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**THE BLOODY HOUSE OF LIFE
VISIBLE ECONOMIES
AND
SHAKESPEAREAN DISCOURSES OF EMBODIMENT**

By

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THE BLOODY HOUSE OF LIFE

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation interrogates the relationship between metaphors of social embodiment and the gaze in Shakespeare's first historical tetralogy and *King John*. The term "visible economy" refers to the plays' negotiation of the performative aspects of identity in which the subject and the monarch, presenting themselves to the gaze, fulfil or disrupt the social roles that define their relation to the body politic. The visible economy is most apparent in scenes of ceremony, such as coronations, state scenes, weddings, and trials--in combat or in court--where the subject's role is enacted before a communal gaze and his or her position with regard to authority is defined. Drawing on the theoretical insights of feminist scholars, such as Patricia Parker, Barbara Freedman and Phyllis Rackin, and on the historical work of J.A. Sharpe, Pieter Spierenburg and Linda Woodbridge, the dissertation challenges the New Historicist model of power, popularized by Stephen Greenblatt, that envisions disruption and resistance as aspects of hegemony's self-consolidation.

Focussing on such scenes of ceremony, the dissertation explores Shakespeare's problematization of attempts by hegemonic power to define the meaning of bodies in relation to the discourses of nationalism, sovereignty, patriarchal hierarchy and martial conflict. Each of these discourses depends in the histories on a paradigm of exposure of the subject to the defining gaze. This paradigm is deeply fraught in contemporary

discourse where the science of perspective and illusionistic representation, along with the relativizing nature of capital--epitomized by the theatre--challenged Providential order grounded in the presence of an all-seeing divine gaze. In the early histories, contradiction, irony and parody of standard ceremonial enactments of power disrupt "class" and gender hierarchy by questioning the visual ground of knowledge and by demonstrating that the power of the gaze is natural neither to the masculine subject, nor to sovereignty.

Once demystified in this way, the power of these hegemonic discourses to define the social body breaks down, and the social body begins to appear chaotic and mutilated. This fragmentation of bodies is analogous to the structural fragmentation of dramatic irony, and both form an index of the radical destabilization of systems of knowledge and power in Shakespeare's plays.

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Introduction: "Merely" Playing

It is all very well to acknowledge that 'all the men and women' are 'merely players', but what does it mean? Is 'playing' their aspiration or their fate? If the King is an actor, what is a king? What is an actor?

(Peter Thomson, *Shakespeare's Professional Career* 104)

The questions Peter Thomson raises in the above quotation are complex ones, and to them I would add, what does "merely" have to do with it? To read the Elizabethan anti-theatrical polemics of such puritan nay-sayers as Stephen Gosson and Phillip Stubbes, one would think that there is nothing "mere" about playing. Stubbes, in his *Anatomie of Abuses* (1583), argues that the attempts on the part of theatre supporters to legitimize plays on the ground of their moral didacticism¹ serve only to turn the moral world upside down: "If he be accursed y calleth light darkness & darkness light, truth falsehood, & falsehood truth, sweet, sowre, and sowr sweete, then *a fortiori* is he accursed that saith players & enterludes be equivalent with sermons" (*Anatomie*, "Theaters, Venus Pallaces" n.pag.). He appeals for support to Lactantius, saying: "The shamelesse gestures of Plaiers, serve to nothing so much, as to move the flesh to lust, and uncleannesse" (*Anatomie*, "Stage Playes condemned" n.pag.). John Northbrooke, in *A Treatise Against Idleness, Vain Playes, and Enterludes* (1598), concurs, adding that simply viewing staged acts of lust is the same as performing them: "He that looketh on a woman, and desireth to have hir, he hath committed adulterie alredie in his heart. . . . Those filthie and unonest

gestures and movings of the Interlude players, what other thing do they reach, than wanton pleasure and stirring up of lust as unlawful appetites and desires?" (qtd. in Lenz 839). What is interesting here, in addition to the lack of definition Northbrooke perceives between stage and world, vision and action, is also the fact that, in 1598, English Interlude players were all men, and the "woman" the lustful, adulterous gaze covets is, in fact, a cross-dressed boy. And yet, the heterosexual desires against which Northbrooke rails are in his mind real lusts, real adulteries, even if the "woman" who incites them is not a woman. An object of an amorous gaze, the "unhonest" cross-dressed player embodies the possibility that gender is a mask that can be shifted with a costume, and that identities grounded in gender norms are customary, rather than natural (Dollimore, "Understudies" 141).² The same might be said of social status, for the king who acts royal on the stage is potentially a beggar in hand-me-down clothes, or worse, in costumes of royalty purchased with the new arbiter of status: hard cash. "Because the actors were so proficient in replicating the world outside the theater," Donald G. Watson argues, "they challenged its presuppositions about the naturalness of social stratification" (27). If men and women are players, if the theatrical cannot be confined to the theatre, and if identity, like the boy's smock or the player-king's robe, is a masquerade, then surely to describe the world in terms of "merely" playing is to do more than the word suggests.

Theatres are places of complex negotiation at the "margins of authorized culture, opening a space for the transformation, as much as the simple reproduction, of that culture" (Howard, "Spectator" 72). In the last half of this century, with the development of critical methodologies grounded in an interest in the material and ideological contexts

of early modern literature and drama, critics and historians like Jean Howard, Stephen Mullaney, Jean-Christopher Agnew, and Linda Woodbridge, have taken as their object of study this transformative, marginal space of theatres and theatricality that Shakespeare's Jaques knew as a present and experienced reality. Within its wooden O, the theatre incorporated and negotiated the transformations that were redefining the world outside its walls, where nascent capitalism, along with new scientific and religious debates, challenged traditional understanding of how society was defined. The theatre as an institution, and plays in particular, staged a confrontation between ways of knowing the social universe: on the one hand, a Providential worldview that assumes that earthly identities are defined by a fixed vertical hierarchy from lowest vassal to the king, and that there is a divine viewpoint that sees all and knows all, and; on the other hand, a newer, humanist worldview (associated with the politic, vilified Machiavelli of *The Prince*) posits truth and reality as dependent upon one's point of view, and legitimacy and authority as products of surfaces and appearances. In part, this worldview takes the new science of perspective as its premise, for the most realistic perspective painting is also the most finely wrought illusion, one that hides its own limitations under the guise of true representation.³

Another influential text, Castiglione's *The Courtier* (1528), translated the *realpolitik* of Machiavelli's *The Prince* and the illusionistic reality of perspective painting into the standard of courtly deportment and grace. Artful living, Castiglione argued, involves *sprezzatura*, "a certain contempt and nonchalance that hides what is artificial and shows what one does as though it came easily. . . . True art is that which seems artless, and no effort should be spared to hide it, because if it is discovered it takes away all credit and

esteem" (Revel 191). It is easy to see why Northbrooke might so readily perceive a connection between staged lust and "real" lust: the artful mode of social relations and identity proposed by Machiavelli, Castiglione, and perspective representation made the distinction between art and artlessness, reality and illusion a tenuous one. "Merely" playing risks becoming social *being*.

The plays in Shakespeare's theatre staged this interaction between divine vision which anchored a vertical hierarchy, and perspectival vision which looked horizontally through the space of Middle Earth. It is this concatenation of vertical and horizontal worldviews that Hugh Richmond identifies as the distinguishing characteristic of Elizabethan representational practice. Medieval representation, he argues, best illustrated by the morality play, emphasizes vertical iconography and emblematic characters who rise and fall on the Wheel of Fortune. The convention persists, for example, in the staging of power relations in *Richard II*, where the king must stand "*on the walls*" as he confronts Bolingbroke at Flint Castle (*Richard II* 3.3.61 s.d.), only to fall down "*below*," into the base court "where kings grow base" (3.3.180) to capitulate to the usurper. As Martha Hester Fleischer observes, the position of the king on the stage represents his position on the Wheel of Fortune: "ascending or descending from the throne or, at the very low point, sitting on the stage floor itself," the king's motions map out the progression from *regnabo* (ascension), to *regnavi* (deposition), to *sum sine regno* (humiliation) (42). In constant dialogue with this vertical iconography, Richmond argues, are the new models of knowledge and representation that define the renaissance and which emphasize "the horizontal dimension of Middle Earth" and human relations, illustrated, for example, by

Polonius and Claudius hiding behind the transverse curtain of the discovery space to spy on Hamlet and Ophelia ("Techniques" 174). Thus, we are treated to the chinese box stagings of *All's Well That Ends Well*,⁴ where the Second Lord watches and narrates for the audience Parolles's confession of cowardice (4.1), or *Troilus and Cressida*, where Thersites watches Troilus watch Cressida capitulate to Diomedes (5.2).

With its vertical galleries and yard, modelled on the lively communal spaces of inns and yards, the Elizabethan urban theatre reiterated in physical space the conceptual models negotiated within the plays. Bound between the painted "Heavens" of the stage canopy and the dirt and nutshell and straw floor of the yard was an audience whose department both reiterated the hierarchies of the larger society and testified to their often disturbing fluidity.⁵ Here, where the spectators in the Lords' rooms above the stage were only a few feet from the "Heavens," and the "groundlings" of the yard were eye-level with the stage--physically occupying the same level as that stage's underworld--the vertical nature of social hierarchy was apparent. But the heights of the expensive galleries were nonetheless available to those up-and-coming members of the merchant classes (who, like Shakespeare himself, could purchase a coat of arms for a reasonable sum) or to anyone who had the money to pay for the right to climb the social ladder, if only for the two hours' traffic of the play. In this space, too, it was the groundlings who could come closest to the represented centre of power, where kings held court in their borrowed robes of state, while those with higher status were displaced for a short period from the centre of the action to the margins. In the theatre, traditional hierarchies of status became fluid: the vertical ranks of the galleries were redefined in the levelling language of capital, and were

juxtaposed with a stage that was itself the site of extended ruminations on the decay and transformation of a vertically-defined world. Thus, the content and staging of the plays reflected and informed the dynamics of both the theatre's architecture and the architecture of the social relations that formed its context. In many ways this is the architecture of the social self.

Living this confrontation between divine and illusionistic vision, traditional hierarchy and the humanist perspective of "Middle Earth" relations, Elizabethan audiences had ample evidence to suggest that "merely" playing social identity, whether gendered or classed, was serious business; theatres and theatricality posed a challenge to the conservative understanding of identity as fixed by one's position in a system of hierarchy authorized by God and legitimized by tradition.⁶ Positing a social universe in which identity is a product of theatrical surfaces, masks and costumes, the theatre challenged the metaphors of social embodiment that subtend hierarchy. The most pervasive of these metaphors is that of the social body, in which a subject's position is by definition a fixed and unchanging manifestation of his or her social function. We can see this metaphor at work, for example in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, where the First Citizen anatomizes the state, describing, "The kingly crownéd head, the vigilant eye, / The counsellor heart, the arm our soldier, / Our steed the leg, the tongue our trumpeter" (1.1.110-12). Menenius, seeking to quell an uprising of hungry peasants, appeals to an image of self-mutilation, defining "The senators of Rome" as "this good belly," and the rebelling Citizens as "the mutinous members" (1.1.143-4). Mobilizing this metaphorical self-destruction, Menenius's deployment of the social body is here an obvious deterrent, an attempt to

maintain the status quo, literally to keep each subject in her or his "place." For Francis Barker, this metaphorical body organizes the social relations that constitute identity. The king, who is this body's head with its all-seeing, all-knowing eye, is the "master signifier" of "intelligibility," the godlike principle that makes the social body meaningful. The disruption of this principle, Barker argues, risks "disarticulation of reality itself" (33). This metaphor, he argues, strives to make the idea of fluid status or identity unthinkable, as absurd, for instance, as the notion that "the arm should replace the spleen" (32).

The situation becomes even more disturbing if it becomes apparent that the king is "merely" playing at being the literal head of state, especially when we consider that sovereignty is in this period articulated largely through spectacular display that tends to foreground the performative aspects of the monarchy. Many literary critics and historians have studied the forms and implications of this dependence of monarchy on spectacle. Marie Axton, in *The Queen's Two Bodies*, extrapolates from Ernst Kantorowicz's exhaustive account of the development of the metaphor of the King's two bodies in order to investigate the role of pageant spectacle in the reign of Elizabeth I. Critics as diverse in methodological approach as Jonathan Dollimore, Stephen Greenblatt, Stephen Orgel, Hugh Richmond, Leonard Tennenhouse and Christopher Pye have tackled the difficult questions of identity, spectacle and social embodiment in the early modern period. What is common to all of these studies--whether the historicist work of Stephen Orgel, the formalist readings of Hugh Richmond, Greenblatt's New Historicist theories of subversion and containment, Pye's lacanian psychoanalysis, or the cultural materialist models of contradiction in Dollimore's work--is an emphasis on the precarious nature of a

sovereignty whose spectacular presence is always in danger of being exposed as "mere" playing. As Orgel asserts: "An Aristotelian might maintain that to be a good king it is necessary to have all the virtues and a Machiavellian object that it is necessary only to seem to have them; but in either case it is the *image* of the monarch that is crucial, the appearance of virtue, whether it accords with an inner reality or not" (42). But, as the fluidity of the theatre implies, *images*, and their tendency to reveal status and identity as masquerade, are symptomatic of the very social upheavals that challenge the prevailing metaphor of social body of which the king is the head and organizing principle. This challenge has serious implications for kingship as an institution since, by way of a circular logic, the metaphor of the social body also legitimizes the monarch's claims to supremacy.

Some different, but equally engaging, considerations of the anxieties surrounding the visible signs of status and identity come from another quarter, from feminist historians and critics, such as Phyllis Rackin, Jean Howard, Linda Woodbridge and Patricia Parker. Focussing largely on the regulation of feminine sexuality in the period, these critics share with their male colleagues an interest in the social construction of both masculine and feminine subjects, for the metaphor of the social body also underwrites patriarchal discourses. The continuity of masculine power throughout this period is, as Rackin and Howard argue, bound inextricably to a genealogical dependence upon women, whose sexuality must be carefully monitored in order to guarantee the direct succession of heirs and to mitigate against the dilution or diversion of the patrilineal bloodline by the intrusion of bastards.⁷ For example, Leontes, consumed with jealousy, tells his son, Mamillius:

"Thy mother plays, and I / Play too, but so disgraced a part, whose issue / Will hiss me to

my grave" (*The Winter's Tale* 1.2.186-88). His mad and obsessive reading of Hermione's actions in this scene is an acknowledgement of the hidden dangers inherent in masculine "ownership" of femininity, for the "playing" woman can undermine masculine identity by transforming the patriarch to a cuckold, and the heir into a "whoreson." As I will demonstrate below and in Chapter One, the danger that the image of chastity may hide a reality of promiscuity makes the visible presence of women an issue of pervasive debate and regulation, both in Shakespeare's plays and in their cultural context. Masculine anxieties about the status of patriarchal identity, as the example of Leontes' mad narrative illustrates, manifest themselves in the desire to expose feminine sexuality to the patriarchal gaze.

While these two lines of enquiry proceed along parallel courses, tracing the implications of "mere" playing for the construction of the social subject, neither the studies of sovereign spectacle nor of the spectacle of femininity have approached the question of how these two models of spectacular relations interact in the drama of the period, or of what are the consequences for the metaphor of the social body of this interaction. In the pages that follow, I will be tracing some of these implications through Shakespeare's first English historical tetralogy and *King John*. Like other feminist critics who have turned their attention to the role of femininity in the histories, I choose these plays because they are populated with vociferous women who occupy the centre of the theatres of war and politics. Largely neglected by non-feminist readers, the *Henry VI* plays are also replete with what are often dismissed as oddities, extraneous narratives, and gratuitous scenes of violence. It is at these junctures, such as the shocking entrance of Queen Margaret

cradling Suffolk's severed head, or Joan la Pucelle's conversation with fiends, that the two contradictory models of spectacular relation collide with the most interesting results.

II

Before moving on to detailed discussion of these plays, it will be necessary to define some of the critical terms that will inform my analysis of this conjunction of sovereign spectacle and femininity. These two instances of spectacular relation constitute the "visible economies" of my title, the systems of signs that govern the spectacular construction of identity in the first tetralogy and *King John*. In other words, the visible economy refers to the performative aspects of identity in which the subject and the monarch, presenting themselves to the gaze, fulfil or disrupt the social roles that define their relation to the body politic. The visible economy is most apparent in scenes of ceremony, such as coronations, state scenes, weddings, and trials--in combat or in court--where the subject's role is enacted before a communal gaze and his or her position with regard to authority is defined. The visible economy, then, is comprised of two movements or gestures, each of which attempts to consolidate power and to legitimate authority, whether sovereign or patriarchal: first, I have termed the spectacular consolidation of royal identity "penetrative spectacle"; second, the constitution of masculine and feminine identities is effected, I will demonstrate, through "regulative visibility."

Penetrative spectacle, while it is constituted by a dynamic that is on its surface theatrical, denies theatricality insofar as the monarch's spectacular presence cannot be seen to be "mere" playing. The monarch does not present herself as an object of the gaze, but,

rather as the light that makes gazing possible. Seeing, in this relation, is coded as a passive function in which the spectator is co-opted to the monarch's intent: the gazer becomes the object of the spectacle. In this sense, the monarch is identified as a godlike presence whose all-seeing eye defines the terms of the subject's identity. The fifteenth-century theologian Nicholas of Cusa figures human identity in relation to God in just this way: "I exist in that measure in which Thou art with me, and, since Thy look is Thy being, I am because Thou dost look at me, and if Thou didst't turn Thy glance from me I should cease to be" (qtd. in Freedman 19). Appropriating all the power of the gaze to itself, penetrative spectacle is a conceit that equates royal presence with absolute control of the scopic relation. Sovereignty in this instance frames its authority as demonstration, as a *fait accompli* which, while it depends upon the observing subject, effaces the consolidating function of the audience who will interpret the image. As David Womersley avers: "Tudor propaganda insisted that the principles of order and allegiance to monarchs were to be adhered to not as the results of rational choice . . . but unthinkingly as absolutes" (514).⁸ For M.M. Bakhtin, too, such monological utterance requires an auditor whose understanding is "purely passive, purely receptive, contributes nothing new to the word under consideration, only mirroring it, seeking, at its most ambitious, merely the full reproduction of that which is already given in the word" (281). Contemporary explanations of the mechanics of sight emphasize this aggressive penetration of the seeing eye by spectacle. Joseph Lenz notes that, in Roger Bacon's thirteenth-century and Vesalius's sixteenth-century drawings, the eye resembles female reproductive organs: "[I]mages enter through the pupil and are channelled through the optic nerve into the brain

where, in Richard II's words, they 'people the little world'" (841). Figuratively "impregnated" by the demonstration, the spectator of sovereign display is constituted by what Bakhtin terms "passive understanding" (281). Defined by this conceit as that which *reproduces* sovereign presence, the spectator fits into stereotypical categories of passive femininity.

Ideally the farthest thing from "mere" playing, this spectacle asserts that the corporeal king in the raiment of office is sovereignty itself. In the absence of organized material forms of coercion, for example, Elizabeth I's ability to rule rested on the creation of a perceived congruence between her person and her image, presence and presentation, body and title, power and authority. Leonard Tennenhouse observes that "Elizabeth insisted upon representing her body as one and the same as England. She made this equation on the grounds that her natural body both contained and stood for the mystic power of blood which had traditionally governed the land and made it English" ("Violence" 80). Elizabeth's authority was vested, then, in the dramatization of the royal body as nation. Whereas theatricality posits a gap between self and role, penetrative spectacle does not. Penetrative spectacle, then, is not, as critics such as Stephen Greenblatt would have it, an instance of theatre (*Negotiations* 65), but is, rather, a form of display that negates theatricality even as it appeals to its presentational form. Grounded in the king's assertion of authenticity and self-identity (modelled, perhaps, on the Biblical, "I am that I am"), the social body is itself stabilized, as Francis Barker describes it, as part of the "king's body in social form" (31).

Two brief examples will serve to concretize the abstractions of this dynamic.

Consider, for instance, the description of the coronation of Anne Bullen in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*. Beginning with a royal procession in which the new queen passes over the stage with a full retinue of peers, the scene moves from the commentary of the two watching Gentlemen to the description of the coronation provided by a Third Gentleman who has come from an Abbey so crowded that "a finger / Could not be wedged in more" (4.1.57-8). The Third Gentleman describes Bullen as "the goodliest woman / That ever lay by man; which when the people / Had the full view of" (4.1.69-71) they broke into an ecstasy of jubilant cheering:

..... Hats, cloaks
 (Doublets I think) flew up; and had their faces
 Been loose, this day they had been lost. Such joy
 I never saw before.

 No man living
 Could say, 'This is my wife' there, all were woven
 So strangely in one piece. (4.1.73-81)

This response of the crowd to the spectacular presence of the new queen fulfils the demands of penetrative spectacle, for the subjects who gaze upon her are unified as an entity that is defined as an effect of her presence. The very faces of the spectators "had been lost" if they could be taken off and offered up with doublets, hats and cloaks. The identities of wives are likewise lost in the "press" of spectators, and their relationships to husbands subordinated to a national unity, a cloth "woven / So strangely in one piece." Subsumed into the mass response to Anne Bullen's demonstration of sovereignty, the individual is incorporated into a national body that responds with one jubilant gesture of ratification. Having "all the royal makings of a queen, / As holy oil, Edward Confessor's

crown, / The rod, and the bird of peace, and all such emblems / Laid nobly on her" (4.1.87-90), Queen Anne unites the traditional symbols of royalty with their earthly embodiment; this union of individual, symbol and nation is signalled by the resulting unity of the jubilant masses. This is the *universitas*, as Ernst Kantorowicz defines it: "the eternal continuity and immortality of the great collective called the human race" (277). A union of the people and the territory of the nation with tradition and posterity, the *universitas* is symbolized by the sovereign's two bodies: the Body Natural that lives and dies, and the Body Politic, that, like the nation itself, lives perpetually.

The familiar state scene in *Hamlet* provides a more self-conscious, politically savvy, construction of kingship as spectacle as, in his first 117 lines, Claudius consolidates his position as king, both *de facto* and *de jure*. In his coronation/wedding address, he asserts that the state, which might appear to be "disjoint and out of frame" (1.2.21) is in fact whole and united. His union with Gertrude, "Th' imperial jointress to this warlike state" (1.2.9), solidifies his otherwise tenuous claim to the throne. Dispatching an embassy to old Norway, he shows the "warlike" state to be fortified against the threat of foreign invasion. Declaring Hamlet "the most immediate to our throne" (1.2.109), he recuperates, at least provisionally, the one remaining challenger to his sovereignty. In the very centre of his opening speech is his appeal to the Court: "Nor have we herein barred / Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone / With this affair along. For all, our thanks" (1.2.14-16). A more subdued ratification than that which greets Anne Bullen at her coronation, this gesture to the "better wisdoms" of the Court and their silent consent nevertheless demonstrate Claudius's ability to appropriate the politic body to his own

agenda. We do not hear the "better wisdoms" of the counsellors' voices; we do not need to, for their complicity, perhaps motivated by their fear of a Norwegian invasion, makes their voices the king's voice. Such is the case with the ambassadors, Cornelius and Voltmand, who, as the king's voice in the Court of Norway, have "no further personal power / To business with the king more than the scope / Of [Claudius's] delated articles allow" (1.2.36-8). Rosencrantz, who becomes the king's eyes and ears later in the play, best illustrates the concept of the king's social body when he asserts: "Never alone / Did the king sigh, but with a general groan" (3.3.22-3). Of course, Claudius's ability to mobilize penetrative spectacle is limited, for his embodiment of kingship has already been questioned by the vision of the martial King Hamlet pacing the fortifications of Elsinore, and will further be challenged by the reticence of his heir apparent, Hamlet. But these challenges, I will argue, are proper to the effects of the interaction of sovereign display and the second aspect of the visible economy: regulative visibility. I will return to both Claudius and Anne Bullen below.

The first aspect of the visible economy that I have delineated, and which has occupied the attention of critics interested in Shakespeare's representation of kingship, uses penetrative spectacle to organize the social body around the "master signifier" of the king. Subjects exposed to this penetrating gaze are defined as aspects of that social body. The second gesture of the visible economy, one which has primarily interested feminist critics, is that of "regulative visibility," which seeks to assuage anxiety about the instability of social identity by exposing the individual to a gaze that defines her in terms of a social role. Sumptuary legislation, for example, attempted during the Tudor period to place

restrictions on the clothing that people of each class and occupation were able to wear.⁹ For Stubbes, pride in apparel was the primary sin in his *Anatomie of Abuses*, since its visibility could entice "others to vanitie and sin" and "as an exemplarie of evill induceth the whole man to wickedness and sin" (*Anatomie*, "Pride in Apparel" n.pag.). But Stubbes's aversion to sin betrays a deeper aversion to the confusion of rank. The ability for people of lower classes to purchase clothing above their rank, or to inherit clothes from their employers or lords, muddied hierarchical distinctions based on traditional values, "So it is hard to know," Stubbes complains, "who is noble, who is worshipfull, who is a gentleman, who is not. . . . This is a great confusion & general disorder, God be merciful unto us" (*Anatomie*, "Sumptuous Attyr" n.pag.).

While largely unenforceable, sumptuary legislation is nevertheless symptomatic of a desire on the part of a conservative dominant ideology to regulate the social identities of subjects within the domain of appearances. While this desire for regulation operates in many domains, including class, for my purposes, the domain of feminine sexuality is of particular interest. In a patriarchal society, in which women, as mothers, wives and daughters, are both outward indicators of the status of men and the vehicles of patrilineal succession through their role in the production of heirs, the regulation of sexual identity is invested with a certain urgency. Embodying the levelling potential of sexual desire, disease, and trade "in a world where kingly difference is at risk and men made alarmingly the same" (Howard, "Forming" 117), the "loose" woman endangers the social system that structures both identity and reality. The preoccupation with "whoresons" and bastards in Shakespeare's historical dramas derives from the fear of the *invisible* whore --the

adulterous wife--and her offspring who haunt the plays, spectres of what Phyllis Rackin calls "the unarticulated residue" of feminine sexuality (*Stages* 191). Women, she observes, are the "keepers of the unwritten and unknowable truth never directly accessible to the knowledge of men, [and are] the others who delineate the boundaries of the male self's territory of knowledge and control" (190). Because women are the only ones who can know if a child is his father's son, women's bodily conduct is one limit of masculine identity; Heaven is the other. Insofar as men have no access to the knowledge of women or of Heaven, "Man" is defined by "his" tenuous and fraught position between the unknowable purity of spirit and unknowable, but inescapably necessary, feminine sexuality. Between heaven and mothers is a space of almost unbearable anxiety.

The inability of a husband to distinguish between the mere appearance of women's conformity to patriarchally defined roles and genuine internalization of those roles provokes in Shakespeare's plays a crisis in the masculine sense of self. Leontes' reaction to Hermione's alleged infidelity attests to this crisis:

. . . . O thou thing!
Which I'll not call a creature of thy place,
Lest barbarism, making me the precedent,
Should a like language use to all degrees
And mannerly distinguishment leave out
Betwixt the prince and beggar. (*The Winter's Tale* 2.1.82-87)

Hermione's apparent transgression of the role of wife undoes the language of status itself, and threatens to undo all hierarchical distinctions "Betwixt the prince and beggar" and even between the king and the barbarian. Hamlet faces this difficulty when, confronting Ophelia in the Nunnery scene (3.2), he is overcome by the sense of feminine duplicity: "I have heard of your paintings too, well enough. God hath given you one face, and you

make yourselves another. . . . Go to, I'll no more on't; it hath made me mad (*Hamlet* 3.2.142-46). The feminine manipulation of appearances here troubles Hamlet's own "show" of madness and causes him to be mad in earnest. Othello, who laments that husbands may "call these delicate creatures ours, / but not their appetites!" (*Othello* 3.3.269-70), is driven into epileptic convulsions by the thought of Desdemona's infidelity, a betrayal that robs him of his identity: "Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content! / Farewell the plumèd troop, and the big wars / . . . / Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!" (3.3.348-9, 357). In *Much Ado About Nothing*, Claudio stakes the identities of all those present on the truth of his indictment of Hero on the grounds of her promiscuity: "Leonato, stand I here? / Is this the Prince? Is this the Prince's brother? / Is this face Hero's? Are your eyes your own?" (4.1.66-8). Leonato, cut to the quick by his daughter's dishonour begs: "Hath no man's dagger here a point for me?" (4.1.107). In each case, uncertainty about the status of wives and daughters leads to a crisis in masculine identity.¹⁰

The resolution of this crisis depends upon regulative visibility, a process of exposure similar in spirit to sumptuary laws that insist that a person's appearance coincide with his or her "true" identity. Both Renaissance law and literature endeavoured to reduce the excess of feminine sexuality to manageable categories through a process that mobilized spectacle as a mode of social regulation. Stubbes, a virulent advocate of visible regulation, suggests that whores "be cauterized and seared with a hote yron on the cheeke, forehead, and some other part of the their bodye that might be seene, to the end the honest and chast Christians might be discerned from the adulterous Children of Sathan" (*Anatomie*, "Due punishment for whordome" n.pag.). Marking a woman's identity on her

skin, Stubbes's proposed spectacle of exposure reveals his belief that the boundary between legitimate and illegitimate uses of the female body must be clearly delineated if masculine ownership and identity are to be protected. The identification of the whore, therefore, is significantly a question of differentiating her from the wife whose sexual regulation is necessary to the maintenance of the patriarchal social structure. The attempt to make the whore visible is simultaneously a twofold movement of suppression: first, the whore, once identified, consolidates by a process of comparison the category of the "chaste" woman and locates the excess of feminine sexuality in a conveniently disparaged and delegitimized category of commodification; second, the chaste wife who materializes from this exclusion is elided or "muted" in the patriarchal family as the equally commodified medium of succession.

It is in this spirit that Leontes openly accuses Hermione, declaring: "You my lords, / Look on her and mark her well" (*Winter's Tale* 2.1.64-5). Only Hermione's mock death allows her to escape the erroneous designation, "adulteress," and to be reborn at the end of the play. Hidden behind a screen and discovered to the amazement of her family, Hermione returns to a stable identity as wife and mother only after Perdita is proven to be Leontes's legitimate child. Likewise, Hero, too, must die, only to be resurrected in a stable identity as a virgin. Upon removing her veil and showing her face, she assures Claudio: "One Hero died defiled; but I do live, / And surely as I live, I am a maid" (*Much Ado About Nothing* 5.4.63-4). The confusion created by the bed trick in *All's Well That Ends Well* is resolved as Helena, also believed to be dead, arrives to take her rightful place as wife and mother. This reintegration is expressed in the language of vision when the

incredulous King asks: "Is't real that I see?" (5.3.303). Helena, who is "but the shadow of a wife . . . / The name and not the thing" (5.3.303-5), like Hero, needs only a husband's acceptance to unite the name and the thing. For Desdemona, the answer to the question, "Am I that name, Iago?" (*Othello* 4.2.118)--that is, "whore"--comes too late to save her, but her identity is stabilized by Emilia's dying assertion: "Moor, she was chaste" (5.2.250). In *Measure for Measure*, the Duke confronts the veiled Mariana who insists that she is neither maid, widow, nor wife. He responds: "Why, you are nothing then" (5.1.177-8). Equating whoredom with nothingness, Lucio attempts a provisional definition with his assertion that Mariana "may be a punk; for many of them are neither maid, widow, nor wife" (5.1.179-80). Mariana only becomes "something" when she, like Hero, removes her veil and takes her position as a wife. The identities of these women are solidified in acceptable social roles through a process of revelation to a patriarchal gaze, aptly symbolized by the removal of the veil.

In each of these cases, to be the object of the masculine gaze is to be constituted as feminine and to be placed within an economy of masculine ownership and identity. Coextensive with this objectification is the stabilization of the masculine subject as master of a defining and objectifying gaze. As Jean Gebser argues: "The conception of man as subject is based on a conception of the world and the environment as an object" (11). This subject/object dynamic, for Gebser, arises with the development of spatial awareness, for "in order to objectify and qualify space, a self-conscious 'I' is required that is able to stand opposite or confront space as well as to depict or represent it by projecting it out of his soul or psyche" (10). Space, in Gebser's phenomenological model, is not an absolute

reality, but is rather a product of the human awareness of self. Where Gebser's "man" refers to the universal "mankind," however, Mary Ann Doane insists on the gendered nature of the subject/object dynamic, for "an essential attribute of that dominant system is the matching of male subjectivity with the agency of the look" (230). In Doane's qualification of the model proposed by Gebser, the "I" that appears is masculine, and the space, environment, or object that he "confronts" is feminine.

There is, therefore, a striking similarity between the gestures, on the one hand, of regulative visibility that consolidate masculine subjectivity through the definition of femininity as the object of a patriarchal gaze, and, on the other, the penetrative nature of sovereign spectacle, which, by monopolizing the agency of the gaze, defines and unifies the social body as a feminized effect of sovereign presence. While these two analogous models would appear to be commensurate with the desires of the dominant ideology to regulate the social body through the agency of the gaze, in their interaction, they demonstrate the contradictions inherent to that desire.

In order to examine this interaction of the two aspects of the visible economy, let us return to Claudius and the scene of state. Claudius, who has worked hard during his speech to solidify the social body around his own presence as rightful king, must confront Hamlet, whose silence and black mourning clothes insulate him from Claudius's appropriating rhetoric. Claudius asks, "How is it that the clouds still hang on you?" to which Hamlet answers, "Not so, my lord. I am too much in the sun" (*Hamlet* 1.2.66-7). Standing in the shadows in his black clothes, Hamlet refuses the exposing desire of sovereign spectacle. Declaring himself "*too much in the sun*" of royal spectacle (my

emphasis), and "A little more than kith, and less than kind!" (1.2.65), Hamlet positions himself outside of the social body conjured by Claudius's rhetoric and appropriated by the light of the sovereign gaze. This resistance to exposure is articulated throughout the play in Hamlet's pervasive use of puns, and by his antic disposition, both of which keep him suspended between madness and craft, hidden in plain sight.

In addition to this refusal to capitulate to the all-seeing eye, Hamlet's positioning outside the charmed circle of Claudius's spectacular control creates a locus of vision that competes with Claudius's sovereign conceit. In production, this competing centre may be signalled by Hamlet's first line, quoted above, which is often delivered as an aside, a dramatic strategy that helps the audience to identify with Hamlet's point of view and against that of Claudius. In the 1992 BBC radio production, with Kenneth Branagh's Renaissance Theatre Company, Hamlet's first line firmly situates the listener in Hamlet's mind; his voice, from the very first moment we hear it, is right in the centre of the soundscape, and the Court, Claudius, and Gertrude are ranged around him (and, because of our own centeredness in a stereo world, around us). Positioning the audience in this way, the aside ruptures the authority of Claudius's speech and alienates our identification with him: he becomes the object of a resisting gaze, which, as it is aligned with Hamlet as the rightful king, reveals Claudius to be "merely" a player. This definition will be concretized, of course, in the Mousetrap scene (3.2), when Claudius will literally see himself as a Player-King. Furthermore, Hamlet's final capitulation to Gertrude's and Claudius's command to remain at Elsinore--"I shall in all my best obey you, madam" (1.2.120)--is designed to insult Claudius by excluding him, but the comment is also

insulting for the way that it implies the femininity of the king. Hamlet repeats the insult later when he refers to Claudius as his "mother": "father and mother is man and wife, man and wife is one flesh, and so, my mother" (4.3.50-1).¹¹ Hamlet's identity as rightful king is concretized for the audience through this dynamic struggle for mastery of the defining gaze.

Establishing at the outset the conceit of penetrative spectacle, the state scene in *Hamlet* is ruptured by a competing gaze, a gaze that turns the king himself into a feminized object, and, in the process, evacuates his presence of sovereign authority. A similar subversion of sovereign spectacle is evident even in the celebratory representation of Anne Bullen's coronation in *Henry VIII*. In this scene, we do not witness the coronation ourselves, but instead hear about it second hand from the Third Gentleman. Because it is the Gentlemen that we see on stage during this discussion and not the spectacle itself, the emphasis in the scene is not on the sovereign, but on the observers. This scene highlights the role of the spectator that sovereign spectacle ideally elides. Anne Bullen, described as "the goodliest woman / That ever lay by man" (4.1.69-70), is defined according to a patriarchal relation that, as we have seen, is enabled by regulative visibility, an exposure of the woman to a gaze that identifies her as an object.¹² As in the case of the state scene, or the queen's coronation, it is the very exposure of the monarch in penetrative spectacle that makes him or her vulnerable to a disempowering objectification. Appearing as the object of the gaze, the sovereign who displays her or himself as spectacle risks, like Claudius or Anne Bullen, becoming theatrical, that is, being revealed to be "merely" playing.

III

Such a rupture of penetrative spectacle by the regulative gaze has important implications for the metaphor of the social body. It is, after all, Claudius's status as usurper and Player-King that provokes Hamlet's obsessive desire to bring this secret "to light," and it is this struggle that leads to the pile-up of bodies in the last two acts of the play. In the chapters that follow I will focus on images of the social body and individual bodies in pain in the four plays of the first tetralogy and *King John*, for it is in the representation of violence that the disruptive effects of the contradictions at the heart of the visible economy are most apparent. Within the hegemonic discourse of the histories, the martial body is the ultimate sign of the social body, for the scars gained in battle are the visible manifestations of the history of a nation struggling to define itself against the threat of its enemies. The best example of the martial body as a sign of the state can be found in Henry V's St. Crispin's Day speech before the decisive battle of Agincourt in *Henry V*:

He that shall see this day, and live old age,
 Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbors
 And say, 'Tomorrow is Saint Crispian.'
 Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
 [And say, 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.']

.....
 And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
 From this day to the ending of the world,
 But we in it shall be remembered -- (4.3.44-48, 57-9, editor's addition)

Henry envisions in this speech the body's scars as a kind of writing wherein the story of England's glorious defeat of the French will be written. The scarred martial body in this passage is tied to both the past and the future as part of a glorious national body identified

with the king: Henry promises his soldiers that "he that sheds his blood with me / Shall be my brother" (4.3.61-2).

A negative, but no less important, manifestation of the body as state is the penal subject. Just as the martial body becomes the narrative of the defense of the national self from the foreign Other, the penal body demonstrates the king's power to see treason and to protect the state from its threat. This power is written in the spectacular dismemberment of the condemned on the scaffold. Christopher Pye asserts that, as the dismembered body is reduced to a field of meaning, "[at] the same time, sovereign power reveals itself through the condemned man's body, not in terms of an economy of example--not as a knowable form at all--but as a terrifyingly immediate presence" (110). Penal spectacle represents an extreme example of what I have termed "visible exclusion" in the early histories. This is a process by which the transgressor is "brought to the light" of the sovereign or judicial gaze in order to be expelled from the social body. Excluded in a public ceremony, the transgressor, like a foreign invader, becomes an Other against which sovereign power is defined. To this end, contemporary penal practice was characterized by shaming rituals such as the pillory and the stocks, and criminals were often ritually mutilated on the scaffold before they were executed and their bodies obliterated by fire. Banished even from burial within the town's walls, the criminal was truly dis-membered, excluded from the social body in a highly visible ritual of purification.¹³ Such a pattern of exposure, exclusion and consolidation is apparent, for example, at the conclusion of *Othello*, where Iago's many crimes are revealed to the Venetian ambassadors and we are promised that the offender will be taken away to be tortured. At the same time, the order

of the state is re-established by the promotion of Cassio, himself a wounded soldier, to the rank of governor.

But the spectacle of visible exclusion is, like other forms of sovereign display, vulnerable to subversion in Shakespeare's plays. A parody of visible exclusion takes place in *The Winter's Tale*, to suggest just one of a multitude of instances, when Hermione is brought to public trial and is forced "To prate and talk for life and honor 'fore / Who please to come and hear" (3.2.40-1). In production, the force of this miscarriage of justice can be emphasized, especially in the daylight performances of Shakespeare's Globe, if Hermione addresses the visible crowd of spectators in the theatre, making the audience uncomfortably complicitous in her persecution and humiliation. Hermione's visible exclusion slips into parody because Leontes' jealousy causes him to ignore the protestations of his Court and even the Oracle from Delphi, all of which proclaim Hermione innocent. The all-seeing eye of the sovereign is here blinded by the masculine fear of the power of feminine sexuality to transform him into a cuckold and laughing stock: the penetrative spectacle of power, which should be consolidated by the visible exclusion of the transgressor, is undermined by a masculine identity crisis. Leontes, not Hermione, becomes the object of a censoring gaze as Hermione's just indignation and reasoned rhetoric align the audience against her husband's obvious madness and disregard for justice.

Shakespeare's *Henry VI* plays, *Richard III*, and *King John* are replete with just such rites and ceremonies whose maimed character can be traced to the breakdown of the sovereign's control of the spectacular language of power. Instead of ratifying sovereign

power, injured bodies in these plays attest to its absence. Instead of providing a hegemonic narrative of nation, these bodies become polysemous and ironic; no stable narrative of authority, nation, or kingship can be read in these scars, murders, and multiplying severed heads. These bodies as signs within the visible economy are, to adapt a term from Francis Barker, "disarticulated" (33). I use this term for the way that it connotes both a physical and a linguistic breakdown: the disarticulated body is broken at the joints, lacking in the integrity necessary to proper mechanical functioning; no longer able to function as a language through which sovereignty expresses itself, these individual bodies in pain mark the collapse of the metaphor of the social body.

