant in *Richard II*: when Richard is brought in to "undeck the pompous body of a king", the regalia is borne after him. IV. i. 161.1. (The direction is Capell's, but the subsequent action clearly implies it: when Richard calls for the crown in l. 181, he is addressing the regalia-bearer.)

to the four sides of the stage as the Bishop addresses the people asking their consent.²⁷ But it is the anointing with the sacred unction which is the most important part of the service; here at the crucial point, the emphasis again rests on imitation:

God, . . . whoe in the beginning by the powring out of thie Floude, didest chasten the Sinne of the World, and by a *Doue* conveying an *Oliue branch* didst giue a token of reconcilment vnto the earth: And again didest consecrate thie servant *Aron* a Priest, by the annoynting of *Oyle* and afterwards by the effusion of *Oyle*, didest make Kings and Prophets to governe thie people *Israel*: and by the voice of the Prophet *Dauid* didest fortell that the Countenance of the Church should be made Chearfull with *Oyle*: Wee beseech the Almighty Father, that by the fainesse of thie Creature, thou wilt vouchsaaffe to blesse and sanctifie thie servant . . . that in the simplicitie of a dove hee may Minister peace vnto his People, that hee may imitate *Aron* in the service of God . . . And that by the annoynting of this *Oyle*, thou maist giue him a Countenance alwise Cherfull and amiable.²⁸

The Archbishop must literally tear the specially prepared silk shirt from the body of

²⁷"Metropolitanus siue episcopus regem coronaturus per quatuor partes dicti pulpiti plebem alloquatur ipsorum inquirens uoluntatem et consensum de dicti principis consecratione. Rege interim in sede sua stante atque ad quatuor partes dicti pulpiti dum pontifex plebem alloquitur se uertente. quibus ut moris est consencientibus atque uoce magna et unanimi proclamantibus." Legg, *Coronation Records*, 85, 116. Holinshed described this segment of Edward IV's coronation as "this part thus plaied", *Chronicles*, 664.

²⁸From the *Coronation Order of Charles I*, Legg, *Coronation Records*, 257. The *Liber Regalis* reads: "Qui in primordio per effusionem diluuii crimina mundi castigare uoluisti. et per columbam ramum oliue portantem pacem terris redditam demonstrasti. Iterumque aaron famulum tuum per unctionem olei sacerdotem sanxisti. et postea per huius unguenti infusionem ad regendum populum israeliticum sacerdotes ac reges et prophetas perfecisti uultumque ecclesie in oleo exhilarandum per propheticam famuli tui uocem dauid esse predixisti. ita quesumus omnipotens pater ut per huius creature pinguedinem hunc seruum tuum . . . sanc-tificare tua benedictione digneris: eumque in similitudinem columbe pacem simplicitatis populo sibi subdito prestare: et exempla aaron in dei seruicio diligenter imitare . . . et equitate iudicii semper assequi uultumque hilaritatis per hanc olei unctionem", 91.

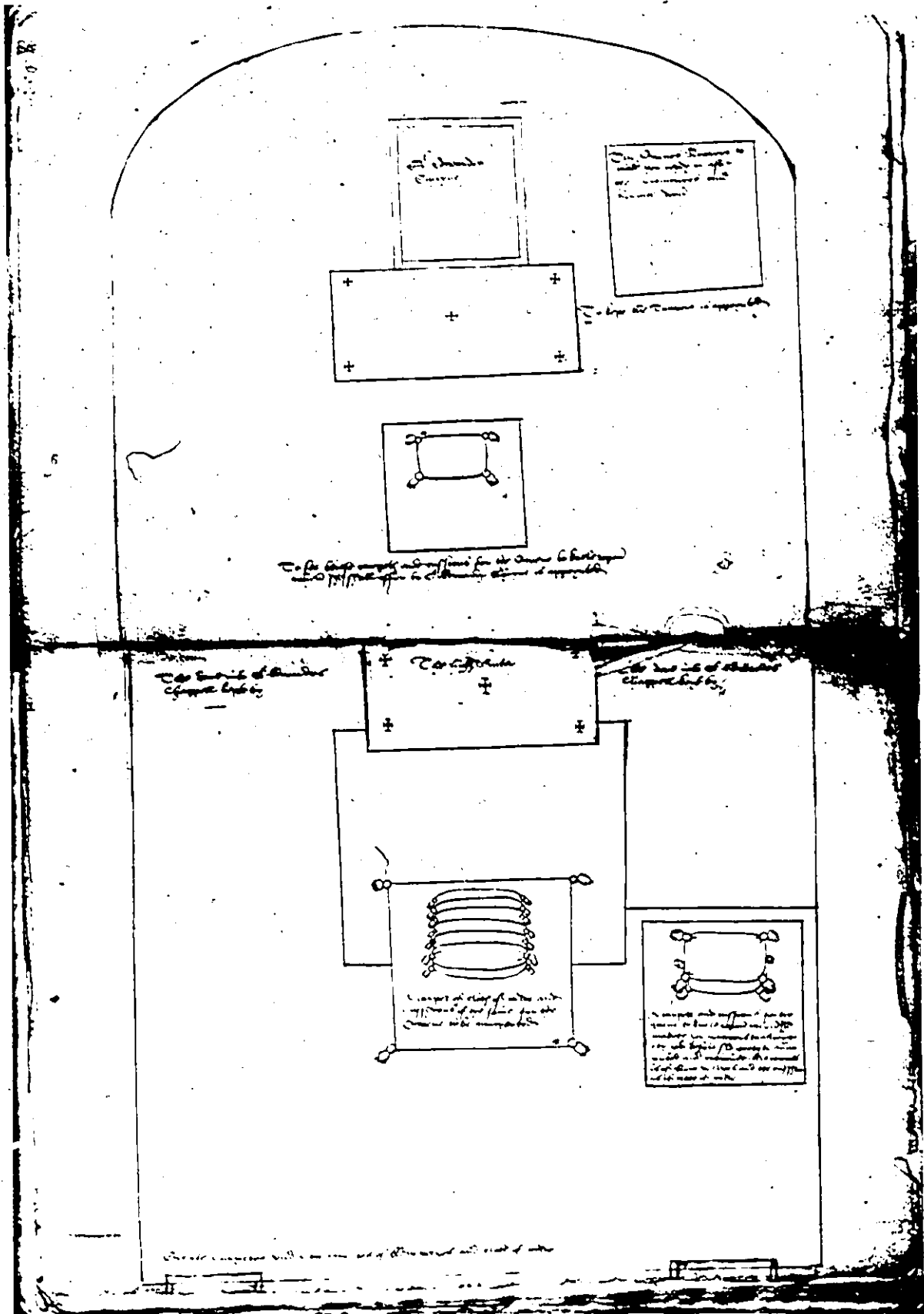


Figure 2

the king to anoint him on the palms of the hands, on the breast, on the shoulders and back, on the inside of the elbows, and lastly on the head.²⁹

It is only after he is anointed that the king receives the regalia and it is worth noting here that, as Legg stresses, "the king is vested and adorned with the *regalia* because he is anointed, and that he is not anointed in order that he may receive the *regalia*."³⁰ The qualities with which the king is indued are represented by the symbolic significance of the vestments and ornaments which are now bestowed on him. The pallium, or royal mantle, for example, "is formed with foure Corners, to let them vnderstand that the foure Corners of the World are subjects to the power of God: and that no man can happily reigne vpon Earth, whoe hath not rec[eived] his authority from Heaven."³¹ The sceptre is the "signe of Kingly power, the Rodd of the Kingdome, thee rodd of Vertue".³² And the crown, the prime emblem of majesty, is of course, the "crown of glorie and righteousness", a signal that he who wears it "is filled with manifold graces, and all pretious Vertues".³³

²⁹So sacred was the anointing that the chrism on the head was not touched. To protect this from irreverence the Lord Great Chamberlain put a shallow coil of fine lawn upon the king's head. This was worn by the king for eight days after his coronation. See Legg, *English Coronation Records*, introduction, xxxix.

³⁰Introduction, *Coronation Records*, xxxiv.

³¹The Archbishop speaks this to the king as he places the mantle upon him. Legg, *Coronation Records*, 261.

³²*Ibid.*, 263.

³³*Ibid.*, 261. Briefly, the regalia include the following: the *supertunica*, or tunic, now called the close pall; buskins, or tinsin hose and sandals; spurs; girdle, or sword belt (the sword is symbolic of the king's responsibility to protect his subjects); armil, or stole; the pallium, or mantle; crown; sceptre; staff, or rod; orb; ring (symbolic of the king's faith and his relationship with his people; bracelets (of sincerity and wisdom). See Legg's introduction, xl-xliv and the *Coronation Order Of Charles I*, 259-64. Erasmus supplies a summary of the metaphoric significance of the regalia in the *Education of a Christian Prince*:

The Prince should learn to philosophize about those very decorations with which he is adorned. What does the anointing of the king mean, unless the greatest mildness of spirit? What significance has the crown on his head, if not wisdom that is absolute? What is the meaning of the collar of plaited gold around his neck, except the union and harmony of all virtues? What is symbolized by the bright rays of gems shining with many colors, if not the highest degree of virtue and that whatever

At the coronation service of King James, Thomas Bilson devoted part of his sermon to the religious significance of the regalia borne by the king. Bilson's description makes clear that the appearance of the king in his costumed role essentially represents an imitation of God in His celestial robes:

Insomuch that when Christ is described in the Scriptures, as a King, all the ornaments and ensignes of a Kingdome, are nameley recited and personally referred to him, though in him they be spirituall and eternall, which to men must be materiall and temporall. *Thy Throne, O God endureth for euer*, saith the Scripture of Christ, as the Apostle expoundeth it, *The Scepter of thy kingdome is a Scepter of Righteousnesse*. (Hebr. 1) Wherefore, *God euen thy God, hath annointed thee with the Oyle of Gladnesse aboue thy Partners*. On his head (saith Saint Iohn) *are many Crowns*, and out of his Mouth (as working his Will by his Worde) *goeth a sharpe Sword, wherewith hee shall smite the Heathen*. To Princes then, as Partakers with Christ in the power, honour and iustice of his Kingdome heere on Earth, are allowed of God a *Sword*, in signe of *Power*, a *Crowne*, in shew of *Glory*, a *Scepter*, for a token of *Direction*, a *Throne* for a seate of *Iustice* and *Iudgement*; and *Inunction* as a pledge of outward *Protection*, and inward *Infusion* of grace. All which Signes and Ornaments of Kingdome since Christ

is honorable ought to be found in a special-degree in the prince? What does the rich purple mean, except an ardent love toward his subjects? What do his various decorations mean, except that he should either equal or exceed the glorious deeds of his ancestors? What is the significance of the sword that is carried before him, unless that his country ought to be safe under the protection of this man, safe both from outside enemies and those within. (187)

For Tudor lawyers, the "king's crown was a hieroglyphic of the laws". Sir Edward Coke's *Reports*, cited by Kantorowicz, 16.

assumeth from Princes, and applieth to himselfe, he confirmeth to be lawfull in Princes, because they are common to them with him.³⁴

Once "all the nobles of the realm then present . . . publicly do their homage on the stage"³⁵ (which is the first action the king, as king, engages in) then he is prepared for his disrobement:

*then shall the Great Chamberlain of England strip the king of his regalia . . . And there shall be near by a closed place near the altar with curtains, prepared by the king's servants, where the king shall be stripped . . . of his royal ornaments . . . the king shall be revested with other vestments by the said Great Chamberlain.*³⁶

From the traverse (see Figure 2) the king emerges in yet another form: no longer an ordinary man, no longer adorned with all the visible symbols of his new role, but the king, in whose person all the external images of royalty are now internalized: his role now is quintessentially in his person.

³⁴A Sermon Preached, A7^{r-v}. "Their Crownes, Thrones, Swords & Scepters . . . are resemblances of Christs kingdome, and approued of God, as signes & assurances of their authority, dignity, and duty from God, euen as Inunction is an earnest to them of that inward sufficiencie, and outward securitie, which God bestowes on their persons, when hee aduanceth them to their Places", B3^r.

³⁵"facto prius dicto regi ab omnibus proceribus regni tunc presentibus publice super dictum pulpitum homagio", Legg, *Liber Regalis*, in *Coronation Records*, 99, 122.

³⁶"Deinde magnus camerarius anglie exuet regem regalibus antedictis que per dictum camerarium singillatim sicut a rege auferuntur tradentur abbati westmonasterii. uel uicem eius agenti ut sepius prescriptum est super dictum altare reponenda. Eritque ibi locus clausus iuxta altare cum curtinis per regios ministros preparatis. + in quo rex de suis ut predictum est exutus regalibus usque ad tunicam sericam et camisiam. ac caligas regales et sandaria a dicto magno camerario aliis uestibus de nouo erit reindutus." Legg, *Liber Regalis*, in *Coronation Records*, 106, 127.

The King's Countenance

Without the visual trappings which surround the body of a king -- the robes and the brilliance of the ornaments, especially of his crown -- how does the man "look" like a king? It was held as part of the conception of his role, that a king's face, in fact his whole appearance, displayed the evidence of his divinity and the ability to wield power. There is in the countenance of the king the mark of God and a celestial light. It would be silly to suggest that these were actual signs that could be witnessed in the king's person. But if a king had an inner spiritual grace because of his relationship with the divine, it followed that an outward grace was present as well. The importance and unique quality of the king's countenance can easily be illustrated from plays. Hamlet forces precisely this point on his mother when he presents her with the portraits of the two kings:

Look here upon this picture, and on this.
 The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
 See what a grace was seated on this brow,
 Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,
 An eye like Mars to threaten and command,
 A station like the herald Mercury
 New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill,
 A combination and a form indeed
 Where every god did seem to set his seal
 To give the world assurance of a man (III. iv. 53-62)

Though here Hamlet is nominating "the difference of man and man" rather than man and king, his natural interest in the succession seems to have led him unconsciously to a mode of description that draws on his father's true regality as a means of contrasting Claudius's usurping baseness. In an ironic exchange between subject and king, Lear is puzzled over the disguised Kent's desire to serve him. Kent tries to recall Lear to his former self's majesty by recognizing its sign in his face:

Lear. Who would'st thou serve?

Kent. You.

Lear. Dost thou know me, fellow?

Kent. No, Sir; but you have that in your countenance
which I would fain call master.

Lear. What's that?

Kent. Authority. (I. iv. 24-30)

Tamburlaine's power is, in part, due to the magnificence of his countenance. He can "conquer" Theridamas with his "looks" (I. i. 228) and make Menaphon admire his eyes which encompass "a heaven of heavenly bodies in their Spheares"; his hair is "Wrapped in curles, as fierce *Achilles* was, | On which the breath of heaven delights to play, | Making it daunce with wanton majestic". "In every part", says Menaphon, "proportioned like the man, | Should make the world subdued to *Tamburlaine*". This is the "face and personage of a woondrous man" admits Cosroe (II. i. 16-32), and the appearance of the actor who plays Tamburlaine must prove Cosroe and Menaphon right. Though the actor might not quite manage to portray heaven dancing in his countenance, it is enough, that Marlowe makes the language suggest as much, and that he could rely on his audience's belief in what kings were supposed to look like. Lear's face *has* authority because the actor playing him is playing the role of the king. The audience accepts Hamlet's description of his father and Claudius because one was the rightful king and the other a murderous usurper.

The Renaissance was a period poetically obsessed with the imagery of the countenance. People's faces are read and commented upon for all sorts of reasons: the lover's, the soldier's, the courtier's, the fool's. The visible expression of qualities of character led to notable advances of technique in both poetry and painting; the idea that the king's countenance bespeaks his divine nature is certainly a part of this burgeoning tradition, which has been frequently surveyed and documented. But the stress on the appearance of the king's face goes further: the descriptions which are applied to them confirm the complete picture of the king as a mimetic construct who *must look* the role he is required to play. Thus is forged another link between royalty, religion and the theatre. The Bible taught that "in the light of the King's

countenance is life"³⁷. What the subject could receive from the sovereign's face was a confidence and comfort that all was well with the world: "when a noble man passeth by", wrote Elyot of all those in authority, "showing to men a gentle and familiar visage, it is a world to behold how people taketh comfort, how the blood in their visage quickeneth, how their flesh stirreth, and hearts leapeth for gladness. Then they all speak as it were a harmony. . . . He is no man, but an angel; see how he rejoiceth all men that behold him!"³⁸. But the king's physical appearance could also instill a dread of reverence in his beholders: "*Nature herself*", said Rawlinson, "hath made the *Physiognomy* of Princes to bee such, as strikes an awfull feare and reverence into as many as behold them; euen as it is said of *Moses* Exod. 34: that after his conference, with God, the skin of his face shone so bright, that the people were afraid to come near him."³⁹

Writing of Henry VIII's coronation, Sir Thomas More described, in "A Poetical Expression of Good Wishes", his confidence that in the "very countenance of our prince, extraordinary as it is, wears upon itself sure evidence which cannot be falsified".⁴⁰ The king, said More, "stands out taller than any . . . There is a fiery power in his eyes, beauty in his face . . . his moral perfection does shine forth from his very countenance. His frank face reveals his noble heart."⁴¹ Sir John Davies celebrates his worship of the Queen in his eighth "Hymn to Astrea" (an acrostic) where he asks all the Princes of Europe to "Sayle hither to obserue her eyes, | And marke her heavenly motion". Such a "pilgrimage" will reveal "This saint's tongue", a queen whose "eye hath made a Prince a page":

R aise but your lookes to her, and see
E uen the true beames of maiestie.

³⁷Prouerbes, 15:10.

³⁸*The Book Named the Governor*, 108.

³⁹*Vivat Rex*, 9.

⁴⁰*The History of King Richard III and Selections from the English and Latin Poems*, ed. Richard S. Sylvester, 133.

⁴¹*Ibid.*

G reat Princes, marke her duly;
 I f all the world you doe suruey,
 N o forehead spreades so bright a ray,
 A nd notes a Prince so truly.⁴²

James's triumphant arrival in London, "all in pompe", is described as "should a King appeare, | Gods Deputie should set the world at gaze; | Yet his milde lookes driue vs from all amaze".⁴³

The fact that the prince's face was stamped on the coins of the realm offered another opportunity for metaphor: his true merit was described in terms of "coinage" and "impression", thus enabling qualities of rule to be seen as yet another form of imitation. "We have in this realm coins", Elyot expostulates,

which be called nobles; as long as they be seen to be gold, they be so called. But if they be counterfeited, and made in brass, copper, or other vile metal, who for the print only calleth them nobles? Whereby it appeareth that the estimation is in the metal, and not in the print of figure.⁴⁴

In this way the king's countenance bore witness to his unique position among men. "The excellency of *Princely dignity*", says Rawlinson, "shines in the very face and countenance of a King." For there is a *Character tremendus in vultibus Regū*: An impression or character of dreadfull Maiestie stampt in the very visage of a King.⁴⁵

⁴²*Complete Poems*, ed. A.B. Grosart, as cited in Francis Yates, *Astrea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century*, 85.

⁴³The Shepheards Spring Song, in gratulation of the royall . . . Entrance, to the Maiestie of England", recorded in Chettle, G1^{r-v}.

⁴⁴*The Book Named the Governor*, 106. Cf. *Richard III*, Richard's contempt for Elizabeth's relations: "great promotions | Are daily given to ennoble those | That scarce some two days since were worth a noble". (I. iii. 80-3); and later in the same play, Margaret's diatribe at Dorset: "Your fire-new stamp of honour is scarce current". (I. iii. 156).

⁴⁵*Vivat Rex*, 9.

"It is not the antiquity and greatnesse of your house", wrote John Bede to the King of France, "that maintaineth your Crowne. But that diuine character, grauen by the finger of God in the face of the King, who *sitting upon the throne, chaseth away all euill with his eyes*."⁴⁶ More and more the image is that of God, who as holy engraver, worked upon his creation to reproduce His own image in art: "the King of Kings". William Pemberton told his congregation, "hath instamped his image of soueraigntie in Kings and Caesars".⁴⁷ For the lawyer, Henry Finch, the king bore a "similitude from the diuine perfection" by "carrying God's stamp and mark among men, and being, as one may, a God upon earth".⁴⁸ Some writers allowed the image to carry them away in those hyperbolical panegyrics which were so common in the period, and it is significant how many of these were clergymen: "Your highnesse", John White wrote to James, "is more than an ordinary man: God hath set his owne image, as it were upon his gold, in an eminent manner upon you, which he hath not done upon other men".⁴⁹

Daniel includes an interesting account in his *Ciuile Warres* of the effect of majesty's countenance upon the viewer. Brought back to London in humiliation, Richard II rides behind the proud Bolingbroke -- whom Isabel mistakes for the King precisely because Bolingbroke now *looks* like one:

Lo yonder now at length he comes (saith shee)
 Looke my good women where he is in sight:
 Do you not see him? yonder that is hee
 Mounted on that white courser all in white,

 I know him by his seate, he sits vpright:
 Lo, now he bows: deare Lord with what sweet grace:
 How long haue I longd to behold that face?

⁴⁶*The Right, and Prerogative of Kings*, trans. Robert Sherwood, A8^r.

⁴⁷*The Charge of God and the King*, A3^r.

⁴⁸*Law, or a Discourse Thereof*, 81.

⁴⁹Epistle Dedicatorie to King James, *A Defence of the Way to the True Church*, **2^v. White became chaplain in ordinary to James.

But "false joy deludes her wrongly", "For nearer come, shee findes shee had mistooke,
| And him she markt was *Henrie Bullinbrooke*." But once Isabel realizes her mistake
she recognizes Richard whose "princely face doth bring | The euidence of maiestie to
proue".⁵⁰

Majesty in the history plays is animated in the king's countenance, a theatre in
which sacred and intrinsic qualities are viewed or said to be sadly lacking.⁵¹ The
king's appearance is part of the role he must play because it belongs to the abstract
concept of kingship. It thus becomes a quality accessible to the audience even before
the actor playing the king's part reaches the stage. Henry V is eulogized by
Gloucester in *1 Henry VI* as a king whose "arms spread wider than a dragon's wings",
whose "sparkling eyes, replete with wrathful fire, | More dazzled and drove back his
enemies | Than mid-day sun fierce bent against their faces" (I. i. 11-14). "Unto the
French", says Winchester, "the dreadful judgement-day | So dreadful will not be as was
his sight" (I. i. 29-30). It is in the face of the young Prince Edward that hope is to
be found, rather than in his weak father: "Look on the boy", Clifford admonishes the
King, "And let his manly face, which promiseth | Successful fortune, steel thy melting
heart | To hold thine own and leave thine own with him" (*3 Henry VI* II. ii. 39-42).
Later in the same play Henry's royal powers of divination recognize that the true hope
for England's future rests in the majesty of the young Richmond:

Come hither, England's hope. Lays his hand on his head.

If secret powers

Suggest but truth to my divining thoughts,

⁵⁰Samuel Daniel, *The First Fowre Bookes of the Ciuile Warres*, Book II, stanzas
74-5, 82. Reproduced in the Appendix II, Peter Ure's Arden ed. *Richard II*, 200-2.

⁵¹For references to a majesty which is personified in facial terms see: *Troilus
and Cressida*, "and all my powers do their bestowing lose, | Like vassalage at unawares
encount'ring | The eye of majesty" (III. ii. 36-8); *Romeo and Juliet*, "Upon his brow
shame is asham'd to sit, | For 'tis a throne where honour may be crown'd | Sole
monarch of the universal earth" (III. ii. 92-4); *Tempest*, "He was indeed the duke: out
o' th' substitution, | And executing th' outward face of royalty" (I. ii. 103-4); *1 Henry
VI*, "beauty's princely majesty is such | Confounds the tongue and makes the senses
rough" (V. iii. 70-1); *2 Henry VI*, "Upon thy eye-balls murderous Tyranny | Sits in grim
majesty to fright the world" (III. ii. 48-9); *King John*, "on the winking of authority |
To understand a law, to know the meaning | Of dangerous majesty, when it perchance
it frowns" (IV. ii. 211-13).

This pretty lad will prove our country's bliss.
 His looks are full of peacefull majesty;
 His head by nature fraim'd to wear a crown.
 His hand to wield a sceptre; and himself
 Likely in time to bless a regal throne. (IV. vi. 68-74)⁵²

The "death" of Prince Arthur in *King John* is made "proud with pure and princely beauty" inherent in the young boy (IV. iii. 35). It is the beauty of majesty, together with the strength of a king's countenance, which the Bastard urges the King to put on. For a king must not only act like one, he must look the part as well, so that from him, his subjects may draw strength and an example for imitation:

But wherefore do you droop? why look you sad?
 Be great in act, as you have been in thought;
 Let not the world see fear and sad distrust
 Govern the motion of a kingly eye!
 Be stirring as the time, be fire with fire,
 Threaten the threat'ner, and outface the brow
 Of bragging horror: so shall inferior eyes,
 That borrow their behaviours from the great,
 Grow great by your example and put on
 The dauntless spirit of resolution.
 Away, and glister like the god of war (V. i. 44-54)

And when the appropriate behaviour, befitting the king, is lacking in a true prince the tell-tale signs are plain in his countenance. King Henry laments that he

⁵²Cf. the description of the grown-up Richmond in Hall's account of the history of Richard the Third, *Union*: "he was . . . formed and decorated with all gyftes and lyniamentes of nature that he semed more an angelicall creature then a terrestriall personage, his countenaunce and aspecte was cherefull and couragious", fol. lv^v. In Ford's *Perkin Warbeck* King James accepts the Pretender's claim to royalty because Perkin "looks" like a king:

How like a king he looks! Lords, but observe
 The confidence of his aspect; dross cannot
 Cleave to so sure a metal -- royal youth!
 Plantagenet undoubted! (II. iii. 73-6)

can "See riot and dishonour stain the brow | Of my young Harry" (*1 Henry IV* I. i. 84-5). Hal himself can "acknowledge" that his slothful weariness "discolours the complexion of [his] greatness" (*2 Henry IV* II. ii. 4-5). Ironically enough it is Hal, as Henry V, who symbolizes the epitome of the visible grace in the king's face. From the "little touch of Harry in the night", the Chorus declares that the soldiers, beholding him, will draw the kind of solace and strength that the Bastard expected King John to show:

Upon his royal face there is no note
 How dread an army hath enrounded him;
 Nor doth he dedicate one jot of colour
 Unto the weary and all-watched night;
 But freshly looks and overbears attaint
 With cheerful semblance and sweet majesty;
 That every wretch, pining and pale before,
 Beholding him, plucks comfort from his looks.
 A largess universal like the sun
 His liberal eye doth give to every one,
 Thawing cold fear, that mean and gentle all,
 Behold (*Henry V* IV. chorus. 35-46)

The realm's military power, embodied in the king's command, is also a part of the strength of his perceived countenance. Richard II cannot be comforted after he hears the Welsh forces have deserted him:

Aumerle. Comfort, my liege, why looks your grace so pale?
Richard. But now the blood of twenty thousand men
 Did triumph in my face, and they are fled;
 And till so much blood thither come again,
 Have I not reason to look pale and dead? (*Richard II* III. ii. 75-9)

One of the signs of a subject's loyalty is his ability, and willingness, to proclaim his awareness of these signs of the king's outward nature. Bolingbroke is understandably anxious to see how Richard II has reacted to his reverses of fortune,

and sends Northumberland to Flint Castle to (among other things) "mark King Richard how he looks" (III. iii. 61). But when the Duke of York, the reluctant participant in Bolingbroke's progress to royalty, sees Richard on the ramparts, his immediate reaction (though he is aware that in material terms Richard has lost everything) is to recognize in Richard's mere appearance the signs of enduring royalty, a spontaneous tribute of fealty:

Yet looks he like a king. Behold, his eye,
As bright as is the eagle's, lightens forth
Controlling majesty; alack, alack for woe
That any harm should stain so fair a show!

(Richard II III. iii. 68-71)

The "fair show" York pays tribute to is the light of grace, that imitation of divine glory, which denotes the special sign of God's favour. Grace "is a special mark of divine love", Aquinas had written, "which is observable", a "form and perfection . . . signified by some sort of light".⁵³ It became a commonplace in the period to refer, therefore, to the king as someone from whose person there emanated a kind of celestial glow. "As the face of *Moses* descending the Mount from God, shone bright and glorious", Robert Sherwood explained,

so the Majesticke looke of a King (reflecting divine beames, received from the King of Kings) daunteth the most proud and savage hearts of Inferiors. Therefore Kings are in holy Writ called *Lights*, for their glory . . . to testifie their graces, and the dignity of their Office".⁵⁴

⁵³Thomas Aquinas, *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith Summa Contra Gentiles*, trans. Vernon J. Bourke: "Hence in Scripture, the grace of God is signified by some sort of light, for the Apostle says in Ephesians (5:8): 'You were heretofore darkened, but now, light in the Lord'. Properly enough, then, the perfection whereby man is initially moved to his ultimate end, which consists in the vision of God, is called *light*, for this is the principle of the act of seeing". 233; "So, man achieves the likeness to God through grace", 234.

⁵⁴Introductory Letter to James in Sherwood's translation of John Bede. *The Right and Prerogative of Kings*, A2^v; also, "And surely your Maiesty is a light, and a light of Israel, (Gods people) not onely for glory, but for example of piety, religion, and vertue: your Maiesty is Gods Lieutenant", A2^v. Cf. *Merchant of Venice*, for the true

The light affirms the king's graces, but can also by the same token cast his faults into greater view, for

a King is like a Lampe, that shineth light to all the worlde: therefore if he be blemished of blotted with any vice or crime, it is more Notable and reproveable in him, than in any other Priuate persone.⁵⁵

Tudor encomiums of kingship reached exaggerated, indeed idolatrous, and often absurd proportions: one writer "dares not cast [his eyes] but sidewise upon the flaming beams of [the king's] bright sun, which [he] in no wise can steadfastly behold".⁵⁶ Elizabeth is the "onely star of light . . . whose like on earth was never seen"⁵⁷; whose "vertewe of so bright an hewe shine[s] cleere in [her] to every man's vew".⁵⁸ The mayor of Norwich, in his oration to the Queen during one of her progresses to the city in 1578, "would account nothing more pretious . . . than that the bright light of [her] bright beame of [her] most chaste cleere which doth so cheare us, might pearse the secret and strait corners of our hearts".⁵⁹ Daniel wrote of James that "There are no mightie mountaines interpos'de | Betweene thy beames and us, t'imbarre thy light, | There Maiestie liues not as if inclos'de".⁶⁰ Nonetheless, these hyperboles all spring

essence of a king in terms of light: "A substitute shines brightly as a king | Until a king be by", (V. i. 94-5).

⁵⁵From Chillester's English translation of Chelidonius Tigurinus, *Of the Institution and firste Beginning of Christian Princes*, 38.

⁵⁶Letter written by an unknown person to King Henry VIII, British Museum Reg. MSS 7. CXVI.f.181, cited by Franklin Le Van Baumer, *The Early Tudor Theory of Kingship*, 86.

⁵⁷A *Collection of Seventy-Nine Black Letter Ballads*, No. 52, by Richard Harrington, 182-6; No. 11, "Lines underneath a Portrait of Queen Elizabeth": "Loe here on earth | The onely starre of light", 36. Cf. Dedicatory Preface of the King James Bible, "that bright Occidentall Star queen Elizabeth".

⁵⁸Recorded in Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, III, 52.

⁵⁹Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 1288.

⁶⁰Samuel Daniel, "A Panegyrike Congratulatorie", A4^r.

from the same ideology as we have been discussing, and may be regarded as no more than its most ostentatious flowers.

One image, which through persistent use became effectively inevitable, was the equation of the king with the sun in the general order of creation. "Therefore", observed Castiglione,

even as in the firmamente the sonne and the moone and the other sterres show to the world (as it were) in a glasse a certaine likenesse of God: so uppon the earth a much more liker image of God are those good Princis that . . . shewe unto the people the cleere light of his justice, accompanied with a shadowe of the heavenly reason.⁶¹

Henry Valentine maintained that the king's function in society is as the "Sun of the Common-wealth, according to that of the Psalmist (89.36) *His Throne shall be as the Sun*. The Sun is *Sponsus naturae*, the beauty of the Bridegroom of Nature, appointed by God to rule the Day, and it runs from one end of the Heavens unto the other".⁶² In his Italian dedicatory epistle to Elizabeth, Charles Merbury devotes the entire page to composing an elaborate picture of the Queen, who is "stella, Sole, Honor, & Gloria della nazione Inghilese", who will he hopes, "splenda lungamente, & ci scaldi sempre con i suoi viui, & chiarissimi raggi".⁶³ Elizabeth's death was of course expressed by the image of the setting sun, but as the translators of James's Bible pointed out, the King had been the new light on the horizon, whose appearance in "Sion . . . as of the Sun in his strength, instantly dispelled those supposed and surmised mists".

⁶¹*The Book of the Courtier*, 314.

⁶²*God Save the King*, 18.

⁶³*A Brief Discourse of Royall Monarchie*: "Si come il viandante riguarda al Sole, il nauigante alla tramontana, & la calamita al Polo: cosi (Serenissima Maesta) hauend'io a solcar con la mia debil barca nell' alto madre della Republiche, & de gli stati: ho preso ardire d'alzar gl'occhi alla diuina, & chiara stella del suo felicissimo Regno; indirizzando il corso del mio viaggio, & gouernandolo tutto, secondo lo splendor, & la chiarezza di quello".

Hall describes Henry V as "the-blayng comete and apparant lanterne in his daies".⁶⁴ His counterpart in Shakespeare will

imitate the sun,
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That, when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted he may be more wonder'd at
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists

(1 Henry IV I. ii. 192-97).⁶⁵

He can already conceive his future role after his purposed "reformation" in terms of "brightness and light" (I. ii.203-12). As king, who will fight against the French, Henry sees himself rising "there with so full a glory | That [he] will dazzle all the eyes of France, | Yea strike the Dauphin blind to look on us" (Henry V I. ii. 278-80).

Verbally matching the visual splendour of *Henry VIII*, the language of the opening dialogue between Buckingham and Norfolk describes the famous meeting of the Kings on the Field of the Cloth of Gold: "Those suns of glory, those two lights of men", who are there in their pomp, in the "view of earthly glory" (I. i. 6, 14-38). But nowhere in Shakespeare is the sun of royalty more consistently used than in *Richard II*, where not only the splendour of the office is conveyed but also the hallowed radiance of the man who occupies it in his role of king.⁶⁶

⁶⁴Union, fol. lxxv.

⁶⁵It has been already noted (section 1 of this chapter) that the king was stripped of his silk shirt before he could be anointed. Perhaps this fact accounts for some of Hal's imagery, when he thinks of throwing off his loose behaviour to appear the more striking in men's eyes.

⁶⁶There has been much written about the sun images in this play, see Peter Ure's Arden ed., introduction, n.6, lxxi. Also Ernst Kantorowicz. *The King's Two Bodies*: the banner of Richard II "had a sun shining carried by a white hart, whereas his standard was sprinkled with ten suns 'in splendor' with a white hart lodged", 32-3, n.18. The sun was also the Yorkist badge. Holinshed described the effect the King's flatterers had on him as "dimming the brightnesse of true honour, with the counterfeit shine of the contrarie", *Chronicles*, 418.

The signs of kingship mark a figure who is propertied, costumed and endowed with the qualities of representational divinity. The spectator in the theatre could expect to see in the performance of the king on stage what the nobleman saw of the real king in court. By the inscribed codes of his physical presence, the outward and visible signs of the role, the king is accepted by the viewer as a person who is forever acting out the role taken on at his coronation. The trappings of royalty which the actor wears, the references to the regality of his countenance, and the aura of his person (if only present in the language and the sparkle of his performance) are symbols of the histrionics the real king is obliged to perform in the continual drama inherent in his office.

CHAPTER FOUR

"THAT WITHIN WHICH PASSES SHOW"

The King's Extraordinary Nature

If a necklace, a sceptre, royal purple robes, a train of attendants are all that make a king, what is to prevent the actors who come on the stage decked with all the pomp of state from being called king?¹

More than any other person in his society, the king bore the burden of *having* to be an extraordinary individual. His place in the Great Chain of Being contributed to his image, as a man who, of necessity, and by virtue of his nature and function in society as head of the body politic, was more than mortal. The sacred character of his office and of his conduct set the king above normal existence; indeed it was a commonplace that to experience the mere exhalation of the breath of kings was a transcendental experience. Shakespeare's King John is confident that no "earthly name to interrogatories | Can taste the free breath of a sacred king" (III. i. 73-4). But as Austin Woolrych points out, "national pride and popular feeling craved for a more than human figure to personify the majesty of the State and the aspirations of the nation".² Within the kingly role beat the pulse of the whole realm and the welfare of its subjects. It is no wonder that the office drew attention to itself as role: its singularity and isolation automatically placed the king in an extraordinary position.

¹Erasmus, *Education of a Christian Prince*, 152.

²"Political theory and political practice", in *The Age of Milton*, eds. C.A. Patrides, Raymond B. Waddington, 37. Woolrych takes this point an interesting step further: "John Foxe had supplied a special reason for holding [the king] so. Far more widely read than any other book except the Bible, his *Book of Martyrs* had taught generations of Englishmen to believe that they were an elect nation, predestined to play a very special part in the final overthrow of Antichrist. In this great enterprise the Godly Prince was cast for a heroic role", 37.

Erasmus paraphrases Aristotle on this subject in the following terms: "The rule of the king is finest of all because it seems to possess a certain something which is greater than mortal".³ So special is this "certain something" that the king is seen almost not to belong to this world at all; his consecration and sanctification, according to the Norman Anonymous, made him a saint: "that is, outside the earth and outside the world . . . set apart as mediator between God and the people, having communion in heaven and moderating [his] subjects on earth".⁴ His designated responsibilities set him apart from other men; God promises to "raise vp Kings and gouernours" and give "unto them an especil charge" to set forth His word.⁵ The treatment the king receives from his subjects must also correspond, in degree, to the treatment entitled to God himself:

he who wants to permit the prince what is not honourable is really lowering the prince! In what else does lowering a prince consist than in making him like the common run of men; to be a slave to anger, lust, ambition, avarice, and beholden to folly? Would it be a shameful outrage and one not to be tolerated if that were not granted to a prince which is not granted God himself? God does not demand that He be allowed to act contrary to the course of propriety. But if He did, He would no longer be God!⁶

"God hath set a part your Majestic", Joseph Hall wrote to James, "as a glorious instrument of such an universall good to the whole Christian world".⁷ Hall's

³ *Education of a Christian Prince*, 174.

⁴ In his customary fashion, the Norman Anonymous applied this quality to bishops as well: "*Ideo igitur consecrantur sacerdotes et reges et sanctificantur, ut . . . sancti sint, id est extra terram, et extra mundum segregati, inter Deum et populum mediatores effecti, et in celis conversentur et in terris subditos moderentur*", as cited in Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 88.

⁵ The "Argument" to Deuteronomic, Geneva Bible, 80^r.

⁶ Erasmus: *The Education of a Christian Prince*, 191.

⁷ *A Recollection of such Treatises*, A2^r.

commendation cannot be considered panegyric, or any exaggeration of the role, in view of the number of other commentators making essentially similar claims. The king's relationship to God, as His vicegerent, made him unlike any of God's other created children. His power was, therefore, assured and necessarily for the right. It is to this issue of power that Roger Maynwaring, one of James's chaplains in ordinary, addressed his sermon, printed by "His Maiesties Speciall Command":

Now, to this *high*, and most *constraining* Power of Kings, not onely *Nature*, but euen *God* himselfe giues from heaven, most full and ample testimone: and that this Power is not meereley *humane*, but *Superhumane*, and indeed no lesse then a *Power Diuine*. Though *Maiesty* . . . be shrouded vnder *Mortality*, yet is it endowed with such a Power from *aboue*, as beares no small resemblance with the *Deity*.⁸

"By reason of their distance from common men, even as the heavens are in respect of the earth", Maynwaring goes on to say, "none may, nor can search into the high discourse, and deepe *Counsells* of *Kings*; seeing *their hearts are so deepe*".⁹ Such an isolation places the king in a reality which, in certain significant respects, is different from that his subjects inhabit. It was, for instance, a commonplace of their superhumanity that kings could not get sick, or grow old, or die. Sir John Fortescue, in his tractate on *The Governance of England*, writes on the natural defects which are lacking in the figure of the king:

it is no poiar to mowe synne, and to do ylle, or to mowe to be seke, wex olde, or that a man may hurte hym self. Ffor all thes poiars comen of impotencie . . . wherfore the holy sprites and angels that mey not synne, wex old, be seke, or hurte ham selff, have more poiar than we.

⁸*Religion and Allegiance*, 10.

⁹*Ibid.*, 17. Also in the same passage: "*the heart of a King is unsearchable*. As also, for that none may dare to call in question the *Iudgement of a King*, because, the heart of a King is in the hand of god, and hee turneth it which way he pleaseth". It was proverbial in the period that "every man cannot speak with the king", Tilley, M111. Cf. Tilley: "The King's word is more than another man's oath", K82.

that mey harme owre selff with all thes defautes. So is the kynges power more.¹⁰

In his *Interpreter: Or Booke Containing the Signification of Words*, John Cowell includes in the definition of the word "King", that he "is in intendment of Lawe cleared of those defects, that common persons be subiect vnto".¹¹ It was not, then, just a matter of Elizabeth's vanity, or flattery by the painters, or propaganda for the Tudors, which resulted in successive portraits of the Virgin Queen representing her unaging, and unchanging (when all the Court knew the patent truth that she in fact grew progressively older and less attractive). On the contrary, what was being represented in the paintings was not Elizabeth at all, but the role of the king, whose countenance is constant, and whose natural defects are non-existent.

The king's superhumanity also allows him, like God, the powers of bestowing life and death.¹² "For hee can *Vivificare & occidere* quicken, and kill men at pleasure: He can breathe into the face of man (his ciuill creature) the breath both of life and death: He can raise men out of the dust, and set them euen with the Piers and Princes

¹⁰Ed. Charles Plummer, 121. Fortescue's comments are part of a larger concept: that of the king's two bodies, which consisted of a body natural, and a body politic that cannot be seen or handled. The theory of the king's two bodies is discussed in section iv of this chapter. Cf. Henry Finch, *Law or a Discourse thereof*: "A second thing proper unto God, is the diuine perfection. In the King no imperfect thing can be thought", 82. See also Tilley: "The King can do no wrong", K61.

¹¹The dictionary, as the title page says, sets "forth the true meaning of all, or the most part of such Words and Termes, as are mentioned in the Lawe Writers". Cowell was King James's Professor of Civil Law at Cambridge.

¹²In his speech to Parliament in 1609, James described this divine power: "Kings are iustly called Gods, for that they exercise a manner or resemblance of Diuine power vpon earth: For if you wil consider the Attributes to God, you shall see how they agree in the person of a King. God hath power to create, or destroy, make, or vnmake at his pleasure, to giue life, or send death, to iudge all, and to be iudged nor accomptable to none: To raise low things, and to make high things low at his pleasure, and to God are both soule and body due. And the like power haue Kings: they make and vnmake their subiects: they haue power of raising, and casting downe: of life, and of death", *The Political Works of James I*, ed. McIlwain, 307-8. James, as usual, is the most articulate spokesman for a doctrine which was, however, common knowledge, and by no means of his creation.

of his people. Yea, what God doth himselfe, that doth the King".¹³ His character *must* drive him to be an "overreacher", because God has "reputed" the king "to excelle amonge all other humayne creatures".¹⁴ Further set apart from the people in his world, the king "must", says Erasmus, "exhibit the highest moral integrity, while in others a general appearance of uprightness is enough. His mind must be divested of all private emotions."¹⁵

Even the king's anger exceeds that of "ordinarie man".¹⁶ His suffering too, is greater than purely mortal suffering, because it is that of the head of the body politic, who is obliged to feel for all his subjects: "the stronger or of more might is the

¹³John Rawlinson, *Vivat Rex*, 12. It is appropriate here to include a few comments about the king's ability to cure scrofula, the so-called King's Evil, which is part of this divine power that Rawlinson talks about. The procedure was initiated by Edward the Confessor and the full ceremonial was laid down in the reign of Henry VII; from 1634 the "ritual of royal healing was included in the Book of Common Prayer, where it remained until nearly the middle of the eighteenth century" (see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 193-5). As Reginald Scot noticed, "the kings euill . . . hath beene alwaies thought, and to this daie is supposed to be a miraculous and peculiar gift, & a speciall grace giuen to the kings and queenes of England. Which some referre to the proprietie of their persons, some to the peculiar gift of God, and some to the efficacie of words" (*Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 303-4). "Some argued", says Thomas, "that the miraculous power sprang from the monarch's consecration with holy oil at his coronation . . . Most people thus regarded the power to cure the Evil as an intrinsic quality pertaining to the sacred person of the monarch" (195). See the eye-witness account by John Ernest, Duke of Saxe-Weimar, of James's royal healing of three children in 1613 (*England as Seen by Foreigners: In the Days of Elizabeth & James the First*, ed. William Brenchley Rye, 151; the phrase used at the point of healing is "Le Roy vous touche, Dieu vous guery"). The Doctor and Malcolm in *Macbeth* deliberate at length about the king's evil at IV. iii. 141-59. Their discussion of the king of England, though based on the account of Edward the Confessor in Holinshed, is an obvious allusion to James.

¹⁴Stephen Gardiner, *De Vera Obedientia*, in *Obedience in Church and State*, 89.

¹⁵*Education of a Christian Prince*, 182.

¹⁶Holinshed, *Chronicles*, "But what will not an ordinarie man doo in the full tide of his furie; much more princes & great men, whose anger is resembled to the roaring of a lion", 170. One of the factors in Henry V's surprising victory at Agincourt is this divine anger: "I was not angry since I came to France | Until this instant", IV. vii. 57-8.

person, the stronger pain is to him imminent."¹⁷ The close scrutiny with which a king was observed made any fault he possessed glaringly larger than it was: for "everie fault is greater in a king than in a meane man".¹⁸ "Falsehood", says Imogen in *Cymbeline*, "Is worse in kings than beggars" (III. vi. 13-4); Lear's mad behaviour toward Cordelia's liege men is "A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch, | Past speaking of in a King!" (IV. vi. 201-2).

Because he is an extraordinary being, there was good reason for the king's role achieving the heroic proportions that are associated with it in the Renaissance; his qualities made him as close to being a god as it was possible for any human to be:

In very early times, the kings were selected through the choice of the people because of their outstanding qualities, which were called "heroic" as being all but divine and superhuman. Princes should remember their beginnings, and realize that they are not really princes if they lack that quality which first made them princes.¹⁹

More was needed than simply to acquire the qualities of which Erasmus speaks in order for the king to play his role: he had constantly to excel in them. The political structure cannot survive, cautioned Richard Taverner, "onles [the prince] surmount and excell the rest of men in wysdome, in vigilance, in honestye, holynes of mynd in godlynes".²⁰ William Blount, Baron Mountjoy, used a similar terminology in his eulogy of the heroic qualities of Henry VIII, shortly after his accession. He wrote to Erasmus, then at Rome:

¹⁷Erasmus, *Education of a Christian Prince*, 96-7; "For most hard and grievous judgement shall be on them that have rule over other. To the poor man mercy is granted, but the great men shall suffer great torments. . . . This notable sentence is not only to be imprinted in the hearts of governors, but also to be often times revolved and called to remembrance." Cf. *The Wisdome of Salomon*, 5:5-8.

¹⁸Mr. Cheeke to the Duke of Somerset, Lord Protector in the Reign of Edward VI, *Nugae Antiquae*, I, 45.

¹⁹Erasmus, *Education of a Christian Prince*, 173.

²⁰*The Garden of Wysdome*, B3^r.

For what may you not promise yourself from a prince, with whose extraordinary and almost divine character you are well acquainted, . . . But when you know what a hero he now shows himself, how wisely he behaves, what a lover he is of justice and goodness, what affection he bears to the learned, I will venture to swear that you will need no wings to make you fly to behold this new and auspicious star.²¹

In a more exciting account of kingly heroics, Henry Chettle records Elizabeth's bravery, and reaction to an apparent assassination attempt:

when *Appletree* whom I remembered before, had hurt her waterman, being next to her in the Barge; the French Ambassador being amazed, and all crying Treason, Treason: yet she with an vndaunted spirit, came to the open place of the Barge; and bad them neuer feare, for if the shot were made at her, they durst not shoote againe: [s]uch maiestie had her presence and such boldnesse her heart, that she despised all feare; and was as all Princes are, or should be: so full of diuine fulnesse, that guiltie mortalitie durst not beholde her but with dazeled eyes.²²

Here, Chettle's interpretation of Elizabeth's behaviour *as a queen* is more important to my subject than what Elizabeth herself did. The role, for Chettle, is forefront, not the person.

The monarch's "diuine fulnesse" is a sign of his superhumanity, and the responsibility of the burden to "bear all" beyond what may be needful in a man. Rosencrantz (rather surprisingly) is given a perfectly orthodox expression of the ways in which the cease of majesty affects the condition of the whole state:

The single and peculiar life is bound
With all the strength and armour of the mind

²¹*The Epistles of Erasmus*, ed. Francis Morgan Nichols, I. Epistle 210. The Palace of Greenwich, 27 May [1509], 457.

²²*Englandes Mourning Garment*, E2^v-E3^r.

To keep itself from noyance; but much more
 That spirit upon whose weal depends and rests
 The lives of many. The cess-off majesty
 Dies not alone, but like a gulf doth draw
 What's near it with it. Or it is a massy wheel
 Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
 To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
 Are mortis'd and adjoin'd, which when it falls,
 Each small annexment, petty consequence,
 Attends the boist'rous ruin. Never alone
 Did the King sigh, but with a general groan (*Hamlet* III. iii. 11-23)

The duty and the grave responsibilities of the king as ruler and as the divine guide of the nation never ceased to be a lively subject for the many writers of the time who held forceful opinions on the matter. What emerges from their accounts is a picture of the king as a man who, bound up in a singular role, has an infinite stratification of functions. In their course of actions, "Princes must not passe the tyme in slothfulnes necligence and Idlenes but continually serve the office that God hathe given them", wrote Bishop Gardiner; for kings

see them selves the more bounden in yielding accompta. For it is a great talent that God hathe put princes in trust withall: that is that they should not only rule the people but also rule them rightly not in any one parte alone but in all particularly.²³

There exists an obvious tension between the humanity of the man who fills the role of king; and the expectations engendered by his divine nature. It is not uncommon to find, in history and in Shakespeare, instances when a king is acutely

²³*De Vera Obedientia*, in *Obedience in Church and State*, 113. "that the Prince is the hole Prince of all the people and not of parte . . . the same Prince beinge as the headde: whose office is to take charge not only of humayne maters but much more of divine maters that is to distribute fitely unto every membre of the body their propre offices that he with his eies with his cares and with his mouthe according to the care wherby he hathe the gouernment by the gifte of God in ministring vnto the body and chargeing every one with their dutie he maye applye that maner of office that God shall doubtles one daye call for a reconying of at the handes of a christian Prince", 117.

aware of the pressures of his obligations. In a speech to her Parliament in 1601, Elizabeth echoed Gardiner's concern for a prince's ultimate accountability.

I know the title of a king is a glorious title, but assure yourself that the shining glory of princely authority hath not so dazzled the eyes of our understanding but that we well know and remember that we also are to yield an account of our actions before the Great Judge. To be a king and wear a crown is more glorious to them that see it than it is pleasure to them that bear it.²⁴

Henry IV complains that sleep will give its "repose" to the common "wet sea-boy" but "Deny it to a King": "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown" (2 *Henry IV* III. i. 26-31).²⁵ Brakenbury, in *Richard III*, comments how the outward glories of a king are at odds with the burdens of rule:

Princes have but their titles for their glories,
An outward honour for an inward toil;
And for unfelt imaginations
They often feel a world of restless cares (I. iv. 78-81).

Hal describes the crown as this "polish'd perturbation!" and "golden care!" (IV. v. 22). But Henry warns the wayward Prince that he seeks "the greatness that will overwhelm [him]" (IV. v. 97). In his speech of excuse to the King, Hal talks of the crown "as having sense", and thus upbraided it because

The care on thee depending
Hath fed upon the body of my father;
Therefore thou best of gold are worst of gold.
Other, less fine in carat, is more precious,
Preserving life in medicine potable;

²⁴"Golden Speech", in *The Public Speeches of Queen Elizabeth*, 109.

²⁵Henry's and Elizabeth's statements about the cares of kingship are proverbial: see Tilley C863, "Crowns have cares".

But thou, most fine, most honour'd, most renown'd,
Hast eat thy bearer up' (IV. v. 157-64)

Yet kingly care cannot be shaken off from the role, or from the man who plays it. Bolingbroke is mistaken in thinking that he will share part of Richard's "cares" when the King gives him the crown. According to all standard Renaissance theory, Richard's response is the correct one:

Your cares set up do not pluck my cares down.
My care is loss of care, by old care done;
Your care is gain of care, by new care won.
The cares I give, I have, though given away,
They tend the crown, yet still with me they stay.

(*Richard II* IV. i. 194-99)

The Homilies exhorted Elizabethans to believe in God as "the universall Monarch, and onely King, and Emperour over all, as being onely able to take, and beare the charge of all"; subjects likewise were to acknowledge a similar correspondence in the earthly monarch: "for it is indeed evident, both by the Scriptures, and dayly by experience, that the maintenance of all vertue, and godlinesse, and consequently of the wealth, and prosperity of a kingdome, and people, doth stand, and rest . . . in a wise, and good Prince".²⁶ Joseph Hall told James that the "burden of the whole world lies on the shoulders of soveraigne authority".²⁷ Erasmus forewarned the prince what kind of ordeal he must be prepared to take on:

No one enters the Olympic games without first considering what the rules of the contest demand. And he does not complain that the sun is bothersome, or the dust, or the perspiration, or any of the other things of this sort. Likewise the man who undertakes to rule should first

²⁶"An Homily Against Disobedience and Wilfull Rebellion", in *Certaine Sermons*, 278.

²⁷*A Recollection of Such Treatises*, A2^r. The King's relationship to the Church is the same: "As Kings are to the world, so are good Kings to the Church: None can be so blinde, or enuious, as not to grant, that the whole Church of God vpon earth, rests her-selfe principally . . . vpon your Maiesties royall supportation" (*ibid*).

consider what the position of prince demands. He must give his thought to the best advantage of others and neglect his personal interests. He must always be alert so that others may sleep. He must toil so that others may rest. . . . He who is carrying on the offices of the state must give his attention to nothing but that. He must perform kindnesses even to those who are ungrateful, to those who do not understand, and to those who are opposed. if these conditions are not to your liking, why do you desire the burden of ruling?²⁸

On the eve of Agincourt Henry V wrestles with perturbations arising from the burdens of his role: the "twin-born greatness" of his humanity and the extraordinary nature of the office:

Upon the king! let us our lives, our souls,
 Our debts, our careful wives,
 Our children, and our sins lay on the king!
 We must bear all. O hard condition!
 Twin-born with greatness, subject to the breath
 Of every fool, whose sense no more can feel
 But his own wringing. What infinite heart's ease
 Must kings neglect that private men enjoy!²⁹ (*Henry V* IV. i. 236-43)

²⁸*Education of a Christian Prince*, 182. Erasmus' Latin is not as bluntly imperative as the translation implies. Twice the impersonal verb *oportet* is used (meaning "it is necessary"), but the other verb is *licet*, from which derives the common Renaissance (and subsequent) formula "It pleases the King to proclaim . . ." (or whatever). That it pleases the king to do thus and such (i.e. that it is appropriate that he should) is some distance from that he *must* do so. For some similar concepts to those expressed by Erasmus, cf. Henry Valentine, *God Save the King*, "When the King watches we may all sleep, when he labours we may all rest, his Terme is our Vacation, and when he workes every man may keep holy day", 18.