IV

In the chapters that follow I have broken with the traditional presentation of the plays in order of their composition and placed my consideration of *King John* at the beginning. I have done so because this play provides a kind of blueprint for the more protracted interrogations of spectacle and the social body that Shakespeare undertakes in the long unified narrative of the *Henry VI* plays and *Richard III*. Chapter One traces the interaction of the two movements of the visible economy that I have delineated in these introductory remarks. Beginning with a discussion of the exposure of Lady Faulconbridge as an adulteress in the opening scene of the play, I consider the ways in which her visibility prefigures John's exposure to the censoring gaze of the Citizen in the scene before the town of Angiers in the second act. This scene, which is permeated with the language of bawdry and prostitution, explores the connection between sovereign spectacle and

solicitation, an association that both feminizes John and reveals him to be a Player-King. This collapse of the spectacular language of power leads to the mutilation of the body of the state, epitomized by John's warrant for the execution and disfigurement of young Arthur Plantagenet.

Chapter Two considers the consequences of the death of Henry V, who, in the first scene of *1 Henry VI*, is presented as the lost ideal of penetrative spectacle. With the loss of Henry's all-seeing gaze, the play dramatizes what I call a "fall into perspective," where knowledge, identity and the representation of the social body become fragmented and ironic. The martial body, paralysed by this originary loss of quasi-divine vision, becomes captive, I argue, to the triumphal car as an object of a disempowering French gaze. While English identity in this play, as many critics have argued, is dependent upon a demonization of the French Other as common, feminine and carnal, I will demonstrate how these dichotomies collapse, provoking a crisis in English masculine identity. The chapter closes with an analysis of the sorcery scene and the trial of Joan la Pucelle in which the audience's implication in the miscarriage of justice both provides provisional stability for English martial identity and reveals the tenuousness of truth claims based on visible evidence.

Continuing with this investigation of the consequences of collapsing dichotomies in *2 and 3 Henry VI*, Chapter Three begins with an analysis of the infiltration of Margaret of Anjou's "counterfeit beam" into the English state. This chapter focusses more particularly on scenes of violence, such as Humphrey's murder, the trial by combat of Thump v. Horner, and Margaret's ghastly entrance with Suffolk's severed head. The proliferation

and circulation of severed heads in these plays is analogous to the multiple usurpations that replace one crowned head with another in rapid succession, leaving the body politic decapitated and evacuated of its consolidating power. Appearing with Suffolk's severed head cradled on her breast like a suckling babe, Queen Margaret as an adulteress becomes emblematic of the power of femininity to unhinge the connection between kingship and the metaphor of the social body that is the source of sovereign legitimation.

The final chapter, which explores the explicitly theatrical obsessions of *Richard III*, traces the influence of feminine transformation on the development of Richard's character, a "coming between" or narrative power analogous to Richard's own mediation of the action as the "presenter" of the drama. Concerned, like Chapter Three, with scenes of violence and judicial procedure, this chapter interrogates the ways in which Richard's ironic manipulation of ceremony and of bodies (dead and alive) undermines sovereignty from within the very spectacular domain that helps to define and to authorize it. Opposing Richard's egotistical monopoly of the spectacular domain, I will argue, is an alternative domain bound to tradition, oral culture and the communal unity of the people. Expressed through dreams, tall tales and proverbial language, this domain slowly recuperates Richard's deconstructive energy, setting the stage for the play's Providential closure and Richard's visible exclusion.

Finally, in the Epilogue, I turn to two examples of resistance in production to this Providential closure in order to suggest that the visible exclusion of Richard is, like all the others we witness in the tetralogy, incomplete. This is so, I argue, because the dichotomization of Richmond and Richard upon which this exclusion depends is radically

unstable. This instability, I conclude, is symptomatic of the challenges faced by masculine identity throughout the tetralogy with regard to the questions raised by the disturbing fluidity and groundlessness of identity as masquerade: If all the men and women are "merely" players, what is a man? What is a woman? What does "merely" have to do with it?

Notes

1. See for example Thomas Heywood's *Apology for Actors*.
2. Michael Shapiro discusses this phenomenon and its exploitation within plays in *Gender in Play on the Shakespearean Stage: Boy Heroines and Female Pages*.
3. For a detailed discussion of the interaction of these two worldviews, see Barbara Freedman, *Staging the Gaze*, especially the Introduction, which draws on the work of Jean Gebser and Erwin Panofsky; Jonathan Dollimore's *Radical Tragedy* performs a similar tracing of philosophical shifts during the period; Jean-Christopher Agnew's *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theatre in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750* provides an extended analysis of the relationship between the rising market economy and theatres; Shannon Miller's introductory comments to her article, "Consuming Mothers / Consuming Merchants: The Carnavalesque Economy of Jacobean City Comedy," provides a brief overview of the effects of the new economy on later drama; for a concise treatment of the ideological contexts of the theatres in London, see Stephen Mullaney, "Civic Rites, City Sites: The Place of the Stage," in *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*. This collection, edited by David Scott Kasdan and Peter Stallybrass, includes among its many contextualizing articles Jean Howard's "Women as Spectators, Spectacles, and Paying Customers," which considers the implications for women of the potential freedom of access to public life offered by the new market economy.
4. All references to Shakespeare's plays are from Alfred Harbage ed., *The Complete Works*, The Pelican Text Revised (New York: Penguin Books, 1969).
5. There are many works that ruminate upon the possible physical conditions of Shakespeare's theatre and the effects that these conditions would have on the experience of watching and staging the plays. Since the revival of interest in dramaturgic "accuracy" associated with William Poel's efforts to recreate the experience of the bare "Elizabethan" stage late in the last century, there have been many notable attempts to design and build replicas of Shakespeare's Globe. The Festival Theatre in Stratford, Ontario reflects the influence of Poel, with its thrust stage and fan-shaped amphitheatre seating, while the tiny Swan theatre at Stratford-Upon-Avon reflects the desire to return the plays to an intimate setting with vertical galleries associated with contemporary playhouses, such as the Blackfriars. The recently completed International Shakespeare Theatre Centre in Bankside, London, 20 years in research, design and construction, boasts the most "authentic" reproduction of the Globe modern science, historical study, and archeology could provide. While the jury is still out on the issue of authenticity, the theatre does offer the vertical galleries, yard and large stage spaces believed to have been characteristic of contemporary permanent theatres. Detailing the design philosophy and construction methods of this theatre, *Shakespeare's Globe Rebuilt*, edited by J.R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring, offers some interesting analysis of available evidence for the interior

decoration of the Globe, especially in articles by John Ronayne and Siobhan Keenan and Peter Davidson. Another interesting collection associated with this project and dealing with issues of playing conditions is *New Issues in the Reconstruction of Shakespeare's Theatre: Proceedings of the Conference Held at the University of Georgia, February 16-18, 1990*, edited by Franklin J. Hildy. This conference was called in light of the discovery in 1989 of the foundations of the Globe and the Rose theatres in Bankside. For discussions of playing in such a theatre, see Alan C. Dessen, "Taint Not Thy Mind. . .: Problems and Pitfalls in Staging Plays at the New Globe," J. L. Styan, "In Search of the Real Shakespeare; or, Shakespeare's Shows and Shadows," and Hugh Richmond, "Techniques for Reconstituting Elizabethan Staging" all in the Hildy volume. For more general discussion of contemporary stages, see Glynne Wickham, *Early English Stages, 1300-1660*, John Orrell, *The Human Stage: English Theatre Design, 1567-1640*, E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*.

6. For Donald G. Watson, plays, and particularly the history plays that will occupy our attention in the pages that follow, dramatized this confrontation between the traditional and eternal on the one hand, and the fluid and contingent on the other. Official culture, symbolized by monarchy, he argues, posits itself as "timeless," symbolic, hierarchical and "ideologically rigid," but drama is by definition transient, sequential; the synchrony of official culture, which Elizabeth I encouraged through comparisons with mythological figures such as the Phoenix which never really dies, confronts in drama the diachronic unfolding of events in time which "subordinates the iconic present to the historic sequence" (32).

7. See *Engendering the Nation*, especially Chapter One, and Rackin's *Stages of History*, Chapter Four for extended discussions of the relationship between women and genealogical systems of hierarchy. I will discuss this issue further in following chapters.

8. Such "passive obedience" was codified during the Tudor period through the production of standardized sermons for the new Protestant clergy. These sermons emphasized in no uncertain terms that the sovereign answered to God alone, and that the role of the subject is to accept sovereign will without protest. See Ronald B. Bond, ed. *Certain Sermons or Homilies (1547) and A Homily Against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion*, for the texts of the sermons and an informative historical introduction.

9. For a detailed account of the Tudors' attempts to regulate the appearance and consumer habits of their subjects, see Frances Elizabeth Baldwin, *Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation in England*.

10. This masculine anxiety informs one of the more important metaphors deployed by Tudor jurists who sought to protect sovereignty from the uncertainties associated with paternity and succession: the phoenix, a bird that is, in its singularity, both individual and species, and which is also capable of self-generation. There are obvious advantages to the association of this figure with the King. One of the most interesting is

the way the metaphor manages to escape dependence on female sexuality, a source of great anxiety in a genealogically heirarchized patriarchy. According to Kantorowicz, contemporary Rabbinic discourse suggested that the phoenix was the only creature not to taste of the apple in Eden, and therefore escaped the taint of Eve's sin (395). Furthermore, in rising from its own ashes, the phoenix was its own successor and heir in a perpetual substitution that was both mortal and immortal, and, conveniently, depended upon no sexual intercourse.

11. For a more comprehensive discussion of this scene and its treatment in other productions, see my article, "The Hermeneutics of Error: Reading and the First Witness in *Hamlet*."

12. The female monarch, Elizabeth I, embodies these contradictions, for the Queen was both a woman subject to patriarchal regulation and a sovereign who both defines the terms of the visible economy and is ideally unavailable to such objectifying gazing. The contradiction is manifest in the image of Pallas Athena, a figure often associated with the childless Queen Elizabeth. As Francis Bacon tells the tale: "They say, after Jupiter was married to Metis [signifying the union of king and counsel] she was conceived by him and was with child, but Jupiter suffered her not to stay till she brought forth, but eat her up; whereby he became himself with child, and was delivered of Pallas armed, out of his head" ("On Counsel" 760). Effacing the feminine in favour of masculine (intellectual) birth, this story posits a distinctly masculine fantasy of appropriation and control that has complicated implications for the Virgin Queen: Elizabeth is associated with the motherless Pallas (necessitated perhaps by the fact that her mother, Anne Boleyn, had been executed for treason), as supreme ruler she may also be identified with Jupiter, and as a woman (exhorted to [re]produce an heir to the throne) with Metis. As at once motherless daughter, devouring father and devoured mother Elizabeth was situated at what was a complex and no doubt psychically rending intersection of competing and misogynist discourses. It is no small wonder that she forbade discussion of succession amongst her subjects. For interesting readings of Elizabeth as monarch and woman, see Leonard Tennenhouse, "Playing and Power," and "Violence Done to Women on the Renaissance Stage" in which he argues that Elizabeth's gender did not alter her perception as a patriarchal ruler. For a contrasting view, see Dennis Moore, "Recorder Fleetwood and the Tudor Queenship Controversy" in which he traces the contemporary debate over the dangers of feminine rule. See also Philippa Berry, *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen*, and Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies*, for extended discussions of the controversy surrounding succession and queenship.

13. For details of contemporary penal practice in England, see J.A. Sharpe, *Judicial Punishment in England* and "Last Dying Speeches': Religion, Ideology and Public Execution in Seventeenth Century England"; in Europe, especially the Low Countries, see Pieter Spierenburg, *The Spectacle of Suffering: Executions and the Evolution of Repression: From a Preindustrial Metropolis to the European Experience*;

see also Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, especially Chapter One; for execution specifically for women, see Camille Naish, *Death Comes to the Maiden: Sex and Execution 1431-1933*.

Chapter One

Industrious Scenes and Acts of Death: *King John's Visible Economy and the (Dis)Appearing "I"*

It is the curse of kings to be attended
By slaves that take their humors for a warrant
To break within the bloody house of life,
And on the winking of authority
To understand a law, to know the meaning
Of dangerous majesty, when, perchance, it frowns
More upon humor than advised respect.

(King John 4.2.208-14)

For those looking back on his reign from the vantage of the Elizabethan state, King John cut an ambiguous figure. As Queen Elizabeth prohibited discussion of a successor and refused to name one herself, John's kingship was mobilized in the Tudor tradition of argument by precedent and analogy to bolster diametrically opposed cases for succession: the Suffolks, English born and named as successors in Henry VIII's will, pointed to John's Oxford birth and his succession by testamentary disposition to justify their own claim; the Stuarts, identified as foreigners, but closer to the Crown in blood, stood on primogeniture and denounced John as a usurper of Arthur Plantagenet's right as "best blood royal" (Axton 32).¹ Poised between testamentary disposition and succession by blood--for the custom of royal election had not in his day been firmly replaced with primogeniture--John is an anxiously transitional figure reborn on the stage at a time that was itself anxiously transitional.

The treatment of kingship and its embodiment in Shakespeare's *The Life and Death of King John* betrays the cultural anxiety precipitated by the succession crisis at a point in English history when the shift from feudalism to incipient capitalism was also provoking an interrogation of the traditional modes of social organization based on metaphors of the social body. The fact that John's example could be co-opted with equal ease by the legitimating discourses of opposing factions reflects the instability of metaphors of kingship and social subjectivity, for the same figures became open to divergent interpretations. In response to this instability, Tudor models of royal embodiment and prerogative grew increasingly complex as the debate wore on in an attempt, during this time of dynastic insecurity, to solidify and codify the metaphor of social embodiment. The disarticulation which Francis Barker identifies with the adjustment of a society to changing modes of knowing itself suggests, not simply a shift to a new set of metaphors of social selfhood, but a crisis of signification, a disjunction of the language by which royal presence and, concomitantly, that of the people are made knowable. With the increasing debate over the meaning of social metaphors and the inauguration of new forms of status as the feudal system of vassalage was slowly displaced by a monied economy, sovereignty's traditional discourses of legitimation became more fraught. If the social body depends for its organization on the stability of sovereign presence, that metaphor becomes inadequate to the task of organization when the spectacular nature of sovereignty comes under attack. The "place" of the social subject becomes uncertain, and the prevailing discourses of social embodiment cannot articulate alternative forms of selfhood. For Shakespeare, writing in the late afternoon of the

Elizabethan era (as the Queen answered--or ignored--variations on the theme of Peter Wentworth's "A pithie exhortation to Her Maiestie for establishing her svccessor to the crowne."), this disarticulation is a condition important enough to merit extended treatment in two historical tetralogies, and between them, the puzzling *King John*.

Like the other histories, this play is about the performative aspects of monarchy. Unlike favourites such as Hal and to some extent Richard III, who, in their protean self-presentations, can play to any audience, John's relationships with the spectacle of royalty and with his audience are considerably more difficult. Where Hal might take to heart Berkeley's assertion that to be is to be perceived and turn this insight to the best political advantage, for John, to be perceived is both to come into being as a subject and to disappear in rapidly proliferating fragments before the critical and defining gaze. There are two particular kinds of rupture or disarticulation that I will explore in this play: first is the widening gap between the symbols of royalty, such as the crown, and John's ability to embody that symbolic force as king; the second rupture, which may be regarded as symptomatic of the first, is the fragmentation of John's identity as the power of spectacle is challenged by the gaze of the Other, most vociferously embodied here by the figure of the Citizen of Angiers. These ruptures result from the interaction of the two models of the gaze I delineate in the Introduction: the consolidating gestures of regulative visibility on the one hand and of the conceit of penetrative spectacle on the other.

The difficulty arises for John when the force of the first, defining gaze is turned on the king at the very site of his spectacular performance of royal identity. Becoming the object of this gaze, John, and by implication, kingship, are feminized. The exposure of

Lady Faulconbridge as an adulteress in the first scene of the play functions ostensibly to contain her disruptive potential and to stabilize both patriarchal power and masculine identity. The provisional stability represented by this visible exclusion is precarious, however, and Lady Faulconbridge's exposure comes to serve as an illustrative prefiguring of John's parallel delegitimization as, in the following scene, he appeals to spectacular demonstration of power in the "theatre" of battle before the town of Angiers. In the process of acting royal the very visibility of royalty becomes in this scene structurally linked to whoredom: forced to solicit the approving and defining gaze of his subjects, John is unable to demonstrate a natural or essential connection between himself and the crown. Once denaturalized in this way, kingship becomes "merely" playing rather than the demonstration of a divine connection between an individual monarch and the history and the territory of the nation. The play dramatizes the breakdown of the spectacular language of power, manifested in the emptiness of battlefield pageantry, John's multiple coronations, and the bodies either figuratively or physically dismembered in the theatre of war. In their interaction, then, these two models of the gaze are both regulative and consolidating as well as disruptive, for the discourse of whoredom that ostensibly contains the feminine threat to patriarchal definitions of the social body contaminates and delegitimizes sovereignty itself.²

II

The first scene of the play depicts a debate about legitimacy, the younger son of Robert Faulconbridge accusing the elder, Philip, of being a bastard. By roughly the middle

of the scene, Philip trades his patrimony for a new alliance, accepting new status as a landless bastard of Richard Cordelion. In a sophisticated analysis of the scene, Phyllis Rackin observes that the Faulconbridge episode is exemplary of patriarchal anxiety regarding "the repressed knowledge of women's subversive power," for only Lady Faulconbridge can confirm the Bastard's true lineage (*Stages* 118). For Rackin, women as the "grounds and evidence of patriarchal authority . . . remain curiously voiceless and disembodied," but their subversive potential can be actualized when they speak, for "[o]nce they become speaking subjects, they can only subvert the mythology in which their representation plays an essential role" (*Stages* 161-2). The speaking mother challenges patriarchal history, Rackin asserts, which seeks to "authenticate the always dubious relationships between fathers and sons, and to suppress and supplant the role of mothers" (*Stages* 161). That this challenge has far-reaching implications in terms of the structure of social hierarchy is proved by the civil case that develops from this infidelity, a case which significantly occupies the opening scene of a play that takes as its subject the parallel nightmare of the illegitimacy of the king's claim to the throne.

Although I agree with Rackin's identification of the potential for a form of visible and vocal motherhood in the plays to challenge the genealogical basis of patriarchy, I must note, however, the limits of the subversive power of the vociferous woman as it is manifested in Shakespeare's histories, and in this play in particular. While women's bodily knowledge is undoubtedly disruptive, the ways that this "body" materializes in the patriarchal discursive economy are necessarily fraught for women, who in actuality have little access to that bodily power once it is made visible. Consider, for example, Justinian's

assertion that the adulterous wife "gives her husband heirs who are not his children. It is theft to foist heirs born of debauchery on an entire family: it is a usurpation of the property, nobility, and name of the family" (qtd. in Martines and O'Faolain, 224). Always an extension of the masculine system of ownership and identity, feminine sexuality that appears to escape into a space "exterior" to that fantasy, in the form in this case of extramarital sex, is already coded as deviance, a theft of bodily productions which were always the property of another. This model is recapitulated in John's much-quoted decision in favour of the Bastard's inheritance of Sir Robert Faulconbridge's estate: "Sirrah, your brother [the Bastard] is legitimate. / Your father's wife did after wedlock bear him, / And if she did play false, the fault was hers" (1.1.116-118). A cutpurse of the small realm of the Faulconbridge estate, Lady Faulconbridge has stolen the masculine right of procreation, and with it that of inheritance. Richard Cordelion, who has popped in between Robert Faulconbridge and his succession, is significantly absent from this indictment. Lady Faulconbridge, not Cordelion, is deviant and culpable. For Phyllis Rackin, John's legal finding demonstrates that "the very absoluteness of patriarchal right provides for its own subversion" (*Stages* 189). This is an important insight that locates the source of masculine anxiety about patriarchal social order deep within the terms of that order itself. However, in the context of this testamentary debate, the power of the "unarticulated residue" of disruptive feminine sexuality is circumscribed in the scene precisely because it is articulated within the rubric of visibility.

For Lady Faulconbridge, speech is not power, but the instance of her submission to power; the moment of her arrival is also the moment of her dismissal. In the first scene

of the play, Lady Faulconbridge is induced to speak, and appears before us to confess that her apparent status as chaste wife is but a guise that hides an illegitimate interior. Her power, far from being actualized in her speech, is spent in its speaking, for, in confirming the Bastard's royal parentage, her words also confirm her "real" status as an adulteress, allowing her disruptive ambivalence to be contained by the dichotomous discourses of virtue and vice. At the moment that Lady Faulconbridge's transgression reveals that the system of genealogical hierarchy is vulnerable to distortion by the excesses of female sexuality, the very visibility of that transgression itself consolidates both patriarchal power and identity. When Philip states, "Heaven guard my mother's honor and my land!" (1.1.70), he makes explicit the connection between feminine sexuality and patrilineage. When he accepts his new nomination as "Sir Richard, and Plantagenet" (1.1.162), however, he becomes "the reputed son of Cordelion, / Lord of thy presence and no land beside" (1.1.136-37). In this act of renaming, Philip Faulconbridge makes a transition from "whoreson," that is, a *secret* and *invisible* disruptor of primogeniture, to "Bastard," a name that denotes both his new connection to the father and a visibility that reinstates the paternal blood lineage of the Faulconbridge estate, a stabilization that is dependent upon the prior designation of his mother as adulteress. Thus, while the invocation of the mother, as Rackin asserts, reveals a disruption at the heart of patriarchal hierarchy, this mother must herself be invoked so that her renaming as whore can consolidate her son's "true" identity in a male-centred system of genealogy in such a way that the system as a whole is protected. While Philip's transition to a specific form of visibility--significantly landless--allows him to form a powerful new alliance, Lady Faulconbridge's exposure

consigns her to a delegitimized category of sexual impurity. She is, in other words, made visible in order to be erased.

The visible exclusion of Lady Faulconbridge through the renaming of her "whoreson" as Bastard also enables the precarious containment of a second, arguably more immediate and legalistic challenge to discourses of patriarchal inheritance, specifically that of succession. The crux of the issue is Robert Faulconbridge's unanswered question: "Shall then my father's will be of no force / To dispossess that child which is not his?" (1.1.30-31). Critics are divided with regard to the effect of John's ruling that Philip is a legitimate heir in spite of Sir Robert's will. On the one hand, Rackin asserts that, in demonstrating that the "relationship between father and son is finally no more than a legal fiction," John's ruling against Robert Faulconbridge denies Arthur Plantagenet's claim to the throne on the grounds that blood succession is meaningless because impossible to prove (*Stages* 189). For Robert Lane, on the other hand, "John's decision is contrary to his own title, resting as it did on the will of Richard I" (467). This reading is supported dramatically in the next scene when Elinor's assertion that she can "produce / A will that bars the title of [Arthur Plantagenet]" (2.1.191-2), is countered by Constance's identification of that will as "A wicked will! / A woman's will; a cankered grandam's will!" (2.1.193-4). Contesting the will by implying that Elinor might very well have "produced" it herself, Constance's arguments further undermine the authority of the will through its association with the personal ambitions of a woman. In his ruling on the Faulconbridge will, therefore, John seems to have created for himself something of a conundrum: if, as Rackin argues, blood ties are in the end only a legal fiction, Arthur's claim is groundless;

if, as Lane asserts and John himself confirms, a patriarch's will can be denied, John's own claim to the throne is likewise faulty.³ Lane's reading indicates a potential legal illegitimacy, Rackin's a contradiction at the heart of patriarchal legitimating discourse. Taken together, these readings point to the very problem that defines the play's ruminations on kingship: the possibility that no-one can legitimately be a king, for neither blood succession nor testamentary disposition can fulfil the demands of certainty.

In a pattern which will be repeated in the next scene before the walls of Angiers, the crisis of royal identity will be, at least temporarily, evaded through the subjection of a woman to patriarchal regulation and definition. Sensing perhaps the tactical danger of John's ruling on the will of Sir Robert Faulconbridge, Elinor fills the breach with a name, diverting the question of inheritance with the offer to Philip of a new identity, asking:

Whether hadst thou rather be a Faulconbridge,
And like thy brother, to enjoy thy land,
Or the reputed son of Cordelion
Lord of thy presence and no land beside? (1.1.134-37).

Revealing the efficacy of a well-timed diversionary tactic, this strategy evades confrontation with the twin challenges to John's position: Rackin's formulation of the instability of patriarchal dependence on blood; and the insecurity of the testamentary basis of succession identified by Lane. By renaming Philip Faulconbridge as Bastard, Elinor tactfully removes Philip's claim on the Faulconbridge estate, allowing Sir Robert's will to stand. Succession by blood is also protected for the strategy allows young Robert, the blood heir, to succeed. Everyone, therefore, is satisfied; blood and testament are held in a politically expedient tension. But the implicit question about the legitimacy of testamentary disposition goes unanswered. The question, in other words, is sublimated,

hidden by Elinor's politically astute transfer of the whoreson to new status as Bastard, a shift enabled by the exposure of his mother to public shame and naming as whore.⁴

There is a final important act of renaming that occurs in this scene. Admitting her capitulation to Cordelion's desire, Lady Faulconbridge explicitly identifies herself as a victim of a "long and vehement suit" that was "strongly urged past [her]defense" (1.1.254, 258). Her use of the word "suit" masks the aggression of Cordelion's advances in the language of courtly love, an aggression that is, however, betrayed in the image of a castle besieged by a powerful invading force against which her virtue and married status are no defence. Arguing that this suit and her transgression were really "Subjected tribute to commanding love" (1.1.264), the Bastard attempts to reinscribe her capitulation to Cordelion's advances in the language proper to the obedience of subject to sovereign, thereby granting a certain legitimacy to his own status. While this logic is in some ways an affirmation of his mother's appropriation of reproduction, it also demonstrates how the overriding logic of patriarchy will nevertheless reduce her dangerous transgression to the terms of obedience, will cashier her honour, and write her out of the play (One wonders if the Bastard would be quite so sanguine in his sophistry and assertion of pride and selfhood--"And I am I, howe'er I was got" [1.1.175]--if his blood father were a draper or a steward rather than a king). Lady Faulconbridge's language of defence is entirely at odds with the Bastard's attempt to redefine her "dear offence" (1.1.257) as a subject's due obedience. Through this renaming of the offence, Richard Cordelion--"Against whose fury and unmatched force / the aweless lion could not wage the fight" (1.1.265-6)--escapes censure as an aggressive thief of another man's "property" and appears, rather, as

a true sovereign commanding the due submission of his subject. A victim first of Cordelion's desire, then of the Bastard's ambition, Lady Faulconbridge submits to an enforced exposure that precipitates a chain of evasions of responsibility that succeed at her expense. Her visible exclusion is an equally vehement suit against which she has no defense.

This scene of naming and renaming assuages the anxiety raised by the Bastard's intrusion into the Court: John's identity as king, Robert Faulconbridge's identity as heir, and Philip's identity as Bastard are all stabilized by Lady Faulconbridge's visible exclusion. But this happy stability will not endure; the disruptive potential of femininity that is exorcised in this scene goes underground, only to return as a structural principle that governs the next act. It is this return of the repressed that goes some way to explaining why Lady Faulconbridge appears onstage in this play at all. She arrives *after* her reputation and identity have been coded as adulterous, remains for less than sixty lines of dialogue, and exits never to be seen again. If the fact of her adultery is understood, if she has been figuratively and discursively "exposed" in the differences between Robert Faulconbridge's "five pence" face and the Bastard's knightly one, the question becomes: what is the dramatic function of this appearance in the context of the disarticulation of kingly identity and authority that will comprise the next four acts of the play? The answer to this question is complex, but can be found in the demonstration of royal power that takes place in the following scene. The two scenes are linked by this double rubric of visibility and whoredom. Like any binarism, the wife/whore dichotomy that underwrites masculine identity in the first scene is an unstable exercise of power that will only be

maintained by the application of violence, both discursive and literal. The clashing terms of military assault, seduction and royal prerogative in Lady Faulconbridge's exchange with her son anticipate the next act in which this clash is the prime preoccupation.

III

The gestures of containment in the first scene of the play illustrate the regulative power of the patriarchal gaze to define the terms of identity, albeit precariously, through a process of exposure and erasure. I would like to turn now to the second kind of exposure, that of the penetrative spectacle of royalty, in order to investigate the relationship between these two aspects of the economy of the visible in this play. In the introduction I argue that penetrative spectacle allows the monarch to present her or himself as the unifying principle of the social body, as an embodiment of the territory, populace, history and posterity of the nation. As such, sovereignty unites the symbols of the monarchy and the nation with the corporeal body of its divinely elected representative, the king. If such a mobilization of royal spectacle is successful, it is because the monarch controls the terms of its reception, and assumes an observing subject who will, not so much interpret, but rather become occupied by the demonstrated signs of power in such a way that the subject becomes an effect of sovereignty's spectacular presence. I use the word *occupy* here purposely to allude to its double connotation, as Doll Tearsheet informs us in *2 Henry IV* (2.4.134-5), of "inhabit" and "fornicate," for in this bawdy context the word highlights the sexualized, and therefore dangerous, nature of sovereign spectacle.

What I am mapping here is a reversed image of the structure of power that operates in the Faulconbridge episode. In royal spectacle, power rests in the demonstrating, penetrative presence of the monarch; the observer, the passive receptacle, can only *reproduce* that sovereign intent, and is therefore structurally feminized. In the Faulconbridge episode, however, it is the gazer, in this case a masculine one, on whom the power to define the terms of the exposed subject's identity is conferred; it is in the observing eye that power rests in that scene. Lady Faulconbridge is brought before us as an object lesson in the relationship among power, visibility and knowledge, and her fate instructs the audience how to read the structure of this relationship. There is significance, therefore, in the fact that *we* witness the object lesson but John does not, for what we see in this enactment of visible exclusion is the danger inherent to visibility itself. In being cast as an adulteress, Lady Faulconbridge submits to a particular form of gendering that associates being the *object* of the gaze with a disempowering feminization, specifically with whoredom. In this explicit gendering, Lady Faulconbridge becomes an illustrative type for John, who, in the next scene, is himself exposed, not as a demonstrating "master signifier of intelligibility," but as an object of a defining, delegitimizing gaze.

Set before the barred gates of the town of Angiers, 2.1 opens with an exchange in which each of the two Queen Mothers, Constance and Elinor, asserts her son's claim to the English crown. Seeking to discredit the opposing claim, each woman accuses the other of whoring and producing a bastard pretender to the throne. The majority of what follows is a battle between England's dubious King John and King Philip of France for the acknowledgement of the citizens of Angiers, who, faced with two claims to the crown,

resist rhetorical assertions of legitimacy and demand visible proof. Appealing to his authority as king, John asks, "Doth not the crown of England prove the king?" (2.1.273). The Citizen's answer-- that it is not the crown that is at issue, but who may rightfully embody that symbolic power--severs the connection between title and person that is so insistently asserted in Elizabethan spectacle. After a battle that ends in a draw, both the French and the English claim victory. The Citizen, seeing "Strength matched with strength, and power confronted with power" (2.1.330), denies the claims of both rivals and refuses them entry, "until our fears, resolved, / Be by some certain king purged and deposed" (2.1.371-2).

John's task before the walls of Angiers is to consolidate his identity as king, to make his *self* identical with the crown as a legitimate embodiment of kingship. The emphasis in the scene, however, is on the viewer, the Citizen of Angiers whose refusal to allow the town to become part of John's social body disrupts John's spectacular demonstration of self-sufficient authority. That this scene is staged as a site of seeing is made clear by the positioning of the Citizen on the walls above the "theatre" of battle, where "from off our towers we might behold, / From first to last" the conflict between the English and French contenders to the throne (2.1.325-6). Virginia M. Vaughan notes also that the structure of Shakespeare's theatre itself would have contributed to the sense of surveillance in this scene, since the "scaffolding on the battlements [of Angiers] is really scaffolding in the theater, and citizens in the audience stand as citizens of Angiers" (68). The effect is heightened because the battles occur offstage, making the act of witnessing those feats itself a dramatic event that supersedes the battles in importance. Protesting

John's continuing debate with the Citizen, the Bastard invokes the image of the stage, and, in doing so, also warns of the dangers of allowing the shift of power from the actor to the audience, stating:

By heaven, these scroyles of Angiers flout you, kings,
And stand securely on their battlements
As in a theater, whence they gape and point
At your industrious scenes and acts of death. (2.1.373-6)

As in Claudius's wedding speech in *Hamlet*, or the coronation of Anne Bullen in *Henry VIII*, this emphasis on the viewing eye interrupts the spectacle demonstration of authority, for the town's "best eyes" cannot determine whose violence will "depose" their fears. Nor can our own "best eyes" in the audience form an opinion, for the sight of battle has been replaced for us by the site of seeing. The Citizen holds the town, then, "for neither, yet for both" (2.1.333), and our judgement, too, is suspended.⁵

John is unable to control the terms of his own spectacular presentation, and, much to the Bastard's disgust, his demonstration of power becomes instead a solicitation of favour articulated in the language of pageantry. Barbara H. Traister bases much of her argument for John's personal, rather than institutional, style of rule on the absence of explicit ceremony, such as, for example, "formal battle scenes" (92). While I am inclined to agree with her reading of John's tendency to rule by the strength of personality and individual relationships, I find that the absence of "formal" battle scenes only reinforces the theatrical--one might go so far as to say, ceremonial--character of the dispute between the two armies. The absence of formal ritual that Traister notes demonstrates a displacement of ceremony to alternative sites, where ceremony becomes visible as "mere" playing. For example, the long descriptions of the battle offered by both the English and French heralds

echo the prologues and epilogues of contemporary dramas, which, while they often censure the critics, also seek to win their favour by offering the audience guidelines for right interpretation.⁶ The heralds' descriptions of "dancing banners / ...triumphantly displayed" (2.1.308-9) and "armors... / gilt with Frenchmen's blood" (2.1.315-16), serve, not to inform the audience of what has happened off stage (for their accounts are contradictory and quite empty of actual information), but to instruct the Citizen how to read the evidence, not in absolute terms of bodies slain, but in terms of a symbolically forceful spectacular rhetoric. The emphasis on "colors," silvered armor, purpled hands, "plumes" and "banners" shifts the tenor of the speeches from narration to description, from the action of battle to the rhetoric of display. The mutually contradictory claims of victory arrive virtually together, aligning us with the Citizen, suspended between balanced speeches that, with similar content and identical form, simultaneously solicit our support and make the choice difficult, if not impossible. Appealing to convention of the prologue, the heralds' speeches reinforce the theatricality that the Bastard sees as a crucial factor in John's humiliation and loss of authority, for, unlike the ideal of sovereign display, theatrical spectacles, even Jonson admits, "*Are not to please the cook's taste, but the guests*" (*Epicoene*, Prologue 9).

The choice between martial contenders is made even more difficult because of the context of whoredom that is established in the first scene and carries over into this one. It is at this moment of solicitation that the whore makes her return as a structural principle, for, as Joseph Lenz has noted, theatrical spectacle was metaphorically and materially linked in Shakespeare's time to prostitution: "Both the actor and the prostitute perform

'with a lewde intent of committing whoredome,' of beguiling the client with a simulated (but nonetheless stimulating) experience" (840). If, on the one hand as Lenz argues, the observing subject is feminized by the penetrating spectacle, "he" is also seduced by the "effeminate gesture and costly apparel" of the actor (841); and if the "sensory experience of the theatre climaxes in carnality and effeminacy" (851), it is the actor, who, like the whore, is the ground of that experience in a context of the trade of the body for money. Set in a theatrical frame of "industrious scenes and acts of death," the action before Angiers, permeated as it is with the language of bawdry, dramatizes a reductive gendering structurally similar to the exposure of Lady Faulconbridge to the defining masculine gaze, for John is cast as an actor/whore soliciting the gaze and approval of the resisting audience. Just as Lady Faulconbridge's delegitimization derives from an enforced exposure to the defining gaze, John's industrious acts, which should ideally function as demonstration, are coded as an equally enforced exposure to the sceptical gaze of the Citizen. The Citizen's demand for proof is but the first in a series of challenges that rupture penetrative spectacle. The shift from the site of demonstration to the site of seeing reveals the gap between the crown and John himself as its representative: the association of the theatre with duplicity, masks and illusions, grounds John's attempted consolidation of identity in a discourse of impersonation. Wearing the crown, but unable to wield its power, John appears as an actor adorned in the hand-me-down raiment of the gentry. Often critiqued for its breach of sumptuary regulation, the theatre reveals the spectacle of status to be theatrical, insofar as status can be aped in the transferable signs of its clothes. As an actor and a usurper, John struggles with a royal spectacle of self that is

divested of its authorizing function by the revelation that it is "merely" theatrical. The crown, then, becomes a "prop" and, as such, does not in fact prove the king, but becomes, rather, a marker of this gap, a signifier of absence and instability.

In a turn of events already familiar to the audience from the opening scene, the impasse is broken by a kind of question-begging strategy of renaming: the marriage of John's niece, Blanch, to Lewis, the French Dauphin, apparently resolves the question of John's legitimacy. With the union of Blanch and Lewis, King Philip betrays his commitment to Constance in favour of a more expedient and powerful alliance with England and King John. The Citizen of Angiers, seeking to protect the town from what amounts to an act of violent penetration strongly urged past his defence, substitutes Blanch's literal maidenhead for the town's figurative one. However, this provisional closure does not escape the structure of whoredom that subtends the scene, but rather inscribes it in a different form, for the political alliance effected by the exchange of a woman is continuous with the accusations of whoring and bastardy that open the scene. In the seldom performed exchange between the two mothers, Elinor says to Constance: "Thy bastard shall be king / That thou mayst be a queen and check the world!" (2.1.122-3). In the punning association of "queen," as in ruler, with "quean," as in whore, "queen" as a title of power alludes to the whore that forms the structural principle of the scene as a whole.⁷ The scene closes with the Bastard's disgusted musings about "commodity," "This bawd, this broker, this all-changing word," which can turn kings "From a resolved and honorable war,/ to a most base and vile-concluded peace" (2.1.582-5). The Bastard,

himself a visible sign of adultery, explicitly connects in this closing speech the exchange of a woman in political alliance with a self-interest akin to pandering.

While the alliance saves the town of Angiers from destruction, the question of John's legitimacy, like the question of the will, remains unanswered. The power of the effeminating gaze which, in the Faulconbridge episode defines the identity of the woman and thereby stabilizes the patriarchal genealogical hierarchy, is in this scene turned on the king himself, resulting in a fracturing of John's identity *as king* by associating that identity with a delegitimized category of whoredom. In effect, his power to define himself in spectacular demonstration is displaced, first onto the Citizen, with his infuriating resistance to rhetoric, and then onto Blanch, whose body would ideally stabilize the relations between the warring states and thereby consolidate John's royal identity. Framed, however, by the accusations of whoring that open the scene, and the discourse on political self-interest at its close, the appeal to the female body as commodity is at best question-begging; the exchange of Blanch's "chaste" body, like John's own, is contaminated by its association with whoredom and bawdry.

IV

As niece of the English, wife of the French, Blanch is trapped between the warring factions, and laments her untenable position, articulating the consequences of this fragmentation of royal authority as they are played out in the social body: "Each army hath a hand,/ And in their rage, I having hold of both, / They whirl apart and dismember me" (3.1.28-30). This dismemberment is part of the typical iconography of the

Elizabethan stage. As Leonard Tennenhouse observes, in the context of corporate monarchical embodiment, violence done to the aristocratic female body represents a radical dismemberment of the state ("Violence" 83). Barker finds a similar congruence of body and state in *King Lear*, where the division of the realm precipitates the madness of king and the disfigurement of the gentry (33). The interruption of sovereign demonstration caused by the obstinacy of the Citizen problematizes the reading of the "master signifier," the king, and precipitates a "disarticulation of reality" figured repeatedly in the play as mutilation. Revealed to be "merely" playing, John struggles for legitimacy, and his identity crisis has very real consequences for the men and women upon whose bodies that struggle is inscribed.

If the crown is not sufficient proof of royal authority, says John, there are "Twice fifteen thousand" soldiers present on the battlefield to "verify" his claim to the throne "with their lives" (2.1.275, 277). Philip of France, too, will "Wade to the market-place in Frenchmen's blood" (2.1.42) in order to win Angiers for his English allies, Constance and her son, Arthur. However much that later king, Henry V, might hope to deny it, "when all those legs and arms and heads, chopped off in a battle . . . cry all 'We died at such a place'" (*Henry V* 4.1.128-31), in the context of the metaphor of the social body, they are the king's legs and arms and heads, chopped off in an act of self-mutilation. It is, after all, *Frenchmen's* blood through which Philip of France vows to wade, and the French soldiers who John's army kills, if his assertion of identity as their rightful monarch is valid, are the members of John's own body politic. The voices crying all for a hearing at doomsday indicate with their earthy eloquence at many important junctures in Shakespeare's martial

dramas a disturbance of this metaphor of social embodiment, for the parts and fragments of the social body, the limbs and spleens, as it were, are given voice, protesting their mobilization in a battle that is for them far from simply metaphorically dismembering.

The presence of Lady Faulconbridge on stage in the first scene embodies for us the consequences of the ruthlessness of the forces that govern the world of the play, for, just as Philip charismatically cashiers his mother's honour for the honour of a knighthood, the treacheries and betrayals that characterize the bulk of the play repeatedly turn on the destruction of those whose stake in these forces is great, but whose ability to influence them is small. In this sense Lady Faulconbridge is linked to, and prepares the ground for, the more explicitly violent psychic rending experienced later in the play by Blanch and Constance, and she also becomes a named, identifiable representative of the thousands of un-seen, un-named soldiers whose bodies will be destroyed and aestheticized in the pageantry of the "theatre" of war. She represents mute bodies in *King John* who figuratively stand on the field of battle, visible to the Citizen but not to us, speaking in their own way of the gap that John works hard to mend, for it is with their lives that the question of his identity with the symbolic force of the crown will be resolved. Faced with a vehement suit strongly urged past their defense, they will fill this gap with the silent, heavy mass of their bodies, leaving a scar which, like the exposure and exclusion of the wife/whore, both hides a wound and visibly marks it.

Fulfilling a similar role as representative of the greater context of violent dismemberment in the play is young Arthur Plantagenet, and the nature of this violence--the putting out of his eyes with a hot iron--is a particularly interesting incidence of the

relationship between visibility and the breakdown of the spectacular rhetoric of power.

The circumstances surrounding John's order for mutilation and murder resonate with the anxiety precipitated by this breakdown. John's circumlocution in his attempt to broach the subject of murder with Hubert is characterized by his desire to avoid the particular contradictions of the visible economy:

Or if thou couldst see me without eyes,
Hear me without thine ears, and make reply
Without a tongue, using conceit alone,
Without eyes, ears, and harmful sound of words;
Then, in despite of brooded watchful day,
I would into thy bosom pour my thoughts.

(3.3.48-53)

Speaking in the first person singular instead of using the royal "we," John hopes to circumvent the visibility of majesty by avoiding even words, which are public and subject to interpretation and censure. This determination to avoid signs is reflected in the order to blind Arthur before the child is executed. In addition to providing pathos and shifting the audience's sympathies away from the king who is now on the downward turn of Fortune's wheel, this scene represents John's attempt to control the threat represented to his position by sight itself. In the tradition of *lex talonis*, the blinding of Arthur is symbolic of his "crime," which is not only, as Arthur asserts, that of being Geoffrey's son (4.1.22).

Rather, Arthur is a representative in John's mind of the forces that reduce John to the humiliating extreme of soliciting the approval of his subjects. The symbolic blinding is part of the iconography of retribution: like the counterfeiters hung or pilloried with the instruments of their crimes about their necks, or the thieves whose hands are struck off before hanging, Arthur must be blinded in order to signal John's triumph over the obstinate

gaze. In this instance, however, such iconography slips out of the register of justice and into that of revenge, for this execution is not a public spectacle that affirms royal power or that performs an exemplary function to warn wrongdoers of the unassailable and unfailing right of the king to enact the laws of the land. This hugger-mugger affair, repugnant even to the executioners themselves, reveals in the slippage of its symbolism the depth of John's inability to legitimate his own claims to the symbolism and power of monarchy.

Even having changed his mind, John cannot escape the consequences of this failure. Like the spectre of Lady Faulconbridge entering post-haste after she has been erased, Arthur, too, will come back to haunt John with the knowledge that he cannot escape the contradictions of his position: Arthur's body, found by the rebelling peers at the foot of the prison wall, indicts John's intentions of murder if not the act. As Salisbury asserts: "Murder, as hating what himself hath done, / Doth lay it open to urge revenge" (4.3.37-8). Confirming their suspicions, this sign affirms the nobles' decision to abandon John for the Dauphin, sealing that new pact with a vow impressed with the image of the dead prince, a sign as damning as John's signature on the warrant of execution. Their desertion marks a further mutilation of the body politic.

V

The state of usurpation in *King John* produces a wound that will not heal, or if it does heal, it produces a scar that ensures that the wound cannot be forgotten. And so John must be crowned again and again in this play--and with each repetition the gap

between the symbolic power of the crown and the nominal king is widened. John's ceremonial recrowning in 4.2, as Pembroke observes:

Doth make the fault the worse by the excuse
As patches set upon a little breach
Discredit more in the hiding of the fault
Than did the fault before it was so patched. (4.2.31-34)

Again, Traister's notice of the absence of ceremony in the play is germane, for, in this scene, we see, not the coronation with its assertive symbolism of power, but rather the sceptical responses of the observers; like the recrowning at the hands of the papal representative two scenes later, this coronation becomes an ironic commentary on John's steadily eroding position.⁸ Trapped by the contradictions of the spectacle surface, John's identity is repeatedly undermined at the moments when he attempts most forcefully to assert himself. In each case, the ground of the consolidation of his identity as a legitimate ruler is also the site of its dissipation.

The contradictions encompassed by the economy of the visible in this play provoke a crisis at the heart of the discourse of the social body, for Shakespeare's dramatization of the site of seeing makes explicit the power of the observing subject to resist incorporation in the king's conceit of embodiment. For Lane, the presentation of the Citizens as arbiters of succession demonstrates Shakespeare's advocacy of popular voice and critical judgement. "In so doing," Lane continues "[Shakespeare] constitutes the theater as a deliberative forum where that judgement can be stimulated and nurtured" (464). If there is such an advocacy of a form of republican feeling in this play, however, is of a very ambivalent nature. The Citizen's "solution" to the dilemma of sovereignty is a diversionary tactic acted out in the face of absolute destruction, and, more importantly leads, not to

peace, but to greater violence when Lewis pursues the English throne in his new wife's name. Furthermore, if Arthur, one representative of the chorus of opposition to John's position, does not lose his eyes in retribution for the broader crisis of visibility inaugurated by his claim by blood, it is only because Hubert is less of a Machiavel than John demands. Repeatedly in this play the collapse of royal spectacular power results in the psychic and physical mutilation of the subjects who make up the social body; the toppling of the king does not inaugurate an age of the people. It is, after all, not kingship or the ceremony of coronation that the nobles critique when John has himself recrowned, but the potential for that "antique and well noted face / Of plain old form" to become "disfigurèd," opening the language of power to interrogation that "Makes sound opinion sick and truth suspected" (4.3.21-7).⁹ John's inability to deploy spectacle demonstration in the context of usurpation reinforces by comparison the legitimacy and authority of spectacular power in its ideal form. In this sense, the play is on one level nostalgic for an age of certainty, where the king's presence could ensure the kind of unity and sense of place and order promised by the metaphor of the social body.

Lurking beneath this nostalgia, however, like the language of whoredom, is a realization that this golden age does not exist, for the certainty of succession that in many ways solidifies sovereign authority is always potentially disrupted by the unknowable, occulted spaces of feminine sexuality. In this play, the two aspects of the visible economy, each of which expresses the desire to consolidate identity, clash with violent results. Even within the conservative frame of the play, with its nostalgic adherence to the antique face of ceremony, the very terms of spectacular demonstration are repeatedly shown to be

fraught with contradiction. In other words, the process of consolidating masculine identity in this play invests the gazer with the very power that is denied in penetrative spectacle; caught at the intersection of these two incommensurate forms of exposure, John becomes a Player-King whose tenuous grip on the authority of kingship is weakened at every turn. Like Lady Faulconbridge, he arrives onstage only to begin the long process of his erasure, culminating in the end with an ignominious death by poisoning.

In this doubled structure of (dis)appearance, the play enacts a disarticulation of social identity which may find in usurpation its immediate cause, but which is grounded in tensions within a governing metaphor of spectacular identity itself. Collapsing the necessary distinction between royal spectacle and theatrical representation, Shakespeare reveals royal self-sufficiency to be a conceit. As the power of the "master signifier" begins to erode, the social body becomes chaotic; as martial prowess is revealed before Angiers to be "merely" theatrical, violence erupts that both figuratively and literally tears subjects to pieces. But these wounds, unlike the scars that tell a heroic tale of national sacrifice and triumph in Henry V's St. Crispin's Day speech, instead mark a site of contradiction in the metaphor of social embodiment. An excessive presence, "the" body, like Lady Faulconbridge, or Arthur, returns again and again in the histories as a spectre of disruption that qualifies the plays' apparently conservative agenda. As Jonathan Dollimore observes, the "subversive knowledge" (re)presented by these disarticulated bodies, "emerges under the pressure of contradictions in the dominant ideology which also fissure subjectivity; the subjects who embody, discover or convey this knowledge are often thereby stretched across social and psychic contradictions that literally destroy them" ("Understudies" 141).

Blanch is one such subject, for she is cast as both wife and whore, a contradiction that emotionally dismembers her. Lady Faulconbridge is another, for the stabilization of the social hierarchy represented by her visible exclusion in the first scene of *King John*, sets the stage for the radical destabilization of that system in the next scene. The increasing fragmentation of John's identity is inextricably linked to the disintegration of the idealized wholeness of the social body--twice fifteen thousand men face death, and marketplaces are figuratively awash in Frenchmen's blood. The more insistently the king is shown to be "merely" playing, the more real is the pain his subjects feel.

Notes

1. For detailed discussion of the Shakespeare's *King John* as a political allegory of the Elizabethan succession debate, see Robert Lane. For a succinct articulation of the Stuart and Suffolk arguments and the contradictory uses made of John's succession see Marie Axton (25-32).

2. I use the term "whore," in this context to refer neither to manifest whores (of which there are none in the play), nor to the women who ply their trade on the street, but rather to a site of derogation, delegitimization and contestation.

3. For Rackin, reading the Faulconbridge episode as a thematic mirror of the questions surrounding John's legitimacy as king, succession and inheritance are commensurate. For Lane, reading the play as a legal allegory of the debates surrounding Henry VIII's own testamentary disposition of the Crown to the Suffolks and the Stuarts' contestation of that act, the conflation of succession and inheritance is a more problematic one of mutually exclusive options. The issue as Lane conceives it is the question of "to what extent should the prince be able to dispose of the Crown as if it were his/her own property, thereby superseding the historically sanctioned rules of succession?" (467). By this logic, John, as one who received the crown by testamentary disposition may be the *heir*, but not, perhaps, the *successor*.

4. The excessive nature of femininity is only partially contained by the power of the masculine gaze to expose and to define. Consider, for example, the identification of the gentlewoman-as-adulteress within the reductive dichotomy of virtue and vice. Such an identification tends to elide an important class difference, for the woman of the petty nobility will have little in common with the punk selling her body in poverty. In its attempt to regulate gender, the dichotomizing desire of the masculine gaze collapses distinctions of class. If the gentility of the noble woman is in part consolidated by the abject poverty of the punk, to name the gentlewoman "whore," therefore, is to open the door to a linguistic infiltration of the gentle classes by the low-class connotations of prostitution. The Bastard threatens to actualize this discursive infiltration when he asserts that, a knight in name, he can "make any Joan a lady" (1.1.184). Such an infiltration can be illustrated as well in a slightly different context by the case of the Renaissance courtesan, who, with her education, wealth and social connections, complicates class categories based on these defining qualities. It is this contamination of the outward appearance of gentility by actual "unchaste" behaviour that helps to work Stubbes into puritan fury and fuels his vituperative attack on those women who maintain themselves by whoredom, "and yet go clothed Gentlewomanlike" (Stubbes, "Sumptuous Attyr," n.pag.). Stubbes, always ready to police the borders between ranks, equates true gentility with feminine chastity, and protests the permeability of the categories of this hierarchy.

5. For a more extended discussion of the role of the Citizens as arbitrators, both in the play and its greater social context, see Robert Lane (464 *passim*). Like Lane, I acknowledge the disruptive power of the Citizen's powers of arbitration. Unlike him, however, I am more sceptical of the extent and positive effect of that power, as I will argue below.

6. Consider, for example, Jonson's second prologue to *Epicoene*, a response to speculation on the part of James I's cousin, Arabella Stuart, that Jonson alluded to her in Act 5 of the play. Poets write fiction, Jonson asserts, and

*If any yet will, with particular sleight
Of application, wrest what he doth write,
And that he meant of him or her, will say;
They make a libel, which he made a play.*
("Occasioned By Some Person's Impertinent Exception" 11-14)

The response of powerful audience members to his play evidently led to trouble for Jonson, and demonstrates the precariousness of the relationship of spectacle to audience approbation. Attempting to stabilize the relationship (and to save himself from further harassment), Jonson offers the audience guidelines for proper interpretation.

7. Elinor's allusion to chess in the word, "check," both highlights the notion that the kings are involved in a game and the idea that it is the queens who have the real power, for, while the king is the target of the opposing army, he can only move one square; the queen, on the other hand, can move freely all over the board. Elinor suggests that Constance's free movement, as a loose woman and producer of bastards, is the source of her destructive ambition.

8. Traister observes that John's coronation by the papal legate, which is the one formal ritual we actually see, "is an embarrassing one, lasting only a few lines and witnessed only by 'Attendants'" (92). The scene is an ambivalent one, for, while it does demonstrate once again John's eroding power, the "maimed rites" of the coronation, which go unwitnessed by either the populace or any officials of note, also allow Shakespeare to undermine for his Reformation audience the official spectacular power of the capitulation to the Pope. This capitulation is obviously a politically motivated act on John's part, and there is no indication in the lines that he admits anything but the fact that civil strife makes it impossible for him to deal also with religiously inspired foreign invasion. In this way, the scene does double duty, both making a dramatic point about the fall of the represented king, and slyly (although only partially) recuperating the legend of resistance associated with the historical king.

9. The fact that Shakespeare makes Arthur's death, rather than the peers' resentment of John's powers as king (a resentment to which Magna Carta testifies and attempts to assuage), the source of their rebellion, and the absence of any discussion of

Magna Carta in the play suggests that monarchy itself is not under attack here by nascent republican interests. It is not kingship the nobles seek to replace, but the king himself. This is itself a line of thought, however, that threatens the institution of kingship, for the model of the King's two bodies does not allow for such a division (except, perhaps, from the point of view of 1649).

Chapter Two

No Rainbow Without the Sun: Visibility and Embodiment in *1 Henry VI*

Sirs, take your places and be vigilant.
(*1 Henry VI*, 2.1.1)

In *King John*, the division between the sovereign subject and the object of the gaze is uncertain, for John, displayed in penetrative spectacle, becomes the object of a disempowering gaze that both feminizes him and makes it impossible for him to consolidate his identity as king. Like *King John*, *1 Henry VI* also problematizes the strict division between the subject of the gaze and its object. Following from this fundamental disturbance in the visible economy is a collapse of the carefully managed binary oppositions that are the ground of English identity, power and knowledge. In the discussion of *1 Henry VI* that will occupy our attention here, I wish to consider the ways in which the economy of the visible complicates what Phyllis Rackin has identified as a governing contest in the play "between English *words* and French *things*, between the historical record that Talbot wishes to preserve and the physical reality that Joan invokes to discredit it" (*Stages* 151, Rackin's emphasis). In *King John* the state of usurpation

reveals the contradictions of the visible economy manifested in a collapse of the spectacular language of power and a concomitant dismemberment of the social body; in *Henry VI*, it is abdication that occasions this confrontation with contradiction. Here, where English heroic, national, and masculine identity depends upon the demonization of the French as carnal and feminine, the dichotomization of English and French, words and things, the ideal and the corporeal is continually breaking down. Because this dualistic model is posited as the ground of knowledge and power, the collapse of difference precipitates a crisis.

This crisis may be described as a problem of perspective. The rapidly developing artistic science of Shakespeare's day offered a paradoxical mix of true, full and realistic mastery of representational space and an awareness of the limitations of this mastery, for, as Ernest Gilman observes, "the very fullness and definition of perspective space implies the radical incompleteness of our vision, and the point of view becomes a drastic limitation, a set of blinders, as well as an epistemological privilege" (Gilman 31). In her discussion of this dynamic in her book, *Staging the Gaze*, Barbara Freedman has identified this epistemological conceit as "spectator consciousness," a model based on an observer who "stands outside of what she sees in a definite position of mastery over it" (9). This model of the gaze acknowledges the doubled nature of the dynamic, as Jean Gebser argues: "Perspectival vision and thought confine us within spatial limitations The

positive result is the con[c]retion of man [sic] and space; the negative result is the restriction of man to a limited segment where he perceives only one sector of reality" (18). Such a model introduces a peculiar sense of crisis to spectatorship, for the conceit of spectator consciousness implies a destabilizing of the subject/object relationship. In the Preface to *The Order of Things*, in which Foucault analyses Velasques' *Las Meninas*, we find an example of this dynamic. In the painting we see the painter, standing in front of his canvas, looking at the model of his painting who is beyond the frame of the work. The painter has stepped out from in front of the represented canvas in order to see his model: "He is staring at a point to which, even though it is invisible, we, the spectators, can easily assign an object, since it is we, ourselves, who are at that point: our bodies, our faces, our eyes" (4).

Staging the return of the gaze in this way, the painting exemplifies the vulnerability of the visual mastery integral to sovereign spectacle. The penetrative nature of sovereign spectacle is always, as I have demonstrated in the preceding chapter, threatened by its objectification. It is this instability that makes this kind of display a volatile site. Like sovereign spectacle, spectator consciousness enshrines the gazer as a sovereign presence, the absolute origin of order and power within the painting's illusionistic world. In fact, in *Las Meninas*, we can see "ourselves," the painter's models, in a mirror within the painting: we are the king and queen whose presence is the occasion of the painter's unseen work of

art. We are, in our usurped kingly identities, the object of the painter's gaze. The two positions of mastery, penetrative spectacle and spectator consciousness, are both grounded in a fundamental elision of the self as object of the gaze.¹ As observers, we imagine that we are the gazing subjects, but this painting challenges this assumption, for, "[a]s soon as they place the spectator in the field of their gaze, the painter's eyes seize hold of him, force him to enter the picture, assign him a place at once privileged and inescapable, levy their luminous and visible tribute from him, and project it upon the inaccessible surface of the canvas within the picture" (5). In the dynamic of *Las Meninas*, Foucault argues, "[n]o gaze is stable, or rather, in the neutral furrow of the gaze piercing at a right angle through the canvas, subject and object, the spectator and the model, reverse their roles to infinity" (5). Caught in this circuit of the gaze, the observer and the painter who looks back from the painting both assert the power to own and to know the image before them; at the same time, each gesture of scopic mastery is revealed to be the object of another. We are captured by the represented painter's canvas and by the painting's design even as we "grasp" its meaning in the act of observation.

It is this circuit of the gaze that to a degree characterizes the theatrical space of Shakespeare's stage, where the audience and the actors stand under the same light, and where, when the house is full, there are at least three thousand points-of-view for the drama enacted on the stage. In *1 Henry VI*, Shakespeare exploits the instability of the

gaze as audiences, both onstage and off, play a witness's role that is woven even into the metaphorical and philosophical fabric of the drama. The world in which *I Henry VI* takes place is a world evacuated of its all-seeing sovereign gaze, a world that has fallen, as it were, into perspective. Phyllis Rackin observes a similar structure in terms of historiography in Shakespeare's second tetralogy, which she identifies as a "fall into time" in a "postlapsarian world": "The linear, causal structure of *Richard II* is replaced in the Henry IV plays by a proliferation of subplots that cannot be subsumed under the temporal principle of teleology; instead, they are tenuously connected by the spatial principles of analogy, parody, contrast, and juxtaposition" (*Stages* 136-37). Such a shift is analogous to the fall into perspective that *I Henry VI* explores, where such spatial relationships reflect the fracturing of a unitary vision into overlapping, fragmentary, and contestatory *loci* of sight. As such, the play is plagued by the blindnesses peculiar to spectator consciousness. Repeatedly, characters on both sides of the conflict take up positions of visual mastery only to find themselves subject to a fatal blindness: certain of their privilege as gazers, they do not put themselves into the picture, they do not recognize themselves as objects, and they do not account for the dangers of either the return of the gaze or the limited scope and contrived reality of perspectival vision. Grounded in this precarious relation between the subject and the object of the gaze, English identity and the hierarchies that subtend it are destabilized as the difference between the self and the Other is proved

to be a fiction. The violence that begins in this play and escalates in the following three plays of the tetralogy is to a great extent a product of the attempt on the part of the English to maintain this fiction.

II

When, in his death throes aflame with fever, King John upbraids his subjects because none of them will "bid winter come / To thrust his icy fingers in my maw, / Nor let my kingdom's rivers take their course / Through my burned bosom" (*King John*, 5.7.36-39), he is expressing in his final speeches the desire that has consumed him throughout the play: to become one with his kingdom, to embody its territory, people and spirit as rightful King. Seeing himself at last as "a clod / and module of confounded royalty" (5.7.57-8), he dies, leaving his subjects behind to offer him a brief eulogy and, a scarce 36 lines later, to pledge allegiance to the new king, John's son, Henry III. The king is dead. (In the absence of any living contenders to pop in between the Prince's election and the crown) Long live the king.

In this final scene we witness the enactment of a ceremony, now a familiar one in the procession of dead kings and living successors. Although in his dramatic dilation on the moment of succession Shakespeare transplants this tradition to John's era, Ernst Kantorowicz locates the first significant use of the formula, "Le Roi est mort. Vive le

Roi," to the accession of Henry VI. Henry V and Charles of France died within months of each other, and the Duke of Bedford raced to proclaim Henry's infant heir king of England and of France before the adult Dauphin could claim the Crown of France for himself. In this moment of crisis, the cry, "The king is dead! Long live the King!" is designed to permit no interregnum, no gap in the continuity of royal claims to territory and power (411-12). The ceremony purports to remove any doubt, permitting the new king seamlessly to take up the space vacated by the old; death gives way to life, funeral to coronation in a process carefully managed to assert their difference (the king is dead; the living takes his place), while making the transition as smooth as breathing (long live the King, a power and presence which never dies). In avoiding the kind of crisis that characterizes John's reign as Shakespeare represents it, this ceremony links together funeral and coronation in order to make the certainty of succession visible. There is no room in this ceremony for the Citizen of Angiers' assertion that he will swear allegiance to "the King of England, *when we know the king*" (*King John* 2.1.363, my emphasis).

The ceremony of the closing scene of *King John*, which enacts succession in funeral and oaths of fealty to the new king, finds its counterpart in the first scene of *Henry VI*. In this case, however, between the lamentations over the hearse of the dead monarch and Gloucester's declared intention to "proclaim young Henry king" (1.1.169) there intervene 169 lines concerned with praise for the king that was, news of foreign

massacre, and the outbreak of civil broils. In the space between "The king is dead" and "Long live the king" the defining constellations of the play are mapped out with efficiency. With his opening speech lamenting the loss of "King Henry the Fifth, too famous to live long!" (1.1.6), Bedford launches nearly 60 lines of praise for the dead king (with a short intermission for an exchange of spleen between Winchester and Gloucester). Occupying over 25% of a scene which covers as much ground as this one--from establishing the animosity between the Bishop and the Protector, to the loss of seven French cities and the chief English hero, to preparations for war and a coronation--such a eulogy for the old king leaves precious little space for the new. The absence of Henry V, signalled by his body inhearsed on stage, represents the physical, political and conceptual absence of his son, who makes no appearance until Act three, who, with only 157 lines out of a possible 2670, speaks a mere 6% of the play that bears his name, and whose speech, when we finally hear it, is invariably characterized by wheedling, deference, and disastrous misunderstanding. When he is mentioned at all in this scene, young Henry is an "effeminate prince" (1.1.35) offered up as an object of the peers' ambitious jarring. That the king is dead is loudly proclaimed. That a new king has taken his place is barely whispered.

Dominating the conceptual space of the scene, Henry V's body, memory, fame and loss emphasize the impossible standards set for the young king whose physical absence is

indicative of a political vacuum that enables factionalism to flourish where monologic power should reign. Unlike John or the young king, Henry V is presented as the ideal embodiment of the penetrative spectacle of power:

England ne'er had a king until his time.
 Virtue he had, deserving to command;
 His brandished sword did blind men with his beams;
 His arms spread wider than a dragon's wings;
 His sparkling eyes, replete with wrathful fire,
 More dazzled and drove back his enemies
 Than midday sun fierce bent against their faces.
 What should I say? His deeds exceed all speech.
 He ne'er lift up his hand but conquerèd. (1.1.8-16)

Positioned as the model of kingship, Henry V, according to Gloucester's speech, both sets and controls the terms and conditions of the visible and of his spectacular presentation. His eyes are both the receptors and the source of penetrating light that "dazzles" his enemies, depriving them of sight and monopolizing for himself the privileged perspective, a dragon's wing vantage that encompasses all. Vision conjoined to the sword, the image of Henry's "sparkling eyes, replete with wrathful fire," yokes together knowledge and violence in a powerful act of seeing that "[drives] back his enemies" like "midday sun fierce bent against their faces." With these accolades, Shakespeare is mobilizing familiar Elizabethan imagery of sovereign power.

The most famous representation of Queen Elizabeth, Isaac Oliver's *Rainbow Portrait*, encapsulates a whole mythology from which Shakespeare draws in this speech.

In her hand the Queen holds the rainbow, the symbol of peace; on her sleeve is a snake, symbolic of knowledge; on her dress are multiple eyes, ears and mouths, referring to her prodigious network of spies. Typical in its lack of reference to the real, actual person of the Queen, with its flattened features and its fascination with the iconography of costume, this portrait declares that what we see is not Elizabeth, but her power and Office, not her openness to our gaze, but her ability to see *us*, completely. The eyes in this, as in other depictions of the Virgin Queen, are dark and piercing, and are the most arresting aspect of this unearthly representation. In its iconography, the painting reverses the relationship of the observer (us) to object (the painting and, through it, the Queen), a reversal that is integral to the penetrative spectacle of power. In reading the iconographic language of the portrait, we as gazers are redefined as objects before a gaze; the very act of reading the portrait challenges what, in the instance of John's display before Angiers for example, is a position of visual mastery over the image of monarchical self-display. The portrait exemplifies what is for Christopher Pye "the exquisitely dissecting gaze" of Elizabeth I, "as it 'pearse[s]' and lays bare every artery and vein [and] mimes the force that dismembers, eviscerates, and exposes all in the ceremony of punishment" (*Regal Phantasm* 139). Like Elizabeth's "dissecting gaze," Henry's eyes, "replete with wrathful fire," have the power to enact violence upon the bodies of those who stand, and fall, before them. To be the object of this gaze, is to be opened, known and finally, overthrown.

In its use of a well-known vocabulary of spectacular power, the eulogy for Henry fulfils the *Rainbow Portrait's* caption: "*non sine sole iris*: No rainbow without the sun." Here, the latin, *iris*, refers simultaneously to the rainbow of peace and to the all-seeing eye of the sovereign. Appropriating the Elizabethan image of the sun, Henry's spectacular presence is a violent, penetrating light that conquers where it shines; as the sun, it is aloft, seeing to all horizons, transforming where it touches. Most importantly, it is too bright to be gazed upon directly. As in the portrait, the sovereignty made visible in Gloucester's speech precludes the mastery of the returning gaze even as kingship declares its presence before it. Unlike John, whose exposure before the Citizen of Angiers undoes him, Henry, as the sun, can see without himself becoming the object of the gaze. Based on the structure of the anatomy, a rhetorical mode of "dissection" most associated with visual mastery and knowledge,² Gloucester's description of Henry's royal person is here couched in terms of blinding light that defies the return of the gaze. Gloucester's speech culminates in the admission that the king and his power cannot be contained within the anatomy's epistemological desire to expose all to the light of the inquiring gaze; Henry's "deeds exceed all speech," even this one, which itself must capitulate, at the moment of its highest praise, to the overwhelming force of a vision that blinds. With this admission, Gloucester defers to a traditional division between deeds and rhetoric, seeing, as does Coriolanus, a debasement of martial glory in the telling of it: "Plague upon it! I cannot bring / My

tongue to such a pace. 'Look, sir, my wounds!'" (*Coriolanus* 2.3.48-9). Willing only to show his wounds "in private" (2.3.74), Coriolanus cannot bring himself to speak the evidence of his body's wounds before "Hob and Dick" (2.3.111), the Citizens whose votes he solicits. In asserting that Henry's deeds "exceed" all speech, Gloucester preserves the dignity of action from the debasement of words, a debasement that Coriolanus associates with a humiliating exposure to a "common" gaze. Dead, idealized, unspoken, Henry is the uncontested icon of visual mastery.

It is this position of mastery of the visible that the scene marks as an irretrievable loss, and the scenes that follow on the battlefields of France are driven by the struggle to regain this privileged position. The rapid entrance of messengers immediately following the speech, the news of losses in France, and the rising rancour between the peers at home seem a playing out of prophesy: No rainbow without the sun. If Henry "ne'er lift up his hand but conquerèd," the victories are those of England and the body politic of which he is the head. In his absence, the identification with this power becomes the humiliating exposure of the triumph, a state Exeter laments:

Henry is dead and never shall revive.
 Upon a wooden coffin we attend,
 And death's dishonorable victory
 We with our stately presence glorify,
 Like captives bound to a triumphant car. (1.1.18-22)

Exeter begins with a reassertion of absence and loss and then immediately links the ritual

of mourning to that of the triumph, where the vanquished are paraded before the victors as objects of spectacle humiliation. With the king's death, the peers are themselves transformed into the objects of a powerful and defining gaze, a taunting, common gaze that mocks nobility's "stately presence" with its sudden debasement.

While this ceremonial debasement is part of death's pageantry in this speech, just a few lines mark a shift from death's "dishonorable victory" to that of the "subtile-witted French" whom Exeter suspects of contriving Henry's end "[b]y magic verses" (1.1.25-27). This shift from death to the French indicates a related shift in the nobleman's understanding of his identity. When Henry was alive and victorious, his gaze encompassed the nobles, not as objects, but as part of a national social body; the violence of the penetrating gaze was reserved for those "enemies" driven back by this sunlike brilliance. The invocation of the French in the context of the triumphal parade and spectacle humiliation marks a shift from this early identification with the gaze to an awareness of the self as its opened and overthrown object. Consuming in a kind of scopic ritual the nobility and the glory of the vanquished, the triumphal gaze appropriates its object and rewrites the meanings of nobility's visible symbolism--the nobleman's insignia and his "stately presence" signify, not the prisoner's power, but the power of the enemy to humiliate him. The victor's glory is proportionate to the distance the vanquished have fallen, and the triumphal parade is the externalized index of that fall. Like Coriolanus,

who, in his toga of humility, must submit to a "common" gaze that forces him to rearticulate his body's scars in the terms of political solicitation, the peers fear a similar rearticulation before the gaze of the French "Hob and Dick." The loss of the identification with the penetrative gaze is, for the English, a challenge to national identity; reflected in the fracturing of territory that continues throughout the scene is a kind of disenfranchisement, or, in keeping with the social body metaphor, paralysis.

Overcome with the sense of England's loss, Bedford declares, "Instead of gold we'll offer up our arms, / Since arms avail not, now that Henry's dead" (1.1.46-7). The arms of war he proposes to lay upon the altar are no less than the limbs of the social body which are now paralysed and ineffectual without the royal head. With the loss of the privileged perspective of sovereign presence, the humiliation of the triumphal parade before the enemy's gaze leads to political and marshal impotence. Not soon to be cured, this malaise, Bedford prophesies, will visit future generations' "wretched years" until "Our isle be made a nourish of salt tears, / And none but women left to wail the dead" (1.1.48-51). Although Bedford invokes the dead king's ghost (significantly not the new king's presence) to "Prosper this realm, keep it from civil broils!" (1.1.53), his conjuration is cut off mid-sentence by the messenger's news "Of loss, of slaughter, and discomfiture" (1.1.59) in France. Enacting this progress from visual mastery to humiliation to mutilation of the social body, this scene establishes the pattern of the ensuing conflict of the play as

the English encounter, not just the soldiers and the peers of France, but the prophetic, common gaze of the upstart, cross-dressing Joan la Pucelle.

Directly following this eulogy for the lost light of England--"Hung be the heavens with black, yield day to night!" (1.1.1)--the setting shifts to France where the Dauphin and his peers, amazed at the ability of the lean and hungry English to strike on like clockworks even after they have been starved and beaten, prepare to withdraw and "let them alone" (1.2.41-44). At this point Joan makes her first appearance in the play, introduced by the Bastard of Orleans as a maid

Which by a vision sent to her from heaven
 Ordained is to raise this tedious siege

 The spirit of deep prophesy she hath
 Exceeding the nine sibyls of old Rome. (1.2.52-56)

Presented as a saviour of the French cause, Joan is recommended, not for her skills in battle (although these will become apparent), but for her ability to *see*. Her first exchanges with Charles emphasize both her extraordinary vision and her attempt to control her spectacular presentation: "I know thee well, though never seen before. / Be not amazed, there's nothing hid from me. / . . . / Stand back, you lords, and give us leave awhile" (1.2.67-71). She is not fooled by Reignier's attempt to stand in for the Dauphin, and easily demotes him from Prince to player, demonstrating that she knows a sovereign gaze when she sees it, and it does not sit in Reignier's eye.³ Having demonstrated in this

first overture her ability to know sovereignty and to use her mystic sight to name and un-name it, Joan establishes for herself the position of visual mastery, claiming a uniquely privileged gaze from which nothing, even the future, is hidden. In drawing Charles apart with a commanding "Stand back, you lords," furthermore, she attempts to manipulate the terms by which she is seen. These terms are in themselves disruptive, however, for in commanding where she should sue, Joan transgresses both gender and hierarchical boundaries in an adumbration of the sweeping instability her presence will embody throughout the play. Insofar as she relegates Reignier to the margins of the stage, she assumes the right to visible exclusion generally reserved to the masculine gaze. Managing to displace Reignier through the acuity of her gaze, Joan sets the terms for an equally precocious appropriation of the spectacular iconography of power. Her description of the genesis of her power resonates with the spectacular identification that the English in the opening scene of the play have lost:

Heaven and our Lady gracious hath it pleased
To shine on my contemptible estate.

.....
God's Mother deigned to appear to me,
And in a vision full of majesty
Willed me to leave my base vocation
And free my country from calamity.
Her aid she promised and assured success.
In complete glory she revealed herself;
And whereas I was black and swart before,
With those clear rays which she infused on me
That beauty am I blessed with, which you may see. (1.2.74-86)

Chosen to return the gaze in a vision of "complete glory," Joan becomes identified with that heavenly perspective; having seen the vision, she now claims to partake of an absolute vision from which "nothing is hid." The transformative power of this gaze, which will turn French defeat into "assured success," is written upon her body, once "black and swart" but now "infused" with a beauty which she offers as an outward guarantor of her honest "wit untrained in any kind of art" (1.1.73). Asserting that she is devoid of "feminine" duplicity and has no secret interior beyond this visible surface, Joan's honesty is ratified by the "complete" glory of the vision of the Holy Mother: just as she takes mystic vision from her visionary experience, she also takes from the Holy Mother's "complete" revelation of essence a self fully revealed and figured in the transformation of her body, once "swart" and now beautiful.

In this sequence, the two opening scenes of the play suggest a disruption of the ceremony of succession. As Henry V's hearse is carried on and off the stage to an extended elaboration of "The King is dead," the heir to his place of privileged vision is shown to be, not Henry VI, but Joan of Arc. With her assertion, "Expect Saint Martin's summer, halcyon days, / Since I have entered into these wars" (1.2.131-32), Joan appropriates the most powerful image of Henry's spectacular kingship: the sun. In usurping the role of privileged gazer, Joan transgresses a gamut of regulative categories. In *Le Ménagier de Paris* (1393), to give just one illustrative example, woman is

admonished to "[k]eep your head straight, your eyelids lowered and unflinching and your glance directed straight in front of you, eight yards ahead and toward the ground, without moving it about" (qtd. in O'Faolain 167). The passage demonstrates the regulation, not just of women as objects of the gaze, but of female gazes. Directed to look straight ahead and at the ground, the woman is the acknowledged object of the gaze; the regulation of her own vision works to protect the masculine ownership of the gaze through which patriarchal power is consolidated. A wandering, or worse, direct gaze from a woman entails a sudden reversal of terms, as the one-time object assumes the role of subject. Enacting such a reversal, Charles prostrates himself before the maid, and his supplication-- "Meantime, look gracious on thy prostrate thrall," (1.2.117)--for all its Petrarchan triteness, signals for the hierarchy-conscious, English audience of Shakespeare's theatre, an outrageous overthrow, all the more dangerous because Charles is no simple lover, but a king. So, too, Joan is not simply a woman, but a *Frenchwoman*, a peasant, the enemy, and, to go further, a boy playing a crossdressing woman in a theatre often condemned for its mockery of royalty by base-born actors and its violation of gendered codes of dress and behaviour.

Taking centre stage, Joan upstages the French peers and proposes to occupy the very position of authority left vacant by Henry's death. By appropriating the imagery proper to Henry V, she becomes, in an English context at least, a usurper, a monster who

threatens to upset masculine identity at its most fundamental level. Much of the innuendo directed at Joan, like the accusations of witchcraft and whoredom she receives from her English enemies, is intended to alienate her from the identification she claims with the Holy Mother's glory and the king's privileged vision. Wondering aloud if they should interrupt her conference with the Dauphin, "since he keeps no mean" (1.2.121), Alençon and Reignier attempt to recuperate from the ego's sting by recasting Joan's forthrightness as a typical instance of feminine wiles: "These women are shrewd tempters with their tongues" (1.2.123). Attempting to reclaim the power of the masculine gaze, the two lords meet Joan's disruptive presence with a well-established, and for them a far more comfortable, chauvinism that seeks to resolve Joan's multiple transgressions into a familiar reductive category of tricky and debased femininity.

Joan's story is not true, of course, or, more precisely, how true it is depends on who is telling the story, but the disruptions precipitated by her transgressive nature are manifest. The eulogy for Henry, which explicitly places him beyond our sight, seeks to enable a heroic narrative to stand for him in our minds, and to protect thereby his idealized deeds from contamination, both by objectifying vision and debasing words. In contrast, Joan's introduction to the stage, although it is couched in similar rhetoric, is characterized by the dramatization of her openness to the gaze; the scene is contained within a doubled frame of observation, both by the sexual innuendo and commentary of Alençon and

Reignier and by ourselves as audience who come to the theatre with a range of often conflicting historical images of the maid. According to the terms of visible exclusion, on the one hand, this visibility foreshadows Joan's ultimate recuperation by a reductive gaze. But, on the other hand, also foreshadowed here is a kind of protean excess that will thwart any simple deployment of regulative visibility. Through the course of the play, Joan is called witch, strumpet, pussel, "Astraea's daughter" (1.4.4), Rhodope (1.4.22), Deborah (1.2.105), and even, by her French supporters, "deceitful dame" (2.1.50). This cascade naming is a manifestation of the desire by those men who confront her to find a category that will contain her slippery character and salve their smarting egos: Charles, like Talbot is enthralled, vanquished by an Amazon or a witch; Reignier blames his displacement on tricky, but typically feminine, dissembling. We will see, however, that Joan's surface, while not exactly duplicitous, is nonetheless contradictory and multiple. Just as she reflects the glory of the Holy Mother in her new beauty, she reflects the desires and fears of those around her. Although she claims the imagery of the originary light, the sun, Joan, as a *dramatis persona*, is better represented by the figure of the mirror. The significance of Joan's apparent openness, especially to the gaze of the audience, I will address below. At this juncture, though, suffice it to say that Joan's arrival and attempted appropriation of the discourse of visual mastery nevertheless serve to establish the terms of the conflict within the visible economy and to highlight the instability of identities staked on the

opposition between subjects and objects of the gaze.

III

Having established in this economical way both the ideal of spectacular power and the consequences of its loss, the play moves on to elaborate and unfold the implications of this challenge to established hierarchies and identities. Act one, scenes four and five, which form in many ways a reprise of the first two scenes of the play, immediately establish the precariousness of visual mastery upon which the English rely before the besieged city of Orleans. The French master gunner, acting on information provided by the "Prince's espials," directs his aim at the English generals who stand at an iron grate "In yonder tower to overpeer the city, / And thence discover how with most advantage / They may vex us with shot or with assault" (1.4.9-12). In an almost cinematic cut, the scene shifts to the English in the tower, where Talbot recounts his story of his time spent as captive of the French. Having lived what was a metaphorical triumph in 1.1, Talbot describes his humiliation when, "With scoffs and scorns and contumelious taunts / In open marketplace produced they me / To be a public spectacle to all" (1.4.38-41). Talbot's phrasing, that in the marketplace "produced they me," alludes to the capacity for the gaze to define the identity of its object, since "produced" carries a double connotation of "made to appear" and "fashioned." For Talbot, as for the peers at Henry's funeral, the French

gaze appropriates his martial glory. It is just this kind of humiliation that incites Cleopatra to kill herself rather than to see an actor "boy [her] greatness / I' th' posture of a whore" (*Antony and Cleopatra* 4.2.220-21). "Produced" as in a play, Talbot is forced to "boy" his own greatness; to appear in the flesh in this context is to be coerced into a parody of himself that threatens to make him a shadow of his fame. Talbot, like Coriolanus in his toga of humility, confronts the returning gaze and sees himself debased by a form of display that collapses the carefully wrought division between words and deeds. In a gesture equivalent to Coriolanus's sarcastic mockery of such display--" Look sir, my wounds"--Talbot recounts, not only his own experience in the triumph, but the French narrativization of it. Exposed before a taunting crowd, Talbot and his heroic narrative are open to a reinterpretation that hollows out his greatness, turning him into a substanceless mock-hero and straw man: "'Here,' said they, 'is the terror of the French, / The scarecrow that affrights our children so'" (1.4.42-43). Forced to play a role in a spectacular ritual, Talbot, specifically as a physical presence, becomes a grammar through which the French articulate their own narrative of glory, and this contamination of his greatness by words is further framed by his own report of his heroic resistance. For example, Talbot attempts to recover from French sarcasm by positing his own reading of his martial prowess, claiming: "In iron walls they deemed me not secure; / So great fear of my name 'mongst them were spread / That they supposed I could rend bars of steel" (1.4.49-51). He struggles to

regain control of the site of seeing through a counter-narrative of resistance: "And with my nails digged stones out of the ground / To hurl at the beholders of my shame" (1.4.45-6). At the moment when we are introduced to the greatest English martial hero, that very introduction, which recounts debasement by the common gaze, performs the debasement of acts by words. Talbot's deeds, unlike Henry V's, do not exceed all speech.