²⁹Erasmus speaks of the accountability of the king in a situation of war. Henry's sentiments on the isolation of his role, particularly in the situation he faces at Agincourt, are similar: "After the prince has reckoned and added up the total of all the catastrophes (which would come) to the world (if that could ever be done), then he should think over in his own mind: "Shall I, one person, be the cause of so many calamities? Shall I alone be charged with such an outpouring of human blood; with causing so many widows; with filling so many homes with lamentation and mourning; with robbing so many old men of their sons; with impoverishing so many who do not

In this, as in all these discussions of the king's extraordinary nature, a central and crucial link is formed with the view that the king was an imitator of Christ. The nature of the hypostatic union has come to be recognized in twentieth-century Christology as one of the key philosophical issues, or one of the profoundest theological mysteries, of the Christian faith. The nature of the hypostasis in Jesus was accepted by the Church in the Definition of Chalcedon in A.D. 451, and was common doctrine throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance: it was construed as a union of truly divine and truly human substances in one Person. The application of this to the doctrine of kingship as an imitation of Christ could not be clearer. The king, by virtue of his role, adopts a new substance; but he remains also substantially human. The ordinary nature is often, inevitably, at odds with the semi-divine nature, and the struggles and tribulations this entails upon the royal actor have been already fully documented. Because these struggles are a form of *agon*, they are in essence theatrical: they are part of the role the king is expected to play, and they in turn lend themselves to representation in the drama. No wonder the conflict of the public and the private became the pivotal point of so many Renaissance plays.

ii

Kingly Qualities

In the fourth act of *Macbeth* Macduff encourages the young Prince not to be fearful, since "Scotland hath foisons to fill up your will, | Of your mere own. All these are portable. | With other graces weigh'd" (IV. iii. 88-90). But Malcolm replies with a whole list of the kingly qualities which he declares that he lacks, whose absence makes him unfit to rule:

But I have none: the king-becoming graces,
Justice, Verity, Temp'rance, Stableness,

deserve such a fate; and with such utter destruction of morals, laws, and practical religion? Must I account for all things before Christ?", *Education of a Christian Prince*, 254.

Bounty, Perseverance, Mercy, Lowliness,
Devotion, Patience, Courage, Fortitude (91-4).

Although he names the Twelve Virtues, his list is actually rather incomplete: it lacks many other qualities widely regarded as necessary for a king to have, such as wisdom, zeal, goodness, moderation, affability, placability, and understanding; in fact the list could be extended further. As a divine imitator, and because of his extraordinary nature, the king was expected to show with every action he took, and with every word he spoke, many of the qualities God Himself possessed. Any man might have any number of these "graces", but it was only the king who could manifest them all. During the coronation service, in the blessings bestowed upon the king, a number of these qualities were prayed for, to be granted to the new monarch:

Give care wee beseech thee vnto our humble prayers, and multiplie thie blessings vppon this thy Servant . . . whome in lowly devotion wee doe consecrate our King, that hee being strengthened with the faith of Abraham, indued with the mildnes of Moses, armed with the fortitude of Joshua, exalted with the humilitie of David, bewtified with the Wisdome of Salomon, hee may please thee in all things, hee may alwaies walke vprightly in the way of righteousness, hee may nourish and teach, defend and instruct, thy Church and People, . . . and being defended with the helmet of thie protection, covered with thie invincible Sheild, and all clad with heavenly armour, hee may gloriously triumph. . . . Blesse wee beseech thee this our King, that hee may rule like David, . . . Grant by thie inspiration hee may governe with the Mildenesse of Salomon, . . . that hee may serve thee with feare, and fight for thee with Constancie. . . . Lett him be singular in Judgement and equite, . . . Besprinkle him with the dewe of thie Wisdome.³⁰

³⁰Legg, *Coronation Records*, "*respice quesumus ad preces humilitatis nostre: et super hunc famulum tuum quem supplici deuotione in regem consecramus: benedictionum tuarum dona multiplica: eumque dextere tue potencia semper et ubique circumda: quantinus predicti abrahe fidelitate firmatus: moysi mansuetudine frenus: iosue fortitudine munitus: dauid humilitate exaltatus: salamonis sapientia decoratus: tibi in omnibus placeat: et per tramitem iusticie inoffenso gressu semper incedat: ecclesiamque tuam. . . . tue quoque proteccionis galea munitus: et scuto insuperabili iugiter*

Sunday prayers at the end of the homily were devoted to thanking "God for his, great, and excellent benefit, and providence concerning the state of Kings", and further enjoining the congregations to pray that "they [kings] may have wisdom, strength, iustice, clemency, and zeale".³¹

The make-up of the king's inner attributes was a concern for the whole nation. Elizabeth had her own place in the Prayer Book, where worshippers could ask God to "replenyshe her with the grace of [His] holy spirit, that she may alway incline to [His] wil, and walcke in [His] waye: Indue her plentifully wyth heauenly gifts".³² Because of his gifted nature, the king was in turn a blessing to his people: "a good mercifull, and gracious Prince, is as a shadow in heate; as a defence in stormes, as dew, as sweet showers, as fresh watersprings in great drought".³³ According to Erasmus, it is "most natural" that the power of rule should be entrusted to him "who excels all in the requisite kingly qualities of wisdom, justice, moderation, foresight, and zeal for the public welfare".³⁴

Sir Thomas Elyot outlines "three special qualities" which are of particular importance to the people: affability, placability, and mercy.³⁵ For "affability is a

protectus: armisque celestibus circumdatus: optabilis uictorie triumphum felciter capiat . . . Benedic domine hunc regem nostrum: qui regna omnium moderaris. a seculo et tali eum benedictione glorifica: ut dauitice teneat sublimitatis septum: et glorificatus in eius te propicio reperiatur merito. Da ei tuo inspiramine cum mansuetudine ita regere populum: sicut salomonem fecisti regnum optinere pacificum: Tibi cum timore semper sit subditus: tibi que militet cum quiete . . . sit in iudiciis equitatis singularis . . . et illa eum benedictione sydere ac sapientie tue rore perfunde", 89-90, 256.

³¹An Exhortation Concerning Good Order, and Obedience to Rulers and Majestrates, in *Certaine Sermons*, 77.

³²BCP, The Litany. Prayers for Elizabeth were read at Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer, at Communion, in A Form of Common Prayer, and on feast days.

³³An Homily Against Disobedience and Wilfull Rebellion in *Certaine Sermons*, 279.

³⁴Education of a Christian Prince, 140.

³⁵The Book Named the Governor, 106.

wonderful efficacy or power in procuring love".³⁶ Nothing more "becometh a man noble and honourable, then Mercy and placability"; it is, in the governour something to be "marvelled at".³⁷ "It is in their mercy that kings come closest to gods" was proverbial³⁸ in the period, for mercy in the ruler was the fundamental quality upon which all others rested:

Mercy is and hath been ever of such estimation with mankind that not only reason persuadeth, but also experience proveth, that in whom mercy lacketh and is not found, in him all other virtues be drowned and lose their just commendation.³⁹

Portia is the most famous exponent in Shakespeare of the nature of mercy, but there are others: Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, despite her personal diffidence, speaks with confidence to the Duke's deputy of the mercy that his role requires him to manifest:

--Well, believe this:

No ceremony that to great ones longs,
Not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword,
The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe,
Become them with one half so good a grace
As mercy does. (II. ii. 58-63)

By his mercy, a prince could not only secure the loyalty of his subjects, but also secure the safety of his own person:

³⁶*Ibid.*, 107.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 111.

³⁸Tilley MS98.

³⁹Elyot, *The Book Named the Governor*, 115. "Let governors, which know that they have received their power from above, revolve in their minds in what peril they themselves be in daily if in God were not abundance of mercy, but that as soon as they offend Him grievously, He should immediately strike them with His most terrible dart of vengeance", 116.

what a notable history is this, and worthy to be graven in tables of gold; considering the virtue and power of benevolence therein expressed. For the benevolent mind of a governor not only bindeth the hearts of the people unto him with the chain of love, more strongly than any material bonds, but also guardeth more safely his person than any tower or garrison.⁴⁰

Besides mercy, the other quality which received much attention in the period was learning and wisdom. "A King without learning is but a crowned ass".⁴¹ Bacon had attributed the flourishing of the golden age to the "conjunction of learning in the prince with felicity in the people".⁴² Elyot admitted that knowledge from certain books is "almost sufficient to make a perfect and excellent governor."⁴³ Whatever the prince thinks himself as a ruler, he must remember he is above all, said Erasmus, "a *Christian Prince*! . . . and should be as different from even the noble pagan princes as a Christian is from a pagan".⁴⁴ It is the education of the "Christian Prince" which shaped him and prepared him for rule. The second Psalm was often invoked to keep them in this frame of mind: "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be learned, ye that are judges of the earth". But it was not a question simply of being learned; the prince's first obligation was to acquire wisdom in the word of God. Because the king has "allied [himself] with Christ".

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 127. "Surely nothing more entirely and fastly joineth the hearts of subjects to their prince or sovereign than mercy and gentleness", 119. The quality of mercy is not insubstantial; Sir Thomas More described how he could see the "gifts" of Henry's character displayed in his countenance: "how serene the mercy which warms his gentle heart!" "On the Coronation Day of Henry VIII" in *The History of King Richard III and selections from the English and Latin Poems*, 132.

⁴¹Tilley K69.

⁴²*Works*, VI, 152-53. For an account of Bacon's views on the learning of the monarchy and their involvement in education, see Theodore K. Rabb, "Francis Bacon and the Reform of Society", in *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Rabb and Jerrold E. Seigel, 176 ff.

⁴³*The Book Named the Governor*, 39.

⁴⁴*Education of a Christian Prince*, 152.

before all else the story of Christ must be firmly rooted in [his] mind. He should drink deeply of His teachings, gathered in handy texts, and then later from those very fountains themselves, whence he may drink more purely and more effectively. He should be taught that the teachings of Christ apply to no one more than to the prince.⁴⁵

Just as soon as the young prince had learned the basic "elements of language", he was set to read the Proverbs of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, and the Book of Wisdom. From these sources, the tutor might show "whatever pertains to the functions of a good prince".⁴⁶

Queen Elizabeth prided herself upon, and was admired for, her religious learning. Speaking to her Parliament in 1566, she reminded them of this fact, declaring: "It is said I am not divine. Indeed I stud[ied] nothing else but divinity till I came to the Crown and then I gave myself to the study of government".⁴⁷ Bacon had commended the Queen for her "manners religious"; not only for her learning, but also for the way she *appeared* in her role as a Christian monarch.

In her religion she was pious, constant, moderate and could not away with innovations, her piety chiefly appeared in her works and actions.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 153, 148. "Christian theology attributes three prime qualities to God--the highest power, the greatest wisdom, the greatest goodness. In so far as you can you should make this trinity yours", 158.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 200. Elyot adds to this list Ecclesiastes, "all historical parts of the Bible be right necessary for to be read of a nobleman", and the "residue (with the New Testament) is to be reverently touched, as a celestial jewel or relic"; he also adds Erasmus's own book, *The Education of a Christian Prince. The Book Named the Governor*, 39. The Homilies reminded people that "GOD . . . chargeth Princes aswell as Priests, that they should indeavour themselves to get understanding and knowledge in his Word . . . In GODS Word Princes must learne how to obey GOD, and to governe men: in Gods Word subiects must learne obedience, both to GOD, and their Princes", "the prayer as in that time it was published", after the fourth part of the *Homily Against Disobedience and Wilfull Rebellion*, in *Certaine Sermons*, 317-18. In their Epistle to Elizabeth, the compilers of the Geneva Bible stressed to her Majesty that "great wisdome, not worldlie, but heauenly is here required, which your grace must earnestly craue of the Lord, as did Salomon, to whome God gaue an vnderstanding heart to iudge his people aright, and to discern betweene good and bad", ii^v.

⁴⁷*The Public Speaking of Queen Elizabeth*, 80.

but it was also seen in the ordinary course, and conversation of her life; she was seldom absent from prayers in her closet, or at sermons and solemn service abroad; diligent in reading the Scriptures, well-versed in the Fathers, and above all in St. *Augustine*; upon divers occasions she composed sundry prayers: when she mentioned God (though in common talk) added for the most part of Creator, casting, as I have often observed, her face & eies into a reverend form of humility.⁴⁸

Henry VIII, who was awarded the title of "defender of the Faith" (and who appropriated it as a hereditary garnish to the kingly roles of all subsequent English rulers) described kingly qualities not so much as virtues which are acquired from without, but as *indued* substances. In the last speech he made to his Parliament, he tried to distinguish, in a deliberately modest manner, between those qualities which God had given him, and those he attempted to "get" himself:

I most heartily thank you all that you have put me in remembrance of my duty, which is to endeavour myself to obtain and get such excellent qualities and necessary virtues, as a Prince or governor should or ought to have, of which gifts I recognize myself both bare and barren; but of such small qualities as God hath endued me withal, I render to his goodness my most humble thanks, intending with all my wit and diligence to get and acquire to me such notable virtues and princely qualities as you have alleged to be incorporate in my person.⁴⁹

The qualities "incorporate" in the king's person are indued⁵⁰ by special grace and are

⁴⁸Francis Bacon, *The Felicity of Queen Elizabeth and her Times*, 23.

⁴⁹24 December, 1545, *The Letters of King Henry VIII*, 419.

⁵⁰See *OED*, "endue" definition 9: "to invest with a power or quality, a spiritual gift, etc." But the word, in the senses applicable to the discussion of royal qualities, is more richly complex: see the etymological senses "lead into", "draw into", "lead on", "draw on", which, says *OED*, "account for the English senses of OF. *enduire*, *induire*. In senses 5-6, however, the word was associated with the nearly synonymous L. *induere* to put on (a garment), which it often renders in early translations from Latin . . . Senses 7-9 are of mixed origin: they are partly derived from the fig. use of sense 6 'to clothe' (cf. invest); but the forms *endew*, *indew* in 15th c. (sense 8) are etymologically

as natural to a king as human qualities are to mortal men. That all men are indued with certain characteristics is clear from an account by Reginald Scot: "As we see in stones, herbs, etc: strange operation and naturall loue and dissention: so doo we read, that in the human bodie of a man, there be as strange properties and vertues naturall".⁵¹ The king's person can be read in a similar fashion. In the words he addressed to the young King Edward VI at his coronation, Archbishop Cranmer stressed the inner grace of the king: for kings "be God's anointed -- not in respect of the oil . . . but in consideration of their power, which is ordained, . . . of their persons, which are elected of God, and endued with the gifts of His Spirit for the better ruling and guiding of His people."⁵²

Elizabeth not only recognized her indued princely qualities, but also considered them as signs of the miraculous:

the bottomlesse graces and immesurable benefits bestowed upon me by the almightie, are, and have beene such, as I must not onelie acknowledge them, but admire them, accounting them as well miracles as

equivalent to ENDOW . . . Hence in 16th and 17th c. the verb endue had all the senses of ENDOW in addition to those which it derived from OF. *enduire* and L. *induere*. In sense 9 the meanings proceeding from the three sources have so completely coalesced that it is often impossible to say which of them is the most prominent in a particular use of the word."

⁵¹ *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 303.

⁵² Arthur Stanley, *Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey*, I, 97. Holinshed described King John as an example of a king who lacked the inner graces, whose mistakes could have been avoided "had he beene indued with such prudence and prowesse as is requisit to be planted in one that beareth rule, of whom it is said,

Cui si quando Deus rerum permittat habenas,

Imperijque decus, nunc aurea secula fiunt.

Tunc floret virtus, terrasque Astrea reuisit,

Pax viget, et vitium duris cohibetur habenis.

whereas by meanes of defects in the contrarie, he bare too low a saile, in that he would be so foolifed as being a king, to sufer usurped supremasie to be caruer of his kingdome", *Chronicles*, 191.

benefits . . . there liueth not anie, that maie more trustie acknowledge
themselues infinitelie bound unto God than I.⁵³

The translators of the Geneva Bible found a good phrase to encompass all the inner qualities of the kingly role: it is a "principal Spirit" that God "indewe[s] your grace and other godly princes and chefe governours . . . that you may procure and commande things necessarie".⁵⁴ This principal spirit, or what might be called essential kingship, is a required element in a true prince.⁵⁵ And though it is part of his inner nature, it is none the less recognizable by those who look at him. Falstaff uses this exact argument in his trumped-up story to excuse his cowardice:

By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he that made ye. Why, hear you, my masters, was it for me to kill the heir-apparent? should I turn upon the true prince? Why, thou knowest I am as valiant as Hercules: but beware instinct -- the lion will not touch the true prince: instinct is a great matter. I was now a coward on instinct: I shall think the better of myself, and thee, during my life -- I for a valiant lion, and thou for a true prince. (*1 Henry IV* II. iv. 263-71)⁵⁶

Later he tells Hal that, however he may disguise his behaviour, the Prince is a "true piece of gold", he is "essentially made without seeming so" (II. iv. 486). Belarius, in *Cymbeline*, is amazed that Guiderius and Arviragus should behave like true princes

⁵³The Queen's report to hir parliament", 1586. Holinshed records the speech in his *Chronicles*, 1582.

⁵⁴Epistle, ii^v.

⁵⁵Thomas Bilson, in *A Sermon Preached*, makes a lengthy point of the "principal spirit" induced in the king: "God . . . neuer calleth any man to serue him, whome hee doth not furnish with gifts according. Workemen hee would haue none to the making or decking of his Tabernacle, but such as he replenished with the spirit of understanding for that purpose . . . gouernors then, whose *harts, mouths, and hands*, he useth to keep his people in peace and pietie: God neuer chooseth any but he first endowed them with a Principal spirit", A7v-A8r.

⁵⁶The belief that lions could distinguish between kings and ordinary men was legendary. See *1 Henry IV*, (Arden ed.), A.R. Humphreys's note to this scene.

though they have not been taught how. Even in the wilderness of Wales, the boys have shown their essential royalty:

Thou divine Nature; how thyself thou blazon'st
 In these two princely boys: they are as gentle
 As zephyrs blowing below the violet,
 Not wagging his sweet head; and yet, as rough,
 (Their royal blood enchaf'd) as the rud'st wind
 That by the top doth take the mountain pine
 And make him stoop to th'vale. 'Tis wonder
 That an invisible instinct should frame them
 To royalty unlearn'd, honour untaught,
 Civility not seen from other, valour
 That wildly grows in them, but yields a crop
 As if it had been sow'd.⁵⁷ (IV. ii. 170-81)

Belarius believes that their action in the wars at home will prove who they really are: it will "fly out and show them princes born" (IV. iv. 50-4).

The king shows himself most like to God by the grace (which encompasses all the qualities) with which he is indued.⁵⁸ Grace and mimesis, as Kantorowicz has demonstrated in this context, are not mutually exclusive: "grace is the power enabling

⁵⁷Cf. Castiglione's contemporary appraisal of Prince Hal: "a man can judge no lesse, but that nature was willing in this Prince to show her cunning, planting in one body alone so many excellent vertues, as were sufficient to decke out infinit". *The Book of Courtier*, 329.

⁵⁸According to the Norman Anonymous, the king was *christus* by grace only. The Spirit "leaps" into the terrestrial king at the moment of consecration to make him "another man" (*alius vir*): "*Ad ipsam quippe unctionem et divinam benedictionem insiliebat in eos spiritus Domini et virtus deificans, per quam Christi figura fierent et imago et que mutaret eos in viros alios, ita ut uterque impersona sua esset alius vir, et alius in spiritu et virtute.*" 664. 20-3. "*Post unctionem vero insiluit in eum spiritus Domini, et propheta factus est, et mutatus est in virum alium.*" 665. 2-4.

man to be, or act as, the 'image of God'.⁵⁹ Chettle records that Elizabeth's "charitie" was a sign of her "principall diuine Grace to the eye of mortalls".⁶⁰ How well or badly Shakespeare's kings act like kings is a matter of their grace in degree and proportion. Henry VI is a holy and benevolent king but the qualities of his kingship are misproportioned -- he is not much else besides being learned and saintly, and so his authority crumbles. Likewise every king (except for Henry V and Henry VIII) upon whom the history plays focus, is dramatized as lacking the proper combination of the qualities belonging to a monarch. Shakespeare was not the only dramatist to be aware of the consequences of deficiency in the induced kingly qualities: Beaumont and Fletcher's *A King and No King* is a dramatization of precisely this issue. The clue to the plot's impenetrability is Arbaces' unkingly behaviour, whose excesses mightily perplex the other characters of the play. He *ought* to behave in certain ways, but consistently fails to do so because, as the audience may deduce (though the befuddled other characters fail to) he is not the king at all.⁶¹ It is evident that to achieve a successful balance, *all* the princely qualities of a king's extraordinary nature had to combine in harmony.

⁵⁹*The King's Two Bodies*, 500. The Norman Anonymous describes the actor of Christ in terms of grace: "*Potestas enim regis potestas Dei est. Dei quidem est per naturam, regis per gratiam. Unde et rex Deus et Christus est, sed per gratiam, et quicquid facit non homo simpliciter, sed Deus factus et Christus per gratiam facit*". 667.36-9. Kantorowicz's translation: "The power of the king is the power of God. This power, namely, is God's by nature, and the king's by grace. Hence, the king, too, is God and Christ, but by grace; and whatsoever he does, he does not simply as a man, but as one who has become God and Christ by grace", *King's Two Bodies*, 48.

⁶⁰*Englandes Mourning Garment*, C2F. Malcolm speaks of the king of England for whom "sundry blessings hang about his throne, | That speak him full of grace" (*Macbeth* IV. iii. 158-9); Falstaff quibbles on the name of "grace" given to kings, which he addresses in an ironic way to Hal: "and I prithee sweet wag, when thou art king, as God save thy Grace -- Majesty I should say, for grace thou wilt have none" (*1 Henry IV* I. ii. 16-18).

⁶¹On the "counterfeit stamp of majesty" in this play, see Thomas Rymer, *Critical Works*, ed. Curt A. Zimansky, 42-5.

iii

Multiple Identities

In his speeches to Lear, Kent continually tries to put his King in mind of who he is:

Royal Lear,
Whom I have ever honour'd as my King,
Lov'd as my father, as my master follow'd,
As my great patron thought on in my prayers . . .
(*Lear* I. i. 138-41)

Here Kent acknowledges the several roles, the familiar identities, which the king has displayed: king, father, master, patron (the list is short because Lear interrupts him). A king was expected to be all things to all persons at all times and, as Kent's speech shows, recognized as the one to "play in one person many people". "Because a King is *Persona publica*", Rawlinson wrote, "not a private, but a publike person; hence is it that his style, is, *Mandamus & Volumus*, in the plural. *We* will and command".⁶² The use of the royal "we" refers not only to the king's public nature, but takes into account his multiple identities also. Rawlinson went on to say,

O how happy then we, that have not *Regem unum in pluribus*, a King that is but one among many, but *Plures in uno*, many Kings in one! The King of England, the King of Scotland, the King of France, the King of Ireland, all foure Kings in our *one* King. So that he is not only *Unus*, but *unitivus*; one King, or a singular King, but a King that makes one of many.⁶³

⁶²*Ibid.* *Rex*, 29.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 32.

Even the king's faith is another kind of identity: James advised his son that since a prince is a good Christian and a king, he is therefore "clothed with two callings" and "must be alike carefull for the discharge of them both".⁶⁴ Considering the qualities the king was expected to possess, it is not surprising to see just how many different identities were attached to his role. In the homily "concerning good order and obedience to rulers", kings are proclaimed as "Gods Lieutenants, Gods Presidents, Gods Officers, Gods Commissioners, Gods Judges".⁶⁵

One of the most common roles the king was seen as fulfilling was that of the father of the nation's great family.⁶⁶ The Catechism taught that to honour your father and mother meant also to honour all superiors:

that we may better know the duty of this Commandment, it is to be understood, that the word Father is diuersly taken in the Scriptures, euen for euery Superiour in any thing . . . For our superiour in gouernment, thus euery King is called a Father, because he is *Parens Patria* the Father of the Countrey, it was a common name of the Kings of the Philistines, who were called *Ambimdech*, which is the King my father.⁶⁷

⁶⁴*Basilikon Doron*, 27.

⁶⁵*An Exhortation concerning good Order and Obedience to Rulers*, in *Certaine Sermons*, 71. Henry Valentine justifies the number of times the liturgy asks subjects to pray for their king: "For in her [the church's] *Liturgie* she prayes for the King foure or five severall times, and yet I dare say commits no Tautologie, or idle repetition. For his severall capacities as a *man*, as a *Christian*, as a *Magistrate*, as the *Supreme Magistrate*, upon whom lyeth the care of the Church and Common-wealth, require it of us", *God Save the King*, 22.

⁶⁶See Figgis, *The Divine Right of Kings*: "The arguments of Bodin in favour of monarchy and the phrases employed by Williams, Bishop of Ossory, in a little pamphlet, *Jura Magistratus*, are an indication that men were feeling their way to a system akin to that of Filmer: 'Every master of a family that ruleth his own household is a *petite king* . . . A kingdom is nothing else but a great family where the king hath paternal power", 152.

⁶⁷John Mayer, *The English Catechisme Explained*, 303.

We saw above that the King was an imitator of Christ, *Christomimetus*; it is now evident that he is also an image and imitator of God the Father; if anything, his paternal relationship with his people was the better-known. Roger Maynwaring preached of the "most high, sacred, and transcendent Relation which naturally growes between the Lord's Anointed, and their loyall Subjects, to, and over whom, their lawfull Soueraignes are no lesse then Fathers, Lords, Kings, and Gods on earth".⁶⁸ Richard Taverner believed that even traitors could not but have in "wonderous reverence" the "incomparable maiestye" of Henry VIII:

wherefore should this come, but by reason that his grace beareth hym so benyngnely, so gentilly, so louynglye to all hys subiects, that he maye very well be called Pater patrie the father of the countrye, or (to use the terme of the Prophete Esaye) the nounsynge father.⁶⁹

Likewise, Elizabeth was thought of as England's "natural mother".⁷⁰ The image was so prevalent that Bacon described it as the first of three "platforms or patterns which are found in the nature of monarchies".⁷¹

The second "pattern" he finds is that of the shepherd watching over his flock (with the obvious religious connotation). The "excellency of Kingly dignity shines in

⁶⁸*Religion and Alegiance*, 3-4.

⁶⁹*The Garden of Wysdome*, Aii^v. Cf. King James's speech to Parliament, 21 March, 1609, which encompassed not only the father identity but also others: "In the scriptures Kings are called Gods, and so their power after a certaine relation compared to the Diuine power. Kings are also compared to Fathers of families: for a King is trewly *Parens patriae*, the politique father of his people. And lastly, Kings are compared to the head of this microcosme of the body of man". *The Political Works of James I*, 307.

⁷⁰"Sir John Harington to his Lady", 27 December, 1602: "Our Deare Queene, my royale godmother, and this state's natural mother, dothe now beare shew of human infirmitie", *Nugae Antiquae*, I, 320.

⁷¹"The Argument in the Case of the Post-Nati": "the first is that of a father, or chief of a family, who governing over his wife by prerogative of sex, over his children by prerogative of age, and because he is author unto them of being, and over his servants by prerogative of virtue and providence (for he that is able of body, and improvident of mind, is *natura servus*) is the very model of a king": quoted from Francis D. Wormuth, *The Royal Prerogative*, 7-8.

the very appellations of a King; that he is called a *Head*, a *Shepherd*, a *Father*, a *God*.⁷² The "Shepherds Spring Song" celebrates James's accession to the English throne in precisely this role.⁷³ In his speech to his first Parliament, James amalgamated the metaphor of king's identity as the country's husband with that of the shepherd:

"what God hath conjoined then, let no man separate." I am the husband, and all the whole island is my lawful wife; I am the head, and it is my body, I am the shepherd, and it is my flock.⁷⁴

Shakespeare's famous shepherd-king is Henry VI, who, rather than attend to the crucial occupation of soldiering (an identity which he *loses*), spends time amid the battle meditating upon a pastoral existence (*3 Henry VI* II. v).

Other identities include keeper of the vineyard⁷⁵; the gardener of the state⁷⁶ (to which Shakespeare devotes a whole scene in *Richard II*); physician to the body politic⁷⁷; and philosopher.⁷⁸ Identities derived from classical antiquity were also

⁷²Rawlinson, *Edward Rex*, 9.

⁷³"A Royall King will of your weale take keepe. | Hee'll be your Shepheard, you shalbe his sheepe"; included in Chettle, *Englandes Mourning Garment*, G1r-v.

⁷⁴William Cobbett, *Parliamentary History of England*, I, 930.

⁷⁵See Stephen Gardiner, *De Vera Obedientia*, 113; the vineyard is not only the state but also the church. Cf. Matthew 20.

⁷⁶The comparison of the state to the garden had long been established and was current among medieval preachers. For a discussion of the garden image see Peter Ure's Arden ed. of *Richard II*. Also see Elyot, *The Book Named the Governor*: "In this similitude to the garden may be resembled the public weal, to the gardeners the governors and counsellors, to the knots or beds sundry degrees of personages, to the moles vices and sundry enormities", 241.

⁷⁷Thomas Elyot, *The Book Named the Governor*, "governors shall not disdain to be resembled unto physicians, considering their offices in curing and preserving be most like of any other", 232. Richard II disclaims the role of physician, but actually plays it, seeing himself as one who can cure the sickness of the quarreling Mowbray and Bolingbroke:

Wrath-kindled gentlemen, be rul'd by me,

attributed to English kings, as rulers of new Troy -- further additions to the increasing number of roles enacted by the holder of kingly office. For William Blount the newly crowned Henry VIII was "our Octavius".⁷⁹ More described Henry, on the day of his coronation, as not only appearing like Achilles, but as Achilles in two of his role-playing ventures:

. . . and such color in his cheeks as is typical of roses. In fact, that face, admirable for its animated strength, could belong to either a young girl or a man. Thus Achilles looked when he pretended to be a maiden, thus he looked when he dragged Hector behind his Thessalian steeds.⁸⁰

Having lost his kingdom, Shakespeare's Henry VI laments that "No bending knee will call [him] Caesar now" (*3 Henry VI* III. i. 18).⁸¹ All three men of royal rank in the play either describe themselves or are described as Caesar. The usurping King Edward appropriates the name for himself when addressing Clarence, his false fleeing brother: "Et tu, Brute! wilt thou stab Caesar too?" (V. i. 81). And Margaret compares the fate of the murdered Prince Edward with that of Caesar (V. v. 49-53). Richard tries to persuade Elizabeth that her daughter in marrying him "shall be sole victoress, Caesar's Caesar" (*Richard III* IV. iv. 336). Exeter warns the French King that Henry V will come "In thunder and in earthquake like a Jove" (*Henry V* II. iv. 100) but when the King returns to London, the citizens "Go forth and fetch their conqu'ring Caesar in" (V. Chorus. 28).

Let's purge this choler without letting blood --
This we prescribe, though no physician;
Deep malice makes too deep incision. (I. i. 152-55)

⁷⁸Erasmus, *Education of a Christian Prince*: "You cannot be a prince, if you are not a philosopher . . . To be a philosopher and to be a Christian is synonymous in fact. The only difference is in the nomenclature. . . I do not mean by philosopher, one who is learned in the ways of dialectic or physics, but one who casts aside the false pseudorealities and with an open mind seeks and follows the truth", 150.

⁷⁹His letter to Erasmus, 27 May [1509]. In *Erasmus Epistles*, I.457.

⁸⁰"On the Coronation Day of Henry VIII", *Selections from the Latin Poems*, 132.

⁸¹Henry persists in adopting classical roles. Within a few lines, shortly before he is killed, he refers to himself as both Roscius (the great Roman actor) and Daedalus; the murdered Prince consequently becomes the ill-fated Icarus (V. vi. 10, 21-2).

In an age generously given to flattery of the Queen, Elizabeth acquired a plethora of mythological and classical identities. A nice catalogue of her roles begins Thomas Dekker's play, *Old Fortunatus*. Two old men meet on the way to Elizabeth's court:

1. Are you then traueelling to the temple of *Eliza*?
2. Euen to her temple are my feeble limmes traueelling. Some cal her
Pandora: some *Gloriana*, some *Cynthia*: some *Belphoebe*, some *Astraea*: all
 by seuerall names to expresse seuerall loues: Yet all those names make
 but one celestiall body, as all those loues meete to create but one soule.
1. I am one of her owne countrie, and we adore her by the name of
Eliza.
2. Blessed name, happie countrie: Your *Eliza* makes your land *Elizium*.⁸²

Her epithets included Lady of the Sea, Phoenix of the World, Peerless Oriana, Diana (and so Huntress, and moon goddess), and the Fairy Queen; she was also countless other goddesses.⁸³ What these identities helped to create was an image of the Queen's role as a rich complex of imaginative structures.

In addition to, and more truly significant than, the classical roles, were the many religious ones which surround the office and were understood on a more serious level. According to Bishop Jewel, the prince was by "ordinance and word of God . . . to be the nurse of God's religion".⁸⁴ In 1578, on one of her better-known progresses

⁸²The Prologue at Court, 1-10. The second old man, later in the prologue, addresses Elizabeth as the "Dread Queene of Fayries", 55. *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. Fredson Bowers, I. Explications of the names and reference sources are found in Cyrus Hoy, *Introductions, Notes, and Commentaries to texts in The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, I, 92.

⁸³See Frances Yates, "Queen Elizabeth I as Astraea" in *The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century*.

⁸⁴John Jewel, *Defence of the Apology of the Church of England*, in *Works*, Parker Society, ed. John Ayer, III, 167.

to Norwich, Elizabeth was greeted as "the nurse of Christ his church".⁸⁵ The king's spiritual concern for his subjects was part of his identity as pastor and shepherd, but not only those. "For wee are not to imagine", advised Rawlinson,

that a King is but *Armentarius*, a heardsman onely, that he should haue care but of the bodies of his people. No: a King is *Mixta Persona cum Sacerdote*, a mixt person with a Priest, hauing also the procuration and care of *Gods Worship*, and so consequently the *Soules of men*.⁸⁶

Rulers often described themselves as the vicars of Christ; Henry VIII for instance declared that he was the person "whom God hath appointed his Vicar and high minister".⁸⁷ As well as being a priest, the king assumed the identities of a host of biblical figures.

Well may *Rex*, the King, stand for *Adam*: for *Adam* was *Rex mundi*: the sole King & Monarch of the whole world: and as well may *Vivat* goe for *Eue*. For *Eue* was *Mater viventium*, the Mother of the liuing: euen as the Kings life is . . . the Mother of all *their liues* that liue vnder him.⁸⁸

⁸⁵The minister of the Dutch church his oration", recorded in Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 1294. The speech was made directly to the Queen and she is referred to twice as the "most faithfull nurse of the Church of God", 1294.

⁸⁶*Vivat Rex*, 11. The idea of the king as *mixta persona cum sacerdote* lasted into the seventeenth-century and is shown by the words put into the mouth of Charles I in *Eikon Basilike*, "On their denying his majesty his chaplains": "It may be, I am esteemed by My Denyers sufficient of My self to discharge My duty to GOD as a Priest, though not to men as a Prince. Indeed, I think both Offices, Regall and Sacerdotall, might well become the same Person; as anciently they were under one name, & the united rights of primogeniture", 211.

⁸⁷This is taken from Henry's last speech to Parliament, in which he rebuked the lords temporal and spiritual for their lack of charity to each other. The King threatened to "see these divisions extinct, and these enormities corrected, according to [his] very duty" as minister and vicar of God. 24 December, 1545, *The Letters of Henry VIII*, 421.

⁸⁸John Rawlinson, *Vivat Rex*, 1. The passage begins the sermon preached before James and the Queen (hence the Eve attribution), on the day of his inauguration in 1614.

Church prayers asked that kings "may most faithfully follow the Kings, and Captaines in, the Bible, David, Ezekias, Iosias and Moses, with such other."⁸⁹ The biblical figure whose identity was most frequently claimed by kings was of course David. As the "true figure of the messias", David was the king whose house and dominion were to stand for ever: "this muste alwayes be noted, that the kingdome which God erected in the person of Dauid: was established in the true Messias vnto the ende of the worlde."⁹⁰ That a king took on the identity of David implied a kind of national immortality and prosperity for his kingdom. The Mayor of Norwich, speaking on behalf of the citizens, welcomed Elizabeth as the "light of this realme (as Dauid was of Israel)".⁹¹ Joseph Hall wrote to James I that "you may truly say with *Dauid*, *Ego sustineo columnas eius*."⁹²

On the occasion of the Norwich progress Elizabeth was addressed, on the same day, as the "nurse of Christ", David, and Joseph:

Thou surlic doost folow most holilie the mind of Ioseph, by the singular

⁸⁹*An Exhortation Concerning good Order, and Obedience to Rulers, in Certaine Sermons*, 77. Sir Richard Rich lauded Henry VIII for possessing the same virtues as Solomon, Samson, and Absalom; see Franklin Le Van Baumer, *The Early Tudor Theory of Kingship*, 86. Thomas Bilson could see "no cause why the function of Princes still remaining the same, the Inunction of Princes shuld not haue also the same signification, operation & approbation from God which it had in *Dauid*, *Salomon*, *Ioash*, *Iehoahaz*, and others". *A Sermon Preached*, B3^r.

⁹⁰John Calvin, *A Harmonie Vpon the Three Euangelists*, 579.42. Henry VI in Holinshed's *Chronicles* uses this argument to justify maintaining his monarchy: "Not long before his death, being demanded whie he had so long held the crowne of England uniuertie; he replied: 'My father was king of England, quietlie inioieng the crowne all his reigne; and his father my grandsire was also king of England, and I euen a child in my cradell was proclaimed and crowned king without anie interruption; and so held it fortie yeares well-neere, all the states dooing homage unto me, as to my antecessors: wherefore I maie say with king Dauid; The lot is fallen unto me in a faire ground; yea I haue a goodlie heritage, my helpe is from the Lord which saueth the upright in heart'", 691.

⁹¹Holinshed, "The maiors oration to the queene Englished", *Chronicles*, 1288.

⁹²*A Recollecion of Such Treatises*, A2^r.

goodnesse of God, as well in preserving thy kingdome, as in amplifying the kingdome of Christ.⁹³

Elizabeth could be mimetically represented as a biblical figure: the final pageant in her coronation procession portrayed her as "Debora" iudge and restorer of the house of Israell".⁹⁴ In an obvious attempt to parallel his name in form of compliment, James was called England's Jacob. In thanksgiving for his "Highnesse happy deliuerance from the traiterous and bloody attempt of the Earle of Gowry", prayers were published admonishing "the wicked and bloodthirstie men [who] thought to deuoure Jacob, and to lay waste his dwelling place . . . thou (O God) . . . rulest in Jacob".⁹⁵ The title is a particularly interesting one from the point of view of representation. Saint Augustine explains why Jacob was also called Israel: for "this name, the angel that wrestled with him, gave him, being an evident type of Christ."⁹⁶

In consequence of the king's maintaining one or several biblical identities, the country too, was transformed: England now becomes Israel and Zion.⁹⁷ The king, said

⁹³Holinshed, "The minister of the Dutch church his oration", *Chronicles*, 1294. "The oration ended, there was a certaine monument presented to hir maiestie, in the upper part whereof was artificiallie grauen the historie of Joseph out of Genesis", 1294.

⁹⁴Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 1177: "she might by this be put in remembrance to consult for the worthie gouernment of hir people, considering God oftentimes sent women noblie to rule among men, as Debora, which governed Israell in peace of fortie yeares", 1178. Elizabeth was also described as she "whom God hath made as our Zerubbabel for the erecting of this moste excellent Temple . . .", Epistle to the Queen, Geneva Bible, ii^r.

⁹⁵*A Fourme of Prayer, with Thankesgiuing, to be vsed by all the Kings Maiesties louing Subiects*, D2^v. James was not only Jacob but Abraham as well. At the end of Henry VIII, Shakespeare has Cranmer prophesying that James will be Elizabeth's successor whose "honour and the greatness of his name | Shall be, and make new nations". The prophecy is based on Genesis 17: 4-6 where God makes his covenant with Abraham: "thou shalt be a father of manie nacions, Nether shal thy name anie more be called Abram, but thy name shal be Abraham: for a father of manie nacions haue I made thee. Also I wil make thee exceeding fruitful, and wil make nacions of thee: yea, Kings shal procede of thee."

⁹⁶*The City of God*, trans. John Healey, I, 125.

⁹⁷"For whereas it was the expectation of many, who wished not well unto our Sion . . ."; dedicatory preface to King James in the King James Bible, A2^r.

Valentine, "is *Decus Israelis*, the beauty of Israel . . . the effects and influences of whose government . . . extend over the whole Kingdome, and reach from *Dan*, even to *Beersheba*, from *Aarons* head to the skirts of his cloathing".⁹⁸ In commemoration of James's inauguration, Richard Crakanthorpe describes how London in "our Temples, our houses, our streets, did witnesse and proclaime that publicke joy: No otherwise then did the people of *Israel*, at the Inauguration of their *Solomon*".⁹⁹

iv

"The King's Two Bodies"

In his attempt to confound Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Hamlet leaves them and the audience in bewilderment with his cryptic retorts, especially when they concern the whereabouts of the body of the dead Polonius:

Rosencrantz My lord, you must tell us where the body is and go
with us to the King.

Hamlet The body is with the King, but the King is not with
the body. The King is a thing --

Guildenstern A thing, my lord?

Hamlet Of nothing. Bring me to him. (IV. ii. 24-9)

To what, if anything, is Hamlet referring? In his recent Arden edition of the play, Harold Jenkins suggests that "it is impossible to agree with Furness, Kittredge, and others that this or anything Hamlet says is meant to be mere nonsense".¹⁰⁰ On the

⁹⁸*God Save the King*, 18.

⁹⁹*A Sermon at the Solemnizing of the Happie Inauguration of . . . King James*, G4^r. The whole sermon casts King James in the role of Solomon: "All the people ran after him, piping with Pipes, blowing Trumpets, & rejoycing with so great a ioy, that the earth rang with the sound thereof, and crying with all their might, *God saue King Salomon*", G4^r.

¹⁰⁰See his note to this scene and the longer notes, 525.

contrary; political doctrine held that the king, as one person, had two bodies: a body natural and a body politic:

his Body natural (if it be considered in itself) is a Body mortal, subject to all Infirmities that come by Nature or Accident, to the Imbecility of Infancy or old Age, and to the like Defects that happen to the natural Bodies of other People. But his Body politic is a Body that cannot be seen or handled.¹⁰¹

With reference to the king's two bodies, Jenkins thus explains Hamlet's response: "asked where the 'body' is in relation to 'the King', Hamlet indicates that the body (natural) is necessarily 'with the King' but that the essential of the king, his majesty and kingly office, does not inhere in or belong with that body."¹⁰²

That the king exists in two capacities is yet another element in his invisible but essential role. Though the two bodies are united in the king and "are become as one" they remain "distinct capacities", "whereof the Body politic is greater".¹⁰³ The characteristics of the two bodies are described by James's Serjeant at Law, Henry Finch:

A body politick is a body in fiction of Law that endureth in perpetual succession. And such is the King alone, and by himself considered . . . for the King hath two capacities, a body natural (wherein he may inherit

¹⁰¹*The Commentaries or Reports of Edmund Plowden*, 212a. Plowden's *Reports* consist of law cases "argued and adjudged" during the several reigns of King Edward VI, Queen Mary, King and Queen Philip and Mary, and Queen Elizabeth. See Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, which is a comprehensive study of the theory. His first chapter investigates the *Reports*, which are the first clear elaboration of concept of the king's two bodies. See also Maynard Mack, *Killing the King*, who bases his study on this theory.

— ¹⁰²Longer notes, 523-4.

¹⁰³Plowden's *Reports*, 239a, 234a. Kantorowicz admits the apparent confusion of the theory in the minds of the law-courts: "it was anything but a simple task to remain consistent when one had to defend at once the perfect union of the King's Two Bodies and the very distinct capacities of each body alone. It is a veritable sword-dance that the jurists perform", 12.

from any of his ancestors, or purchase to him and his heirs, and retain the same, notwithstanding he be removed from his estate Royal) and a body politick, wherein he may purchase to him and his heirs Kings of England, or to him and his Successors.¹⁰⁴

As a man, the king could be separated from his physical role, or body natural, by violence; but from his spiritual role or body politic he could never be separated.¹⁰⁵ The celebrated proclamation, "Le Roi est mort, vive le Roi!" is an illustration of the belief that the king's body politic, at least, never dies. The successor to the throne enters his office the moment of the king's death, so that the role is never seen as unoccupied -- the role is absolute.¹⁰⁶

The definition of "king" in Cowell's dictionary includes that he is "taken as not subject to death, but is a Corporation in himselfe that liueth euer".¹⁰⁷ The "corporation" of the king consists of all the members of the body politic and

he and his Subjects together compose the Corporation . . . and he is incorporated with them, and they with him, and he is the Head, and they are the Members . . . and this Body is not subject to Passions as the other is, nor to Death, for as to this Body the King never dies.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴Law or a Discourse thereof, 83. The theory could be extended metaphorically to incorporate the whole country; as Roger Maynwaring declared: "the King is the sacred & Supreme Head of two Bodies, the one Spirituall, the other Secular", *Religion and Allegiance*, 5-4.

¹⁰⁵As Kantorowicz notes, the theory of the king's two bodies was turned to advantage by the Puritan revolutionaries. After Parliament succeeded in trying Charles I for high treason it admitted to "executing solely the body natural without affecting seriously or doing irreparable harm to the King's body politic". *The King's Two Bodies*, 23.

¹⁰⁶For the "absolutism" of the process of succession and coronation see Percy Ernst Schramm, *A History of English Coronation*, trans. Leopold Wickham Legg, 1.

¹⁰⁷*The Interpreter: Or Booke Containing the Signification of Words*.

¹⁰⁸The case of *Willion v. Berkley*, in *Plowden's Reports*, 234a.

Seen in this light, the body politic and the head of such a corporation was an immortal entity.¹⁰⁹ But in several ways, *both* his natural body and his body politic could be regarded as immortal. It was precisely for this reason that having an heir for the throne was so important, for the succession was the guarantee that the "corporation" would continue indefinitely. The monarch's "Power shall last (by God's grace) perpetually", Charles Merbury wrote in 1581, "first during his owne life in him selfe, and then after his death in his sonnes, and successors".¹¹⁰ Discussion of the death of even the king's physical body was avoided as far as possible. Elizabethan theologians and lawyers never liked to use the word "death" in connexion with the king, but spoke rather of his "demise"; a quite different word, thanks to its special and technical significations:

his natural Death is not called in our Law . . . the Death of the King, but the Demise of the King, not signifying by the Word (*Demise*) that the Body politic of the King, is dead, but that there is a Separation of the two Bodies, and that the Body politic is transferred and conveyed over from the Body natural now dead, or now removed from the Dignity royal, to another Body natural. So that it signifies a Removal of the Body politic of the King of this Realm from one Body natural to another.¹¹¹

This transmigration of the immortal part of kingship was secured with the production of an heir -- the most significant action a king could ever undertake. "However many statues he may set up", declared Erasmus, "however many massive works he may erect, a prince can have no more excellent monument to his worth than a son, splendid in every way, who is like his excellent father in his outstanding deeds. *He does not die.*

¹⁰⁹In this respect, treason must be understood to be against only the king's natural body, for his politic body is immortal. See Kantorowicz, 75.

¹¹⁰A Brief Discourse of Royall Monarchie, 41.

¹¹¹The case of *Willion v. Berkley*, *Plowden's Reports*, 234a. Cf Henry Finch, *Law or a Discourse thereof*: "for perpetuity, the King never dieth, but in Law it is said the demise of the King, and a gift unto the King, without saying more, trencheth to his successors", 83.

who leaves a living likeness of himself."¹¹² Holinshed records a speech made by the dying Edward IV, in which the King advises his counsellors as to the proper care of the successor:

studie to defend, counsell and preferre, not onelic him during his life;
but also to serue, assist, and mainteine his sequele and lineall
succession, as the verie images and carnall portatures of his stirpe, and
line, and stemme, naturallie descended.¹¹³

The adaptation to Christian purposes of the classical myth of the Phoenix provided the appropriate metaphor to represent the king's immortality and the living successor.¹¹⁴ This self-begotten and self-perpetuating fabulous creature became yet another identity for the king and his role. It was engraved on Elizabethan medallions and became a permanent symbol of the Queen. Thomas Heywood's history of Elizabeth's reign nicely incorporates the image in his description of Anne Boleyn:

the young lady her Daughter lost a Mother before she could doe any
more but smile vpon her; She dyed the Phoenix of her Sexe, but left a
daughter behind who proued the Phoenix of her time, the true Daughter
of so rare a Mother Phoenix.¹¹⁵

¹¹²*Education of a Christian Prince*, 142.

¹¹³*Chronicles*, 709.

¹¹⁴For an interesting discussion of this topic see Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 387-95: "the Phoenix represented one of the rare cases in which the individual was at once the whole existing species so that indeed species and individual coincided. The species, of course, was immortal; the individual, mortal. The imaginary bird therefore disclosed a duality: it was at once Phoenix and Phoenix-kind, mortal as an individual, though immortal too, because it was the whole kind. It was at once individual and collective, because the whole species reproduced no more than a single specimen at a time . . . the lore of the Phoenix . . . stressed almost without exception the personal identity of the dead Phoenix with his living successor".

¹¹⁵*Englands Elizabeth*, 31. Heywood includes the following when he recounts the moment of Anne's execution: "*Phoenix Iana iacet, nato Phoenixe, dolendum, | Saecula Phoenixes nulla tulisse duos*", 30.

In Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, Elizabeth and her successor are described in the same kind of relationship, even though James (obviously) was not the biological offspring of the Queen:

The bird of wonder dies, the maiden phoenix,
 Her ashes new create another heir
 As great in admiration as herself,
 So shall she leave her blessedness to one
 (When heaven shall call her from this cloud of darkness)
 Who from the sacred ashes of her honour
 Shall star-like rise, as great in fame as she was,
 And so stand fix'd. Peace, plenty, love, truth, terror,
 That were the servants to this chosen infant,
 Shall then be his (V. iv. 43-9)

The demise of a king is given dramatic representation in the last act of *King John*, where the dying King shares the stage with surrounding lords and the young Prince Henry. Listening to the dying singing of his father, Henry describes himself as the "cygnet to this pale faint swan" (V. vii. 21). Once the King dies, his body natural, represented on stage, is simply as he had described it would be: "but a clod | And module of confounded royalty" (57-8). Twice, the body of the King is pondered upon, as representing both a former and present substance: Salisbury tells the Bastard that he is speaking "dead news in as dead an ear" (65) and eulogizes John "But now a king, now thus" (66); the Prince questions the "surety of the world" when "this was now a king, and now is clay?" *The King is dead, long live the King!* The stage is never lacking one, for Henry assumes his father's body politic immediately. The Bastard is the first to recognize Henry as king, and as a sign of this, makes his subjection to him and offers him fealty. The others on stage follow suit.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶During the king's demise, the successor prepares for the new role he is about to put on with a different kind of awareness from that which he has held during his lifetime's training. As Henry lies dying in 2 *Henry IV*, Poins admonishes Hal for not preparing seriously enough the new role of king he must soon assume:

How ill it follows, after you have laboured so hard, you should talk so idly! Tell me, how many good young princes would do so, their fathers

As a king, John lives in his son. In the same play the disputed heir to England's throne is said to have the figure of his father living in him. King Philip accuses John of cutting off "the sequence of posterity", for Arthur is the "little abstract [who] doth contain that large | Which died in Geoffrey" (II. i. 101-2). In 3 *Henry VI* Prince Edward has nothing of his father's unkingly qualities: rather, he has more of the true essence of royalty which he has inherited from his grandfather. The Earl of Oxford declares that Henry V lives in Edward, because the Prince speaks like a king:

O brave young Prince! thy famous grandfather
Doth live again in thee: long may'st thou live
To bear his image and renew his glories! (V. iv. 52-4)

When Henry disinherits his son in favour of the Duke of York, he is several times condemned for performing such an unnatural act. The horror of the deed is not lost upon the King's faithful lords, who see the act as an injury not only to the Prince but to themselves and to all of England. By denying the role to the rightful heir, Henry has damaged his body politic and the corporation which it represents. He offends against the several roles he plays as king: against his role as the King of England, as a father to the Prince, his son, as the Father to the country, and as a man.

King I am content: Richard Plantagenet,
Enjoy the kingdom after my decease.
Clifford What wrong is this unto the Prince your son!
Warwick What good is this to England and himself!
Westmoreland Base, fearful, and despairing Henry!
Clifford How hast thou injur'd both thyself and us! (I. i. 180-5)

Northumberland Be thou a prey unto the house of York.
And die in bands for this unmanly deed! (192-3)

being so sick as yours at this time is (II. ii. 28-31).

Clifford He, but a duke, would have his son a king,
 And raise his issue like a loving sire;
 Thou, being a king, bless'd with a goodly son,
 Didst yield consent to disinherit him,
 Which argued thee a most unloving father. (II. ii. 21-5)¹¹⁷

There is another very important aspect to the matter of the king's two bodies. The king is preserved in his heirs as well as in the essence of his kingship in his body politic; but he is also a part of all his subjects in corporation: "he is incorporated with them, and they with him". Roger Maynwaring described the corporation as all-encompassing:

The poorest creature, which lyeth by the wall, or goes by the high-way-side, is not without sundry and sensible tokens of that *sweet* and *Royall* care, and *providence*; which extendeth itself to the lowest of his *Subjects*. The way, they passe by, is the *Kings* high-way. The *Lawes*, which make provision for their reliefe, take their binding force from the *Supream* will of their *Liege-Lord*. The bread, that feedes their hungry soules, the poor ragges, which hide their nakedness, al are fruit and superfluity of that happie plenty and abundance caused by wise and peaceable gouernement.¹¹⁸

That the king was a part of every member in his realm was the argument used in the case of *Hales v. Petit* in which Chief Justice Dyer ruled that suicide was a crime against the king.¹¹⁹ To kill one's self, as a member of the king's realm, was also to destroy part of his *corpus mysticum*. Speaking in a more positive vein, Valentine talks of the king who

¹¹⁷The unnaturalness of the deed is continually stressed. Cf. I.i.199, 225.

¹¹⁸*Religion and Allegiance*, 9.

¹¹⁹*Plowden's Reports*, 261: it was a crime "against the King in that hereby he has lost a Subject, and . . . he being the Head has lost one of his mystic members".

inanimates and informes the whole collective body of the people, and every particular man of it, of what degree, quality, or profession soever, so that to say wee have no part in *David* is the voice of a rebell; for yong men and maids, old men and children have all a part in him, and profit by him.¹²⁰

The king's mystical body represented an exact parallel to that of Christ: "For as we haue many members in one bodie, and all members haue not one office, So we being many are one bodie in Christ, and euerie one, one anothers members".¹²¹

Canon law and theology merged their respective boundaries in similar discussions of the king's ability to be everywhere and in all people. Henry Finch attributed this quality first to God and then to the king:

the first thing in God, and most proper to his sacred Majesty, is the infiniteness of his nature; who, as the philosopher elegantly saith, only is that Circle, *cujus centrum est ubiq; peripheria nusquam*. So say our books, that the King in a manner is every where, and present in all his courts.¹²²

Members of the royal court had their own special role to play as representatives of the king's body. In a sermon preached specifically to the superior officers of James's court, William Pemberton charged that all "Vice-Royes, and all others, in their seuerall rankes of gouernment, do beare the stampe and impression of God, and the King".¹²³ Even in the absence of the king's royal person, his authoritative presence resides in whoever acts on his behalf. What God can do of

¹²⁰*God Save the King*, 17-18: "so that high and low, rich and poore, one with another, and all together owe their *bene esse* unto him".

¹²¹Epistle to the Romaines, 12:4-5. Cf. the Communion Service: "we be very members incorporate in thy mistical body, whiche is the blessed company of al faithful people", BCP, 104.

¹²²*Law of a Discourse thereof*, 81.

¹²³*The Charge of God and the King*, A3^r.