In Talbot's account of his experience, the distinctions between words, deeds, and the gaze collapse in a narration of spectacular humiliation that is placed significantly between the opening representation of the French espials and Salisbury's confident assertion of a privileged gaze over the city of Orleans. For all its marshal ferocity, Talbot's counter-narrative is undermined by the stage direction that follows it: "*Enter the Boy with a linstock*" (1.4.56). The framing narrative of the scene, that of French ordnance and espials, interrupts Talbot's resistant gesture, revealing that, in spite of his apparent delivery from the triumphal car, Talbot and the English generals are still very much captives of the French gaze. This continuity and the presence now on stage of the Boy, presumably on the mainstage below, contributes an added irony to Salisbury's invitation to Talbot and the others to look through the grate "And view the French how they fortify. / Let us look in; the sight will much delight thee" (1.4.61-2). The delight Salisbury takes is not so much in the view, but in his belief in his visual mastery of the scene, further emphasized by Gargrave's and Glansdale's suggestions of targets on the panorama below,

and by the anticipated revenge to be exacted on the French for their humiliation of Talbot. What the generals do not see is that their exposure to French artillery is precisely a consequence of their elevated position of mastery; they believe that they can see without being seen. Salisbury's invitation, "Let us look *in*" (my emphasis), as implicit stage direction, indicates that the men look out over the stage and into the daylight yard and galleries of the theatre. The staging reinforces the sense that the generals are the objects of a gaze of which they are unaware. If the theatre stands for Orleans, the audience, looking up, like the Boy, at the English generals in the gallery above the stage, is aligned with the French gaze. For all their discussion of the layout of the city and deployment of the Dauphin's troops in the distance, the generals and captains fail to observe the Boy in the foreground (they literally overlook him), the unseen watcher whose linstock will ignite the fatal shot.

Losing both his eye, the organ of sight, and part of his face, that surface that most represents an individual to the world, Salisbury wears on his body the signs of the dangerous circuit of the gaze in which visual mastery is exposed to a returning look that can overturn the structure of power.⁴ Talbot's attempt to recover from the unexpected turn of events takes the form of an invocation of the familiar image of the sun: "One eye thou hast to look to heaven for grace. / The sun with one eye vieweth all the world" (1.4.83-4). But Talbot's appeal to this image of the all-seeing eye cannot recuperate lost

mastery, for the king is dead, and in this world revolving around this vital absence, a French boy can topple the nobility from below: less than 20 lines later, peals of lightning and thunder herald the arrival of Joan la Pucelle, "A holy prophetess new risen up" (1.4.102). Dressed now in armour, Joan resembles the Boy with the linstock whose returning look has toppled the English from the heights of visual mastery; this resemblance creates a visual echo that recalls Joan's own transgressive appropriation of the look in the earlier scene. These two boys, whose presence is coincident with roaring ordnance and rumbling thunder, represent a radical challenge to the principles of hierarchy and the stability grounded in those principles, just as the sudden reversal at Orleans exemplifies this breakdown in the broader society: boys will kill men from a distance using guns, disdaining honourable hand-to-hand combat, a prentice will do his master's work, peasants will cozen noblemen, women will entrap them, petty jealousies will cause them to feed on one another. By the end of the next scene, Talbot's subjection to the gaze is complete. He laments: "O, would I were to die with Salisbury! / The shame hereof will make me hide my head" (1.5.38-9). The story of humiliation that began our relationship with Talbot in the previous scene culminates here in shame; surveillance has become internalized as self-surveillance, and Talbot has become his own spectacle as he looks upon his dismal failure. As in the opening scene of the play, such exposure is attendant upon debasement and marshal impotence.

IV

Not alone in his humiliations, of course, Talbot overturns his defeat at Orleans under cover of darkness, proving the English to be as "subtile-witted" as their enemy. Rouen, too, is seized by the French and retaken by the English in the space of a scene. The easy loss and recovery of positions of mastery in these scenes of attack and counter-attack testify to the instability of the visible economy in which these battles are waged. The holy prophetess "new risen" on the upward turn of Fortune's wheel will herself occupy an elevated position of visual mastery and will suffer the fall that inevitably comes with such a rise. But this dynamic is not one of simple reversal of terms, as the metaphor of Fortune's Wheel might suggest, for the rapid oscillation of subjects to objects of the gaze and back again is symptomatic of a more fundamental disturbance. The loss of the spectacular ideal of Henry V precipitates a collapse of categories of difference upon which national identity and epistemology are grounded. Phyllis Rackin astutely observes the challenge posed to English idealizing historiography and discourses of fame presented by French nominalism and association with sexuality and the body:

[A]t the rhetorical level, [the French] attack both the English version of history and the values it expresses with an earthy iconoclasm that subverts the inherited notions of chivalric glory invoked by the English heroes. Talbot, the English champion, and Joan, his French antagonist, speak alternative languages. His language reifies glory, while hers is the language of physical objects. (*Stages* 150-51)

I would argue, however, that this binary model, like the oppositional rhetoric Rackin

identifies, participates in the epistemological desire for dichotomous relations, a desire that is consistently thwarted in the play. In an epistemological model where the masculine, martial, English self is defined and consolidated by its opposition to a feminine, French Other, the crisis is to be found not merely in a conflict between opposed sets of terms (English *words* and French *things*), but rather in this opposition's collapse, in the possibility that the differences mobilized to justify territorial, national, religious, sexual, or historical dispute prove to be unstable and incapable of consolidating the identities staked upon them. It is for this reason that the appropriation of visual mastery by a French peasant woman must be figured as a usurpation of English right: to suggest that such mastery does not *naturally* adhere to only one side of mutually exclusive binarisms is to suggest a radical alternative to existing models of knowledge and identity. The fear of this deconstructive energy provokes in the play finally a strident (although incomplete) reassertion of English difference in what Gabriele Bernhard Jackson describes as Joan la Pucelle's violent and provocatively anxious recuperation by the dominant order (60).

One illustrative instance of this denaturalizing energy involves the scenes I have already discussed: 1.2, comprising a battle and the introduction of Joan, and the latter part of 1.4-5, from the death of Salisbury to the loss of Orleans and Talbot's expression of shame. Act one, scene two opens with the French asserting an overweening confidence about their ability to raise the siege of Orleans, followed by their humiliating rout at the

hands of "Lean raw-boned rascals" (1.2.35), and Charles' hypocritical shifting of the blame to "Dogs! cowards! dastards!" (1.2.23), that is, the French soldiers who retreated before the fury of the English. At the moment of defeat, Joan enters, engages in single combat with Charles, who is enthralled. Joan then declares at the end of the scene that Orleans will be taken. In 1.4, following the death of Salisbury, Talbot, swears revenge and charges to the fight, only to be defeated at the opening of 1.5 and to lay the blame on English soldiers. Pucelle enters, engages in single combat in which Talbot, defeated, claims he has been bewitched: "My thoughts are whirlèd like a potter's wheel / I know not where I am nor what I do" (1.5.19-20). The scene concludes with Joan's entrance into Orleans.⁵ On one level the two scenes operate together as a prophesy and a fulfilment, for Joan's assertion that "This night the siege assuredly I'll raise" (1.2.130) is realized when Talbot admits that "Pucelle is ent'red into Orleans / In spite of us or aught that we could do" (1.5.36-7). On the level of structure, however, the identical action in the two camps identifies the scenes as obvious analogues. Charles and Talbot are shown to act from similar states of mind, charging to the fight with overblown confidence, then blaming their failure on the desertion of their soldiers. More importantly, they seem to be equally open to the force of Joan's gaze, which seems to conquer effectively on both sides of the line of battle. While Charles can attribute Joan's power to the Holy Mother, and Talbot can blame it on witchcraft and the devil, neither combatant is spared the effects of her

supernatural presence.

Equally susceptible to Joan's strange power, the national difference between the two contenders is subordinated in the analogous staging of these two scenes to their similarities as men. This flattening of national difference by the force of gendered desire is powerfully demonstrated in the imagery and rhetoric of embodiment in the play. In 2.1, for example, in which the English recapture Orleans in a secret attack, national difference is both consolidated and undermined by Talbot's use of a language of sexuality. Here, the original positions of 1.4-5 are reversed, with the English below on the mainstage outside the walls and the French sentinels above watching for "some apparent sign" of enemy activity (2.1.3). Our experience of the earlier scenes of attack and counter-attack should prepare us for the reversal that will follow, for the French position of mastery is undermined, not simply by "darkness, rain, and cold" (2.1.7), but by the way that the staging reiterates the earlier scenes. Both 1.4-5 and 2.1 are characterized by a fatal blindness. After the city is taken and the French generals gather to dispute the blame, for example, Joan insists that "had your watch been good, / This sudden mischief never could have fall'n!" (2.1.59-9). Each general asserts in reply that the watch had been carefully set. It becomes clear in the course of the exchange that, like the English in Orleans Tower, all watch, but none sees. A most dangerous and wilful blindness is initially attributed to Joan:

Is this thy cunning, thou deceitful dame?
Didst thou at first, to flatter us withal,

**Make us partakers of a little gain
That now our loss might be ten times so much? (2.1.50-3)**

Joan's blindness is constructed here by Charles as a blinding of others with a conceit of security and with a false vision of assured success. This is an early sign that Joan's vision belongs more to the fallen world of deceiving perspective than it does to the lost ideal world of perfect sight of which she initially appears to be the inheritor. Relocating Joan's vision in this way, the scene serves to re-establish the apparent opposition between the ideal and the perspectival gazes represented respectively by English Henry V and the French Holy Maid.

As we have seen, however, such a dichotomy grounded in visual mastery is inherently unstable. In this scene, it is the language of sexuality that marks the collapse of difference between the English and their French enemies. As they prepare to attack the city, Talbot and Burgundy engage in a brief conversation about the Pucelle. Talbot, characterizing Joan as a witch, as he has consistently done since their first encounter, concludes: "Well, let them practice and converse with spirits. / God is our fortress, in whose conquering name / Let us resolve to scale their flinty bulwarks" (2.1.25-7). These lines are as telling as the image they contain is odd. The metaphor is a strangely mixed one that conjures the image of the English scaling the city walls while inside a fortress. With its reference to a double set of walls, the metaphor of fortification becomes strangely vulnerable. If, as Talbot claims, the English are protected by a fortress (God's name), and

if they are breaching a fortress, then fortresses are not impenetrable; they are vulnerable to the kind of silent, sneaky penetration the English associate with the "subtile-witted" French but in fact enact themselves.

It is penetration that becomes the crux of the issue in the scene. The image of God-as-fortress is ostensibly protected from attack because its purity is opposed to the image of a demonized French fortress, which is strongly identified with the presence of Joan la Pucelle; God's fortress is impenetrable, while the French walls are not, are, in fact, vulnerable to righteous challenge due to the French association with the open and loose sexuality of Joan the witch. In Shakespeare's day, as Linda Woodbridge notes, walls, gates and cities were routinely figured as feminine. The term, "outskirts," for instance, was coined at this time to refer to the environs of a feminized city ("Palisading" 274). Burgundy himself returns in the later play, *Henry V*, to make this association explicit, when he equates the French cities Henry has won by treaty with Katherine's chaste body: "Yes, my lord, you see them perspectively, the cities turned into a maid; for they are all girdled with maiden walls that war hath never entered" (5.2.307-9). The invulnerable fortress, then, is a chaste maid who repels the advances of a male attacker (to save her treasure, that is, for her lawful husband, who is, in this case, her king). Joan, by contrast, as a loose and open woman, is a fortress whose walls can be or have been breached.⁶ The double entendres of Talbot's and Burgundy's exchange clearly link the French "practice"

with "witches and the help of hell" (2.1.18) to Charles's effeminacy, his "Despairing of his own arm's fortitude" (2.1.17), and his sexual debasement. To "practice and converse with spirits" is equivalent in its bawdy double meaning to having sex with Joan who, dressed in a man's battle gear, is said to "carry armour" as a woman in heterosexual intercourse "underneath the standard of the French" (2.1.22-4). Identifying himself with God's fortress, Talbot bases his purity and invulnerability on his repudiation of a promiscuity he identifies as French.

The image of the fortress, however, occurs half-way through this exchange with Burgundy, and the defensive deployment of oppositional terms that occupies the first half of the conversation is undermined by the collapse of these distinctions in the second. As they plan their strategy, Talbot and Burgundy's speech is contaminated with the sexual images attendant upon their proposed penetration of the feminized city. Hoping, in making their "entrance several ways," that if one party fails "The other yet may rise against their force" (2.1.30-2), Talbot chooses his literal and metaphorical place of attack: "And here will Talbot mount, or make his grave" (2.1.34). The language of marshal strategy, with its "mounting" and "rising," betrays the grounding terms of the conflict in the scene as the exclusive options of phallic conquest and nothingness: a penetration of the feminized French city or "his grave." In their recourse to the corporeal language of sexual penetration, the English undermine their own claims to purity, for they are involved in the

very penetration of Joan that is the defining characteristic of the enemy. It is worth noting here, too, that Talbot converses with Burgundy who is French and who will eventually abandon the English in favour of his mother-country and the Holy Maid. Burgundy's use of sexual language in the play to characterize his future ally aligns him with both the English disparagement of Joan and with the sexual jibes deployed by the French peers, Alençon and Reignier. Like Talbot and Charles, who both fall to Joan's mesmerizing power, Burgundy's presence in both camps indicates a particularly masculine desire to possess and define the feminine subject that unifies the male community across the nationalist distinctions of the lines of battle. Resorting to a language that conflates martial conquest with rape, these men attempt to protect their masculinity from the threat of feminine power, but they do so at the expense of their national difference.

The quick reversal at Orleans is a precursor to the loss and recovery of Rouen in the next act, and the two scenes function in much the same way as do 1.2 and 1.4-5 to flatten out the necessary difference between the two camps. In 3.2, the French do finally use the subterfuge that has been attributed to them, although it is presented to us as a strategy learned from the English. Joan and her fellow soldiers enter into Rouen disguised as "la povere gens de France" (3.2.14), using disguise the same way that Talbot uses darkness and rain to cover his approach at Orleans. The structural reiteration of this pattern undermines the rhetorical assertions of difference made by actors on both sides of

the conflict and reveals the contenders to be the same. Like the walls of the metaphorical fortress, the borders between the self and the Other are dangerously permeable, and the larger epistemological project of the play is the finding, knowing and policing of those borders.

Without such a careful preservation of difference in the conflict, the characters are reduced to the kind of sophistic squabbling of the Temple Garden scene, where the legal quibble (the nature of which we in the audience never learn) escalates to threats of bloodshed. Even the "dumb significant" (2.4.26) of the red and white roses cannot stabilize the argument. Somerset's challenge to Vernon demonstrates the dangerous freedom of signification in the scene: "Prick not your finger as you pluck it [the white rose] off, / Lest, bleeding, you do paint the white rose red / And fall on my side so against your will" (2.4.49-51). See too, Richard's challenge to Somerset: "Meantime your cheeks do counterfeit our roses, / For pale they look with fear, as witnessing / The truth on our side" (2.4.62-4). With no apparent ground on which to base judgement, the signification of the roses oscillates between the opposed terms, red becoming white, white red, and both constantly made to mean something else with each new interpretive pass. Even after Somerset and Richard agree that sheer numbers of roses on either side will be sufficient ground to resolve the unknown quibble, they continue rhetorically to wrestle for mastery, unwilling to give up their opposition to the obvious emptiness of their "dumb significant."

Their opposition is real, but their difference, like that between French and English, is difficult to discern.⁷ What is easy to see is that the original dispute over a point of law is really about genealogical claims to power and has given way to personality in a contest that circumvents the question of how one *knows* the truth. Warwick, who will emerge as one of the great arbiters of destiny in the next plays, himself asserts that he can tell the difference between two hawks, two dogs, or two blades in a question of empirical observation, but will not venture to stab at this truth (2.4.11-18). His decision to abstain on the question of right interpretation reflects the fact that, ultimately, the truth has little to do with the debate, since what the nobles really would like to stab at is each other.

Signifying in the end only that "dumb significant" cannot be fixed as reliable indices of difference in this world of fallen vision, the scene's devolution to threats of violence follows the larger pattern of the play. As Derek Cohen observes, in this case, of the deposition scene of *Richard II*: "[I]n the political scheme of this world of power, murder becomes the logical means of reconciling the irreconcilable; it is a procrustean attempt to resolve through violence what cannot be resolved through logic" (23). Cohen continues: "Bolingbroke, in a sense, wants to *be* Richard, but can only succeed by seeming to be his opposite. The violence of the language of the play, straining as it does to break the bounds of rigid verse structures, derives from the attempt of each antagonist to propose himself as the opposite of the other" (26). In a visible economy in which

opposition is justified as difference, violence, Cohen argues, becomes the site at which difference itself is fashioned and becomes meaningful as a term in the ideological conflict of the play. This is certainly the case in the Temple Garden scene and in the English metaphorical fortress before Orleans. The violence of the play, however, instead of guaranteeing epistemological mastery, becomes instead a confrontation with the terrifying apparition of the Other who always threatens to return as the same.

Talbot, as the martial hero, exemplifies this collapsing of dichotomous relations and the violence attendant upon this breakdown of difference. For Rackin, one particularly effective instance of the opposition between English words and French things occurs in 4.7 when Lucy discovers Talbot's slain body. Lucy's enumeration of Talbot's titles and heroic accomplishments continues for eleven lines and is taken, Rackin observes, from Talbot's tomb at Rouen. Joan's response--"Him that thou magnifi'st with all these titles / Stinking and fly-blown lies here at our feet" (4.7.75-6)--is a representative French (feminine) rejection of "masculine historical ideals and significance that Lucy's glorious names invoke" (153). Joan's nominalism, Rackin argues, is undermined by the play's emphasis on the primacy of report and fame over physical presence: "[Talbot's] mere name, like the name of God, is sufficient to rout the French soldiers (I.iv.50; II.i.70-81); and although Talbot is finally killed, his glory survives his physical death" (154). As the scene with the Countess d'Auvergne demonstrates, Talbot's physical presence is but a

shadow of his real self as historical figure, as hero, as general of an army (155).

The opposition of Lucy's "Alcides of the field" (4.7.60) to Joan's "stinking and fly-blown" corpse establishes, then, a mutually exclusive dichotomization between the ideal and the corporeal that reflects a similar opposition in the now well-documented philosophical and social context of the play, a binarism that was to be named a few years later in what has come to be known as the Cartesian split. Nicholas of Cusa's fifteenth-century description of the proper encounter with Christ provides a concise (in medieval terms) example of this binarism and negative theology's repudiation of the corporeal: "[I]n his rapture the believer sees Christ in his own self apart from symbolism. For he who is Christlike sees himself, free from the world. Therefore, he sees only faith, which has been made visible to him by the stripping away of worldly things and by the face-to-face revealing of his own self" (qtd. in Hopkins 107). Knowing the self in Cusa's theology involves "stripping away" the physical self (worldly things) to come at last to a non-corporeal "face-to-face" revelation. For Foucault, this kind of self-examination is a species of "mortification": "Mortification is not death, of course, but it is a renunciation of this world and of oneself: a kind of everyday death. A death which is supposed to provide life in another world" ("Politics and Reason" 70). A daring daylight escape through the "bloody house of life" (*King John* 4.2.210) into the ideal, mortification is not a death, but an escape from death. In Shakespeare's world such an escape can also be

found in "fame." Fame, which, as Rackin explains by way of Foucault, depends finally on an effacement of embodiment (Henry V is "too famous to live long" [1.1.6]), operates on a system of substitution by which the ideal replaces the physical body of the hero. One can be ideal or corporeal, but rarely both: "If [the hero] was willing to die young, it was so that his life, consecrated and magnified by death, might pass into immortality" (Foucault qtd. in *Stages* 149). The intensity of the opposition Rackin describes between Lucy and Joan derives from this exclusive dichotomization. What Rackin describes as Joan's rejection of the idealized Talbot in favour of "physical fact" (153) is an insult so great that it provokes Lucy's wish that his eyes could be "into bullets turned, / That I in rage might shoot them at your faces!" (4.7.79-80). Such a dichotomy is in its structure no different from Gloucester's assertion in the opening scene that Henry V's "deeds exceed all speech" (1.1.15), for, while Rackin privileges fame over corporeal presence and Gloucester deeds over praise, the basic binary opposition of words to the body is nevertheless maintained. For Rackin, this opposition exemplifies a series of dichotomies that define the English and French respectively that includes: "chivalric virtue versus pragmatic craft . . . patriarchal age versus subversive youth, high social rank versus low, self versus other" (151). The manifest conflict in this model is one of reversal of oppositional terms, as youth replaces age, or French the English on the walls of Rouen.

On another level, however, there can be discerned a rhetorical and structural

current that runs in a different direction, away from the oppositional substitution structure which tends to protect and maintain the dichotomization of terms. In isolating in Foucault's discussion his example of the immortalizing potential of writing, specifically of those narratives of heroism that derive from the Greek epic tradition, Rackin emphasises the ideal at the expense of the corporeal. In addition to the immortality conveyed by the substitution of story for bodily presence in the discourse of fame, Foucault also offers the example of Sheherazade in *The Thousand and One Nights*. In this example, writing does not substitute for the body the transcendence of immortal fame, but rather extends the life of the body in an effort "to keep death outside the circle of life" ("Author" 117) as Sheherazade weaves a nightly reprieve in the form of a tale. The example of heroic substitution permits a familiar repudiation of the body for a higher life of the spirit and is the ground of the defining dichotomies that Rackin identifies in the play. What Rackin identifies as French nominalism is opposed to this transcendental deployment of language, narrative, and history. This opposition is quite real; however, the second of Foucault's examples, elided in Rackin's account, suggests that the strict opposition of writing, narrative and language to the corporeal, to bodily presence, is to some extent untenable. Writing substitutes for the body in Foucault's examples, but it also prolongs the body's presence. Even mortification does so; the pure spiritual confrontation with self or God through self-mortification depends on, and is written on, that body in the very act of its

repudiation. Scourged and denied, the body becomes visible as a site of strict regulation. The conflict between Lucy and Joan itself collapses these terms, for even the discourse of fame, with its denial of the body in favour of its story, demands on one level their interimplication: Talbot can be idealized as (English) Alcides, only once he *becomes* the (French) stinking corpse. Even in Lucy's desire to obliterate the French nominalizing position in order to protect his own idealizing one there remains the tincture of the bodily: he shoots his eyeballs metaphorically at the enemy in a rhetoric of repudiation that is wholly, even grotesquely, embodied.⁸

That the onstage corpse of Talbot is in fact *both Alcides and stinking corpse* disrupts this careful, defensive bracketing of the ideal from the corporeal, a circumstance that generally seems to escape critical attention, perhaps by being so obvious a statement. Joan's earthy iconoclasm and Lucy's idealizing recitation, juxtaposed *over Talbot's dead body*, are not simply "alternative languages." The exchange over Talbot's body marks a conflation of terms, a derailing of the system of transcendent substitution that ensures the possibility of fame, and is shocking because it transgresses a taboo against such contamination. Talbot's onstage corpse, then, is an actualization of the same conflation of words and deeds that define his first appearance in Orleans Tower where he recounts his tale of humiliation in the French triumph.

Even more discomfiting is the way that the exchange over Talbot's body refers

back to that other eulogy for a dead hero, the funeral of Henry V that opens the play. The goal of that scene is the same as Lucy's in this one: to establish and protect the ideal hero from the corporeal contamination threatened by his onstage body. Henry's funeral purports to enact the substitution of the king's fame for his body, a substitution that is disrupted in Talbot's case. But as the later scene shows us in its structural reflecting back, such substitution is not possible because of the residue of the onstage body which problematizes any simple dichotomization. For this reason, Henry's ideality in the first scene is figured as an originary loss, a vacuum, rather than as the necessary transcendent substitution. While, as Rackin argues, fame ensures that the ideal will live on after the body has died, in the case of Henry and the funeral scene, no such guarantee can be made. Once Henry's corporeal body is dead, the ideals of nationhood and the social body immediately begin to fail: the peers are paralysed and the nation literally begins falling apart as one messenger after another enters with news of lost territory and the capture of England's heroes.⁹ Talbot's appearance onstage as a corpse, like his "mounting" and "rising" in the night attack on the feminized city, challenges the strict opposition of English idealism to French carnality that not only enables the consolation of fame, but also rationalizes the conflict between nations.

V

The character who most exemplifies the consequences of this collapse of difference in the play is, of course, Joan la Pucelle. Appearing before Rouen disguised as "la pouvre gens de France," Joan confounds the desire for truth by appearing disguised as herself. Conflating truth and falsehood, strategy and verity in this way, Joan is the target of epistemological anxiety in the play, for she resists the regulative gaze by seemingly standing openly before it. Holy prophetess, maid, marshal hero, whore, witch and finally, mother, prisoner and condemned, Joan is the specular surface *par excellence*, a play of light that is always tantalizingly beyond the touch. The combat of the play, rhetorical as much as physical, is a struggle to control the signification of that reflecting surface. In an economy in which French and English causes are structurally and rhetorically threatening to collapse into sameness, it is only this signification that appears to separate them and to ensure the difference upon which their opposition and the dramatic narrative depend.

While Rackin argues that Joan's "promiscuity" in this play, with Queen Margaret's adultery in the next, "are dramatically unnecessary," serving only to "underscore the women's characterization as threats to masculine honour" (*Stages* 158), the play itself is not at all clear on the fact of Joan's promiscuity. The ambivalent representation of Joan's character points to an important dramatic necessity enfolded in Joan's so-called promiscuity and her multiple presentations of self. Rackin's argument, at least as much as Talbot's, depends on

the dichotomized relations of (English, masculine, ideal) self to (French, feminine, corporeal) Other which, in fact, the play establishes only to complicate and deconstruct. From the contesting images that pass for Joan's presence, there emerges, not a single self, a witch, who lies about her nature from the beginning of the play, but rather an overdetermined site of contestation where difference is installed as the justification for territorial and nationalist dispute. Without this moment of differentiation, played out in terms of sorcery and promiscuity, the English conquest of the French would be revealed to be a mutilation of their own politic body.

Because of the instability of Joan's specular surface, the structures of difference and authority staked upon her identity show an equal tendency toward an anxious indeterminacy. The sorcery scene (5.3) proves to be a particularly important juncture, for this is the point at which Joan's character is ostensibly finally stabilized as a witch, and Talbot's intuition proves to be correct. The scene is a prime example of visible exclusion: the moment that Joan's demonic affiliations are made apparent to us onstage is also the moment of her loss of privileged vision and power. After Joan is rejected by the fiends and captured by the English, Richard York says of her, "See how the ugly witch doth bend her brows / As if, with Circe, she would change my shape" (5.3.34-5), referring both to the potential power of Joan's sorcerer's gaze and its loss. In this, the sorcery scene enacts the pattern of demonic exorcism in which, as Stephen Greenblatt observes, the spirit is

"compelled by a spectacular spiritual counterforce to speak out and depart" (*Negotiations* 98-9). Like Greenblatt, Deborah Willis argues that the presence of spectators is essential to overcoming the witch in spectacular presentation: "The trial [of a witch] functions as a kind of countermagic, with judges and jury taking over some aspects of the role of the cunning folk, as the witch's exposure and forced confession also dissolve her magical powers" (107). Like Lady Faulconbridge in *King John*, Joan's visibility is coextensive with her erasure: she is recuperated, ostensibly, by the regulative gaze which seems to stabilize the difference between French corporeal debasement and English moral rectitude.

Even here, however, at what should be the moment of the most clarity in the play regarding Joan's slippery evasions of the defining gaze, we find in the language of self-mutilation a most graphic instance of the collapsing difference between the two factions. Joan's promise that she will "lop a member off" (5.3.15) to give to the fiends in exchange for their prognostications, and her assertion that her "body shall / Pay recompense" if they will grant her suit (5.3.15, 18-19), are at first glance blatant instances of Joan's sexual openness and willingness to sell her flesh for her own purposes. Joan's offer to dismember her own body apparently provides proof of Talbot's indictments of both whoredom and witchery that serve to differentiate the French and English metaphorical fortresses before Orleans. But Talbot's presence is not felt in the scene merely as justified intuition, but also as a rhetorical echo. In his first encounter with Joan, Talbot declares: "My breast I'll

burst with straining of my courage / And from my shoulders crack my arms asunder / But I will chastise this high-minded strumpet" (1.5.10-12). The similarity between the two offerings is striking. Although Joan does not defeat Talbot at their initial encounter, he rhetorically dismembers himself in a way that foreshadows his own literal death later in the play. In their rhetoric, the hero and the witch both sacrifice and mutilate their bodies in the theatre of war; Talbot offers up his limbs to king and country, as does Joan, who fears that France's glory, without the aid of her familiars, "droopeth to the dust" (5.3.29). It will be argued that Joan's sacrifices are manifestly to demons, while Talbot's are, presumably, to God; and it is not my purpose here to argue that Joan is not in this scene in league with devils. What I am arguing, however, is that, taken together, the appeal to dismembered bodies in these instances complicates the pat gratification of English desire for a resolution of the conflict into binary oppositions. Again, as at Orleans, or in the exchanges over Talbot's corpse, the dichotomizing impulse is thwarted by the tendency of bodiliness to turn up on both sides of the binarism. The difference between the English discourse of self-mutilation and Joan's is one of moral rectitude, but the contamination of English discourse by the very corporeal terms of the flesh they identify as French reveals the uncanny return of the Other within the boundaries of the self.¹⁰

This definitive scene, therefore, slips into further evasions that complicate the status of the sorcery scene in the juridical discourse of the trial scene that follows (5.4).

These evasions hinge largely on the fact that we see Joan's traffic with demons, but the English do not. Since Joan is onstage alone as she reveals herself to be a conjurer, it is we in the audience who are enlisted as the judges, jury and "cunning folk" to bear witness to the act and to fulfil the structure of visible exclusion. The tendency, however--and the dramatic structure of events specifically elicits this effect--is to attribute our knowledge to the English: we know that Joan is guilty of sorcery; *ergo*, her condemnation as a whore can be justified as a slightly displaced comeuppance. Joan's condemnation in the trial scene, therefore, is constructed by the order of the presentation of the drama to appear to be a culmination of a condemnation begun in the sorcery episode. But as such a culmination, the later judgement is made based on evidence that only we have seen; in fact, the English ignorance of this scene has no effect on the final outcome of her trial, which is based, not on "proof" of Joan's sorcery, but on the English need to expose, humiliate and destroy the enemy. Joan is not a witch, in other words, because she has been shown to be one, but because the consolidation of English identity in opposition demands that she be so. The *demonstration* of Joan's transgression, therefore, has no role in the unravelling of the events of the play, but has everything to do with the dramatic manipulation of the audience in the context of a radical destabilization of certainty based on visibility. The verity of our vision in the first scene, then, implicates us in the wilful distortion of the trial scene and the ruthlessness of the English judges. Simply by placing

an Englishman on the stage during the conjuring scene, as he does in the next play for the entrapment of Duchess Eleanor, Shakespeare could have avoided this complication and recuperated the trial scene in a discourse of justice. That he does not do so suggests that this manipulation of the protocols of "evidence" is implicated in deeper questions about identity and the nature of the "truth."

Shakespeare's interrogation of these protocols is illustrated by the English treatment of Joan's claim to benefit of belly in the trial scene. Having failed to escape the stake through an appeal to either noble birth or heavenly genealogy, Joan declares:

Will nothing turn your unrelenting hearts?
Then, Joan, discover thine infirmity,
That warranteth by law to be thy privilege.
I am with child, ye bloody homicides.
Murder not then the fruit within my womb,
Although ye hale me to a violent death. (5.4.59-64)

Here we witness a moment similar to that of the first scene of *King John*, where Lady Faulconbridge's whoreson makes the transition through a ritual of renaming and recuperation to the status of bastard. Richard and Warwick, however, refuse to permit Joan's child to attain any status that would benefit its mother. Joan's claim, first that the Dauphin, then Alençon, then Reignier, is the father of the child is rejected because the men are respectively the enemy, a "notorious Machiavel" (5.4.74) and "A married man" (5.4.79). In blocking this transfer of status, the English judges read the child as a "sign that [Joan] hath been liberal and free" (5.4.82). As a whoreson, the child has no social

being, and on this ground the judges deny Joan's claim to benefit of belly. As Jackson observes, however, "Joan is the butt of the brutal joke here, but it is unlikely that York and Warwick come off unscathed by the negative association of their total violation of English custom" (62). Our witness of Joan's sorcery is an act of exorcism just as this "discovery" of Joan's pregnancy is an extreme instance of visible exclusion; both instances attempt to stabilize Joan's disruptive nature by fitting it into a reductive social role. But in this case, there is a backlash against the English judges. Our privileged viewpoint on the one hand and the judges' wilful blindness on the other are subject to a rebounding of the juridical gaze upon those who claim its rights, as Jackson concludes: "[I]n a final twist of meaning, as we have seen, the terms of Joan's reintegration into conservative ideology recognizably damage her captors' own ideological sanction" (64). In this final instance of the deployment of a stabilizing gaze, English identity is not, in fact, consolidated, for the opposition of English moral rectitude to French shiftiness is eroded by the judges' cruel manipulation of justice.

Even while noting this tendency for the captors to be contaminated by the rebounding infamy of the condemned, Jackson makes a common critical assumption. She writes: "Although Joan is *only pretending*, her captors are at best playing cat and mouse with her as they condemn her supposed child to death anew each time she assigns it a different father" (62, my emphasis). This assumption that Joan is "only pretending" about

her pregnancy, a position general among critics, reveals a critical belief that Joan really is a maid as she earlier claims, and as the historical record tends to support. However, if, on the one hand, Joan is a promiscuous sorceress, if the French innuendo is taken to supplement and validate English invective, then it is possible that Shakespeare's Joan (as opposed to the historical Joan) could be pregnant at this point. If this is the case, then the English are murderers of an innocent and become villains at the moment when the condemnation of the criminal should ideally crystallize their identities as those worthy to occupy God's fortress. If, on the other hand, we assert that Joan is "only pretending" when there is no more evidence to that effect than there is of its opposite, then we must acknowledge an unarticulated critical desire that has already solidified a significant aspect of her identity, sorcery scene, conflicting reports and innuendo notwithstanding. The critical desire for Joan not to be pregnant is as much an imposition as the judges' desire for her pregnancy to "prove" her villainy. As critics, we participate in, or, more precisely, we perform the suspect regulation of Joan's subjectivity that defines the English as judges.

Recognizing ourselves in this judicial tableau, we also confront our own confidence in historical knowledge. Do we see Joan, even in the privacy of the sorcery scene, as a unified subject, or does this *dramatis persona*, poised between history and fiction, reflect back to us our own desire for unity? The scene of privacy, like the sorcery scene or a standard soliloquy of the Hamlet type, is conventionally assumed to present

truth to the audience; the character alone on stage is not considered to be performing for an outside world in a potential state of duplicity, but is felt, rather, to be "being herself." No-one "acts" unless she feels she is being observed. The image of the "witch" onstage alone establishes conventional expectations of unmediated, "true," representation; however, the after-image of historical record, as Jackson's belief in Joan's dissimulation suggests, does in fact mediate, does place us in a liminal space between drama and history, visible evidence and desire. In manipulating the boundary between historical knowledge and dramatic construct, the two scenes of sorcery and condemnation manoeuvre us into a position where our sense of mastery is challenged by the dramatization of the notion that even the most likely images of truth give us access only to further duplicities in a treacherous labyrinth of contradiction. Exploiting our extratextual understanding that Joan is a maiden as historical record tells us, Shakespeare mobilizes history, not as a guarantor of validity, legitimacy or truth, but in order to challenge both history's status as knowledge and our confidence that privileged vision is equivalent to truth. In the interaction of these two scenes, as before the painting, *Las Meninas*, we become aware of our spectator consciousness and of the limitations that conceit of mastery implies. Pregnant or not, sorceress or not, historical figure or Shakespearean construct, Joan's uncertain and shifting position between history and fiction, between what we see and what we are told, challenges our belief that seeing is believing.

Throughout the trial scene Joan displays all of her masks and the transgressions of boundaries attendant upon them: disclaiming her peasant father, she claims noble birth, then heavenly descent; professing purity, she then "discovers" her pregnancy. Each persona--upstart peasant, holy maid, Amazon, mother, whore--is rehearsed and stripped away in the course of the action. What is left is not an inner core revealed to a gaze hungry to know her and thus to contain her, but rather a strange emptiness. She is pregnant and not pregnant, a maid and a whore, a pretender and a saviour, an enemy and a victim of ruthless injustice. This protean identity is that much more disturbing in the play because it does not succumb to the established epistemological paradigm that is grounded in the appearance/reality dichotomy.¹¹ Characters such as Talbot or Alençon and Reignier approach Joan from within a vertically oriented paradigm that figures contradiction as a familiar split between a surface appearance and a hidden, "deeper" reality. For Alençon and Reignier, this split can be figured as a typically feminine duplicity; for Talbot, it is a division between the visible earthly world and occulted underworld of witchcraft. But as Joan moves through the play, as Jackson argues, she is genuinely multiple, rather than duplicitous: "The changing presentation allows Joan to perform in one play inconsistent ideological functions that go much beyond discrediting the French cause or setting off by contrast the glories of English chivalry in its dying moments" (44). Joan's identity, she concludes, has less to do with unity and more to do "with the way in which a character is

perceived by the audience at a particular moment of dramatic time" (42). Jackson argues that the critical tendency is to assume Joan is a unified, if dissembling, character, a reading strategy that supposes that "temporally multiple suggestions of meaning collapse finally into an integrated pattern that transcends the temporal process of dramatic presentation" (42). She suggests that such a synchronic reading practice is inadequate to an understanding of Joan as a *dramatis persona*:

Perhaps it is a reflection as much on accepted critical standards of aesthetic unity as on the gullibility of individual critics that several have read this last scene [5.4] as Joan's admission of sexual activity with the whole French camp. Ridiculous as such a reading is, it does at least integrate Act 5 with what precedes, undercutting Joan's claims to virginity just as her conjuring undercuts her claims to divinity. . . . Similarly, Joan's claims to divine mission . . . become in such an interpretation synchronic with the action which follows them. (42)

In this mode of interpretation, Joan is as Talbot insists: a witch and a whore masquerading as a Holy Maid, whose earlier claims to purity and divinity are recuperated by the appeal to the figure of imposture. She is, in other words, "merely" playing. Jackson proposes replacing such a vertical, synchronic mode of interpretation with a horizontal, diachronic--that is temporal and dramatic--mode that would allow Joan to be apprehended, not merely as *duplicitous*, but as genuinely *contradictory* and *multiple*. In this sense, Joan is not lying when she presents her beautiful surface as proof of artlessness, as a sign, that is, that she has no "deeper" or hidden interior. Her rapid rehearsal of all of her various roles in the trial scene is a telescoped reiteration of what we have seen

throughout the play as she takes on one identity after another. Contradictory, but not duplicitous, Joan is not available to the regulative gestures of visible exclusion. This mode of definition operates in a vertical paradigm in which the occult is brought to light, the deeper meaning is brought to the surface and the doubleness of artifice is collapsed into the "real," which is, in this model, coextensive with the visible. Proliferating horizontally and diachronically, Joan's "character," as *dramatis persona*, has no inner substance to bring to the regulative light of the patriarchal, English, nationalist, judicial gaze. Exploiting this paradigmatic incommensurability, the sorcery scene and the trial scene insist that the stabilization of Joan's identity through the application of a synchronic notion of duplicity can only be partial, and can only point to further ruptures as infamy rebounds upon the judicial gaze itself.

Apprehended by both supporters and detractors alike who believe in the necessity of authentic interiority, Joan can finally be figured only as an emptiness, an effect of the clashing desires of those who see her; she is an empty signifier who becomes the repository for the anxieties attendant upon the collapsing of a discourse of hierarchy that makes this world intelligible to those who act within it. The destruction enacted by boys and women in the play, the abandonment of heroes by their armies, the language of demonization, with its reiteration of "dogs," "bastards," and "slaves," all signal the collapse of hierarchy and the identities staked upon it. In the wake of the definitive scenes

of the play, therefore, Joan exits as much an enigma as she ever was, strangely escaping the critical gaze by walking boldly disguised as herself. The violence of her death sentence does not produce the desired resolution into manageable dichotomies any more than does the sorcery scene, for the boundaries between the self and Other which are at stake in her demonization are repeatedly shown in the play to be permeable. Joan, as *dramatis persona*, is a representative of a way of being that is not dreamt of in the dichotomizing philosophy of the patriarchal society in which she moves. If she is "merely" acting, the masks she wears hide no "authentic" face. If the national identities of the masculine contenders in this play depend upon some kind of authenticity that they can define as Other, Joan's multiplicity provokes disturbing questions: If the Other is the self, who is the Other? Who is the self?

Notes

1. This disavowal, as I argue in Chapter One, following Joseph Lenz, is enabled in part by an association of theatrical spectacle with a disparaged embodiment, a degradation of the circulating power of the gaze in the theatre because of its perceived material and philosophical alliance with effeminacy and prostitution. The spectacles of Shakespeare's theatre, however, could never disavow that volatile exchange of glances between the crowd and the actors who stood under the same daylight; encircling the stage or even seated upon it, occupying on a good day at least three thousand different vantage points and sight lines, the spectators constantly broke through the tissue of fiction and history with shouts and a crowd's shifting energy of presence. Royal spectacle, because of its structural similarity to stage exposure, was constantly in danger of such contamination. Elizabeth's unearthly portrait representations (and I will discuss one, below), with their inhuman anatomy and their piercing eyes, like her careful deployment of her virginity as State policy, seek to hold at bay a corporeality through which her position in the circuit of the gaze can be challenged.

2. I am indebted to Margaret Owens and her article, "The Many-Headed Monster," for this notion.

3. Shakespeare will exploit Reignier's status as the pauper-King of Naples and Jerusalem later in this play and in the next, when Suffolk will trade on behalf of Henry VI a significant portion of France for Reignier's daughter, Margaret. Dismissed and figuratively demoted by a mere peasant woman in this scene, Reignier will later inherit a kingdom in an overturning of hierarchy that is the preoccupation of this play and the two that follow.

4. Christopher Pye further extends this "calculus of theatrical relations" of the gaze to include the theatre audience, "[f]or the moment Talbot 'overpeers the city,' overlooking the canon [sic] below and gazing out beyond the stage, is also the moment that the audience finds its own masterful and subjecting gaze returning upon it." At this instant of transgression, "the moment spectacle returns the gaze . . . the boundary between viewer and spectacle is rent" ("Market" 509). This returning gaze rebounds yet again in the form of a shot that strikes off Salisbury's cheek and eye.

5. Later editors have broken 1.4 at the moment Talbot charges to battle. Given the obvious structural congruity with the earlier scene and the continuity in the theme of humiliation and shame that opens scene four and concludes scene five, I would suggest that this break is misplaced.

6. Much is made of this metaphorical association in Shakespeare's narrative poem, *The Rape of Lucrece*, where the lustful Tarquin must force "The locks between her

[Lucrece's] chamber and his will" (1.303), and several stanzas are dedicated to his progress through the house to Lucrece's chamber. Lucrece herself identifies the rape as an assault on her battlements: "She says her subjects with foul insurrection / Have battered down her consecrated wall" (722-3), a breach that necessitates and rationalizes the suicide that will damn her soul:

'Her house is sacked, her quiet interrupted,
Her mansion battered by the enemy;
Her sacred temple spotted, spoiled, corrupted,
Grossly engirt with daring infamy.
Then let it not be called impiety
If in this blemished fort I make some hole
Through which I may convey this troubled soul. (1170-76).

Joan is not, of course, represented as a Lucrece in Talbot's and Burgundy's bawdy exchange, but she may be seen as a parody of this chaste maid. Instead of resisting the infiltration of the masculine attacker, Joan is condemned as one who welcomes it, for she is persistently described in sexual terms by the men of both camps. I thank Linda Woodbridge for bringing this aspect of the poem to my attention in her article, "Palisading the Body Politic."

7. The opposition between Gloucester and the Winchester is also exemplary of this conflation and the pull in the play against it. Gloucester tells Winchester, "Name not religion, for thou lov'st the flesh" (1.1.4), invoking a familiar exclusive dichotomy between the flesh and the spirit. But Winchester, who "gives whores indulgences to sin" (1.3.35), conflates in his hypocrisy these two categories and must be cast, therefore, as a villain. In the next play, when the two characters are more developed, we will see that Gloucester's desire for and belief in easily recognized dichotomous relations and social transparency will become his own fatal blindspot: he believes that sight can be the ground of stable knowledge, and dies because others, more canny in the manipulation of the visible, use this desire against him.

8. We can see a similar resistance to dichotomization of bodies and names in *Romeo and Juliet*, where Juliet's question, "What's in a name?" (2.2.43), reveals her desire to sever herself and Romeo from the divisiveness of naming: "Romeo, doff thy name; / And for thy name, which is not part of thee, / Take all myself" (2.2.47-9). Juliet's question, however, receives the most dire of responses, for the lovers cannot escape the social power of naming except through their bodies' death. So, too, when Romeo in despair seeks his name in some "vile part of [his] anatomy" so that he may "sack / The hateful mansion" (3.3.106-8), he cannot excise the offending name without cutting short

the body's life and damning in the process his immortal soul.

9. Henry's status as ideal can be further problematised by the fact that, like Joan, he and his line are upstarts and usurpers, whose appropriation of the spectacular language proper to the king creates enough disruption to occupy Shakespeare for the eight plays that deal with the legacy of the Lancaster dynasty.

10. Note too, that at the funeral of Henry V Bedford performs his own rhetorical conjuration, saying: "Henry the Fifth, thy ghost I invoke: / Prosper this realm, and keep it from civil broils!" (1.1.52-3). Granted that Henry is not here a fiend, the first invocation of otherworldly spirits in the play is nevertheless an English one.

11. Jonathan Dollimore discusses the emergence of empiricism in the Jacobean period, and the ways in which the turn to "objective" and observational science increased rather than decreased the sense of epistemological uncertainty: "For Montaigne (at least in the "Apologie") empiricism was inseparable from a nihilistic scepticism which led finally to a retreat into fideism. The anxiety of writers over the 'new philosophy' has been well documented, while the obsession in the period with the appearance-reality dichotomy reminds us of just how insecure their empiricism could be" (*Radical* 20).

Chapter Three

Althea's Brand: 2,3 *Henry VI* and the Body in Pain

Great is his comfort in this earthly vale,
Although by his sight his sin be multiplied.
(*1 Henry VI* 2.1.69-70)

When the English lords hale Joan to a violent death at the stake, it is not the stability of comfortable dichotomies that they achieve, but rather an uncomfortable silence, a momentary respite that comes at great cost to English identification with purity and moral rectitude. They do not really achieve an effective visible exclusion of the Maid, largely because there remains in the play some question as to whether she was ever truly "visible" at all. As Gabrielle Bernard Jackson observes: "We may anticipate . . . what those in Shakespeare's audience familiar with the conventions defining the woman warrior must also have anticipated: that the more free play Joan's attractive force is permitted, the more completely she will have to be feminized at the end of the play" (60). But the English assertion of self implicit in the violent act of definition in this scene seems to depend not merely on the exposure of exorcism, but on total obliteration. Administering a rhetorical *coup de grâce*, Richard literally condemns Joan to nothingness: "Break thou in pieces and consume to ashes" (*1 Henry VI* 5.4.92). Joan must not simply be punished; her very body must be destroyed, transmuted to waste and presumably, following standard

penal practice, scattered to the wind. Emphasizing even further the radical Othering of the "witch" is the fact that the ultimate outcome of the judges' circumvention of the protocols of evidence (and our own complicity in that wilful blindness) is hidden from our sight, beyond the ludic space in the nothingness outside of dramatic representation. We do not witness the execution. We hear no more of Joan of Arc, even indirectly by report. At the end of the play, the English hold the stage.

Silenced and consumed to ashes, Joan, however, is not completely banished from the stage, for her presence lingers ghostly in the figure of her doppelganger, Margaret of Anjou. It has become a critical commonplace to note that it is no coincidence that Joan's exit after her capture in 5.3 is balanced by the entrance of Margaret, the adulteress, queen, mother, warrior, and finally, ghostlike banning hag of the three following plays; the warrior Maid is replaced, this time at the heart of the English court, by the warrior Mother. But Joan, too, is a mother, or, at least, as Deborah Willis suggests, she mobilizes the language of motherhood, in her association with the Holy Mother, or, demonically, with imps who traditionally suckle at the witch's teat. This is the phallic mother, "a mother who at first seemed to have it all--breast, womb, and phallus--now reduced to futile stratagems that display only the relative powerlessness of the maternal body in the male public world" (Willis 101). This "relative powerlessness," however, must be acknowledged to be a highly qualified state, which contains in the occulted spaces of the female body a disruptive secrecy. It is, after all, the very pregnancy for which Joan is convicted that makes the English vulnerable to the rebounding infamy of the condemned. The desire to see this occulted body, to bring to light its inner recesses, to open it, to

know it, and to name it is the model that shapes the action of the three remaining plays of the tetralogy, and, in each case, where the enquiring gaze meets its object there is a confrontation with the radical disarticulation of systems of knowledge, hierarchy and meaning.

I conjure Joan from the dead at the beginning of this chapter because the ambiguous image of the pregnant/not pregnant woman being dragged off to execution marks a convergence of discourses particularly germane to a discussion of *2 and 3 Henry VI*: the indecisive nature of Joan's status as "mother" points to the genealogical anxiety precipitated by women's procreative power, while the spectacle of punishment points to the volatility of the spectacular body in pain. These discourses converge as well in the analogous image of Queen Margaret cradling her lover's severed head like a babe in arms (*2 Henry VI* 4.4). This startling image brings together motherhood and spectacle punishment in a way that illustrates the difference between the dismemberment of the criminal body that functions to consolidate the state, and the disarticulation of the social body that occurs when these mutilated bodies become ironic. The functional dismemberment of bodies by the machinery of justice ideally produces a grammar of power in a process of legitimation through which the self is consolidated by the identification and abjection¹ of the Other. The disarticulation of the social body, however, is dramatized when the abject subject erupts, as do Suffolk (or, at least, his head), and Eleanor of Cobham, within the circumscribed body of the "pure" social self. These haunting, disruptive figures are what I will call the post-penal subjects whose return and incomplete containment challenge sovereign legitimation.

Legitimacy is sorely lacking in the *Henry VI* plays. All three begin with an illustration of royal absence: in *1 Henry VI* it is the glorious sun-king, Henry V, who is mourned by the peers as messengers enter with news of foreign losses; *2 Henry VI* begins with a marriage by proxy and a loss of territory in an injurious nuptial contract; *3 Henry VI* opens with disinheritance and the image of the empty throne. It is this vacuum at the heart of the system of power that precipitates the fragmentation into overlapping and contradictory visual perspectives in *1 Henry VI*, and contributes to the ironic presentation of ceremonies of justice in the next two plays, where gestures of functional dismemberment become instead symptomatic of a pathological disarticulation familiar to us from *King John*. In these plays, the disintegration of the social body that begins in *1 Henry VI* continues as the boundaries between the self and the Other continue to erode.

II

As the king enters on one side of the stage and Suffolk and Margaret enter on the other, *2 Henry VI*, like the previous play, opens with a visual and rhetorical dramatization of the paralysis of the social body precipitated by the absence of sovereign power. Having stood for Henry in his marriage to Margaret by proxy, "In presence of the Kings of France and Sicil, / the Dukes of Orleans, Calaber, Bretagne, and Alençon, / Seven earls, twelve barons, and twenty reverend bishops" (1.1.6-8), Suffolk offers Henry his new queen:

In sight of England and her lordly peers
 [I] Deliver up my title in the queen
 To your most gracious hands, that are the substance
 Of that great shadow I did represent:
 The happiest gift that ever marquess gave,
 The fairest queen that ever king received. (1.1.10-16)

With its delineation of "substance" and "shadow," the speech refers to corporate embodiment, the union of the king and the institution of sovereignty, but is equally fraught with images of its collapse. As proxy, Suffolk is, within the carefully circumscribed ceremony of marriage, technically the king, a temporary "substance" that represents the "shadow" or the invisible, immaterial power, rights and Dignity of the royal office. However, the language of the gift in this speech shifts the meaning of these references into the register of absence and displacement, for, in order to "give" Margaret to Henry, Suffolk cannot be identified as a proxy for the king: as proxy, he has no will or desire that is not already the king's. This speech, in assuming that Margaret was ever in a position to be transferred as a gift, emphasizes, not Suffolk's identification with the king, as proxy demands, but rather his assertion of his own identity in claiming and then "giving" to Henry his "title" in the queen. The rhetorical irony of his speech becomes more apparent when we consider that Suffolk's "gift" never really leaves his hands, as his closing speech of *1 Henry VI* demonstrates:

Thus Suffolk hath prevailed; and thus he goes,
 As did the youthful Paris once to Greece,
 With hope to find the like event in love
 But prosper better than the Trojan did.
 Margaret shall now be queen, and rule the king;
 But I will rule both her, the king, and realm. (5.5.103-8)

The reference to Paris prefigures the adulterous relationship between the queen and the new-made Duke of Suffolk, an alliance that challenges Henry's ability to embody the symbolism and the power of sovereignty: as her fierce defence of the Lancastrian line demonstrates, Margaret is committed to the institution of sovereignty--the "shadow"--

but, as her relationship with a self-styled Paris suggests, her commitment to Henry himself--the "substance"--is less than devout. Margaret's desire, like Suffolk's, posits the treasonous possibility that these two aspects of kingship can be considered separately. Once this gap is identified, Suffolk can easily exploit it. In his speech, Suffolk identifies himself as the representation of this "shadow," suggesting the role-playing he undertakes as proxy. But his desire to take the place of the king in Margaret's affections includes a claim to the power of her rightful bedfellow, the king. In this context, the reference to Troy conjures the image of the Trojan horse, a disaster in the guise of a gift.

The image of the gift allows Suffolk rhetorically both to claim the "shadow" and to occupy in a clandestine way the position of "substance." "I tell thee, Pole, when in the city Tours / Thou ran'st a-tilt in honor of my love / . . . / I thought King Henry had resembled thee" (1.3.48-51), complains Margaret, verbalizing the visual and rhetorical usurpation effected in the opening scene. Suffolk's list of French royal and ecclesiastical witnesses to his marriage (1.1.6-8), in conjunction with his invocation of the "sight of England and her lordly peers" (1.1.10), mobilizes the language of spectacular ceremony and social visibility which ostensibly legitimizes and honours the marriage of Henry and Margaret. Rather than guaranteeing the literal meaning of his speech as proxy, however, this language reveals another truth, presenting to us an image of Suffolk, not standing *for*, but occupying the *place* of the king before these legitimating gazes. In the ironic turn of the language of the gift, the invocation of the observing peers paints them as witnesses, therefore, not of the king's nuptials, but of his visual displacement and absence. The image is anticipated by the closing scenes of the previous play, where Reignier, sealing the terms

of the nuptial agreement, embraces Suffolk "as I would embrace / The Christian prince King Henry, were he here" (*1 Henry VI* 5.3.171-72). Reignier's embrace of the "king" is juxtaposed to Suffolk's snatching of a kiss from the princess as a "loving token to his majesty" (5.3.181). "That for thyself" (5.3.185), Margaret responds, placing Suffolk's acceptance of both the kiss and Reignier's embrace in their proper relation as expressions of Henry's purely instrumental, if necessary, presence in the adulterous relationship. Henry materializes in the tableau as a shadow of Suffolk's desire, and the exchange of kisses and embraces is a physical rendering of Suffolk's earlier linguistic slip:

SUFFOLK. If thou wilt condescend to be my--
 MARGARET. What?
 SUFFOLK. His love. (5.3.120-21)

Visually and linguistically, Henry is a last-minute substitution, a front for a relation enabled by his presence but inscribing his absence.

So great is Suffolk's confidence in his ability to upstage the king, that he broaches Henry's absence as prudent state policy. In the closing scene of *1 Henry VI*, Gloucester objects that Henry's marriage to Margaret is a dishonourable breach of contract with the Earl of Armagnac. To Gloucester's exasperated question, "How shall we then dispense with that contract / And not deface your [Henry's] honor with reproach?" (5.5.28-9),

Suffolk responds:

As doth a ruler with unlawful oaths,
 Or one that at a triumph, having vowed
 To try his strength, forsaketh yet the lists
 By reason of his adversary's odds. (5.5.30-3)

Suffolk proposes that, given Margaret's superior "odds," Henry may escape the previous contract by figuratively withdrawing his spectacular presence and, with it, his masculine

strength. The image contrasts sharply both with Margaret's references to Suffolk's prowess in the lists and her own reputed "valiant courage and undaunted spirit" (5.5.70). Henry is defeated by greater martial odds before he ever enters the tournament of marriage. Indeed, his very participation in the marital joust is predicated upon his forsaking of the lists.

This absence and its consequences are rehearsed several times in 2 and 3 *Henry VI*. Act one, scene three begins with Petitioners appealing to the Protector, Humphrey of Gloucester, and being intercepted by Suffolk and Margaret; the king is clearly displaced from the commons' understanding of both the system of justice and its corruption. In this scene, in fact, Henry speaks but nine lines of a possible 218: three of them are questions, in one he pleads for peace, and the remaining ones express only his lack of interest in state affairs. His first act of government takes the form of an abstention over the choice of regent of France: "For my part noble lords, I care not which: / Or Somerset or York, all's one to me" (1.3.99-100). In the opening scene of 3 *Henry VI*, York sits in the throne while Henry stands to disinherit his son in favour of the house of York, a decision that, as Margaret observes, can only lead to his death: "To entail [York] and his heirs unto the crown, / What is it but to make thy sepulchre / And creep into it before thy time?" (1.1.235-37). Fulfilling a pattern of displacement and effacement, this act of disinheritance makes Henry a ghost, a king in name only who "shalt reign but by their [the Yorkists'] sufferance" (1.1.234). Having thus divorced the Crown from its power (dramatically signalled by the divorce of the powerful Margaret from the bed of the politically impotent king), Henry steals into England from exile in Scotland, "To greet my own land with my

wishful sight" (*3 Henry VI* 3.1.14), only to utter a eulogy to his absence: "No, Harry, Harry, 'tis no land of thine; / Thy place is filled, thy sceptre wrung from thee, / Thy balm washed off wherewith thou was anointed" (3.1.15-17). His (appropriately clerical) disguise signals metonymically his role as a Player-King, a proxy for his own throne. When the disguise is removed, he is revealed to be neither the holy palmer he aspires to be, nor a king, but, literally, a has-been. Calling himself "Harry," the king marks his demotion from Dignity to mere, unanointed, man.

This discourse on loss is framed by the commentary of the watching Keepers who make him prisoner to the new king, Edward IV. The Keepers argue, "We are true subjects to the king, King Edward" (3.1.94), to which Henry replies: "So would you be again to Henry / If he were seated where King Edward is" (3.1.95-6). As Henry's response suggests, the crown changes hands enough times in these plays as to be not only confusing but also something that verges on the absurd. The absence that Henry represents is not limited to himself, but extends to the institution of kingship. The symbols of royalty, "the balm, the sceptre, and the ball, / The sword, the mace, the crown imperial" (*Henry V* 4.1.246-7)--bandied back and forth between interchangeable incumbents, divested by testamentary disposition, abdicated, stolen, recovered--are no longer conjoined in sacred union to mortality and have themselves become mere cyphers. Such a disconnection incapacitates the Crown and the Body politic, as Kantorowicz observes: "[The jurists] had to admit that their personified immortal Dignity was unable to act, to work, to will, or to decide without the debility of mortal men who bore the Dignity and yet would return to dust" (437). The ramifications of this disease of the royal corporate

body are manifest in the instability that infects the social body. Even the keepers, judiciously advocating the distinction between *de facto* and *de jure* sovereignty, absolve themselves of treason in a gesture that indicates their awareness of their own unstable identities: "For we were subjects but while you were king" (3.1.81). Henry's absence, his inability to maintain the conjunction of mortality to the ideal, opens the space for a factionalism that both divests him of identity ("No, Harry, Harry"), and incapacitates Dignity and drains it of meaning.

An analogous draining of meaning occurs among the peers, who, like Bedford at the opening of *1 Henry VI*, find their arms to be paralysed without the will of a king to move them. In the first scene of *2 Henry VI*, this crisis is one of national identity as it is articulated, first, through divergent deployments of the body, and especially the injured or mutilated body, and, second, in the fraught relationship posited between the noble body and the state. Having accepted his "gift" from Suffolk's hands, Henry attempts to forge unity through naming, first by promoting Suffolk to duke, and then by thanking the peers for their support: "Thanks uncle Winchester / Gloucester, York, Buckingham, Somerset, / Salisbury, and Warwick" (1.1.66-8). In addition to performing the practical function of identifying these various lords to the audience, Henry's nomination of these ancestral titles attempts to capitalize on a connection between the peerage and the territory of the nation through an appeal to a tradition of occupation, lineage, inheritance and stability. By conjuring the image of a unified social body, Henry hopes that he can ratify an ill-considered marriage. The recitation of names, however, echoes Suffolk's ironic appeal to the French and English peers in his "gift" speech which has already deflated the

importance of the witness's role in such sanctification and ratification. Furthermore, the invocation of the tradition of stability and nationalism in the king's thanks, uttered in the context of his creation of William de la Pole as "the *first* Duke of Suffolk" (1.1.61 my emphasis), further undermines the power of such an appeal to nomination. Himself evacuated of substance by his appearance as the upstaged and defaced husband (in the sense that he cares, like a tenant, for the crop of another's land), Henry cannot mobilize a unified social body whose association with tradition and nation can solidify his position as king. In this sense, this scene is an early, negative prefiguring of the more successful political posturing of Claudius's first speech in *Hamlet*. Not only is there immediate evidence in Henry's case that the Court has not "freely gone, / With this affair along" (*Hamlet* 1.2.15-16), but Suffolk's rhetorical and actual usurpation of Henry's place makes Henry's appeal to the social body an empty one. Henry is manifestly not the head of this body.

The embodied state that Henry attempts and fails to muster in his "thanks" speech is present, but resistant to his desire. Reading the terms of the nuptial agreement, Gloucester is struck with a "sudden qualm . . . at the heart" (1.1.53), registering the loss of territory contained in the articles as a bodily infirmity that has, he says, "dimmed my eyes that I can read no further" (1.1.54). Protector of the realm and the peer most associated with the nation as *universitas*, Gloucester's identification with the land makes it impossible for him to read or speak the terms of its loss. Gloucester's next speech invokes the dead Henry V in a familiar litany of loss: "What? Did my brother Henry spend his youth, / His valor, coin and people in the wars?" (*2 Henry VI* 1.1.76-7), he asks, only to see his nation

sold in a nuptial league? Here, Gloucester makes a distinction between honourable and dishonourable relations of the body to the territory of the nation. The first is a martial relation, the second, a debased, marital one, where the nation is lost to concupiscence.² He then moves to a nomination that echoes the earlier "gift" and "thanks" speeches: "Have you yourselves, Somerset, Buckingham, / Brave York, Salisbury, and victorious Warwick, / Received deep scars in France and Normandy?" (1.1.83-5). Positing a social body defined as martial and sacrificial, Gloucester's nomination challenges both Suffolk's and Henry's self-serving manipulation of naming. Unlike the earlier lists of witnesses, Gloucester's roll-call appeals to an image of a state written in scars upon the bodies of peers who are united in a common martial and political effort to keep the French in thrall. York's assertion that "France should have torn and rent my very heart / Before I would have yielded to this league" (1.1.123-4) identifies the mutilated body of the noble soldier as the external sign of the *universitas* as it is expressed in a discourse of nationalism, for the heart of the martial hero is equivalent to the nation itself. In contrast to this model of state embodiment is Warwick's anguished sense that his scars are made meaningless without the territory they represent: "And are the cities that I got with wounds / Delivered up again with peaceful words? / Mort Dieu!" (1.1.119-21). Divested by "peaceful words" of the conquered land that makes their sacrifices meaningful, the peers' bodily signs become unintelligible cyphers.

Nation written on the body in this case is made meaningful in opposition to France as a strongly defined external Other; without this Other, the body's pain can articulate only absence and loss. In light of the repeated references in contemporary chronicles³ to

Margaret as at least one of the catalysts for the intestine wars, Gwyn Williams' assertion that her affair with Suffolk "is neither historically nor dramatically called for" (318) is in need of qualification. In Shakespeare's text, it is Suffolk's desire to "unnerve the English, by corrupting them with his own enthusiasms" (Richmond, *Political Plays* 27) that exploits the vital absence of the king and imports the Other into the state in the form of adulterous marriage. From this nuptial league flows, as Robert Fabyan notes in his *New Chronicles of England and France* (c. 1516), the loss of French territory, the death of Suffolk and the rule of the queen "to the great disprofite of the kyng and his realme" (qtd. in Lee 202). Hugh Richmond supports Polydore Virgil's assertion that "by means of a woman, sprang up a newe mischiefe that sett all out of order" (qtd. in Lee 205), arguing that Suffolk introduces "into the heart of England a woman who is to sap the inner vitality as effectively as Joan has managed to impair its outward expression. England loses one dangerous enemy at the very moment when its own weakness creates another" (25-6). Margaret is in this sense just as Suffolk describes her on their first meeting: "As plays the sun upon the glass streams, / Twinkling another counterfeited beam, / So seems this gorgeous beauty to mine eyes" (*1 Henry VI* 5.3.62-4). Like Joan of Arc, Margaret, whose "sight did ravish" (*2 Henry VI* 1.1.32), will reflect the light of the royal sun and dazzle the eyes of her lover and her husband.

But her light is "counterfeit," and so is she: a wife, she is also a consort; a queen, she acts like a king; a woman, she will go to war like her predecessor and doppelganger, Joan of Arc, and act the man. She is counterfeit money which passes into the English economy to destabilize it from within. The nuptial league represents for the peers the loss

of the externalized Other against whom the martial body is defined. For York, the ceded territories of the English empire "Bear that proportion to my flesh and blood / As did the fatal brand Althea burnt / Unto the prince's heart of Calydon" (1.1.230-33). Here, York, who thinks most like a king, sees his flesh as one with the nation. The reference to Althea, however, places at the heart of his patriotic embodiment the image of the destroying mother who will sacrifice the son for her pride, figuratively setting the stage for the Amazonian Margaret who will slay children to achieve her ends. The presence of the destroying mother in this speech reveals both the vulnerability of the martial body to a violence that can make and unmake the body-as-state, and the more terrifying possibility that this violence is always already within the self: York's most fervent declaration of masculine martial identification with the nation is impregnated with a figure of destructive feminine power.

Margaret represents the Other whose eruption within the borders of the self divests the peers of territory. But her "counterfeit beam" can be nothing more than counterfeit because Henry's sovereign light is itself no more than a pale reflection, and the "glassy streams" are not clear mirrors, but waters troubled by the clashing ambitions of the English Court. The disarticulation that "Defac[es] the monuments of conquered France, / Undoing all as all had never been!" (1.1.102-3) is blamed on the influence of the "enemy," Margaret. But Margaret as counterfeit can only function so well because she so precisely resembles the currency already in use in the Court, where the *modus operandi* of opposing factions is to "pluck the crown from feeble Henry's head" (5.1.2), no matter what the consequences to the nation. Margaret's disruptive presence is only a figure for a disease

whose etiology can be traced to a discourse of royal abnegation. Like Joan, Margaret is a lightning rod for the forces of division and mutilation already fomenting in the state. The opening scene dramatizes the structural turn from an outside enemy to the enemy within. But, like Joan, Margaret is defined as an Other whose counterfeit presence challenges such pat dichotomization.

The doubleness of an Other who is also the self appears as a confusing grammatical inconsistency, for example, in York's speech at the close of the first scene. Of the loss of French territory he says, "I cannot blame them all. What is't to them? / 'Tis thine they give away, and not their own" (1.1.218-19), and counsels himself: "Then, York, be still awhile, till time do serve" (1.1.246). York addresses himself both in the first (I) and in the second person (thine, York), revealing his divided state of mind as he debates the issue of his claim to the throne; he steps out of himself momentarily to confer upon himself the lands he hopes to rule. The split pronouns body forth in language the psychology of the mole as York divides himself psychically into two: the "York" who, as a public face, will be still and will "make a show of love to proud Duke Humphrey" (1.1.239), and the "I," the private self who will engage in a secret agenda. York is in some ways like the Boy at Orleans tower (*1 Henry VI* 1.4) who stands in the foreground, seeing, but somehow unseen: "Watch thou," he says to himself, "and wake when others be asleep, / To pry into the secrets of the state" (*2 Henry VI* 1.1.247-8). Unlike the glory of the dead Henry V, whose brilliance beats back the returning gaze, this is a secret gaze enabled by a split between York's public and private selves. The blinding and panoptic gaze of Henry V has gone out of the world, and what is left is a "prying" into secret places

that depends upon York's ability to split himself in two, and to consign a part of himself to darkness.

III

Framed by two instances of duplicity--York's plan to show a false face to the Court and Suffolk's ironic manipulation of the protocols of ceremonial visibility--the first scene of the play locates the terms of the conflict in a discourse of what Luke Wilson calls "epistemological resistance" (62). Knowledge of the body's secret interior depends, Wilson argues, on an understanding of the body as something injured, of injury as the necessary precondition of knowledge about the self which is otherwise limited to an experience of a visible surface:

But precisely this space [our bodies as *substantia extensa*] is marked out by an epistemologically resistant natural margin; we originally caught sight of the *inside* of the body only by violence and at the risk of pain, either for ourselves or for some other creature. In order for the body to function properly, and thus to be what we believe it really to be, it must deny us access to it--to our selves in other words--either literally or analogically. (62)

The *whole* body, then, is one that shrouds a necessary mystery: the exposure of the secret of life to the inquiring gaze marks life's tantalizing dissolution. Knowledge of the hidden interior of things, then, is both enabled and thwarted by the violent penetration of the body by the gaze. In this sense, the wounded body as the site of revelation is also a site of resistance to the desire to see into it and to know it. This model of a founding epistemological violence has interesting implications for the question of duplicity in this play, for this "natural margin" between the visible surface and the shrouded mystery of interior spaces has its psychological and political analogue in York's split-pronoun division

of self into a public false face and an occulted will. The violence of this psychic schism in the identity of the conspirator has important implications for the discourses of justice and for the social body which depends upon these discourses for its protection and consolidation. Violence, Derek Cohen asserts, is "an inherent feature of the political system of patriarchal authority," and, while it may be coded as "anti-social" and "unnatural," it is nevertheless "the very system that so condemns it that produces it and, occasionally, needs and depends on it" (1). This dependence upon an epistemological wounding can be demonstrated by three brief examples: the trial of Thump v. Horner; the trial and penance of Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester; and the anatomization of Gloucester's dead body.

Accused by his prentice of treason, Horner the Armorer is brought before the king and Protector to answer for himself. Peter Thump, the prentice, swears "By these ten bones" (1.3.188), the fingers of his hands, that Horner said that York was the rightful king. Horner, denying the charge, also swears, "God is my witness, I am falsely accused" (1.3.186-7), and insists that he has "good witness" (1.3.198) of Peter's malice toward him. The arguments of prosecution and defence neatly map out a triad of terms in the visible economy of justice: the body ("these ten bones"), the invisible omniscient (God), and the unbiased third party ("good witness"). Peter appeals to the material fact of his body, Horner to the omniscience of God; neither of these guarantors of truth is available to immediate cross-examination in the temporal court. Furthermore, Horner's "good witness" is never given leave to speak onstage, does not arbitrate between the two appeals to dumb significant, the body and God, and in fact only complicates the matter. Horner's

insistence that he "hath witness of his servant's malice" (1.3.207), which contradicts Peter's eyewitness, but uncorroborated, account, causes Gloucester to turn for resolution to the violence of single combat. Like our own "good witness" in the sorcery scene and the trial of Joan la Pucelle in *1 Henry VI*, this "good witness" does not produce resolution, but creates instead a suspension of temporal judgement and a deferral to a higher court. "Good witness," for all its possible relevance, must ultimately drop out of the picture altogether in order to allow an unmediated correspondence between God and the bodies of the accused in trial by combat. Peter defeats the drunken Horner and the king declares that by Horner's death "we do perceive his guilt, / And God in justice hath revealed to us / The truth and innocence of this poor fellow" (2.3.96-98). With Horner's death, the epistemologically resistant margin between the visible and the occult has been breached, and through this breach is revealed God's truth. And in that flash of illumination as the traitor shouts, "I confess, I confess treason" (2.3.90), is a familiar consignment of the corrupt to darkness. This visible exclusion solidifies the identity of the innocent, manifested materially in Peter's unbroken, whole body as he follows the king from the stage to collect his reward.

But there is another character who survives this trial by combat, but who cannot be considered whole. This is, of course, the Duke of York, who has just watched his proxy, Horner, confess his treason and die. Horner dies York's death, for Horner has uttered no treason that we have not heard directly from the duke himself. This death by proxy is a visible analogue of York's psychically split self. York's participation in this scene of trial, therefore, produces the analogous structural split of the scene's dramatic irony. A

structural, and therefore fundamental, form of epistemological wounding, dramatic irony is a kind of incision in the body of the extant action that reveals to the audience's inquiring (and voyeuristic) gaze a truth that is invisible to the characters onstage. It plays on the gap between the visible evidence and our knowledge of an occult circumstance that changes the meaning of the dramatized events. York's duplicity, in other words, produces a split in the visual plane of the action which depends upon our "good witness" for its actualization.⁴ Until the final act of the play when York openly declares his claim to the throne, such duplicity throws into question even the evidence of an omniscient will, such as God's justice in the trial by combat, where the wounded body is not a sight of pure revelation, but is, rather, the site of ironic evasion: York literally uses Horner's revelation of treason as a cover for his own treasonous agenda.⁵ When York exits the stage, like Horner, un-whole, but nevertheless free as the whole-some Peter Thump, we understand that something essential has escaped the regulating gestures of the visible economy in the scene.

In its ideal manifestation, the trial by combat reveals God's knowledge of truth, but the death of the traitor serves additionally in the established iconography of justice to declare the presence of a king with the power and authority to enforce that justice. Such power is here obliquely, if inadequately, registered by Henry's promise of reward to the innocent Peter Thump. But the presence of Kingship, its divine and immaterial power as head of the state, is suspect in this play which spends much of the time leading up to a series of judiciary decisions and visible exclusions demonstrating, as I have argued above, the absence of that power. Such an absence precipitates, not only an increasing

fragmentation in both the national psyche and the form of its representation (in the increasing pressure of dramatic irony, for example), but also a kind of iconographical drift: the signs of judicial retribution become increasingly inadequate to the task of ensuring the abjection of those subjects who threaten royal identity and power. Eleanor of Cobham's attainder and her penitential parade reproduce the iconographical instability of discourses of justice. Another proxy for the clandestine machinations of the Court's factions, Eleanor turns, not to battle, but to witchcraft, a form of knowledge metaphysically opposed, but structurally similar, to the trial by combat insofar as it attempts to access hidden knowledge.

Like the trial by combat, the conjuring scene performs an exposure, a bringing of knowledge from darkness into the light. Assuring Eleanor that "wizards know their times" (1.4.13), the conjurer, Bolingbroke, works in "Deep night, dark night, the silence of the night" (1.4.15) to raise a spirit from the underworld into his "hallowed verge" (1.4.21). But the true exposure here is, of course, of Eleanor herself who, entrapped by Hume who acts as agent for Suffolk and York, finds that they "watched [her] at an inch" (1.4.41). Her positioning in this scene "*aloft*" (1.4.12 *s.d.*) emphasises her doubled position as both overseer and the object of the gaze, recalling the ill-fated visual mastery of the generals in Orleans tower in the previous play.

Eleanor's exposure, it seems, is complete. As in the trial by combat, however, "good witness" in this scene, namely, the paper onto which Southwell writes the spirit's answers, performs a similarly obfuscating function that signals the slippage of the protocols of evidence and the discourse of justice these protocols subtend. The scene

strangely presents the answers to the Duchess's questions twice: once from the spirit itself, and once when York reads them from the confiscated paper. The repetition is significant for the way that it stages York's scene of reading as both seeing and blindness. The words uttered by the spirit mark the exposure both of occulted knowledge to the light and of Eleanor to censure for treason, and are thus doubly invested with insight. However, as York is quick to point out, the prophecies are themselves cryptic and duplicitous:

'The duke yet lives that Henry shall depose;
But him outlive, and die a violent death.'
Why, this is just 'Aio te, Aeacida,
Romanos vincere posse.' (1.4.58-61)

The latin oracle that York quotes is significant: "I say that you, descendant of Aeacus, can overcome the Romans," or "I say that the Romans can overcome you, descendant of Aeacus." These oracles, "hardly attained and hardly understood" (1.4.69) are polysemous, contradictory and, in York's view, meaningless beyond their instrumental value as evidence of treason.⁶ York is unable to see that it is himself who, like Pyrrhus for whom his latin oracle was originally intended, will win the war for the crown only at the high price of the eradication by the end of the tetralogy of both royal houses. York's blindness is particularly interesting, for the grammatical difficulty of the oracle duplicates his own grammatical inconsistency in the first scene of the play: the truth of the oracle is manifest to those who, like ourselves, have the privilege of historical hindsight, but it is invisible to York who cannot see himself in the words. The oracle's strategy of evasion is precisely the one chosen by York himself--to hide in plain sight. Presenting the prophecies to us twice, the scene duplicates the trial by combat that comes before it. In a pattern that

relentlessly reiterates the instability of knowledge based on a paradigm of exposure, the oracle's presentation equates visibility, not with revelation, but with blindness.

In the context of the misprision that defines this scene, the exposure of Eleanor proves to be, like the oracle itself, dangerously polysemous. At first blush, Eleanor's sentence for sorcery--three day's open penance, and after this public shaming, internal banishment in the Isle of Man (2.3.11-12)--appears to be a clear-cut example of visible exclusion in its most ritualized form. Walking "[barefoot] in a white sheet, [with verses pinned upon her back] and a taper burning in her hand" (2.4.16 *s.d.*, editor's interjections), Eleanor must first become a spectacle, the object of a disparaging, common gaze, in order to make public both her repentance and the social stigma of her banishment from her community (and, incidentally, from the play). Such banishment is a necessary correlative to the penal spectacle, an erasure that marks the final triumph of justice. Jean Howard, describing the physical deterioration of Jane Shore in Heywood's *Edward IV*, identifies this necessary dis-appearance of the transgressor as integral to the process of rehabilitation: "Of course, Jane's spiritual virtue is represented as increasing as her physical body dwindles. . . . And this criminalized figure is morally rehabilitated only when she becomes in effect a disembodied spirit: an exemplification of total self-abnegation" ("Forming" 116). The ritual of penance, Lionello Puppi observes, involves a redemption, through the "agony of torture and death" (or in the case of Eleanor, public humiliation), with the necessary addition of the condemned person's acknowledgement that the punishment is just. This resignation, he argues is "the only way in which one's sins could be ransomed" (46). As Pieter Spierenburg notes: "In the eyes of the authorities the staging of

executions achieved its most beautiful form of ultimate success when it came to a kind of overall victory of the condemned" (50). This "ultimate success" demonstrates, according to J.A. Sharpe, that the condemned person, through the very act of his/her exclusion, has been "morally reintegrated into the society whose laws they had broken" ("Dying Speeches" 33). It is not enough that the condemned should be cast out beyond the circumference of a society defined by its adherence to law and its unquestioned membership in the body of the *universitas*; this abjected subject must herself ratify her own exclusion, must acknowledge her "victory" in a particular ritual that also ratifies the state.⁷ This is the price of her "ransom," the exemplary self-abnegation that can discharge the debt to the state and the king she has offended. This "civil facade" of quiescent capitulation both masks and reinforces the power of the sovereign who demands it, as Robert Cover observes: "It is, of course, grotesque to assume that the civil facade is 'voluntary' except in the sense that it represents the defendant's autonomous recognition of the overwhelming array of violence ranged against him, and of the hopelessness of resistance or outcry" (211). In accepting the civil facade, the condemned reveals himself to be "author of his own punishment" (Pye, *Regal Phantasm*, 112) in a way that allows royal power both to declare itself and to escape the accusatory eye of the spectator who sees the Crown enacting the very violence it condemns. "Strumpet, thy words condemn thy brat and thee" (*1 Henry VI* 5.4.83), declares Richard as he consigns Joan to death at the pyre, just as Henry VI greets the news of Eleanor's transgression by identifying her as the "author" of her own punishment: "O God, what mischiefs work the wicked ones, / Heaping confusion on their own heads thereby!" (*2 Henry VI* 2.1.180-81).⁸

"Rehabilitation," therefore, codes as reintegration the abjection of the condemned, who must acknowledge the correctness of the very boundary that marks him or her as Other. A wounding that brings hidden guilt to the light of the public gaze, the exclusion of the transgressor is a "rehabilitation," rather, of the whole-some social body.

The quiescent acceptance by the condemned of this designation, along with the ritualized and highly visible exclusion of the offender, allows royal power to "overcome 'obstacles in historical time,' to control the incidents that are part of the course of history" (Puppi 42). But the *representation* of this ritual in these plays becomes a more complex and potentially disruptive issue. The visible exclusion of Eleanor occurs immediately following the incomplete exorcism in the trial by combat and the death of Horner, York's traitor-by-proxy. While Eleanor, barefoot in a sheet, looks the part of the penitent, the form of her exclusion partakes of the earlier scene's excessive resistance to resolution. This excessiveness is signalled on a basic level by the division of lines in the scene. Of 110 lines, Eleanor speaks 56 of them, or 51% of the scene. For a woman who is presumably presented to us as a spectacular exemplum of self-abnegation, this loquaciousness is at odds with the protocols of penitence. Recognizing the break with decorum, Gloucester attempts to recast his wife in the proper role according to the expectations of the civil facade, first and foremost by stilling her tongue: "Thy greatest help is quiet, gentle Nell. / I pray thee sort thy heart to patience; / These few days' wonder will be quickly worn" (2.4.67-9). The protocols of penance demand a silent spectacle, or one that speaks a carefully scripted acknowledgement that public shame is linked justly to a private guilt. Seeing oneself as a shameful spectacle turns shame ideally into the "workable shape of loss

and guilt" (Pye, *Regal Phantasm* 137) which, in the ritual of the scaffold, is the true victory of the condemned. But Eleanor expresses no guilt, although she keenly feels her shame. She comes close to the formula of the gallows speech at her sentencing where she replies to the king's doom, "Welcome is banishment. Welcome were my death" (2.3.14), but this brief nod to custom is far outweighed by the long lament of the penance scene where she rather upbraids Gloucester who "stood by whilst I, his forlorn duchess, / Was made a wonder and a pointing-stock / To every idle rascal follower" (2.4.45-47).

Gloucester responds to this accusation with a further appeal to protocol, the breach of which, he argues, only spreads the infamy of the condemned: "Wouldst have me rescue thee from this reproach? / Why, yet thy scandal were not wiped away, / But I in danger for the breach of law" (2.4.64-5). Without the expression of guilt, Eleanor cannot discharge her debt to the state: "My shame will not be shifted with my sheet. / No, it will hang upon my richest robes / And show itself, attire me how I can" (2.4.107-9). Using her voice not to repent but to blame, Eleanor does not fulfil the penal contract; she is not "reintegrated" as one who accepts her own exclusion, and the state, in this breach of contract, remains ritually unpurified.

As Molly Smith observes of the more radical spectacle of public execution, the social relevance of the exercise depends "on its proper exactness through the collusion of all participants . . . and the slightest deviation could lead to redefinitions and reinterpretations of power relations between subject and sovereign" (226). Eleanor's vociferous condemnation of the Court responsible both for her attainder and her punishment is just such a reinterpretation that evacuates the spectacle of penance of its

consolidating function. So far is the erstwhile duchess from accepting the "freedom" of guilt that she links her accusations of Gloucester to a warning and prophesy of his death at the hands of "Suffolk--he that can do all in all / With her that hateth thee and hates us all-- / And York and impious Beaufort, that false priest" (2.4.51-3). Having fallen to their machinations and entrapment, Eleanor sees what Gloucester, with his faith in forthright appearances, cannot: "And fly thou how thou canst, they'll entangle thee. / But fear not thou until thy foot be snared, / Nor never seek protection from thy foes" (2.4.55-7).