Himself, a king can do through others: as "God himself knowes all things", Rawlinson wrote, "So doth a King by his *Intellegencers*. God of himselfe can do all things: So can a King by his *Officers*. God is in all places at once by himselfe: So is a King by his *deputies*."¹²⁴ Because of the king's two bodies, his role is not a localized entity but all-pervasive, through what might be called a process of multiple occurrence. Thus to rebuke the king's messenger was, in other words, a direct slight upon the king himself. The mistreatment of Kent by Cornwall in *King Lear* is shocking (no matter how obnoxious his behaviour toward Oswald) because of whom he represents in his person:

Call not your stocks for me; I serve the King,
On whose employment I was sent to you;
You shall do small respect, show too bold malice
Against the grace and person of my master,
Stocking his messenger. (II. ii. 125-29)

Within a few lines Shakespeare shows, and repeatedly emphasizes, the import of Cornwall's and Regan's action. As an old-guard vassal, Gloucester too understands the meaning of Kent in the stocks, and implores Cornwall not to go through with the punishment:

the King must take it ill,
That he, so slightly valued in his messenger,
Should have him thus restrained. (141-43)

Likewise, the king speaks through and in the persons of his ministers and deputies that make up part of his mystical body. This is a lesson that Hal, in *2 Henry IV*, says he had to learn the hard way at the hands of the Chief Justice:

Chief Justice I then did use the person of your father,
The image of his power lay then in me;
And in th'administration of his law.

¹²⁴*Vivar Rex*, 12.

Whiles I was busy for the commonwealth,
 Your Highness pleased to forget my place,
 The majesty and power of law and justice,
 The image of the King whom I presented,
 And struck me in my very seat of judgment;
 Whereon, as an offender to your father,
 I gave bold way to my authority
 And did commit you. If the deed were ill,
 Be you contented, wearing now the garland,
 To have a son set your decrees at naught?
 To pluck down justice from your awful bench?
 To trip the course of law, and blunt the sword
 That guards the peace and safety of your person?
 Nay more, to spurn at your most royal image,
 And mock your workings in a second body? (V. ii. 73-90)¹²⁵

Unlike Kent's reception, Suffolk's in *I Henry VI*, is correct and courteous: Reignier embraces him "as I would embrace | The Christian prince, King Henry, were he here" (V. iii. 171-2). When Suffolk completes his purpose on behalf of the King and is once again in Henry's presence, he can

humbly now upon bended knee
 In sight of England and her lordly peers,
 Deliver up my title in the Queen
 To your most gracious hands, that are the substance
 Of that great shadow I did represent (2 *Henry VI* I. i. 10-14).

In his constant refusal personally to fulfill his kingly duties, Henry gives leave to his lords to "Do, or undo, as if ourself were here (III. i. 196). The murderers sent to kill Clarence in *Richard III* gain access to the prisoner because of their written

¹²⁵Cf. Elyot's *Governor*: "Sir, remember yourself: I keep here the place of the King, your sovereign lord and father, to whom ye owe double obedience, wherefore oftsoons in his name I charge you", 114.

commission. In his attempt to appease the First Murderer, Clarence finds himself at a loss to realize exactly who he is speaking to:

Clarence Thy voice is thunder, but thy looks are humble.

I Murderer My voice is now the King's, my looks mine own. (I. iv. 158-9)

Clarence Wherein, my friends, have I offended you?

I Murderer Offended us you have not, but the King. (167)

The French are made to listen to the Bastard, who speaks for King John: "Now hear our English king, | For thus his royalty dōth speak in me" (*King John* V. ii. 128-9). York, in *Richard II*, confronts the returning Bolingbroke with power of his authority:

Com'st thou because the anointed king is hence?

Why, foolish boy, the king is left behind.

And in my loyal bosom lies his power (II. iii. 95-7).

The theory of the king's two bodies enhances the multiplicity of the role as the king performs it. It is another kind of mimesis which links him to God and to the way in which the king is perceived by his subjects. Shakespeare, in his plays, pays ample acknowledgement to the doctrine of the king's two bodies, but nowhere more tellingly than in *1 Henry IV*. In the battle of Shrewsbury Henry is represented by the many soldiers who are dressed as the king. Decoys were a strategic ploy to confuse the enemy and protect the monarch, but in this play they provide a visual metaphor for the *multum in uno* -- the king whose body is legion. After Hotspur informs Douglas that "the king hath many marching in his coats" he swears to "kill all his coats; . . . murder all his wardrobe, piece by piece, | Until [he] meet[s] the King" (V. iii. 25-8). But as the king's body politic cannot be killed, whenever Douglas strikes down a counterfeit it is immediately replaced by another. He is exasperated that the "kings" he has met in the field "grow like Hydra's heads"¹²⁶ (V. iv. 24). At last, after

¹²⁶See Holinshed, *Chronicles*: "the earle Dowglas strake him downe, & at that instant slue Sir Walter Blunt, and three other, apparelled in the kings sute and clothing, saieing: I maruell to see so many kings thus suddenlie arise one in the necke of an other", 523.

he has encountered so many of Henry's "shadows", Douglas finally meets the real king -- and, as a rebel, is defeated himself.

"The Name Of King? A God's Name"

Curiously, neither the Arden nor any of the editors summarized in the Variorum edition gloss this line of Richard II's (III. iii. 146). Yet it is clearly ambiguous (at least in the Quarto; the Folio reads, probably without any authority, "o'Gods Name"). Richard may be attempting merely the wearily dismissive ("Oh, for God's sake let it go"), or he may be alluding to the enormous significance the *name of king* carried at this time: it was, quite literally, a god's name. The possibilities for multiple meaning in this simple phrase are very attractive, in view both of Richard's nature and of the theme of the play. In fact, the extraordinary nature of the monarch, the qualities which make him capable of rule, the various identities subsumed in his role, and the dual nature of his "body", are all understood in the very name of "king". To say the name of "king" is to mean, in one utterance, all these things, and to see them in the man whether he appears in real life in the court, or when he makes an entrance on to the stage in the theatre. The name itself becomes a touchstone for the entire scope of possibilities inherent in the role, and the way it is perceived by others.

In many ways, the power of the king is the power of his name. The storm in *The Tempest* is indifferent to the fact that the ship has the King of Naples on board: the roaring waves, says the Boatswain, care not "for the name of King" (I. i. 16-17). But of course in this instance the storm itself is an artificial construct, part of the role that the King of Naples must perform in Prospero's metadrama. In despair upon his return from Wales, Richard II remembers he is after all still a king, and recalls his role because he recalls the significance of his name:

I had forgot myself, am I not king?
Awake, thou coward majesty! thou sleepest.
Is not the king's name twenty thousand names?

Arm, arm, my name! a puny subject strikes

At thy great glory (III. ii. 83-7)

In 1631 Elizabeth's name "euen in this our age is so sacred amongst all good men, that it is scarce remembred, at the least uttered without deuout thanks-giuing".¹²⁷ For James's subjects, his "very name" was celebrated as "precious among them".¹²⁸ As a god on earth, the king shared the name of Christ. It is, said Thomas Bilson, another important *sign* of sovereignty.¹²⁹

As Christ giueth Princes his name, by calling them *Gods*, and, the *Sonnes* of the most High: So he taketh their Names and Signes to shew the Vnitie and Soueraigntie of his Kingdome, and to seuer it from all other kinds of gouernment.¹³⁰

In the same sermon, Bilson preached that the "likeness that Princes haue with the kingdom of God and of Christ, consisteth in the Societie of the names [as well as signs] which they haue common with Christ".¹³¹ That kings share God's name is not an association that was taken lightly. Since it was prohibited to take the name of God

¹²⁷ *Englands Elizabeth*, "the Epistle to the Reader" by N.R.

¹²⁸ "The Dedicatory Preface" to the Holy Bible, A2^r.

¹²⁹ Holinshed condemned Bolingbroke for his return to England and for what is "woorse", for "usurping the signs of royalty: he had "taken upon him the name, title . . . of king". "Henrie of Lancaster . . . tooke upon him the scepter and the crowne, and wrongfullie bare the name and stile of a king", *Chronicles*, 305, 319.

¹³⁰ *A Sermon Preached*, A7^r. Cf. Richard Taverner, *Garden of Wisedome*: kings "represent unto us the person even of god himself" and so God "adorneth them with the honourable title of his own name, calling them Gods", B6^r.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, A5^r. "The Societie of their names is euident. *I haue sayd, we are Gods, and all the Sonnes of the most High* (Psalm 82): And of this very Scripture our Sauour saith, *it can not be dissolued* (John 10)". A5^v.

in vain, how "shall wee thinke, Bilson asked, "that God himselfe wil giue his name to Princes in vaine?" -- what God hath spoken, he will perform.¹³²

The king's name was supposed to be worthy of its Christ-like associations. "Let the prince remember", Erasmus cautioned, that titles like "your highness", "your majesty", "your diuine excellence", are not appropriate unless he governs his kingdom after the fashion of God, with a sort of celestial magnanimity.¹³³ True nobility is the "surname of virtue", and it is, according to Elyot, "extolled and marvelled at" the "longer it continueth in a name".¹³⁴ Immortal and diuine, the name of the king is an extension of his body politic. For as one Justice explained,

*King is a Name of Continuance, which shall always endure as the Head and Governor of the People (as the Law presumes) as long as the People continue . . . and in this Name the King never dies.*¹³⁵

Conversely, however, a ruler who was a man of inaction was a king in name only: "know that the name of sovereign or ruler without actual governance is but a shadow".¹³⁶ When Shakespeare's Henry VI resigns his crown to the Duke of York, the King separates his role into two aspects (those of name and action) which ought to be inseparable. Hall recorded how "it was agreed, that king Henry should reigne in name

¹³²*Ibid.* Kings deserve God's name "heere on earth" because "they are gods by Office: Ruling, Iudging, and Punishing in gods steede", A6^{f-v}. When God gives Abram his new name, it is with "Abraham", the "father of manie nations", that a covenant is made. The gloss to the Geneva Bible reads: "the changing of his name is ~~a~~scale to confirme Gods promes vnto him"; see Genesis 17:4.

¹³³*Education of a Christian Prince*, 199. Holinshed recorded how, in the history of Richard II, these titles were used by those people around the king, for all the wrong reasons: "Sir John Bushie in all his talke, when he proponed any matter vnto the king, did not attribute to him titles of honour, due and accustomed, but inuented vnused termes and such strange names, as were rather agreeable to the diuine maiestie of God than to any earthlie potentate. The prince being desirous inough of all honour, and more ambitious than was requisite, seemed to like well his speech, and gaue good care to his talke", *Chronicles*, 490.

¹³⁴*Governor*, 106.

¹³⁵*Plowden's Reports*, 177a.

¹³⁶Elyot, *Governor*, 165.

and dignitie, but neither in deed nor in auctoritie".¹³⁷ Holinshed concluded his history of the King with the comment that "Henrie . . . (besides the bare title of roialtie and naked name of king) had little appertaining to the port of a prince".¹³⁸ Lear mistakenly believes he can simply "retain | The name and all th'addition to a king", and can leave the "execution" of the office to others (I. i. 134-8). The symbology of the action is his request that Cornwall and Albany divide "this coronet" between them. Richard III usurps the name of the king; Holinshed had Richmond point out that Richard is merely "he that calleth himselfe king"¹³⁹ -- like a little man who has played dress-up in clothes that are too big for him, he does not become the role he thinks he is playing. In the play, Richard attempts to bolster his self-confidence before the battle by evoking the power of "the King's name" which is "a tower of strength | Which they upon the adverse faction want" (V. iii. 12-13).

Some other characters in the history plays draw attention to the importance, power and authority of the king's name. Gloucester, in *1 Henry VI*, is enraged at the manner of address in the letter sent by the rebellious Duke of Burgundy:

What means his Grace, that he hath chang'd his style?
 No more but plain and bluntly "To the King"!
 Hath he forgot he is his sovereign?
 Or doth this churlish superscription
 Pretend some alteration in good-will? (IV. i. 50-4)

The defeated Cade in *2 Henry VI* anguishes over his deserting soldiers, lamenting that "the name of Henry the Fifth hailes them to an hundred mischiefs, and makes them leave me desolate" (IV. viii. 56-8). After Edward has taken the crown in *3 Henry VI*, he demands several times that he be proclaimed "King of England" (IV. viii. 53), and

¹³⁷*Union*, Clxviii^v.

¹³⁸*Chronicles*, 661.

¹³⁹*Chronicles*, 757. Holinshed goes one step further: "this caitife Richard the third, not deseruing so much as the name of a man, much lesse of a king, most manifestlie appeareth", 761.

insists that Warwick "call Edward King" (V. i. 23).¹⁴⁰ As Richard II declines in his role as King, his name also diminishes in authority. In an unpleasant display of open contempt for his ruler, Northumberland merely calls him "Richard". York is quick to point out the fault, whatever the erring lord's excuse:

York It would beseem the Lord Northumberland
To say "King Richard". Alack the heavy day,
When such a sacred king should hide his head!

Northumberland Your grace mistakes; only to be brief,
Left I his title out.

York The time hath been,
Would you have been so brief with him, he would
Have been brief with you to shorten you,
For taking so the head, your whole head's length.

(III. iii. 7-14)

The surrounding events distance Richard from his role and name, and in consequence he speaks as if he had somehow moved outside of himself. Like Gaunt before him, he now declines his own name in a rhetorical display of submission.

What must the king do now? Must he submit?
The king shall do it. Must he be depos'd?
The king shall be contented. Must he lose
The name of king? a God's name, let it go. (III. iii. 143-6)

Because he has lost the name of the king, Richard has subsequently lost all names. In his isolation, he does not know how he is to be addressed nor what to call himself:

No lord of thine, thou haught insulting man;
Nor no man's lord. I have no name, no title;
No, not that name was given to me at the font.
But 'tis usurp'd. Alack the heavy day.

¹⁴⁰In his private meditations, Macbeth is annoyed that Banquo should have "chid the Sisters. | When first they put the name of King upon me" (III. i. 56-7).

That have worn so many winters out,

And know not now what name to call myself! (IV. i. 254-9)

-This speech is one of the most intense in the play, rich with overtones of identity and loss. Richard was baptized Richard, surnamed Plantagenet, but both these names became superseded when he became "King Richard II". Now that he is no longer King Richard II, now that identity has been taken away from him, he feels unable to reconstruct his former identities: the names "Richard" and "Plantagenet" are irrecoverable, so fully was his identity bound up with the name of king. The loss of this great role disables him from playing his former, lesser roles. Not until Act V is he able to find another set of roles to play, though all leave him discontented. The theatricality of the situation is obvious; what should by now be also obvious is that the theatrical metaphor (the star player being dismissed from his role, and unable to revert to playing bit parts: Othello's occupation's gone) is based firmly upon a conception of the role the name of king played in renaissance monarchical theory.

The mere three words of the familiar stage direction: "enter the King", carry in themselves the signification of everything so far discussed in the first part of this study. In the name of the king is defined all England itself.¹⁴¹ Its function is a sign which encompasses not only all the visual trappings which must accompany the role (the outward and visible signs) but also all "that within which passes show". To the Elizabethan subject and to the Elizabethan who attended Shakespeare's plays, the living monarch, and the actor who played the king on stage, are not "merely players" of a named role, but living extrapolations of a Christian ideal. It remains now to investigate how Shakespeare put the Christology of kingship to use in his history plays, and in the various themes and variations that he played upon this subject.

¹⁴¹The term "England" was a frequently used, and well-known form of address for majesty. See *King John* (II. i. 89-95) for King Philip's equivocal use of the name as it applies to John's role and Arthur's rightful claim. In the same play, the Bastard laments over Arthur's dead body as that of England itself: "How easy dost thou take all England up | From forth this morsel of dead royalty" (IV. iii. 142-3).

Epilogue

It may not be the fashion to see the lady the Epilogue, but when the lady is Elizabeth I, she commands that position in any discussion of the qualities and nature of the monarch in the renaissance. From the time of Elizabeth's coronation onwards, and even after her death, English subjects were used to seeing the Queen portrayed in various pageants and plays. A mere handful of examples will suffice to show how Elizabeth, the chiefest icon of the age, became a focus, if not indeed, on occasion, the impetus for mimetic art. A brief description of a few of these will help to draw together some of the points so far discussed, and provide a convenient bridge to the second part of this thesis.

On her coronation day, Elizabeth passed from pageant to pageant that were contrived to present to her either the glorious history of her family, or to represent her as a symbolic figure of conquest and honour. The first pageant, "grounded vpon the queens maiesties name"¹⁴² was "The vnitng of the two houses of Lancaster and York". Both Richard Tottell and Holinshed described the elaborate three-level stage, bedizened with the "personages representing the kings & queenes" of the Tudor dynasty. The levels were enmeshed with joining branches of the family trees which had for their pinnacle "a seate royall, in the which was sette one representyng the Queene's most excellent maiestie Elizabeth".¹⁴³ At Cornhill, in a second pageant, another child "representing hir maiesties person, placed in a seate of gouernement" was "supported by certaine vertues, which suppressed their contrarye vices vnder their feet".¹⁴⁴ At the great conduit in Cheape, a pageant presented the qualities of the

¹⁴²The pageants are described in great detail in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, 1173 ff. All quotations concerning them are from this source, unless attributed *ad loc.* to Richard Tottell, *The Passage of our most Drad soueraigne Lady Quene Elyzabeth*.

¹⁴³Tottell, A4^r-v.

¹⁴⁴Tottell, B3^r. Holinshed provides the details of the presentation which illustrate, in a dramatic way, the qualities inherent in a monarch: "each [personage] hauing his face to the queene and people, whereof euerie one had a table to expresse their effects, which are vertues, namelie Pure religion, Loue of subiects, Wisedome and Justice, which did tread their contrarie vices vnder their feet, that is to wit: Pure religion did tread vpon Superstition and Ignorance. Loue of subiects did tread vpon

Queen in the blessings of the "eight beatitudes . . . applied to our souereign ladie queene Elisabeth". In another pageant, Elizabeth is the crowned figure of Deborah, "richlie apparelled in parliament robes, with a scepter in hir hand, as a queene". For almost every pageant Elizabeth encountered, the Queen was able to see a mirror image of herself, not only as a person but also as a princely ideal. The sight, from the perspective of the thousands of onlookers, must have been powerfully evocative of the grandeur inherent in the very concept of monarchy, as well as laudatory of the Queen in particular. The spectators had not only the presence of the real monarch in their midst, but also her mimetic re-creations, presented on the symbolic level -- queens of artifice.

In plays throughout the period, Elizabeth is presented (or at least alluded to) in her various identities. "Presented before the Queene's Maiestie, by the Children of her Chappell", Peele's *Arraignement of Paris* has Diana who "describeth the Nymph Eliza, a figure of the Queen" (V. i. 54.2).¹⁴⁵ Eliza governs a "second Troy" (70), whose people are "y-cleped Angeli" (72); she is the Queen "in whom do meet so many gifts in one" (84), "not earthly, but divine" (105). Elizabeth becomes involved in the actual performance of the drama: the character Clotho speaks directly to her as she lays a distaff at the feet of the Queen. Atropos follows suit, with the resignation of "her fatal knife" (150); Venus herself gives up the golden apple that Paris had allotted to her as she "delivereth the ball of gold to the Queen's own hands" (157.1). In Marston's *Histriomastix*, pageant-like scenes present Elizabeth as Astraea, who enters "ushered by Fame, supported by Fortitude and Religion, followed by Virginitie and Artes". The playwright includes a note in the margin to indicate that Astraea is "Q. Eliza" (VI. i). At the court performance of *Every Man Out of his Humor* the epilogue, written with the Queen in mind, is directly addressed to Elizabeth. She is represented by Cynthia in Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, and is certainly the "imperial votaress", whom Oberon praises in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. After Elizabeth's death, the Queen appears as an actual character in several plays: Thomas Heywood's *If you Know Not Me, You Know Nobody* was published in 1605 with the sub-title, *The Troubles of Queen*

Rebellion and Insolencie, Wisdome did tread vpon Follie and Vaine glorie, Justice did tread vpon Adulation and Briberie". 1174.

¹⁴⁵George Peele, *Works*, ed. A.H. Bullen.

Elizabeth; part two of the play in 1606 included another appearance of the Queen. In yet another Heywood play, part one of *The Fair Maid of the West*, Bess Bridges (the fair maid) is likened to Elizabeth. She is Titania in Dekker's *Whore of Babylon*; and continued to be a figure in the drama throughout the period and after the Restoration.¹⁴⁶ Shakespeare uses Hall's account of the christening of the infant Elizabeth as the source for the final scene in *Henry VIII*, in which the ceremony is dramatically recreated. She is, says Cranmer, "this royal infant" around whom heaven moves (V. iv. 17), "a pattern to all princes living with her" (22), "a mighty piece" which is "moulded up" of "all princely graces" whom "truth shall nurse" (25-8). In her "God shall be truly known, and those about her | From her shall read the perfect ways of honour" (36-7). It was, then, not an uncommon occurrence to see the monarch, who existed on the stage of the court, represented as a dramatic construct (in whatever form) on the theatrical stage.

Perhaps, for the purposes of this study, the most telling example of Elizabeth's presence in a drama is Dekker's *Old Fortunatus*, which has earlier been mentioned. In the Prologue and Epilogue at Court, classical and Christian images are combined to present a picture of Elizabeth both to her own eyes and to those attending the play. Descriptions of the Queen incorporate most of the concepts of kingship so far explored: the king's multiple identities (already discussed with reference to this play), the king's countenance, divinity, qualities, immortality and so on. The second old man says he comes to offer what "all straungers doe: two eyes strucke blinde with admiration" (14-15); it has been a year "since he last beheld her" (18). The eyes of the two old men are "dazled by *Elizaes* beames" and dare see for themselves "where she sits" (28-9). The court is the "great panthaeon of our Goddesse, | And all those faces . . . Are Nymphes attending on her deitie" (29-31). The second old man weeps to "behold this Maiestie" (36). Elizabeth (now in the forty-second year of her reign) is "still bright, still one, still diuine" (47). At the conclusion of the play, Vertue, speaking directly to the Queen, proclaims herself but the "counterfeit" and Elizabeth "the true" (V. ii. 334); she acknowledges that the Queen has the power to turn the actors of the play, who are "shaddowes", into real "substances" (337-39). The first old man addresses the audience as "pilgrims" who share "the circle of this bright celestiall

¹⁴⁶For a more extensive survey see Frederick S. Boas, *Queen Elizabeth in the Drama*.

Sphaere" (1-2). As the whole court is brought to their knees, the first old man begs on their behalf "one pardon for himself" (7). Elizabeth is entreated to "breathe life in [their] numb'd spirits with one smile, | And from this cold earth, [they] with liuely soules | Shal rise like men (new-borne) and make heau'n sound | With hymnes sung to [her] name" (9-12). The play concludes with appropriate shouts of "Amen!"

Elizabeth herself made a celebrated observation, which revealed her acutely sensitive awareness of the significance inherent in the performance of kingship as a role. The Queen, discussing the playing of *Richard II* on the eve of Essex's rebellion, told William Lambarde: "I am Richard II. know ye not that?"¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷Recorded in Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, III, 552-53.

CHAPTER FIVE

ENTER SHAKESPEARE'S KINGS

There is a history in all men's lives
Figuring the nature of the times deceas'd;
The which observ'd, a man may prophecy,
With a near aim, of the main chance of things
As yet not come to life, who in their seeds
And weak beginnings lie intreasur'd.
Such things become the hatch and brood of time.

(2 Henry IV III. i. 80-6)

To judge from the general tenor of his works, one may reasonably conclude that Shakespeare had a very profound interest in the past. He wrote no fewer than ten plays on English history alone, of which eight deal with the later Plantagenets; his other works include three plays on Roman history, and several plays which deal, mythically or tragically, with the events based on the history of ancient times.¹ As everyone who has studied the subject remarks, Shakespeare was a playwright who, though he consulted a great variety of chronicles and historical sources, was no mere chronicler, but rather was able to find in the past a stimulus for his imagination, in its development of subjects for dramatic conflict on the stage. Paraphrasing Cicero, Thomas Elyot had reminded the readers of his *Governor* that history is the "witness of times, mistress of life, the life of remembrance, of truth the light, and messenger of antiquity"², from which the lives of kings provided valuable lessons for the present. Writing in a period which still saw history as a handmaid to theology, Shakespeare created his theatrical kings for an audience who judged them against the religious³ and

¹In view of its source in Holinshed, there is a good case for considering *Macbeth* a history play too, except that its dramatic strategies impose a primarily tragic focus upon it.

²*The Book named the Governor*, 36.

³A survey of Richmond Noble's *Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge* reveals a conscious and abundant use of biblical and prayer book allusions in the history plays. Noble cites some 285 allusions in the history plays alone; when compared with all the

political climate of the day. The homilists had encouraged their congregations to "turne over, and read the histories of all Nations, looke over the Chronicles of our owne contrey"⁴ as a place where Godly truth could be revealed. Historical writers such as Hall and Holinshed saw their own roles as part of a religious ministry which was indistinct from political concerns:

Of the same mind it were to be wished that all storie-writers were: for then should Chronicles approach next in truth to the sacred and inuiolable scripture, and their use not onlie growe more common, but also of greater account . . . Chroniclers therefore deserue a reuerence of dutie, whome time hath called and culled out as it were by the hand, to use their ministrie and seruice for the disposing and distributing of the riches of his wisdom to all ages, that successors may be taught by their predecessors, wit by their follie, fealtie by their disloialtie, obedience by their rebellion, vnitie and peace by their dissention, plainnesse by their doublenesse . . . pitie by their vncharitablenesse; finallie all goodnesse by their badnesse.⁵

The written history which chronicled the lessons of kingship was a mirror of the past that, when held up to the nature of present times, could prove a guide and helpful reminder.⁶ History itself became the emblem of a mimetic process which saw

other plays, which have some 418 allusions, the proportion is a revealing statistic: history and theology are compatible subjects for dramatic treatment.

⁴An *Homily Against Disobedience, and Wilfull Rebellion*, 301.

⁵Preface to the chronicles beginning in 1576 by John Stow and others, in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, 1286.

⁶Cf. the *Chronicle* of John Hardyng, first published in 1543:

Wherefore Goddes woorde and holy scripture
Which abandoneth all maner vanitee
Yet of Chronicles admitteth the lecture
As a thing of great fruite and utilitee
And as a lanterne, to the posteritee
For example, what they ought to knowe
What waies to refuse, and what to folowe.

As cited in Lily B. Campbell, *Shakespeare's Histories: Mirrors of Elizabethan Policy*, 57-8.

the patterns of rise and fall enacted and reflected from age to age. As Lily B. Campbell has pointed out, "it is in the descriptions of history . . . that we find the word [mirror] most frequently used".⁷ The work most symbolic of this concept was, of course, *The Mirror for Magistrates*, against which the king could measure the actions of his own rule, and ponder their significance. By the time Shakespeare began his dramatic career, theories of kingship and history were so entrenched in religious ideology that the figure of the king was seen as a symbolic representation of all divine order and harmony -- the mirror of Christendom. He was the image of God's own power in the Great Chain of Being, and the world's second Prime Mover.⁸

The materials of history and ideology which Shakespeare's age inherited helped to serve his dramatic purposes. By stressing that historical significance is a servant to the dramatic purpose, Northrop Frye was surely right when he maintained that "the poet . . . can deal with history only to the extent that history supplies him with, or affords a pretext for, the comic, tragic, romantic or ironic myths that he actually uses".⁹ In order to provide his plays with a dramatic habitation and a name, Shakespeare used methods which resemble remarkably those employed by the historical scholar. The accumulated evidence which shows that Shakespeare knew and drew upon

⁷*Ibid.*, 108.

⁸"For if the king be well ordered", wrote Hugh Latimer, "the realm is well ordered", *Selected Sermons of Hugh Latimer*, ed. Allan G. Chester, 79; the passage is from the "Second Sermon" preached before King Edward VI in 1549. In his *Sphaera Civitatis* (London, 1588) John Case declared that "as the heaven is regulated in all its parts . . . by the one first mover who is God, so the world of men is at its best when it is ruled by one prince". The famous diagram, which is included in the work, represents the *sphaera civitatis* over which the all-embracing figure of Queen Elizabeth looms as the representative of the Deity. Not only kings, but all magistrates had their appointed place and ordained task in the world. Preaching before members of James's court, William Pemberton reminded his audience that they were to reflect the universal scheme by imitating God as prime movers: "Sith the God of heaven and earth is the first mover, in his supreme orbe of government, all you his secundarie movers, in this your orbe of government, in this heaven of our politie, ought to move after the will and ordination of God, and not . . . from your private affection . . . You must in your motion run the same course, & eye the same end with God himselfe; namely, the glory of God . . . And such subordination will surely cause an heavenly harmony, and heart-pleasing concent in a circular revolution thus". *The Charge of God and the King to Judges and Magistrates*, A8^r. It is apparent that not only was the king to be a mirror but whole court as well.

⁹"New Directions from Old" in *Myth and Myth Making*, ed. H. Murray, 117.

such sources as Hall, Holinshed, Foxe, Daniel, Stowe, *The Mirror for Magistrates*, the Homilies, the Book of Common Prayer, other plays, poems, and historical accounts, and that he cross-checked and collated his materials, produces a picture of a dramatist whom one would have to call interested in research. That history and ideology provided him with the tools for his dramatic endeavours of art is not in question; the subject is rather just which materials he chose, and how he used them to present a view of kingship on the stage.

As the first part of this thesis has shown, Shakespeare was aware, and made use of, the Christology of kingship so much in the political forefront of the Renaissance. It is not unreasonable to assume that a mind of his calibre was in tune with events and with the challenges to political and religious orthodoxy in the exciting times in which he lived, and upon which he drew. What the mass of materials gathered and presented in the first part of this thesis has proved, both by its variety and frequency of propagation, is that the ideology of kingship was part of what Tillyard called "the collective consciousness"¹⁰ of the Elizabethan age. Kingship was very much a part of a world picture which could inform not only outward actions, but also the realm of spiritual ideals surrounding the figure of the monarch. The obstacle that any modern audience of Shakespeare's history plays must face is that much of this sixteenth-century ideology is foreign to our own: twentieth-century tastes and understandings are simply not those of the Renaissance. Many notable scholars have wrought to re-create something of that lost understanding, an endeavour which this thesis attempts to support and in its own limited way extend. The reconstruction of ideology is in itself a fascinating and worthwhile activity, but not the only one proposed by this thesis, which aims, by seeking to recapture the matrix of ideas which inform the concept of the king as a divine actor, to re-assess the dramatic nature of the plays. As G. Wilson Knight had advised,

to all these kingly plays we must bring a sense of the sacramental. They challenge our modern understanding on a vital issue. Kingship is closely related to the essence of poetic drama, which seems never properly to have recovered from the execution of Charles I.

¹⁰Shakespeare's *History Plays*, 18. His use of the phrase pertains to the doctrine of order.

We who find Shakespeare's kings a stumbling-block and the other spiritual kingship of the Christ an enigmatic dream . . . are therefore unable to follow the significance of their union.¹¹

Shakespeare's history plays are about the making and unmaking of kings, in a dramatic context which focusses upon the specific role and social office of the king. The audience was aware, even before he made his entrance onto the stage, of the king as a figure whose role belonged to the domain of a preconceived concept -- the abstract idea of a king and how he was supposed to act. Individual character, though part of his kingly performance, was outweighed by the idea of what a king represented. Throughout the history plays the recurring focus is on the definition of kingship as a role and what that role constitutes in an individual who is wedded to a divine ideal.¹² A measure by which a king's failure to act according to his role may

¹¹*Shakespearean Production*, 150, 158. In his book, *The Player King*, James Winny divorces Elizabethan ideology from an understanding of the plays: "[Shakespeare's] idea of the king is not a political concept, and whether his royal figures are not good or bad kings by Tudor standards is irrelevant", 44. Winny's sample kings "are not approached as kings whose royal conduct invites judgement within a context of Elizabethan political ideas, but as men grappling with an identity bigger than their own", 47. In light of the new knowledge presented in this thesis, it seems that such a view could not be more mistaken.

¹²The real king, unlike the actor who plays his part on the stage, cannot remove his costume at the end of the performance. That the drama of the period was aware of this idea is revealed in an interesting manner in John Ford's *Perkin Warbeck: A Strange Truth*. The play dramatizes the disparity between an actor playing the king and an actor playing an actor playing a king, which ultimately becomes the "strange truth" of the play. "The player's on the stage still, 'tis his part; | He does but act" (V. ii. 68-9) says Henry VII disdainfully of Perkin; but the same naturally applies to the actor who plays Henry's role. As Peter Ure points out in his Revels edition of the play: "everything depends upon the exalted performance of a role. When man and actor draw as close together as this, when to be a man and hero is to be one who performs excellently the chosen role, who creates it, and stands by it in his imagination, and prefers to die rather than abandon it -- then what matters is the quality of composition and performance, their stageworthiness the degree of accomplishment achieved. If these satisfy and convince, it really does not matter if the little boy points out that the emperor has no clothes, that the hero strutting it out before us is 'really' the son of John Osbek. We have known that all along, in much the same sense that we have known that Henry VII is not 'really' Henry VII but a member of the Phoenix company". lxxix.

be assessed was available to the audience through their knowledge of how a king was supposed to play his role in the first place:

The contrast between the individual and the part which he assumed at the moment of coronation is so obvious that it evokes the image of the actor, an image which serves to express the flawed nature of the king's rule, the contradictions imposed by abdication, or by the illegitimacy of his possession of the crown.¹³

The "flawed rule" of a king is only recognizable when the picture of a perfect rule is a common conception in the minds of the audience. In order to present kings who do not act like kings, Shakespeare had to rely upon his audience's awareness, their "collective consciousness", of the ideology of kingship. The ceremonial and ritual aspects of the role, the distinctive language of a king, the repertory of royal moves and gestures, his relationship to other characters and theirs to him, are all recognizable facets of the office, which the incumbent must learn and perform accordingly. The actor who plays the king, too, must learn to play the role in its recognizable form.¹⁴

Shakespeare never presents his audience with a picture of an ideal king (even Henry V has his faults); but rather lays the dramatic stress on various ways in which monarchs depart from the ideal. Each play has something different to say about the nature of the king's role, which surely reveals that Shakespeare was interested in the conditions of kingship, rather than merely taking them for granted, and focussing solely on the consequences of misguided kingship, on the king himself and on his realm. Shakespeare's kings each have a particular style, and a view of the world, which reflects their attitudes toward the office they hold. They continually cast their royalty into the enactment of a special role. Henry VI is the saintly king who, rather than rule effectively, desires the simplicity of a pastoral existence; Richard III is an anti-Christ king, "determined to prove a villain" in the demonic role he has written for

¹³ Anne Righter, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play*, 121.

¹⁴ There is no other kind of character who predominates in Shakespeare's plays to the same degree as do the kings. In the history plays alone, the audience sees the figure of a king enter on to the stage no fewer than ninety times.

himself; Prince Hal goes through the changes of personality and attitude which allow him to grow into the role of king; when he is King Henry V, he is presented as a dynamic amalgamation of kingly qualities and roles. Richard II provides the most intense statement about a king who finds himself at odds with the sacred identity of his office; believing in the anointed authority of his role, Richard cannot, however, manifest the reality of its power.

Naturally, not all the history plays deal with these issues with equal intensity or in equal detail. Rather, each play reveals aspects of the ways in which kingship is primarily a role-playing endeavour, whose histrionic basis is ultimately derived from a theological foundation. The ideal king is an actor of Christ, and when he fails to perform his divine role, the consequences can prove catastrophic, not only for himself, but also for the realm over which he rules. The history plays explore the difference between the right to rule and the ability to rule, as other characters may find themselves in a better position to perform the kingly office than the king himself. The gap that is created when a king abdicates the proper playing of his role is filled by those who aspire to play the role themselves, or by those whose actions represent them as better suited to the office. Henry VI, King John, and Richard II must confront characters who act better kings than they themselves can: Richard Duke of York, Talbot, Faulconbridge, Bolingbroke. The conflict of the drama becomes the conflict of the individual who sits at the head of the state as the centre and focus of the ordered world. James Winny has summarized the nature of the player-king's conflict in the history plays:

the king is forced to come to terms with the nature of the royal identity which he has tried to assume, and to recognize a disparity between his ideal of majesty and his personal ability to fill the role assigned to him. The costume is laid out and the part rehearsed, but the performance falls short in respects which both actor and audience acknowledge. The player is not the king.¹⁵

¹⁵*The Player King*, 46.

The tragic dilemma in which Shakespeare's kings find themselves involved is the measure of the disparity between the sacramental nature of royalty and the unworthy person in whom that nature inheres. Not all of Shakespeare's kings are failures, however: neither Henry VIII¹⁶ nor Henry V can be considered as fitting this category of the inept role-player. They are nonetheless actor-kings, who have learned, and can use, aspects of the role effectively.

The conflicts in the history plays reveal that the religious concepts of authority and obedience are more complex than the Homilies would have had Elizabethans believe.¹⁷ It is impossible to undertake to demonstrate whether or not Shakespeare believed in the divinity of the king. That he found the ideology of the king as a divine actor a way of representing dynamic human conflict on the stage is, however, beyond doubt: it is the focus of the following chapters.

¹⁶Henry VIII is a different kind of history play from the rest. A brief discussion of his Kingship forms part of the conclusion to this thesis.

¹⁷"If Shakespeare could not fail to attend to the annual readings of the homilies, neither could he escape an awareness of the great events and the diversity of opinion of the extraordinary times in which he lived, and in consequence he must have been conscious of the theoretical difficulties involved in the doctrine, the challenges which the times repeatedly threw up against it, and the dilemmas of great as well as ordinary men whom the realities of power and the inflexibility of the official doctrine tempted to entertain rebellious thoughts", Moody Prior, *The Drama of Power*, 99.

CHAPTER SIX

NOT LIKE A KING: THE *HENRY VI* PLAYS

1 Henry VI

"A Talbot!"

1 Henry VI marks Shakespeare's first venture at portraying a king on stage.¹ It was, as has been observed, a remarkable decision that he chose to begin his professional dramatic career by representing the unfortunate reign of this particular king. Shakespeare presented his audience, not with the character of an ideal monarch, but with one whose role fell notoriously short of the kind of ideological expectations so far discussed in this thesis. In the three plays devoted to his reign, Henry is shown to be incapable of fulfilling the role for which he was consecrated. His inability, indeed his refusal, to "act" like a king, especially when action is most required, entails the ruin of the realm in all manner of civil chaos and unnatural moral order. Henry is not like a king, in that he leaves vacant one of the most vital roles the king was expected to play: the man of action, the commander, a role which is grappled for by the energies of other characters.

In part one, Talbot makes a dramatic contrast with Henry, in that Talbot possesses some of the kingly qualities which Henry so conspicuously lacks. These qualities, of military energy and fortitude, the role of soldier, are in theory *delegated* by the king, the realm's commander-in-chief, to his deputies. Talbot, however, has to generate them in himself, lacking inspiration from his leader; by doing so, he becomes

¹The controversy concerning the order in which the *Henry VI* plays were written seems to have expired. The current consensus appears to be that they were written in the order part one -- part two -- part three, that no author other than Shakespeare was involved in the composition of Part I, and that all plays date from the beginning of the 1590s. See Andrew Cairncross's Arden editions for detailed argument towards these conclusions, and Antony Hammond's Arden edition of *Richard III*, 54-61, for a recent recapitulation of the question.

inevitably, though unconsciously, a living criticism of Henry's deficiency. The Duke of York, (and to a lesser extent Queen Margaret) in the second and third parts, has the kind of hard courageousness Henry never dreamed of possessing -- but should have. They, like Talbot, and in his different way, the Duke of Gloucester, attempt to occupy the vacuum that Henry's incapacities have opened at the centre of England's political life.

The cycle, often criticised for lack of a cohering formal structure, actually forms a unity out of this pattern of centripetal movement; as Harold Brooks has observed, "the centre is unoccupied, but is unmistakable because the parts that make up the design are all balanced about it."² Henry is the placid moral centre around which all the confusion and activity of a realm becoming violently unstable occurs. Henry is not a fool, nor a vicious king, nor is he a bad man; what Shakespeare makes abundantly clear is that morality and piety and being full of the milk of human kindness do not comprise enough of the roles kings must play to suffice as an amalgam of kingly qualities. Henry is the saintly king, one who can imitate Christ the Suffering Servant well enough, but is never capable of imitating the role of Christ the King, a role he has forgotten, and is made painfully aware of, in the course of the trilogy.

Shakespeare did not have to originate this portrayal of Henry as a saintly incapable; on the contrary, he found the portrait clear and unequivocal in Hall and Holinshed, who both treat Henry's character with gentle, if partial, tolerance and courtesy. They are careful to point out the faults of those advisors whom Henry should have turned away, but thanks to his mildness did not:

for kyng Henry . . . was a man of a meke spirit, and of a symple witte, preferryng peace before warre, reste before businesse, honestie before profite, and quietnesse before laboure. And to the intent that all men might perceiue, that there could be none, more chaste, more meke, more

²"Marlowe and the Early Shakespeare" in *Mermaid Critical Commentaries: Christopher Marlowe*, ed. Brian Morris, 70.

holy, nor a better creature: In hym reigned shamefastnesse, modestie, integrite, and pacience to bee marveiled at.³

Hall attributes the failure of this reign to "yll chaunce & misfortune" because Henry

was a man of no great wit, such as men comonly call an Innocent man, neither a foole, neither very wyse, whose study always was more to excell, other in Godly liuyng & vertuous example, then in worldly regiment, or temporall dominion.⁴

Holinshed says that "by his authorite" Henry might have been able to rule the quarrelling factions of the Yorkists and Lancastrians, but for the "overmuch mildnesse in the king" it was thought that Henry was "too soft for governor of a kingdome".⁵

Despite Henry's saintly qualities, and the fact that he could not rule effectively, he remained a popular figure with his subjects, even when he showed himself at his weakest. When the York faction gained effective control of the throne, they agreed that they ought not to

depose or destroy the said kyng, least thei might sodainly prouoke and stirre the fury and ire of the common people against them: whiche for his holines of life, and abundant clemencie, was of the simple sort muche fauored, and highly esteemed.⁶

Hall's and Holinshed's descriptions read more like those of a saint than a man or a king. Henry, says Holinshed, was a


³Hall, *Union*, fol. Clv.

⁴*Ibid.*, fol. CCxv.

⁵*Chronicles*, 626.

⁶Hall, *Union*, fol. Clxviii.

patternne of most perfect vertue . . . plaine, upright, farre from fraud, wholie giuen to praier, reading of scriptures, and almesddeds: of such integretie of life, that the bishop which had beene his confessour ten yeares, auouched that he had not all that time committed anie mortall crime . . . He was religiouslie affected (as the time then was) that at principall holidiaies, he would weare sackcloth next his skin.⁷

Henry is frequently termed "saintly", "pious", "devout", "contemplative"  so on. These terms are not all automatically applicable to the same individual: there are saints who are fierce in their faith, contemplatives who gird on the sword of Christ, hermits who are uncouth. The interesting thing about Henry is that he combined these particular qualities in himself: he was besides being pious, meek; he was besides being scholarly, ineffectual. This, no doubt, makes him a special kind of "saint", and perhaps not a very usual one. But the sources all agree on his character, and that it was saintly.

His countenance, too, is described in terms of beatification: for his face was "beautifull, in the whiche continually was resident, the bountie of mynde, with whiche, he was inwardly endued."⁸ Henry's divine nature "caused God to worke miracles for hym, in his life tyme",⁹ and "indued" the King with a "prophetical spirit. And surelie the epithet or title of holie is not for naught attributed unto him."¹⁰

Though Henry was indeed a child when he succeeded to the throne, the stigma of child-like immaturity followed him long into his reign. The chroniclers were not at

⁷*Chronicles*, 691.

⁸Hall, *Union*, fol. CCxxiii^r.

⁹*Ibid.*, verso. Henry VII sued to Pope Julio II to have him canonized, but, as Hall reports, "the fees of canonizing of a kyng, wer of so great a quantitie at Rome . . . that the saied kyng thought it more necessary to kepe his money at home", *Ibid.*

¹⁰Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 678. Henry's passivity in the plays is an integral part of his holiness and one of the causes for his overthrow: "for, it is to be read in writers, that he was by nature giuen to peaceableness, and abhorring bloud and slaughter, detesting ciuill tumults . . . In consideration wherof, he procured against himselfe an apostasie of his people both natie and foren; who reuolted and fell from fealtie", *Ibid.*

a loss to remind their readers how the prophet "Esaie lied not" about the fate of a kingdom ruled by children: "I shall giue you children to be your princes; and infants without wisdom shall haue the gouernance of you".¹¹ In the play the Duke of Exeter laments the "jarring discord of nobility" (IV. i. 188) in a realm where "'Tis much when sceptres are in children's hands" (192). Though the play begins with Henry in infancy the dramatic time of part one spans some thirty years of his reign; by the time Exeter utters these words Henry has in fact reached maturity, but the troubles engendered in his childish days, and confirmed by his continued child-like personality, produce a climate of opinion in which Exeter's comment is still apt.

The play begins with the grand pageantry and spectacle of the funeral of Henry V in Westminster Abbey, and turns into a solemn proclamation on the virtues of the dead King. Henry V's coffin is carried on to the stage, and surrounded by the swelling scene of attendant lords. No-one says the expected acclamation, "the king is dead. Long live the king!" -- rather, the stress is laid on the fact that Henry is dead, and that a king of his capacities can never be replaced. The infant Henry VI is not even brought on the stage to represent the embodied succession. The empty centre of the kingly role is immediately established in emblematic form at the beginning of the play: the lords, "like captives bound to a triumphant car" (22) attend a dead body, not the King. Bedford, Gloucester, Exeter and others spend the first fifty-six lines mourning the loss of a king whose role cannot be assumed by his successor. Bedford calls upon Nature's portents to "scourge the bad revolting stars, | That have consented unto Henry's death" (I. i. 4-5). Henry was a king, says Bedford, "too famous to live long! | England ne'er lost a king of so much worth" (6-7). Gloucester takes the encomium farther, hyperbolically declaring that "England ne'er had a king until his time" (8). Henry's qualities as king are catalogued at length and are firmly established in the audience's mind as those characteristics that the play will show are so desperately lacking in Henry VI. Ironically, they are precisely the kind of kingly qualities Talbot himself will subsequently display: this is not surprising, in view of Henry V's reputation as a military leader, but it does stress the contrast with the

¹¹*Ibid.*, 656. Cf. Ecclesiastes 8:4; *An Homily against Disobedience and Willfull Rebellion in Certaine Sermons*: "the Scriptures, of undiscreet and euill Princes, speake thus, Woe be to thee (O thou land) whose King is but a child . . . A foolish Prince destroyeth the people . . . Thus speake the Scriptures, thus experience testifieth of good, and euill Princes", 279.

situation under the new King even more vigorously. Henry V's countenance, his divinely-favoured position, and even his comparable identity as a classical figure, are invoked to offer prosperity to the realm:

Virtue he had, deserving to command:

His brandish'd sword did blind men with his beams (9-10)

He was a king bless'd of the King of kings (28)

The battles of the Lord of Hosts he fought (31)

A far more glorious star thy soul will make

Than Julius Caesar or bright -- (55-6)

What are these qualities that Talbot has? The audience gets to hear of them and to see him in action before Henry comes on the stage. Soon after the funeral procession leaves, he is described as the "valiant Talbot", who "above human thought, | Enacted wonders with his sword and lance" and whose soldiers are in awe of his "undaunted spirit" (121-27). By the reported news the messengers bring, the audience is made aware how everything Henry V had accomplished in France is quickly turning to disastrous ruin. It is Talbot alone who maintains what little is left of the English conquest. He is "a worthy leader" (143); Bedford declares he would slay himself rather than hear of any news of Talbot's death. When he makes his first appearance, Salisbury obliges him to describe his captivity at the hands of the French. The speech is a recapitulation of almost superhuman heroism and its attendant heroics, attained against enormous odds:

Salisbury Yet tell'st thou not how thou wert entertain'd.

Talbot With scoffs and scorns and contumelious taunts.

In open market-place produc'd they me

To be a public spectacle to all:

Here, said they, is the Terror of the French.

The scarecrow that affrights our children so.

Then broke I from the officers that led me.

And with my nails digg'd stones out of the ground
 To hurl at the beholders of my shame.
 My grisly countenance made others fly;
 None durst come near for fear of sudden death.
 In iron walls they deem'd me not secure;
 So great fear of my name 'mongst them were spread
 That they suppos'd I could rend bars of steel
 And spurn in pieces posts of adamant.
 Wherefore a guard of chosen shot I had,
 That walk'd about me every minute-while;
 And if I did but stir out of my bed,
 Ready they were to shoot me to the heart (I. iv. 37-55)

Talbot promises "Nero-like" to "play on the lute, beholding the towns burn"; "wretched shall France be only in [his] name" (I. iv. 94-6). As a hero he not only captivates the loyalties of, and stirs awe in, the characters with whom he interacts, but also in the audience (already stirred no doubt by their antagonistic feelings towards the French).

In two short scenes Talbot is strongly established as a man of action and of extraordinary energy: he recounts the history of his rigorous captivity, suffers an attack in which Salisbury is wounded and is helped by Talbot to safety, pursues the Dauphin and Joan La Pucelle -- all in the exciting theatrical context of general alarms and skirmishes across the stage, and amidst the thunder and lightning which dramatically attend on him (I. iv-v). Though Talbot goes off in temporary defeat he re-emerges in II. i. with his forces to scale the enemy walls with cries of "*Saint George! A Talbot!*" (38.1, 77.1). Reignier comments in frustration that the "heavens, sure, favour him" (47) and the French shamefacedly disperse, flying the stage with a second alarm.

The victory is effected simply by the power of Talbot's "name", the kind of power entailed in the cry of the name of a king. A solitary English soldier proclaims the success achieved by Talbot's name:

The cry of 'Talbot' serves me for a sword;
 For I have loaden me with many spoils,
 Using no other weapon but his name (II. i. 79-81).

The mere utterance of his name, says the Countess of Auvergne, is enough to make "mothers still their babes" (II. iii. 16). Talbot himself when speaking uses his own name as if it has become a kind of other identity by which he acts:

And here will Talbot mount, or make his grave. (II. i. 34)

Here is the Talbot: who would speak with him? (II. ii. 37)

I go to certify her Talbot's here. (II. iii. 31)

France, thou shalt rue this treason with thy tears,
 If Talbot but survive thy treachery. (III. ii. 36-7)

Damsel, I'll have a bout with you again,
 Or else let Talbot perish with this shame. (III. ii. 56-7)

English John Talbot, captains, calls you forth (IV. i. 3)

Saint George and victory! Fight, soldiers, fight:
 The Regent hath with Talbot broke his word (IV. v. 2)

By comparison, the name of the English King Harry has lost its priority of status in the field of action, even though Talbot invokes it when facing the French. Besides his own name, Talbot is characterized by other names, roles and identities. When news of his death reaches Sir William Lucy, the name of Talbot now becomes a catalogue of persons:

But where is the great Alcides of the field,
 Valiant Lord Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury,
 Created for his rare success in arms

Great Earl of Washford, Waterford, and Valence,
 Lord Talbot of Goodrig and Urchinfield,
 Lord Strange of Blackmere, Lord Verdun of Alton,
 Cromwell of Wingfield, Furnival of Sheffield,
 The thrice victorious Lord of Falconbridge,
 Knight of the noble Order of Saint George,
 Worthy Saint Michael, and the Golden Fleece,
 Great Marshal to Henry the Sixth
 Of all his wars within the realm of France? (IV. vii. 60-71)

Is Talbot slain -- the Frenchmen's only Scourge,
 Your kingdom's Terror and black Nemesis? (77-8)¹²

Kinglike, Talbot maintains the role of having "two bodies". The Countess proudly imagines she has him prisoner as the result of luring him to her house, and gloats that though she had but the "picture" of Talbot in her gallery, she now has the "substance" (II. iii. 35-7). Talbot's response is to deflate her claim; for his "substance" and his power, he declares, lies not in him but in the body of men whom he commands:

I laugh to see your ladyship so fond
 To think that you have aught but Talbot's shadow
 Whereon to practise your severity. (II. iii. 44-6)

No, no, I am but shadow of myself:
 You are deceiv'd, my substance is not here;
 For what you see is but the smallest part
 And least proportion of humanity:
 I tell you, madam, were the whole frame here,
 It is of such a spacious lofty pitch
 Your roof were not sufficient to contain't. (49-55)

His second body is instantly put into action as the soldiers enter the scene:

¹²Hall calls him "thys English Hector & marcial flower", *Union*, fol. Clxiii^v.

How say you, madam? Are you now persuaded
 That Talbot is but shadow of himself?
 These are his substance, sinews, arms, and strength,
 With which he yoketh your rebellious necks,
 Razeth your cities, and subverts your towns,
 And in a moment makes them desolate. (60-5)

Be not dismay'd, fair lady, nor misconster
 The mind of Talbot as you did mistake
 The outward composition of his body. (72-4)¹³

Talbot's other self, his "other life" (IV. vii. 1) is also maintained in the person of his son, also called John Talbot. Devoid of the aid promised by Somerset and York, Talbot and his son remain alone in the final battle scenes against the French. The relationship which is dramatized between father and son resembles that between king and prince, and will serve as a contrast for the unnatural way Henry treats his son, in parts two and three of the trilogy. Young John is to his father the means by which "Talbot's name might be in [him] reviv'd" (IV. v. 3), a successor to the father's role. When Talbot offers his son means to escape so as to secure a continuance of life by primogeniture, John responds by imitating his father's bravery and taking courage in the Talbot name:

Is my name Talbot? and am I your son?
 And shall I fly? O, if you love my mother,
 Dishonour not her honourable name,
 To make a bastard and a slave of me!
 The world will say, he is not Talbot's blood.
 That basely fled when noble Talbot stood. (IV. v. 12-17)

¹³It is interesting to note that Tillyard, despite his alertness to Renaissance ideology in general, dismissed this scene between Talbot and the Countess as a "startling but irrelevant anecdote", *Shakespeare's History Plays*, 158.

Talbot again urges, though to no avail, that he will be saved if his son can escape: "Part of thy father may be sav'd in thee" (38). But the kind of immortality thus attained would, says John, be shame and really not a part of his father at all. In the field of battle John, surrounded by the enemy, is rescued by his father and the roles established between them take on a renewed life and significance despite the odds:

O, twice my father, twice am I thy son!
 The life thou gav'st me first was lost and done,
 Till with thy warlike sword, despite of fate,
 To my determin'd time thou gav'st new date. (IV. vi. 6-9)

Talbot insists again that the son is the means by which honourable values may be saved:

In thee thy mother dies, our household's name,
 My death's revenge, thy youth, and England's fame:
 All these and more we hazard by thy stay;
 All these are sav'd if thou wilt fly away. (IV. vi. 38-41)

It is, once more, John's belief in the significance of the name of "Talbot" that determines his decision to stay:

And if I fly, I am not Talbot's son.
 Then talk no more of flight, it is no boot;
 If son to Talbot, die at Talbot's foot. (IV. vi. 51-3)

Defeated by his son's determination, Talbot plays now the "desperate sire of Crete" to John's role of "Icarus" (54-5). Ironically they are the same roles as those in which Henry casts himself and his son in part three.¹⁴ The "two Talbots" that "winged

¹⁴ Henry V (V. vi. 21); shortly before he is killed by Richard, Henry laments his and his son's fate in "that tragic history" in which he has played a role:

I, Daedalus; my poor boy, Icarus;
 Thy father, Minos, that denied our course;
 The sun that scar'd the wings of my sweet boy,
 Thy brother Edward; and thyself, the sea.

through the lither sky" (IV. vii. 21) are no longer bodies of substance but ashes from which "shall be reard | A phoenix that shall make all France afeard" (IV. vii. 92-3). Sir William Lucy attributes this phoenix-like quality of majesty to both of them, as he also does the majesty of Talbot's countenance, whose mere "picture", if left among the French, would "amaze the proudest of [them] all" (IV. vii. 83-4).