Gloucester, Eleanor fears, is oblivious to the multiple duplicities of the Court, at least in part because he exists in a paradigm of wholeness that is construed to be entirely superficial and unified. Avraham Oz, speaking in this case of Tamora in *Titus Andronicus*, links this kind of integration to an inability to see: "What hinders her from proper reading is her vain pretence to integrated knowledge, [o]f the kind that blinds Caesar from seeing through the conspirators. . . . However, that particular ability to read the world 'with the case of eyes' (*Lear* 4.6.145) is reserved to those whose identity is torn, either by genuine disguise or, in some cases, torn as their limbs" (3). Eleanor is just such a torn identity whose body appears to be whole but whose psyche is split by the humiliations of penitence:

Ah, Gloucester, teach me to forget myself.
 For, whilst I think I am thy married wife
 And thou a prince, Protector of this land,
 Methinks I should not thus be led along,
 Mailed up in my shame, with papers on my back,
 And followed with a rabble that rejoice
 To see my tears and hear my deep-fet groans. (2.4.27-33)

Her abjection presages Humphrey's own fall, for, as she argues, her loss of identity would not be possible were her husband still "a prince, Protector of this land" (2.4.29). Just as her identity is inextricably bound to his, so is his fate bound to her own. A "forlorn duchess," Eleanor sees herself as one severed from her title, reduced to a spectacle of shame, unable to show a token acceptance of guilt that would allow for even a negative assertion of self. The image of a self "mailed up" in shame further emphasizes the split between her inner identity and the outward show. Bereft of "this world's eternity," (2.4.90), the pleasures and dignities of title, she finds that she is "but reproach" (2.4.96), no longer by the end of the scene even a person, but a state of disgrace, not merely an outsider, but the outside itself. The only way that Eleanor can accept her new state, without fulfilling the penal contract and accepting guilt as well, is to erase her former identity completely, to consign herself to darkness: "No; dark shall be my light, and night my day; / To think upon my pomp shall be my hell" (2.4.40-1). This invocation of hell is in sharp contrast to the contemporary understanding that the body's torment on earth made possible acceptance in heaven. Henry Goodcole describes in 1618, for example, a condemned man who came to the scaffold "like a lambe going to the slaughter . . . prepared to suffer the same willingly, patiently, and ioyfully: and our confidence is such of him, that he is received into the fold of that most blessed heavenly flocke" (qtd. in Sharpe, "Dying Speeches" 152). Unlike the penitential convict, who goes like a lamb to the slaughter in order to be accepted like a lamb into the fold, Eleanor cannot shed her penitential robes as Goodcole's condemned sheds his criminal life. Therefore, she is left in

a space of darkness to make a "hell" of her inability either to forget her "pomp" or to embrace her life of banishment "willingly, patiently, and joyfully."

This darkness is integral to the complexities of the thematic relationship of the penitential spectacle to the factionalism and conspiracy of the play. Like York's act of reading in the conjuring scene, this scene also encodes dark as light and night as day. On an individual level, Eleanor's abjection is complete, for she leaves the stage, not a duchess, but "reproach." In the larger frame of reference, however, the content of the scene, her vociferous refusal to repent and her astute warnings to her husband, along with the scene's placement between the trial of Horner and the attainder of Gloucester, serve together to realign the spectacle with the disarticulation of the machinery and language of justice. If, as J. A. Sharpe asserts, the condemned were "central participants in a theatre of punishment" ("Dying Speeches" 156), then the very acknowledgement of the theatricality of the event admits the possibility of a gap: resistant to the role of penitent, Eleanor, "mailed up" in her penitential gown, wears it like a costume. Like Horner, Eleanor suffers the banishment proper to the scheming conspirators who as yet go unexposed. The fact of her dabbling with witchcraft, like Horner's dying confession of treasonous speech, justifies her punishment, but the fact that the visible exclusion of these petty traitors only deflects attention from the real threat to the state undermines the consolidation her abjection should effect.

The trials of Eleanor and Horner illustrate a complex interplay of blindness and insight that calls into question established discourses that stabilize power through visible exclusion. The penal and penitent bodies, ideally sites of truth, become in the duplicitous

world of the play dangerously polysemous signs that undermine epistemological paradigms grounded in visibility, for the very openness of these bodies to the gaze encodes the inability of the inquiring gaze to identify the threat to the state. Gloucester's attainder and murder demonstrate this contradictory pattern. Gloucester's belief that he can "lie open to the law" (1.3.154) and be found innocent, or that he "must offend before [he] be attainted" (2.4.59), illustrates his insufficient grasp of the complex manipulations to which both the law and "openness" are subject. It is, however, precisely his openness that his enemies offer as evidence of his villainy: "Seems he a dove? His feathers are but borrowed," argues the queen, concluding, "Who cannot steal a shape that means deceit?" (3.1.74,79). Balancing the accusations of the peers is Salisbury's assertion, "I never saw but Humphrey Duke of Gloucester / Did bear him like a noble gentleman" (1.1.181-2), and the Cardinal's own observation that the commons "favor him, / Calling him 'Humphrey, the good Duke of Gloucester'" (1.1.156-7). Although the conspirators admit that they have "but trivial argument, / More than mistrust, that shows him worthy death" (3.1.241-2), the deluge of accusations at Gloucester's indictment is enough to drive Henry from the parliament, abandoning his uncle to the plots of his enemies. Admitting eventually that "I shall not want false witness to condemn me" (3.1.168), Gloucester recognizes too late that his trust in justice and the protocols of evidence is misplaced in the Court. His only appeal is to the higher court of God's justice--"But God in mercy so deal with my soul / As I in duty love my king and country" (1.3.155-6)--but the earlier trials in the play have demonstrated that this faith, too, is misplaced. Gloucester's attainder and the relentless accusations of his enemies represent a most frustratingly pat manipulation of the visible by those with

enough rhetorical savvy to turn his apparently forthright behaviour into a grammar of ambiguity. "Can you not see? or will ye not observe / The strangeness of his altered countenance" (3.1.4-5), demands Margaret of the king, mobilizing the weight of visible evidence to support her strategic misreading of Gloucester's character, and at the same time implying that Henry's unflagging, if impotent, support of the duke is a form of wilful blindness. Appealing to the authoritative form of the proverb, Suffolk insists, "Smooth runs the water where the brook is deep, / And in his simple show he harbors treason" (3.1.53-4). From our point of view, this insight is better aimed at the "show" of prudent silence offered by the duke of York.

As a whole, living and acting body, Gloucester is defined by an epistemological resistance, an opacity that is open only to speculation. It is not until he dies and is presented as a body to be anatomized that the rhetorical manipulation of his identity can be stabilized and tied finally to a single narrative. A prisoner of his uncle, Winchester, Gloucester is dispatched in a hugger-mugger fashion familiar to us from *King John*, only, unlike Arthur, he receives no mercy or brief reprieve. When Gloucester on his death bed is thrust forward--probably, on Shakespeare's stage, from the aptly named discovery space--the king balks at viewing the body, for "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" (3.2.150-52). This explanation of the king's hesitation reiterates Gloucester's close identification with the nation and with the king's body as its corporeal manifestation, for the duke's death leads Henry to visions of his own. Gloucester's dead body is, in this sense, a wound in England's body. Such an association is further reinforced when the

news of Gloucester's death causes Henry to "sound," falling into a senseless paralysis that refers back to Gloucester's own "qualm" in the opening scene, where the loss of territory deprives him of his ability to read the nuptial agreement. Furthermore, Gloucester's association with all levels of English society is demonstrated by the fact that, a mere 108 lines after the exit of his murderers, the commons are already up in arms calling for Suffolk's head, with Warwick and Salisbury as their voices in the Court. The murder of this body, unlike any other in a series of plays crammed with death, causes a national convulsion.

As a wound in the body of the nation, Gloucester becomes available at last to an appropriately incisive, or penetrating, reading in the form of his onstage verbal anatomization. This dead body does in fact reveal "life in death," as Warwick's anatomy of the body's deformities reenacts rhetorically the murder that has occurred offstage. Warwick's reading of the "face . . . black and full of blood" (3.2.168), the "hands abroad displayed, as one that grasped / And tugged for life and was by strength subdued" (3.2.172-3), narratively reanimates the body in its last moments of life in a way that not only reveals a linguistic "life in death," but that also makes visible in the same flash of illumination England's conspiratorial politics and the traitors' murderous intent. Given this "hard" evidence, Warwick's circumstantial conclusions recuperate the authority of proverbial knowledge once deployed against Humphrey. Warwick asks: "Who finds the partridge in the puttock's nest / But may imagine how the bird was dead, / Although the kite soar with unbloodied beak?" (3.2.191-93) The image echoes York's sophistic justification for the murder of the duke: "Were't not all one an empty eagle were set / To

guard the chicken from a hungry kite / As place Duke Humphrey for the king's Protector?" (3.1.248-50). By attaching the image of the voracious kite to its proper referents, the guilty Suffolk and Winchester, Warwick's proverb counteracts the sophistry of Gloucester's enemies, and their ability to misrepresent Humphrey's outward appearances.

In its traumatized state, Gloucester's body partakes of a functional dismemberment, not in this case of the traitor's body, but of the victim's before an anatomizing gaze that constructs a forensic narrative. Gloucester's innocence is established as the physical wounding comes together with language, and the result of this new narrative is the exposure and exclusion of Suffolk, and later, the death of Winchester. Winchester's violent delirium likewise reveals his secret interior as he struggles with his conscience, speaking his guilt in the very process of dying. "So bad a death argues a monstrous life" (3.3.30) moralizes Warwick, once again codifying the body's trauma with a judgement. With this union of the body and a stabilizing narrative, Warwick's forensics re-establishes the body as self-evident, as a sign of truth untroubled, ostensibly, by proliferation of meanings ascribed to it by the politic Court. Gloucester's death marks the extinction of the forthright man who, with the possible exception of the trusting and unfortunate Hastings in *Richard III*, will not again see the stage in this cycle of plays.

But the stabilizing of signification in this scene is tenuous and, like the exclusion of Eleanor and of Horner, produces yet another vacuum, which a series of ambitious peers, from York to Warwick to Margaret to Cade, will attempt to fill. Instead of reinforcing sovereign presence, the death of Humphrey highlights the absence of sovereignty that has precipitated the power-grabbing conspiracies of the Court. Looking on what he perceives

to be his own death, Henry swoons. His collapse into unconsciousness reiterates his tendency throughout the plays toward self-effacement: abstaining from a decision on the regent of France, bolting from the parliament instead of using the Crown's considerable power to help his uncle, entailing the throne and disinheriting his son. Recognizing in Suffolk's eyes a "murderous tyranny," Henry calls him back, demanding that with his wounding eyes he look on the king and like a basilisk "kill the innocent gazer with thy sight; / For in the shade of death I shall find joy-- / In life but double death, now Gloucester's dead" (3.2.48, 53-5). Henry's first instinct, as always, is toward oblivion. Helping him to it is Margaret, whose 63 line speech drowns in a deluge of words Henry's poor 18 lines and pathetic lament: "Ah, woe is me for Gloucester, wretched man" (3.2.72). Claiming all grief for herself, and incidentally deflecting Henry's accusing gaze from the basilisk Suffolk, Margaret exclaims: "Be woe for me, more wretched than he is" (3.2.72). Henry's one kingly act in all of the three plays that bear his name is the banishing of Suffolk, although this is urged by the commons who demand Suffolk's life. Self-effacing to the last, Henry undertakes the judgement not in his own name but as God's "far unworthy deputy" (3.2.286).

IV

From this point onward, the violence of the play becomes more and more explicitly written on the bodies of the characters, leading to *3 Henry VI* and the wholesale hacking and hewing of bodies that does not cease until the final play of the tetralogy when Richard of Gloucester wipes out the remnants of both noble houses. After the death of Humphrey

of Gloucester, we are treated to visions or reports of at least a bushel of severed heads-- Suffolk (2 *Henry VI* 4.4), Lord Say and his son-in-law, Sir James Cromer (2 *Henry VI* 4.7), Jack Cade (2 *Henry VI* 5.1), Somerset (3 *Henry VI* 1.1), York (3 *Henry VI* 1.4) and Clifford (3 *Henry VI* 2.6)--not to mention multiple stabbings, bloody ambushes, hand-to-hand disembowelings, mutilation of corpses, arrow wounds and the cold-blooded murder of children. The psychic split that fostered the representational duality of dramatic irony in 2 *Henry VI* explodes outward in the next play, once York openly declares for the throne, as bodies become increasingly fragmented and broken. The potential for a functional dismemberment to reconstitute a whole community collapses before a deployment of violence in a discourse of revenge that threatens to unhinge for once and for all the connection between the martial body and the *universitas*.

For Margaret Owens, this pile-up of mutilated bodies, and especially of severed heads, marks the breakdown of established hierarchy and the creation of the "many-headed monster" of rebellion (370) whose advent produces in the play "a picture of disembodied heads jostling for power" (371). Ideally part of a "visual rhetoric" (367) of power and stability, the severed head in these plays is wrenched out of its ideal context in scaffold spectacle: beheading in 2 *Henry VI* becomes "a sign not of the orderly extirpation of civil dissent but of its uncontrollable proliferation" (370). The severed head in this context, she argues, "tends to expose the inevitable failure of this effort to contain the semiosis of the fragmented body" (368). As a multiply inflected sign, representing in some circumstances the return of order and in others its banishment, mutilation, Avraham Oz asserts, "as a form of representation serves as an acute boundary point between the

plausible (if radical) disintegration of the human body and subversive immanent multiplicity, which challenges common patterns of meaning" (5). In other words, the fragmented body moves from dismemberment to disarticulation: the proliferating heads mark also a proliferation of meaning that exceeds the established language of representation and challenges the ideal unity of the social body insofar as it is organized around the sovereign "master signifier." In this confrontation between a discourse of unification and one of multiplicity, the rebel, like Queen Margaret, is a lightning rod for epistemological anxiety. The post-penal subject who returns to the scene, either physically whole, like Eleanor, or in parts, like Suffolk, disrupts the stability and narrativizing impulse of "orderly extirpation" and dismemberment. Unlike Gloucester's body which is thrust forward to present a forensic narrative that for a moment at least stabilizes his character and exposes treason, the bodies mutilated onstage from that point on are made to tell a far more disturbing story.

While not so filled with pathos as the murders of Rutland or York, nor so macabre as the Yorkists frustrated mockery of Clifford's lifeless body, Queen Margaret's lament to the severed head of her lover, Suffolk, is easily one of the most puzzling moments of the tetralogy, incongruous to the point of comedy, yet somehow retaining something of both the macabre and the pathetic. The rather startling stage direction, "*Enter . . . the Queen with Suffolk's head*" that opens 4.4 of the play, can be made meaningful in the context of the contesting discourses of dismemberment and disarticulation. Margaret is onstage with the head for twenty-five lines of dialogue in which her lamentations for her lover interrupt the king's consultation with his council. In the time that it takes for Henry to acknowledge

the head's presence--"How now, madam? / Still lamenting and mourning for Suffolk's death?" (4.4.21-2)--the severed head can only become a compelling object of fascination, asserting itself against the background of state deliberations. The "still" in Henry's statement suggests that the head has become something of a fixture (presumably a decidedly greenish and oozing one) in the Court. It is here, in this strangely, almost comically, incongruous moment, that the severed head takes on its most disturbing and contradictory role. In its ideal manifestation the appearance of the severed head invokes the displaying of the head, in a Perseus with the Gorgon fashion, to the assembled audience of the execution, announcing the reactivation of power and the re-establishment of royal presence. However, in this scene, where Margaret's asides interrupt Henry's woefully ineffectual attempts to curb the power of the Cade rebellion, this discourse of containment inadequately explains the power of this visual symbol. This is especially so since the scene ends with the Court fleeing to Kenilworth. The head in this case, therefore, points, not to closure, but to rupture.

Holding her lover's head to her "throbbing breast," the queen wonders: "But where's the body that I should embrace?" (4.4.5-6). The image of the head without a body indicates in a visual chiasmus the play's central concern with the consequences of a social body without a head. Henry, who will soon continue his pattern of absence and flee from London, offers to parley with Cade and the rebels, "Rather than bloody war shall cut them short" (4.4.12). But the heads saved in Henry's gesture of mercy are tallied up elsewhere. Henry informs the aged Lord Say that "Jack Cade hath sworn to have thy head," to which Say responds, "Ay, but I hope your highness shall have his" (4.4.19-20). It is this

reference that calls to Henry's attention the lamenting Margaret who literally "has" Suffolk's head in a grotesque realization of the language of the debate. The overall effect is an image of circulating heads, charges and counter-charges, that add up, finally, to impotence.⁹ As Owens observes, this impotence and the proliferation of severed heads is symptomatic of "the failure of the king to establish with any conviction his authority as the legitimate head of state" (371).

The scene has multiple analogues in this play and the next. In one of the final scenes of the play, Iden arrives at Court with Jack Cade's severed head, but the momentary closure signalled by the dismemberment of the rebel is coincident with York's declaration for the throne (*2 Henry VI* 5.1). After the contenders have called forth their supporters, Iden, who has newly been knighted and chosen to attend on Henry at Court, sees that Court suddenly disintegrate. The stage fills and empties again, and when the air clears, Iden has earned for his service only Jack Cade's now worthless head; he is left, literally, holding the bag.¹⁰ And, as Jack Cade was never more than another of York's proxies, whom the duke has used to "perceive the commons' mind" (3.1.375), his death reveals only the duke's ability to multiply himself strategically, as he will do at the close of the scene when he calls for "the sons of York" (5.1.119): "orderly extirpation" has clearly given way to Oz's "subversive immanent multiplicity."

Multiplicity in its most subversive form extends to sovereignty itself. In another analogous scene in the following play, Warwick and the sons of York discover the body of Clifford, whose death in the battle has robbed them of their revenge. Warwick orders the sons to cut off Clifford's head "And rear it in the place your father's stands. / And now to

London with triumphant march, / There to be crownèd England's royal king" (*3 Henry VI* 2.6.85-88). Yoking through juxtaposition the severed head to the head of state, the replacement of York's head by Clifford's parallels in Warwick's speech the replacement of one king with another. Triumphant coronation is in this way contaminated with the trace of ignominious defeat. Linking coronation to abdication in this way, the scene echoes Henry's decision to entail the crown, for as a Player-King, Henry's very occupation of the throne is a sign of his defeat. Warwick's own change of heart and decision to back the Lancastrian cause likewise exhibits this doubleness. Plucking the crown, now, from Edward's head, Warwick declares that Henry "now shall wear the English crown / And be true king indeed, thou but the shadow" (*3 Henry VI* 4.3.49-50). But Henry, as the plays relentlessly demonstrate, is himself a shadow, making Edward but the shadow of a shadow. Figuring metonymically the decapitation of the body of state, the circulation of heads, both severed and crowned, articulates through a compelling visual symbol sovereign absence as disturbing multiplicity.

Visually signalling the distortion of the unified social body, the grotesque "embrace" between the queen and her "lover" is part of a pattern that includes Jack Cade's obscene order to his followers to make the heads of Lord Say and his son-in-law, Sir James Cromer, "kiss" at every street corner as they progress through the city (4.7.120-26). This perversion of the gestures of affection and "proper" bodily conduct graphically symbolizes the general perversion of "proper" bodily signs throughout the tetralogy. The gestures of familial love become impotent gestures of revenge, for example, in Richard's desire to cut off his own hand in order to drown the dead Clifford "whose unstanchèd

thirst / York and young Rutland could not satisfy" (*3 Henry VI* 2.6.80-84). Hugh Richmond asserts that, in the discourse of revenge, the play articulates a certain metaphysical order: "Virtue may be destroyed often in the world of *Henry VI*, but Nemesis always overtakes the guilty" (*Political Plays* 46). I would argue, however, in the light of the resonating images of perverse affection in the play, that revenge is symptomatic rather than curative of the disorder of the state. The scenes of revenge in these plays represent a pathological forfeiture of the *universitas* in favour of personal ambition and vendetta. The evil do get their just desserts in the end, but the moral centre that might *define* evil is evacuated in the play, signalling an ultimate breakdown of the modes of knowing the social body and articulating "order."

This evacuation and concomitant breakdown is apparent in the "son that hath killed his father/father that hath killed his son" episode (*3 Henry VI* 2.5). Civil war has severed the bonds of family and caused men unknowingly to kill their own family members. This scene demonstrates the degree to which the martial body has become unreadable, for sons and fathers, arbitrarily renamed enemies by the nation's political schism, no longer recognize one another. The son, realizing that he has become a patricide indicts the nation itself:

From London by the king was I pressed forth;
 My father, being the Earl of Warwick's man,
 Came on the part of York, pressed by his master,
 And I, who at his hands received my life,
 Have by my hands of life bereavèd him.
 Pardon me, God, I knew not what I did.
 And pardon me, father, for I knew not thee. (2.5.64-70)

Pressed into service on the part of regional lords, the two men represent the territory of the nation turning on itself in blind massacre. Indicted in this speech are the traditional oaths of fealty to one's liege lord that subtend hierarchical structures, for the values of service and loyalty that organize social identity produce in this conflict rather a loss of identity and the dissolution of the ground of knowledge: "I knew not what I did" and "I knew not thee." The familial embrace is refigured in this scene, as in Richard's desire to sever his hand to drown Clifford in blood, as self-mutilation when father and son unknowingly shed their own familial blood, and drag the bodies of their loved ones onto the stage. The aptly-named intestine wars are formulated here as a kind of national suicide. Revealing the perversion of the bodily sign, this massacre of the family also demonstrates the precariousness of the differences that justify dispute: the Other--the enemy--is revealed to have been the self--the family--all along.

Clutched to Margaret's breast, Suffolk's head similarly marks the return of the Other within the boundaries of the self, for his banishment and execution cannot eradicate his ability to displace the king with his erotic presence. A proxy to a death's head, Henry is upstaged once again by Suffolk's amorously coded body. That this body still holds power is apparent, for example, in the way that Margaret's elegy for her lost lover is intertwined with the deliberations of the king's council. Although she delivers these lines "apart" from the council debate, her lament is a competing focus of attention that causes a kind of hiatus in the scene, a suspension of state concerns. At the same time, this competing narrative is continuous with the news of Cade's progression to the heart of London. Messengers report that "The rebels are in Southwark" (4.4.27), and, a mere 22

lines later, that "Jack Cade hath gotten London Bridge" (4.4.49). Just as Suffolk's presence displaces the king from the marital bed, the penetration of the rebels into the centre of Henry's domain displaces the king to its outskirts, to Kenilworth castle in Warwickshire, which is, interestingly, the nominal seat of the Yorkist rampant bear, the earl of Warwick. This confusion of centre and margin is reiterated at the beginning of 3 *Henry VI* where York's troops hold Henry's traditional seat of power, London, while Henry negotiates to entail his crown and rule "but by their sufferance." Henry is marginalized even at the centre of power, returning to the presence chamber only to find his own absence. A strange conflation of the motherly and the erotic, the image of the queen cradling Suffolk's head emblemizes the perversion of the body's sign that is symptomatic of this collapsing boundary between self and Other, inside and outside, friend and enemy. Suffolk, who has been described as a "kennel, puddle, sink! whose filth and dirt / Troubles the silver spring where England drinks" (4.1.72-3), who has brought Margaret to England and turned Henry into a proxy in his own bed, is, along with Margaret, one of the major sites at which this infiltration and contamination are revealed. As the Lieutenant concludes in his assessment of Suffolk's role in this contamination: "reproach and beggary / Is crept into the palace of our king, / And all by thee" (4.1.102-4). Embedded in this network of images of perverse relationships, Suffolk's head is a post-penal subject whose return to the Court demonstrates that the boundary between the "purified" self of the social body and the abjected Other is permeable.

Here, we come to the presentation of Suffolk's head onstage, not as a gorgon vanquished and displayed on a pike, but as a babe cradled in the arms of the queen.

Margaret Owens identifies Suffolk's parting speech as the source of this presentation of the head, adopted by both Pennie Downie in Adrian Noble's 1988 adaptation of the play, and Julia Foster in Jane Howell's BBC production. In the parting scene, Suffolk fantasizes himself as "the cradle-babe / Dying with mother's dug between its lips" (3.2.92-3), and this image is actualized in the later scene. For Owens, "[p]resumably, the horrific realization of Suffolk's fantasy is intended to underline the perverse nature of his liaison with the queen, a relationship so unhealthy (to the extent that it threatens the unity and stability of the nation) as to engender a death's head instead of a child" (372). The moment, in Owens' reading, is one of closure, for the adulterous relationship is cut short by the death of the queen's lover. Focussing on the head as a sign of such a foreclosure of transgressive desire, Owens does not tackle the question of why, if this closure were its only function in the scene, the head appears outrageously as a babe-in-arms. If we attend, however, to the scene's tracing of the instability of borders, and, especially, to the pervasive anxiety associated with childbirth in Shakespeare's plays, this startling presentation of the "babe" becomes less of a shocking incongruity and more of a concise visual representation of the play's major concerns.

As Ulinka Rublack observes, the radical permeability of borders that characterizes this scene is exemplified by the pregnant body: "Boundaries between inside and outside, the individual and the social, the emotional and the physical, were generally experienced as permeable, not firm. This permeability was even more marked during pregnancy and childbed, as a woman dramatically expanded into space, opened to deliver a child, and closed and contracted again" (109). Procreation, in which the baby comes into the world

from the hidden recesses of the female body, can be seen as the image *par excellence* of the permeability of borders between the inside and the outside, the self and the Other. To expose the connection between this bodily experience and its patriarchal context, it will be helpful here to recall Kantorowicz's description of the *universitas* as "the eternal continuity and immortality of the great collective called the human race . . . of the *seminal* powers, of the forces of *germination*" (277, my emphasis), for this characterization nicely delimits the masculine as the principle of continuity. But it is this belief in the primacy of the masculine principle that creates an epistemological conundrum for a model of continuity based on masculine germination, but dependent upon a feminine ground. Of all secret interiors, that of the womb was the most profound and disturbing in a patriarchal society that staked its identity on making visible, knowing and regulating the secret life of the female body. As Phyllis Rackin has noted, in Tudor patriarchal society female sexuality formed the unacknowledged ground of masculine identity. Yet, in their ability to disrupt the flow of power that justified itself in a genealogical succession of pure blood, women and their bodies were an inescapable site of anxiety that threatened the very narratives of nation (*Stages* 190-91).

It is no wonder, then, that images of mothers are so abundant and so fraught in Shakespeare's plays, for the male identity is inextricably bound to the "secret" of the feminine body from which male heirs emerge. Pregnancy or the birth of a child is often closely linked to the processes of visible exclusion in Shakespeare's plays: Tamora's "*blackamoor Child*" reveals her adulterous relationship with Aaron in *Titus Andronicus* and prompts, first, her order to have the child killed, and then, Aaron's murder of the

nurses who have knowledge of the baby's existence (4.2.143-47); the "Nine changes of the wat'ry star" (*The Winter's Tale* 1.2.1) of Polixenes' visit to Sicilia corresponds to the term of Hermione's pregnancy, a thin piece of evidence Leontes uses to declare "this brat is none of mine" (2.3.92) and to condemn Hermione for adultery; Joan la Pucelle's "pregnancy" is "sign that she hath been liberal and free" (*1 Henry VI* 5.4.82) used by her judges to condemn her to the stake; Lady Faulconbridge's bastard child, declared and renamed in John's Court, brands her, however sympathetically, a whore (*King John* 1.1). In each case, the birth of a child is an indictment of the mother, a form of "evidence" that purports to expose the mother's secret desires and transgressions to the world. What is also revealed, of course, is the desire on the part of patriarchy to expose, and thus, to regulate, femininity.

A woman distracted with grief, cradling the severed head like a child, this is the first image we are given of Margaret as mother; its bloodiness prefigures her later taunting of York with Rutland's blood (*3 Henry VI* 1.4.79-83), its anguish foreshadows her lamentations over the stabbed body of her son, Edward (*3 Henry VI* 5.5.51-67). Although the "baby" in this scene is not a real child, Margaret is consistently scape-goated in the play as one who has given "birth" to the disruption of sovereignty attendant upon her counterfeit presence, as a French adulteress, within the English social body. A social manifestation of the physically pregnant woman, Margaret is identified, along with her lover, as a site of radical permeability. This first image of motherhood, therefore, visually contaminates Margaret's later support of Henry's son, for the macabre suckling mother who will become the warrior mother is here nursing another man at the royal breast, an

image that graphically suggests a challenge to the legitimacy of the Lancastrian line quite outside of the manifest dynastic contention. This image exploits references to Margaret's infidelity in (typically Yorkist or Tudor) chronicles and correspondence. An anonymous fifteenth-century chronicler reports (c. 1459-60), for example, that "The quene was defamed and desclaudered, that he that was called Prince, was nat hir sone, but a bastard gotten in avoutry" (qtd. in Lee 191, note 21). Gwyn Williams notes an oblique reference to this kind of rumour in *3 Henry VI*, when Warwick replies to the Prince of Wales' proud invective: "Whoever got thee, there thy mother stands" (2.2.133) (Williams 317).

Suffolk's severed head is a sign that refers back to his own displacement of the king from the marriage bed, and forward to Margaret's determination to make her son king, regardless of intimations of suspicious paternity, an agenda that further displaces her politically impotent husband. The doubled image of head and baby emphasizes the power of feminine will to assert itself through the occulted space of the womb, to challenge the continuity of succession and the masculine forces of germination that define the *universitas*. Warwick, acknowledges this feminine will when he asserts that Edward resembles no-one so well as his martial mother. Unlike Lady Faulconbridge's "whoreson," who makes his transition to Bastard in order to stabilize patrilineal inheritance, Margaret's child hovers between legitimacy and illegitimacy, testifying to the ability of motherhood to resist exposure and definition, and thereby to cast a shadow of uncertainty over the succession of kings and heirs. Margaret, as a queen whose nuptial league will undo all "as all had never been," is, in Rackin's terms, an "antihistorian" (*Stages* 148), whose transgression of her proper role threatens the ideals of nation and masculinity. The

association of motherhood with violence, and the perversity of Margaret's eroticized relationship with death mark an eruption of the sublimated feminine principle into patriarchal systems of power and knowledge. For this reason, Margaret, like her ghastly "child," can only be represented in the prevailing patriarchal language of the play as monstrous, a "tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide" (*3 Henry VI* 1.4.137), a transgressor of categories.

Returning to Court after his banishment, Suffolk's severed head, like Eleanor's vociferous denial of guilt and York's strategic multiplication of self, marks the dangerous excess of the post-penal subject, an eruption of the Other whose abjection is supposed to solidify the identity of the state. His death, enacted by pirates outside of the legitimate machinery of justice, marks only a temporary absence and an ineffective visible exclusion. Dead and in pieces, the duke's reappearance marks the return of that which has been conceptually Othered, whose abjection has made it excessive and ironic. This excessiveness is likely the source of the scene's almost comic grotesqueness, for the laugh, like the shudder of horror, is an acknowledgement that the established systems of signification, the languages of justice, power and bodily decorum, fall short. Instead of functional dismemberment, the head signifies disarticulation; instead of producing a narrative that, like the scars on the martial body, binds that body to the *universitas*, the head leads to anti-history, that space of femininity opaque to the masculine desire to see and to know.¹¹ The severed head as baby underlines the radical permeability of boundaries, as the Other returns, not just to the Court, but to the breast of the future mother of the nation's heir: the Other, it seems, is the family all along.

This terrifying fall from the master narrative of masculine martial history is manifested in the seemingly endless reversals, attacks and counterattacks, that characterize the tetralogy, and which end only after Richard of Gloucester has hacked his way through both royal houses in a glut of violence that in the end claims him, too. Cleansing the realm through a surfeit of blood, Richard inaugurates the age of the Tudor dynasty, signalled by the union of Richmond and Elizabeth of York at the close of *Richard III*. Their descendant, Elizabeth I, with her attempts to regulate both her own bodiliness and her spectacular representation, aimed to deliver the nation from the bloody corporeality of Queen Margaret into the idealized kingship of the Virgin Queen. That the Tudors were among the bloodiest monarchs in history suggests that, like Suffolk's head incongruously returning as a babe to Court, the unruliness of bodies will not, in the end, be disavowed.

Notes

1. Judith Butler has defined the "abject" this way: "The abject designates here precisely those 'unlivable' and 'uninhabitable' zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the 'unlivable' is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject In this sense, then, the subject is constituted through the force of exclusion and abjection, one which produces a constitutive outside to the subject, an abjected outside, which is, after all, 'inside' the subject as its own founding repudiation" (3).

2. The distinction is a spurious one, of course. Gloucester, in dichotomizing these terms, conveniently forgets his own advocacy of the nuptial agreement with the daughter of the rich Earl of Armagnac. The exchange of lands in nuptial contracts, it seems, is acceptable unless it goes against English interests. The dichotomizing of martial and marital bodies is a reprise of the trial of Joan of Arc, where her judges attempt to evacuate her martial victory of its power through its rearticulation as sexual transgression.

3. For a detailed overview of the treatment in the chronicles, both contemporary with Margaret and with her later Tudor detractors, see Patricia-Ann Lee, "Reflections of Power: Margaret of Anjou and the Dark Side of Queenship."

4. This doubleness inherent to dramatic irony, all but absent in the first play of the series, takes on gradually more and more weight in the cycle, culminating, of course, in that master of duplicity, Richard Duke of Gloucester, in *Richard III*. The epistemological consequences of this duplicity will be addressed in the following chapter.

5. York is not, of course, the only conspirator in the play, but he is the only one who speaks to us in soliloquy. Thus, while duplicity is the manifest *modus operandi* of the Court in general, York's silence at critical junctures and his direct revelation of his secret thoughts to the audience aligns him more than the others with the structural split of dramatic irony by soliciting directly our complicity.

6. Southwell's notes are also evidence of Eleanor's attempted usurpation of the masculine right of visible exclusion, for she seeks to bring to light the hidden future of her enemies in order to eradicate those who stand between her husband and the throne.

7. Camille Naish notes this ratifying expectation in gallows speeches by traitors condemned to death. The case of the men accused of being Anne Boleyn's adulterous lovers reveals the threat of a dynastic violence that reaches beyond the bodies of the condemned: "Pronounced guilty, they could not proclaim their innocence as this was considered a special form of treason implying criticism of the law, leading to the confiscation of their property and disinheritance of their heirs. Thus, they all made brief remarks, curt to the point of ambiguity, that they 'deserved the death'" (48).

8. This judicial procedure takes the form of a motif in the histories in general, becoming a dramatic device of no small efficacy and complexity: Henry V gets the traitors, Cambridge, Scroop, and Grey, to urge their own punishment when they object to his enlargement of a man accused of petty sedition, arguing that the king could "Breed by his sufferance more of such kind" (*Henry V* 2.2.46). Exposed as traitors, the peers cannot claim the mercy that by their own counsel "is suppressed and killed" (2.2.80); Fluellen forces Pistol to eat the leek that he has lately insulted (*Henry V* 4.1.54-5; 5.1.17-46); Northumberland attempts to coerce Richard II to read the articles of his indictment at his deposition (*Richard II* 4.1.222-27); Hal listens to Falstaff confess his own guilty prevarication in the Gadshill caper (*1 Henry IV* 2.4); Richard of Gloucester slyly manoeuvres Hastings into condemning himself in *Richard III* (3.4.63-66). Henry V alone seems to evade this kind of manipulation in his exchange with Williams, where the soldier seeks to hold the king responsible for his men's deaths: "Now, if these men do not die well, it will be a black matter for the king that led them to it" (4.1.136-7). Henry, unwilling to be caught in the same trap of self-condemnation he has himself deployed to great effect, argues in the king's defence: "Then if they die unprovided, no more is the king guilty of their damnation than he was before guilty of those impieties for the which they are now visited" (4.1.163-6). Only to God and the audience will Henry divulge his own sense of guilt: "Not to-day, O Lord, / O, not to-day, think not upon the fault / My father made in compassing the crown!" (4.1.278-80).

9. Margaret Owens discusses the relation of the severed head to castration (371). See also Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, "Gericault's Severed Heads and Limbs: The Politics and Aesthetics of the Scaffold." While this article focusses on a later period, Athanassoglou-Kallmyer provides a pertinent discussion of the shift in popular attitudes regarding decapitation as a form of judicial punishment from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries, and especially through the Terror. The article also provides a pictorial history that graphically illustrates these shifts. For a good survey of philosophical developments from the Classical to the modern periods, see Gertrude Ezorsky, ed., *Philosophical Perspectives on Punishment*.

10. The BBC video version of the play makes much of this moment, using some well-placed close-ups of Iden's increasingly bewildered and anxious face to underscore his sense that his triumphant return to the Court has dropped him in the middle of the very power-mongering that he has shunned in the past.

11. By emphasizing pregnancy as a socially constructed event in Shakespeare's *oeuvre*, that is, as a localization of particular masculine anxieties, I hope to avoid an essentialist reading of the feminine body in this instance. Rather, I want to point to the way that this body materializes in the patriarchal structures of the visible economy. There is no female body *per se* in this model, for the Early Modern anatomist's gaze, demanding that the female body reveal the secret of masculine identity, produces that body as an inferior analogue of the male. Thus, the act of seeing this body is characterized by misrecognition, as Mary Ann Doane observes of Freud's essay on femininity: "The claim

to investigate an otherness is a pretence haunted by the mirror effect by means of which the question of the woman reflects only the man's own ontological doubts" (228). Femininity in this paradigm is, then, a site where the masculine gazer negotiates his own identity. Pregnancy, in the sense that it is constructed as a mode of masculine autogenesis, is emblematic of the contention between men for a certain ownership of the ground of genealogical identity. Thus feminine silence and secrecy regarding paternity are forms of limited resistance to the masculine gaze, a resistance constructed in the dominant discourse as a kind of theft. Not in this instance an assertion of an essential feminine identity, this resistance is a refusal to divulge *which* man has asserted his will to define the feminine subject as his own; this passive aggression reveals the ability of feminine will to divert the direct flow of blood that is the linking chain of all masculine genealogical and hierarchical identity. Subversive femininity, if there is one to be found in this paradigm, appears as that which the masculine self cannot quite see in his narcissistic relation with the incubative body. What does appear, then, is a femininity that is askew, that does not fit the available categories or language of patriarchy, that is, in effect, monstrous and excessive. The epistemological resistance of the female body, in this instance, cannot comfortably be managed by the regulative gestures of the visible economy because it cannot really be seen by this gaze. For more on the relationship among masculine identity, anatomy and the female body, see Richard Wilson, "Observations on English Bodies" (126 passim). For more on motherhood and masculine identity, see Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to The Tempest*.

Chapter Four

Corrective Lens: *Richard III*, Hypervisibility and the Ironic Body

Shine out, fair sun, till I have bought a glass,
That I may see my shadow as I pass.
(*Richard III* 1.2.262-63)

When Queen Elizabeth mourns the loss of her sons, the famous princes in the infamous Tower, she frames her grief with an image of divine blindness, and calls on a sleeping God whose closed eyes tacitly permit the obscenity of devoured children: "Wilt thou, O God, fly from such gentle lambs / And throw them in the entrails of the wolf? / When didst thou sleep when such a deed was done?" (*Richard III* 4.4.22-4). For Elizabeth there is no comfort in the notion of *deus abscondis*, an invisible God who works in mysterious ways. She envisions, rather, a world from which the divine gaze seems to be averted, where, as Peggy Endel observes, the place of benevolent and just vision is usurped by "Saturn, the planetary god of death and dung, whom iconographers depict as a savage king, enthroned, devouring a living child": an appropriate patron for the last play of a bloody tetralogy, the dregs of war, the cold, dry, barren, melancholic earth of *Richard III* (121). "Now is the winter of our discontent," Richard of Gloucester tells us, and it is this line and not its continuation--"Made glorious summer by this son of York" (1.1.1-2)--that lodges in the popular imagination, signalling our sense of the saturnine age of the

world, its blindness to its own delusions of vitality, its ripeness for apocalyptic transformation.

The averted or blinded eyes of a sleeping God are, in Elizabeth's lamentation, explicitly linked to an outrageous violation of the body of the state, marking this play as the apotheosis of a process set in motion in the very first scene of the tetralogy, at the funeral of Henry V, where the peers display their paralysed arms and struggle to remain free of the humiliating gaze of death's triumphal parade. The scene of mourning is repeated in *2 Henry VI*, where Humphrey of Gloucester sees, in the nuptial league between the effeminate Henry and the Amazonian foreigner Margaret of Anjou, the erasure of England's glory and history. In *3 Henry VI*, the mutilated bodies of adolescents, Rutland and Edward, stand for the moral bankruptcy of both sides of the conflict in their ascription to a revenge code that pulls the play away from history and toward the conventions of tragedy that will govern the final play of the series.¹ In these plays, where the narrative of nation is written in the scars of the martial hero, the honourable disfigurement of the noble body gives way to disarticulation, manifested in the maimed rites of justice, the insistent presence of the post-penal subject, and the increasing narrative force of dramatic irony.

Deeply felt, even by history's most famous advocate of mayhem, Richard Duke of Gloucester, the loss of the quasi-divine visual position represented by Henry V's "sparkling eyes, replete with wrathful fire" (*1 Henry VI* 1.1.12) is mourned in the parodic "praise" of peace in the opening speech of *Richard III*. The sunlike vantage of the sovereign gaze is invoked in the much-quoted opening lines of the play as the light that buries war in the

"deep bosom of the ocean" (1.1.4). "This son of York" (1.1.2), Edward IV, is identified here as the final fulfilment of the prophetic image of "Three glorious suns" (*3 Henry VI* 2.1.26) witnessed by Richard and Edward in the Welsh Marches, and interpreted by the future king as a sign that the brothers should "join our lights together / And overshadow the earth, as this the world" (2.1.37-8). Edward, in this speech, claims a space of privileged vision akin to that of Henry V. This privilege, however, is undermined from the very moment of its invocation in *Richard III*, for, as an audience familiar with the Tudor version of history would have known, the lights of brotherhood will not be joined together in harmonious glory and panoptic vision: Richard will play on the trust and blindness of both of the brothers, and kill them from the shadows. Furthermore, in the opening scene of *Richard III*, Edward himself, like Henry VI in *1 Henry VI*, will be present in name only, and will be called upon only to be dismissed in Richard's extended dilation on ambition and deformity.

Not "shaped for sportive tricks" (1.1.14), Richard has nothing to do in "this piping time of peace" (1.1.24), "Unless to see my shadow in the sun / And descant on mine own deformity" (1.1.26-7). The doubleness of the image of the sun and the shadow is an instance of both self-construction and self-abnegation. The privileged light of the sun, Richard argues, has the power to cast others, namely himself, as darkness. Forced to "descant on mine own deformity," Richard rhetorically links his distorted image to the light cast by his brother's sovereign glory, and because there can be only one sun, not three, this "summer" sun relegates Richard to insubstantiality. Richard thereby displaces the blame for his "dark" nature onto the very light that brings peace to England. In the

critical tradition, Richard is acknowledged to be the quintessential "shadow," the role-playing machiavel. But the shadow "in the sun," might also describe, from Richard's ambitious point of view, Edward himself, an actor playing the "part" of the king, "in" the sun, but not coextensive with its power. That the shadow is Richard's shadow suggests that Edward plays Richard's part, that, in the inverted logic of the usurper, Richard experiences Cleopatra's humiliation at seeing her royal presence "boyed" upon the stage of power. In playing on both of these meanings, the symbol of the shadow in the sun constructs Edward as a shadow that produces shadows, another in a line of usurpers whose appropriation of the imagery of penetrative spectacle is incomplete and ineffective. The ritual acclamation of new sovereign presence is thus rewritten: The king is dead, but we've found an actor (and not a very good one) to wear his clothes.

Richard's opening soliloquy encapsulates the anxieties rehearsed in various forms in each of the plays leading up to the glorious summer of the sun/son of York. Like *1 Henry VI*, with its introduction of the occult power of Joan of Arc, and *2 Henry VI*, with the incursion of the foreign feminine power into the body of the state, *Richard III* also begins with the spectre of the threat of feminine disruption of the masculine martial economy. As Marguerite Waller observes, the reign of peace articulated in the rhetorical antithesis of "dreadful marches to delightful measures" (1.1.8) represents, not the end of violence, but its "institutionalization": "In Richard's extended figure for the current situation, it is still 'grim-visaged war,' merely presenting a peaceful front, that has transferred its activities from the battlefield to the bedroom" (168). But this institutionalization is not a continuing assertion of masculine martial presence, for the war

against Amazonian female power has not so much been won as internalized in the person of Edward himself, and the marriage-market nobility, Queen Elizabeth and her brace of heiress-hunting sons and brothers. For E. Pearlman, the inauguration of Richard's machiavellian duplicity is coincident with his anger at Edward's marriage to Elizabeth in *3 Henry VI*, which is the moment at which the conflict between warring dynasties turns inward and the family begins to devour itself (418).

The "delightful measures" that threaten Richard's masculinity in this speech are, therefore, part of a larger feminine incursion into the privileged space of masculine power that proves again and again in the tetralogy the precariousness of masculine and sovereign identity. Richard's use of the image of "bruised arms hung up for monuments" (1.1.6) to describe a new era of peace produces an ironic turn in its echoing of the first scene of *1 Henry VI*, where Bedford instructs the peers to "offer up our arms, / Since arms avail not, now that Henry's dead" (1.1.46-7). Hanging their arms as monuments on Henry's tomb, the peers commemorate, not peace, but paralysis and humiliation. The image resonates again in *2 Henry VI* in Gloucester's dire description of a "fatal" marriage "Rasing the characters of [the peers'] renown, / Defacing monuments of conquered France, / Undoing all as all had never been" (*2 Henry VI* 1.1.99-101). The "deep scars" (*2 Henry VI* 1.1.85) that link the noble body to a discourse of nationalism are made into ciphers by the incorporation of the feminine enemy into the body of the state. "Effeminate" peace is linked in this echoing image of paralysis and amnesia to the inaugural loss of sovereign spectacular power. In the absence of this power, the signification of monuments and arms

(both flesh and steel) is open to a reinterpretation that threatens the connection of the masculine body to national identity and historical narrative.

This "anatomy of effeminization" (Moulton 259) and Richard's references to "bruised arms" open yet another possible reading of his descant on deformity that is linked to the marital economy and the mutilated body as sign. Tragedy, Philip Sydney writes in his *Apologie for Poetrie*, "openeth the greatest wounds, and sheweth forth the ulcers that are covered with Tissue" (qtd. in Rackin "Engendering" 48).² *The Tragedy of King Richard the Third* is an extended dilation on woundedness: physical (murder, deformity, execution), psychic (the bifurcated psychology of the mole) and, structural (the doubleness of dramatic irony). Richard sees his own deformity in terms of an incompleteness akin to wounding, for he is "curtailed of this fair proportion, / . . . / Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time / Into this breathing world, scarce half made up" (1.1.18-21). At the beginning of his soliloquy, Richard establishes an economy of signs that opposes the masculine martial body, "grim-visaged war," to a distorting feminine representation of that body in an "amorous looking-glass" (1.1.9, 15). Richard, who once could articulate his masculinity in the language of mutilation, presenting, for example, Somerset's head to "Speak thou for me and tell them what I did" (*3 Henry VI* 1.1.16), finds that in this new economy he is "not shaped for sportive tricks." Where, in the martial economy, his deformity was no hindrance to his ability to prove he "hath best deserved of all [York's] sons" (*3 Henry VI* 1.1.17), the feminine economy makes his deformity *signify*, and that signification prompts the splitting of his identity into villainous doubleness; if he cannot prove a lover he is "determinèd to prove a villain" (1.1.30).

For Phyllis Rackin, this splitting, and Richard's resulting subversive power, signals the patriarchal recuperation of feminine subversive potential: "In *Richard III*, the subversive power associated with female characters in the earlier plays is demystified, and all the power of agency and transgression is appropriated by the male protagonist" ("Engendering" 52). Such an appropriation is apparent in 1.3, for example, where Richard finishes Margaret's string of curses by substituting "Margaret" for "Richard" (1.3.233). "Thus have you breathed your curse against yourself" (1.3.239), says Elizabeth to Margaret, acknowledging Richard's ability to steal a form, to act, as Hugh Richmond suggests, as a mirror, a "reflection of the latent will and the greedy self-deception of those with whom he has dealings" (*Political Plays* 85). Richard takes Margaret's name even as he will take from her the role of the disruptive Other. Margaret will in turn be absorbed into the larger Providential frame of the play, and her vengeance will be at least superficially aligned with the energy of consolidation, order, and divine will.

Although such recuperation of feminine power is in part the manifest *telos* of the play, I would argue, however, that a *structural* femininity maintains the power to read and to define the masculine body. Margaret, for example, will escape the play to watch events unfold from France and Richard will stay in England: she is ever the watcher, he becomes the object of the gaze; she escapes the regulating power of the visible economy, he exploits it and finally succumbs to its contradictions. Richard's deformities, by his own admission, attest to the definition of his body within a discourse of femininity. In her discussion of the gendered signification of blood, for example, Gail Kern Paster notes this discursive construction of the wounded masculine body as feminine, observing that

"involuntary" bleeding is associated with women's incontinency and the menses.³ The male body, therefore, "opened and bleeding, can assume the shameful attributes of the incontinent female body as both cause of and justification for its evident vulnerability and defeat" (92). In addition to this figurative correspondance, on the level of conventional dramaturgic structures, tragedy, as Rackin herself notes following Sydney, is the most wounded of genres and is closely associated with femininity. Given these multiple levels of effeminization, I would argue that, while that female *characters*, as Rackin asserts, might be subsumed in the "hegemonic narrative" (Rackin "Engendering" 57), *femininity*, as a structural and epistemological principle nevertheless exerts the pressure of definition on the masculine body. In this sense, femininity reverses the patriarchal structure of power that defines the feminine as the object of the regulating gaze, for, in this play, it is Richard who is subjected to such definition both before and after his rise to the throne. Thus, while the charismatic power of Joan la Pucelle's overt appropriation of the gaze may be absent from this play, and while the women characters are allied with, rather than against, conservative hegemonic systems, femininity is as disruptive a principle as it ever was. Richard's deformity represents the disarticulation of the spectacular language of power as it confronts this defining feminine gaze, where the kind of involuntary wounding Richard blames on Nature and Fortune is gendered feminine. There are, then, two threads of analysis that will come together in the image of the deformed and wounded body, both the duke's body and that of the state: first, is the collapse of discourses that unify and define the social body, such as justice, in a state bereft of its "master signifier," the king; second is the defining power of femininity. The honourable wounds of the nobleman

engaged in a battle for national memory are reinscribed here as ineffectual; scars are reflected back from the feminine "amorous looking-glass" as deformity, a translation of terms that is linked in Richard's logic to the womb, which exposed him to the world "scarce half made up."⁴

Expelled before his time from an incontinent womb, Richard links his *monstrous* appearance to his *premature* appearance in the "breathing world." According to this logic, all humans are at some point monstrous, and it is only the fullness of time and the darkness of the womb that distinguish the deformed--"scarce half made up"--from the beautiful. In Richard's self-narration, his deformity is an effect of the fact that he was brought too early from the darkness of the maternal body into the light of the day; he was visible when he should have been hidden. But Richard, as third son, was also born too late to succeed to the throne, and so grew too fast, as Henry VI recalls at Pomfret: "Teeth hadst thou in thy head when thou wast born, / To signify thou cam'st to bite the world" (3 *Henry VI* 5.6.53-4). Able to "gnaw a crust at two hour old" (*Richard III* 2.4.28), yet cast into the world half made and "rudely stamped" (1.1.16), Richard is doubly monstrous: he is both lack and excess, a shadow that is both a thing and nothing. In a perverse exploitation of this founding violation of the visible, he will be hidden when he should be apparent, but his "hiding" will be excessively visible to us in the audience. In this sense, Richard's presence is "obscene," as Patricia Parker defines the term. Following the lead of Michael Neill, who posits "a powerful though false etymology" for the word "hideous," Parker identifies the "obscene" as that which should be "kept 'off-stage'--forging a link of

sound between the *scaenum* or stage and the obscene as what should be hidden, unseen, not 'shown'" (120).

The dramatic correlative of this obscene visibility is Richard's monopolization of the stage, and his charismatic relationship with the audience beyond the stage. As Joseph Candido observes, the opening soliloquy replaces chronicle history with "historical hiatus, featuring the intrusive power of a superior mind bent both on altering history and on serving as its own chronicler" (62). A "partisan and engaged consciousness" (Candido 62), Richard interposes himself in the extreme foreground of the play, speaking across worlds, from his to ours.⁵ As I suggest in the Introduction, the geography of the platform stage epitomizes the tensions that Richard exploits. With its vertical galleries and the yard at the centre, the theatre tends to displace the rich and the "high" from the front of the stage to the galleries at the periphery of the theatre, just as it removes the represented figures of authority to the centre and rear of the platform, farthest away from and least accessible to the spectators. While the vertical galleries of the Elizabethan theatre reproduce vertical hierarchy of society, this hierarchy is in constant tension with a horizontal, carnivalesque relation where the commons occupy for once the centre of the spatial and visual field. The interplay between these domains produces what David Kastan and Peter Sallibrass call "ideological dissonance" as the contradictions of this volatile space continually problematize "the dominant aristocratic ideology, submitting its postures and assumptions to the interrogation of clowns and commoners" (7). Sometimes a clown, but no commoner, Richard's noble presence, his collusive relationship with the audience, and his use of the relativising gestures conventionally associated with low and comic

characters serve together to reinforce the horizontal perspective by flattening out hierarchical distinctions.⁶ In this sense, Richard brings to bear on a medieval and feudal conception of the world the distinctly renaissance, humanist understanding of temporal relations epitomized by the institution and the architecture of the theatre itself. Exploiting this tension between a vertically-oriented worldview, with its adherence to hierarchy, patriarchy and primogeniture, and the horizontally-oriented collusion with the world of the theatre, Shakespeare creates in Richard a character who is defined by tension, contradiction, and irony, not only psychically and physically, but dramatically and structurally as well. Richard is in this sense as his deformities make him, and as Olivier played him: "askew, oblique, out of place and therefore noticeable in a horizontal and vertical world" (Hassel 7).

Like Iago, Richard possesses an ironic energy that has the power to fracture the visual field of representation. John Styan's observations regarding Iago's asides are applicable to Richard's theatrical skill, which "divides the stage into two, and so compels us from this moment to see and hear everything in two ways, with the eye of innocence and the mind of suspicion" (192). Styan's formulation indicates not only the function of the presenter in the dynamic of dramatic irony, but the complicity of the audience who watches with double vision. It is this complicity that is key to Richard's obscene hypervisibility. Pearlman notes that in Richard's discussions of motivation, in this play and in its earlier rehearsal in *3 Henry VI* (3.2), his "[s]elf-portrayal becomes almost confessional, and motivation, which in the histories had almost invariably been of an external and public nature (most commonly dynastic loyalty), suddenly becomes internal

and personal" (421). What Pearlman does not observe, however, is that this very instance of psychological internalization is coextensive with Richard's movement out of the self-contained world of the play's action and into a self-reflexive relationship with the audience. At his most private moment Richard occupies the most public of spaces, where the character acknowledges the audience beyond the raised platform of the stage. Not only is his "psychology" at this moment attendant upon a splitting of the visual field, but it proposes a radical challenge to the strict division between the internal and the external, the public and the private, the psychological and the social. In this moment, Richard becomes *all surface*, hypervisible.

Closing his soliloquy at the entrance of Clarence and his guards, Richard states: "Dive, thoughts, down to my soul--here Clarence comes!" (1.1.41). When Richard plunges his nefarious thoughts into his soul, that is, that place hidden from the world, the thoughts are buried in the audience, the space, paradoxically, of his total exposure. The logical extension of the soliloquy figures the *audience*, not only as complicitous, but *as* Richard's *soul*. The true obscenity, in some sense, is our awareness that we have become contaminated by Richard's monstrous self-presentation, and we cannot help but find it compelling.⁷ For Hugh Richmond, the key to our sense of identification with the villain is its cathartic potential, for Richard "is the focus for the vicarious release of all the repressed resentments and desires that men [sic] share in a complex, organized society" (*Political Plays* 79). In this sense, we are like the spectators of the fifteenth-century play, *Mankind* (c. 1471), who are implored by Myscheff to add to the collection pot if we wish to see the devil, Tytivillus, in "hys abhomynabull presens" (qtd. in Weimann 114). Playing to the

audience, drawing his disruptive energy from this space of contact and desire, Richard, in "hys abhomynabull presens," is no less a devil we gladly conjure from our purses. Having conjured him, however, into the volatile hallowed verge of the theatrical dynamic, we cannot control him. Bound by the theatrical contract, we can watch, revel in his wickedness, feel guilty, perhaps, but we cannot intervene. We are Scriveners, all.⁸

Claiming for himself the role of presenter, Richard aligns himself with the devil of biblical tradition who "quickly developed into a creature of boundless energy, the energy of disordered passion; and he became too, a theatrical artist who specializes in presenting fictions as reality" (McAlindon 149). The critical tradition accepts almost axiomatically the shadow-actor model of Richard's character, as he, like the devil, plays role after role with protean fluidity. But the actor here is at the same time a figure that Richard adopts only to parody, for his "industrious scenes and acts of death" (*King John* 2.1.363) are, in the world of the fictional Court, far from "play," for all their theatrical form and appeal. Richard's use of the theatrical metaphor is a strategic manipulation of the boundary between the fictive and the real, a trick learned, perhaps, from Hieronymo in *The Spanish Tragedy*. Staging a pageant in which his enemies will play their death scenes as part of the plot, Hieronymo kills them in earnest, conflating stage murder and real death. A precursor of Richard's own manipulations of the theatrical, "Hieronymo's revenge drama depends upon a blurring of representational boundaries" (Shapiro 107). As in Hieronymo's fatal pageant, the deaths Richard engineers in his play are real deaths, and the theatrical metaphor only increases our complicity by asking us to read Richard's murderous actions aesthetically rather than morally. He is, after all, "merely" playing.

Stalking the edges of the fictional world--like the devil, presenting realities as fictions, fictions as reality--Richard hides within the structures of theatricality, just as he hides within all structures, using them, like Margaret's name, to subvert them. He is like the famous clown, Richard Tarlton (a figure entertained as a possible model for Richard's deformity and Vice-like intellectual agility), who was known particularly for a certain "outfacing *Jeste*": "When a lady offers to 'cuff' him, he agrees provided that she reverses the spelling" (Thomson 106). Tarlton's wordplay capitalizes on the complicity of the spectator, trapping the offended lady with a mirror reflection of her own word, turning righteous indignation into a vehicle of desire. This *Jeste* is the essence of Richard's *modus operandi*, for, next to irony, the trope is Richard's figure of choice: appropriating structures--penal spectacle, religiosity, feminine transformation, ceremonial kingship, theatricality, inheritance--Richard spells them backward, hollows them out with parody, turns them to his advantage. If Richard's martial body is reflected back to him deformed from the surface of the "amorous looking-glass," he will appropriate the very symbol of his debasement, becoming himself as his mother defines him: "one false glass / That grieves me when I see my shame in him" (2.2.53-4).

Literally shaped by premature appearance, Richard is characterized by an obsessive self-presentation that seeks to control the signification, not only of his own body, but of everything in the visual field. His duplicity allows Richard to capitalize on the limited vision of the characters he deceives. For all intents and purposes a character himself defined by deconstructive energy, Richard works through his manipulations of the visible to separate signifier from signified, words from deeds, the ideal from the material in order

to rescue his own signifying body from the representational power of the distorting "amorous looking-glass." His excessive visibility makes him utterly transparent; with no interior, his "inner" self cannot be "brought into the light" by the regulating gaze of justice. So long as he is hypervisible, monopolizing the terms of the visible economy, throwing all signs into confusion, he will obsessively display himself to us in the audience, but cannot be "exposed," that is, subjected to visible exclusion.⁹ Richard's admitted split psychology, the structural force of dramatic irony, and the drifting iconography of the fragmented body are all symptomatic of the loss of unified, sovereign vision and its replacement by this deconstructive energy.

But the play does move, nevertheless, toward the visible exclusion of the villain that will finally reinstate the firm boundaries between the pure social self and the demonized, abjected Other, boundaries that have been consistently eroded throughout the course of the tetralogy. Opposed to Richard's disarticulating energy is, on the level of a broader narrative control, a growing insistence on a totalizing vision that by the end of the play realigns signifiers and signifieds, and reinstates the wounded martial body as a stable sign of a unified state. Fusing the martial and the marital economies, the union of Richmond and young Elizabeth represents on one level the assertion of a social body defined by wholeness. Necessary to this realignment is the recuperation of Richard's subversive energy by the dominant discourse of the visible economy, which ultimately contains his obscene and inappropriate visibility. This recuperation is built into Richard's very character. As Pearlman suggests, Richard's character exhibits the "overlapping" of "natural" motivation, his deformity, and the "supernatural" or Vice convention, augmented

in this case with machiavellian overtones (424). With this combination, Richard becomes, Pearlman suggests, "both *more* and *less* realistic" (425). He is, in other words, *more* realistic because his descant on deformity reveals a localized and recognizably modern, if pathological, psychology that directs and controls his pretence; he is *less* realistic because that psychological motivation is figured forth in the conventional, supernatural terms of the Vice tradition. Psychologized, Richard becomes in this play what Weimann calls a "nascently tragic figure" developed from the Vice for whom the "ancient freedom of topsy-turvydom has, finally, become the modern passion of self-destruction" (160). It is precisely this supernatural or conventional frame that signals at the moment of Richard's first appearance in the play that he will be reclaimed by both history and dramatic convention, that the energy of the Vice will be drawn at last into hell mouth; but it is his psychological complexity and his understanding that he is shaped in part by complex social forces that make his fall something akin to tragedy.

With the recovery of what Robert Cover calls a "normative future" (208) in the play, the fragmentation and disarticulation that has characterized the tetralogy will be reconciled with a unifying discourse that re-establishes the empyrean sovereign gaze. The two movements of the play--one deconstructive, the other consolidating--mesh like the gears of a carefully engineered machine, each driving the other and their interaction driving the play. I will begin by mapping out first Richard's destabilization of systems of order. Then I will turn to the consolidating counter-voices, bringing the two together in a discussion of the throne scene, the murder of the princes, and the final act of the play.

II

Inheriting a state from the earlier plays in which sovereign presence is reduced to a "shadow in the sun," Richard is able to exploit the instability of the social body. Reading his own deformity as a source of his villainy, Marie A. Plasse suggests, Richard "establishes himself as a self-conscious reader of corporeal signs. This ability to recognize powerful corporeal signs and to influence the way others construe them is central to Richard's treacherous rise to the throne" (14). Richard's ability to exploit the instability of the bodily sign is the logical extension of the challenges to systems of hierarchy and knowledge that concern the preceding three plays. As William C. Carroll observes, Richard's cynical manipulation of form, his violation of "sacraments, rites, and order itself," ultimately shows form and order to be empty and contaminated (217). Capitalizing on this instability in the language of power (in, it could be argued, language *per se*), Richard loosens the link between established rituals and their ability to consolidate sovereign power and authority. Three brief examples will serve to illustrate this subversion of the body as a site of revelation: Henry VI's maimed funeral rites (1.2); the "murder" of Clarence (1.4) and; the "trial" of Hastings and the presentation of his severed head (3.4; 3.5).

Although much has been made of Richard's seduction of Anne in 1.2, comparatively little critical attention has been paid to the spectacle of Henry VI's onstage body that frames the scene's central confrontation. Described as a "Poor key-cold figure of a holy king" (1.2.5), Henry VI functions in this scene as an icon of displacement, the maimed rites of his funeral procession persistently signalling the absence of sovereign

power. The term, "figure," conjoined with "holy king" in Anne's description is a loaded word that refers in its surface connotation to the body as a sign of the Office of kingship, the "holy" body politic that encompasses the *universitas*, the territory and memory of the nation (Plasse 19). For Plasse, Richard's appropriation of Henry's body in this scene marks his appropriation of "all the powers that Henry's body represents" (21). But "figure," here, also refers to image, mimesis, or, in Plato's sense, a lie of representation. As I have argued in previous chapters, Henry was, while alive, a "shadow" king who was never more than an unfulfilled promise of kingship. Merely a "figure" of a holy king in life, in death Henry VI can only be a figure or imitation twice removed from the sun, the "bloodless remnant of that royal blood" (1.2.7). As a shadow's shadow, Henry's body, counterpoised with Richard's living one, foreshadows ironically Richard's own inability to fulfill the promise of kingship, for the previous scene's extended play on the meaning of shadows casts Richard himself as a dark reflection of Edward's imperfect sovereign light, in a chain of regression that reveals a central and defining absence. While Richard may seek symbolically to appropriate Henry's "powers" by appropriating his body, this body is represents only the absence of power; Richard at best grasps at shadows.

Henry's disconnection from the state is further emphasized by Anne's failed anatomy. She says:

Lo, in these windows that let forth thy life
 I pour the helpless balm of my poor eyes.
 O, cursèd be the hand that made these holes!
 Cursèd the heart that had the heart to do it!
 Cursèd the blood that let this blood from hence! (1.2.12-16)

Pouring the "helpless balm" of her tears into the "windows" of Henry VI's wounds, Anne's anatomizing gaze looks through the wounded body of the king to the "hand," "heart," and "blood" of the duke who killed him. The body itself actively participates in this exposure of the traitor as "Henry's wounds / Open their congealed mouths and bleed afresh!"

(1.2.56) when Richard comes into their presence. Re-enacting the throes of death, the body becomes potentially a site of revelation, for, as Fleischer observes: "Elizabethan stage characters conventionally achieve a moment of truth at the point of death" (191). As in the trial by combat, the body speaks its truth through its woundedness.

The context of this anatomization, however, demonstrates the disconnection of the body from its function as a site of revelation. Comprising just one mourner, Henry's funeral procession is outside of the economy of official state spectacle. Furthermore, Anne's own displacement from that system, as a woman and as the last of the fallen house of Lancaster, means that her gaze and speech can have no connection to the world of politics; her anatomy, although its conclusions are true, instigates no national convulsion and no visible exclusion of the guilty. The fact that her curses rebound upon her own head demonstrates her nearly hermetic (and hermeneutic) isolation from the machinery of power.¹⁰ When she asks, "What black magician conjures up this fiend / To stop devoted charitable deeds?" (1.2.34), it is difficult to deny that Richard arrives on cue after being vividly conjured, like the devil Tytivillus, by her own magic. With her self-reflexive cursing, Anne is, in this scene, the first instance of a long line of realized prophecies. Following Henry's corpse in the maimed rites of a shabby funeral, she fulfils Bedford's vision of England as an "isle . . . made a nourish of salt tears, / And none but women left

to wail the dead" (*I Henry VI* 1.1.50-1), an image most powerfully realized in 4.4 when Margaret, Elizabeth and the Duchess of York wail the desolation of their families and the state. Nor can Anne truly appropriate at this juncture the power of the regulating gaze, for, like her rebounding curses, the stychomythic form of her confrontation with Richard demonstrates that she is "merely" playing a role in Richard's drama.¹¹ Her gaze, for all her attempted usurpation of its defining power, is impotent in the face of Richard's superior narrative skill. She is trapped, like Tarlton's indignant lady, between "cuff" and its opposite in Richard's reflecting wordplay (Thomson 106). Tarlton's *Jeste* is a remarkably pat analogy for the turn in the scene from ferocious attack to seduction.

The ultimate image of martial impotence that Bedford in his grief could formulate, the mourning woman can neither recuperate the signification of the wounded body, nor protect it from Richard's violent appropriation. A shadow of a king in life, Henry VI is displaced and co-opted in death. His murder in the Tower, often interpolated in production as a Prologue to this play, takes place outside of the official machinery of justice and penal spectacle and is not, then, available as an image of visible exclusion or functional dismemberment. A parodic reversal of the funeral of Henry V, this Henry's procession is filled out with no peers and no mourners except a single woman. Furthermore, Henry's procession is displaced by Richard's self-constructing soliloquy from the visual and thematic primacy of the first scene of the play to the second. Instead of framing the action and setting the terms of conflict, as does Henry V's funeral in *I Henry VI*, this scene is framed by Richard's megalomaniacal plans to manipulate all within the field of representation. Within the scene, the body is upstaged by Richard's wooing of

Anne and then ultimately abandoned by its principal mourner. Interred initially at St. Paul's, the body is in the process of relocation to Chertsey, but will be appropriated by Richard and brought instead to Whitefriars. This last shift of position is analogous to Richard's appropriation of the bloody body in his wooing of the mourner as he coerces Anne's capitulation by making her complicitous in Henry's and Edward's deaths. Richard admits he killed the body that bleeds on stage, but asserts it was Anne's "beauty, that did haunt me in my sleep / To undertake the death of all the world, / So I might live one hour in your sweet bosom" (1.2.122-24). Outrageously, the wounds that barely 70 lines earlier cried murder and supernatural indictments of Richard's hate now testify to his love; the body as murder victim is reinscribed, obscenely, as a gift of passion.

With its disconnection from conventional forms of articulation, the king's body itself becomes ironic, is appropriated, overdetermined and multiplied in contesting interpretations of its meaning. Like the maimed rites of funeral display, penal spectacle too is cast adrift from its consolidating function. Rather than enacting the re-establishment of ideal royal power, execution in this play indicates instead a fundamental disconnection of authorizing words and deeds deriving from the absence of this absolute authority. The scene of Clarence's murder (1.4) reiterates the pattern of Henry VI's funeral by setting up expectations of recuperated iconography that are undermined by the private context of the staging. The scene opens with Clarence's dream in which he, falling "overboard / Into the tumbling billows of the main" (1.4.20), experiences his death by drowning and a prophetic vision of the afterlife. He confronts there the souls of Warwick and young Edward, and is drawn by furies into hell where he faces torment for perjury and murder. He concludes:

"Ah, keeper, keeper, I have done these things / (That now give evidence against my soul)" (1.4.66-7). Clarence's narration draws on the conventions of the gallows speech which, like Anne's anatomy of Henry VI, are ultimately unrealized. His presentation of the "evidence" of his deeds and the indictment of his soul are undermined by his confusion of temporal and divine justice. Admitting his guilt, he prays to God--"Yet execute thy wrath in me alone: / O spare my guiltless wife and my poor children!" (1.4.71-2)--but reads his temporal punishment as a betrayal of brotherly love, since his crimes were committed "for Edward's sake, and see how he requites me!" (1.4.68). Defining his punishment as an act of revenge, Clarence relocates imprisonment to the private sphere of temporal relations. He is thereby able to disconnect the deeds from the system of divine justice that defines them as crimes. In the very act of confessing, Clarence is able to redefine himself as a victim. The confessional nature of Clarence's speech does not fulfil the penal contract because, while he admits that he is the author of his own punishment, he does so in private. This privacy circumvents the demands of public penitence through which the criminal "ransoms" himself to the state. Clarence's "debt" cannot be discharged in private execution, a technicality Clarence himself exploits in his attempt to dissuade the murderers from their task: "If God will be avengèd for the deed, / O, know you yet he doth it publicly!" (1.4.210-11). In the private chamber of the Tower, Clarence becomes at once justly punished criminal and victim.

Like Henry VI's corpse, Clarence's body as the subject of the maimed rites of penal spectacle becomes a site of unstable signification. The moral conflict between private vengeance and divine justice is reflected in the editorial history of the play and in the

nomenclature of the speech attributions in this scene: the Quarto version of the play designates Clarence's killers as "Exec," that is, executioners; in the Folio version, they are "Vil," or, villains, and; in the Pelican edition the editor has opted for the shady side of nomenclature and named them "Murderers." Having a warrant for Clarence's death--they let Brakenbury "see our commission" (1.4.90)-- the killers are Executioners carrying out the business of the state. But although Edward has issued the commission, it is from Richard that the Murderers receive it. He gives them the warrant in the previous scene, and names them "*my* executioners" (1.3.338, *my* emphasis), binding them to his own villainous plot and signalling his appropriation of the protocols of justice. Thus, they become Villains and Murderers. The shifting speech tags reveal the moral interpretation implicit in the naming of the act, for the first identifies Clarence's death as just desserts for the crimes he has himself admitted, and the latter defines him as a victim of Richard's ambition.

Clarence's criminal body is overwritten in the scene with a narrative of victimization, repeating the pattern of appropriation familiar to us from the funeral of Henry VI, who, as a casualty of dynastic conflict, is reinscribed first as a victim of Richard's hatred and then as a sign of his "love." In a system in which the iconography of justice is no longer grounded in absolute power, the body becomes polysemous and unstable as a sign. In both of these instances, Richard interposes himself between the ceremony's conventional narration of justice and stability and the material objects charged with its enactment; he comes between, for example, the executioner's warrant and the body of the condemned, turning an execution into a murder. In this way, Richard attacks

the system of justice at its most fundamental level. In hierarchical structures, Robert Cover argues, "institutionally sanctioned commands, orders, or signals of institutionally legitimated authorities" can overcome "autonomous" behaviours, that is, our natural inhibition toward the infliction of pain on others. Justice depends, he continues, upon a real and apparent link between the words of the judge (in this case the sovereign) and the actions of those who carry out the judgement: "We would not, for example, expect contemplations or deliberations on the part of jailors and wardens to interfere with the action authorized by judicial words. But such a routinization of violent behavior [execution, punishment] requires a form of organization that *operates simultaneously in the domains of action and interpretation*" (219, my emphasis).¹² It is this understanding of justice that allows Brackenbury to absolve himself of responsibility for Clarence's death. On looking at the warrant, he says: "I will not reason what is meant hereby, / Because I will be guiltless from the meaning" (1.4.93-4). As executioners, the killers would likewise be "guiltless from the meaning," and would remain purely instrumental: they would actualize the seamless union of words and deeds that characterizes legitimate authority. As murderers, however, they cannot excuse themselves. The Second Murderer, when asked if he is afraid, answers: "Not to kill him, having a warrant; but to be damned for killing him, from the which no warrant can defend me" (1.4.109-11). Although they blame the death on Edward and Richard, it is themselves, they fear, who will pay with their souls' torment in eternity. It is the interposition of Richard, who hands them the warrant in the earlier scene, that opens up the wound of conscience in this one. In naming the killers "*my* executioners," he banishes the potential absolution of instrumental execution and gives the

killers up to visions of "the great Judgement Day" (1.4.102-3). Informing the sickly Edward of the fulfilment of "his" commands, Richard describes with ironic imagery his stepping between the sovereign's words and the "executioners'" deeds:

But [Clarence] (poor man) by your first order died,
And that a wingèd Mercury did bear:
Some tardy cripple bare the countermand,
That came too lag to see him buried. (2.1.88-91)

Richard is both the wingèd Mercury and the tardy cripple whose interference exploits the dependency of the penal spectacle on the tenuousness of the simultaneous relation between words and deeds.

Penal spectacle in the first half of the play submits to relentless subversion in the form of Clarence's sophistic evasions of the salutary guilt of the gallows speech: refusing to go like a lamb to the slaughter, Clarence does not fulfill the penal contract.

Furthermore, the private nature of the murder, in both its physical setting in the Tower and its conceptual setting in the personal vengeance and villainy of feuding and paranoid brotherhood insures that Clarence's death cannot fulfill the demands of visible exclusion.¹³ Rather than revealing the truth of God's justice, Clarence's body gives rise to contradictory narratives. Even the killers' chosen mode of execution both refers to and undermines established practice. The Second Murderer, besieged by guilt, shouts, "Look behind you, my lord!" while the First Murderer stabs Clarence in the back (1.4.263). The First Murderer then takes Clarence to the other room to finish him off in a butt of malmsey. While the stabbing parodies the beheading generally reserved for noblemen, the second punishment mirrors the standard practice of displaying the bodies of criminals with objects representing their crimes.¹⁴ Machiavelli in *The Prince*, for example, recounts the instance

of Caesar Borgia who executed his own officer, Remiro D'Orco, "a cruel and hasty man," beheading him in the market place at Cesena "where he was left upon a gibbet, with a bloodie sword by his side" (28). The "bloodie sword" is the iconographic signifier of both D'Orco's cruelty and the sovereign's ability to punish that crime.

Drowning Clarence in the malmsey, however, the murderers produce an ironic turn in the common practice of emblematic punishment.¹⁵ Seeing the malmsey as a sign of excess of appetite, the First Murderer declares the drowning an "excellent device!" (1.4.152). However excellent it might be, the device is misdirected. Clarence's crimes are identified in the scene as perjury and murder, not carousing, and the excellent device of the malmsey is more than a mockery of the victim's nobility; it is a mockery of the system of justice, for we are told that it is not Clarence but the effeminate Edward who "hath kept an evil diet long / And overmuch consumed his royal person" (1.1.139-40). The emblematic punishment of the malmsey refers, not to the criminal, but to the sovereign. Displaced onto the victim/criminal, the emblem nevertheless rebounds upon the king, whose dissolution and lack of acumen lead him to a paranoid indictment of his brother on the strength of hearsay and superstition. The displaced icon of penalty, therefore, symbolizes the multiple miscarriages of justice in the scene: Clarence is a murderer and a perjurer, who is convicted because Edward heeds a prophesy "that G / Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be" (1.1.39-40); "G" refers, however, to Gloucester, who instigated the whole indictment and whose coming between derails the state apparatus of justice. An "excellent device" indeed, the malmsey is a sly revenge on the part of the murderers. Debasing Clarence's nobility by stabbing him in the back and then making a "sop" of him,

the Murderers, as scapegoats for the warring ambitions of paranoid brotherhood, leave behind them a sign that the entire system of justice is contaminated by duplicity.

Unable, in its subversion of the protocols of justice, to uphold the dependence of penal practice upon its visible enactment of authorized words, the "murder" of Clarence nevertheless points to the consolidation of Richard's own backroom, under-the-table shadow government. The case of Hastings' indictment and the circulation of his severed head in the play mark the convergence of the threads of analysis I have been following thus far. The collapsing discourse of justice that engenders the ironies of the penal body meets in this scene the feminine power of definition that provokes Richard's pugnacious first soliloquy. As in the earlier scene of maimed rites of penal spectacle, Richard appeals to and undermines established protocols in order to indict Hastings, exploiting the tendency of the body toward irony and unstable signification. He begins by eliciting from Hastings a doom of death for those, "whosoe'er they be" (3.4.65), "That do conspire my death with devilish plots / Of damnèd witchcraft, and that have prevailed / Upon my body with their hellish charms" (3.4.60-2). He then presents as evidence, his withered arm:

Then be your eyes the witness of their evil.
 Look how I am bewitched. Behold mine arm
 Is like a blasted sapling, withered up;
 And this is Edward's wife, that monstrous witch,
 Consorted with that harlot, strumpet Shore,
 That by their witchcraft thus have markèd me. (3.4.67-72)

Among the many remarkable things in this speech is Richard's audacious presentation as evidence of witchcraft (which has apparently occurred in the 31 lines since his sanguine entrance), an arm which we have seen as withered since before Edward ever met "that monstrous witch," Elizabeth, or her alleged partner in crime, "strumpet Shore."

Some argument might be made that, among Richard's several deformities, the withered arm could go unnoticed, since it is unremarked in this play or the earlier *3 Henry VI*. Conversely, it is possible that it could be introduced for the first time at this juncture. But the scene is far more interesting a moment if we consider that the arm has been visibly withered all along. In this case, Richard's gambit here would be continuous with both the kind of seemingly impossible dramatic challenge he sets and overcomes in the wooing of Anne, and with the play's discourse on the signification of the martial and deformed body that opens the first scene. Again, a comparison with the clown, Tarlton, is apt, for the deflating power of his *Jestes* was in part a product of his "extraordinary ugliness": "Small and hunchbacked, with a squint and a button nose squashed into his face, he invited pity from the spectators and threw power back at them" (Thomson 106). Using the "blasted sapling" of his arm to provoke pity and to claim the status of victim, Richard is able to use his deformity as justification for his thinly veiled aggression. As Plasse suggests, Richard appears "to be giving up the power he claims at the beginning of the play, where, in his opening monologue, he identifies his physical defects as the source of his own wickedness" (17). The gambit, she continues, allows him to "'moralize' two meanings' in one body. This doubleness allows him to exercise enormous power in the scene while seeming to give it up. As Richard flashes contradictory messages, potential opposition is effectively neutralized" (17).

The doubled role, however, is not, as Plasse suggests, contradictory, but rather continuous. The key to his success in this dramatization of the body is his appeal to and manipulation of masculine anxieties regarding the feminine economy: his powerful

wickedness, he tells us, is an effect of the "amorous looking-glass," and his victim-stance in this scene is a parodic enactment and appropriation of that transformative power. Richard's earlier strategy of "coming between" the sovereign order and its execution prefigures this appropriation. As Patricia Parker observes, the female body interposes itself, in the Aristotelian model of generation, between the father and son, a "coming between" that "undermines and adulterates the perfect copying or reproduction of parthenogenesis." She continues: "In the influential tradition of woman as imperfect and secondary, a *lapsus* or falling off from the more perfect male, she is both 'baser matter' and adulterating mixture, a frail or 'weaker vessel' whose coming between involves an aberrant and translative detour, a creature whose status is also figured by sexual parts that are secret, 'occult' or hidden from the eye" (138). The witch and the strumpet are yoked together in Richard's indictment of Hastings because they occupy the same position as demonized objectifications of feminine "coming between."

The physical "coming between" of the womb is transferred in the indictment of Hastings to the domains of politics and representation. In a patriarchal system grounded in a simultaneous dependency on and elision of the role of women in generation, the harlot has the power to assert her presence by marking the masculine body as cuckold, a signature which metaphorically transforms the surface of that body by adding to it the cuckold's horns. Such a transformation, like the spells and curses of the witch, co-opts the martial body, hi-jacks, so to speak, its primacy and autonomy and makes it into a grammar of autonomous feminine appetite and transgressive desire. In this, the cuckold resembles the vanquished captive in the triumph, whose power and presence becomes an index of the

victor's glory. Thus redefined, the vanquished and the cuckold are both the objects of a humiliating gaze.¹⁶ Richard's presentation of the "blasted sapling" of his arm is a similar strategic appeal to a masculine community united by the fear of feminine transformation. If his arm has been withered all along, its sudden "appearance" here would be a particularly strident demonstration of the conflict between gendered signifying economies in the play, for the peers' willingness to see the arm in a new way is an index of, and is proportional to, their alignment against the feminine Other.¹⁷ Richard traps Hastings indirectly by associating him with the feminine economy as the "protector of this damned strumpet" (3.4.74). Guilty of his own coming between, Hastings will pay with his life for his assertion that, rather than help Richard to the crown, he would "have this crown cut from my shoulders" (3.2.43).