Talbot's valiant struggle is cast in Christian terms by York and Lucy. Through a cluster of images, Talbot becomes a type of Christ in passion in his kingly role:

York Alas, what joy shall noble Talbot have
 To bid his young son welcome to his grave?
 Away, vexation almost stops my breath,
 That sunder'd friends greet in the hour of death.¹⁵
 ————— (IV. iv. 39-42)

Somerset How now, Sir William! whither were you sent?

Lucy Whither, my lord! From bought and sold Lord Talbot,
 Who, ring'd about with bold adversity,
 Cries out for noble York and Somerset
 To beat assailing Death from his weak legions;
 And whiles the honourable captain there
 Drops bloody sweat from his war-wearied limbs¹⁶ (IV. iv. 12-18)

Whose envious gulf did swallow up his life.
 Talbot's response one is of stoical resignation in the face of circumstances which he has tried everything in his power to subdue:

Into the clustering battle of the French;
 And in that sea of blood my boy did drench
 His over-mounting spirit; and there he died
 My Icarus, my blossom, in his pride. (IV. vii. 13-16)

Henry's lamentation, on the other hand, is one of feeble misappropriation.

¹⁵"in the hour of death" forms part of the Litany.

¹⁶"bloody sweat", also from the Litany. Cf. Luke 22:44 which describes Christ's passion while his disciples slept: "But being in an agonie, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweate was like droppes of blood, trickling downe to the grounde."

It may seem slightly surprising to find, in a Shakespearian history play, a figure other than the king, his heir, or a potential usurper, as the dramatic focus of the action. But in practice, Talbot has fulfilled certain of the most important, action-oriented roles of the king on stage. The battle cries are shouted, not in the name of the King, but rather for "God and Saint George, Talbot and England's right" (IV. iii. 55). He dominates the central scenes with his vigour and energy and is never at a loss to say and do precisely the right thing, with a kind of eloquence and patriotic confidence. It is not surprising, then, that the captivating quality of his role was in part responsible for the play's popularity. Thomas Nashe attests to the Elizabethan reception of Talbot on the stage:

how it would haue ioyed braue *Talbot* (the terror of the French) to thinke that . . . he should triumphe againe on the Stage, and haue his bones newe embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least, (at seuerall times) who . . . imagine they behold him fresh bleeding.¹⁷

Talbot's role and character is summarized in the many forms of address which other characters use to describe him. He is "stout lord Talbot", "valiant Talbot", "brave Talbot", "warlike and martial Talbot", "the Talbot", "English Talbot", and so on. His name is usually never allowed to stand alone (even when spoken by the French) and so the audience is constantly reminded of the kind of princely figure Talbot represents. Henry's appellations, too, characterize the way he is perceived in the play, but they are in direct contrast with those applied to Talbot. The King's name is also accompanied by epithets: Henry is "virtuous Henry", "sweet King", "sweet Henry", "sweet prince", "princely Henry", and so on. Parts two and three continue the pattern with more similarly appropriate designations.

Usually the first time any king comes on to the stage the event is signalled as a quite different entrance from that of any other character, and usually the king is the centre of the action immediately. Henry does not appear in the play until III. i. (which is uncharacteristically late in a play whose title bears his name) and though he

¹⁷*Pierce Penilesse*, cited by Cairncross, xxxviii.

enters with the accustomed "*Flourish*" and amidst a sea of attending lords, he does not speak for 65 lines. The scene takes place in the Parliament House, a nice emblematic touch in a scene which presents a king who is ineffectually silent in a world of political decisions and demands.¹⁸ Because of the two scenes which come before it, it is an entrance strained by the insecure basis of Henry's right to be king. Questions of genealogy, and the crime committed against Richard II, form the basis of the famous Temple Garden scene and the dialogue between Richard and his dying uncle Mortimer: the role of king is being fought for before it is even presented to the audience in the form of Henry's person. Richard Plantagenet establishes his claim to play the role of king, and sets in motion the tone of strife and division which are to attach themselves to Henry's crown.

Henry's goodness is never seen as capable of translating itself into the kind of political action required by the events going on around him. What does the King do on stage during the 65 lines of tempestuous dialogue between Gloucester, Winchester, Somerset and Warwick? Henry's first action in the play is to sue for peace, love and amity between the quarrelling lords and to stress his tender years, which cannot abide such civil dissension:

Uncles of Gloucester and of Winchester,
 The special watchmen of our English weal,
 I would prevail, if prayers might prevail,
 To join your hearts in love and amity.
 O, what a scandal is it to our crown
 That two such noble peers as ye should jar!
 Believe me, lords, my tender years can tell
 Civil dissension is a viperous worm
 That gnaws the bowels of the commonwealth (III. i. 65-73).

¹⁸The Duke of Gloucester is the Lord Protector and in effect takes on the responsibilities of the king's role. It is, however, another example of how Shakespeare chose to dramatize the centre which is essentially unoccupied. Everyone is seen to play, or to desire to play, the king's role -- except the King himself.

There is nothing essentially wrong with this speech, except that no one pays much attention to it; Henry is interrupted with the noises of "civil dissension", heard outside the doors, and he is not allowed to continue. His first speech, with its Prayer Book phrases, is characteristic of the religious and holy nature that Henry maintains throughout the play and the rest of the trilogy. Henry pleads on "allegiance to ourself" (III.i. 86) that the peace be kept, but has to call on Gloucester to "mitigate this strife" (III. i. 88). When the skirmish is not abated, the King draws attention to himself, not by the exertion of authority, but with a plea for pity:

O, how this discord doth afflict my soul!
 Can you, my Lord of Winchester, behold
 My sighs and tears, and will not once relent?
 Who should be pitiful, if you be not?
 Or who should study to prefer a peace
 If holy churchmen take delight in broils? (III. i. 106-11)

The series of questions is indicative of how lacking are the characteristics of assertion and control in Henry's roles as king. Henry knows much better how churchmen are supposed to behave, and because Winchester is a bishop, Henry feels he can educate the cleric in his role. And, later in the scene, when Winchester refuses his hand to Gloucester, Henry shows himself again more proficient in holy instruction than in royal authority:

Fie, uncle Beaufort! I have heard you preach
 That malice was a great and grievous sin;
 And will you maintain the thing you teach,
 But prove a chief offender in the same? (III. i. 121-30)

The King plays the role of peacemaker, and is joyful that the quarrelling lords have made up. But as their asides make clear, their gesture of reconciliation at the King's behest is but a superficial one. Henry remains unaware of the real situation--and is probably the only one on stage who is so mistaken. His Christian joy isolates him, in the context of seething discord, political intrigues and manoeuvrings, so that he seems entirely out of place:

O loving uncle, kind Duke of Gloucester.
 How joyful am I made by this contract!
 Away, my masters! trouble us no more,
 But join in friendship, as your lords have done. (III. i 142-45)

The quarrels of Somerset and York (the red rose and the white), follow the King to France however, and here, too, Henry finds himself able to sue for peace only in terms of holy gentleness. The King does not demand, he begs:

Good Lord, what madness rules in brainsick men,
 When for so slight and frivolous a cause
 Such factious emulations shall arise!
 Good cousins both, of York and Somerset,
 Quiet yourselves, I pray, and be at peace. (IV. i 111-15)

The general response is once again to ignore what the King has said; it is not until Gloucester intervenes, with a forceful admonition to the lords, that Henry can speak again. He then asks to play the role of "umpire to this doubtful strife" (IV. i. 151), and because of his generous spirit of amity, which desires that they all "still continue in peace and love", he puts on the red rose (152). It is a semiological blunder of the gravest kind: his error of judgement springs from his simple trust in fairness and mutual concern, which lets him believe naively that it is acceptable for him to "see no reason if I wear this rose, | That any one should therefore be suspicious | I more incline to Somerset than York" (IV. i. 152-54). The entire speech, of some forty lines and his longest in the play, uses a number of attempted persuasions: "O, think upon the conquest of my father, | My tender years" (148-9); but the King is still begging. His most vigorous command to them, as a king, is no more than to "Go cheerfully together" (167).

The events of the last act guarantee England's disastrous loss of France. As plans are put forth to find some solutions, Henry is still at a loss to understand how all this trouble could have come about in the first place:

Ay, marry, uncle, for I always thought
 It was both impious and unnatural
 That such immanity and bloody strife
 Should reign among professors of one faith. (V. i. 11-14)

The King holds on to his world of Christian values and morals at a time when they cannot prop up the crumbling order which surrounds him. His role becomes further isolated, as he is seen operating on a scale of ideas entirely at odds with those of the other characters in the play, especially those who can be seen as "rival" kings: Talbot, York, Somerset, Gloucester. When the plan of marriage is offered to ensure the peace between France and England, Henry retreats into his other roles -- namely the scholar and contemplative:

Marriage, uncle! Alas, my years are young!
 And fitter is my study and my books
 Than wanton dalliance with a paramour. (V. i. 21-3)

Though he acquiesces, Henry's purpose in agreeing is to be "well content with any choice | Tends to God's glory and my country's weal" (V. i. 26-7). But his acceptance of Margaret of Anjou, rather than the daughter of Armagnac, is another bad decision, of the same order as misjudgement concerning the red rose. With the loss of Armagnac comes the loss of the dowry, land in France, and Henry's honour for the breach of the contract. The oath he breaks is another way he does not act his role as king¹⁹ and forms the basis for oath-breaking as a theme in the representation of kingship in the later plays. His decision comes as a result of Suffolk's skill at manipulation and persuasion, but also because Henry is, as Suffolk had correctly estimated, "youthful, and will quickly yield" (V. iii. 99):

Whether it be through force of your report.
 My noble Lord of Suffolk, or for that

¹⁹The oath of a king was inviolable, especially for himself: "Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, Protector of the realme, repugned and resisted as much as in hym laie, this new alliance and contrived matrimonic: alledgyng that it was neither consonant to the lawe of GOD nor man, nor honourable to a prince, to infringe and breake a promise or contracte". Hall, *Union*, fol. Cxlvii^v.

My tender youth was never yet attaint
 With any passion of inflaming love,
 I cannot tell; but this I am assur'd,
 I feel such sharp dissension in my breast,
 Such fierce alarums both of hope and fear,
 As I am sick with working of my thoughts. (V. v. 79-86)

Henry is reduced to a quivering mass of confusions under Suffolk's masterful assumption of authority; he agrees to Suffolk's going to France to "procure" Margaret to be "King Henry's faithful and anointed queen" -- ominous words! Henry's last words in the play are his plea to be alone "where from company | [He] may revolve and ruminate [his] grief" (V. v. 100-01). Gloucester, however, recognizes the prophetic character of Henry's wish; that grief "both at first and last" (102) that is about to descend threefold on the kingdom. The cocky Suffolk concludes the play in gleeful hope about his own designs on the role of the king:

Margaret shall now be Queen and rule the King;
 But I will rule both her, the King, and realm. (V. v. 107-8)

At best, and despite his age, Henry has been no more than a "shadow" king, the kind of king which Alencon despises Charles of France for being reduced to:

Must he be then as shadow of himself?
 Adorn his temples with a coronet,
 And yet, in substance and authority,
 Retain but privilege of a private man?
 This proffer is absurd and reasonless. (V. iv. 133-7)

The theme of "shadow-" and "substance-kings" indicates the roles they are seen as playing: well, badly, or not at all; and recurs as a motif of role-playing throughout the history plays.²⁰ It is also represented in ritual and ceremony. At his coronation in

²⁰As Anne Righter has pointed out, shadows, like dreams, attend upon the actor. "Both are symbols of illusion, of what is unsubstantial and unreal. They tend, like the idea of the actor, to appear in connection with the king when Shakespeare wishes to

France, Henry does not quite get himself crowned before the ceremony is interrupted by the late arrival of the cowardly Falstaff and his subsequent quarrel with Talbot (IV. 1-9 ff.).²¹

The Henry VI plays are to a large extent about the disaster which occurs when the right to rule and the ability to rule become separated in the role of the king.²² "Ability" and "right" are nowhere more ironically felt than in the scene where Talbot first meets the King, shortly before his coronation. In the bravery of his spirit and with all his kingly qualities manifest, Talbot kneels at the feet of the man who has none:

My gracious prince, and honourable peers,
Hearing of your arrival in this realm,
I have awhile given truce unto my wars
To do my duty to my sovereign:
In sign whereof, this arm, that hath reclaim'd
To your obedience fifty fortresses,
Twelve cities, and seven walled towns of strength,
Beside five hundred prisoners of esteem,
Lest fall his sword before your Highness' feet;
And with submissive loyalty of heart
Ascribes the glory of his conquest got
First to my God, and next unto your Grace. [*Kneels*] (III. iv. 1-12)

Talbot offers the glory of his victories in a celebration of degree and order where God

express a flaw in the symbol, a royalty that is somehow illusory." *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play*, 124-5.

²¹For an interesting discussion about how the interruption of ceremony in this play is indicative of the collapse of order, see Cairncross's introduction to his Arden edition, liii.

²²Moody Prior comments that "the right to govern cannot be separated from the ability to govern -- from the capacity and talent for the exercise of power in the person of the man who occupies the sovereign office". *The Drama of Power*, 118.

and king in their respective places oversee the good of all²³. His submission to his sovereign is correct behaviour for a subject; it is however, from Henry's standpoint as king, behaviour which is unmerited.

ii

2 Henry VI

"Fine Word, Legitimate"

Part two continues to present the figure of Henry as the holy king: as more is seen of him on stage in this part, the trilogy as a whole begins to magnify his saintliness, which becomes increasingly its central subject; more also is heard of his liturgical style of discourse. As Henry increasingly surrounds himself with the halo of his religious convictions, he isolates himself on stage, even in the midst of other characters, and more importantly in the midst of rebellion. It is not, of course, the isolation of command and authority; quite the contrary. Because his role of king-as-commander and ruler is even more tenuous in this play (considering his age) than in part one, his position as King is even more precarious. In consequence, there is something of a rush amongst the ambitious to vie for the position which Henry is seen as leaving vacant. The Duke of York is the man who shows that "true nobility is exempt from fear" (IV. i. 129), and because of his real claim to the throne, he asserts his kingly qualities over Henry's rule, that is effective in name only. Unlike Talbot, York's fortitude of character is secretly cloaked and manipulative: he is content to bide his time until he can lay claim to what he wants. Hall describes how the Duke of York, thus waiting in the wings and

perceyuing the Kyng to be a ruler not Ruling, & the whole burden of the Realme, to depend in the ordinaunces of the Quene & the duke of Suffolke, began secretly to allure his frends of the nobilitie, priuately

²³The speech might be easily overlooked both in the theatre and by a reader: for the significance of what Talbot says to Henry see E.M.W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture*: "Talbot's speech in its reference to the places of God, the king, and himself in their due degrees carries with it the whole context of Hooker and the great Homily of obedience", 15.

declared to them, hys title—and right to the Crowne . . . which priuie attempt was so politiquely handled and so secretly kept, that hys prouision was ready, before his purpose was openly published.²⁴

Throughout the play, York's ambition for the crown is revealed in a constant, and rather surprising, use of aside and soliloquy and word-play where his self-confidence in his capability to play the roles of king are also revealed to the audience. By and large, York is not an unsympathetic character, yet despite the legitimacy of his title to the throne, the actions he undertakes to encompass it do constitute that worst of Tudor sins, rebellion against the crown. A deep ambivalence is thus built in to his role, which is revealed theatrically in this linguistic behaviour, which no Elizabethan audience could fail to recognize as characteristic of the Vice.²⁵ The doubleness of the Vice is implicit in the way York plays several roles, one for the audience and another for the characters with whom he interacts. His endeavours are thus tainted; York is not merely ambitious, he is the harbinger for the behaviour of his own son Richard, who becomes the totally depraved Richard III. He even anticipates some of Richard's verbal mannerisms, which are also characteristic of the Vice.²⁶

Warwick So God help Warwick, as he loves the land,
And common profit of his country!

York And so says York -- [*Aside.*] for he hath greatest cause.

(I. i. 208)

In the first scene of the play alone, York is given a soliloquy of some forty-six lines in which he plans the performance of his future behaviour in order to gain the throne:

²⁴*Union*, fol. Clij^r.

²⁵The most extended treatment of the Vice in Elizabethan drama is Bernard Spivack's *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil*; but see also Peter Happe, "The Vice and Popular Theatre 1547-80", in *Poetry and Drama 1570-1700*, eds. Antony Coleman and Antony Hammond.

²⁶For the ways Richard III is modelled on the Vice, see Hammond's Arden edition, pp. 99-101.

So York must sit and fret and bite his tongue
 While his own lands are bargain'd for and sold.
 Methinks the realms of England, France, and Ireland
 Bear that proportion to my flesh and blood
 As did the fatal brand Althaea burnt
 Unto the prince's heart of Calydon.
 Anjou and Maine both given unto the French!
 Cold news for me, for I had hope of France,
 Even as I have of fertile England's soil.
 A day will come when York shall claim his own (I. i. 231-40)

Then, York, be still awhile, till time do serve:
 Watch thou, and wake when others be asleep
 To pry into the secrets of the state (249-51)

Then will I raise aloft the milk-white rose,
 With whose sweet smell the air shall be perfum'd,
 And in my standard bear the arms of York,
 To grapple with the house of Lantaster (255-8)

When news arrives that all the territories in France are indeed lost, York compensates for the disappointment with his hope of a kingly title:

York [*Aside*] Cold news for me; for I had hope of France
 As firmly as I hope for fertile England.
 Thus are my blossoms blasted in the bud,
 And caterpillars eat my leaves away;
 But I will remedy this gear ere long,
 Or sell my title for a glorious grave. (III. i. 87-92)

Act III: scene i. ends with yet another major, soliloquy. During the fifty-three lines that York is alone on stage, the audience is made aware of his self-dramatization, in which his "brain, more busy than the labouring spider, | Weaves tedious snares to trap [his] enemies" (III. i. 339-40):

Now, York, or never, steel thy fearful thoughts,
 And change misdoubt to resolution:
 Be that thou hop'st to be, or what thou art
 Resign to death; it is not worth th'enjoying.
 Let pale-fac'd fear keep with the mean-born man,
 And find no harbour in a royal heart.
 Faster than spring-time showers comes thought on thought,
 And not a thought but thinks on dignity. (III. i. 331-8)

By the final act, York is still quietly convincing himself that he is better suited to the royal role than Henry: it is clear that his confidence in his title is not alone enough to legitimize his actions in his own mind:

[*Aside*] I am far better born than is the King,
 More like a king, more kingly in my thoughts;
 But I must make fair weather yet awhile,
 Till Henry be more weak, and I more strong. (V. i. 28-31)

His attempts to justify his claims by his declared belief that Henry's "church-like humour fits not for a crown" (I. i. 248) and that his "bookish rule hath pull'd fair England down" (I. i. 260). He accuses the King directly of being a "False king!", an oath-breaker not worthy even of the name:

King did I call thee? No, thou art not king;
 Not fit to govern and rule multitudes,
 Which dar'st not, no, nor canst not rule a traitor. (V. i. 91-5)

For York, kingship manifests itself as the outward and visible signs of the role, in the workings of his own imagination. The regalia, the throne, the visible and invisible²⁷ crowns of state, and subjects' homage are the *mise en scene* of kingship he

²⁷ There was a visible, material, exterior gold circle or diadem with which the Prince was vested and adorned at his coronation; and there was an invisible and immaterial Crown -- encompassing all the royal rights and privileges indispensable for

plays and replays in his mind's eye; he will pretend allegiance to the Lord Protector with "a show of love"; but when he can "spy advantage" he will

claim the crown.

For that's the golden mark I seek to hit.
Nor shall proud Lancaster usurp my right,
Nor hold the sceptre in his childish fist,
Nor wear the diadem upon his head (I. i. 242-7).

He plans that the rebellion he will stir up in the land will be a "fell tempest" that will not cease to rage

Until the golden circuit on my head,
Like to the glorious sun's transparent beams,
Do calm the fury of this mad-bred flaw. (III. i. 351-4)

Not only does he see his role as King in semiotic terms: he perceives his role as military leader also in terms of visual symbols. And York cannot act his roles without them:

From Ireland thus comes York to claim his right,
And pluck the crown from feeble Henry's head:
Ring, bells, aloud; burn, bonfires, clear and bright,
To entertain great England's lawful king.
Ah! sancta majestas, who'd not buy thee dear?
Let them obey that knows not how to rule;
This hand was made to handle nought but gold:
I cannot give due action to my words,
Except a sword or sceptre balance it.

the government of the body politic -- which was perpetual and descended either from God directly or by the dynastic right of inheritance". Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 337. As a direct descendant of one of the elder sons of Edward III, York has claim to both crowns. See York's own explanation of the genealogy (II. ii. 9-51); in *Henry VI* Shakespeare devotes a whole scene to this issue with the words of the dying Mortimer (II. v.).

A sceptre shall it have, have I a sword,
On which I'll toss the fleur-de-luce of France. (V. i. 1-11)

Most of what York says in terms of the signs of majesty is shared only with the audience. The first other person to hear his opinions at length is none other than the King himself, when York confronts him with his deficiencies as a presenter of the appearance of kingship. York not only believes he excels Henry in the kingly qualities so far named, he also thinks he has more of a kingly countenance than Henry:

That head of thine doth not become a crown;
Thy hand is made to grasp a palmer's staff,
And not to grace an awful princely sceptre.
That gold must round engirt these brows of mine,
Whose smile and frown, like to Achilles' spear,
Is able with the change to kill and cure.
Here is the hand to hold the sceptre up,
And with the same to act controlling laws. (V. i. 96-103)

The exchange that follows is a parody of the earlier scene which took place in York's garden, where his followers offered him fealty as a king, also in the form of signs.

Through York's recounting of the true line of succession, Salisbury's and Warwick's conviction of the Duke's rightful claim to the throne becomes a belief embodied by their gesture of kneeling before him:

Warwick Then, father Salisbury, kneel we together,
And in this private plot be we the first
That shall salute our rightful sovereign
With honour of his birthright to the crown.
Both Long live our sovereign Richard, England's king! (II. ii.58-62)

Their gesture towards York is simultaneously quite natural and profoundly shocking. His rhetoric has persuaded them he is the rightful king, which they acknowledge by an appropriate action. The signs of reverence shown to a king, whether or not the king

was present, were one of the forms in which his role is visually evidenced. Sir Thomas Smith, Doctor of Civil Law and principal secretary to Edward and Elizabeth, wrote that because "the prince is the life, the head, and the authorite of all things that be doone in the realme of England" a certain reverence is due for such a recognition:

to no prince is done more honor and reuerence than to the King and Queene of Englande, no man speaketh to the prince nor serueth at the table in adoration and kneeling, all persons of the realme be bareheaded before him: insomuch that in the chamber of presence where the cloath of estate is set, no man dare walke, yea though the prince be not there, no man dare tarrie there but bareheaded.²⁸

But of course York is not the King; his *claim* to the crown may be legitimate, but the actions he undertakes are wholly illegitimate: he is breaking his vow of allegiance and generating a traitorous conspiracy. In their positions on stage, the three of them present a *mise en scene* of kingship of the kind that York insists on in front of Henry.

The parody of this scene occurs in the confrontation at the beginning of Act V: Somerset calls York's outburst to the King an act of a traitor, and demands that the Duke "kneel for grace" (V. i. 108) but York is confident that his faction will not "brook I bow a knee to man" (110). What follows is a mass confusion of loyalties as more people come on to the stage occupied in effect by two kingly figures. Clifford enters and offers instant homage to Henry, but York sarcastically intercepts Clifford's

²⁸*De Republica Anglorum: The Manner of Gouernment or policie of the Realme of England*, 47. See also John Aylmer, *An Harborowe for Faithfull and Trew Subjects*: "The hart (I say) must be framed and brought into the circle of obedience and then wyll all the reast followe. Thy knee shall bowe, thy Cap shall of, thy tongue shall reuerently speake of thy soveraign, when and where thou oughtest", M4^r. Kneeling, and the lack of kneeling becomes a significant dramatic issue in *Richard II*. See also Thomas Bilson, *A Sermon Preached*: "When S. Peter saith. Honour the King, we must not thence exclude bodily honour, which is sensible to others, and restraints it to the honour of the minde, which neither we can shew, nor they can see, but by externall signes. The Commaundments of God binde the whole Man: no part is exempted where Submission is required", B7^r.

greetings and appropriates to himself what he grandiloquently interprets as a mistaken gesture of allegiance:

Clifford Health and all happiness to my lord the King! [*Kneels.*]

York I thank thee, Clifford: say, what news with thee?

Nay, do not fright us with an angry look:

We are thy sovereign, Clifford, kneel again:

For thy mistaking so, we pardon thee. (V. 124-8)

York has appropriated not only the signs of kingship but also the royal "we". When his sons enter, followed by Warwick and Salisbury, York is now surrounded by a supporting cast who substantiate his kingly role by forming a rudimentary embryo of a body politic. As York draws more strength from this, it seems as if Henry's own kingship is being drained from him. In turn the King acknowledges his diminished role in terms of the visual signs of fealty which Warwick and Salisbury have failed to show:

Why, Warwick, hath thy knee forgot to bow?

Old Salisbury, shame to thy silver hair,

Thou mad misleader of thy brain-sick son!

For shame! in duty bend thy knee to me.

That bows unto the grave with mickle age. (V. i. 161-74)

The collapse of Henry's role as king is emblematically represented in this scene, where the stage contains the figures of two kings and the divided loyalties of two groups of people. Henry's body politic is thus dismembered, and the scene which immediately ensues demonstrates the wounds of civil war.

The signs of kingship are not only confined to York's imaginings: in a lesser degree they inform the Duchess of Gloucester's dreams of majesty. She encourages Gloucester to gaze on "King Henry's diadem. | Enchas'd with all the honours of the world" (I. ii. 8); and to

... gaze on, and grovel on thy face.

Until thy head be circled with the same.
 Put forth thy hand, reach at the glorious gold.
 What, is it too short? I'll lengthen it with mine;
 And, having both together heav'd it up,
 We'll both together lift our heads to heaven' (I. ii. 9-14)

The Duke admonishes her for the "canker of ambitious thoughts!" (18) but she continues in a similar vein to rehearse to him her "morning's dream":

Methought I sat in seat of majesty
 In the cathedral church of Westminster,
 And in that chair where kings and queens are crown'd;
 Where Henry and Dame Margaret kneel'd to me,
 And on my head did set the diadem. (i. ii. 36-40)

Both York and the Duchess of Gloucester represent assaults on Henry's role as king, but his relationship with Margaret also diffuses the role which Henry alone should play. Though she is not an admirable character, she is in all respects more of a man, a strategist, a soldier than her husband, and is never at a loss to remind him of the fact with her pleas for him to act, and her own actions as Queen. By the end of the play she has changed drastically from the figure whose face contained "A world of earthly blessings" for which Henry thanked God in the opening scene. Resenting the position of the Lord Protector, Margaret asserts herself in the new role of Queen that she has come to England to occupy:

Is this the government of Britain's isle,
 And this the royalty of Albion's king?
 What! shall King Henry be a pupil still
 Under the surly Gloucester's governance?
 Am I a queen in title and in style,
 And must be made a subject to a duke? (I. iii. 45-9)

She finds out too late that she has married a lemon. She believed that Henry was a king who at least "resembled" his subject Suffolk, in "courage, courtship, and

proportion" (I. iii. 53-4). She learns quickly enough that all of Henry's "mind is bent to holiness", rather than to the arts of the courtier's role:

To number Ave-Maries on his beads;
His champions are the prophets and apostles,
His weapons holy saws of sacred writ,
His study is his tilt-yard, and his loves
Are brazen images of canoniz'd saints. (I. iii. 55-60)

Because Henry's holiness better suits the state of the Pope's "triple crown" (62-4), Margaret has to take it upon herself to secure the power she needs to rule as a Queen in "title and style". However misdirected her plots with the conniving Suffolk become (she has a hand in the plotting of Gloucester's murder), she is seen as someone who can take action effectively, and thus again someone who fulfills a kingly role in desperate need of fulfillment. After Margaret and Suffolk have jointly effected Gloucester's fall, she takes the initiative in claiming that Henry is now free to enact his kingly role -- a claim which, by its very nature, implies a further subservience for Henry at her hands:

I see no reason why a king of years
Should be to be protected like a child.
God and King Henry govern England's helm!
Give up your staff, sir, and the King his realm. (II. iii. 28-31)

For Margaret, the roles for everyone at this point in the play have been redefined to her advantage in her greed for power: "Why, now is Henry King, and Margaret Queen; And Humphrey Duke of Gloucester scarce himself" (II. iii. 39-40). With York and Suffolk she is seen to handle the problem of the Irish rebellion (III. i.) and throughout the play is at the ready to jump into the decision-making and advice-giving process. In the final battle scenes, Henry is made to feel inadequate in view of the Queen's ability to think quickly, and by her conception of manly action:

Away, my lord! you are too slow: for shame, away!

What are you made of? You'll not fight nor fly.

Now is manhood, wisdom, and defence,

To give the enemy way, and to secure us

By what we can, which can no more but fly. (V. ii. 72-7)

The King is different things to different people; in the forms of address used to him, his name takes on the qualities of his kingship and his character. At the beginning of the play, and because she does not know any better, Margaret calls Henry "great king" and "gracious lord". Because Suffolk is the man who secretly desires to control the strings of power and manipulate the pliant king, Suffolk flatters Henry with ironical salutations: "mighty sovereign" and "gracious Henry". To York the king is "feeble Henry" and a "false king". But for the most part Henry retains his numerous appellations of "virtuous", "good", and "gracious". Increasingly Henry's words are extended into religious phraseology so that he rarely says anything which fails to remind the audience of his holiness of character. His first words in the play are in a form of a prayer of thanksgiving for his new Queen's arrival and her love (I. i. 19-23). He is mistaken even in his acts of beneficence when he advances all the wrong people. Because Suffolk has brought him Margaret, Henry raises him from Marquess to Duke, much to the other lords' displeasure. Suffolk is now the "new-made duke that rules the roast" (I. i. 108). That Henry does not see the undermining character of Suffolk's actions is indicative of the way he remains unaware of most things that occur around him in the play.

He is silent during council meetings and if he speaks it is usually to declare himself indifferent to business of state: "for my part, noble lords, I care not which, | Or Somerset or York, all's one to me" (I. iii. 101-02). But the issue at hand here is nothing less than the regency of France, which casts the lords present into a disgraceful squabble. And what does the King do, impossible to ignore in the theatre thanks to his prominent position on the stage, for some forty lines while the loud dissension rages about him? In Henry's presence Suffolk accuses Gloucester of being king of a realm that has consequently gone to ruin. The Queen stridently usurps her husband's role, officiously speaking on his behalf: "the king forsooth, will have it so" (I. iii. 115). When Margaret and the Duchess of Gloucester come close to blows (in fact the Queen gives the Duchess a box on the ear, 138.1) Henry finally intervenes

with a spectacularly feeble attempt at conciliation: "Sweet aunt, be quiet; 'twas against her will" (I. iii. 143); he then does not speak for another thirty-six lines.

The famous hawking scene in act two has Henry again in the midst of the irritable nobles, twitching with their animosity towards Gloucester. The hawking is symbolic of the Lord Protector's imminent ruin, and creates a curious contrast to Henry's position in the broil. As Gloucester and the Cardinal bicker between themselves and around the King, Henry is more observant of his natural surroundings. His saintliness isolates him from all the manifestations of the negative around him and the ironical responses of the characters; he speaks as if only to himself:

King To see how God in all his creatures works!

Yea, man and birds are fain of climbing high.

Suffolk No marvel, and it like your Majesty,

My Lord Protector's hawks do tower so well;

They know their master loves to be aloft,

And bears his thoughts above his falcon's pitch.

Gloucester My lord, 'tis but a base ignoble mind

That mounts no higher than a bird can soar.

Cardinal I thought as much; he'd be above the clouds.

Gloucester Ay, my lord Cardinal, how think you by that?

Were it not good your Grace could fly to heaven?

King The treasury of everlasting joy. (II. i. 7-18)

The scene continues in much the same fashion until the King sues for peace among them, "for blessed are the peacemakers on earth" (II. iii. 34). But the lords persist in their derisive asides and their plans for a confrontation, until Henry just barely manages to intervene again with more pious hopes of peace:

The winds grow high; so do your stomachs, lords.

How irksome is this music to my heart!

When such strings jar, what hope of harmony?

I pray, my lords, let me compound this strife. (II. i. 56-9)

The "miracle" episode which concludes the scene is symbolic of Henry's inability to act the royal role of judge. He immediately accepts the validity of the occurrence and praises God "that to believing souls | Gives light in darkness, comfort in despair" (II. i. 66-7). Gloucester must act the king's role and reveal the bogus blind man for what he is. Like Escalus in *Measure for Measure*, who can see what Pompey is all about where Angelo cannot, Gloucester acts for the King who is just as convinced of his own acuteness of insight and self-perception as is Angelo. As the scene draws to an end the King confines his responses by his addresses to God, thus isolating himself ever further from the activity on stage: "O God! seest thou this, and bearest so long?" (II. i. 147); "O God ! What mischiefs work the wicked ones, | Heaping confusion on their own heads thereby!" (178-9). Within the thirty-six lines of dialogue that Shakespeare gives the King, allusions to the Gospels, the psalms, the services of Morning Prayer and Communion, and the Homilies are found, pervading Henry's reactions to events around him -- the King lives in another kind of world, and plays on another kind of stage, from the rest of the cast.

When it seems that he finally decides to take the responsibility of rule upon him, Henry unwittingly takes part in the destruction of the one person who has his best interests at heart. The King demands the right to play his royal role, on condition that Gloucester will give up his role as Lord Protector. Ironically enough Henry's demand is couched in terms of the signs of office and religious faith:

Stay, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester: ere thou go,
 Give up thy staff: Henry will to himself
 Protector be; and God shall be my hope,
 My stay, my guide, and lantern to my feet. (II. iii. 22-5)

Gloucester relinquishes his staff, leaving the King with the outward sign of rule, but Henry will need much more than to hold this token about which the Queen now waxes so ecstatic: "This staff of honour raught: there let it stand, | Where it best fits to be, in Henry's hand" (II. iii. 43-4). When the King is unable to prevent Gloucester's arrest for treason because of his inability to make a firm decision (another case where he leaves the decisions to those around him) the imminent demise of Henry's body politic is hastened. To trust in the bad advice of those whose allegiance is questionable, at

the expense of those who maintain true fealty, is one of the gravest wounds a king could inflict on the body of the state.²⁹ Gloucester's parting words bear precisely on this issue:

Ah! thus King Henry throws away his crutch
 Before his legs be firm to bear his body.
 Thus is the shepherd beaten from thy side,
 And wolves are gnarling who shall gnaw thee first.
 Ah! that my fear were false; ah! that it were;
 For, good King Henry, thy decay I fear. (III. i. 189-94)

It is only after Gloucester, guarded, has left the stage that Henry declares his belief in the Duke's innocence and laments that he sees, too late, in Gloucester's face, the "map of Honour, Truth, and loyalty" (III. i. 202-03). A long declamatory speech ensues, in which Henry places himself, and everyone who has played a part in this "plotted tragedy", in their respective roles:

And as the butcher takes away the calf,
 And binds the wretch, and beats it when it strains,
 Bearing it to the bloody slaughter-house;
 Even so, remorseless, have they borne him hence;
 And as the dam runs lowing up and down,
 Looking the way her harmless young one went,
 And can do nought but wail her darling's loss;
 Even so myself bewails good Gloucester's case (III. i. 210-17)

Henry describes, with candour (and with a good deal of self pity) how well he can act in his mourning role: he will "With sad unhelpful tears, and with dimm'd eyes" see Gloucester go; he "will weep" Gloucester's fortunes and "groan" that he is no traitor (III. i. 218-22). He will not, however, exert his royal authority to save him.

²⁹Throughout the Tudor period, constant warnings of the dangers of flatterers to the monarch stressed specifically this issue.

Perhaps the most telling of all Henry's failures to play his role of king is the moment when he effectively abdicates: he walks out of a session of Parliament. The other characters are quick to notice the significance of his leave-taking: "What! will your Highness leave the Parliament?" (III. i. 197). Henry's indifference to the government of the realm is terrifying: "My lords, what to your wisdoms seemeth best, | Do, or undo, as if ourself were here" (III. i. 195-6). Its consequences are immediate: the decay of Henry's "body" is symbolized in the news that an Irish rebellion has now "put the Englishmen unto the sword" (III. i. 284); and succour is needed "before the wound do grow incurable" (286). Lacking the King's presence, the whole Irish issue rests in the hands of Margaret, Suffolk, and York.

York seizes upon the rebellion: he immediately perceives how to make it an opportunity to further his own designs on the throne. He grasps the licence Henry's parting words offered him, and proposes to "undo" mightily to his own advantage. Once again, York seems like the Vice. In a manner which his son Richard III was to perfect, York plays the devil. He has "for a minister of [his] intent" "seduc'd" Jack Cade to "stir up in England some black storm" that "Shall blow ten thousand souls to heaven, or hell". While York is in Ireland, Cade is "This devil here" who will play his "substitute" (III. i. 349-71). With the Lord Protector fallen, and "Henry put apart" the Duke sees his way clearly to the accomplishment of his designs. York thus in his *putsch* for the throne decides to play, or is drawn by his role of usurper, into playing the devil, imitating not Christ but His opposite.

Gloucester's murder furthers the decay of the realm. After he swoons (III. ii. 31.1), Henry can do nothing except observe in stunned amazement that the Duke is dead. He more than suspects Suffolk's hand in the matter, but rather than commit him, engages in rhetoric, first banning him from the presence, and then inviting Suffolk rather to use his basilisk's stares to complete the outrage by killing Henry himself, so that in death he can "find joy" (III. ii. 50-3). The King's identity is bound up with Gloucester's past role, and Henry realizes how his "two bodies" have suffered as a consequence of the Duke's death: if he is allowed to live he suffers "but double death, now Gloucester's dead" (54). In what he takes to be an attitude of true Christian forgiveness, the King refuses to make any accusations, "For judgement only doth belong to Thee" (III. ii. 139). He forgets that God has lent to him the authority

to dispense justice; his evasion leaves those responsible for Gloucester's death unpunished: in another context this action could generate a good revenge play. Gloucester's corpse is brought on the stage, and in that body Henry sees his own "demise":

That is to see how deep my grave is made;
For with his soul fled all my worldly solace,
For, seeing him, I see my life in death. (III. ii. 149-51)

The King does not speak again for another seventy-nine lines, while the remaining characters are busy accusing each other of the murder -- Henry's silences on stage are increasing. Even when he does speak, he seems to be unaware of what is going on around him and more in a daze than usual, as a result of a mind which has meandered in dreams of moral righteousness. It is the hawking scene all over again:

What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted!
Thrice is he arm'd that hath his quarrel just,
And he but naked, though lock'd up in steel,
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted. (III. ii. 231-4)

Outraged at Gloucester's murder, the commons deplore that Henry's majesty should be "asleep" in the garden of the realm, whose paradisaic state is threatened by the serpent, Suffolk. Salisbury voices their outrage at Suffolk and the way he has climbed his way to the top rungs of power:

They say, in care of your most royal person,
That if your Highness should intend to sleep,
And charge that no man should disturb your rest,
In pain of your dislike or pain of death,
Yet, notwithstanding such a strait edict,
Were there a serpent seen, with forked tongue,
That slily glided towards your Majesty,
It were but necessary you were wak'd,
Lest, being suffer'd, in that harmful slumber,

The mortal worm might make the sleep eternal (III. ii. 253-62)

But the King has been "asleep" for most of the play: his silences on stage, his lack of action, his day-dreaming attitude are some of the ways he has abdicated from playing his proper role. The demands that Henry rouse himself to his duty grow increasingly vociferous, because the country's need for a king is becoming ever more acute. Perhaps the one really decisive action Henry does undertake is the decreeing of Suffolk's immediate banishment; nor will he rescind this command even at Margaret's pleading. Henry has sworn by "His Majesty . . . Whose far unworthy deputy I am" (III. ii. 284-5); and because he has sworn like a king, his word, he rightly believes, "is irrevocable" (III. ii. 292-3).

But one kingly action does not a Prince make. Henry's holiness of mind stresses certain moral abstractions in his dramatic make-up: the positive qualities he is given are a compound of truth, goodness, charity, pity and love. To the dying Cardinal Beaufort, Henry plays the role of priest, offering the last rites of absolution over the suffering body:

O thou eternal Mover of the heavens!
 Look with a gentle eye upon this wretch;
 O! beat away the busy meddling fiend
 That lays strong siege unto this wretch's soul,
 And from his bosom purge this black despair. (III. iii. 19-23)

Peace to his soul if God's good pleasure be.
 Lord Cardinal, if thou think'st on heaven's bliss,
 Hold up thy hand, make signal of thy hope.
 He dies, and makes no sign. O God, forgive him! (III. iii. 26-9)

The role of priest is a legitimate one for a ruler to play (the Duke in *Measure for Measure* makes a profession of it) but it is not the only role, of course; yet Henry's kingship increasingly defines itself in terms of priestly qualities.

Most of the action for the rest of the play involves the Cade insurrection, the general chaos which it causes, and the way characters cope with the ensuing situation. Henry's reactions to these events is increasingly passive, as he loses yet more of his self-identity as a king. In response to the rebels' supplication in IV. iv. Henry offers only to "send some holy bishop to entreat"; and rather than wage what he perceives as a needless war, he will "parley with Jack Cade their general" (9-13). Yet in a very real sense the Cade insurrection arises from the lack of authority and direction in Henry's government. The weakness which first infected the nobility has now spread to the rest of Henry's body-politic. Henry cannot conceive of his responsibility in these terms; in his response to the rebellion he relies upon his version of the suffering Christ role; Henry exclaims that the rebels are "graceless men! they know not what they do" (IV. iv. 37). At the height of their troubles, the King and Queen take to Killingworth for refuge, depending on Henry's belief that "God, our hope, will succour us" (IV. iv. 54). Meanwhile the brave Lord Say remains behind to play the role of sacrifice or scapegoat to Cade's onslaught. By the time Henry himself becomes aware of the desperateness of the situation he no longer wishes to be a king:

Was ever king that joy'd an earthly throne,
 And could command no more content than I?
 No sooner was I crept out of my cradle
 But I was made a king at nine months old;
 Was never subject long'd to be a king
 As I do long and wish to be a subject. (IV. ix. 1-6)

In part three, and in a more ritualistic way, the King again tries to detach himself from his identity in the midst of crisis by wanting to exchange roles with the shepherd. For now the King sees his condition as "unfortunate", even when events turn to his favour (IV. ix. 18). His kingship stands wavering "twixt Cade and York distress'd" (IV. ix. 31). Rather than go himself to confront the oncoming York in arms, the King sends Buckingham instead, with the caution that he "be not too rough in terms": for York is "fierce and cannot brook hard language" (IV. ix. 36-44). Henry himself retreats back into the castle, proposing to Margaret that they "learn to govern better" (IV. ix. 47); but no-one else could imagine that this is either the place or the time for such schooling. He admits he has been a failure as a king, since "England yet

may curse [his] wretched reign" (48); but even when Cade's head is brought on to the stage in triumph, Henry fails to seize the opportunity thus offered, and allows what should be a substantial victory to last only a brief moment in the action.

In facing York, Henry must contend with the representation of the kind of kingship lacking in his own identity, and which he needed to maintain the loyalties of those who now abandon him. Solemn oaths of allegiance, that bond the king to his subjects, no longer retain their value. The end of the battle of Saint Albans and the end of the play see the King fleeing in retreat to London at the entreaty of his wife.

Part three will show the audience a shepherd-king, one who would exchange the court role for the pastoral. But in part two the audience is made to see that even someone who exists in the tranquil Eden of the country can act like a king, and a charitable one too. Iden's country estate and living is worth a "monarchy" to him (IV. x. 19), a place and existence which he would not exchange for the turmoils of court life. It is in the garden of his "monarchy" that Iden kills the rebel, Jack Cade.

iii

3 Henry VI

"Que Ne Suis-Je Un Simple Pasteur?"

Like the realm itself, the role of king gets carved and mutilated in part three. York takes effective control right at the very beginning by appropriating the throne and the hereditary right to rule for his descendants; his son, Edward, manages to become king after York's death; Warwick can "make" and "unmake" kings at will; Henry loses his right and his son's right to rule, as well as both of their lives; Richard, meanwhile, hovers in the background with his own more frightening ambitions upon the crown. Stability of the throne, of a king's role and function, never is allowed a place in the play. It is a play which presents two kings, two queens, and the fight for power which depletes the perception of the monarch's position in society, a position already weakened by events; where, says Holinshed,

the principallie posted ouer sometimes to Henrie, sometimes to Edward; according to the swaie of the partie preuailing: ambition and disdaine still casting fagots on the fire, whereby the heat of hatred gathered the greater force to the consumption of the peeres and the destruction of the people. In the meane time, neither part could securlie possesse the regallie, when they obtained it.³⁰

In part two York merely imagined the glory of the visible signs of the kingship he desires to attain. In the opening of part three, the audience sees him actually appropriating the physical properties of sovereignty. The first scene of the play represents the fruition of York's imaginings in a presentation of his ritual coronation:

This is the palace of the fearful King,
And this the regal seat: possess it, York;
For this is thine and not King Henry's heirs'. (I. i. 25-7)

Shakespeare took the essence of the first scene from Hall and Holinshed, who describe the significance of York's taking of the throne into his actual possession:

the duke of Yorke, with a bolde contenance, entered into the chamber of the peres, and sat downe in the trone royall, vnder the clothe of estate (which is the kynges peculiar seate) & in the presence aswel of the nobilitie, as of the spiritualitie (after a pause made) saide these wordes in effect . . . "I declare and publysh to you, that here I sit, as in the place to me by very iustice lawfully belongyng, & here I rest, as he to whome this chayre of righte apperteineth."³¹

Hall continues to describe the event by recording the reaction to York's audacious gesture:

³⁰*Chronicles*, 677.

³¹Hall, *Union*, fol. Cxcvii^{r-v}.

When the duke had thus ended his oracion, the lordes sat still like Images grauen in the wall, or domme Gods, neither whisperyng nor spekyng, as though their mouthes had been sowed vp.³²

In Holinshed, York makes his oration while holding the cloth of state in his hands:

and there laieng his hand vpon the cloth of estate, seemed as if he meant to take possession of that which was his right (for he held his hand so vpon the cloth a good pretie while) and after withdrawing his hand, turned his face towards the people, beholding their preassing together, and marking what countenance they made.³³

What emerges from these accounts is a picture of a man who has sought power by role-playing his way to the top, complete with props. The York of the chronicles, and in Shakespeare, tries to affirm his right to play the role of king by making himself suitable to a "setting" of kingship:

the duke . . . departed, and went to the most principall lodging that the king had within all his palace, breaking up the lockes and doores, and so lodged himselfe therein, more like to a king than a duke, continuing in the same lodging for a time to the great indignation of manie, that could not in anie wise like of such presumptuous attempts made by the duke, to thrust himselfe in possession of the crowne, and to depose king Henric, who had reigned ouer them so long a time.³⁴

York may have had the stage on which to perform his role, and thereby to certify his capacities to sustain it, but he lacked the anointing which would complete his claim. In the chronicles, York offered himself in the tired but ever-popular role of God's deliverer, divinely sent to restore the decayed kingdom; as one who, by God's grace, would take possession of "this roiall throne . . . to beautifie & mainteine the

³²*Ibid.*, fol. Cbccc^r.

³³*Chronicles*, 655.

³⁴*Ibid.*

same".³⁵ Even his downfall is revealed by a process of naming, and decoding, signs. In Hall, York's oration to the Parliament is concluded by the portentous event of a falling crown:

While he was thus declaryng his title, in the chambre of the peres, there happened a straunge chaunce, in the very same tyme, emongest the commons in the nether house, then there asembled: for a Croune whiche did hang in the middell of the same, to garnishe a branche, to set lightes vpon, without touche of any creature, or rigor of wynd, sodainly fell doune, and at the same tyme also, fell doune the Croune, whiche stode on the top of the Castle of Douer: as a signe and prognostication, that the Croune of the Realme should bee diuided and changed, from one line to another.³⁶

In the opening scene of the play, York is seen mounting the chair of state, a gesture which is central to the ensuing action. It is the emblem around which York and Henry verbally battle, both for its physical possession, and for the role of true king that it implies. Warwick encourages the Duke to be resolute and "claim the English crown" (I. i. 49). The image of the usurped chair is the first thing Henry comments upon when he enters: "My lords, look where the sturdy rebel sits, | Even in the chair of state!" (I. i. 50-1). Westmoreland and Clifford react with cries to "pluck him down" and the animadversion that "he durst not sit there" had Henry's father lived (I. i. 63); the King demands that York show him the signs of fealty:

Thou factious Duke of York, descend my throne,
And kneel for grace and mercy at my feet;
I am thy sovereign. (I. i. 74-6)

Shall I stand, and thou sit in my throne? (I. i. 84)

³⁵*Ibid.*, 657.

³⁶*Union*, fol. Cxxxv.

A *mise en scene* of divided kingship informs the quarrelling factions as the actual position of the characters on stage become emblematic of the way Henry has abdicated his role as responsible king, and the way York remains in control. York's sons, too, promote their father's usurpation by urging that he take possession of the visible signs of kingship: Richard encourages his father to "tear the crown from the usurper's head" (I. i. 114); and Edward adds "do so; set it on your head" (115). And York, himself, demands that "Henry of Lancaster resign [his] crown" (I. i. 168).

Throughout York's remaining part in the play, he feeds his ambition to have the kingship for himself by what has now become in the drama the intoxicating image that the crown has garnered to itself. Shakespeare has Richard echo Tamburlaine's imaginative view of kingship:

And, father, do but think
How sweet a thing it is to wear a crown,
Within whose circuit is Elysium
And all that poets feign of bliss and joy. (I. ii. 28-31)

Spurred on by this picture, York breaks the oath of peace he had made to Henry, which results in the battle of the factions of the red and white roses. In the midst of the fighting, York recounts how he takes courage from his sons' reminders that what they are fighting for is symbolized in the signs of sovereignty:

Richard cried, 'Charge! and give no foot of ground!
Edward, 'A crown, or else a glorious tomb!
A sceptre, or an earthly sepulchre!
With this we charg'd again (I. iv. 15-18)

Interestingly, York shows himself at his most kingly when he is finally captured by Margaret, Clifford, and Northumberland, and lacks all those visible emblems for which so much energy and blood have been shed. Like a king, he appropriates to himself the image of the phoenix, from whose ashes a new bird will arise to wreak his revenge upon Margaret and the Lancastrians (I. iv. 35-8). In the company of his vengeful captors, it is York now who grows more religious in tone and attitude.

The scene of York's death is a ritualistic parody of a coronation, in which he is made to re-enact his usurpation of the crown. It is indeed a form of coronation, but its ironical reversal of York's hopes is made evident by the fact that the text is not the *Liber Regalis*, but Margaret's malicious specifications. York ascends, not the throne, but the molehill on which he is made to stand, and is given not the regalia of a real king, but that of a mockery king. To his enemies he is nothing more than a froward counterfeit:

What, was it you that would be England's king?
 Was't you that revell'd in our parliament
 And made a preachment of your high descent? (I. iv. 70-2)

A further level of irony in this situation lies in the way Margaret's speech and actions are unconsciously controlled by a cluster of religious images deriving from the Crucifixion:

Come make him stand upon this molehill here,
 That raught at mountains with outstretched arms,
 Yet parted but the shadow with his hand. (I. iv. 67-9)

In a parody of the comfort offered to Christ on the cross, York is given the stained napkin of Rutland's blood to "dry [his] cheek withal" (I. iv. 78-83). Like the taunting onlookers at the foot of Christ's cross, Margaret plays her mocking role with revengeful glee, and crowns the counterfeit king with equally counterfeit emblems and signs of fealty:

York cannot speak unless he wear a crown.
 A crown for York! and, lords, bow low to him:
 Hold you his hands whilst I do set it on.
 [Putting a paper crown on his head]
 Ay, marry, sir, now looks he like a king! (I. iv. 93-95.1)

Her diatribe is directed not merely at York's desire to be king, but to the manner in which he articulated his desires, by appropriating to himself the symbols of a king's royalty:

Ay, this is he that took King Henry's chair (I. iv. 97)

And will you pale your head in Henry's glory,

And rob his temples of the diadem (I. iv. 103-4)

For the element of religious parody in the scene, Shakespeare found and made use of the material in Holinshed's account:

Some write that the duke was taken aliue, and in derision caused to stand upon a molehill, on whose head they put a garland in steed of a crowne, which they had fashioned and made of sedges or bulrushes; and hauing so crowned him with that garland, they kneeled downe afore him (as the Jewes did vnto Christ) in scorne, saieing to him; "Haile king without rule, haile king without heritage, haile duke and prince without people or possessions".³⁷

But York's crucifixion generates a powerful sense of ambivalence. On the one hand his suffering, and the sense of loss he feels for Rutland's death, manages to move the obdurate Northumberland (and, presumably, the audience) with pity: "Beshrew me, but his passion moves me so | As hardly can I check my eyes from tears" (I. iv. 150-1). The notorious phrase, that Margaret's is a "tiger's heart wrapp'd in a woman's hide" (137) aptly, if floridly, describes her detestable behaviour, which also is a means to moving the audience to pity York's catastrophe. York's last words are religious in tone and admirable in a man who is about to die:

This cloth thou dipp'd in blood of my sweet boy,

And I with tears do wash the blood away.

Keep thou the napkin, and go boast of this:

³⁷*Chronicles*, 659.

And if thou tell the heavy story right,
 Upon my soul, the hearers will shed tears;
 And say 'Alas! it was a piteous deed'.

Hard-hearted Clifford, take me from the world:
 My soul to heaven, my blood upon your heads! (I. iv. 157-68)

Open thy gate of mercy, gracious God!
 My soul flies through these wounds to seek out Thee. (I. iv. 177-8)

A messenger tells Richard that his father's death was the "saddest spectacle that e'er [he] view'd" (II. i. 67). In his death, York stood against his enemies "as the hope of Troy | Against the Greeks that would have enter'd Troy. | But Hercules himself must yield to odds" (II. i. 51-3). He is described as having been the "flower of Europe for his chivalry" (II. i. 71). Even Henry expresses pity at the sight of York's head hung on the town of York's gates: "To see this sight, it irks my very soul | Withhold revenge, dear God 'tis not my fault" (II. ii. 6-7).

On the other hand, throughout parts two and three, York has been deliberately cast in, and has played effectively, the role of the devil. - His "crucifixion" is not parodic of Christ, but of His opposite. York's attempt at usurping the kingly role has brought disaster upon the land, and shattered the bonds that link subject and king. All that York has done, he has done from purely personal and selfish motives (however he may have wrapped them up in attractive packaging to take in the more gullible of his supporters). The Tudors were in no two minds about the nature of usurpation, and the theological basis for kingship also left no room for doubt that an usurper was diabolical. As has been already shown, York in these plays is presented in a complex way: as a person who has courage and a good deal of charm and presence; certainly not as an evil man. Yet the evil nature of his enterprise is signalled by an elaboration of the linguistic structure of his dramatic representation, into those areas of direct address and double-talk that characterized the Vice and his diabolical predecessors. This use of language as commentary can scarcely be thought of as accidental: it is a clear signal to the audience to read and to mark York ambivalently. Like many another dramatic character whose designs have led him to action that can only be

considered enormous, York's sufferings are a source of pity, but his actions are clearly to be condemned. To mark this condemnation, York is made to play, perhaps entirely unwittingly, a devil's role. This makes his death not purely pitiful, but a matter for relief (or it would be if his sons were not already moving from the wings for their turn). In the end, York's insurrection has cost far more to far too many, about far too much, to be dismissed as the mere ill-effects of ambition. The nature of kingship was too subtle a structure to permit this kind of careless and heedless action, and from this point of view, York is "justly serv'd".

As York fights against the King to be a king himself, Margaret fights for the King, and in the consequence appropriates her husband's roles to herself. Hall had described Margaret as

a woman of a greate witte, and yet of no greater witte, then of haute stomacke, desirous of glory, and couetous of honor, and of reason, pollicye, counsaill, and other giftes and talentes of nature, belonging to a man, full and flowyng: of witte and wilnesse she lacked nothyng, nor of diligence, studie, and businesse, she was not vnexperte.³⁸

When Henry voids the hereditary rights of his son, it is Margaret who is most shocked at the deed, and tries in consequence to do the most she can to restore what the King has undone. She is confident that the northern lords who have forsworn the King's colours will follow her own (I. i. 258-63). She manages to force Henry to recognize some of his royal obligations towards his son: before battle Henry is made to knight the young Prince Edward (II. ii. 57-66). In matters of fighting and strategy Margaret has proved the King's superior, for "she hath" says Clifford to Henry, "best success when you are absent" (II. ii. 74). During battle and throughout the countryside Margaret has "led calm" Henry, though he were a king, | As doth a sail, fill'd with a fretting gust, | Command an argosy to stem the waves" (II. vi. 34-6). Before Tewkesbury it is Margaret, not the King, who delivers the oration to the soldiers, and whose courageous spirit inspires the Prince:

³⁸Union, fol. CIV.

Methinks a woman of this valiant spirit
 Should, if a coward heard her speak these words,
 Infuse his breast with magnanimity
 And make him, naked, foil a man at arms. (V. iv. 39-42)

The Prince too shows his competence in a kingly role: had he lived he might have proved most royal. His speech and actions reveal all the hallmarks of a prince's training. He is quick to object to his disinheritance at his father's hands, and to advocate the rights of primogeniture (I. i. 233-4). When he is knighted and pledges his sword's use to preserve the crown, Clifford is quick to comment that Edward has "spoken like a toward prince" (II. ii. 63-66). Edward begs his father to act like a king by instructing him on how to perform the proper motions, especially when they are most needed:

My royal father, cheer these noble lords,
 And hearten those that fight in your defence.
 Unsheathe your sword, good father: cry, 'Saint George'.
 (II. ii. 78-80)

To the usurping Edward of York, the Prince speaks not only for the King but also with a king's authority. Edward knows what it means to act like a sovereign, and in turn what should be expected as appropriate behaviour in a subject; for each has his proper role to play:

Speak like a subject, proud ambitious York.
 Suppose that I am now my father's mouth;
 Resign thy chair, and where I stand kneel thou,
 Whilst I propose the self-same words to thee
 Which, traitor, thou would'st have me so resolv'd! (V. v. 17-22)

His very last words in the play are an assertion of his sovereignty to the "undutiful" brothers of York, who each take turns in stabbing him (V. v. 33-40). With his murder the realm suffers an incurable wound to its body politic, since in him the Lancastrian line is effectively extinguished.

What York, Margaret and Prince Edward demonstrate in varying degrees is that the vacancy at the centre of the play (and the trilogy), created by Henry's inability to play the role of king adequately, cannot be filled by any of the other individuals in the play so long as Henry remains alive, and that Henry himself is incapable of filling it by any process of maturation. The King is still perceived, as his forms of address indicate, in the role of "bashful Henry", "base, fearful, despairing Henry", "faint-hearted and degenerate king", "wretched man", "timorous wretch", "simple Henry", "gentle-hearted king", "faint Henry", "easy-melting king", "gentle king", "calm Henry", "sham'd face Henry". Throughout the play, Henry moves further and further away from any form of real action, and in some cases even from speech. When he finds himself forced into action, whatever he does undertake only worsens his position as king: the mere fact of his being *forced* into taking any action essentially compromises his power, as Margaret is very well aware: "Art thou King, and wilt be forc'd?" (I. i. 237). He is more of an observer, a figure who is in the background, a beatified presence rather than an earthly one. The play shows how he becomes distanced from his role and identity as a king, and more importantly the disastrous results which occur as a consequence of this distancing.

Henry's response to York's sitting on the throne in the opening scene is that "frowns, words, and threats, | Shall be the war that Henry means to use" (I. i. 72-3), he will not commit violence in Parliament. In other words, he wishes to rely upon the authority of the kingly countenance to effect York's overthrow: unfortunately, Henry lacks the attributes of the kingly countenance; no enemy will be terrified by his frown. Warwick scornfully proposes a mere exchange of roles between Henry and York: "Be Duke of Lancaster: let him be King" (I. i. 86). Westmoreland ripostes that Henry has both roles within his person: "He is both King and Duke of Lancaster" (I. i. 87). The opening scene becomes a kind of casting session, with Henry wavering between asserting his claim to the throne and giving it up. Not only is he uncertain which role he should play, he doesn't know his lines: "I know not what to say: my title's weak" (I. i. 138). He asks York to "let" him rule as king (I. i. 174-5), but what he is actually asking for is an arrangement not unlike that proposed by Lear: "we shall retain | The name and all th' addition to a king" (I. i. 134-5). Both monarchs imagine that it is *possible* to retain the royal title without the power, and both are self-evidently wrong.

When Henry abandons his son's rights in favour of York's heirs, he abdicates from his roles of natural father and of father to his country. The deed is characterized as "unmanly" and "unnatural", a crime which has hurt not only himself and his son, but the country as well. In exchange for York's oath to cease civil war and to forgo any designs on the crown (both of which promises York later inevitably breaks) the King has gained, and is left with, nothing; the rhetorical balance of the following passage indicates this:

York Farewell, my gracious lord; I'll take my leave,

For I'll to Wakefield to my castle.

Warwick And I'll keep London with my soldiers.

Norfolk And I to Norfolk with my followers.

Falconbridge And I unto the sea from whence I came.

King Henry And I with grief and sorrow to the court. (I. i. 212-17)

Henry pleads with Margaret to listen to him; he attempts to excuse his unfatherly conduct, but she stops him with a telling command which reminds him how a king's word has the power to undo: "Thou hast spoke too much already" (I. i. 265). Once he has been thus silenced, any subsequent attempt on Henry's part at explication or exhortation must necessarily be ineffectual. He describes York as "empty eagle" who will "Tire on the flesh of me and of my son!" (I. i. 275-6); but the only plan of action he can conceive following this exclamation is the writing of a letter which he hopes will regain the favour of the lords who now follow York (I. i. 277-8). To advance Edward's cause toward the throne, the Yorkist faction demands the crown from Henry in II. ii, but he is silent for some thirty-six lines before he finally demands to be heard:

King Henry Have done with words, my lords and hear me speak.

Margaret Defy them then, or else hold close thy lips.

King Henry I prithee give no limits to my tongue:

I am a king, and privileg'd to speak.

Clifford My liege, the wound that bred this meeting here,

Cannot be cur'd by words: therefore be still. (II. ii. 117-22)

It is indicative of the loss of his role that Henry does not speak like a king; nor indeed is he allowed to speak at all for the remainder of this scene.

The violence which threatens the realm is a result of the violence which threatens the separation of the King from his role. Warwick can claim with confidence that he will "pluck the diadem from faint Henry's head, | And wring the awful sceptre from his fist" (II. i. 153-54). Clifford warns that Henry must put aside "this too much lenity | And harmful pity" (II. ii. 9-10), in a speech which confronts the King with the imminent reality of his own demise. The speech is full of images of the *lex talionis* expressed in visions of predatory animals (II. ii. 11-42). Edward asks the King if he will "kneel for grace, | And set thy diadem upon my head; | Or bide the mortal fortune of the field?" (II. ii. 81-3). With Warwick and with Edward, Henry is made to feel how the signs of his kingship will be the metaphorical means by which he will lose not just the outward role of playing the king but also everything else which is inherent in the title. The path which Henry follows throughout the course of the play contributes in part to his murder by Richard in V. vi, where for the first time Shakespeare presents on the stage the violent separation of king and body, king and role.

What contributes to Henry's downfall is the way he has allowed himself the luxury of thinking about who he would like to be rather than acting according to who he is and must be as England's sovereign. Rather than leave the succession of a kingdom to his son, and thereby perpetuate the title of king, Henry wishes instead to leave the Prince "my virtuous deeds behind" (II. ii. 49). Margaret and Clifford drag the King from battle to battle not because he is of any military use, but because to them Henry is still the King of the realm if only in body, a mute symbol from which the troops may take a modicum of strength, an echo of the old divine order of things which is felt to be quickly passing away. Often the King is urged to relinquish his "soft courage" and to put on the appropriate demeanour in order to give his followers the spirit they need for battle. In this respect, Henry is right; his father had not left him much.

He has the time to ruminate on his identity and role while all around him can be heard the alarums and cries of death and destructive fighting (II. v.). In the middle of battle and chaos, Henry creates an imaginative pastoral world for himself, in which

the language of his soliloquy carries him into a reverie of an idyllic existence. He sits himself down on what probably was the same stage molehill as that on which York's execution was acted, which lends the scene an extra ironic colouring. York was an image of an anti-Christ, who wanted to be a king and was instead crucified on the molehill; Henry wishes to be another image of Christ, the shepherd who sits on the molehill tending his flock. As Van Laan observes, the molehill, "like York's molehill in I. iv., is a stage for enacting the loss of a crown -- and let the victory go to whom it will".³⁹

The fifty-four lines of the speech comprise a complex artificial and rhetorical construct of ideas. Phrases in parallel constructions, the use of continued anaphora, exclamation, gradatio, alliterative patterns, connected series of allusions, and so on, help to create the intensity of Henry's self-made isolation from his role as king. The speech is hypnotic, presenting him again in what has now become one of his familiar dazes, except this time he is alone on stage. The life of a "homely swain" is point by point articulated by hours and days, activity and contemplation. How sweet this life, compared to "kings that fear their subjects' treachery" (II. v. 45). But in all this Henry has failed to realize that as a king he was indeed already a shepherd, the pastor to his own flock, to the kingdom which is disintegrating around him. It is an ironic paradox therefore that Henry chooses a role in an imaginative sense that he has already failed to play in reality. Henry's pastorality anticipates the typical Elizabethan pastoral lyric; by a curious coincidence, it is very much like one of William Byrd's songs on Kings and shepherds:

What pleasure have great princes
More dainty to their choice
Than herdsmen wild, who careless
In quiet life rejoice,
And fortunes fate not fearing
Sing sweet in summer morning

Their dealings plain and rightful.

³⁹ *Role-playing in Shakespeare*, 136. The saying, "to be king of the molehill" was proverbial. Cf. "Better to be King of a molehill than a Kaiser's slave", Tilley, K55.

Are void of all deceit;
 They never know how spiteful.
 It is to kneel and wait
 On favourite presumptuous
 Whose pride is vain and sumptuous.

All day their flocks each tendeth;
 At night, they take their rest;
 More quiet than who sendeth
 His ship into the East,
 Where gold and pearl are plenty;
 But getting, very dainty.

O happy who thus liveth!
 Not caring much for gold;
 With clothing which sufficeth
 To keep him from the cold.
 Though poor and plain his diet
 Yet merry it is, and quiet.⁴⁰

As the son who has killed his father, and the father who has killed his son enter the scene, Henry now plays the role of Chorus, commenting on the unnaturalness of civil war. The "harmless lambs" (II. v. 75) of this "piteous spectacle" have arrived at the feet of the shepherd who has let them down; Henry is unable to do more than watch and express pity. The formal and choric nature of the scene serves to heighten precisely this point, in a ritualistic manner.

⁴⁰From *Psalmis, Sonnets, and Songs*, 1588 in *Lyrics From the Song-Books of the Elizabethan Age*, ed. A.H. Bullen, 153-4. The desire of the world-weary to escape from their problems by retreating to a pastoral simplicity is a universal theme in Western culture, as the epigraph to this section (from Berlioz' *Benvenuto Cellini*) indicates.

After the battle of York, and as Edward finds his way to London for his coronation, Henry flees to the north of England. Disguised and holding a prayer-book (III. i. 12.1) the King appears to the unsuspecting Keepers. He plays another role here in disguise (probably as a monk or some sort of cleric), thus adopting his preferred part of priest (or pastor), while divesting himself of the outward countenance of a king. The scene concentrates on Henry's further thoughts concerning the state of kings and the sanctity of oaths; except this time he is not alone but in the company of the subjects he has offended. It is ironical that in this guise he can lament that the other symbols of his office are no longer his to claim: his throne, sceptre, the anointing balm that has been washed off, signs of fealty now shown to Edward (III. i. 13-20). Henry is now the "quondam king" (III. i. 23), who cannot answer the Keepers' question about who he is:

More than I seem, and less than I was born to:
 A man at least, for less I should not be;
 And men may talk of kings, and why not I? (III. i. 56-8)

In his mind, Henry is a king and no king; his identity has now become as confusing as his outward garment is a contradiction of the essential role he was born with. To the Keepers, it is not enough that Henry speaks as "if" he were a king; they want to see the role played out in his person:

2 *Keeper* Ay, but thou talk'st as if thou wert a king.
King Henry Why, so I am, in mind; and that's enough.
 2 *Keeper* But if thou be a king, where is thy crown?
King Henry My crown is in my heart, not on my head;
 Not deck'd with diamonds and Indian stones,
 Nor to be seen: my crown is call'd content;
 A crown it is that seldom kings enjoy. (III. i. 59-65)

Henry's answers are correct, in a rather complex way. First, they are right for the kind of person he thinks he has now become; secondly, he is incapable of wearing the material crown because he has been ruled solely by his spiritual nature (hence his "content"); thirdly, he does not wear the crown because it is now on Edward's head!

The oaths of allegiance which Henry grieves that the Keepers have broken are a further indication of how far he has become distanced from his kingly role. The role of king has become so debased that for the Keepers it is now merely a matter of argument and discussion to determine to whom they owe their loyalties; for Henry, who naturally still believes himself to be the true king, it is not as easy to accept that fealty has become a matter of debate:

King Henry And tell me then, have you not broke your oath?

I Keeper No, we were subjects but while your were king.

King Henry Why, am I dead? do I not breathe a man?

Ah, simple men, you know not what you sware.

(III. i. 79-82)

For the remaining lines of the scene, the word "king" is not a secure linguistic structure of meaning. The role is said to be played by several men: Henry calls himself the "King" who, however, "shall be commanded", yet he calls the Keepers "kings" whom he will obey (III. i. 91-2); the Keepers think themselves true subjects to "King" Edward (93); in God's name and the "king's", the Keepers capture Henry (96). And Henry's final lines are a dizzying variation on the confused conceptions of kingship illustrated by the play, an appropriate outcome of the swaying of obedience in the wind of loyalty that he has just finished illustrating with a feather a few lines earlier:

In God's name, lead; your king's name be obey'd:

And what God will, that let your king perform:

And what he will, I humbly yield unto. (III. i. 98-100)

The rest of the play puts into the action these swaying allegiances: at one time it shows Edward king, Henry deposed, then Henry king again, Edward deposed, Edward king once more, and Henry lost for ever;⁴¹ Edward comfortable as king and Richard

⁴¹It is interesting to see how the speech-prefixes (which may or may not be authorial) and stage directions in the Folio are emblematic of this back and forth movement. *Edward* becomes *King Edward* at 2026, *King* at 2031, *the King* at 2257, *K. Edw.* at 2263, just *Edward* again at 2491, and *King Edward* finally at 2855. *Henry* and

plotting in the background to make that kingship a short-lived one. Warwick, the "kingmaker", has much control over this game of "musical kings" to which the authority of royalty has degenerated. For Warwick, kingship is a creative process; as he made Edward a king so he threatens to unmake him for breaking his marriage oath (a curious reminiscence of Henry's error of judgement in part one):

It was the chief that rais'd him to the crown.
 And I'll be chief to bring him down again:
 Not that I pity Henry's misery,
 But seek revenge on Edward's mockery. (III. iii. 262-5)

Edward has failed, too, to "act" like a king, which accounts for Warwick's feeling that he has brought "mockery" to his new role as monarch. When Warwick confronts Edward it is an easy (if perhaps comical) matter to threaten an alteration of the role in which Edward has been remiss:

Warwick Here is the Duke.
 King Edward Why, Warwick, when we parted,
 Thou call'dst me King.
 Warwick Ay, but the case is alter'd.
 When you disgrac'd me in my embassy,
 Then I degraded you from being King,
 And come now to create you Duke of York.
 Alas, how should you govern any kingdom
 That know not how to use ambassadors,
 Nor how to be contented with one wife,
 Nor how to use your brothers brotherly,
 Nor how to study for the people's welfare,
 Nor how to shroud yourself from enemies? (IV. iii. 30-40)

Edward counters with his belief that he "will always bear himself a king" (IV. iii. 45) - at least in his mind, despite Fortune's malice. It is Edward now who must be king

King are used interchangeably for King Henry.

of an inward "content", for Warwick takes off Edward's crown to make him again the Duke of York, a pretender king:

Warwick Then, for his mind, be Edward England's king;

Takes off his crown.

But Henry now shall wear the English crown

And be true King indeed; thou-but the shadow. (IV. iii. 48-50)

Characteristically, Henry sees his restoration as an act of God's intervention, but the first thing he does in his king-again state is to hide behind Fortune's "spite", and abdicate his authority to Warwick at once. Save for the wearing of the crown, Warwick will be king:

But, Warwick, after God, thou set'st me free.

... And chiefly therefore I thank God and thee;

He was the author, thou the instrument

Therefore, that I may conquer Fortune's spite.

By living low where Fortune cannot hurt me,

And that the people of this blessed land

May not be punish'd with my thwarting stars,

Warwick, although my head still wear the crown,

I here resign my government to thee.

For thou art fortunate in all thy deeds. (IV. vi. 16-25)

Clarence and Warwick will "yoke together, like a double shadow | To Henry's body, and supply his place" (IV. vi. 49-50) while the King "will lead a private life | And in devotion spend [his] latter days | To sin's rebuke and [his] Creator's praise" (IV. vi. 42-4). Outside of Henry's pious visions, things are never quite that simple. Henry's tragedy is that, no matter what he does, he fails to realize that he can *never* escape from being the King, nor, ironically enough, can he separate himself from the sanctified role which he was ordained to play, no matter how inept he is in its performance. For the signs and qualities of true kingship, Henry has exchanged a saint's virtues; but they are not enough to give him the allegiance of his subjects:

My pity hath been balm to heal their wounds,
 My mildness hath allay'd their swelling griefs,
 My mercy dried their water-flowing tears;

Then why should they love Edward more than me?
 No, Exeter, these graces challenge grace:
 And, when the lion fawns upon the lamb,

The lamb will never cease to follow him. (IV. viii. 41-50)

It is immediately after this speech that Henry is taken prisoner to the Tower, and Edward firmly (if temporarily) established as king. In his last scene in the play Henry is still the "bookish king", as Richard finds him in his cell "hard" at study. Henry sees his confrontation with the "devil" Richard as that of the lamb and the wolf; he casts the roles appropriately enough, for he is in a role-playing mood: "What scene of death hath Roscius now to act?" (V. vi. 7-10). He sees himself, too, as Daedalus, his son as Icarus, York as Minos, Edward and Richard as the sea.

The drama is coming to an end with the sounds of this "tragic history" which Henry himself recounts, but says he can barely allow his ears to hear (V. vi. 28). Richard murders the King in the midst of his prophesying, a speech centred on the deformity of Richard's person and the "much more slaughter" he will commit after this. The peculiar gift of prophecy which the chroniclers attribute to Henry is utilized here, as it was when he blessed Richmond as "England's hope" in IV. vi. His end is the end of most saints' lives: the lamb has been led to the slaughter in another of history's great sacrifices. And here Richard plays his role too, for he says at the moment he stabs the king that "For this, amongst the rest, was I ordain'd" (V. vi. 58). Henry has been, as John Danby points out, "the regulating principle of a traditional society. He is mercy, pity, love, human kindness, reinforced by God's ordinating fiat. It is this which Richard kills".⁴² Henry remains true to his character with his very last words, in which he asks forgiveness for himself and for his murderer.

⁴²*Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature*, 60.

What the *Henry VI* plays show is what happens to a "traditional society" when the king plays only a partial role, guided mainly by the principles of which Danby speaks. For the loss of the realm which is incurred by the way Henry has played his role, the dying Clifford offers a suitable lament: "Henry, hadst thou sway'd as kings should do, | Or as thy father, and his father did . . . I, and ten thousand in this luckless realm | Had left no mourning widows for our death" (II. vi. 14-19). The next time King Henry makes his "appearance" it is as the dead body of the "Poor key-cold Figure of a holy king" in *Richard III* (I. ii. 5), where use of the word, Figure, denotes all the connotations of an archetype which has failed.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RICHARD III AND THE ANTI-CHRIST KING

The subject of this chapter is the most celebrated evil king in Tudor history. The purpose of the initial discussion is to demonstrate that the ideology discussed in this thesis concerning the Christian role-playing of the king applies also, in a special way, to an evil monarch. Before going to Bosworth, Richard is confronted with a blast of outrage from his mother, the Duchess of York:

King Richard And came I not at last to comfort you?

Duchess No, by the holy Rood, thou know'st it well:

Thou cam'st on earth to make the earth my hell.

A grievous burden was thy birth to me;

Tetchy and wayward was thy infancy;

Thy school-days frightful, desp'rate, wild, and furious;

Thy prime of manhood daring, bold, and venturous;

Thy age confirm'd, proud, subtle, sly and bloody;

More mild, but yet more harmful, kind in hatred.

What comfortable hour canst thou name

That ever grac'd me with thy company? (IV. iv. 165-75)

The gloss in the Arden edition to "the holy Rood" (l. 166) reads: "the Cross. More than an oath is intended, for in the ensuing lines (especially l. 167) the Duchess describes the birth and growth not of God Incarnate, but of the Anti-Christ."¹ That Richard is a devil, a Vice, and a Machiaveli are indisputable aspects of the dramatic representation Shakespeare has given him, and have frequently been remarked on by critics. That he is also a king in the aspects of kingship so far investigated in this thesis, and a dramatic perversion of the image of the Christ-imitator-king is another

¹*Richard III*, 283.

matter altogether, and one that needs further investigation, especially in light of Antony Hammond's observations about the irrational aspects of Richard's behaviour and,

the evil that the other characters react to in varying degrees of fright and horror. Such evil is also characteristic of the devil, and Richard is called 'devil' often enough in the play; at various points (eg. IV. iv. 419) he seems to accept the identification. His behaviour is as relentlessly anti-Christian as he can manage, his favourite device being 'With odd old ends stol'n forth of Holy Writ, | [To] seem a saint, when most I play the devil' (I. iii. 337-8). He determinedly inverts all Christian values: he hates his fellow man (but 'Alack, I love myself'); he is an entirely accomplished hypocrite; he is brutal, vicious, egocentric, cruel and unnatural, conceited, blasphemous: the perfect example of the anti-Christ.

Yet he has become King, and dares to call himself 'the Lord's anointed' (IV. iv. 151). His moral perversity afflicts now, not only family and friends, but the entire nation.²

Richard III explores Richard's character and function as a king, and presents the ways these are grounded in the Elizabethan Christology of kingship -- which, by its very theological nature, had to theorize its *contrary*, and devise an image for a king who did the opposite of imitating Christ. Every time a king is described in terms of divine mimesis, his opposite, any usurping pretender or enemy to the rightful monarch, is described in terms of the devil, Satan, or in other words, the anti-Christ,³ who also plays a role in fulfilling a divine function. To have a usurper on the throne was to have the rule not of a real, but of a mockery king, whose anti-Christian

²*Ibid.*, 102-3.

³Defined this way, the anti-Christ could have applied (and often did) to anyone who expressed a *view* opposed to the monarchy. Catholics and extreme Papists (especially Jesuits) were often referred to as anti-Christ by Anglican and Puritan preachers, as were those sects who denied the Incarnation. For the relationship between the usurper and the anti-Christ see *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*: "the man of sin" of 2 Thess. 2. 3-10, who will appear after a great apostasy before 'the day of the Lord' and sit in God's sanctuary, claiming to be God, but will be finally slain by Christ". The imitation implied in this definition is the important aspect of Richard's demonic role as king in the play.

functions were seen as fulfilling a very specific kind of role which he, too, must play. Acts of usurpation, usually accompanied by the dreaded scourge of rebellion, were directly contrary not only to the ever-desired harmony of a maintained order, but also to Heaven itself. Robert Tynley told his congregation in 1608 that

Hell is not more opposite to Heaven, then the bearing of armes by the subject against his Prince, . . . to depose Kings, to depose of their dominions, to take the Crowne from one, and give it to another . . . these and such like . . . overthrow the very foundations of Kingdomes and Commonweales.⁴

Tynley had inherited the thoughts of a generation before him who believed that any threat to the sovereign was a diabolical one. In their prefatory letter to Queen Elizabeth, the translators of the Geneva Bible prayed that the Queen might be strong in matters religious, so that she could protect God's "spiritual Temple" against the "crafte and force of Satan", for

thogh Satan lay all his power and craft together to hurt and hinder the Lordes building: yet be you assured that God wil fight from heauen against this great dragon, the ancient serpent, which is called the deuill and Satan.⁵

It is apparent from this passage that the translators believed that God could protect the monarch against her enemies. That God, too, played a role in the destruction of the anti-Christ will prove significant when Richmond's function in *Richard III* is discussed later on. Holinshed's *Chronicles* end on a religious note, which, like the Geneva Bible, also asks for God's blessing on the "pretious iewell" of the realm "euen good queene Elizabeth to saue as the apple of his eie: to protect hir with the target

⁴Two Learned Sermons, 19-20.

⁵Epistle to the Moste Vertuous and Noble Qyene Elisabet, ii^r-iii^v.

of his power against all the pernicious practises of satan's instruments".⁶ In a treatise which advocated support for Elizabeth, despite the unfortunate experience of woman's rule under Bloody Mary, John Aylmer, in 1559, urged her merits as a preserver of England from the dangers of the anti-Christ Pope, which had threatened during her predecessor's reign:

Let us heare God rather then man, which crieth and commaundeth upon payne of dampnation, to obey his lieutenant and supreme officer: Against whom we can not kicke, but we must be Gods enemies, false subiects, and Satans seruantes . . . Let us dayle call to God . . . for her [Elizabeth] preservation and long lyfe: that she may many yeares cary the sworde of our defence, and there with cutt of the head of the Hidra, the Antichrist of Rome; in suche sort, as it neuer growe againe in this realme of England.⁷

After the Northern Rebellion the country was thrown into a great furore concerning the diabolic nature of violent opposition against a prince's rule. John Bridges wrote to the Queen, in his Epistle Dedicatory to *The Supremacie of Christian Princes*, that

There is no countrouersie at this day betwixt vs and the enemies of the gospel more impugned, than this one of the Supremacie, nor more bookes compiled, more libels scattered, more vaunts made of truth on their partie, more slaunders deuised of oure doctrine, and your Maiesties Title, more secrete conspiracies and open treasons against your Royal person and state of the Realme: than our aduersaries make, only for this Supremacie. Shall Sathan then vse al this double diligence in promoting the pride & tyrannie of his Antichrist, the man of sinne, the foreigne usurper of all Christian kingdoms: and shall the children of God be negligent in defence of the kingdom of Christ, of the Lordes anoynted,

⁶*Chronicles*, 1592. Elizabeth had lived a good part of her life in the fear of assassination at the hands of Mary's Catholic supporters. It is not surprising to find repeated pleas for the Queen's protection against such "ungodly" forces.

⁷*An harborowe for Faithfull and Trewe Subiects*, R3^r.

of the dutifull office and lawfull authoritie of their naturall
Sovereigne?⁸

Bridges later speaks of the confidence that he feels that God will preserve the Queen from her enemies: "God workes with you, God fights for you, God hath taken your hart into his handes, that haue taken his quarel into yours".⁹ This is significant for Richmond's arrival at Bosworth, because the forces who have God on their side -- as, in the Chronicles and the play, Richmond's forces surely have -- are engaged in fighting a king devoid of any sanctity. The great homily on the evils of rebellion casts the forces of light and darkness into the context of a war fought between Heaven and Hell:

For as Heaven is a place of good obedient subiects, and Hell the prison, and dungeon of Rebels against GOD, and their Prince: so is that Realme happy, where most obedience of subiects doth appeare, being the very figure of Heaven: and contrariwise where most Rebellions, and Rebels be, there is the expresse similitude of Hell, and the Rebels themselves are the very figure of fiends, and devils, and their Captaine the ungracious patterne of Lucifer, and Sathan, the prince of darknesse.¹⁰

From this passage and others, the use of mimetic terms ("figure" and "pattern") makes it evident that the usurping anti-Christ is an imitator and a role-player, of a kind and degree to affect the well-being of the whole nation. Such a fear is expressed in Baldwin's dedication to the *Mirror for Magistrates*, which could very well describe Richard's usurpation: "what a foul shame were it for any now to take upon them the name and office of God, and in their doings show themselves devils".¹¹ The more this sort of picture develops in Renaissance ideology, the more the figure of Shakespeare's Richard III presents itself as the terrifying exemplar of the worst

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁰ *An Homily Against Disobedience, and Wilfull Rebellion*, 296.

¹¹ 645.

imaginings of theory come to life. If a prince should be ruled by the wickedness of evil, it is disaster for himself and for the country: "an evil prince", wrote Erasmus,

who is like a plague to his country, is the incarnation of the devil, who has great power joined with his wickedness. All his resources to the very last, he uses for the undoing of the human race.¹²

It followed, as Erasmus quite rightly points out, that "if it is divine to play the part of king, then nothing more suits the tyrant than to follow the ways of him who is most unlike God".¹³ The kind of self-love, and his own loveless nature (which Richard professes) is one of Erasmus's definition of a tyrant, for "he who looks to the good of his people is a king; he who is concerned for himself is a tyrant".¹⁴ To achieve his ambitions, the usurper "acts" his way to the throne, as indeed Richard does as early as 3 Henry VI. King James described the usurping tyrant who,

(thinking his greatest honour a felicitie to consist in atteyning *per fas, vel nefas*, to his ambitious pretenses) thinketh neuer himself sure, but by the dissention and factions among his people, & counterfaiting the Sainte while hee once creepe in credit.¹⁵

When the king's governance failed to imitate God's divine rule, then the king and the country could suffer divine retribution. The Homilies preached that if a prince was to "swarve from the example of the heavenly government, the greater the plague is he of GODS wrath, and punishment by GODS iustice unto that Countrey, and people, over whom God for their sinnes hath placed such a prince, and Governour".¹⁶

¹²*Education of a Christian Prince*, 157.

¹³*Ibid.*, 174.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 190.

¹⁵*Basilikon Doron*, 30.

¹⁶*An Homily Against Disobedience, and Wilfull Rebellion*, 278.

But tyrants were sent by God for a reason, and they act as His instruments to fulfill some sort of providential plan. For "Christ taught us plainly, that even the wicked rulers have their power, and authority from God".¹⁷ "As tyranny could proceed only by God's consent, commonly the divine rationale for permitting it was some form of retribution". The role of the tyrant was the means by which the "sins of the people" were to be punished, and thus God "maketh a wicked man to rule".¹⁸ The collective guilt of the country which permitted the Lancastrian usurpation, the moral abdication of Henry VI, the Yorkist rebellion, the many oaths broken along the way, were frequently perceived as part of a cancer which had been growing since the deposition of Richard II, which Richard III is elected to cure through his role as anti-Christ. As Hammond points out, Richard's death

is the one act of sacrifice needed to redeem England from her accumulated sins (as Richmond's final soliloquy makes clear); it restores England to grace. The anti-Christ takes the sins of the world on his shoulders not for altruistic, but for selfish reasons; he does not offer himself as ransom, but is pushed, fighting and shouting, to his fate.¹⁹

It is important to stress that Richard's villainy is an act of choice: "I am determined"²⁰

¹⁷*An Exhortation Concerning Good Order, and Obedience to Rulers, and Magistrates*, in *Certain Sermons*, 72.

¹⁸*An Homily Against Disobedience, and Wilfull Rebellion*, 280. The role of the tyrant was a theological commonplace. See St. Thomas Aquinas *On the Governance of Rulers (De Regimine Principum)* trans. Gerald B. Phelan: "by divine permission wicked men receive power to rule as a punishment for sin, as the Lord says by the Prophet Osee (XIII. ii): 'I will give thee a king in my wrath' . . . Sin must therefore be done away with that the scourge of tyrants may cease", 60. Cf. St. Augustine, *Grace and Free Will*: "Who shall not tremble at these judgements, where God worketh even in the hearts of evil men whatsoever he will, and yet rendreth to them according to their deservings", Chapter 20. Also the *Mirror for Magistrates*: "Against the tyrant, God permits the rebel to rage and war to threaten, conscience torments him, his kingdom may be taken from him, and by God's doom an ignominious death awaits him", 52.

¹⁹Arden *Richard III*, 107.

²⁰See Hammond's note to I. i. 30: "As D.S. Berkeley (*SLQ* 14 (1963), 483-4) points out, the verb can be read in the passive voice, implying that Richard's role has been determined by providence. *OED* determine v. III. 14b." The double irony is subtle here; it combines Richard's act of choice with a divine scheme of events in which he is the

to prove a villain"; he is an anti-Christ king because he has chosen to play this role. It is through this means that theological-political theory would claim that God is seen as bringing about good in the play. As Margaret comments in *3 Henry VI*, "For though usurpers sway the rule awhile, | Yet heavens are just, and time suppresseth wrongs" (III. iii. 76-7).

From More, via Hall and Holinshed, Shakespeare was able to gather the impression of a King who played a specific role as an actor in a vast providential plan. Holinshed described how when Richard began to establish his kingdom in blood, and grew hated of the nobles, he also began the process of "abridging both the line of his life, and the time of his regiment: for God will not haue bloudthirstie tyrants daies prolonged, but will cut them off in their ruffe".²¹ Richard's villainies were actions which could not be tolerated by God for long, "neither would the Lord suffer him in his bloudthirstines to abuse the holie and diuine estate of a prince by the cruel title of tyrannie".²² The battle of Bosworth was the last great act of redemptive sacrifice for which Richard was ordained:

kyng Richard (whiche was appoynted nowe to finyſhe his last laboure by the very devyne justice and providence of God, whiche called him to condigne punyshement for his scelerate merites and myscheveous desertes) marshed to . . . Bosworth.²³

Richard's end is an event which "finished his time" in "the best death and the most righteous" because it was, according to Holinshed, "his owne".²⁴ Richard's reign had

principal player.

²¹*Chronicles*, 723.

²²*Ibid.*, 737.

²³Hall, *Union*, fol. liiii^r.

²⁴*Chronicles*, 734. Richard is punished by divine justice: "we may consider in what sort the ambitious desire to rule and gouerne in the house of Yorke, was punished by Gods iust providence . . . so it came to passe, that the Lords vengeance appeared more heauie towards the same than towards the other, not ceasing till the whole issue male of the said Richard duke of Yorke was extinguished. For such is

been guided by his diabolic nature; it was not surprising to read of him that "such a lord is Lucifer when he is entered into the hart of a proud prince, giuen to couetousnesse and crueltie".²⁵

The picture of the anti-Christ king emerges when the chroniclers combine the wickedness of Richard's deeds with the appearance of his person. Holinshed does this in a symbolic way towards the end of the history, by alluding to the emblem of the boar which was Richard's badge: "better had it beene for him to haue contented his heart with the protectorship, than to have cast up his snout, or lifted up his hornes of ambition so high".²⁶ Richard's outward deformity was a sign of his inner depravity and moral ineptitude:

As Richard was small and little of stature so was he of body grrately deformed, the one shoulder higher then the other, his face small but his countenance was cruel, and such, that a man at the first aspect would judge it to savor and smel of malice, fraude, and deceite: when he stode musyng he woulde byte and chaw besely his nether lippe, as who sayd, that hys fyerce nature in his cruell bodye alwaies chafed, sturred and was ever unquiete.²⁷

The king's countenance now takes on a new significance when it is applied to Richard's appearance, and Shakespeare makes much use of it in the play. It is not the bright, sanctified light that was said to shine in a king's face which manifested itself in Richard, but rather the decay of moral corruption.²⁸

gods iustice, to leaue not unrepentant wickednesse unpunished, as especiallie in this caitife Richard the third", *Ibid.*, 761.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 738.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 761.

²⁷Hall, *Union*, fol. lix^r.

²⁸A great deal has been written trying to establish the "true" extent of Richard's deformities and appearance; more useful is a recent article by Scott Colley, which examines the ways the image of King Herod provided a model and historical context for Richard III. He gathers the evidence of the contorted and twisted bodies of

To add to the picture of Richard's perversity as King, the chroniclers deliberate on how Richard's tyranny has totally reshaped his character through a "metamorphosis" of demonic subversion. Holinshed creates this speech for More's patron, Bishop Morton of Ely, to describe how

the good qualities of the late protector, and now called king, [are] so violated and subverted by tyrannie, so changed and altered by usurped authoritie, so clouded and shadowed by blind and insatiable ambition: yea, and so suddenlie (in manner by a metamorphosis) transformed from politike ciuilitie, to detestable tyrannie.²⁹

Richard's oration to his army is ironically cast also in diabolical terms: he apologizes for his wickedness by blaming it upon evil temptation:

And although in the adeption and obtaining of the garland, I being seduced, and prouoked by sinister counsell, and diabolicall temptation, did commit a wicked and detestable act: yet I haue with strict penance and salt tears (as I trust) expiated & cleerlie purged the same offense.³⁰

The "tears" Richard was able to show are indicative in the history, as they are in the play, of how adept he was at playing any part to achieve his ends. The devil hath power to assume a pleasing shape, and the sources show that Richard was nothing if not an actor:

He was close and secrete, a depe dissimuler, lowlye of countenance,

Herods from illuminated manuscripts, stained glass windows, and roof bosses. See "Richard III and Herod", *SQ*, XXXVII (Winter 1986) 451-58.

²⁹Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 737.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 756.

arrogante of herte, outwardely familer where he inwardely hated, not lettynge to kisse whom he thought to kill.³¹

"Deceit", "subtle", "mockish", "counterfeit" "dissembler", "feign" are words constantly used in the Chronicles to describe Richard's behaviour. To his brother, Clarence, Richard affects an affectionate relationship but actually purposes his death, "whiche thyng in all apparaunce he resisted, although he inwardly mynded it".³² Through "deceitful clemency" he tried to gain the good will of the people in open displays of forgiveness "which thing the common people rejoiced at and praised, but wise men took it for a vanity."³³ "Mooued of an hypocriticall shew of counterfeit pitie", Richard caused a tomb to be made for the king whom he murdered.³⁴ He also assumes the classical roles of evil emperors; Richmond called him both a "Tarquine and Nero: Ye a tyraunt more than Nero".³⁵

Richard had attained the throne by massive misuse of his role as Protector, in order -- as Holinshed described it in an interesting phrase -- "to haue wandered in princelynesse".³⁶ His nemesis is the figure of Richmond, who in all respects is presented in the Chronicles as an ideal king and the country's Saviour. Richmond, too, has his divine role to play. Henry VI had "shewed before, the chaunce that should happen, that this . . . Henry so ordeined by God, should in tyme to come (as he did in deede) have and enioye the kyngdome, and the whole rule of the realme."³⁷ In his oration to his soldiers, Richmond spoke with the confidence of having God on his side, and was sure that

³¹Hall, *Union*, fol. iv.

³²*Ibid.*, fol. ii^r.

³³Sir Thomas More, *The History of Richard III*, 84.

³⁴Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 761.

³⁵Hall, *Union*, fol. lvi^r.

³⁶*Chronicles*, 761.

³⁷Hall, *Union*, fol. CCxi^v.

no enterprise can be of more vertue, bothe by the lawes divine and civile, for what can be more honest, goodly, or Godly quarell then to fight against a Captayne, beyng an homicide and murderer of hys awne bloud and progenye?³⁸

Richmond was the instrument by which "God appoynteth the good to confounde the yll",³⁹ an angel in his kingly countenance and more than a "terrestriall personage".⁴⁰ Against Richard and the forces of darkness, Richmond was the vehicle of goodness and light whose role was to kill the anti-Christ whose sin had been one that had "violated, and broken bothe the lawe of GOD & man".⁴¹

In the play, the ideal of kingship which Richard usurps becomes in his person as perverted and distorted as his own body. His father, York, had provided the helpful paradigm that the way to achieve the crown is to become a kind of devil; Richard is an apt pupil: the process starts in *Henry VI*, where he establishes himself in the role of the Vice. Robert G. Hunter has remarked on the special power of Richard's first soliloquy in III. ii. 124-95: it "dramatizes the creation of a self . . . Shakespeare not only creates Richard, he has him created and doubly created, Richard is brought into existence by himself."⁴² In the seventy-one lines he shares with the audience, Richard makes his designs about the crown known by ruminating on a series of sacred and profane possibilities, which are perversely intertwined in his mind. He emerges in the process as a self-created artefact -- an actor, who will use mimetic means to attain the "golden time" he looks for (127). Not to kill all those who stand in his way to the throne is to "but dream on sovereignty" (134); since love forswore him in his mother's womb, the world affords him no possibilities of amorous affection (151-3); Nature had guaranteed his loveless character "with some bribe" to place Deformity on his back to mock his body (155-8). And therefore, since the world affords him no joy,

³⁸*Ibid.*, fol. lvi^r.

³⁹*Ibid.*, fol. lvi^r.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, fol. lv^v.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, fol. lvi^r.

⁴²*Shakespeare and the Mystery of God's Judgements*, 82.

he will "make [his] heaven to dream upon the crown"; this world while he lives will be "but hell | Until my misshap'd trunk that bears this head | Be round impaled with a glorious crown" (165-71). But as yet in the soliloquy he still does not know how to achieve his ends, until like a conjuring trick when the new self is created right before the eyes of the audience, the idea presents itself: he will "play" his way to the throne; he will "smile, and murder whiles [he] smile", he will "wet his cheeks with artificial tears", "frame [his] face to all occasions", "play the orator", "deceive more slyly than Ulysses", "change shapes" and set the "murderous Machiavel to school" (182-93).

By the end of *Henry VI*, Richard has been firmly established as the figure of the role-playing devil. He kills the King with relish: "Down, down to hell; and say I sent thee thither" (V. vi. 67). His last soliloquy sees a new creation of self -- the proclamation of the supreme individual who is however both loveless and isolated:

Then, since the heavens have shap'd my body so,
 Let hell make crook'd my mind to answer it.
 I have no brother, I am like no brother;
 And this word 'love', which greybeards call divine,
 Be resident in men like one another,
 And not in me: I am myself alone. (V. vi. 78-83)

He understands his deformity as a sign to "snarl, and bite, and play the dog" (V. vi. 76-7); and his "prophecies" that he will "buzz abroad", concerning Edward's and Clarence's fates, are an ironic perversion of the prophesying qualities of the King he has just murdered. He starts to play his role immediately; in his aside he reveals how he will kiss Edward's new infant son "as Judas kiss'd his master | And cried 'All hail!' when as he meant all harm" (V. vii. 33-4).

Shakespeare elaborated upon the Richard of *Henry VI* by presenting in *Richard III* the self-dramatization of the Vice as king. The Vice's well-known characteristics of "homiletic showman, intriguer extraordinary, and master of ceremonies"⁴³ are the

⁴³Bernard Spivack, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil*, 151. Of the sixty-odd characteristics of the 'formal Vice' listed by Peter Happe: "The Vice and the Popular Theatre 1547-80", see Hammond, *Richard III*, 101. Richard displays no fewer than 22 of

hallmarks of Richard's inordinate evil. Richard himself establishes his identity as the "villain" in the very beginning of the play. But he is a villain in the guise of saintly colours:

But then I sigh, and, with a piece of Scripture,
Tell them that God bids do good for evil:
And thus I clothe my naked villainy
With odd old ends stol'n forth of Holy Writ,
And seem a saint, when most I play the devil. (I. iii. 334-8)

Henry VI played a saintly king because his holiness was grounded in the sincerity of his character; Richard "seems" a saint because it serves as another role which he can adopt for the mere sake of playing: like the wooer, the lover, concerned brother, puritan statesman, and so on.⁴⁴ More than any other role, however, his saintliness is his most persistent pose, and a symptom of the way he performs his role as the anti-Christ king. Richard the devil and Richard the seeming saint coalesce to make a mockery of the ideal, the man who was supposed to assume the true characteristics of the kingly office. For every instance in which Richard is equated with the devil, there is a corresponding number of references to his "saintliness", his role of holy mockery.⁴⁵

There are some seventeen occasions in the play where characters, including Richard himself, describe him as a fiend of hell. To Anne, he is the "dreaded minister of hell", a "foul devil" who has made the "happy earth [his] hell" (I. ii. 46, 50-1). In Richard's scene with Lady Anne alone, there are nine expressions of his demonic character. He gloats that the instruments of his wooing have been "But the plain devil

them.

⁴⁴This chapter is not concerned primarily with the figure of Richard as a role-player, but how that function serves as a comment on the way he aspires to, and performs kingship in the play. For an excellent study of Richard's histrionic capabilities and how they inform the play, see Thomas Van Laan, *Role-playing in Shakespeare*, 137-47. It is interesting to note that Shakespeare's only two studies of evil kings, Richard and Macbeth, are both presented as performing kingship in the terms of the actor's role.

⁴⁵The proportions are roughly 17:18.

and dissembling looks" (I. ii. 241). Margaret (the exorcism "out devil" is forever on her lips) castigates Richard as a "cacodemon" whose "kingdom" is hell (I. iii. 143-4). After Richard assumes the crown and is in effect "the King" in IV. ii, the diabolical attributions increase in frequency and intensity. It has been one thing for the demon to aim at the throne, it is quite another matter now that he is seen roosting in it. Margaret becomes even more a voice of doom in the play, and her invectives even more vigorously descriptive:

From forth the kennel of thy womb hath crept
 A hell-hound that doth hunt us all to death:
 That dog, that had his teeth before his eyes,
 To worry lambs, and lap their gentle blood;
 That excellent grand tyrant of the earth,
 That reigns in galled eyes of weeping souls;
 That foul defacer of God's handiwork
 Thy womb let loose to chase us to our graves. (IV. iv. 47-54)

To Queen Elizabeth, Richard's outrageous wooing for her daughter's hand is a temptation of the devil (IV. iv. 418-20). Richmond describes Richard as a "usurping boar" who "swills . . . warm blood like wash, and makes his trough" in the "embowell'd bosoms" of English subjects (V. iii. 7-10). In his oration to his army, Richard prays for the courageous "spleen of fiery dragons" (V. iii. 351) to fight in a battle if not for victory and Heaven, "then hand in hand to hell!" (V. iii. 313-14). Clearly under Richard's reign as an anti-Christ king, England has in its turn become a hell for all. The succouring help comes from *outside* hell's gates, for it is across the seas and away from England that the saviour Richmond must be fetched.

Not only do the demonic attributions fix Richard as an anti-Christ, but so also does the way he perverts Christian ritual. Richard jokes about Edwards presumed intent to have Clarence "new-Christen'd in the Tower" (I. i. 50): in fact the comfort Richard gives to his brother is an ironic blasphemy against saving grace: "I will deliver you, or else lie for you" (I. i. 115). Here he echoes the role of Christ the deliverer, but Richard's are darker purposes: "Simple, plain Clarence, I do love thee so | That I will shortly send thy soul to Heaven" (I. i. 118-19). He boasts to the audience that he

has had Clarence "cast in darkness" (I. iii. 327), a characteristically evil outcome of his outward show of saintly concern. When Clarence is confronted by the murderers, he relies on his trust that his brother promised to "labour [his] delivery". The First Murderer reiterates Richard's anti-Christian designs: "Why so he doth, when he delivers you | From this earth's thralldom to the joys of Heaven" (I. iv. 236-8). And Clarence is indeed new-christened: his death is made into a parodic inversion of the Eucharist, as his body is "made a sop" with the wine in the malmsey butt (I. iv. 147-9). His murderers have been Richard's instruments, but they, "like Pilate", wish to wash their hands of the deed (I. i. 262-3). The whole scene has been set up and cast into an inverted religious ritual, which helps to establish Richard himself as the inverted ideal of a king later on in the play. Other distortions of religious rites include repentance, in the show of false amity to Margaret (I. iii. 306-8); addresses to God which belie his true intent (I. iii. 136); forgiveness where none is intended (I. iii. 315); shows of prayers and meditations for the purposes of public acceptance (III. vi.) and so on.

Richard's demonic and sacrilegious behaviour is extended by the numerous ways he plays at sainthood. He swears by "Saint John" and "Saint Paul", "holy Paul", "the apostle Paul", and God, often enough in the play. Holy maxims are his trademarks in deception, alongside his verbal engagement in theological discussions. He accuses Grey of possessing "nor honesty nor grace" (I. iii. 54-5) and he knowingly tells Margaret that God Himself has "plagu'd [her] bloody deed" (I. iii. 181). Edward's joy at securing family peace and amity is undercut by Richard's ironic "A blessed labour" (II. i. 50-6); he continues in the same speech to appear as an advocate of peace-making:

If I unwittingly, or in my rage,
Have aught committed that is hardly borne
By any in this presence, I desire
To reconcile me to his friendly peace:
Tis death to me to be at enmity;
I hate it, and desire all good men's love. (II. i. 57-62)

He thanks God for his Christian humility, and in a massive display of pity, sheds tears for the dead Hastings, a "Christian" whom Richard "Made him [his] book, wherein [his] soul recorded | The history of all her secret thoughts" (III. v. 24-8).

But the scene which shows the devil-saint antithesis at its height is that in which Richard agrees to become king (III. vii). Buckingham coaches him to appear with a prayer-book in his hand, and to stand between two churchmen in order that the "holy descant" played for the crowd will ingratiate Richard to them (III. vii. 45-50). Richard is "Divinely bent to meditation; | And in worldly suits would not be mov'd | To draw him from his holy exercise" (III. vii. 61-3). With Buckingham's help, Richard's "saintly demeanour is offered to the people as a sign of his capacity to reign as king: "Happy were England, would this virtuous Prince | Take on his Grace the sovereignty thereof" (III. vii. 76-8). He appears, holding his prayer-book, between two Bishops, the "props of virtue for a Christian Prince"; his complete accoutrements are the "True ornaments to know a holy man" (III. vii. 94-8). The whole scene is a carefully staged sham, a parody of the *Liber Regalis* where the crowd, gathered in church, are asked to accept the king as their monarch. It was indeed necessary for a Christian king to show his religious zeal, but Richard merely uses the form of "Christian zeal" as part of his scheme to attain the crown. The richness of double ironies in this scene underlines the mockery Richard makes of kingship generally. He refuses the crown, seeming "not to be easily won", in order for it to be thrust upon him.⁴⁶ He is in truth, as he tells the crowd, "unfit for majesty" (III. vii. 206), because his "defects" are indeed "So mighty and so many" (III. vii. 159). He says what is appropriate, regal self-deprecation,⁴⁷ but every negative thing he says is no more than truth.

In his guise of saintliness which he adopts as appropriate in a candidate for kingship, Richard plays the kind of role which More described as "king's games", "played upon scaffolds":

⁴⁶There is a parallel scene in *Julius Caesar* (I. ii. 235-47) where Casca recounts how Antony offers the crown to Caesar three times: "he put it by once; but for all that, to my thinking, he would fain have had it. Then he offered it to him again; then he put it by again; but to my thinking, he was very loath to lay his fingers off it. And then he offered it the third time. He put it the third time by; and still as he refus'd it, the rabblement hooted, and clapp'd their chopt hands, and threw up their sweaty night-caps . . . because Caesar refus'd the crown".

⁴⁷As does Malcolm, in *Macbeth*, IV. iii.

For at the consecration of a bishop, every man woteth well, by the paying for his bulls, that he purposeth to be one, and though he pay for nothing else. And yet must he be twice asked whether he will be bishop or no, and he must twice say nay, and at the third time take it as compelled thereunto by his own will. And in a stage play all the people know right well that he that playeth the sowdaine is percase a sowter. Yet if one should can so little good to show out of season what acquaintance he hath with him and call him by his own name while he standeth in his majesty, one of his tormentors might hap to break his head, and worthy, for marring of the play. And so they said that these matters be kings' games, as it were, stage plays, and for the more part played upon scaffolds, in which poor men be but lookers-on. And they that wise be will meddle no farther. For they that sometime step up and play with them, when they cannot play their parts, they disorder the play and do themselves no good.⁴⁸

But in all this Richard has served the actor's function (presenting the false as more attractive than the true) and his attractiveness as an evil character has something to do with the tempting attractiveness of evil in general, and the way he plays the role of devil-saint over all.

Richard advises the young Prince Edward that he has a lot to learn about trusting outward appearances:

Nor more can you distinguish of a man
Than of his outward show, which -- God He knows --
Seldom or never jumpeth with the heart (III. i. 9-11).

Hastings should have heard and heeded this advice: he makes a gross error of judgement as far as this point concerns Richard's own appearance: "I think there's never a man in Christendom | Can lesser hide his love or hate than he. | For by his face straight shall you know his heart", III. iv. 51-3. It is one of the most outrageous

⁴⁸Sir Thomas More, *The History of Richard III*, 82-3.

of his ironies that Richard should talk about how the outward nature informs or does not inform the inner man. A king's countenance was part of his role and a sign of "indued" grace; as the King, Richard's deformity serves as a sign of how graceless he is as a monarch. Not only is Richard's appearance a token of how Nature has deserted him, it is also symbolic of his function as anti-Christ. The usual marks of divine sovereignty which a king is said to have stamped upon his countenance become, in Richard, marks of his demonic nature: he is "rudely stamp'd, and want[s] love's majesty" (I. i. 16); Margaret calls him an "elvish-marked, abortive, rooting hog" who was "scal'd" in his birth as the "son of hell" (I. iii. 228-30). She warns Buckingham to stay away from him:

Look when he fawns, he bites; and when he bites
His venom tooth will rankle to the death.
Have not to do with him; beware of him;
Sin, death, and hell have set their marks on him,
And all their ministers attend on him. (I. iii. 290-4)

It may seem surprising, since the figure of Richard's deformity is represented on stage, that there should be such continual reference made to it, by Richard himself, and by numerous other characters. Perhaps it is because Richard's countenance is so important, especially when he becomes the King; the references help to prepare the audience for the grotesque picture of a king whose borrowed robes of majesty do not sit well on his shape.⁴⁹ When he enters from his coronation "*in pomp, crowned*" in Act IV, it must be evident, as Hastings had warned, that "the crown [is] so foul misplac'd" (III. ii. 43). Elizabeth makes a similar observation directly to Richard: "Hid'st thou that forehead with a golden crown ! Where should be branded, if that right were right", the murders he has committed (IV. iv. 140-1). The 1984 RSC production of the play included a coronation scene, in which Antony Sher's contorted body was doubly incumbered with the robes of coronation, and as a result he had to limp and hobble his way to the throne. When the time came to disrobe him for the

⁴⁹It may also be a theatrical expedient. Burbage could have worn a hump and limped and scowled, but the transformations modern make-up can create would have been impractical in an Elizabethan repertory company. If the audience is constantly reminded that Richard is ugly, no doubt this will help them to see him so.

anointing, his naked hunchback was presented to the audience, symbolizing the representation of Richard's coronation as vile distortion of a sacred rite.

Richard's entrance as the newly crowned king is just another role he has decided to put on, but he does it badly:

this important stage imagery calls attention to the role-like qualities of kingship by emphasizing its external histrionic characteristics . . . and for spectators who have watched Richard assume one part after another the effect must surely suggest that he now takes on one more. Almost at once, however, Richard the magnificent actor has become the unkingly king and has begun enacting his fall.⁵⁰

His princely greatness is a malformation in the mirror of Christianity. The Duchess of York is aware of this: lamenting the loss of the two true mirrors of the princeliness of the house of York, her sons Clarence and Edward, she mourns that she has "but one false glass. | That grieves me when I see my shame in him" (II. ii. 50-4).

It is only after Richard becomes the King that he has the young Princes murdered in the Tower: an act, despicable in a man, but a sign of total moral degeneracy in a king.⁵¹ From this point on, his course to the end of the play is marked by his determination to walk in sin and blood, but the jocularity which coloured his actions before he became King is now lacking: "I am in | So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin; | Tear-falling pity dwells not in this eye" (IV. ii. 63-5). The reign of a tyrant is short-lived: the Duchess of York is right to assume that Richard will "die from God's just ordinance", rather than return from Bosworth a "conqueror" (IV. iv. 184-5). And for the life of him, Richard cannot fathom why Richmond is on the march toward England. Richard's identity with the role of king has become so bound up with his self-interest that he now spouts orthodox ideology:

⁵⁰Thomas Van Laan, *Role-playing in Shakespeare*, 145.

⁵¹For the significance of infanticide to the play see Hammond, *Richard III*, I. iii. 178 ff. and note.

Stanley He makes for England, here to claim the crown.

King Richard Is the chair empty? Is the sword unsway'd?

Is the King dead? The empire unpossess'd?

What heir of York is there alive but we?

And who is England's King but great York's heir?

Then tell me, what makes he upon the seas! (IV. iv. 468-73)

Richmond is a focus for the divine intervention which transforms the kingdom in the final events of the drama. But he is not the only focus; in *Richard III* there are more references made to providential order, and divine justice, than in any other history play. As Richard remains unaware of these divine forces at work, other characters express faith in their reality. Act II scene iii is solely devoted to a conversation between the three citizens as they try to interpret the consequences of King Edward's death and voice their forebodings of future events:

3 Citizen Then, masters, look to see a troublous world.

1 Citizen No, no; by God's good grace, his son shall reign. (II. iii. 9-10)

3 Citizen For emulation who shall now be nearest

Will touch us all too near, if God prevent not.

O, full of danger is the Duke of Gloucester (II. iii. 25-7)

3 Citizen All may be well; but if God sort it so

'Tis more than we deserve, or I expect. (II. iii. 36-7)

3 Citizen By a divine instinct men's minds mistrust

Ensuing danger, as by proof we see

The water swell before a boist'rous storm.

But leave it all to God. (II. iii. 42-5)

Clarence's son innocently concludes that "God will revenge" his father's death (II. ii. 14); Buckingham's remembrance of All-Souls' day on the day of his execution is another reminder of how characters' actions determine the just workings of "That high All-seer" (V. ii. 20). Every reference to providence in the play helps to heighten

dramatically the appearance of Richmond as a Saviour. His speeches are instinct with repeated references to God's right and the purpose of Richmond's own role as a divine "Minister of chastisement" (V. iii. 114). In his prayer on the eve of battle he announces himself in the role of God's captain, and acknowledges that victory will be attained by reliance on God alone (V. iii. 109-18). His speeches are based on formulaic principles of how good fights evil, and they have all the strength of a religious logic which is affirmed by the events of the play as a whole, and by Richard's role as anti-Christ in them:

For what is he they follow? Truly, gentlemen,
 A bloody tyrant and a homicide;
 One rais'd in blood, and one in blood establish'd;
 One that made means to come by what he hath,
 And slaughter'd those that were the means to help him;
 A base foul stone, made precious by the foil
 Of England's chair, where he is falsely set;
 One that hath ever been God's enemy,
 Then, if you fight against God's enemy,
 God will, in justice, ward you as his soldiers;
 If you sweat to put a tyrant down,
 You sleep in peace, the tyrant being slain;

 For me, the ransom of my bold attempt
 Shall be this cold corpse on the earth's cold face;
 But if I thrive, the gain of my attempt
 The least of you shall share his part thereof.
 Sound, drums, and trumpets, boldly and cheerfully!
 God, and Saint George! Richmond and victory! (V. iii. 246-71)

The last few lines of his speech gain added religious emphasis with Richmond's allusion to his "ransom" and the "least of you" which firmly place him as a figure of a kingly Christ. The outcome of the battle, and the ensuing bond of peace for which Richmond prays, is determined by "God's fair ordinance" (V. v. 31), and condoned by the ritualistic pageants of the ghosts:

Be cheerful, Richmond, for the wronged souls
Of butcher'd princes fight in thy behalf (V. iii. 122-3)

Virtuous and holy, be thou conqueror:
Harry, that prophesied thou should be King,
Doth comfort thee in thy sleep. Live and flourish!
(V. iii. 129-31)

The wronged heirs of York do pray for thee.
Good angels guard thy battle; live and flourish. (V. iii. 138-9)

Conversely, the ghosts are decidedly less encouraging to the sleeping Richard, whose only course of action, they tell him, is to "despair and die". The state of despair, in all its theological significance, is appropriate for Richard's condition. His body politic as a king has been totally void of substance, for he had symbolically killed it by murdering his way to the crown. By his murderous acts as tyrant, Richard himself has made the body of the country see "these bloody days", and made "poor England weep in streams of blood" (V. v. 36-7). As a result, he fights alone, without the support of the realm which should have made up his spiritual body. The strength of the new body politic rests in Richmond's person as a king. Richard is made frustratingly aware of this when he raves that there "be six Richmonds in the field: Five have I slain today instead of him" (V. iv. 11-12). The isolation Richard feels is concomitant with his anti-Christian behaviour, and his belief that "I am myself alone" is a valid philosophical position. It represents, as Danby points out, "the shift from the absolutes of God and society to the single absolute of the Individual."⁵² And for Richard, the self-proclaimed loveless individual, this is absolutely right, as his last soliloquy attests.⁵³ His engagement in an inner dialogue on the eve of Bosworth

⁵²Shakespeare's *Doctrine of Nature*, 64.

⁵³"One of the most celebrated antecedents for an inner dialogue of this kind is Christ's agony in the garden of Gethsemane. This is enough to re-establish a proper perspective, to prevent sympathies from being excessively engaged. Richard's hesitation before drinking the cup he has chosen is part of his role as anti-Christ; for us to accept him in this role we must perceive him as both comic and callous (or the mind

reveals a conflict between the selves in Richard which cannot be reconciled by his guilty doubts. Because love has deserted him he cannot even inspire love for himself:

What do I fear? Myself? There is none else by;
Richard loves Richard, that is, I and I.

Alack, I love myself. Wherefore? For any good
That I myself have done unto myself?
O no, alas, I rather hate myself
For hateful deeds committed by myself.

Murder, stern murder, in the direst degree;
All several sins, all us'd in each degree,
Throng to the bar, crying all, 'Guilty, guilty!'
I shall despair. There is no creature loves me,
And if I die, no soul will pity me --
And wherefore should they, since that I myself
Find in myself not pity to myself? (V. iii. 183-204)

Richard's stricken conscience in his divided self speaks with "a thousand several tongues" to condemn him as a "villain" -- the role he had originally determined to play for himself in his opening soliloquy. But the "thousand several tongues" are also emblematic of his role-playing character,⁵⁴ and in this respect he has fulfilled the extraordinary qualities of a king's role, though solely in a perverted sense. For Richard's superhumanity has been expressed with the energy of the histrionic qualities of the Vice, and the virtuoso performances of a devil's wit and villainies. In the world of the play and on the stage of the theatre, he has played the anti-Christ king as he had chosen to reflect it in the glass of his own demonic shadow.

would revolt at the sacrifice) yet also sufficiently serious for us to see his acts as important"; see Hammond, *Richard III*, 106-7.

⁵⁴Cf. "Rumour painted full of Tongues", the Prologue to *2 Henry IV*.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE SECOND HENRIAD: "CHANGES FILL THE CUP OF ALTERATION"

The first of Shakespeare's trilogies focussed on the dilemmas which arise when the man who fills the kingly office plays his role ineffectively. Henry VI was a king whose responsibilities and actions in the plays were seen and responded to by other characters in light of the ideology, explored in Part I of this thesis, which defined how a king was supposed to act. *Richard III* offered an inverse picture of the ideal monarch, namely the total perversity of all the ideology of royal-divine role-playing, and the catastrophic consequences of such a rule. The subject of the second Henriad is different again: for the only time in the history plays the focus is primarily on the crown prince rather than on the king. In the other history plays, the roles of the princes are incidental by comparison with that of the monarch. The second Henriad is also unique in that it alone shows a prince succeeding legitimately to the throne, instead of succession by conquest or murder. This succession is the principal subject of the second Henriad: a princely progress, a pre-coronation presentation of how a royal prince, and heir to the throne, grows into his kingly roles. The two parts of *Henry IV* show a kind of tutorial in process in the "education of a Christian prince" which takes Hal from the battle of Shrewsbury, and the quelling of the rebellion in *1* and *2 Henry IV*, to emerge as the conqueror-king of Harfleur and Agincourt in *Henry V*.

In the microcosms of the various worlds of the tavern, the court, and the battlefield, Hal exists in a variety of roles: the prodigal, trickster, thief, son, and soldier. But the function of these roles is mainly to provide the background against which the effect of his stunning translation to King is to be measured. The dramatic stress is on the significance of that royal "alteration", which of itself is shown to convert whatever negative qualities Hal originally possessed, both as a man and as a prince. The coronation in *2 Henry IV* is the major metamorphosis which differentiates what Hal used to be from what he now must be as a king. His actions throughout the

plays are to be understood as the progress toward this monumental rite of passage.¹ His character puts on *all* the kingly roles, in his determination to perform them better than his father. Every role his own son subsequently refused or was unable to play as king, Henry V plays superbly.

Much of the conflict in the two parts of *Henry IV* stems from the questions in various people's minds concerning Henry Bolingbroke's right to rule. He achieved his crown through an act of usurpation, in support of which the Percies engaged in rebellion, and in reaction to which they subsequently become disaffected. Thanks to these irregularities and uncertainties, Hal's own right stands in some question, an insecurity which might be held partly to account for his unprincely behaviour at first. However, he assures the audience that he is merely biding his time until he can, like the sun, break "through the foul and ugly mists" (*1 Henry IV* I. ii. 196). The process of this biding is most important, however: to the common people of the tavern world, to the court, to his father the King, to his soldiers, to the rebels, and to the French, Hal and King Henry V aims to be all things to all men: in effect, he acquaints himself with all aspects of his body politic.

To a certain extent, in writing of the Prince's youthful escapades, Shakespeare was of course fulfilling dramatically the implications of his sources, all of which recount the lively youth of Prince Hal. But the attitude taken towards Hal's japes in the sources is informative. For instance, consider Holinshed's description of Hal's waywardness, which goes on to offer an apology for the Prince against those who had charged him of "unciuill demeanor unseemlie for a prince":

Indeed he was youthfullie giuen, growne to audacitie, and had chosen him companions agreeable to his age; with whome he spent the time in such recreations, exercises, and delights as he fansied. But yet (it should seeme by the report of some writers) that his behauiour was not offensive or at least tending to the damage of anie bodie; sith he had a

¹As Moody Prior points out in *The Drama of Power*, the "critical debate over Prince and Henry V has acquired an independent fascination of its own", 311. The fascination lies however in the reconciliation between the king's past and present rôles, which is bridged and altered in his coronation.

care to auoid dooing wrong, and to tender his affections within the tract of vertue, whereby he opened unto himself a redie passage of good liking among the prudent sort, and was beloued of such as could discerne his disposition, which was in no degree so excessive, as that he deserued in such vehement maner to be suspected.²

Shakespeare does not follow Holinshed into this particular form of whitewashing, but rather chooses a different way of making Hal's wildness relative to his subsequent kingliness. With Hal's first soliloquy the audience is presented with an opportunity to "discerne his disposition" as a prince whose first thoughts are to combine the ideas of role-playing and kingship with a view to his future translation: he will "imitate the sun" which being "wanted he may be more wondered at" (*I Henry IV* I. i. 192-5). He will falsify men's hopes when he "throws off" his loose behaviour

And like bright metal on a sullen ground,
My reformation, glitt'ring o'er my fault,
Shall show more goodly, and attract more eyes
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.
I'll so offend, to make offence a skill,
Redeeming time when men think least I will. (I. i. 207-12)³

In his education the prince, it would appear, has been taught well; his speech shows his acumen concerning the function and effect of a king's public role.⁴ Hal and his

²*Chronicles*, 539.

³Robert Ornstein has quite rightly cautioned that "although we cannot allow one soliloquy to determine our view of a character as fully developed as Hal is in dialogue and dramatic action, neither can we ignore the fact that in each play in which Hal appears, he is allowed only one soliloquy, and in each instance that soliloquy is a crucial revelation of character and motive"; see *A Kingdom for a Stage*, 136.

⁴Many critics find Hal's behaviour, here and subsequently, cold and calculating. Indeed, it is hard not to see him, these days, as someone who is (as it were) carefully building a good media image for himself. This is a rather different issue from the one explored in this thesis, which seeks primarily to show that the inconsistencies in Hal's behaviour are explicable, perhaps indeed necessary, in terms of the royal role which he is being called upon to prepare. That he performs the role well is beyond dispute; that he is a likable individual, quite a different issue.

father are at one in this respect, which makes the King's lesson in statecraft to his son (III. ii.) somewhat comically superfluous. To the King, "riot and dishonour stain the brow | Of [his] young Harry" (I. i. 84-5), as he feels dismay at what he takes to be the ruin of the prince's public countenance.

Henry is mistaken, as is made evident by the "play extempore", in Mistress Quickly's tavern, which epitomizes how well Hal knows to slip into the role which he must subsequently put on as King. Playing at majesty in the Boar's Head is, for Hal, something like a pre-Broadway try-out in New Haven. This playing reveals a deeper purpose than the expression of simple merriment of spirit for which Falstaff first proposes it. As Falstaff assembles his impromptu regalia Hal points out the mockery of kingship involved by deflating the value of the props; Falstaff may play at royalty but Hal recognizes the performance exactly for what it is: "Thy state is taken for a joint-stool, thy golden sceptre for a leaden dagger, and thy precious rich crown for a pitiful bald crown" (II. iv. 375-7). Falstaff's performance is a double parody in a theatrical sense, for not only will he play Hal's father, but he will also do it "in King Cambyses' vein" (II. iv. 382), better than what the astounded Hostess calls "one of these harlotry players" (390). His language is inflated enough to make him sound like the kind of king that Falstaff would play, but the subject of the speech has a serious underlying significance: the particulars of Hal's life that have defiled him, thanks to the "pitch" of the company he has kept.

When Falstaff turns the focus of the speech to his own self-aggrandizement and self-approbation, Hal stops him: he does not play the role of king well enough for the performance to go on: "Dost thou speak like a king? Do thou stand for me, and I'll play my father" (II. iv. 427-8). This is the second time the Prince has deflated Falstaff in his mock role; Hal in turn demonstrates how a real king should speak, because he already knows how to do it. His exchanges with Falstaff (now cast in Hal's role) are sharp in their accusations against this version of himself, a "prince" who has not behaved like one. It is a speech which is partly self-deprecatory because Hal has allowed himself to be "violently carried away from grace" (II. iv. 440-1). As he plays the role of the king in this mock-play, Prince Hal presents himself as nobody's fool; he can recognize the faults in princely behaviour that would be significant in the real performance of a royal role. He is aware that his actions have

been "pointed at", and from his princely vantage point he knows how to recognize Falstaff for what he is: a "devil", a trunk of humours and diseases, a "bolting-hutch of beastliness", a vice, and a "grey iniquity" (II. iv. 441-8).

Falstaff represents all those qualities of excess, appetite, and animal passion which, as we have seen, a king must overcome in his own person. For this reason, Hal's declaration of Falstaff's future banishment ("I do, I will") is absolutely appropriate. In order to be a king, Hal must indeed (ironically enough) follow Falstaff's advice to "banish all the world", for the "world" represents the values expressed in the Book of Common Prayer's "the world, the flesh, and the devil" which all persons are asked to reject at their baptism and confirmation. Falstaff's "beastliness" is not only descriptive of his appearance, but also of the way in which his relationship with the Prince must inevitably contaminate a man who must renounce such things in order to rule. "He which ioyneth a law to gouverne with the Prince, ioyneth God to the Prince", wrote Robert Parsons, "but he that ioyneth to the Prince his affection to gouverne, ioyneth a beast: for that mens affections and concupiscenses are common also to beastes". When a Prince is ruled by law he "is more then a man, or a man deified", but a "Prince ruling by affections, is lesse then a man, or a man brutified. A Prince who ruled himself and others by "appetite and affections, of al creatures is the worst".⁵ In his public conversion in *2 Henry IV*, the Prince says that he has buried all his "affections" in the grave with his father. Falstaff's final rejection after Hal's coronation must be judged in this light.

The Prince plays at prodigality, just as he plays at thievery and uncivil behaviour. His is indeed a world of "seeming", although in his own mind his royalty is never in doubt; for he is, as Falstaff says, "essentially made without seeming so" (II. iv. 486-7). But the world of the play is a place where all men play roles: the King himself professes in the opening scene that he is now a soldier of Christ, under whose cross he is impressed to fight (I. i. 19-21). A little later, facing altered circumstances, he must adopt a different role: that of his former self:

I will from henceforth rather be myself.

⁵ *A Conference About the Next Succession to the Crowne of England*, 22.

Mighty, and to be fear'd, than my condition,
Which hath been smooth as oil, soft as young down,
And therefore lost that title of respect (I. iii. 5-8).

Even the rebels see their cause in mimetic terms: Mortimer describes their plans for revolt as "our induction full of prosperous hope" (III. i. 1-2). Hotspur must be schooled to curb his anger and wilfulness, otherwise his behaviour

Loseth men's hearts and leaves behind a stain
Upon the beauty of all parts besides,
Beguiling them of commendation. (III. i. 181-3)

Henry wishes that Hal would adopt Hotspur as his role-model for princely actions; indeed he goes so far as to dream that Hotspur might have been his real child, and Hal a changeling, so much does he envy Hotspur's ability to play the princely and the valiant roles he wishes to see his son acting. When Hal is called to answer for his actions to the King, he is admonished because he has failed to act appropriately to the role to which he was born. The King determines that the illogicality of his son's behaviour must be some sort of divine punishment for his past "mistreadings", for how else

Could such inordinate and low desires,
Such poor, such bare, such lewd, such mean attempts,
Such barren pleasures, rude society,
As thou art match'd withal, and grafted to,
Accompany the greatness of thy blood,
And hold their level with thy princely heart? (III. ii. 11-17)

The lesson in statecraft which the King proceeds to give his son is based on the effects and power of a monarch's public role, the show of majesty by which he attained his own crown:

Had I so lavish of my presence been,
So common-hackney'd in the eyes of men,

So stale and cheap to vulgar company,
 Opinion, that did help me to the crown,
 Had still kept loyal to possession,
 And left me in reputeless banishment,
 A fellow of no mark nor likelihood. (III. ii. 39-45)

In his "dress" of humility he "did pluck allegiance from men's hearts" and by keeping his presence like "a robe pontifical" he was "Ne'er seen but wonder'd at" (III. ii. 51-7). But Hal has already shown in his soliloquy that he has calculated upon employing much the same strategy of showmanship, when the time shall prove right. The Prince can do no more at present than to promise hereafter to be more himself (III. ii. 92-3). This is a significant promise, in light of Hal's subsequent development, since being more himself will chiefly entail adopting the role of leader in battle, the role for which Henry V was celebrated in popular ideology: it is the "self" that history remembered as his truest aspect. For the moment, Hal is obliged to hear again of Hotspur's merits, while Henry condemns Hal as only the "shadow of succession": in some twenty-three lines of praise, Hotspur's capacities for rule are presented, in Henry's enthusiastic description of his ability to lead "ancient lords and reverend bishops on | To bloody battles, and to bruising arms". In his princeliness, Hotspur is a "Mars in swathing clothes" (III. ii. 99-112) to all kingdoms; he is everything which Hal, to the public eye, does not seem to be. Lady Percy in *2 Henry IV* describes her husband's nobility as a source of imitation for all men to admire and be inspired by:

He was indeed the glass
 Wherein the noble youth did dress themselves.
 For those that could speak low and tardily
 Would turn their own perfection to abuse,
 To seem like him. So that in speech, in gait,
 In diet, in affections of delight,
 In military rules, humours of blood,
 He was the mark and glass, copy and book.
 That fashion'd others. (II. iii. 22-32)

Understandably nettled by the universal chorus of praise for Hotspur's past achievements, Hal offers the promise of his future role as warrior-prince, in which he will show himself the better. For a time, Hotspur may have usurped the prince's glory, but Hal is determined to reclaim it for himself. His response to his father is expressed in the future tense, a picture of Hal's self-perception, which he will put into action because he knows he can. For Henry's fear that Hal is "degenerate", the King *"shall not find it so"*; he *"will redeem all this on Percy's head"*

And in the closing of some glorious day
 Be bold to tell you that I am your son,
 When I will wear a garment all of blood,
 And stain my favours in a bloody mask,
 Which, wash'd away, shall scour my shame with it;
 And that shall be the day, whene'er it lights,
 That this same child of honour and renown,
 This gallant Hotspur, this all-praised knight,
 And your unthought-of Harry chance to meet. (III. ii. 129-41)

There is no reason to doubt Hal's confidence in the essence of his regal nature, and indeed everything he claims here proves true in the battle of Shrewsbury. Here, as elsewhere, Hal has an assured trust in the way action will resolve itself in his favour:

For the time will come
 That I shall make this northern youth exchange
 His glorious deeds for my indignities.
 Percy is but my factor, good my lord,
 To engross up glorious deeds on my behalf,
 And I will call him to so strict account
 That he shall render every glory up,
 Yea, even the slightest worship of his time,
 Or I will tear the reckoning from his heart. (III. ii. 144-52)

the Name of God and if it pleases Him, the Prince promises to "perform" the role has cast for himself.

And the Prince does indeed prove himself in his new light, much to the dismay of Hotspur and the rebellious lords. Hal is no longer the "nimble-footed madcap Prince of Wales" whom Hotspur is expecting to see in battle (IV. i. 95). In the midst of the King's forces which glitter "in golden coats like images" (IV. i. 100), the Prince's newly translated majesty is an impressive show: Vernon describes how he saw

young Harry with his beaver on,
His cushes on his thighs, gallantly arm'd,
Rise from the ground like feather'd Mercury,
And vaulted with such ease into his seat
As if an angel dropp'd down from the clouds
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus,
And witch the world with noble horsemanship. (IV. i. 104-10)

In Vernon's description, the figure of the new Hal emerges as a poetically and imaginatively conceived power. To Hotspur, the news that the rebel forces are abandoning the cause cannot compare with the significance of Hal's metamorphosis, and Vernon's description becomes too much to bear: "No more, no more! Worse than the sun in March, | This praise doth nourish agues" (IV. i. 111-12). When Hal encounters Worcester and Vernon, he speaks now with the power and identity of the Prince of Wales, who has properly taken his place at the King's side. Hal also uses his new-found power and newly-established role to good public effect with his offer to combat Hotspur alone in "single fight" (V. i. 94-100), thereby redeeming his past offences to the code of chivalry. In the ensuing excursions of the battle, the Prince's encounters with Falstaff are casual and abrupt. Should Falstaff die, Hal feels it would be no great matter: Hal tells him he owes God a debt, and fooleries have no place in a world of crisis: "What, is it a time to jest and dally now?" (V. iii. 55). The roles that were played in the tavern have no currency in the battlefield and it is suggestive that Falstaff cannot adapt: he acts as if he were still the entertainer of the Boar's Head, an environment from which Hal, the warrior Prince, has detached himself. When he mistakes Falstaff's body for dead, his response lacks any suggestion of sorrow for the loss of a loved companion: "O, I should have a heavy miss of thee | If I were much in

love with vanity" (V. v. 104-5). The operative word is "if": Falstaff has already become irrelevant to the new play in which Hal is the leading actor.

The bravery he shows in the field is part of the new role of being more himself that Hal had sworn to play, and is achieved in part through the efficacy of the use of his title: "God forbid a shallow scratch should drive | The Prince of Wales from such a field as this" (V. iv. 10-11). He uses it again in order to confront the Douglas, but this time the name contains the strength of the brave members of the body politic who have died:

Hold up thy head, vile Scot, or thou art like
Never to hold it up again! The spirits
Of valiant Shirley, Stafford, Blunt are in my arms.
It is the Prince of Wales that threatens thee,
Who never promiseth but he means to pay. (V. iv. 38-42)

The spirits of Henry's body-politic, represented in the persons disguised as the King, are here already manifest as an "indued" substance in the royal heir. Hal swears to make his "name in arms" greater than Hotspur's in their final confrontation, which is a verbal battle analogous to the impending physical encounter, fought with the weight of their respective names, titles, and roles:

Hotspur If I mistake not, thou art Harry Monmouth.

Prince Thou speak'st as if I would deny my name.

Hotspur My name is Harry Percy.

Prince Why then I see

A very valiant rebel of the name.

I am the Prince of Wales, and think not, Percy,

To share with me in glory any more:

Two stars keep not their motion in one sphere.

Nor can one England brook a double reign

Of Harry Percy and the Prince of Wales.

Hotspur Nor shall it, Harry, for the hour is come

To end the one of us, and would to God

Thy name in arms were now as great as mine!
Prince I'll make it greater ere I part from thee,
 And all the budding honours on thy crest
 I'll crop to make a garland for my head. (V. iv.58-72)

With the last two lines of his speech, Hal thrusts his role as prince into action, and reclaims for himself the imagery of the crown which Hotspur's nobility had usurped.

2 *Henry IV* opens with a Hal who has reverted to his former ways; the first time the audience sees him he is luxuriating in a new role: accidie, or the "weariness" of newly-discovered boredom. He admits to playing the "fool with time" while the "spirits of the wise sit in the clouds and mock" him (II. ii. 134-5); and his adventure to steal in disguise upon Falstaff and Doll Tearsheet proves his self-estimation to be true: "From a prince to a prentice? A low transformation, that shall be mine, for in everything the purpose must weigh with the folly" (II. ii.167-9). It is curious that the stirring new Hal of Shrewsbury seems entirely forgotten, but Shakespeare, in again showing his audience a wayward, negligent Hal, has taken the opportunity of using part two to repeat the pattern of part one, thereby stressing movement towards change and alteration in Hal's role. Thus the foolery in the tavern scene is suddenly suspended when Peto comes with news that the rebels are up in arms again. The urgency of the crisis at hand pricks the Prince's royal conscience, and the merriment he had found in playing the role of the "prentice" becomes instantly irrelevant, and is immediately dropped as an embarrassing folly:

By heaven, Poins, I feel me much to blame,
 So idly to profane precious time,
 When tempests of commotion, like the south
 Borne with black vapour, doth begin to melt
 And drop upon our bare unarmed heads.
 Give me my sword and cloak. Falstaff, good night. (II. iv. 358-63)

The result is a transformation of role: the situation demands the appropriate action from Hal, and the ease with which he supplies it suggests that the lessons of part one have not been entirely forgotten. Falstaff's comment to the Hostess and Doll provides

a nicely ironical comment on the discrepancy between him and the Prince: "the undeserver may sleep, when the man of action is called on" (II. iv.372-3).

Hal does not appear again until well into act four where he comes to "wrestle" with the crown and the destiny of the great new role which is about to fall to him. Scene four represents the physical demise of the King, who directs the nobles around him to prepare for the transfer of royalty from one body to its successor. Henry advises Clarence how to suit his behaviour toward the personality of his future king:

omit him not, blunt not his love,
Nor lose the good advantage of his grace
By seeming cold, or careless of his will;
For he is gracious, if he be observ'd (IV. iv. 27-30).

Henry's instructions focus on the many-sided aspects of Hal's character, which if not properly checked (as befits Clarence's responsibilities as a counsellor) could prove disastrous in a king:

His temper therefore must be well observ'd.
Chide him for faults, and do it reverently,
When you perceive his blood inclin'd to mirth;
But being moody, give him time and scope,
Till that his passions, like a whale on ground,
Confound themselves with working. (IV. iv. 36-41)

The Earl of Warwick, however, seems to know Hal better than does his father. In an attempt to quell Henry's fears that Hal's nobility has proved the "soil" which is "overspread with weeds" (IV. iv. 54-6), Warwick offers reasons for what the King takes to be the Prince's transgressions, and reveals a confidence in the saving grace of Hal's transformation:

My gracious lord, you look beyond him quite.
The Prince but studies his companions
Like a strange tongue, wherein, to gain the language.

'Tis needful that the most immodest word
 Be look'd upon and learnt; which once attain'd,
 Your Highness knows, comes to no further use
 But to be known and hated. So, like gross terms,
 The Prince will, in the perfectness of time,
 Cast off his followers, and their memory
 Shall as a pattern or a measure live
 By which his Grace must mete the lives of other,
 Turning past evils to advantages. (IV. iv. 67-78)

The speech is an affirmation of the kind of educative process which Hal's soliloquy in part one had described, and looks toward the kind of "noble change" which Hal has "purposed" (IV. v. 154), and which he will put into effect after he is crowned.

The dominant note of "change" is sounded by the conditions of Henry's slow death as the "incessant care and labour of his mind" marks the end of his reign (IV. iv. 118); "his eye is hollow, and he changes much" (IV. v. 6); the news that Northumberland has been overthrown has "alter'd [him] much upon hearing it" (IV. v. 13). It seems that nature too, is sympathetic to the death of a king: "The seasons change their manners, as the year | Had found some months asleep and leap'd them over" (IV. v. 123-4);

The river hath thrice flow'd, no ebb between,
 And the old folk, time's doting chronicles,
 Say it did so a little time before
 That our great-grandsire Edward sick'd and died. (IV. v. 125-8)

Against this background of the theme of change the dying Henry lies with his crown beside him. As Hal remains to watch over the sleeping King, the stage ceases to be a platform for living characters and presents instead a *mise en scene* of the process of royal succession. Alone on stage are the King, the crown, and the heir in a symbolic trinity illustrating the ideal of kingship. Hal now speaks to the crown in affective, personified terms, giving it an identity as if speaking face to face with Kingship itself. In the crown are the cares of rule which have proven "so troublesome

a "bedfellow" to Henry's rest (IV. v. 21); "majesty" is an uncomfortable crown whose demands "scald'st" the bearer with its "safety" (IV. v. 27-30). When Hal mistakes the King for dead he speaks first in his role as a son and then in his role as a prince:

Thy due from me
Is tears and heavy sorrow of the blood,
Which nature, love, and filial tenderness
Shall, O dear father, pay thee plenteously.
My due from thee is this imperial crown,
Which, as immediate from thy place and blood,
Derives itself to me. (IV. v. 36-42)

Hal effects his translation to a kingly role by performing his own coronation, when he places the crown upon his head. It is an *alteration* which he is compelled to take on, imposed upon him by his birth-right, despite the cares of kingship which he has just described. The fact that he crowns himself is indicative of his preparedness to assume royal responsibilities -- responsibilities which he could not escape even had he wanted to. From henceforward in the play, Hal speaks not in the tongues of his past roles, but as the future Henry V. He ends his speech with an assertion of his assumption of power by authority, which "God shall guard", and a confidence that the strength of the body politic rests in him and his heirs:

and put the world's whole strength
Into one giant arm, it shall not force
This lineal honour from me. This from thee
Will I to mine leave, as 'tis left to me. (IV. v. 43-6)

The ensuing scene between father and son shows the discrepancies between their respective attitudes towards kingship: once again, the King, the Prince and the crown are the sole occupants of the stage. Henry's pessimism is guided by his thoughts on the "canker'd heaps of strange-achieved gold" (IV. v. 71), and the perturbations of nature in revolt when "gold becomes [its] object" (IV. v. 65-6). He begins by complaining that Hal seeks for himself the "greatness" that in the course of time will "overwhelm" him (IV. v. 97), and pictures a realm in chaos under Hal's rule.

His son's attempt to take the crown before his time he sees as the sign of "vanity" whose time has come to "mock at form" (IV.v. 118-19). In response to his father's rebuke, the Prince kneels, a sign of reverence which reconciles his "inward true and duteous spirit" with his intended outward display of reformation:

If I do feign,
O, let me in my present wildness die,
And never live to show th'incredulous world
The noble change that I have purposed! (IV. v. 147-54)

The crown which has rested so uneasily on Henry's head is the "enemy" with which Hal has striven, and proven victor, in the "quarrel of a true inheritor" (IV.v. 165-8). It shall, Henry admits, descend to his son "in better quiet | Better opinion, better confirmation" than he himself as King had worn it (IV. v. 187-8). The sincerity of the "change" that Hal has purposed is not to be doubted because it is offered as an outward "show" to the "incredulous world": on the contrary, such public manifestations are precisely what a king *should* present as a guarantee of his truth. Hal's transformation is part of the all-encompassing "alteration" which kingship brings: a change from one state and being to another which is completely different and sanctified.

In a series of pageants, Hal's next appearances in the play begin to reveal the outward signs of his alteration, first in the coronation robes which he wears. He is "*King Henry the Fifth, attended*" (V. ii. 42.1). The man has been assumed into the King, and he appears more like a symbol of majesty than like the Prince Hal the audience has hitherto known.⁶ His first comment draws attention to the external qualities of kingship, "This new and gorgeous majesty" which "Sits not so easy on me as you think" (V. ii. 44-5). Because he sees that sorrow looks "so royally" in his

⁶The 1975 Royal Shakespeare Company production stressed this alteration by having Alan Howard, the Hal, clad entirely in golden armour for this scene, a stunning *coup de theatre*. Hal's personality seemed to have been completely metamorphosed; he was transformed from man to some kind of royal automaton whose humanity had been translated into glittering metal. Knowingly or not, the director (Terry Hands) lit upon the ideologically central importance of this transformation. After all, no-one would expect an animated gold statue to react to events in the way a man would have done.

brothers, Hal too, will "deeply put the fashion on" (V. ii. 51-2). He notices that there is an uneasy sense of expectation from the characters around him, as if he were appearing in an entirely new kind of light, and with a new authority, which people had not yet learned how to assess when judging their behaviour:

Brothers, you mix your sadness with some fear.
This is the English, not the Turkish court (V. ii. 46-7)

You all look strangely on me -- (V. ii. 63).

He easily assumes one role of kingship after another; he will be a brother and a father to his brother Princes; he will bear all their cares; the King is dead but the king will live in Hal for everyone's prosperity:

I'll be your father and your brother too;
Let me but bear your love, I'll bear your cares.
Yet weep that Harry's dead, and so will I;
But Harry lives, that shall convert those tears
By number into hours of happiness. (V. ii. 57-61)

In his defence of his former actions towards Hal, the Chief Justice reminds the new King that he must change his view of the world with the change of his role: to look at past offences not with the eye of the truant Prince but with that of the King, and prospective father to another prince:

Be you contented, wearing now the garland,
To have a son set your decrees at naught? (V. ii. 84-5)

Question your royal thoughts, make the case yours.
Be now the father, and propose a son.
Hear your own dignity so much profan'd.
See your most dreadful laws so loosely slighted.
Behold yourself so by a son disdain'd:
And then imagine me taking your part.

And in your power soft silencing your son.
 After this cold consideration sentence me;
 And, as you are king, speak in your state
 What I have done that misbecame my place,
 My person, or my liege's sovereignty. (V. ii. 91-101)

The Chief Justice speaks with the vested authority of the body politic, in which Hal now as King must place his trust, and which he must in turn delegate to members who will act on his behalf. He promises to be the kind of king that the Chief Justice describes, not the thing he was:

believe me, I beseech you,
 My father is gone wild into his grave,
 For in his tomb lie my affections;
 And with his spirits sadly I survive
 To mock the expectation of the world,
 To frustrate prophecies, and to raze out
 Rotten opinion, who hath writ me down
 After my seeming. The tide of blood in me
 Hath proudly flow'd in vanity till now.
 Where it shall mingle with the state of floods,
 And flow henceforward in formal majesty. (V.ii. 122-33)

His public conversion, to proceed henceforth "in formal majesty", is made up of statements which are all affirmatives, typical of the way Hal can take control of his new role. After his public avowal, his first thoughts are of government and rule, concerning which he speaks like a king whose body has indeed become the symbol of a whole country:

Now call we our high court of parliament,
 And let us choose such limbs of noble counsel
 That the great body of our state may go
 In equal rank with the best-govern'd nation (V. ii. 134-7).

The second pageant is even more illustrious than the first, since it presents the anointed King and his train coming from the coronation. It takes the form of a silent passage over the stage, providing the opportunity for Falstaff to "leer" after the King, and mark his "countenance". But it is not the Hal whom Falstaff had known, and is now expecting as King, and from whom he is already anticipating his benefits. With the King's third entrance, Falstaff addresses him directly in the old manner of their past: "my royal Hal", "most royal imp of fame!", "my sweet boy!", "My King! My Jove! . . . my heart!" (V. v. 41-6). Henry directs the Chief Justice to speak to "that vain man" who has transgressed against decorum by his speech: "Have you your wits? Know you what 'tis you speak?" (V. v. 45). Not only is Hal altered in his new role as King, but others too, as a consequence of Hal's change, must now alter their behaviour and attitude around him. Falstaff does not address Hal but King Henry V, and it is as the King that Henry speaks to him in a denial of familiarity: "I know thee not, old man" (V.v. 47). As a king who has gone through the sanctity of a transformation, Henry cannot know Falstaff because of the kind of qualities he has come to represent in the play: lechery, disease, idleness, appetite; these are the "affections" that Henry has buried in the tomb with his father.

The King's past is compared with a dream-world, which must now, in his present state of wakefulness, be forgotten and banished:

Fall to thy prayers.

How ill white hairs becomes a fool and jester!

I have long dreamt of such a kind of man,

So surfeit-swell'd, so old, and so profane;

But being awak'd I do despise my dream. (V. v. 47-51)

Falstaff is banished in all seriousness: by all the tenets for kingship explored in this study, the banishment cannot be seen as a callous gesture on the King's part, but an entirely necessary, indeed, an inevitable action; even Falstaff ironically acknowledges that the King "must seem thus to the world" (V. v. 78). The banishment is a condition of Hal's kingship which has forced him to put on the new man, a new man who has

turned away from his "former self".⁷ Shakespeare follows Holinshed closely in presenting the picture of "this king" who

even at first appointing with himself, to shew that in his person princelie honors should change publike manners, he determined to put on him the shape of a new man. For where as aforetime he had made himselfe a companion unto misrulie mates of dissolute order and life, he now banished them all from his presence . . . inhibiting them upon a great paine, not once to approch, lodge, or sojourne within ten miles of his court or presence: and in their places he chose men of grauitie, wit, and high policie, by whose wise counsell he might at all times rule to his honour and dignitie.⁸

Henry's first decree in his office of King is to banish from his presence those aspects of himself which, as a prince, he has entertained, but in which, as a king, he can have no part:

Presume not that I am the thing I was;
For God doth know, so shall the world perceive,
That I have turn'd away my former self;
So will I those that kept me company. (V. v. 56-9)

⁷No attempt is being made here to assess the impenetrable, the question of how an audience would respond to the *manner* of Falstaff's banishment. Many good judges have revolted at Hal's action, entirely consistent though it is with Hal's explicit attitude towards Falstaff, expressed early in part one, and consistent (as has been shown) with the theory of kingship. Action which is a disagreeable necessity can nonetheless be undertaken in a variety of ways, and it does not seem inconsistent with any other aspect of Hal's relationship with Falstaff that he should choose the most wounding of the alternatives when it comes time finally to reject him.

⁸*Chronicles*, 543. The passage continues: "This reformation in the new king Christ[opher] Ock[land, in his *Anglorum praelia*] hath reported, fullie consenting with this. For saith he,

*Ille inter paulo lasciuior ante,
Defuncto genitore grauis constansqu repente
Moribus ablegat corruptis regis ab aula
Assuetos (si quisquam sua tecta reru ferint) addit.
Atqu ita mutatus facit omnia principe digna,
Ingenio magno post consultoribus usus etc.*

At the beginning of *Henry V*, the King's "new man" image is again the central focus in the commentary of other characters upon him. To the Bishops of Canterbury and Ely, the Prince's conversion and repentance are religious in nature; to them the King is now "full of grace and fair regard" (I. i. 22):

The breath no sooner left his father's body,
But that his wildness, mortified in him,
Seem'd to die too; yea at that very moment,
Consideration like an angel came,
And whipp'd th'offending Adam out of him,
Leaving his body as a Paradise,
To envelop and contain celestial spirits. (I. i. 25-31)

The country is "blessed in the change" (I. i. 37).

Henry's transformation from prince to king is indeed a religious event, in which the ceremony of coronation has thrown off the former man in favour of the new; the Bishop's commentary is taken almost word for word from the Baptism Service in the Book of Common Prayer. Like a baptism, the king's coronation is based on a premise which transforms the person from one state to another:

O merciful God, graunte that the olde Adam in these children maye be so buried, that the newe man may be raysed vp in them. . . . Graunt that all carnal affeccions maye dye in them, and that all thinges belonginge to the spirite may liue and growe in them. . . . graunt that he being dead vnto sinne and lyuing vnto righteousness, and being buried with Christ in his death, maye crucify the old man, and vtterly abolyse the whole bodye of synne.⁹

Because "the strawberry grows underneath the nettle", Henry's past is termed by Ely merely the "veil of wildness" under which the Prince could better cultivate his

⁹BCP, 111.

"faculty" towards kingship (I. i. 60-6). The Constable of France warns the Dauphin that he is mistaken in thinking that England is "so idly king'd | Her sceptre so fantastically borne | By a vain, giddy, shallow, humorous youth" (II. iv: 26-8); the news of Henry's change has reached France, as the Constable proceeds to tell the Dauphin:

Question your grace the late ambassadors,
 With what great state he heard their embassy,
 How well supplied with noble counsellors,
 How modest in exception, and withal
 How terrible in constant resolution,
 And you shall find his vanities forespent
 Were but the outside of the Roman Brutus,
 Covering discretion with a coat of folly . . . (II. iv. 31-8)

As the Constable's account makes clear, Henry's conversion is related to his spectacular performance of the functions of a king. The view of kingship which is presented in *Henry V* is the dramatization of a monarch who fulfills *all* the extraordinary qualities demanded of him in his role, and can perform them when he chooses. Describing the effects of Henry's translation, Canterbury comments that "Never was such a sudden scholar made; | Never came reformation in a flood . . . and all at once -- | As in this king" (I. i. 32-3). Henry is seen now as able to "reason in divinity" so that one "would desire the king were made a prelate"; he can "debate of commonwealth affairs" as if it had "been all in all his study"; his "discourse of war" is a "fearful battle render'd you in music". In fact, continues Canterbury,

Turn him to any cause of policy,
 The Gordian knot of it he will unloose,
 Familiar as his garter; that, when he speaks,
 The air, a charter'd libertine, is still (I. i. 38-48).

All the extraordinary qualities with which the king was invested become in the play the manifestation of the various roles which Henry assumes in order to govern. Henry's royal "occupation" is well beyond that of the ordinary man. As Van Laan has

observed, the histrionic dimensions of Henry's kingship are part of the king's office; the first two acts show Henry

not only as a shrewd, efficient, and righteous executive, but also, especially through the Scroop affair, as the embodiment and dispenser of justice. Acts III and IV, which centre upon the fighting in France, celebrate Henry's battlefield accomplishments, but these are overshadowed by his successful deployment of other skills. Act III features Henry the orator: the lion as orator in III.i, rousing his men . . . and in III.iii the fox as orator, the clever negotiator, smoothly persuading a town to surrender without bloodshed. The orator returns in Act IV scene iii, this time rousing his men to action under far more trying circumstances than before, but the primary emphasis in this act falls in its opening scene . . . which presents Henry the *man*, first as he moves among and tries to share the experience of his soldiers . . . then as in his loneliness he suffers the agonies of his office and his inheritance. In Act V, with the war over, Shakespeare completes his portrayal of Henry by having him exhibit two final dimensions of himself -- the magnanimous victor and the lover-wooer.¹⁰

The military role is one which gets a great deal of attention in the play, especially in the King's speeches to his soldiers. Before the battle of Harfleur, Henry speaks of the warrior's action in mimetic terms, as an endeavour in which he should "imitate the action of the tiger" (III. i. 6); "Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage . . . lend the eye a terrible aspect" (7-8ff.). The whole speech is a lesson which seeks to combine the brutal strength of soldiering with the artifice inherent in role-playing.¹¹

¹⁰*Role-playing in Shakespeare*, 33. "Henry's separate roles do not exist one at a time but simultaneously, even though only one or another of them may be appropriate at a given moment. Henry's identity, as well as that of the King, is genuinely a nexus of roles". *Ibid.*, 35.

¹¹Cf. Holinshed, *Chronicles*: "then calling his captains and soldiers about him, he made to them a right graue oration, moouing them to plaie the men", 553.

The royal office entails a variety of actions which Henry from Act to Act is seen not only performing, but performing well. As each chorus announces the different kind of "Henry" the audience is about to see, the role of king becomes increasingly complex: like a prism, the theatrical action refracts the various spectra of what in "real life" would be unified and whole. To change the metaphor, the play becomes itself a mirror in which to view the "mirror of all Christian kings" (Chorus, II. 6) and his extraordinary qualities:

eloquent and graue was his speech, and of great grace and power to persuade: for conclusion, a maiestie was he that both liued & died a paterne in princehood, a lode-starre in honour, and mirtour of magnificence.¹²

As the constantly theatrical emphasis of the Chorus makes clear, the world of Henry V is symbolically and practically associated with the world of the theatre, a world which ideally needs a "kingdom for a stage, princes to act | And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!" (Prologue, 3-4), but which will perforce make do with an "unworthy scaffold" and the powers of imagination. The acts of an extraordinary king, the kind of royalty Henry puts into action, are quite centrally the stuff of which Elizabethan drama was made; and which in *Henry V* receive perhaps their most dynamic exploration. In the Act by Act presentation of Henry the statesman, the orator, the soldier, and the wooer, the play itself becomes an illustration both of the regal ideal and of the ways this inherently mimetic figure can in turn be represented by the drama. *Henry V* is one of Shakespeare's most self-reflexive plays, whose very subject is the "playing of the king". It is not necessary to discuss this aspect of the play any further; indeed it has become rather threadbare under the weight of modern critical observation. Rather, I wish to pursue the detail of the ways in which Henry himself plays the roles which he has inherited.

Henry's countenance is an effective agent in the playing of his kingly roles. He claims he will "show [his] sail of greatness" to the King of France and "rise there with so full a glory | That [he] will dazzle all the eyes of France, | Yea, strike the

¹²Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 583.

Dauphin blind to look on [him]" (I. ii. 274-80). Exeter warns the French that the King comes "in fierce tempest . . . In thunder and in earthquake like a Jove" (II. iv. 99-100). On the eve of Agincourt, the Chorus affirms that "Upon his royal face there is no note | How dread an army hath enrouned him"; the King "freshly looks" with his "cheerful semblance and sweet majesty" that his soldiers are able to "pluck comfort from his looks" (Chorus, IV. 35-42). And even when he tries to disguise the outward demeanour of his majesty, by appearing just like a "common man" to Pistol and Williams, Henry cannot hide from the audience the essence of his royalty, nor the many identities inherent in the role. The "little touch of Harry in the night" turns out to be a manifestation of those identities, as he "debates awhile" with his soldiers.¹³

To Pistol, Henry acknowledges himself as a "friend", a "gentleman of the company", a "Welshman", who is a "kinsman" to Fluellen (IV. i. 36, 39, 51, 59). On the one level, Henry's responses are guided by the role he is playing at the moment, but on another more symbolic level, they are representative of the king's multiple identities: a friend to his subjects, and a kinsman to all. To the unsuspecting Bates, Court, and Williams, Henry again acknowledges he is a "friend", and one who serves "under Sir Thomas Erpingham" (IV. i. 92, 94), but the dialogue this time focuses upon a subject's allegiance to the king. Henry's the "king is but a man" speech draws attention to outward ceremonial trappings of a king which merely disguise his common humanity. It is an ironic reversal of roles, that though Henry is essentially the King on the inside, his outward appearance for the moment belies the fact, and in his present role, he can speak both in the disguised identity of the King and the common man:

I think the king is but a man, as I am: the violet smells to him as it doth to me; the element shows to him as it doth to me; all his senses have but human conditions: his ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness he appears but a man; and though his affections are higher mounted than ours, yet when they stoop, they stoop with the like wing. Therefore

¹³It may also remind an audience that in his salad days Hal enjoyed dressing up beneath his station. The entire episode of the King's disguised visit to his soldiers is fraught with difficulties of interpretation which (again) will not be ventured upon in this thesis.

when he sees reason of fears, as we do, his fears out of doubt, be of the same relish as ours are: yet, in reason, no man should possess him with any appearance of fear, lest he, by showing it, should dishearten his army. (IV. i. 101-13)

The soldiers, as Williams explains later, did not intend to insult the King on the eve of Agincourt, they were speaking to someone who came to them looking like a man and not like a king:

Your majesty came not like yourself: you appeared to me but as a common man; witness the night, your garments, your lowliness; and what your highness suffered under that shape, I beseech you, take it for your own fault and not mine: for had you been as I took you for, I made no offence; therefore, I beseech your highness, pardon me. (IV. viii. 51-8)

As their participation in the events of Agincourt shows, the soldiers' allegiance is not really a questionable matter; theirs is a faith in the King's cause based on blind trust, the like of which Bates professes: for "if his cause be wrong, our obedience to the king wipes the crime of it out of us" (IV. i. 133-4).

The outgrowth of Henry's disguised encounter between his soldiers is his meditation on the ceremony and outward splendour of majesty. Even as he mocks the "idol ceremony", he proclaims his bound association with it at the same time. He speaks of "homage sweet", of "flexure and low-bending", of commanding the "beggar's knee" (IV. i. 256-62). As Ornstein has remarked, "even as he denies the satisfaction of power and the pleasure of rule, his rhetoric swells to a crescendo that proclaims the oceanic splendor of majesty".¹⁴ That a king should wish to exchange roles with the common man for the latter's simplicity of life was a well-worn notion, even in song:

Were I a king, I might command content;
Were I obscure, unknown should be my cares;
And were I dead, no thoughts should me torment,

¹⁴ *A Kingdom for a Stage*, 196.

Nor words, nor wrongs, nor loves, nor hopes, nor fears,
 A doubtful choice, of three things one to crave;
 A kingdom, or a cottage, or a grave.¹⁵

As Henry speaks in the guise of the common man, he meditates upon the states of the private individual and the king, which are at odds within himself. The majesty which Henry wears is not in the

balm, the sceptre and the ball,
 The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,
 The intertissued robe of gold and pearl,
 The farced title running 'fore the king,
 The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp
 That beats upon the high shore of this world (IV. i. 266-71),

but in the inward sanctity of royalty for which these things are only signs. Henry's kingship in this scene is majesty's essential "nakedness", the "indued" spirit and extraordinary qualities which Henry cannot cloak. Indeed, the cloak in which Henry is disguised is an ironic metaphor in this sense. Elyot, in *The Governor*, equates the king's dignity with the outward garment of majesty:

If thou be a governor, or hast over other sovereignty, know thyself, that is to say, know that thou art verily a man compact of soul, and body, and in that all other men be equal unto thee. Also that every man taketh with thee equal benefit of the spirit of life, nor thou hast any more of the dew of heaven, or the brightness of the sun, than any other person. Thy dignity or authority wherein thou only differest from other is (as it were) but a weighty cloak, freshly glittering in the eyes of them that be purblind, where unto thee it is painful, if thou wear him in his right fashion, and as it shall best become thee.¹⁶

¹⁵From John Munday's *Songs and Psalms*, 1594; in *Lyrics From the Song-Books of the Elizabethan Age*, 151.

¹⁶165.

It is a characteristic quality of Henry's kingship that he continually places his confidence in God's protective power and grace. He proclaims himself to be "a Christian king" (I. ii. 241), and unlike Henry VI, whose perpetual invocation of the Name of God did little for either his condition or his mental equilibrium, Henry V seems to find reassurance in his appeals to the Name of God; indeed, in the crudest sense, they seem to work: he gets what he prays for. Where Henry VI was able to realize only a restricted aspect of the divine nature of his office, Henry V liberates his power through a comprehensive awareness of it. Out of the sixty references made to God in the play, more than half are made by the King himself. It is Henry's spiritual strength and faith which remain a constant feature in the performance of his various kingly roles. Thus, when threatening the French Ambassadors, Henry professes that his conquering strength

lies all within the will of God,
 To whom I do appeal; and in whose name
 Tell you the Dauphin I am coming on,
 To venge me as I may and to put forth
 My rightful hand in a well-hallow'd cause. (I. ii. 289-93)

He declares to the English lords that there is "now no thought in [him] but France, | Save those to God" (I. i. 302-3). As the play progresses, the view that Henry is acting under providential blessing is encouraged by the ways in which his appeals to God appear to be answered favourably.¹⁷ The treason of the Scroop affair is, even to the traitors, a plot which "God justly hath discover'd" (II. ii. 151) and is reaffirmed by the King: "Since God so graciously hath brought to light | This dangerous treason" (II. ii. 185-6). The way to France is now unhindered and Henry encourages his company to set "forth" and "deliver | Our puissance into the hand of God" (II. ii. 189-90). Other characters invoke the divine power in Henry's behalf; Exeter tells the French king that Henry wills, "in the name of God Almighty, | That you divest yourself and lay apart | The borrow'd glories that by gift of heaven" belong to the English King (II. iv. 77-9).

¹⁷Of course, this may be mere happenstance. *Post hoc* is by no means necessarily *propter hoc*. But this is another question which cannot be addressed in the scope of this thesis.

"And bids you, in the bowels of the Lord, | Deliver up the crown" (102-3). Henry warns Mountjoy that the English come, with God before them, to fight the French king; and he assures the fearful Gloucester that the fate of their forces rests not in the hands of the French, but "in God's hand" (III. vii. 174).

Elizabethan tracts are full of references which place the king in God's protective power and guidance, so that he becomes a vehicle by which God's own strength and beneficence can be seen.¹⁸ Henry increasingly becomes in the play a type of kingly David, echoing his confidence in God's succour, and on whose behalf he dedicates himself to action. Holinshed's own homiletic colouring of Henry's history lends an added dimension to this picture; he reports Henry as saying:

¹⁸Included in the Book of Common Prayer was a prayer of thanksgiving "for the deliuerance of her majestie from ye murderous intention of D. Parry": "owre blessed Quene thy humble seruant and trewe Handmaide, of whose Estate being in the expectation of the nombre of wicked persons manie times in great and secrett dangers, yet thow Lord . . . hast alwaies preserued and defended hir by manie miraculous meanes . . . wee haue fullie felt thy mervallous goodnes by the discoverie of sum Attemptes most apparantlie taken in hand against her person". In response to the Gowry treason, *A Fourme of Prayer* was published in thanksgiving for King James's happy deliverance: "Let us pray -- Almighty and euerlasting God . . . by whom Kings doe beare rule, and under whose prouidence they are wonderfully and mightily oftentimes protected from many fearful dangers . . . O Eternal God, & most gracious father, whch preseruest thy seruants by thy mighty hand, especially godly Princes, when their liues are sought for by their cruel enemies", C2^v, F1^r. See also the Book of Common Prayer; the Litany, "That it may please the, to be her [Elizabeth's] defender and keper, geuing her the victory ouer al her enemyes". That God was responsible for all victories was a widespread notion, especially after the Armada; it is one which Shakespeare gives Henry to use, to comment on the results of Agincourt: see BCP: "A Prayer for deliuerance from enemies"; Evening and Morning Prayer psalms: 33:15, "There is no king that can be saved by the multitude of an host"; 63:12, "But the King shall reioice in God"; 90:17, "And the glorious Majesty of the Lord our God be upon us: prosper thou the work of our hands upon us, O prosper thou our handy-work"; 91:1-2, "Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the most High: shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say unto the Lord, Thou art my hope, and my stronghold: my God, in him will I trust"; 108:12-13, "O help us against the enemy: for vain is the help of man. Through God we shall do great acts: and it is he that shall tread down our enemies". See also Richard Hooker, *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*: "For it is God, who giveth victorie in the day of warr and unto whom *Dominion* in this sort is derived, the same they enjoy according unto that law of nations, which law authorizeth Conquerours to raigne as absolute *Lordes* over them whom they vanquish", 334.

"I will enter into France, as into mine owne true and lawfull patrimonie, appointing to acquire the same, not with brag of words, but with deeds of men, and dint of sword, by the aid of God, in whome is my whole trust and confidence.¹⁹

... for either by famous death or glorious victorie would he (by Gods grace) win honour and fame.²⁰

"But let no man ascribe victorie to our owne strength and might, but onlie to God's assistance, to whome I haue no doubt we shall worthilie haue cause to giue thanks therefore".²¹

... and gathering his armie together, gaue thanks to almightie God for so happie a victorie, causing his prelats and chapleins to sing this psalme: *In exitu Israel de Aegypto*, and commanded euerie man to kneele downe on the ground at this verse: *Non nobis Domine, non nobis sed nomini tuo da gloriam*. Which doone, he caused *Te Deum*, with certaine anthems to be soong, giuing laud and praise to God, without boasting of his owne force or anie humane power.²²

On the eve of Agincourt, Henry prays that the "God of battles" will grant his soldiers the courage of divine inspiration; he adds an expression of his own penitence for the death of Richard II at his father's hands.²³ After the battle itself Henry shows himself at his most devout and thankful, praising the protection of his benign God:

¹⁹*Chronicles*, 548.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 553.

²¹*Ibid.*

²²*Ibid.*, 555.

²³"Not to-day, O Lord! ! O not to-day, think not upon the fault . . ." (IV, i. 298-ff.). Cf. *BCP*, Morning Prayer psalm 132:10-12: "For thy servant David's sake: turn not away the presence of thine Anointed. The Lord hath made a faithful oath unto David".

O God, thy arm was here;
 And not to us, but to thy arm alone,
 Ascribe we all! (IV. viii. 108-10)²⁴

Take it, God,
 For it is none but thine! (IV. viii. 113-14)

Fuellen Is it not lawful, and please your majesty, to tell how many
 is killed?

King Henry Yes, captain; but with this acknowledgement,
 That God fought for us. (IV. viii. 119-22)

Do we all with holy rites:
 Let there be sung "Non nobis" and "Te Deum" (IV. viii. 124-5)

The Chorus's account of Henry's victorious entrance into London describes how the King wore his spiritual humility in his countenance, for

his lords desire him to have borne
 His bruised helmet and his bended sword
 Before him through the city: he forbids it,
 Being free from vainness and self-glorious pride;
 Giving full trophy, signal and ostent.

²⁴Cf. BCP, "After Victory of Deliverance From and Enemy": "We gat not this by our own sword, neither was it our own arm that saved us: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto us". This prayer is subsequent to the Elizabethan period, but evidently derives from "A Psalme and Collect of Thankesgiuing" written after the Armada and published in 1588: "This was the Lords doing, and it is marueilous in our and in our enemies' sight, and in the eyes of all people: and all that see it shall say, This is the Lords worke . . . With his owne right hand, and with his holy arme: hath he gotten himselfe the victorie". Also Morning Prayer psalm 144:10: "Thou hast given victory unto kings: and hast delivered David thy servant from the peril of the sword".

Quite from himself, to God. (Chorus, V. 17-22)²⁵

Of all Shakespeare's kings (the special case of Henry VIII excepted), Henry V is the only monarch who enjoys the right and privilege to reign without serious contention or any effective threat of usurpation. He is also Shakespeare's only presentation of a prince who undergoes the process of rightful succession. Over his rule there appears to shine the light of a God whose providence is intermixed with Henry's own conception of his role as king, and how to put that role into action. From the process of change and alteration in the first two parts of *Henry IV*, Henry emerges as a king who has understood the importance of role-playing as an aspect of the kingly office, and how to keep that process in close alliance with the divine element of the role. The sobriquet which Shakespeare joins Holinshed in giving him, "the mirror of all Christian kings", seems entirely appropriate in view of the way that both the religious and artistic aspects of kingship are represented in his rule.²⁶

²⁵Cf. Holinshed, *Chronicles*: "The king like a graue and sober personage, and as one remembring from whom all victories are sent, seemed little to regard such vaine pompe and shewes as were in triumphant sort deuised for his welcoming home from so prosperous a iournie, in so much that he would not suffer his helmet to be carried with him, whereby might haue appeared to the people the blowes and dints that were to be seene in the same, neither would he suffer any ditties to be made and soong by ministrels of his glorious victorie, for that he would wholie haue the praise and thanks altogether giuen to God", 556.

²⁶Once again, the question of a final assessment of Henry's morality, a subject which has exercised most modern writers on the play, lies without the scope of this thesis. "What cannot be denied is that Henry V was widely regarded, especially in the 1590s, as a "mirror", the last successful warrior-king whom England had enjoyed. He was, in short, a legend and a popular ideal (and who are we, in the age of Rambo, to scoff?), and to a certain extent it cannot be denied that this ideology was inscribed in the play, and decoded thence by many audiences. It seems sufficient here to insist that part of the ideology thus inscribed was the way in which Henry conformed to the ideal of the Christian prince which this thesis has explored.

CHAPTER NINE

"THOU KING RICHARD'S TOMB, AND NOT KING RICHARD":

RICHARD II AND THE CRISIS OF A KING'S IDENTITY

After Richard has been deposed, he is allowed a brief encounter with Queen Isabel on his way to the Tower. Her greeting to him recognizes the catastrophic alteration in his symbolic identity, a retroactive change in the man brought about by his abdication:

But soft, but see, or rather do not see,
My fair rose wither -- yet look up, behold,
That you in pity may dissolve to dew,
And wash him fresh again with true-love tears.
Ah, thou, the model where old Troy did stand!
Thou map of honour, thou King Richard's tomb,
And not King Richard! Thou most beauteous inn,
Why should hard-favour'd grief be lodg'd in thee,
When triumph is become an alehouse guest? (V. i. 7-15)

No longer a king in the eyes of the world, Richard has lost the claim to the royal identities which associated him with Troy, and the image and beauty of honour. To the Queen, he is and is not the image of Richard which she has hitherto known: so much has he become changed since the identity of kingship has been separated from him.

In the chronicles, Richard's behaviour as a king who is led by flattery is described as that of a man who "was like no king but rather resembled the shadow of one";¹ he had allowed the vice of flattery to distance himself from the royal ideal. Shakespeare and Holinshed reveal, in these two examples, a king who finds himself on the outside, and looking in upon the royal office he once occupied; a view of a man who is caught in the past and present recollections of what he was and what he is

¹Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 454.

now. The tragic process which *Richard II* explores is that of a king who is separated from his role, and the crisis which results when Richard finds he is incapable of separating himself from his own perception of his identity as a king. Of all the history plays, *Richard II* involves the most self-conscious presentation of the ideology of kingship, especially as it is intensified through the sufferings and meditations of the leading character. And, of all Shakespeare's kings, Richard has the most to say about kingship and its relationship with the person who occupies its office: no other king in Shakespeare wrestles with the ideological concepts of his own role as Richard II does. Throughout the play, Richard plays his own chorus, reciting lamentations upon the role he has performed badly as a king, yet unable to find himself existing outside its domain.

The play marks a turning point in Shakespeare's career thanks to the way he elected to present this king. Richard's personality, his emotions and feelings (expressed in a characteristically lyrical poetic language) make him a more human, and therefore (in a theatrical sense) a more "real" king, than those of the other history plays. Richard III is not a person so much as a compound of the roles he plays, a cartoon picture of the Vice. Hal, in a curious sense, is a throwback to Richard III: a compound of roles; which makes the core of his personality always an enigma -- no doubt one of the causes of much of the critical discomfort about him. Richard II by contrast comes to seem totally real, an integrated personality who, when he plays roles in the dramatic process, does so with something of the same intensely self-aware style that characterizes Hamlet. Richard goes from enacting the folly of his behaviour to achieving self-awareness, not only of himself as a person, but also of himself in his ordained role as king. The play is also the most conflict-ridden of all the histories, as each character becomes involved in, and comments upon, the crisis of Richard's failed kingship.

The process toward self-awareness is necessarily a role-playing one for Richard, as he is seen in the play enacting and professing a belief in the variety of roles and identities inherent in the kingly office. In his first appearance in the play, with the ritual confrontation between Bolingbroke and Mowbray, the King's behaviour is governed by a mannered presence, a repertory of controlled gestures and the calculation of his formal rhetoric. He is the royal plural ("ourselves", "us", "we"), on

public display, in which the ritual of the formal challenge cannot outshine the King's obvious control and manipulation of the situation with his own ritual display of royalty. His "vow" of impartiality toward Bolingbroke is a ritualistic flourish made "by my sceptre's awe", which publicly guarantees Richard's proclamation of impartiality toward "such neighbouring nearness to our sacred blood" (I. i. 118-19). Richard play-acts the image of the public king with the studied effect of one who has perfected the histrionic attributes of the role. Though he proclaims himself "no physician" he proceeds to offer healing forgiveness to the "wrath-kindled gentlemen" in an attempt to "purge this cholier" (I. i. 152-9).

Nonetheless, the limitations of Richard's dramatic control soon become evident. As Bolingbroke and Mowbray continue in their quarrel, the King proclaims himself the "lion" who "makes leopards tame" (I. i. 174). Though he was not "born to sue, but to command", Richard, in effect, cannot command the ire of the two lords nor insist upon the revoking of their challenge. The panache of Richard's performance is simply the polish of royal veneer, without the necessary inner strength which he so confidently assumes. In one breath he utters maxims about the king's prerogative to command, and in another, he deflates his own authority by denying his control over the situation. Richard's recourse is the ritual trial by combat, announced with all the flair of theatrical pageantry that his rhetoric can muster:

We were not born to sue, but to command;
Which since we cannot do to make you friends,
Be ready, as your lives shall answer it,
At Coventry upon Saint Lambert's day.
There shall your swords and lances arbitrate
The swelling difference of your settled hate.
Since we cannot atone you, we shall see
Justice design the victor's chivalry. (I. i. 196-203)

It is not only Richard who plays his part in the opening scene; others too, act according to the ceremonial setting in which they find themselves, and in which the King is the focus. Bolingbroke and Mowbray go through the expected motions of decorum and formality as they each in turn address their King: "Many years of happy

days befall | My gracious sovereign, my most loving liege!" (I. i. 20-1). Bolingbroke comes "appellant to this princely presence" (I. i. 34), and Mowbray declares his restraint because "the fair reverence of your Highness curbs me | From giving reins and spurs to my free speech" (I. i. 54-5). The trial-by-combat in the lists at Coventry offers another occasion for pageantry and spectacle in which Richard appears as umpire. As the appellants, again, go through a choreography of motions and gestures of decorum, the focus is on degree, order and propriety in a ritualistic atmosphere controlled by a strict set of rules. Speeches are repeated almost verbatim as all characters, not just Mowbray and Bolingbroke, participate in the formulaic structure of the occasion. The effect is of a great spectacle, made all the more striking when Richard throws his warder down, and dramatically calls a halt to the proceedings, frustrating the climax to which they were building. He is again the centre of attention and the focus of the show that he himself has determined beforehand.

Because he is accessory to the very crime with which Bolingbroke has charged Mowbray, Richard must take control of the situation for his best advantage, thus making the ceremony merely empty show. Having only just embraced Bolingbroke lovingly in his arms, the King now pronounces banishment with a display of rhetorical splendour: "The hopeless word of 'never to return' | Breathe I against thee, upon pain of life" (I. iii. 152-3). Mowbray's response, in turn, acknowledges the strength in the "word" of a King's pronouncement: "What is thy sentence then but speechless death, | Which robs my tongue from breathing native breath?" (I. iii. 172-3). Bolingbroke, too, gives voice to his grief in terms of the effects of language:

How long a time lies in one little word!
Four lagging winters and four wanton springs
End in a word: such is the breath of kings. (I. iii. 213-15)

Richard has proved a far superior orator, partly because the flourish of his words came from a prepared script. He continues in the posture of the public king denouncing a ritual banishment in formal rhetoric:

Return again, and take an oath with thee.
Lay on our royal sword your banish'd hands,

Swear by the duty that you owe to God --
 Our part therein we banish with yourselves --
 To keep the oath that we administer (I. iii. 178-82)

By this proclamation of banishment, the King takes a share in altering the roles of others. Richard's "part" in the duty he now absolves Mowbray and Bolingbroke from keeping, severs the subject's role from his sovereign. Even in the shortening of Bolingbroke's banishment, Richard seeks a display of royal, public magnanimity, towards Gaunt's distress. In his exchange with Gaunt, the emphasis falls again on words and role-playing:

Gaunt Thy word is current with him for my death,
 But dead, thy kingdom cannot buy my breath.

Richard Thy son is banish'd upon good advice,
 Whereto thy tongue a party-verdict gave;
 Why at our justice seem'st thou then to lour?

Gaunt Things sweet to taste prove in digestion sour.
 You urg'd me as a judge, but I had rather
 You would have bid me argue like a father. (I. iii. 231-8)

The scene has been an exercise in the power and control of words, and their effectiveness in the roles that each character must play and adjust according to the dictates of the chief player. Even after Richard leaves the stage, the parting between Bolingbroke and his father takes the form of a discussion on the words Bolingbroke has failed to say -- a prefigurement of the role of the future "silent king":

Gaunt O, to what purpose dost thou hoard thy words,
 That thou returnest no greeting to thy friends?

Bolingbroke I have too few to take my leave of you.
 When the tongue's office should be prodigal
 To breathe the abundant dolour of the heart. (I. iii. 253-7)

Scene iv shows the audience a different Richard. No longer in the public eye, he is nonetheless concerned with the importance that outward appearances can have.

He seeks to know the manner in which Bolingbroke made his departure: "And say, what store of parting tears were shed?" (I. iv. 5); "What said our cousin when you parted with him?" (I. iv. 10). More of Richard's motives for banishing Bolingbroke are given as Richard reveals his fear of Bolingbroke's increased popularity. It is a popularity achieved by the Duke's own capabilities for public display, and by the affection he is able to show for the "common people", a talent which Richard recognises as a dangerous threat to his own sovereignty:

Ourself and Bushy
 Observ'd his courtship to the common people,
 How he did seem to dive into their hearts
 With humble and familiar courtesy;
 What reverence he did throw away on slaves,
 Wooing poor craftsmen with the craft of smiles
 And patient underbearing of his fortune,
 As 'twere to banish their affects with him.
 Off goes his bonnet to an oyster-wench;
 A brace of draymen bid God speed him well,
 And had the tribute of his supple knee,
 With "Thanks, my countrymen, my loving friends" --
 As were our England in reversion his,
 And he our subjects' next degree in hope. (I. iv. 23-36)²

The more of Richard's character is revealed in this scene the more he is presented as an inept king, who through "liberal largess" of past extravagances seeks now to "farm" the realm. He prays for Gaunt's immediate death; his wealth and

²The details of Bolingbroke's popularity with the people which Shakespeare found in his sources is poignantly reversed in this passage. "A wonder it was to see what number of people ran after him in euerie towne and street where he came, before he tooke the sea, lamenting and bewailing his departure, as who would saie, that when he departed, the onlie shield, defense and comfort of the commonwealth was vaded and gone", Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 495. As Peter Ure, in his Arden edition of *Richard II* points out, "Froissart (like Holinshed and Daniel) describes how the people behaved to Bolingbroke; this speech describes how Bolingbroke behaves to the people", see note to this passage. By describing Bolingbroke's behaviour, Shakespeare stresses the significance of the theme of royal display and role-playing, so important in the play as it pertains to the performance of kingship both by Richard and Bolingbroke.

possessions will line the coffers of the state to suit Richard's purposes. Richard's abuse of his office, by his refusal to play its roles appropriately, is the focus of the next scene in which his uncles, York and Gaunt, confront him with their charges that he is misappropriating the king's prerogative.

The dying Gaunt's lament describes the sufferings of a realm whose king is an "unstaïd youth", preferring the "flattering sounds" of vanity to the advice of sage counsel.³ The "this blessed plot" speech is at once a celebration of an England which is "this teeming womb of royal kings", and a *dies irae* of the country's downfall at the hands of one of its sovereign sons. Richard plays at being the concerned nephew but the sentiment does not last beyond his first line. Though Richard affirms he is in health, Gaunt describes the King's sickly countenance as it symbolically appears. The King's body, like the dying Gaunt himself, is sick and cannot use the anointed balm of its sanctity to cure Richard's diseased crown:

Now He that made me knows I see thee ill,
 Ill in myself to see, and in thee, seeing ill.
 Thy death-bed is no lesser than thy land.
 Wherein thou liest in reputation sick,
 And thou, too careless patient as thou art,
 Commit'st thy anointed body to the cure
 Of those physicians that first wounded thee: (II. i. 93-9)

The crown is an animated court where a "thousand flatterers sit", influencing the negative aspects of Richard's rule: a theme which will recur in the play when Richard himself perceives the crown as a theatre where Death the "antic sits". Richard's misbehaviour has, says Gaunt, cast him in a new role, no longer England's

³The danger of flattery in a personal monarchy is a well-trodden subject, which does not need iteration here. But the danger of flattery in the theatre ("you were *marvellous*, darling") is equally obvious. In a very real sense, a royal flatterer does the king and his body politic the same disservice that a *claque* does a principal actor and his company.

King but its "landlord", who leases out the land.⁴ As Gaunt both logically and prophetically warns, the implication of Richard's unkingly actions is self-deposition. If Richard undermines the ideological structures upon which monarchy rests, he makes himself vulnerable. This stress on the King's failings and misdeeds helps to keep attention, through contrast, upon the kinds of actions appropriate to a ruler. But to Gaunt's diatribe, Richard can only respond with a stubborn royal posture, as he invokes the superficial power of his kingship, a favourite aspect of his rhetoric:

Darest with thy frozen admonition
 Make pale our cheek, chasing the royal blood
 With fury from his native residence.
 Now by my seat's right royal majesty,
 Wert thou not brother to great Edward's son,
 This tongue that runs so roundly in thy head
 Should run thy head from thy unreverent shoulders. (II. i. 117-23)

As usual, Richard's concern is with reverence, the external appropriateness expected in a subject's behaviour and address. He forgets, however, that a king's relationship with a subject also has its appropriate due. Gaunt's last speech is addressed, not to Richard as King but to him as "my brother Edward's son" (II. i. 124), a rhetorical device which begins the process of distancing Richard from the name of king.

When Richard announces the seizure of Gaunt's revenues, it becomes York's turn to admonish the King for a new crime against royal action and against feudal ideology. The patient York, whose duty and allegiance are stretched to their limits by Richard's casualness, denounces his behaviour from his understanding of the tradition of royal action, into which Richard himself was born and which therefore he must

⁴The shamefulness that Gaunt perceives is that Richard is accepting monetary compensation for land-grants, instead of the feudal ideal of reciprocal service and benefit. In fact, as Ure points out (I. iv. 45n), Richard intended to grant the profits from the royal taxes to individuals in return for immediate money. Gaunt, of course, is the representative of the old-fashioned; by Elizabethan times these were normal enough practices, and Shakespeare himself was to buy a half-interest in the agricultural tithes of three of the hamlets near Stratford.

represent. Richard may look like a king, in that he resembles his father the Black Prince, but, says York, he is unlike his father in his actions:

His face thou hast, for even so look'd he,
Accomplish'd with the number of thy hours;
But when he frown'd it was against the French,
And not against his friends (II. i. 176-9)

That Richard should seize the royalties and rights of banished Bolingbroke is tantamount to destroying his identity and role as England's king:

Take Herford's rights away, and take from time
His charters, and his customary rights;
Let not to-morrow then ensue to-day:
Be not thyself. For how art thou a king
But by fair sequence and succession? (II. i. 195-9)

York warns the King that by this one act, he will not only hurt Bolingbroke, but also will damage ordered nature itself, wounding the very body politic and hierarchy at whose head Richard stands. The King's abuse of authority plucks "thousand dangers on his head" and makes inevitable the loss of a "thousand well-disposed hearts" (II. i. 205-6). Both York and Gaunt have enacted the role of loyal counsellor, in drawing their King's attention to errors in his behaviour which he must amend. The role of the loyal counsellor is seldom a grateful one: here and in *King Lear* it is juxtaposed with the self-serving but publicly vicious role of the flatterer: Goneril and Regan play Bushy, Bagot and Greene, while Cordelia and Kent, like Gaunt and York, find their honest advice unwelcome. Richard's response is nearly as irrational as Lear's: as he prepares to leave for Ireland, he vests his authority in the person of York (though indeed, not in Bushy, Bagot and Greene); York now must act as England's "Governor" (II. i. 220). York's new role is necessarily built upon inconsistency and conflict: if the King's actions reveal him to be so deficient in kingly qualities, what kind of representative of the body politic can York, his deputy, be? The later scenes of the play show how this conflict in a true king's identity is reflected in York's frustrated see-saw of allegiance between Richard and Bolingbroke:

Both are my kinsmen:

Th'one is my sovereign, whom both my oath
And duty bids defend; th'other again
Is my kinsman, whom the king hath wrong'd,
Whom conscience and my kindred bids to right. (II. ii. 111-15)

Act II scene i concludes with the remaining Lords, Northumberland, Ross, and Willoughby, discussing further how the King has failed in his office, a conversation that indicates how soon the loss of "well-disposed hearts" makes itself felt. Richard's eroded identity as a king becomes a sounding note in the play, as an echo of York's "Be not thyself" colours Northumberland's view that "The king is not himself, but basely led | By flatterers" (II. i. 241). As each lord recounts Richard's many wrongs against the state -- for instance, unfair taxation of the commons, the fining of nobility, daily exactions, and so on -- the examples accumulate into a convincing picture of a "degenerate king" (II. i. 262). The segments of society which Richard has harmed have "quite lost their hearts" (II. i. 247, 248), just as York had forewarned. With Northumberland's news that Bolingbroke is returning with an army, a new comparative perspective is introduced into the play, through the presentation of Bolingbroke's new role. He is described as the new hope with which England can "shake off [its] slavish yoke" (II. i. 291). In Bolingbroke now rests the confidence that majesty may re-animate itself to its former state; he will, says Northumberland,

Redeem from broking pawn the blemish'd crown,
Wipe off the dust that hides our sceptre's gilt,
And make high majesty look like itself . . . (II. i. 293-5)

Northumberland speaks in terms of the imitation and appearance of royalty that he feels has been so much maligned by a king whose role now lies ready for a more apt performer.

Richard's absence from the realm is not merely a physical departure, but is symbolic of how evanescent he now appears in his role as king. In her grief over her

absent husband, the Queen is comforted by Bushy, whose speech turns on the theme of substance and shadow, a point of general importance in the play:

Each substance of a grief hath twenty shadows,
Which shows like grief itself, but is not so.
For sorrow's eye, glazed with blinding tears,
Divides one thing entire to many objects,
Like perspectives, which, rightly gaz'd upon,
Show nothing but confusion; ey'd awry,
Distinguish form. So your sweet Majesty,
Looking awry upon your lord's departure,
Find shapes of grief more than himself to wail,
Which, look'd on as it is, is nought but shadows
Of what it is not; then, thrice-gracious queen,
More than your lord's departure weep not -- more's not seen . . .

(II. ii. 14-25)

The Platonic distinction between substance and shadow contributes to an awareness of the concept of kingship itself. That a king who was a failure should be the shadow of a true one (or one of substance) is an idea which Shakespeare repeatedly explored with the roles of his English kings; the contrast of substance and shadow is centrally linked with royalty and the performance of the kingly office.⁵ Bushy's speech gives rise to some of the more pervasive concerns in the play: Richard is king by right and divine authority, but he is not a king of substance; though not a king by right, Bolingbroke is a better man of substance and a better ruler than Richard; Richard is merely the shadow king who holds on to the idea of power but cannot wield it properly; Bolingbroke has the power and can achieve what he wants with it. When the two "kings" face each other in the deposition scene, both Bolingbroke and Richard talk of the "shadow" and "substance" mirrored in the looking glass in which Richard views himself. The shadow and substance of Richard's inward grief cannot be reconciled with his "external manners of lament" (IV. i. 296); his "sorrow" at the loss of his identity.

⁵Cf. *3 Henry VI* V. iv. 133-5; *2 Henry VI* I. i. 14; *3 Henry VI* I. iv. 69; IV. iii. 50; *Richard III* IV. iv. 83; *King John* II. i. 498-500; *1 Henry IV* III. ii. 99; V. iv. 30; *Lear* I. iv. 228.

which he cannot see in the mirror, is the inward "substance" of a "tortur'd soul" (IV. i. 298). When he smashes the mirror he breaks his own perspective, and creates a mass of broken glass which, as Bushy had explained to the Queen, "Divides ont thing entire to many objects, | Like perspectives, which, rightly gaz'd upon, | Show nothing but confusion". Even the Queen's own grief foretells Richard's sorrow, for as she confides to Bushy, her "inward soul" persuades her she does not weep at "things imaginary" (II. ii. 29-30). She cannot name the substantive cause of her trepidation, and in her fear her emotions contend between "nothing" and "something":

Tis nothing less: conceit is still deriv'd
From some forefather grief: mine is not so,
For nothing hath begot my something grief,
Or something hath the nothing that I grieve --
Tis in reversion that I do possess --
But what it is that is not yet known what,
I cannot name: 'tis nameless woe, I wot. (II. ii. 34-40)

Substance and shadow are the touchstones for the reality of the kingly role. As Richard fades into the evanescence of a shadow king, Bolingbroke gains in substance and power.

When Bolingbroke returns to England he arrives to find himself with an army, and is encouraged by the evident allegiance and support of most of the country. The "substance" of his behaviour is the hallmark of a king, for he already speaks and takes command like one. Though the King's power rests nominally in York's person, it is at best a feeble presence, as York himself admits: "Here am I left to underprop his land, | Who weak with age cannot support myself" (II. ii. 82-3); "my power is weak and all ill left" (II. iii. 153). Bolingbroke, who is present in substance, confronts only the shadow of Richard's kingship, despite the authority that in theory resides in York's position:

Com'st thou because the anointed king is hence?
Why, foolish boy, the king is left behind,
And in my loyal bosom lies his power. (II. iii. 95-7)

Bolingbroke comes back to England a changed and indeed a new man, not as "banish'd Herford" but as Duke of Lancaster (II. iii. 112-13); the power of his authority rests also in his ability to maintain his title and right, something which Richard was never able to do for himself. And as Bolingbroke wears down York's resistance, the King's own power becomes weakened to a point that York finally gives up all together:

I cannot mend it, I must needs confess,
 Because my power is weak and all ill left.
 But if I could, by Him that gave me life,
 I would attach you all, and make you stoop
 Unto the sovereign mercy of the king;
 But since I cannot, be it known unto you,
 I do remain as neuter. (II. iii. 152-8)

Bolingbroke's authority is manifest in his first authoritative action, the execution of Bushy and Greene, which arrogates to itself all the qualities of royal prerogative. His language is utilitarian, but decisive; in a short scene of forty-four lines, he has the flatterers disposed of, gives instructions for the Queen's care, and sets off to fight "with Glendor and his complices" (III. i. 43-4). His adoption of a kingly manner also, of course, entails adopting a role; significantly, he plays Pilate in decreeing the necessity for the execution: he will wash their blood "From off [his] hands, here in view of men" (III. i. 5-6). Bolingbroke has learned the value of public display, and will use it again for his advantage.

York's delegated authority, itself weakened by the flaws in the king who conferred it, fades to impotence before the inherent power and self-assurance of Bolingbroke. This proves a portent for the way in which Richard's power, upon his return, visibly drains away from him, and thus, from his kingdom. In the Welsh camp, the King's soldiers are dispersing, and losing hope. Richard's dying body politic is mirrored in nature itself, and lamented in the Welsh Captain's observations; to the Captain, the King is already dead:

Tis thought the king is dead; we will not stay.
 The bay-trees in our country are all wither'd,
 And meteors fright the fixed stars of heaven,
 And lean-look'd prophets whisper fearful change.

These signs fore-run the death or fall of kings.
 Farewell: our countrymen are gone and fled,
 As well assured Richard their king is dead. (II. iv. 7-17)

The collapse of Richard's power is shadowed in the heavens, and in the withering of the bay-trees, the outward signs of empty and almost dead authority. The short scene is emblematic of the way the strength of Richard's kingship disperses and decays: the stage begins to empty as the first words are spoken. Even then, the Captain says that it has been a hard task to keep his countrymen together up to now -- the world is falling apart, and the centre cannot hold. Where the Captain perceives the King's decline in the signs of nature, in the eye of Salisbury's imagination, Richard becomes but the fading glory of a place where former splendours are now only shadows:

Ah, Richard! with the eyes of heavy mind
 I see thy glory like a shooting star
 Fall to the base earth from the firmament.
 Thy sun sets weeping in the lowly west,
 Witnessing storms to come, woe, and unrest. (II. iv. 18-22)

Upon his return from Ireland in III.ii, Richard's perception of the performance of his kingly role entails an increase in the element of theatricality. As in the opening scenes of the play, where Richard was engaged in one kind of self-dramatization, he now proceeds to make his crisis into another, even more histrionic, kind of role. As the scene makes painfully clear, Bolingbroke has already stripped Richard of virtually all his physical power, and what action remains is in consequence relegated to the realm of Richard's own imagination. His landing in Wales is indicative of the way that (as Maynard Mack describes it) "he continues to interiorize and

imaginatively transform everything around him".⁶ Richard's greeting of his kingdom's earth is an individual moment of royal theatre, in which he animates the very ground he walks upon, an action to which his supporters become audience. He plays the "long-parted mother" reunited with "her child" (III. ii. 8), and he continues to articulate a repertory of moves and emotions which fulfill the role: "tears" and "smiles in meeting" doing "favours" to the earth with his "royal hands" (III. ii. 9-11). He is carried to a level of exaltation both poetical and pitiful in this display of self-dramatization, which even his followers seem to find excessive. As the lords stand around him, Richard asks them to "mock not [his] senseless conjuration", for he can command the earth to "have feeling" and the "stones | Prove armed soldiers ere her native king | Shall falter under foul rebellion's arms" (III. ii. 23-6). While there is every justification in theory for a king's making such an assertion, in practice, Richard finds himself in a situation in which he can only cling to the name and the attributes pertaining to his kingship. To Aumerle's practical reminder that Bolingbroke "Grows strong in *substance* [my emphasis] and in power" (III. ii. 35), Richard responds with an expression of his belief in the sacred identity of his kingship:

Discomfortable cousin! know'st thou not
That when the searching eye of heaven is hid
Behind the globe and lights the lower world,
Then thieves and robbers range abroad unseen
In murders and in outrage boldly here;
But when from under this terrestrial ball
He fires the proud tops of the eastern pines,^g
And darts his light through every guilty hole,
Then murders, treasons, and detested sins,
The cloak of night being pluck'd from off their backs,
Stand bare and naked, trembling at themselves?
So when this thief, this traitor, Bolingbroke,
Who all this while hath revell'd in the night,
Whilst we were wand'ring with the Antipodes,
Shall see us rising in our throne the east,

⁶*Killing the King*, 59.

His treasons will sit blushing in his face,
 Not able to endure the sight of day,
 But self-affrighted tremble at his sin.
 Not all the water in the rough rude sea
 Can wash the balm off from an anointed king;
 The breath of worldly men cannot depose
 The deputy elected by the Lord:
 For every man that Bolingbroke hath press'd
 To lift shrewd steel against our golden crown,
 God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay
 A glorious angel: then, if angels fight,
 Weak men must fall, for heaven still guards the fight.

(III. ii. 36-62)⁷

The passage is worth quoting in full because it shows how Richard has now turned the Christology of kingship into the ideology of his own role. Richard becomes progressively more engrossed in playing the part of King Richard, which he attempts to enshroud in the ideological divinity which hedges a king. He invokes the power which rests in the external symbols of an anointed king, whose authority as God's elect is the sole remaining recourse for all the problems Richard now faces. The anointed king of God becomes the dominant theme in Richard's portrayal henceforth in the play; but, as Bolingbroke's successes prove, it alone is not sufficient to save Richard and his kingdom. As Elizabethans were well aware, it was not enough that a king could claim his authority simply by divine right; he had to prove himself capable of fulfilling the demands of his anointed office. Carlisle expresses this doctrine admirably: he comforts Richard, declaring "that power that made you king | Hath power to keep you king in spite of all", yet goes on gently but firmly to insist that "The means heaven yields must be imbrac'd | And not neglected; else heaven would. | And we will not" (III. ii. 27-31). The realities of Bolingbroke's power and obvious abilities at rule thus come in conflict with the political ideals which Richard as a king believes he represents.

⁷Cf. Matthew 26:53 "Either thinkest thou, that I can not now pray to my Father, and he wil giue me mo then twelve legions of Angels?" Also, John 18:36 "My kingdome is not of this worlde: if my kingdome were of this worlde, my seruants wolde surely fight, that I shulde not be deliuered to the fewes".

As the rest of the scene with its alternations between hope and despair makes clear, Richard is well aware of the dangers which that conflict can bring, but routinely fails to carry that perception into any kind of decisive action. In his self-dramatization, Richard's is an aesthetic response to the crisis rather than a pragmatic one. The "blood of twenty thousand men" that did only now "triumph in [his] face" drains with the news of the soldiers' desertion (III. ii. 76-9). He calls attention to the pallor of his countenance until he is urged, by Aumerle, to "remember who you are" (III. ii. 82). The exhortation brings momentary relief, in Richard's recollection that he is after all the "king", in whose very "name" is the strength of "twenty thousand names" (III. ii. 83-5).⁸ Whether in despair or in hope, the qualities of his kingship become, in Richard's mind, increasingly poetic and religious. No sooner does he vow to proceed in "high thoughts" than he is brought low again in another proverbial response to adversity; he dismisses the loss of his kingdom: "why, 'twas my care, | And what loss is it to be rid of care?" (III. ii. 95-6).

His subjects, he declares, have broken their faith to God as well as to himself with their revolt (III. ii. 101). Even Scroope joins in the poeticising of Richard's calamity by comparing the way he bears the news to "an unseasonable stormy day, | Which makes the silver rivers drown their shores, | As if the world were all dissolv'd to tears" (III. ii. 106-8). Richard has become the observed sufferer whose endurance is a source of poetry. With the comparison Richard makes of the three men, Bagot, Bushy, and Greene, that he (wrongly) supposes to be traitors to him, to "three Judases, each one worse than Judas!" (III. ii. 132), he again adopts for himself the role of Christ. More specifically, he plays the betrayed Christ, a role he will once more cast himself in, in the deposition scene. The crisis develops in Richard's mind into an outpouring of aesthetic creativity, which aims toward a fictionalizing of his role as a self-written chronicle:

Let us talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs,

Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes

⁸The importance of the king's *name*, remarked upon not only by Richard here, but also by Richard III (V. iii. 12-13), has been already discussed in detail in Chapter 4, section v, "In the Name of the King".

Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth.
Let's choose executors and talk of wills.

For God's sake let us sit upon the ground
And tell sad stories of the death of kings (III. ii. 145-56)

The hollow crown is the theatre in which Death keeps his court, who merely allows the king a "little scene" while scoffing at his regality (III. ii. 160-4); an allusion to the dance of death, and its representation in morality drama, which can hardly be accidental. The theatricality of the image allows Richard a new perception about the inefficacy of the pomp and ceremony inherent in the royal office. Kingship is a role which Richard feels he has merely assumed for a while without inheriting its quintessential power. Ceremony and duty are but the external trappings, lacking in substantial significance, and he tells the others that they must adjust their behaviour now that the show is over and proven unsuccessful:

Cover your heads, and mock not flesh and blood
With solemn reverence; throw away respect,
Tradition, form, and ceremonious duty;
For you have but mistook me all this while.
I live with bread like you, feel want,
Taste grief, need friends -- subjected thus,
How can you say to me, I am a king? (III. ii. 171-7)

Richard's crises of identity are his own worst enemy, as Carlisle tries to tell him: "your follies fight against yourself" (III. ii. 182). Functioning as his own tragic chorus, the King is the opposite of the wise men who "ne'er sit and wail their woes" (III. ii. 178). The solution to his situation continually draws attention to itself in terms of action and decision, neither of which Richard finds himself able to undertake.⁹ When Aumerle suggests that Richard make use of York's forces and

⁹The similarity between Richard's impotence, and that of Henry VI, discussed above, is obvious. The differences between the two are equally deep: Henry's impotence derives, as has been shown, from an inherently passive and contemplative mind, trained in a tradition of saintliness. Richard, as is clear, is not a "good" king,

thereby "learn to make a body of a limb" (III. ii. 187), the King finds a temporarily renewed strength to overcome this "ague fit of fear" (III. ii. 190). As Scroope "play[s] the torturer by small and small | To lengthen out the worst that must be spoken" (III. ii. 198-9), Richard discovers that the strength of a king's body politic, which he had endowed York with, has abandoned Richard to join with Bolingbroke. Richard now banishes "comfort" both as a word to be spoken and as a feeling in which to indulge; he will rather embrace the "sweet way" to "despair": his only course of action is to "pine away" in Flint Castle (III. ii. 205-9). The word "king" is now an external linguistic construct that Richard uses as if it belonged outside his own identity: he is "A [my emphasis] king, woe's slave" who will "kingly woe obey" (III. ii. 210). He himself sets the mood for the ensuing scene at Flint Castle, discharging his followers from the "night" of his own catastrophe to seek the "fair day" of Bolingbroke's triumph.

The audience does not have to wait long to see how the bright splendour of majesty has already surrounded Bolingbroke; his entrance in III. iii. is announced with the pageantry of "*drum and colours*". Northumberland's lack of reverence in simply using the name "Richard", rather than the King's full titles, is condemned by York, but is indicative of how much of Richard's kingly role has already been lost. News that the castle is "royally mann'd" takes Bolingbroke, York, and Northumberland by surprise and as a result, their exchanges make an ironic commentary on the very authority of the word "king":

Percy The castle royally is mann'd, my lord,

Against thy entrance.

Bolingbroke Royally!

Why, it contains no king?

Percy

Yes, my good lord.

It doth contain a king; King Richard lies

Within the limits of yon lime and stone . . . (III. iii. 21-6)

nor especially a "good" man, and his impotence is thrust upon him as a direct consequence of his own neglect of his role.

Ironically, Bolingbroke speaks truer than he knows: Flint contains no real king, and Percy's use of "a king" rather than "the king" detracts in the same way as Northumberland's previous disrespect from Richard's status. The presence of the King's majesty is at best a doubtful reality by this point in the play.

Bolingbroke expresses his view of his anticipated meeting with Richard in imaginative terms, as the signs of an external show; and hence much of the scene deals with precisely what the outward displays of ceremony and duty have come to mean as they relate to both Bolingbroke's and Richard's roles:

Methinks King Richard and myself should meet
 With no less terror than the elements
 Of fire and water, when their thund'ring shock
 At meeting tears the cloudy cheeks of heaven.
 Be he the fire, I'll be the yielding water;
 The rage be his, whilst on the earth I rain
 My waters -- on the earth, and not on him.
 March on, and mark King Richard how he looks. (III. iii. 54-61)

Bolingbroke is the first to observe Richard's aspect, which he describes entirely from the conqueror's perspective; Richard appears as the "discontented sun" amidst the "clouds" that are "bent to dim his glory and stain the track | Of his bright passage to the occident" (III. iii. 62-7). In his speech, Bolingbroke speaks as the "fair day" to Richard's "night," but York perceives someone totally different from Bolingbroke's description:

Yet looks he like a king. Behold his eye,
 As bright as is the eagle's, lightens forth
 Controlling majesty; alack, alack for woe
 That any harm should stain so fair a show! (III. iii. 68-71)

The two descriptions are obviously at odds, but in their very discrepancies they focus on the crisis of the King's identity; the Richard that York sees is still the King, but

to Bolingbroke he is already the vanquished opponent whose monarchical role Bolingbroke has, in effect, already usurped.

In his message to the King, Northumberland is instructed to say that Bolingbroke comes "On both his knees" to "kiss King Richard's hand", in an offering of allegiance and "true faith of heart | To his most royal person" (III. iii. 36-8). But Bolingbroke's attempt at outward ceremonial reverence is merely an empty sign, as he had proved before in his response to York's demand "Show me thy humble heart, and not thy knee, | Whose duty is deceivable and false" (II. iii. 83-4).¹⁰ Richard's first words to Northumberland concern the lack of reverence, which Northumberland has shown:

We are amaz'd, and thus long have we stood
To watch the fearful bending of thy knee,
Because we thought ourself thy lawful king;
And if we be, how dare thy joints forget
To pay their awful duty to our presence? (III. iii. 72-6)

Richard is correct to link this display with the majesty of God which is manifest in himself and which he now goes on to describe. To deny a king his due reverence in external signs was tantamount to an exhibition of self-idolatry. As John Aylmer explained in 1556,

¹⁰Maynard Mack traces the significance of the play's imagery, which develops the relation between meaning and gesture. Throughout the play terms of external gesture, "knee", "hand", "tongue", are at odds with internal meaning, usually associated with the word, "heart"; see *Killing the King*, 68. See also Robert Ornstein, *A Kingdom for a Stage*: "More than an 'elaborate game', the ceremonies of Richard's court project the decorums that order his kingdom . . . In such a world, height of name has a literal reality, because lowliness must hug the ground, kneeling in supplication to stated majesty. Mowbray flings himself at Richard's feet in the opening scene; Mowbray and Bolingbroke kneel together before Richard as their joust begins, and they must swear together an oath of allegiance before they depart to exile. Richard is amazed to see Northumberland erect before him at Flint Castle, but Bolingbroke is quick to kneel before York and to stoop before Richard, who raises his cousin up to the throne itself. On that throne, Henry later watches Aumerle, York, and his wife kneel to him in supplication. The climactic moments of the play are ceremonies of ascension and declension acted out on the heights and the depths of the playhouse stage", 104-5.

greate honour is due to that estate, and thinke it no Idolatrye as some men use to terme it, either to bare thy head or bowe thy knee to the chiefest minister of God, yea if thou doest it not thou makest an idoll of thy selfe, whyle thou liftest uppe thy baseness to that heighte, that thou wylte not stoupe, where thou oughtest, nor geue honoure where thou shouldest. What is els to make an Idoll of thy selfe, but to honour thy self, where thou oughtest not, and pull downe Goddes Maiesty. Where thou shouldest not.¹¹

Bolingbroke is the first to stoop before Richard, and instructs everyone to "show fair duty to his Majesty" (III. iii. 188). But as Richard is all too painfully aware, outward "shows" have simply become signs without significance, because his role as king no longer possesses the authority to merit them:

Fair cousin, you debase your princely knee
To make the base earth proud with kissing it.
Me rather had my heart might feel your love,
Than my displeased eye see your courtesy.
Up, cousin, up; your heart is up, I know,
Thus high at least, although your knee be low. (III. iii. 190-5)

Before Richard descends to the "base court" he clings to the concept of his role as the image of God's anointed; if he is not the lawful king, he asks Northumberland, he demands to see the "hand of God | That hath dismiss'd us from our stewardship" (III. iii. 77-8). He "well know[s]" that no mortal hand "Can gripe the sacred handle of [his] sceptre. | Unless he do profane, steal, or usurp" (III. iii. 79-81). Though outwardly it may appear that the King is bereft of "friends" and the "souls" of his rebelling subjects, Richard calls again on God's protective grace:

Yet know, my master, God omnipotent,
Is mustering in his clouds, on our behalf.
Armies of pestilence, and they shall strike

¹¹In *Harborowe for Faithful and Trewe Subiects*, M3^v-M4^r.

Your children yet unborn, and unbegot,
 That lift your vassal hands against my head,
 And threat the glory of my precious crown. (III. iii. 85-90)

Richard's public pronouncements of his royal sanctity are defensive asseverations which belie his inward fears and lack of confidence. From speaking to Northumberland, he turns to Aumerle and deplores how "we do debase ourselves, cousin, do we not, | To look so poorly, and to speak so fair?" (III. iii. 127-8). As if speaking to himself, Richard struggles with the conception of a past and present identity, lamenting what he was as a king and what he must now be:

O God! O God! that e'er this tongue of mine,
 That laid the sentence of dread banishment
 On yon proud man, should take it off again
 With words of sooth! O that I were as great
 As is my grief, or lesser than my name!
 Or that I could forget what I have been!
 Or not remember what I must be now! (III. iii. 133-9)

Because he can no longer play at being king, Richard surrenders his role to Bolingbroke and his demands: "What must the king do now? Must he submit? | The king shall do it" (III. iii. 143-4). Richard throws himself into a new part, whatever part Bolingbroke is writing for him; and for the role of king, Richard now substitutes a repertory of parts, complete with accompanying props:

I'll give my jewels for a set of beads;
 My gorgeous palace for a hermitage;
 My gay apparel for an almsman's gown;
 My figur'd goblets for a dish of wood;
 My sceptre for a palmer's walking staff;
 My subjects for a pair of carved saints.
 And my large kingdom for a little grave . . . (III. iii. 147-54)

By divesting himself, one by one, of the trappings of his royalty in favour of a more humble and religious life, Richard creates, and sets the tone for, his role as the martyr-king in the deposition scene.¹² He begins here to stand outside himself, as can be perceived from the intricate play of the noun and pronoun; it is not "what must I do now" but what must the "*king*" do now, "must *he* be depos'd? | The *king* shall be contented. Must *he* lose | The name of king?" (III. iii. 143-6). Richard continues to transform the reality around him by the fictions of his imagination and his aesthetic impulses. In his thoughts he imagines a pathetic itinerary from a "little grave, an obscure grave", to the foul weather made with "despised tears", and the "sighs" that will "lodge the summer corn", to (with Aumerle) playing the "wantons with our woes", and back again to an image of graves which kinsmen have dug with weeping eyes (III. 153-69). Coming out of his reverie of the future, Richard sees he "talk[s] but idly" (III. iii. 171),¹³ (Northumberland says he "speak[s] fondly like a frantic man") and seems to awaken to the harsh political reality that has not gone away; it is to "his Majesty", "King Bolingbroke", as Richard already calls him, that the King "must"¹⁴ now submit (III. iii. 173).

The self-dramatization continues with Richard's commentary and descent into the "base court, where kings grow base" (III. iii. 180). His decline and fall is an aesthetic as well as a physical action, from the heights of kingship and from the walls of Flint Castle (and presumably from the literal heights of the upper stage itself). With the steps he takes downward, Richard sings his own tragic chorus and presents his fall like "glist'ring Phaeton" to come "at traitors' calls, and do them grace!" (III. iii. 178-81). He acquiesces in Bolingbroke's new-found authority and power, with the acknowledgement that "they well deserve to have | That know the strong'st and surest way to get" (III. iii. 200-1). The King willingly gives way to what "force" must have him do, and anticipates whatever designs Bolingbroke already has in mind:

Richard For do we must what force will have us do.

¹²This, at least, is a role Henry VI would have understood.

¹³Whether the onlookers "laugh at" him, as he complains, is a point of interpretation. Various theatrical possibilities suggest themselves.

¹⁴Cf. Tilley, M1330: "Must is for the king".

Set on towards London, cousin, is it so?

Bolingbroke Yea, my good lord.

Richard Then I must not say no. (III. iii. 207-9)

The scenes which follow provide, in their varying degrees, a commentary on the action that has taken place so far in the play. Both the garden scene, and the scene which finds Aumerle accused of complicity in Gloucester's death, manifest the implications of Richard's decline as king. Overrun with weeds, the disordered garden provides a political allegory of Richard's mismanagement and the disorder of his realm, and anticipates his tragedy. Richard's "waste of idle hours" (III. iv. 66) has made him a bad actor in the role of gardener to his kingdom, and as the Queen's reaction to the Gardener's views makes clear, the realm is a holy paradise in which she perceives the Gardener as enacting Adam's role in precipitating the "second fall" of man (III. iv. 76). The Gardener's honest analysis of the political situation, which he reveals to the Queen, is a commentary on the new roles in which both Richard and Bolingbroke find themselves. In the balances of power "both are weighed" and in Richard's "scale is nothing but himself" except the few vanities which carry no authority (III. iv. 84-6); whereas Bolingbroke has the weight of power, not only of his own capabilities, but also of "all the English peers" (III. iv. 87-8).

In Westminster Hall the contentions of a disordered state are reflected in the atmosphere of hostility which exists between Aumerle, Bagot and the other lords, over whom Bolingbroke finds himself in the role of umpire. The scene is reminiscent of the opening of the play: gages are thrown, challenges are issued, vaunts of honour and accusations of cowardice are made, and oaths of revenge are taken. Like Richard before him, Bolingbroke has become not only the observer of ritualistic action, but also must attempt to be its controller. His pronouncements come in the form of demands and decrees:

Cousin, stand forth, and look upon that man. (IV. i. 7)

Bagot, forbear, thou shalt not take it up. (IV. i. 29)

These differences shall all rest under gage

Till Norfolk be repeal'd -- repeal'd he shall be,
 And, though mine enemy, restor'd again
 To all his lands and signories. When he's return'd,
 Against Aumerle we will inforce his trial (IV. i. 86-90)

Lords appellants,
 Your differences shall all rest under gage
 Till we assign you to your days of trial (IV. i. 104-6)

Bolingbroke's use of the royal "we" already sounds natural on his lips, as he continues to define, and make his own, the kingly role.

When York enters to give Bolingbroke news that "plume-pluck'd Richard" will with "willing soul" give up his sceptre and make Bolingbroke heir, York now finds himself proclaiming a new king with the words of a freshly-made title: "Long live Henry, fourth of that name!" (IV. i. 108-12). Bolingbroke's first response, so typical of the way he masters the public rubrics of majesty, is to claim the throne "In God's name" (IV. i. 113). The Bishop of Carlisle, once again the voice of orthodoxy, checks Bolingbroke's blasphemous enthusiasm by expounding the ideology of kingship. He accuses Bolingbroke of transgressing the divinity which hedges Richard's kingship, an action even more heinous because it is undertaken in Richard's absence:

What subject can give sentence on his king?
 And who sits here that is not Richard's subject?

And shall the figure of God's majesty,
 His captain, steward, deputy elect,
 Anointed, crowned, planted many years,
 Be judg'd by subject and inferior breath,
 And he himself not present? O forbend it, God,
 That in a Christian climate souls refin'd
 Should show so heinous, black, obscene a deed! (IV. i. 121-31)

That "subjects" should presume to judge their king is, as Carlisle says, a misappropriation of carefully defined roles which hold together the fabric of a world ordered by Christianity. And so Carlisle reminds the present company: "I speak to subjects, and a subject speaks" (IV. i. 132). He continues to express his dismay at subjects who have forgotten to play their proper roles by usurping others: "My Lord of Herford here, whom you call king, | Is a foul traitor to proud Herford's king" (IV. i. 134-5). Carlisle's speech represents yet another avowal of the divine sanctions which continually find themselves surrounding Richard and the royal office. If Bolingbroke is crowned, the country, predicts Carlisle, will turn into, and be called, the "field of Golgotha and dead men's skulls" (IV. i. 144). The allusion to Christ's crucifixion is lost on the onlookers, but it is one which Richard himself will soon elaborate upon in his passionate suffering. Carlisle's speech intensifies the theme of disorder and the significance inherent in the abandonment of belief in ordained roles, both of the subject and of the king. Should Richard be deposed and Bolingbroke become king, the whole world, or at least the kingdom, must fall apart. That Carlisle's prophecy is an accurate forecast of the War of the Roses does not, of course, mean anything so simplistic as that Shakespeare is making Carlisle here a mouthpiece for his own view of history. Indeed, the irony of the situation is that in the circumstances of Bolingbroke's usurpation, the events dismally foretold by Carlisle are only too probable: it needed no ghost come from the grave to tell us this. That Carlisle's exposition of the ideology of kingship should so closely match the public theory (as expounded in the first part of the thesis) proves nothing more than that Shakespeare wanted his audience to perceive the conflicts of the play in these terms. It is of course significant that by Carlisle's arrest, the voice of orthodoxy is muzzled; from the point of view of the others on stage, Carlisle speaks "capital treason" and not allegiance (IV. i. 151).

At the beginning of the deposition scene, Bolingbroke reveals that he, too, is well aware of the potential of theatre in his new-found role: he proposes a show which will stage-manage not only Richard's fall, but Bolingbroke's own advancement to the throne:

Fetch hither Richard, that in common view
He may surrender; so we shall proceed

Without suspicion. (IV. i. 155-7)

The emphasis is again on the outward show of the proceedings, in which everyone has his part to play; Richard's role, of course, being the most important one. His deposition is the most significant action in the play, and one which is enacted in terms of self-dramatization and theatrical process¹⁵; the individuals on stage act as audience to Richard's self-destruction.

The scene represents the final undoing of sacred majesty, brought to humiliation at the feet of political expediency. As Richard enters, with the regalia brought after him, his separation from the role of king is physically made manifest to the eye. He is no longer allowed to look like a king, because he ceases to wear the outward signs of the office: the crown, sceptre, robe, and so on. The scene is actually a coronation service in a reverse order, in which Richard now finds himself the ceremonial instrument which "undock[s] the pompous body of a king" (IV. i. 250).¹⁶

Richard's deposition is an anti-ritual, which has been carefully prepared for by a process of anti-ritual and anti-ceremony throughout the play. Far from being what

¹⁵Q1, Q2, Q3 omit the deposition scene because, as Peter Ure points out, "political conditions towards the end of the century made the dethronement of an English monarch a dangerous subject for public discussion"; "There are instances, occurring in 1578, some time before 1588, and 1597, of certain of Elizabeth's courtiers hinting at analogy between Richard II and the Queen, although in no disloyal spirit. The fact that when the first Quarto was printed the deposition scene was omitted (and not restored until after Elizabeth's death) suggests that official sensitivity about representing the discrowning of a monarch might have been sharpened by the currency of this analogy"; see his Arden edition of *Richard II*, xiv. The printer, Matthew Law, added the scene for the first time in Q4 of 1608 whose title-page advertises the theatrical interest inherent in the deposition: "THE | Tragedie of King | Richard the Second: | With new additions of the Parlia- | ment Sceane, and the deposing | of King Richard, | As it hath been lately acted by the Kinges | Maiesties seruantes, at the Globe."

¹⁶See Walter Pater, "Shakespeare's English Kings" in *Appreciations*: "In the Roman Pontifical, of which the order of Coronation is really a part, there is no form for the inverse process, no rite of 'degradation', such as that by which an offending priest or bishop may be deprived, if not of the essential quality of 'orders', yet one by one, of its outward dignities. It is as if Shakespeare had had in mind some such inverted rite, like those old ecclesiastical or military ones, by which human hardness, or human justice, adds the last touch of unkindness to the execution of its sentences, in the scene where Richard 'deposes' himself, as in some long, agonizing ceremony, reflectively drawn out", 205-6.

many critics call it, Shakespeare's most ceremonial play, *Richard II* is, on the contrary, perhaps his most *anti-ceremonial* dramatic work.¹⁷ From the very beginning of the play, anticipated structures of ritual undercut themselves before they are ever allowed to complete their effects: the trial by combat between Mowbray and Bolingbroke does not take place: it is an empty show because the end result has already been determined beforehand in Richard's mind; the ritual of banishment, which Mowbray accepts, is weakened by Richard's show of leniency to Gaunt, and fails altogether upon Bolingbroke's return and the breaking of his oath; the ritual of a death-bed scene is not allowed a characteristic conclusion of reconciliation because Richard's intransigence obliges Gaunt to go to his grave railing at the King; Bolingbroke's intended shows of reverence and allegiance to the King at Flint Castle are not what they seem; the Queen and her Ladies' attempts to entertain themselves in the garden by playing at bowls, or by dancing and telling tales, are undercut by the news garnered in their eavesdropping; even the Gardeners, tending to their jobs, are interrupted by the onlooking Queen; Aumerle and Bagot remain as appellants who never engage in their trial by combat. In each case in which ceremony is seen as collapsing or undercutting itself, the result breeds, or comments upon the nature of, conflict. The ceremonies which are attempted but never completed in *Richard II* help to make it the most conflict-ridden of Shakespeare's history plays, and it is the conflict of Richard's ceremonial identity as king which lies at the heart of all other conflicts in the play, and the heart of the deposition scene. The universe of the play may be ceremonially ordered, but it is the consequences of ceremony's collapse which are stressed, and provide the dominant focus of Richard's dilemma.

Ritual kingship itself falls apart through its own undoing, so that it becomes a progress, as Gaunt had forewarned, of wilful self-deposing (II. i. 108). In an inverted parallel to the process of a king's translation and alteration *into* his role, Richard's deposition completes a process of royal translation and alteration in a reverse direction. Change is for Richard, as it is for Hal, a key-note in the concept of

¹⁷Some critics who have stressed what they take to be its ceremonial manner are Tillyard, Ornstein, and Van Laan.

majesty, but in Richard's case, only in reverse.¹⁸ Holinshed's various accounts of the King's predicament are telling in this respect:

was it no hurt (thinke you) to his person to be spoiled of his roialtie, to be deposed from his crowne, to be translated from principalitie to prison, & to fall from honor into horror.¹⁹

neither was the king permitted all this while to change his apparell, but rode still through all these townes simple clothed in one sute of raiment, and yet he was in his time exceeding sumptuous in apparell.²⁰

the king being now in the hands of his enemies, and utterlie despairing of all comfort, was easilie persuaded to renounce his crowne and princelie preheminence, so that in hope of life onelie, he agreed to all

¹⁸Shakespeare, of course, does not dwell upon Richard's public successes in his earlier days.

¹⁹*Chronicles*, 501.

²⁰*Ibid.* Cf. Daniel's *Ciuite Warres* which describes Bolingbroke's triumph into London with the degraded Richard in tow:

Straight towards London in this heate of pride
The Duke sets forward as they had decreed,
With whom the *Captiue King* constrained must ride,
Most meanely mounted on a simple steed:
Degraded of all grace and ease beside,
Thereby neglect of all respect to breed;
For th'ouer-spreading pompe of prouder might
Must darken weaknes and debase his sight. (Stanza 66)

Behind him all aloof came pensive on
The vnregarded king, that drooping went
Alone, and but for spight scarce lookt vpon,
Iudge if he did more enuy or lament:
O what a wondrous worke this daie is done,
Which th' image of both fortunes doth present.
In th' one to show the best of glories face.
In th' other worse then worst of all disgrace. (Stanza 70)

things that were of him demanded. And so . . . he renounced and voluntarilie was deposed from his roiall crowne and kinglie dignitie.²¹

that he for insufficiencie which he knew himselfe to be of, to occupie so great a charge, as to gouerne the realme of England, he would gladlie leaue of and renounce his right and title . . . and his maiestie roiall, unto Herrie duke of Hereford.²²

In Holinshed, as in Shakespeare, the historical account of Richard's translation is conceptualized theatrically, as the rehearsed motions of a role enacted to undo royalty:

And further, he desired to have a bill drawne of the said resignation, that he might be perfect in the rehearsall thereof . . . And although he had and might sufficientlie haue declared his renouncement by the reading of an other meane person; yet for the more suertie of the matter, and for that the said resignation should have his full force and strength, himselfe therefore read the scroll of resignation.²³

Richard's first words in the abdication scene strike the theatrical note by acknowledging his awareness of himself as a player-king who has not learned to play his new role as a court flatterer:

Alack, why am I sent for to a king
Before I have shook off the regal thoughts
Wherewith I reign'd? I hardly yet have learn'd
To insinuate, flatter, bow, and bend my knee.
Give sorrow leave awhile to tutor me
To this submission. (IV. i. 162-7)

²¹*Ibid.*, 503.

²²*Ibid.*

²³*Ibid.*, 503-4.

Immediately, he hearkens back to the former state of his kingship, as he recollects the "favours of these men" who once owed him allegiance (IV. i. 168). He throws himself passionately into the role of the betrayed Christ in the midst of His enemies, a Christ whose suffering he hyperbolically conceives of as being less than his own. Not only can he not elicit the appropriate responses due to a king, he must perform them himself:

Did they not sometime cry "All hail!" to me?
 So Judas did to Christ. But he, in twelve,
 Found truth in all but one; I, in twelve thousand, none.
 God save the king! Will no man say amen?
 Am I both priest and clerk? well then, amen.
 God save the king! although I be not he;
 And yet, amen, if heaven do think him me. (IV. i. 169-75)

It was not unusual for a betrayed king to express his outrage by this image.²⁴ The form of prayer which was published to celebrate James's survival from an assassination attempt uses St. Matthew's account of Christ's betrayal as a commentary on the parallel situation:

When the morning was come, all the chiefe priests and Elders of the people held a consell against Jesus to put him to death. And when they had bound him, they led him away, and deliuered him to Pontius Pilate the deputie. Then Judas which had betrayed him . . .²⁵

²⁴See Peter Ure's comment on this concept in his Arden edition of *Richard II*: "the comparison of the fallen monarch with Christ could have developed both from the familiar habit of dubbing any traitor a Judas, and from the view of the king as God's vicar and substitute, the figure of God's majesty, His captain and deputy, for whom the angels fight, which is stressed throughout the play, and which, deriving from the Bible and the contemporary leaders of Protestant thought, is fundamental to Tudor political doctrine. For when this divine royal figure is betrayed, it is at least possible that the poet could see him in the same perspective as another betrayed Divinity", xlviii.

²⁵*A Fourme of Prayer with Thankesgiuing, to be used by all the Kings Maiesties louing Subjects euery yeere the fift of August: Being the day of his Highnesse happy deliuerance from the traiterous and bloody attempt of the Earle of Gowry and his brother, with their Adherents*, F2^v. The most famous of English kings who was

What role must Richard perform, for what "service" is he called?

To do that office of thine own good will
Which tired majesty did make thee offer:
The resignation of thy state and crown
To Henry Bolingbroke. (IV. i. 177-80)

This is certainly the play which Bolingbroke had in mind, and hopes will be performed in "common view", but Richard has another drama in mind, and his own participation makes it inevitable that there will be two plays which contend for the stage at the same time. Richard's staged confession and public abdication are what Bolingbroke has planned, in which his own behaviour, or role, must appear as patient, royal, controlled and as just as possible. Everything is designed for pre-arranged effect: emotions, gestures, language must be carefully calculated so as not to allow any spontaneous events to interfere with the planned display. Usurpation becomes an aesthetic action which Bolingbroke tries to stage-manage, but -- unfortunately for his

considered by others, as he saw himself, in the role of the betrayed Christ is, of course, Charles I: see *Eikon Basilike*: "I blesse God, I pray not so much, that this bitter cup of a violent death may passe from Me, as that of his wrath may passe from all those, whose hands by deserting Me, are sprinkled, or by acting and consenting to My death are embrued with My bloud", 260. For the theatricality inherent in the role, see also J. D., *The Last Counsel of a Martyred King*:

This scene was like the *Passion-Tragedie*,
His Saviour's Person none could Act, but he.
Behold what *Scribes* are here, what *Pharisees*!
What *bands of Soldiers*! What false *Witnesses*!
Here was a *Priest*, and that a *Chief* one; who
Durst strike at *God*, and his *Viceregent* too.
Here *Bradshaw*, *Pilate* there: This makes them twain.
Pilate for fear, *Bradshaw* condemn'd for *Gain*.
Wretch! could'st not thou be rich till *Charles* was dead?
Thou might'st have took the *Crown*, yet spar'd his *head*.
Thou'st justifi'd that *Roman* judg; Who stood
And washt in *Water*, thou hast dipt in *Blood*.
And where's the *Slaughter-house*? *Whitehall* must be.
Lately his *Paradise*, now his *Calvarie*.
Great *Charles*, is this Thy *Dying-place*? And where
Thou wert our *King*, art thou our *Martyr* there? (stanzas 7-8)

directorial ambitions -- one in which Richard refuses to speak the lines of his predetermined script. He has his own play to act.

Richard's self-dramatization is centred on the image of the sacrifice, and suffering, of an anointed and betrayed king who has been manipulated and degraded. His emotions are not disguised but real (however theatrically presented), which is more than can be said for Bolingbroke's merely political behaviour. Richard's language moves from image to image in intricate patterns of symbol and intense emotion; each thought and feeling becomes material for the scene, he is acting. He is not content just to relinquish the crown: on the contrary, he wishes to present its forced transference, and hence the transference of royal power, as a classic drama of betrayal, using the full imaginative force of his suffering. He too can stage-manage effectively, and in fact takes control of the action and even of Bolingbroke's own participation:

Give me the crown. Here, cousin, seize the crown.

Here, cousin,

On this side my hand, and on that side thine. (IV. i. 181-3)

The crown again becomes a symbol for a sphere and quality of action; the court where the antic sits is the now the well in which Richard sinks while Bolingbroke "mount[s] up on high" (IV. i. 184-9). Much to Bolingbroke's discomfiture he finds he must play the straight man, led by Richard's cues: "I thought you had been willing to resign" (IV. i. 190). In a speech which prepares for his formal undoing, Richard declares, with appropriate rhetorical patterning, that though Bolingbroke has triumphed in every other respect, he is still king of his griefs and cares:

My care is loss of care, by old care done,

Your care is gain of care, by new care won.

The cares I give, I have, though given away,

They tend the crown, yet still with me they stay. (IV. i. 196-9)

The implications of movement in both directions suggested by "loss" and "gain", serve to stress both his alteration in the reverse direction as a king, and Bolingbroke's

translation into the royal role. To Bolingbroke's persistence, "Are you contented to resign the crown?" (IV. i. 200), Richard's answer is "Ay, no; no, ay; for I must nothing be" (IV. i. 201), a response replete with a wealth of implications²⁶ which reveal how difficult it is for him to come to terms with the crisis in his identity as a king. He carefully distinguishes: he will not resign the crown, but will resign himself, instead, to Bolingbroke. Having effectually divested himself of majesty at Flint Castle, Richard now ritually and publicly performs the abdication for the benefit of the attendant audience: "Now, mark me how I will undo myself" (IV. i. 203). The speech is a compressed *Liber Regalis* in reverse: the crown, sceptre, kingly sway, the balm, sacred state, duteous oaths, pomp and majesty, and wealth of estates are all the elements of Richard's majesty that he here forgoes and undoes. Even the language is ritualistic in the tone and in the structure of the rhetoric.²⁷

His performance of this anti-ritual is however not enough to satisfy his opponents: to his question "What more remains?" (IV. i. 222), Northumberland replies that there is yet more for the actor to speak: Richard must publicly confess his crimes in order that "the souls of men | May deem that [he is] worthily depos'd" (IV. i. 226-7). But once again Richard takes control of his own role, and refuses to be coached in any direction that does not reveal how he has been betrayed as a sacred king. The "grievous crimes" pertain not to Richard, he declares, but to those who have "[cracked] the strong warrant of an oath" an action which is "damn'd in the book of heaven" (IV. i. 235-6). Two tragedies are here intertwined and enacted: around the sacred tragedy of his royalty Richard sees the tragedy of betrayal, which characteristically he dramatizes in terms of his likeness to Christ:

Nay, all of you, that stand and look upon me
 Whilst that my wretchedness doth bait myself,
 Though some of you, with Pilate, wash your hands,

²⁶"Ay" and "I" are pronounced alike.

²⁷It is, remarkably, very close to the linguistic structure in a poem (*Majesty in Misery*) ascribed to Charles I:

With my own power my majesty they wound,
 In the King's name the king himself uncrowned,
 So does the dust destroy the diamond.

As cited and explained in Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 41, n.32.

Showing an outward pity -- yet you Pilates
 Have here deliver'd me to my sour cross,
 And water cannot wash away your sin. (IV. i. 237-42)²⁸

To Northumberland's repeated insistence that Richard "read o'er these articles" (IV. i. 243), Richard repeats his refusal to comply, continuing his performance as the Man of Sorrows. He cannot read for the tears that fill his eyes. "And yet salt water blinds them not so much | But they can see a sort of traitors here" (IV. i. 244-6). Turning the theme of betrayal upon himself, Richard casts himself into yet another role which stresses not only his reverse translation, but also the reverse of sovereign order:

Nay, if I turn mine eyes upon myself,
 I find myself a traitor with the rest.
 For I have given here my soul's consent
 Tundeck the pompous body of a king;
 Made glory base, and sovereignty a slave;
 Proud majesty a subject, state a peasant. (IV. i. 247-52)

Richard's constant attempts in the scene to recast himself into new roles spring, nonetheless, from the very real sense of despair and suffering that he feels. The "nothing" that "Unking'd Richard" (IV. i. 220) must be makes him "no man's lord", takes away his kingly name and title, even the name that was given him "at the font"

²⁸Cf. Holinshed, *Chronicles*: "he [Richard] tooke them up, and drawing the archbishop aside from the residue, talked with him a good while, and as it was reported, the archbishop willed him to be of good comfort, for he should be assured, not to haue anie hurt, a touching his person: but he prophesied not as a prelat, but as a Pilat", 501. See also Jean Creton, *Histoire du Roy d'Angleterre Richard* (a probable source for the play): "Then spake Duke Henry quite aloud to the commons of the said city, 'Fair Sirs, behold your king! consider what you will do with him.' And they made answer with a loud voice, 'We will have him taken to Westminster.' And so he delivered him unto them. At this hour did he remind me of Pilate, who caused our Lord Jesus Christ to be scourged at the stake, and afterwards had him brought before the multitude of the Jews, saying, 'Fair Sirs, behold your king!' Then Pilate washed his hands of it, saying 'I am innocent of the just blood'. And so he delivered our Lord unto them. Much in like manner did Duke Henry, when he gave up his rightful lord to the rabble of London, in order that, if they should put him to death, he might say, 'I am innocent of this deed'", as cited in Peter Ure's edition of *Richard II*, xviii.

(IV. i. 254-6). Past and present realities make him wish that he were a "mockery king of snow" who could melt into nothing "before the sun of Bolingbroke" (IV. i. 260-1).

Richard produces a brilliant climax to the scene by his ultimate self-dramatization, his request for a mirror. "That it may show me what a face I have | Since it is bankrupt of his majesty" (IV. i. 265-7). No longer a king, he assumes that his kingly countenance, too, -must reveal how he has been translated. To Northumberland's persistent demands that Richard read the articles of his crimes in order to satisfy the commons, Richard assures him that the looking glass will reveal the "very book indeed | Where all my sins are writ, and that's myself" (IV. i. 273-5). As one of the most frequently used theatrical images in Renaissance drama,²⁹ the mirror is at once a symbol of truth and falsity, a means which distinguishes between substance and shadow, but one in which Richard cannot see the reality of his own suffering and change reflected:

No deeper wrinkles yet? hath sorrow struck
 So many blows upon this face of mine
 And made no deeper wounds? O flatt'ring glass,
 Like to my followers in prosperity,
 Thou dost beguile me. Was this face the face
 That every day under his household roof
 Did keep ten thousand men? Was this the face
 That like the sun did make beholders wink?
 Is this the face which fac'd so many follies,
 That was at last out-fac'd by Bolingbroke?
 A brittle glory shineth in this face:

²⁹One of the many apocryphal stories surrounding Queen Elizabeth's death concerns her request for a mirror: "not long before her death she had a great apprehension of her own age and declination by seeing her face (then lean and full of wrinkles) truly represented to her in a glass, which she a good while very earnestly beheld: perceiving thereby how often she had been abused by flatterers' . . . the point of the tale . . . is that for twenty years she had only seen herself in a false mirror, made to deceive her sight", see J. E. Neal, "The Sayings of Queen Elizabeth", *History*, new series, X no.39 (October 1925) 236.

As brittle as the glory is the face . . . (IV. i. 277-88)³⁰

He holds as it were the mirror up to nature, but Richard's crisis is that something within which passes show. By talking to his reflection in the mirror, Richard now becomes an audience to himself.

Until he leaves the stage, Richard's self-dramatization brings to the forefront the discrepancies between what he is now and the title, name, and identity of his former role. In response to Bolingbroke's addressing him as "fair cousin" (IV. i. 304), Richard is quick to satirize the irony of Bolingbroke's form of address:

Fair cousin! I am greater than a king;
For when I was a king, my flatterers
Were then but subjects; being now a subject,
I have a king here to my flatterer. (IV. i. 305-8)

His last words in the scene, however, reveal the naked truth of how Richard has viewed his decline: his is the fall of a "true king" by which others have risen to power (IV. i. 318). Appropriately, Bolingbroke is the first to speak after Richard has left the stage, with the announcement of his own coronation.³¹ The Abbot's remark is a

³⁰Cf. Epistle St. James, 1:22-4: "And be ye doers of the worde, and not hearers onely, deceiuing your owne selues. For if anie heare the worde, & do it not, he is like vnto a man, that beholdeth his natural face in a glasse. For when he hath considered him self, he goeth his way, & forgetteth immediatly what maner of one he was".

³¹Bolingbroke had earlier claimed the throne in a public pronouncement: "In God's name, I'll ascend the regal throne" (IV. i. 113). Holinshed provides the description of the very public nature of Bolingbroke's acceptance of his new role after Richard's deposition: "Immediatelic as the sentence was in this wise passed, and that by reason thereof the realme stood void without head or gouernour for the time, the duke of Lancaster rising from the place where before he sate, and standing where all those in the house might behold him, in reuerend manner made the signe of the crosse on his forehead, and likewise on his breast, and after silence by an officer commanded, said unto the people there being present, these words following:

In the name of the Father, and of the Sonne, & of the Holie-ghost. I Henrie of Lancaster claime the realme of England and the crowne, with all the appurtenances, as I that am descended by right line of the blood comming from that good lord king Henrie the third, and through the

fitting description of the deposition: the audience on stage and in the theatre have "here beheld" a "woeful pageant" (IV. i. 251), a pageant which has presented a sacred tragedy -- royalty divested of itself, and the suddenly ambiguous nature of the divinity of majesty.

Richard's deposition has something of the ritual and sacrificial about it, which, together with his own histrionic superiority, helps to raise his esteem throughout the rest of his appearances in the play. His exchanges with the Queen continue this development by showing a Richard who transforms the reality around him through an aesthetic and religious response to calamity. Husband and wife must learn to think their "former state a happy dream"; when "awak'd, the truth of what [they] are" shows them the reality of present sorrow (V. i. 17-20). Role-playing now has become a second nature to Richard: he is a "brother" to the personified "grim Necessity" with whom he will keep a "league till death" (V. i. 20-2). With their "holy lives", husband and wife "must win a new world's crown" (V. i. 24). But the Queen is not content with Richard's resignation, and tries to cull from him a belief in his kingly identity, which is still, in her mind, unalterable:

What, is my Richard both in shape and mind
Transform'd and weaken'd? hath Bolingbroke depos'd
Thine intellect? hath he been in thy heart?
The lion dying thrusteth forth his paw
And wounds the earth, if nothing else, with rage
To be o'erpow'r'd, and wilt thou, pupil-like,
Take thy correction mildly, kiss the rod,
And fawn on rage with base humility,
Which art a lion and the king of beasts? (V. i. 26-34)

It is now the Queen who has a false perception of the state of things: in their situation, the only feasible response is that Richard makes: he returns to the fictional

right that God of his grace hath sent me, with the helpe of my kin, and of my freends, to recouer the same, which was in point to be undoene for default of good gouernance and due iustice. (*Chronicles*, 505.)

world of the tales of kings and ages "long ago betid" told by the fireside in "winter's tedious nights":

Tell thou the lamentable tale of me,
 And send the hearers weeping to their beds;
 For why, the senseless brands will sympathise
 The heavy accent of thy moving tongue,
 And in compassion weep the fire out,
 And some will mourn in ashes, some coal-black,
 For the deposing of a rightful king. (V. i. 40-50)

Richard's deposition has turned him into an artifact, the main character in a storybook tale to be read and re-read for the purpose of vicarious sympathy. As Northumberland enters to part them, Richard seizes the opportunity to describe the action as a double divorce, not only between himself and the Queen, but also between his marriage to the crown and realm which is another role inherent in the king's office. Thus the process of anti-ritual and "undoing" is thereby re-stressed. In his mind, Richard constructs the *mise en scene* of their departure: the way to France is to be marked with "sighs", and the path to the Tower is to be counted with "groans" and paced with the steps of a "heavy heart" (V. i. 89, 92). Richard is still the actor-king, but with the important difference that his "playing" is now a way by which the sincerity of his feelings is expressed, rather than being merely a form of attitudinizing: his tragedy is real. He now "plays" in the same sense which Latimer asked Ridley to "play the man" at the stake.

The references to the theatricality of Richard's deposition are taken up in the descriptions of other characters. York recounts how the degraded Richard rode into London behind the "great Bolingbroke" (V. ii. 7):

As in a theatre the eyes of men,
 After a well-grac'd actor leaves the stage,
 Are idly bent on him that enters next,
 Thinking his prattle to be tedious;
 Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes

Did scowl on Richard. (V. ii. 23-8)

By contrast, Bolingbroke's majesty is described in terms of the pageantry of a royal entry; the "new-made king" (V. ii. 45) is also the new actor who receives the people's adulation for his public display. "Through casements" the young and old "darted their desiring eyes | Upon his visage" (V. ii. 14-15). Shouts of "God save thee, Bolingbroke!" (V. ii. 11) are the verbal signs of Bolingbroke's newly achieved fealty, the transference of Richard's kingship to the next player of the role in a new play.

Richard's prison soliloquy marks his last moment of self-dramatization in the play, and one which brings to a sharp focus the tragedy of a king's identity. Shortly before his death, Richard is alone for the first time in the play. The king who has tried so hard to develop and maintain a conception of his role, or to persuade those around him that he is the rightful actor of kingship in the country, now has no audience for his pleas except for his own thoughts that "people this little world" (V. v. 9), and, of course, the audience sitting in the theatre. It is this soliloquy, more than any other speech in the play, which presents the dramatization of Richard's identity in tragic terms. As a king and no king, Richard populates his little world, which is at once the prison at Pomfret Castle and the stage, with ideas of who he is now and who he once was.³² He plays the actor to his own "generation of still-breeding thoughts"

³²His mind becomes the kingdom over which he rules. The first forty lines of his speech bear a remarkable resemblance to the sentiments of kingship and imagination which form the basis of Sir Edward Dyer's celebrated lyric, which Byrd set as a song:

My mind to me a kingdom is:
Such perfect joy therein I find
That it excels all other bliss
That God or nature hath assigned.
Though much I want, that most would have,
Yet still my mind forbids to crave.

No princely port, nor wealthy store,
No force to win a victory,
No wily wit to salve a sore,
No shape to win a loving eye:
To none of these I yield as thrall!
For why? my mind despise them all.

Look, what I want, my mind supplies.

(V. v. 8) and presents before the audience a sort of strange and dramatic schizophrenia which involves him in further role-playing. "Thus play I in one person many people" (V. v. 31) is not only the condition of the actor and the emblem of Richard's tragic isolation, but also the condition of kingship itself which insists that the monarch be many things to many people. Throughout the play, Richard has conceived of his role both in divine and dramatic terms -- the great role of king which Bolingbroke has usurped and made his own, and which now cannot be conceived outside of Richard's own identity. Without the crown, Richard has no part to play because he cannot let go either of that sense of divine quality which insists he can never be other than a king, or of the prospect of being "nothing":

Thus play I in one person many people,
 And none contented. Sometimes am I king,
 Then treasons make me wish myself a beggar,
 And so I am. Then crushing penury
 Persuades me I was better when a king;
 Then am I king'd again, and by and by
 Think that I am unking'd by Bolingbroke,
 And straight am nothing. But whate'er I be,
 Nor I, nor any man that but man is,
 With nothing shall be pleas'd, till he be eas'd
 With being nothing. (V. v. 31-41)

The speech makes an interesting comparison with the soliloquy of Richard III on the eve of Bosworth, which also presents a crisis of identity -- in Richard III's case, tortured by a sense of guilt and doom. He too goes through a process of role-playing between the selves of his imagination. But Richard II is not an evil man, nor is he a bad king in the same way Richard III was. Richard II is guilty of wasting time, profaning hours with the misuse of his office, but he is, as his agony makes all too

Lo, thus I triumph like a king,
 My mind content with any thing.

From *Psalms, Sonnets, and Songs*, 1588, in *Lyrics From the Song-Books of the Elizabethan Age*, ed. A. H. Bullen, 78-9. Cf. Tilley, N74: "He that has Need of nobody is a king in himself".

clear, still the King. His inner struggle is symptomatic of the right into which he was born, and the very divinity with which he was consecrated; he is not "eas'd with being nothing" because the balm *cannot* be washed off, the anointed is not "any man that but man is", for the divinity of his state is in his person and cannot be altered except with death. According to the prescriptions of kingship, as it was recognized in the period, Richard is not freed from the burden of his office, though he has lost his power; his role is as much a part of him as the blood that runs through his veins. Therein lies the core of his agony and the tragedy of his identity.³³ The playing of the music which Richard quickly recognizes as the sounds of "time" (music being a temporal art) brings him through the rest of his speech. He admits to wasting the time that now wastes him, yet (ironically enough) the time which calculates and which keeps

³³Much of the play runs parallel to the structure of Marlowe's *Edward II*: the fall of a king who has misused his office, and the rise of a usurper (Mortimer) whose power and influence destroys Edward's kingship. Edward, too, agonizes over his ruin in a prison setting:

The griefs of private men are soon allay'd;
But not of kings.

For such outrageous passions cloy my soul,
As with the wings of rancour and disdain
Full often am I soaring up to heaven,
To plain me to the gods against them both.
But when I call to mind I am a king,
Methinks I should revenge me of the wrongs
That Mortimer and Isabel have done.
But what are kings, when regiment is gone,
But perfect shadows in a sunshine day?
My nobles rule; I bear the name of king;
I wear the crown; but am controll'd by them (V. i. 8-29).

There is much of the element of sacrifice in Edward's death, and it is not hard to believe that Shakespeare had Marlowe's play very much in mind when writing *Richard II*. The main and most important difference between the tragedy of these two kings is one which Shakespeare has stressed throughout the play. Edward is continually unaware of the sacramental quality of his majesty, whereas Richard's tragedy revolves around the divinity which hedges the identity of his kingship, and from which he cannot be separated. See Moelwyn Merchant, "Marlowe the Orthodox" in *Mermaid Critical Commentaries: Christopher Marlowe*, ed. Brian Morris, 183. Shakespeare's treatment and emphasis of this concept makes his king a more sympathetic figure than Edward II.

proportion in the "music of men's lives" (V. v. 44), is the sounding of Richard's own voice in Shakespeare's verse.³⁴

The little scene between the Groom and Richard furthers the concept of Richard's essential kingship. In a loyal subject's simplicity, the Groom remarks how true kingship is not destroyed by an act of usurpation. He hails Richard as "royal prince" and "king" (V. v. 67, 72), and speaks of his desire to "look upon my sometimes royal master's face" (V. v. 75). His loyalties are expressed in his account of Bolingbroke's coronation, whose sight so distressed the Groom. When the Keeper appears, Richard dismisses the Groom, anxious for his safety; the Groom leaves, vowing to keep within his heart that which his "tongue dares not" say (V. v. 97). Loyalty is no longer the outward show of fealty to be worn on a sleeve, but an inner reality of feeling whose expression must be suppressed. This is precisely the kind of realization about his own kingship of which Richard's struggle is symbolic. Kingship, as he realizes too late, is after all a dimension of himself, and not merely the external role which he acted in the earlier half of the play. In his behaviour and language toward the murderers, Richard restores his belief in his kingly identity: Exton confesses that Richard's death is "as full of valour as of royal blood" (V. v. 113). The killing of the King is the separation of his physical body and his body politic, an act whose present and future significance Richard himself verbally realizes:

That hand shall burn in never-quenching fire
 That staggers thus my person. Exton, thy fierce hand
 Hath with the king's blood stain'd the king's own land.
 Mount, mount, my soul! thy seat is up on high,
 Whilst my gross flesh sinks downward, here to die. (V. v. 108-12)

Maynard Mack traces the theatrical significance of the act of killing a king in Shakespeare's tragic structure.³⁵ Richard's murder represents the demise of the actor

³⁴The speech recalls Marlowe's Doctor Faustus who also kept pace with a clock, and the poetry of his thoughts, in the final moments of his life.

³⁵See his *Killing the King*; the act of killing the king in Shakespeare's plays is the "central act, the touchstone, that tests the reality of all the other acts and characters", 11. In his analysis of the action from *Richard II* to *Macbeth*, Mack

of Christ; the Bible's prohibition against the touching of God's anointed was a well-worn stricture in Elizabethan religious writings, and one whose significance is later felt in Bolingbroke's guilt over the deed; see 2 Samuel 1:14-16; also the Homilies: "we may not withstand nor in any wise hurt an anointed King, which is GODS Lieutenant, Vicegerent, and highest Minister in that Country where he is King . . . the violence, and iniury that is committed against authority, is committed against GOD".³⁶ The prohibition was not just restricted to the King's person, but to the very garments he wore; see Thomas Bilson, *A Sermon Preached*:

"The inward Annoynting, which is the diffusing of heavenly wisdom & courage in the hearts of Princes, God testified by externall Inunction, when hee first appointed a King in *Israel*: And by that his Ordinance taught vs, that their persons once dedicated to his seruice, are not only protected by his stretched out Arme, but are and ought to be sacred & secured from the violence & iniurie of all mens hands, mouthes, and hearts. *Touch not mine Anointed*, saith God by his Prophet . . . Yea the very Robes, which they weare, are sanctified. When *Dauid* had priuily cut but the lappe of Saul's Cloake in the Caue, to let him see, that he spared his life: *Dauids hart did afterward strike him*, saith the scripture, for cutting that peece of the kings garment. So sacred is euery thing belonging to them, that no part of their apparel may be wronged or abused".³⁷

On behalf of his mother, James wrote to Elizabeth to let her know

How much it concerned him in Honour, who was both a King and a Son, if his dearest Mother, and she an absolute Princess, should be put to an

concludes that the killing of the king becomes "increasingly a symbolic act of drama, almost *the* dramatic act", 12; it is a "kind of lens in which all manner of political, social, moral, psychological, metaphysical, and religious questions are focused", 191; "regicide is explored in terms of acting", 194.

³⁶Homilies, 73.

³⁷B1r-v.

infamous Death by her who was so nearly allied and engaged to her both in Bloud and League of Amity. Whether by the Law of God there could be any just proceeding by Law against those whom God hath appointed to be his supreme Ministers of Justice, whom he hath called Gods on earth, whom he hath anointed, and once anointed hath forbidden to be touched.³⁸

Others who wrote on Mary's behalf, including Mary herself, stressed the role of an anointed monarch as an "absolute" and divine entity. In the same way, Richard's death marks, not the murder of a *man* who has transgressed through the follies of his behaviour, but the destruction of an "absolute" king.³⁹

Bolingbroke's guilt over the deed reveals a characteristic feature of his new kingship. Having, in effect, covertly commissioned Richard's death with a role-playing gesture toward Exton --

And, speaking it, he wishtly look'd on me,
As who should say "I would thou wert the man
That would divorce this terror from my heart"
Meaning the king at Pomfret. (V. iv. 1-11).

-- he laments the actual deed with the appropriate outward show:

Exton From your own mouth, my lord, did I this deed.
Bolingbroke They love not poison that do poison need,
Nor do I thee. Though I did wish him dead,
I hate the murtherer, love him murthered.
The guilt of conscience take thou for thy labour,
But neither my good word nor princely favour:
With Cain go wander thorough shades of night.

³⁸See William Camden, *The History of the most Renowned and Victorious Princess Elizabeth*, ed. Wallace T. Mac Callfrey, 273.

³⁹See OED def. 5 absolute: "Of degree: Complete, entire; in the fullest sense".

And never show thy head by day nor light.
 Lords, I protest my soul is full of woe
 That blood should sprinkle me to make me grow.
 Come mourn with me for what I do lament,
 And put on sullen black incontinent. (V. vi. 37-48)⁴⁰

Indeed, as Bolingbroke's allusion to Cain suggests, there is something of the murdered Abel in Richard's death, which cannot be effaced by the outward seeming of black mourning clothes, nor with the promise of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land (which King Henry IV never finds himself able to make in the later plays, despite his continual attempts to do so). The presence of the dead King in his coffin on stage is a physical burden of the "blood" from which Bolingbroke, like Macbeth, cannot ever be washed clean; like the balm of an anointed king, the guilt of regicide cannot be washed off with mere pronouncements.⁴¹

Bolingbroke's impulse to outward display does not begin here with the news of Richard's death; it has been made manifest throughout the course of the play. When he becomes the King he soon realizes that a new play of kingship begins with the start of his reign. His coronation procession is marked with the "painted imagery" (V. ii. 16) of the decorative surroundings, which personify and proclaim the new King's welcome. York's account of the coronation procession describes a king who knows,

⁴⁰Bolingbroke's guilt has its religious precedent. Cf. 2 Samuel 1:14-17: "And David said vnto him, How wast thou not afraied, to put forthe thine hand to destroy the Anoynted of the Lord? Then David called one of his yong men, & said, Go nere, and fall vpon him. And he smote him that he dyed. Then said David vnto him, Thy blood be vpon thine owne heade: for thine owne mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I haue slaine the Lords Anointed. Then David mourned with this lamentation ouer Saul". The biblical passage is quoted by the homilist in *An Exhortation Concerning good Order, and Obedience to Rulers*, 74.. Cf. *An Homily Against Disobedience and Wilfull Rebellion*: "For who can lay his hand upon the Lords Anoynted, and be guiltlesse? As truly as the Lord liueth except that the Lord doe smite him, or his dayes shall come to die, or that he goe downe to warre, and be slaine in battell: the Lord be mercifull vnto me, that I lay not my hand upon the Lords Anoynted", 286. As the *Henry IV* plays show, the King's reign is full of unrest and disorder as a result of Richard's murder.

⁴¹As Moody Prior has observed, "The theatrical tableau -- the new king in state and the dead king at his feet -- is an irreconcilable disharmony between the harsh act of political necessity and its human and moral consequences", *The Drama of Power*, 245.

and enjoys, the public importance of his self-display. Speaking for the first time as the King in the play, he reveals concern and disappointment over the behaviour of his son, whose actions he considers inappropriate to his view of what is seemly in a prince.

The ludicrous scene which sees the Duke of York trying to persuade the King to kill his treasonous son,⁴² while the Duchess of York begs for mercy, reveals the play-like quality of Bolingbroke's new role. Bolingbroke himself is well enough aware of the theatricality of the situation: "Our scene is alt'ed from a serious thing, | And now chang'd to The Beggar and the King" (V. iii. 77-8). A king, as the Duchess insists, must show mercy, for there is "No word like 'pardon' for kings' mouths so meet" (V. iii. 116). So Bolingbroke dutifully pronounces the "pardon" which the Duchess has taught him to "rehearse" (V. iii. 126). The artificiality of the language resembles that of the beginning of the play, though the new player in the leading role uses it to different effect. Bolingbroke plays at his kingship because the role demands it. But as the rebellions which initiate his reign make clear, a crown seized is a different crown from one that is lawfully inherited. He finds himself going through the expected motions, in the rhetoric of a required language, in a new role which does not seem quite to fit him.

Partly, Bolingbroke remains unaware of the kind of tragedy of identity which Richard has suffered. The sanctity of the office and its divine dimensions of role-playing seem never to enter Bolingbroke's thoughts with any degree of clarity or comprehension. His actions have been controlled by the expediency that secures political power, and have destroyed the sacramentality of kingship, a condition in which Bolingbroke can have no share. Like Lear, Richard learns too late about the nature of his royal state, but his final awareness brings him closer to a view of the role than Bolingbroke ever achieves. It is an ironic comment on the play that

⁴²York's behaviour is not as ludicrous as it first seems. His kneeling and begging for the death of his son is a desperate plea for the kind of order and meaning which has been disrupted with Richard's deposition. He must believe, as he says, in the pledge of his "lasting fealty to the new-made king" (V. ii. 45). If anything in Bolingbroke's new world picture is to have any meaning, York must adhere to the same values of sovereignty and loyalty which he tried so hard to hold on to when Richard was king.

Elizabeth saw herself cast in Richard's role ("I am Richard II. know ye not that?") and was purported to take pride in his portrait which hung in her gallery of ancestors and successors.⁴³

Richard II., more than any other play by Shakespeare, employs as its organizing and dynamic principle the concepts of kingship, commonly held as ideology in the Renaissance. That Richard himself fails to live up to the ideology, indeed in some respects at first goes deliberately against it, marks this play as being (as the Quarto quite rightly calls it), a tragedy, and as Richard grows painfully into awareness of the nature of that kingship that he had held so lightly at first, the strength of the ideology is the necessary basis of the tragic structure. On another level, Bolingbroke is one of Shakespeare's terrifying "expedient men", men whose actions are founded on the narrowest conceptions of their relationship to the society they despise and seek to rule. Bolingbroke is not as bad as Richard III, or Edmund, but that is merely a matter of luck: his behaviour and his moral choices, like theirs, reflect only himself, cut adrift from any contact with a system of thought that could validate his actions. His successes are personal, his failures likewise personal. That he is quite likable, and the more likable as his problems begin to come home to him, is basically irrelevant, just as Richard's errors of judgement and misconceived actions at the beginning of the play set him up for a well-earned peripeteia. Over both individuals stretches the conception of the role of king, a conception which far transcends, but which also directs responses towards, the individuals who attempt to play the part in practice.

⁴³See the memorandum made by William Lambarde in John Nichols's *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*: "... returning to Richard II. she demanded, 'Whether I had seen any true picture, or lively representation of his countenance and person?' W. L. 'None but such as be in common hands.' *Her Majesty*. The Lord Lumley, a lover of antiquities, discovered it fastened on the backside of a door of a base room; which he presented unto me, praying, with my good leave, that I might put it in order with the Ancestors and Successors; I will command Tho. Kneavet, Keeper of my House and Gallery at Westminster, to show it unto thee", III. 553.

CONCLUSION

The continual concern of this thesis has been to locate Shakespeare's dramatic treatment of his kings firmly in Renaissance political and theological ideology. Though *King John* and *Henry VIII* have not figured prominently in the preceding chapters, they ~~also offer a view~~ of the Christology of kingship in various, if only minor, ways. The important political issues explored in *King John* are the loyalty due to a king, the rightful succession, the moral considerations of rebellion, and the significance of the kingly character around which all these other issues revolve. In the very first scene of the play the dramatic stress falls upon the contention surrounding the royal role. John's right to rule is put into immediate question by the French Ambassador's address to the "borrow'd majesty, of England here" (I. i. 4). John "sways usurpingly" the royal titles which Chatillon says belong to Arthur, the "right royal sovereign" (I. i. 13-15). As John's actions in the play reveal, he is a discreditable king undeserving of his subjects' loyalty. The discrepancy between the right to rule and the ability to rule is focused through John's fear of Arthur's claim to the throne (the King seeks to have Arthur murdered), and the obvious potential for kingship which Faulconbridge the Bastard shows.

Throughout the play the question which is repeatedly in everyone's minds and on their lips is, where does the essence of true kingship lie? Before the walls of Angiers, John demands entrance to the city -- an act which, had Hubert acquiesced, would have acknowledged John's royalty. But as Hubert's responses make clear, the citizens' loyalties rest not with John but with the man who can prove to be the true king of England:

Hubert In brief, we are the king of England's subjects:

For him, and in his right, we hold this town.

King John Acknowledge then the king, and let me in.

Hubert That can we not; but he that proves the king,

To him will we prove loyal: till that time

Have we ramm'd up our gates against the world. (II. i. 267-72)

As Hubert's rebuff makes John aware, he who wears the "crown of England" does not automatically "prove the king" (II. i. 273). The citizens are asked by King Philip to speak for their true king, but again Hubert's response contradicts any notion that the citizens instinctively know who their rightful king is. Both John and Philip put forth their respective claims:

King Philip Speak, citizens, for England; who's your king?

Hubert The king of England, when we know the king.

King Philip Know him in us, that here hold up his right.

King John In us, that are our own great deputy,

And bear possession of our person here,

Lord of our presence, Angiers, and of you. (II. i. 362-7)

John does not by any means prove every inch a king: he is weak, cowardly, evasive, and undignified, believing he can wield power simply by evoking the appropriate facets of the king's role. He comes to France, he says, in the role of the Scourge, as "God's wrathful agent", "the rod which shall "correct" the "proud contempt that beats His peace to heaven" (II. i. 87-8).¹ In response to the demands made by the Papal legate, John has recourse to what he perceives as the unapproachable power of the "free breath of a sacred king" (III. i. 73-4), and to his divinity:

But as we, under God, are supreme head,

So under Him that great supremacy,

Where we do reign, we will alone uphold

Without th' assistance of a mortal hand (III. i. 81-4)

Seeking to confirm his title, John has himself re-crowned in a second coronation, which to the onlookers, presents merely an empty show. By this performance, royalty has been made no more than a matter of putting on new clothes, in an effort to "gild"

¹Cf. Holinshed, *Chronicles*: "for the king was but the rod of the Lord's wrath, and to this end a prince was ordeined, that he might rule the people with a rod of iron, and breake them as an earthen vessel, to chaine the mighty in fetters, & the noble men in iron manacles", 173.

already "refined gold" (IV. ii. 11). Salisbury's comments about this "once again" crowning reveal much of the way John thinks of his kingship:

In this the antique and well-noted face
Of plain old form is much disfigured;
And, like a shifted wind unto a sail,
It makes the course of thoughts to fetch about,
Startles and frights consideration,
Makes sound opinion sick and truth suspected,
For putting on so new a fashion'd robe. (IV. ii. 21-7)

John readily yields his crown to the Papal legate in exchange for the Pope's help and protection. In an act which shows the King submitting to, and acknowledging the "sovereign greatness and authority" of the Pope, John relinquishes any real power he professes to have (V. i. 1-4); the crown which is returned to him is merely an empty ornament. John is merely a king of show, inept in manifesting the qualities of a king: he is not a king who held the "indued" qualities of a prince. Holinshed describes the fall of King John, which need not have happened "had he beene indued with such prudence and prowesse as is requisit to be planted in one that beareth rule . . . whereas by meanes of defects in the contrairie, he bare too low a saile, in that he would be so foolifed as being a king, to suffer usurped supremasie to be caruer of his kingdome".²

In contrast, the Bastard is a man who is presented as more than able to fill the requirements of the royal role. Though not a man who can act with the authority of natural right, he is nonetheless a kingly figure. In much the same way as Talbot was presented as better suited to the kingly role in *1 Henry VI*, the Bastard is a man of action who knows how to rise to the demands of the occasion. As the son of "King Richard Coeur-de-lion" (I. i. 253), the Bastard is a prince among men in John's court, and proud of the characteristics inherent in his noble stock. References to the lion continually colour his language, and remind the audience of his princely heritage. He instinctively knows how a king should behave, and what actions a monarch must take.

²*Chronicles*, 191.

Both John and the French king are "ruled" by the Bastard's advice to join their forces in taking over Angiers:

By heaven, these scroyles of Angiers flout you, kings,
And stand securely on their battlements,
As in a theatre, whence they gape and point
At your industrious scenes and acts of death.
Your royal presences be rul'd by me . . . (II. i. 373-7)

Where Philip and John merely "act" in scenes of royal authority, the Bastard proves he can command real authority in effect. When John shows himself weak, the Bastard relies on his own strength and knowledge to teach the King not only what he must do, but also how he must look:

But wherefore do you droop? why look you sad?
Be great in act, as you have been in thought;
Let not the world see fear and sad distrust
Govern the motion of a kingly eye!
Away, and glister like the god of war
When he intendeth to become the field:
Show boldness and aspiring confidence!
What, shall they seek the lion in his den,
And fright him there? and make him tremble there?
O, let it not be said: forage, and run
To meet displeasure farther from the doors,
And grapple with him ere he come so nigh! (V. i. 44-61)

John evidently lacks the wherewithal to show a kingly countenance, but it is indicative of the Bastard's character that he knows the importance and effect of such a quality; very likely the Bastard reveals such a kingly countenance in his own actions and speech. When he appears before the Papal legate and the Dauphin, he speaks with the vested authority of the English King: "Now hear our English king. For thus his royalty doth speak in me" (V. ii. 128-9). The twenty-nine lines which make up his

formal address reveal his kingly qualities: by his sense of confidence, control, and the mastery of his patriotic strength, he speaks more like a king than John himself could. It is not the authority of King John which speaks, but the Bastard's inherent royalty. If the Bastard acts and speaks more like a king than John does, his function is to show how much is lacking in John's performance of kingship. As John Danby has pointed out, the sanctity of the king's role is not enough to pull John out of his troubles: "kings will have to prove themselves men as good as the Bastard."³

Henry VIII is Shakespeare's last presentation of an English king on the stage.⁴ In *Henry VIII* Shakespeare offers his audience a different kind of play from his earlier histories. Before, he had shown them such scenes as the field of Bosworth and the sprawling battle of Agincourt, and scenes which move from the court to the lively action of the streets and villages throughout England, with characters as diversified as Falstaff, Richard III, Jack Cade and Prince Hal. In his last history play, Shakespeare defines political intrigue more by intellectual dynamics rather than by dynamic action. Dramatic action is confined to Henry's court, a backstairs environment setting, in which power control, gossip about who's in or out of favour, and the activities of those in lesser degrees of authority are the main events. Unlike the earlier history plays, this does not focus primarily on the monarch: Henry himself is curiously not a main plot interest, though he is the catalyst for all the other actions in the play. He appears to be always in control, yet remains largely in the background. He speaks only some 400 of the play's 2800-odd lines, and is never on stage long enough to be the play's dominant figure -- except that of course he is; he is the central sun around which all the planets of the plot revolve.

To be a member of Henry's court in this play means to perform one's assigned part, to flatter and to sue for favour until circumstances call a halt to the performance. The concern of the play, in part, is with the surface appearance of events; elaborate stage directions, descriptions of courtly spectacle, attention to pageantry and ceremony reveal the ritual decorums of "play" in Henry's court. As Robert Ornstein has observed:

³*Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature*, 78.

⁴See Chapter Three, note 2 for a discussion of the authorship of *Henry VIII*.

Where the ritual moments of the *Henry VI* plays, of *Richard III* and *Richard II*, engage the minds and emotions of the audience, the spectacles of *Henry VIII* merely feast the eye. The emphasis is not, as in the earlier history plays, on the decorums symbolized by ritual, but on the niceties which only a connoisseur of courtly spectacle would appreciate: who stands next to the King, who by his right side, who by his left; who enters first in a procession, who last; who wears a golden coronal and who plain circlets of gold. Such authenticity of detail is superfluous to the representation of politics and history; it exists to give the audience or reader the thrill of a vicarious closeness to luxury and power -- to bring them within the charmed circle of the Court, which is in *Henry VIII* a very heaven.⁵

This is an interesting appreciation of the play, and one that seems to have informed many productions of the work, which tend to read it primarily in terms of spectacle.⁶ However, rather than being "superfluous to the representation of politics and history", the presentation of Henry's court is symptomatic of the world of "play" which, as this thesis has shown, is so much a part of history and politics. If Henry's court is a "heaven", it is so because its king is a representative of God, a worldly player of the Divine. The idea of "play" in this last work nicely brings this study to a re-consideration of the concept of "play" which first introduced the subjects explored in this thesis. To be a king is to be a player of a divinely-conceived role, for better or worse.

This conception is not by any means confined to the history plays. It is manifested significantly in Shakespeare's other plays, and in works by his contemporaries. It is not my intention in this thesis to explore the use of the concept in other dramas in any detail, but a few notes may indicate its pervasiveness, and suggest ways in which it can be applied even to plays of a seemingly a-political

⁵*A Kingdom for a Stage*, 205.

⁶So, perhaps, may the King's Men have perceived it, if the stage-directions and the contemporary accounts of its extravagance are anything to go by.

character. Not to act like a king, whether by choice or through folly, is tantamount to an abdication of the proper performance of the role. This has obvious application to *Measure for Measure*, a play which has routinely divided critical opinion on the question of the morality and wisdom of the Duke's behaviour. The first scene of *Measure for Measure* concerns the Duke's decision to decline his princely role, having "impos'd the office" on Angelo (I. iii. 40):

we have with special soul
Elected him our absence to supply;
Lent him our terror, drest him with our love,
And given his deputation all the organs
Of our power. (I. i. 17-21)

The right of a ruler to delegate authority was of course part of his function in a hierarchic power-structure. That is not exactly what happens here, where Angelo finds himself *cast into the Duke's role*: "be thou at full ourself" (I. i. 43). Meantime the Duke disappears from his country, taking the princely countenance with him, and leaving only its pale reflection in the person of Angelo, who promptly reveals his ineptitude to the role, and the office, thus thrust willy-nilly upon him. He is but a "man . . . Dress'd in a little brief authority" (II. ii. 118-19), bad coinage of the Duke's "figure" (I. i. 16). Though he believes he can perform the role to perfection, better than the Duke himself in point of morality, he finds he cannot. To pursue the theatrical metaphor, he is a bit player thrust into the leading role, for which he lacks both the training and the principal's qualities.

Nor is he ever really the Duke's deputy. Throughout the play the Duke never relinquishes control of the action, and the dispensing of justice. These are, to be sure, kingly actions, but in this play they are undertaken surreptitiously, through the Duke's role-playing as Friar Lodowick. As Friar Thomas points out, the Duke's scheme to have Angelo revive the laws is a clear indication of his neglect of his royal duties:

It rested in your Grace
To unloose this tied up justice when you pleas'd;
And it in you more dreadful would have seem'd

Than in Lord Angelo. (I. iii. 31-4)

The Duke's response is unprincipled: he reveals that he prefers to sustain his public image as a lenient ruler, allowing Angelo to bear the brunt of unpopularity:

I have on Angelo impos'd the office;
Who may in th' ambush of my name strike home,
And yet my nature never in the fight
To do in slander. (I. iii. 40-3)

As all treatments of the role of the prince agreed, it was a royal function to balance wisely the need for severity and the gift of mercy. The Duke evades this function, and in his evasion engenders much of the distress to his subjects that the play presents.

It is an incongruous feature of the Duke's role-playing that he seeks to exchange his essentially religious role as prince for another religious part in the guise of Friar Lodowick. As a friar, the Duke is still a divine role-player: all-knowing, beneficent, merciful, and just. In the concluding scene of the play, he neatly "resolves" all conflicts, dispensing justice measure for measure to all concerned "like a power divine" (V. i. 367). However, this neat tying of threads leaves the initial discomfort caused by the Duke's behaviour untouched. One of the problems which this "problem" play insists upon is the way the Duke seeks resolutions to Vienna's troubles through craft and role-playing. The audience is invited to trust him in his proclamation, that he does not "[change] heart with habit" (V. i. 382) in his concerns for his subjects; that their friar is now their prince (V. i. 380). But the doubts persist, and some of the causes of *Measure for Measure's* being still considered a problem play can now be located in the Duke's evident disregard for the roles of his office, which has the effect of making the ending of the play seem merely contrived, and unsound.

Though not a religious role-player like the Duke, King Ferdinand of Navarre in *Love's Labour's Lost* is preoccupied with the idea of play. Not only the King, but his whole court as well, engage in being something that they are not. The first scene of

the play shows the King abdicating the duties attached to his royal role in favour of isolation, stern fasting, and scholarly pursuits:

Navarre shall be the wonder of the world;
Our court shall be a little academe,
Still and contemplative in living art. (I. i. 12-14).

The King and his courtiers play at words, play at making oaths (which they know they cannot keep), play at being book-men, the writers of sonnets, and lovers who come disguised as Muscovites to the Princess and her ladies. Navarre is seen in all sorts of roles, but not in the role of King. The theme of play has its appropriate setting in the King of Navarre's park; the action never moves into the world of the court proper, nor does the audience see Navarre in the sphere of his political status. Retirement from the world gives way to license in the park, but as the sombre ending of the play indicates, everyone must resume his or her respective responsibilities in their proper roles. The pageant of the Nine Worthies provides the appropriate metaphor for the discrepancies in the "worthy" pursuits that the King and his Lords have failed to play themselves. They are at best inept role-players, and the love which they have played falsely must now be earned with sterner and more truthful endeavours. With the news of her father's death, the Princess is the first to recognize that her inherent responsibility as a new Queen must take precedence over the merriment of the play's events. The King must learn to be the true metal of his words and oaths, and so, appropriately, the Princess instructs him to maintain the life of isolation he first proposed himself in the beginning of the play.

The pattern in the comedies and romances is always a restorative one: the king who abdicates from his role usually returns to it by the end of the play. Prospero, once "Duke of Milan, and | A prince of power" (I. ii. 54-5) gives the "government" to his brother in order to pursue "the liberal Arts" and "secret studies" in contemplative retirement (I. i. 73-5). Unlike Navarre, whose academy was at best a diversion, Prospero is a true intellectual, whose role as man of learning, however, seduces him too from his duty. He formerly found that his library was a "dukedom large enough" (I. i. 110), but the end of the play sees him abjure his magic, give up the role of magus, in order to re-assume the role of Duke of Milan.

The restorative pattern is one obviously not explored in the tragedies. Once a king ceases to perform his role, the results are disastrous for himself and the whole realm. Lear thinks he can simply relieve himself of his royalty by dividing the crown and the realm between his children, and still "retain | The name and all th' addition to a king" (I. i. 134-5). The jolt this gives to nature is felt by everyone, as discord, madness, and suffering pervade the world of the play with Lear's first pronouncement of his "darker purpose". When Lear abdicates his kingship, and when others do not treat him like the king, he loses all sense of identity: "Who is it that can tell me who I am?" (I. iv. 227). The Fool can see Lear for what he has become as a result of his folly; Lear is but the "shadow" (I. iv. 228) of a king, a man who attempts to intimidate Goneril, threatening that he will "resume the shape which thou dost think | I have cast off, for ever" (I. iv. 307-8). But Lear never resumes the "shape" or the role of his former kingship -- a punishment perhaps in direct proportion for giving it up in the first place. The division of the kingdom, the image of horror, is the division within the crown, and within the person who bears the office. When Lear destroys his kingdom with his abdication, he destroys his role as king and, therefore, himself. If Lear believes ultimately that he is "every inch a king", then he learns too late about the royal state which no amount of self-proclamation can retrieve.

It is clear that it is possible to use the concepts of divine kingship explored in this thesis as a critical tool with which to examine any Renaissance tragedies and comedies in which kings, governors, dukes and other authority-figures are presented as diverging from their roles, or who choose to adopt other roles. However, the most concentrated treatment of the ideology of a king's role is found in Shakespeare's history plays. What the preceding chapters have shown is how the plays lend themselves to revaluation from the point of view of their principal actors. The world of political action in the history plays focuses on the ability (or inability) of the king to perform the requirements of his ordained office, and on the mimetic and religious principles which are inextricably linked in his role. In the atmosphere of the royal court, which is appropriately a play-like world, the king and the divinity which hedges his person are presented as the central mimetic construct of a holy ideal. The outward and visible signs of his role, first manifested in his coronation and part of his life thenceforward, are reflected in his countenance, in the repertory of royal moves

and gestures, and in the dignity of his language. The outward performance must adhere to the inherent divinity of his person: in the extraordinary nature of his calling, the qualities of a king, his multiple identities, the significance of his two bodies, and in the very name of king that he bears. All these aspects of the Christology of kingship help to inform the king's role as a special kind of actor in the history plays, as a figure who finds himself performing in a world ordered and governed by providence. The actor who plays the king imitates the ideal, but he can, at the end of his performance, return his crown with the rest of his properties to the tiring house. The real king is afforded no such luxury for he is ordained to imitate God in the daily performance of his role. What Shakespeare's history plays and the political world of the Renaissance share, is the awareness that mimesis is essentially a religious endeavour of art reflected in the mirrors of all Christian kings.

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