Like Richard's general deformities, which come to signify *as* deformity when they are reflected in the "amorous looking-glass" of the marital economy, his "blasted sapling" literally becomes visible at the moment it is linked to the representational powers of feminine witchcraft and harlotry. In a tactical *tour de force*, Richard raises the spectre of feminine "coming between" to divert attention from his own brand of "coming between," or transformational narrative. Richard is on one level "merely" playing the role of victim, but as always, the boundary between his theatrical presentation and reality is tenuous, for Richard's manipulation of femininity is not simply a masterful and theatrical "appropriation of the woman's part" ("Engendering" 54), as Phyllis Rackin insists.¹⁸ He is truly rewritten by the power of the feminine "looking-glass," both by the climate of effeminate peace that makes his martial body useless and excessive, and by the mother's womb that comes

between his father and himself as successor to the crown. Richard is also, to use Parker's terms, a *lapsus*, a "falling off from the more perfect male," an "abberent translative detour." Richard consolidates his position in a masculine community by raising the spectre of feminization only to banish it in the execution of the feminized scapegoat, Hastings. As in the seduction of Anne, the seduction of the peers turns on Richard's ability to spread complicity to his auditors. The alignment of the peers with Richard and against the feminine Other (embodied by the feminized Hastings) is convenient, cynical, and salutary, for it allows the peers to capitulate to a hardly concealed threat of violence and to escape from Hastings' sinking ship (often signalled in production by their nervous shifting down the council table away from Hastings and toward Richard). But this enforced alignment of the peers is deeply ironic. Insofar as Richard is himself feminized--by a marital economy that codes his body as deformity, and by his appropriation of the feminine power to come between--the Other they fear is Richard himself. And they know it.

Richard and Buckingham reproduce this dynamic in yet another register in their theatrical confrontation with the Mayor of London in the next scene (3.5). Amid shouts of "Look back! defend thee! Here are our enemies!" and "God and our innocence defend and guard us" (3.5.19-20), Richard, Buckingham and the supernumeraries, Catesby, Lovel and Ratcliffe, stage a mock invasion in order to justify to the Mayor the summary execution of Lord Hastings. And summary it is, for barely 20 lines after his last speech, Hastings enters again, or part of him does, as a severed head, either on a pike or in a bag. The theatrics are necessary because Richard's command for the execution usurps the sovereign power to turn words into action, but has not adhered to the necessary

legitimizing protocols of penal spectacle. Having done the deed, Richard must devise legitimation belatedly, to inscribe murder as execution, and rename the murderers as both victims and executioners.

The potential for cynicism in the scene is great, for, unless the Mayor is portrayed as a buffoon and a gull, it is difficult to believe that he would be taken in by such a patently obvious manipulation of the circumstances. In Hall, Hassel notes, the Mayor's desire for intimacy with the powerful Richard and Buckingham ensured that he "was already in their pocket" (78). Hall writes that the Mayor, "upon trust of hys awne avauncement, where he was of a proud harte highly desirous, toke on hym to frame the cytie to their appetite" (qtd. in Hassel 78). In typical form, Shakespeare complicates the sources to tease out the multiple motivations of individuals, like the Mayor, who have waded wittingly or not into dangerous political waters.

This legitimating charade takes on a specific form that, like the indictment scene, manipulates the Mayor's fears of the Other. First, the Mayor learns of the murder/execution in the midst of what he perceives to be an invasion, or worse, a civil uprising. That the "enemy" is never seen makes it that much more frightening for being unknown and unprepared for. The fact that Richard's "Look back! defend thee! Here are our enemies!" yields only Ratcliffe and Lovel with Hastings' head provides a potentially comic instance of what Stephen Greenblatt calls "salutary anxiety" in which authority generates disorder in order to relieve it with the revelation that order is in fact at hand (*Negotiations* 138). Hastings' head, displayed against the backdrop of unseen invaders, is presented to the Mayor as "the covert'st shelt'ed traitor / That ever lived" (3.5.33-4). In

the context of this legitimating charade, Richard's and Buckingham's ability to make the Other visible and to dispatch him identifies them with a sovereign power that sees all and can exact retribution. Like the earlier scene which aligns the peers against a feminine Other, Richard aligns the Mayor against a loosely defined "invading" Other.

Hastings' head is presented to the Mayor as though the mere fact that it is no longer connected to his body were evidence of his treachery. In this, Richard runs before his horse to market, for the violence of the act precedes the word that legitimizes it, just as the execution precedes the Scrivener's arrival with the indictment. This severed head in this context is a parody of legitimate execution. Ideally, the dismembered body stands as a sign of the state's authority over the social body and as a warning or deterrence to future crime. In the discourse of functional dismemberment, as I argue in Chapter Two, the state is consolidated as a whole social body by the definition of the offender as the abjected Other. As part of this unified social body, the citizen who sees herself as a potential subject of penal mutilation can separate herself from that vision by remaining on the good side of the law. Such a dissociation is possible only when there *is* a law to define for the citizen what will be considered at any given moment a just action and what will be seen as a criminal action. In the discourse of disarticulated or ironic bodies, the moral centre associated with sovereign power and authority is absent and there is no way, therefore, to distinguish between execution and murder, just action and criminal action. Hastings, labouring under the belief that the system of justice is anchored in the authorized/authorizing word, responds to Richard's evidence of witchcraft: "If they have done this deed, my noble lord--" (3.4. 73). Richard's enraged reaction, "If? . . . / Talk'st

thou to me of ifs?"(3.4.74-5), demonstrates just how far the world has fallen from this authorizing sovereign word. The fatal syllable, "if," represents Hastings' gesture toward the protocols of evidence and due process; Richard turns this gesture itself into a crime. The Mayor, presented with both the severed head and the belated legitimation, treads precariously close to Hastings' fatal syllable when he asks, "Had he done so?" (3.5.40). He cannot tell just action from criminal action, and must realize the danger to the citizenry who, like Hastings, might unwittingly utter a fatal syllable and find themselves, like Hastings, suddenly shorter by the length of a head.

When the peers look at Richard's withered arm, they see their own bodies imperilled in the uncertain and feminized state. When the Mayor looks at Hastings' head, he sees the state, ruled by a child-king and threatened by treachery and invasion. This fear is heightened in the acclamation scene (3.7) by allegations of bastardy in the royal line of succession which themselves threaten to decapitate the state and leave it vulnerable to attack. Seeing the threat of the invading Other in Hastings' head, the Mayor also recognizes himself, that is, his own potentially severed head carted around in a bag for the purposes of political maneuvering. The acumen and cynicism of the Scrivener's scene that follows the Mayor's confrontation with the severed head supports the idea that the Mayor's alignment with the conspirators is not as blind or even as ambitious as it appears: he can read a threat when it is dropped in his lap straight from the chopping block. Richard's and Buckingham's melodrama raises the spectre of the Other in order to exact the Mayor's acceptance of their story and acknowledgement of their superior talent, not for acting, but for violence. The very obviousness of the melodrama explicitly casts the

Mayor as spectator, or, like Tarlton's offended lady, as a participant in an out-facing *Jeste*. As a spectator, bound by the theatrical metaphor, he can watch but is powerless to intervene; as an unwilling player, he is drawn into an unstable representational space where the "drama" of the scene has real and deadly consequences, and where his ability to act well the role assigned to him is all that will keep him from becoming another earnestly wounded "prop" in Richard's drama of power. Caught between the images of the self and the Other that he sees in Hastings' head, the Mayor succumbs to the demands of the melodrama. His decision is ratified by the Scrivener's resigned caveat: "Who is so gross / That cannot see this palpable device? / Yet who's so bold but says he sees it not?" (3.6.10-12).

The links that Richard forges between his "blasted sapling" and feminine transformation in the indictment scene, and between Hastings' head and a spectral Other in the Mayor's scene are, of course, spurious ones, since both the witchcraft and the invasion are patently artificial. But the fear he exploits is real. Fundamentally, this fear reflects an anxiety about the instability of the body as sign and its openness to contending interpretations. When Richard offers his "blasted sapling" and Hastings' head as evidence, he is calling on a conventional understanding of the wounded body as a site of truth, an understanding operative, as I argue in Chapter Two, in the anatomy of Humphrey in 2 *Henry VI*. With this gesture, he re-enacts the kind of distortion of judicial protocols that we have witnessed in the "trials" of Thump v. Horner (2 *Henry VI*), Clarence, and to a certain extent, Joan la Pucelle (1 *Henry VI*). The bugbear in both the indictment and the Mayor's scene is, of course, Richard, but the underlying anxiety is an epistemological one:

knowledge in Richard's field of representation is unstable. Unlike the dismembered body that functions in a discourse of normalization, the ironic body is fractured, polysemous, unstable, superficially available to co-optation by divergent hermeneutical practices, in short, disarticulated.

III

A deconstructive force in the play, Richard as a character, with his monopolization of the space of representation, obscures the boundaries between the self and the Other, centre and margin: he casts himself as a victim of feminine power, but is himself the Other, a feminized "falling off" from perfect masculinity who appropriates "feminine" "coming between"; he raises the spectre of insurrection, but is himself an "invading" Other who attacks from within the heart of the Court; he is a figure of the periphery, a "shadow," but his charismatic relationship with the audience causes him to loom larger than life in the foreground of the play, allowing him to upstage the figures of authority; he is a secret manipulator, but this secret "interior" is excessively visible and public; he offers himself as a "player," but his "industrious scenes and acts of death" have truly fatal consequences. Capitalizing on the epistemological crisis inaugurated by the loss of absolute authority in the universe of the tetralogy, Richard appropriates the instability of the body as sign to his own double and contradictory narrative of mayhem and ambition. His ability to impose his own desire on the field of representation, to decide what will signify what and to whom, has led him close to his goal. As the Lord Mayor has

discovered and the Scrivener has corroborated, there is little hope in resisting Richard in his own domain, where his duplicity keeps all signs in flux.

Even Richard's desire is fraught with the contradiction and irony that defines him as a character: Richard is the principle of disorder, ambiguity and irony, and yet he seeks the throne, the ultimate source of that authority, unity, and power which he consistently undermines. The irony of his agenda is foreshadowed, as Hassel astutely observes, by Richard's and Buckingham's appearance to the Mayor in "*rotten armor, marvellous ill-favoured*" (3.5.1 *s.d.*). Giving the appearance of "military experience, desperate haste, and political naiveté" (75-6), the rotten armor, Hassel concludes: "represents the substance of their rotten moral and aesthetic being. False appearance has been Richard's ally throughout half of the play. Finally appearance is turning against him for anyone who will see it and say it" (84). Ultimately, it is this contradiction inherent to Richard's usurpation of the visual domain that will undo him.

Basically conservative in its structure, the play, as the final act of a tetralogy obsessed with epistemological disorder, works toward a reconnection of the disarticulated body to discourses of unity naturalized by divine or sovereign vision: Richard's relativising presence, characterized by a deconstruction of binarisms, will confront an opposing system of Providential order defined by a strict dichotomization of the self and the Other. Opposed to Richard's adherence to a more renaissance conceptualization of visual knowledge in the play is a conservative deployment of an older system based on non-visual knowledge. This form of resistance enacts a nostalgic reversal of the renaissance privileging of sight. Fleisher argues that "a shift in the way of conceiving

knowledge between the ancient and the modern world takes place in the movement from a pole where knowledge is conceived in terms of discourse and hearing and persons to one where it is conceived of in terms of observation and sight and objects" (5). In the movement toward the establishment of the "normative future" in the play, resistance to Richard's representational power must be located outside of his domain, beyond the visual field in alternative forms of knowledge less likely to be contaminated by his deconstructive energy: the dream, the folktale, rumour, the prophesy, the supernatural, the reported action. Resistance, then, is located in the realm of people and orality, rather than in a visual domain that reduces everything to objects of Richard's narrating gaze. In the play, these peripheral perspectives, along with tactics of evasion, silence and invisibility, work to displace Richard's narrative primacy.

As truth is increasingly defined as that which is peripheral, the structure of the play comes to resemble the "trick" of the anamorphic painting, Holbein's *Ambassadors* (1533) being the most well-known example.¹⁹ In this portrait, we see in the foreground a streak that when viewed from the side of the picture becomes visible as a death's head; the painting's "moral," therefore, can only be seen by disrupting the painting's perspective by looking away from the titular subject matter. Perspective, which assumes a particular vantage point from which the painting must be viewed, is disrupted in anamorphosis by the introduction of another line of perspective beyond the primary frame of reference. In *Richard II*, for example, we find a rhetorical deployment of anamorphosis. Bushy, seeking to console Richard's Queen, who is plagued by a grief she cannot articulate, compares the vision of teary eyes of grief to "perspectives, which rightly gazed upon, /

Show nothing but confusion--eyed awry, / Distinguish form" (2.2.18-20). Bushy seeks to evade the implications of anamorphosis, here, urging the Queen to look straight on, "rightly," to acknowledge that the figure visible in the askance perspective of anamorphosis "is naught but shadows" (2.2.23). But in the world of *Richard III*, the "right" or "proper" perspective is aligned persistently with Richard's gaze, which is itself deformed, shows "nothing but confusion." To move away from this stance, the play must stage a counter-narrative of shadows, what Weimann calls the "counter-voices" that speak "from outside representative ideologies--ushering in a contrapuntal theme, some countervision which . . . cannot be easily dismissed in its thematic implications for the main plot " (159). In this conservative and idealized mobilization of the "people," the subversive, satirical, and relativising voices of the low characters--usually associated with the "comic" subplots and with those characters closest to the "rabble" of the theatre's yard--are here annexed to the discourse of hegemonic authority. In a similar reversal of periphery and margin, the anamorphosis of *The Ambassadors* takes us away from the dominant line of perspective to show us a "moral," the image of death that is the ultimate, undeniable, overarching metaphysical frame of temporal existence; through the maiming of mimesis (a negation of Richard's negating gaze), anamorphosis leads us through a manipulation of perspective illusion toward an image that relocates the spectator in a larger frame of divine order. For Barbara Freedman, this manipulation of perspective signals "the death of a spectator consciousness [that illusory sense of visual mastery conferred upon us by perspective art], since we see the picture correctly only when we find ourselves as missing" (19). Finding ourselves missing is the key to this realignment of

sympathies in the play, for we must move away from the seduction of complicity with Richard's perspective and back into a "proper" relationship with the hegemony, a movement which assigns us a more distanced position of moral censure. We must be cured, in effect, of the astigmatism of Richard's view of the world, which plagues us with a double focus. With this distanced position and moral censure comes the re-establishment of the dichotomies that have been consistently eroded over the long narrative of the tetralogy: Richard's visible exclusion enables the reconstitution of a "pure" social body against the demonized and abjected Other.

While the decisive moment of Richard's visible exclusion occurs during the throne scene (4.2), preparation for the anamorphic shift of perspective begins much earlier in the play as several instances of alternative knowledge momentarily share the stage with Richard's own tactical narration of events. The Citizens of 2.3, for example, are well aware of the danger to the nation represented by the spectre of a minority king after the death of Edward IV. The Third Citizen warns his auditors: "O, full of danger is the Duke of Gloucester / And the queen's sons and brothers haught and proud" (2.3.27-8). Sounding like a quotation from the farmer's almanac, his misgiving takes the form of aphoristic wisdom rooted in agrarian consciousness: "When the sun sets, who doth not look for night? / Untimely storms makes men expect a dearth" (2.3.34-5). Representing the common point of view grounded in pragmatism, not rhetoric, the Citizens' statements reveal that the duplicity of the self-serving agendas of peers is "common" knowledge. Concerned primarily with the consequences of "untimely storms," the Citizens assess "industrious scenes and acts of death" for their real effects in the material world; the

articulation of this knowledge in aphoristic form heightens the sense of blindness on the part of the peers because they cannot see what, to the general populace, is axiomatic.

In the next scene (2.4), the young Prince of York invokes a similar form of "common" knowledge in the form of the "old wives' tale." Hoping to retaliate against his good uncle Gloucester's proverbial barb--"Small herbs have grace; great weeds do grow apace" (2.4.13)--the prince relates the tale of Richard's nativity and youth: "Marry (they say) my uncle grew so fast / That he could gnaw a crust at two hours old: / 'Twas full two years ere I could get a tooth" (2.4.27-9). He asserts that he has his the information from Richard's nurse, but is told that she died before York was born. He replies: "If 'twere not she, I cannot tell who told me" (2.4.34). The fact that his source was dead before his time locates York's story in a popular folk tradition ripe with tales of prodigies. He cannot tell who told him, really, just that "they say" that it is true.

The "tall tale" provides another askance view of the duke that supplements the "common" knowledge of the Citizens' scene, further augmenting that scene with the additional Providential framework that defines prodigies as signs of sin and portents of danger (Moulton 262-5). The appeal to folk knowledge places Richard's prodigality in a supernatural context that coincides with his association with the Vice, and with the growing pressure of prophesy. While his own duplicitous self-presentation exploits the gap between intention and appearances, the conventional knowledge of the folk tale makes his villainy readable according to an alternative system of signs. This system is rooted in a traditional understanding of the relationship between the body's form and the discourses of good and evil. Henry VI on his death-bed gestures to this system of correspondences,

noting in a long account of omens, that "The owl shrieked at [Richard's] birth, an evil sign" (*3 Henry VI* 5.6.44). Margaret, who observes that Richard is "elvish-marked," reads in his prodigious form a character firmly situated in a metaphysical context, for Richard's fate, like his form, "wast sealed in thy nativity, / The slave of nature and the son of hell!" (*Richard III* 1.3.227-9).²⁰ While York is innocent of the broader implications of his story, Queen Elizabeth, on receiving the news of the imprisonment of Rivers, Vaughan, and Grey, draws on a supernatural vocabulary to express her grief and foreboding: "Welcome destruction, blood, and massacre! / I see (as in a map) the end of all" (2.3.53-4). In the context of York's fable, Queen Elizabeth's reading of the "map" of precognition corresponds to the traditional reading of the deformed body and behaviours of the prodigy as a "map" of Providential will and the conflict of good and evil. York's witty turning of the "small herbs" proverb back upon his uncle testifies to Richard's inability to control the deployment of this knowledge. Like Tarlton's offended lady, whose desire to "cuff" the clown can only be accomplished at the cost of her own dignity, Richard, for once, is caught in his own wordplay, for York, drawing on a popular tradition of Providential signs, spells his proverb backward and sends it back as a barb.

One final example will serve to round out this brief survey of alternative knowledges. In 3.2, the messenger arrives at Hastings' door at four in the morning to tell him that Stanley has had a dream. He reports that "this night / He dreamt the boar had rasèd his helm: / Besides, he says there are two councils kept" (3.2. 10-12). The unclear antecedent for "his" in the phrase, "rasèd his helm," is provocative. The editor of the Pelican edition glosses the phrase as, "figuratively, cut off his [Stanley's] head"; however,

the antecedent could also be read as a reference to Richard, the "boar" himself, who in the dream lifts off his helmet to reveal his face. The reference to both the beheading of Stanley and the unmasking of Richard links the two to the double councils where what "may be determined at the one / . . . may make [Stanley and Hastings] rue at th'other" (3.2.13-14). Yoking together beheading and unmasking, the dream also posits a realignment of the dismembered body with a discourse of truth and revelation, for in the instant he sees himself as a wounded body, Stanley can also see Richard's duplicity, manifest in the politically suspect divided council. As a prognostication of Hastings' beheading just two scenes later, the dream is an example of an occulted knowledge of the same general species as folk knowledge that reads essences and Providential will in prodigality. Indeed, this supernatural intelligence corresponds, like Queen Elizabeth's "map," precisely to the mundane world, for Hastings learns in reality what Stanley realizes subconsciously. Hastings, unlike Stanley, believes in the unity of intention and appearances, and that Richard is exemplary of this unity: "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" (3.4.51-3). In his final speech, however, he remembers how his "footcloth horse did stumble, / . . . / As loath to bear me to the slaughterhouse" (3.4.84-6). Hastings' acknowledgement of omens as a form of knowledge alternative to the evidence of superficial appearances coincides with his recognition of Richard's duplicity. Even horses, it seems, have "common" knowledge.²¹

Bringing together the "people" and the overarching frame of Providential knowledge and will, these scenes begin the reconciliation of the horizontal worldview with

one defined by vertical hierarchy and divine order. Encompassing both the commons, that is, the Citizens and their aphoristic knowledge, and the nobility, Queen Elizabeth, Stanley and the young Prince of York, the "people" are united against the increasingly isolated Richard. Each of these scenes represents one of a series of askance glances at Richard from an extreme angle which enables the anamorphic death's head to appear where before there was only an illusionistic representation of reality from a particular, that is, Richard's, point of view. Richard's world is one of illusionistic perspective that seduces observers, such as the Lord Mayor, with an offering of order, aligning them with his own privileged vantage. From this vantage, he seems to say, and only this, the world makes sense. To stray from this position is to stray into violence and chaos: the uncertainties of bastardy, the transformational powers of femininity, the horrors of civil uprising and foreign invasion.²² Of course, as we have seen, the violence and chaos is also of Richard's making, and we know that his seduction offers a false and partial image of reality. Charismatic and seductive, Richard exploits the shortcomings of perspective vision that I delineated in Chapter Two. For Jean Gebser, this perspectival gaze apprehends only a sector of reality: "The sector is given prominence over the circle; the part outweighs the whole. As the whole cannot be approached from a perspectival attitude to the world, we merely superimpose the character of wholeness onto the sector, the result being the familiar 'totality' " (18). Richard's theatrics offer the sector as the whole, and his seduction of the characters in the play is enabled by this totalizing gesture. Challenging his totalizing fiction, however, is the potential vision of wholeness adumbrated in the appeal to traditional, common, aphoristic, and occulted knowledge. Providing an alternative system

of signs, this potentially holistic vision relies on an intuitive relationship with a living world, or, as Fleischer observes above, a knowledge based on orality, hearing and interactions of people as a community through time. Like the death's head in the anamorphic painting which frames the image of temporal power with a metaphysical context, these alternative forms of knowledge frame Richard's actions with a larger, Providential context whose articulation takes place in the popular tradition and history of the people.

Supplementing this peripheral knowledge is the Citizens' strategy of silence in the acclamation scene (3.7). Buckingham, who attempts to garner popular support in the Commons for Richard's bid for the throne, must report that, in response to his invitation to "Cry, 'God save Richard, England's royal king!'" (3.7.22), "The citizens are mum" (3.7.3): "No, so God help me, they spake not a word, / But, like dumb statues or breathing stones, / Stared each on other, and looked deadly pale" (3.7.24-6). Staring "each on other," the Citizens participate in an exchange of gazes that appeals to the sceptical "common" knowledge, and which competes with a false spectacle of royal legitimation. The returning gaze that, by resisting penetrative spectacle, threatens the legitimating discourses of sovereignty is here co-opted by hegemonic discourse in order to highlight and to disable Richard's usurpation of the iconography of power. Consistently identifying himself with the theatrical metaphor, Richard begins to recognize the dangers of being identified as a Player-King. Furthermore, the Mayor, bringing Richard's case to the people, refuses to ratify it. Buckingham reports in frustration that the Mayor recounted the tale, saying: "'Thus saith the duke, thus hath the duke inferred, / But nothing spake in warrant from

himself" (3.7.29-33). The Mayor's evasions reveal that his capitulation is far from wholehearted as he refuses to ratify the discourse of legitimation by speaking it in his own voice. Thus, he is able to signal that he is being coerced without actually speaking the word; he retreats out of the narrative of acclamation by revealing himself to be its prop.²³ The rebounding gaze of the Citizens and their refusal to ratify the claims to legitimation reveal the tenuousness of Richard's mastery of sovereign spectacle at the point at which he is poised to seize the throne.

Revealed, too, is the erosion of Richard's seductive potential insofar as it applies to the audience, for the Scrivener's question, "Who is so gross / That cannot see this palpable device?" (3.6.10-11), aligns us with the silent Citizens. We *do* see the palpable device, and, to avoid being identified as too "gross" to know a sham when we see one, we must collude with the "dumb statues" and recognize our common positioning as spectators of Richard's drama. Bound by the theatrical contract of this "palpable device," they, like us, can watch, but cannot act. Thus we are aligned with the "common" knowledge beyond Richard's ludic space. Significantly, beyond this point Richard no longer talks to us in an intimate, collusive manner. Becoming "breathing stones," the Citizens retreat out of Buckingham's narrative as both the onstage and the theatre audiences retreat out of Richard's representational domain; because that domain is permeated by Richard's pretence, the Citizens opt instead to escape from his narrativizing power into silence. The scene has a parodic and revealing comic counterpart in Villiers' Restoration play, *The Rehearsal* (1671), where, seeking to win the applause of the audience "by civility, by insinuation, good language, and all that," the playwright proposes the following Prologue:

BAYES. I come out in a long black veil, and a great, huge hangman behind me, with a furred cap and his sword drawn; and there tell 'em [the audience] plainly that if, out of good nature, they will not like my play, I gad, I'll e'en kneel down, and he shall cut my head off. Where-upon they all clapping--a--"

SMITH. Aye, but suppose they don't. (Act I, p. 11)

The Citizens of Buckingham's tale offer Richard a similar conundrum. Like Villiers' hypothetically reticent audience, they withhold their applause, and "out of good nature, they will not like [the] play." Seeking through his charade of piety to "steal [his] plaudit from the courtesy of the auditors" (Villiers Act I, p. 11) "by civility, by insinuation and good language, and all that," Richard is poised beneath the sword that awaits only the judgement of a damning silence to come crashing down upon his neck. Indeed, Richmond is already fled to France where he will soon gather an army, and in the next scene (4.1) we are given evidence of Derby's co-operation with the nascent rebellion as he sends Dorset to Richmond with letters "from me to my son, / In your behalf" (4.1.49-50). Setting the context for this flight from England is the Citizens' flight into silence for, while we do see a small delegation of aldermen and Citizens petition Richard to take the throne, the bulk of the commons are left unrecuperated. Richard asks, "Would they not speak?" and Buckingham must answer resignedly, "No, by my troth, my lord" (3.7.42-3). The fact that we *hear* about the Citizens' reaction, but *see* the reaction of the Mayor's deputation reveals the split between the oral, communal culture of the people and the predominantly visual culture of Richard's representational domain. As in the scenes depicting folk tales and "common" knowledge, Richard's power in the acclamation scene is undermined in the oral domain even as it is consolidated in the spectral one. Such a contrapuntal structure

reveals that Richard's excessive reliance on visual display will cause him to be blinded to alternative systems of signs.

IV

A significant shift in the terms of representation has occurred in the play since the death of Clarence. The discourse of alternative knowledge will challenge Richard's own attempt at epistemological monopoly in a conflict which finds its decisive moment in the scene of state (4.2). It has been noted in the criticism and in production that Richard's coronation is the height of power from which, in the iconography of Fortune's Wheel, he will inevitably fall. As Fleischer notes, the state scene is always on the verge of irony, since it dramatizes a nostalgia for perfect order and stable hierarchy, and is therefore particularly vulnerable to the infractions and improprieties that can be used economically to stage civil disorder: "That is, the fundamental sign of order, in these plays, is also the fundamental sign of disorder" (53). Richard's double-edged climax, then, is figured in terms of a visible economy. Peggy Endel observes just this precarious signification, for Richard's entrance "*in pomp*" (4.1.s.d.) sets up expectations that are disappointed by his first order: "Stand all apart" (4.2.1). Anticipating a scene of state, we are given instead an image of Richard conspicuously isolated, brooding on the throne while plotting murders as though he were in private. Endel links the image to Thomas More's life of Richard in which the king plots the murders of the princes while "sitting on a draught (a fit carpet for such a counsel)" (qtd. in Endel 118). Death by "privy order" best befits the privy, but the business is here conducted under the canopy of state. Endel concludes that

the sense of impropriety in this image is a strategic element of characterization: "And if some theater-goers have felt this protracted meditation on the throne to be unnatural, that is, I believe, precisely Shakespeare's intent. For Richard is, among other things, *contra naturam*--a physical and metaphysical outrage that has lodged in the body politic" (120).

This scene marks an alteration in the representation of Richard's visibility. In the first half of the play, Richard is hypervisible, his interiority "buried" in the public space of the theatre. Recognizing him as presenter of the action, we see Richard doubly, his character fractured or bifurcated in dramatic irony so that we see him both as others do and as he sees himself. In this representational domain, the bodies that Richard uses to attain the crown, Clarence, Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey, are likewise fractured and doubled in the ambiguous relationship between execution and murder. Like the anatomy of Henry VI, these bodies signify only a disjunction of the iconography of power, and a subversion of the consolidating function of penal spectacle. Excessively visible, Richard is both monstrous and compelling, for he comes between the audience and the represented action and introduces a narrative that makes us see everything doubly; he exploits the absence of an absolute authority which ideally makes words and deeds correspond. "Coming between" in this way, he appropriates the very tactics of feminine narrative transformation that he condemns in his indictment of Hastings. In the throne scene, however, he is subjected to a different kind of visibility.

In this scene, the emphasis falls, not on Richard's presentational powers, but on his status as the object of a suspicious gaze. Catesby, speaking aside to another, says: "The king is angry. See, he gnaws his lip" (4.1.27). Suddenly an object of Catesby's

interpretive gaze, Richard's alienation from the audience is complete: whereas once we were Richard's "soul," now when he talks to himself we overhear only part of a conversation. Faced with Buckingham's reluctance to kill the princes, Richard mutters: "I will converse with iron-witted fools / And unrespective boys. None are for me / That look into me with considerate eyes" (4.1.28-30). Unless we are "iron-witted fools," or "unrespective boys," we are dismissed from Richard's council. Richard's hypervisibility is incorporated into a normalizing narrative as he is brought before the gaze as an object of representation. Rather than an emphatic statement of his identity as king, the scene of state represents the disruption of penetrative spectacle by regulative visibility.

This objectification is coextensive with Richard's movement into the centre of power where the king would ideally occupy the iconographical space of hegemonic authority. The sense of inappropriateness deriving from his conflation of public and private discourse in his plotting of murder has its analogue in his uncomfortable occupation of this iconographical space. As the king occupying the site of hegemonic authority, Richard can no longer access the subversive energy that has defined him throughout his rise to the throne, since such energy is antithetical to the iconography of power and hierarchy through which kingship articulates itself. As a usurper, however, Richard has no access to the discourse of hegemonic authority either. Cut off from presentational control on the one hand, and from legitimating discourse on the other, Richard exists in a vacuum, for his own determination to sever action from the word that authorizes it has left him with no source of power but unmitigated violence. Having severed so completely intention from appearances, he cannot, as a king should, use

authoritative language that "operates simultaneously in the domains of action and interpretation" (Cover 219), and must, therefore, succumb to impatient repetition of his commands: "Look how thou dream'st! I say again, give out / That Anne, my queen, is sick and like to die" (4.1.55-6). The shift into this uncomfortable space of authority is signalled by his abandonment of pretence, irony, and word play. To Buckingham he says in frustration: "Cousin, thou wast not wont to be so dull. / Shall I be plain? I wish the bastards dead" (4.2.17-18). Dramatically disturbing as a king who cannot judiciously separate public and private action, Richard's deployment of power is unmediated by authorized discourse, and the openness of his violence is enough to give even the machiavellian Buckingham a moments' pause. Defined throughout the play by his power to displace hegemonic narrative, Richard, as king, is closed off from the mutually reinforcing relationship between the position of power and the discourse of authority. As he whispers to Tyrrel (4.2.79), we realize that we are not privy to his plotting. No longer hypervisible, but reduced to a "proper" visibility, Richard will progress through the processes of visible exclusion that will allow the nation to consolidate itself against his Otherness.

The throne scene stages the consequences for Richard's character of a reconfiguration of the representational domain. Instead of duplicity and irony, the play presents us with a visible exclusion that exposes Richard to a gaze that defines him as Other. Instead of collusion and complicity, the state scene dramatizes Richard's increasing isolation. Witnessing Richard's ruthless and paranoid orders for the execution of his wife and the young princes, we are aligned with the chorus of voices that indict him; he seems

to shrink in the state scene, to become less of a masterful manipulator and unparalleled intellect and more like a bottled spider, ugly, but something that can be caught and killed. Manifested in Richard's abandonment of pretence, and his movement away from his early collusiveness with us, this rearticulation is poignantly illustrated by Tyrrel's story of the murder of the young princes that begins the next scene (4.3). Given the surfeit of violence that characterizes the rest of play, the decision on the part of the dramatist to report, rather than to stage, the murder is puzzling, at least until it is viewed in the context of a pattern of resistance that is couched in silence and invisibility. This reported action is interesting, especially since Tyrrel enters first and delivers a soliloquy of 22 lines in which he describes, not his own experience, but rather the report given to him by the murderers, Forrest and Dighton. Richard enters belatedly and is given only a three line confirmation of the act. The soliloquy is delivered to us alone, signalling our realignment with the forces of order in the play. Tyrrel's description of "The most arch deed of piteous massacre / That ever yet this land was guilty of" (4.3.2-3) is characterized by a pathos entirely missing from the other scenes of execution that occur during Richard's rise to the throne. Closing Tyrrel's speech in which even the murderers "could not speak" for the weight of "conscience and remorse" (4.3.20-1), Richard's entrance and glib overture, "Kind Tyrrel, am I happy in thy news?" (4.3.24), is a painfully inappropriate shift of tone. Seduced by an aestheticized narration of horror into sentimental identification with the victims, the audience is shocked by Richard's tone into a stance of moral censure that aligns us with the conscience-stricken murderers against their charismatic mastermind.

As auditors of a visually static, but rhetorically powerful narration, we are incorporated into the pattern of knowledge of popular tales and an oral tradition arranged in the play in opposition to Richard's spectacular presentations of reality. The scene of death is described in conventional language of innocence that, like the shift in tone, contrasts Richard's association with death. The princes' lips are described as "four red roses on a stalk, / Which in their summer beauty kissed each other" (4.3.12-13). An image of warmth, colour and "replishèd" (4.3.18) nature, the language gestures nostalgically to a lost potential for transformation. The princes' deaths seem to be a realization of the cold melancholy that the Citizens associate with the present state of the world: "When clouds are seen, wise men put on their cloaks; / When great leaves fall, then winter is at hand" (2.3.32-3). We are told that "A book of prayers on their pillow lay" (4.3.14), as if to reassure us in our horror that the princes' souls are not in danger, and that an overarching divine order claims over temporal outrages the position of absolute value.

The princes speak nothing, engage in none of the sophistic evasions that characterize Clarence's execution. There are no appeals to penal practice or to the legitimating framework of legal protocol because this scene partakes of none of the earlier scene's instability of nomination: this is not execution, but murder, plain and simple. Unlike Clarence, whose ambivalent death collapses the distinctions between murder and execution, the princes' death is articulated in a language of murder unmitigated by any allusion to crimes that might legitimate their deaths as just desserts. While they appear in Margaret's roll-call in the next scene along with those who can be placed in a context of Providential retribution, she herself identifies at least young York's death as excessive.

While Edward IV dies for murdering Edward Lancaster, she argues, and Edward V "to quit my Edward," young York, "is but boot, because both they / Matched not the high perfection of my loss" (4.4.63-6). Rhetorically placing the princes' death squarely in the category of the murder of innocents, the narration's avoidance of the framework of justice and penal practice illustrates the extent to which Richard's position as titular head of state is evacuated of real presence. Although the order for the killing of the princes comes from a king, in no way does it partake of the authorized/authorizing word that makes execution of killing and executioners of murderers.

As we have seen, in the context of the violence of Richard's representational regime, silence is a powerful tool of resistance. Neither the murderers, nor the princes appear on stage to speak to us. The absence of the murderers allows them to slip out of the visual domain so that, although they are named murderers, they are not seen to be so. What we do see is Richard's satisfaction at the news of the boys' death. Eliding the murderers from the stage, Shakespeare is able to associate Richard more directly with the princes as their principal murderer: his image cannot be saved by the fact that he was not personally present at the time of the murder because he is here now taking credit for it while the murderers are not. The presentational sleight of hand means that Richard's attempts to distance himself from the deed are undermined by his own visibility. The erosion of Richard's powers of presentation that begins in the oral domain in the acclamation scene spreads even further into the spectral in this scene in the soliloquy and subsequent exchange between the king and his vassal. Like the bible on the princes' pillow, this shift signals the encroachment of a hegemonic narrative that is gradually

recuperating Richard's purloined powers of definition and presentation, realigning the oral and the visual, and collapsing the duplicities of irony. This realignment is apparent in Tyrrel's narration of the murder. Tyrrel describes the murderers' vision of the sleeping princes: "'Thus, thus,' quoth Forrest, 'girdling one another / Within their alabaster arms'" (4.3.10-11). The use of "Thus, thus," here suggests that, in telling his tale to Tyrrel, Forrest mimes the attitude of the sleeping boys, and that Tyrrel, reproducing the speech in the soliloquy, also reproduces its gestures. In the narration of the scene of murder we see a double embrace: the brothers of each other, and the oral narrative of the visual one. This scene goes one step further than the unrecuperated silence of the Citizens in the acclamation scene, for, in addition to slipping out of the visual domain, the princes' bodies force a reconciliation of the visual and the oral domains. Their silence indicates the initial escape; then, in the same motion, the oral narrative recuperates the visual domain in the gesture of embrace that corresponds to the repeated and rhetorically powerful, "Thus, thus." As part of a reconstructed visual/oral economy the narrated gesture binds words and actions, representation and presentation together in Tyrrel's miming of the prince's embrace. Hidden from view, but exerting pressure on the visual domain, the bodies of the princes are immune to Richard's presentational contamination and remain, therefore, uncomplicated by dramatic irony. These wounded bodies, unlike any since the strangled corpse of Humphrey of Gloucester, are sites of revelation that enable the visible exclusion of the Other. Onstage alone, Tyrrel speaks to us, using this gesture of embrace to solidify our opposition to the now fully demonized Richard. While such low characters as Tyrrel

usually occupy this space in order to critique hegemonic power, this soliloquy marks the appropriation of this space and of the audience by a discourse of unity.

V

Richard, a *dramatis persona* gone amok, interposes into the story of England a narrative whose genius and rampant egotism win our complicity and guilty pleasure if not our ultimate allegiance. I have outlined here some of the ways that we as audience are weaned away from this pleasurable complicity and are realigned in our identification with the larger hegemonic narrative, whose presence is adumbrated by alternative knowledges that circumvent Richard's version of the egotistical sublime. Margaret's leavetaking in 4.4. articulates this shift: "A dire induction am I witness to, / And will to France, hoping the consequence / Will prove as bitter, black and tragical" (4.4.5-7). Margaret's reference to an "induction" identifies the action thus far, which has been largely Richard's theatrical event, as a mere prologue to the real play, the denouement comprising Richard's fall and Richmond's rise. Signalling the re-establishment of the "proper" representational economy, Margaret's withdrawal allows a broader discourse of Providential retribution to co-opt her self-serving and vengeful cursing.

Himself a principle of displacement, Richard is finally displaced from the narrative of the nation. His attempt to secure young Elizabeth in marriage confirms this displacement. He attempts to convince Queen Elizabeth that young Elizabeth can be exchanged for peace, that she can, like Blanch in *King John*, secure the state and guarantee Richard's connection to the *universitas*: "Without her, follows to myself and

thee, / Herself, the land, and many a Christian soul, / Death, desolation, ruin, and decay" (4.4.407-9). Richard's attempt to found his dynasty in Elizabeth's womb fails because, in his narrative, that womb is already dead, a tomb where he buries the bodies of her murdered brothers, where, "in that nest of spicery, they will breed / Selves of themselves" (4.4.424-25).

Opposed to this attempt to materialize a nation in his own genealogical image is an alternative national narrative. Immediately following his failure to secure the marriage, he is barraged with the titles of rebelling nobles: Sir Edward Courtney, the Bishop of Exeter, the Guildfords, Sir Thomas Lovel, Lord Marquess Dorset, the people of Devonshire, Yorkshire, Kent and Milford, Sir Walter Herbert, Sir Gilbert Talbot, Sir William Stanley, Oxford, Pembroke, Sir James Blunt, Rice ap Thomas (4.4.498-519; 4.5.1-15). Alluding to the land, to history, to hereditary succession, and to feudal hierarchy, the invocation of titles creates an image of a nation reconstituting itself. As Ralph Berry notes: "The triumph of right is also the triumph of the provinces. The alienation of the London audience is now complete: it detaches itself from 'the bloody dog' and declares itself for the morality of the provinces, and thus the nation" (127). The sense of communal knowledge and historical unity that has been peripheral in the play until now looms closer to centre stage in this image of a living nation, moving, as Berry observes, toward Bosworth, in the centre of the land (126-7). After the hiatus of the long lament of the mourning women in this scene, and the single combat of Richard's confrontation with Elizabeth, this barrage of entrances is an implosion of the state into Richard's carefully constructed fiction of sovereignty, a series of attacks that foreshadows the genuine battle

that awaits him on Bosworth field. The nation is defined against the threat of an Other whose villainy and persistent association with displacement define him as external to the social body reconstituted in nationalist discourse. This externalization of Richard as Other is a necessary step in the reconfiguration of the social body. Such reconfiguration helps to define Richmond's rebellion as a reunification of the social body, rather than as an act of self-destruction.

With this roll-call of titles, and the history, territory and people they represent, the scene ends with a sense of swelling opposition of a nation who will fight "for an understanding of the normative future that differs from that of the dominating power" (Cover 208). Richard's vision is a perspectival one that serves his egomaniacal desire to recreate the world in his own fractured image; the nationalist vision of Richmond's powers is conservative, unified and communal. Such a nostalgic contrasting view of the "normative future" can be figured in Gebser's terms: "[T]he unperspectival world suggests a state in which man [sic] lacks self-identity: he belongs to a unit, such as a tribe or a communal group, where the emphasis is not yet on the person but on the impersonal, not on the 'I' but on the communal group, the qualitative mode of the collective" (9). In the case of a revolutionary England rising up against the Player-King, the unity and collective mode of this community is a rigidly hierarchized one organized by the metaphor of a martial and masculine social body. Addressing his troops and allies, Richmond hails a masculine community:

Fellows in arms, and my most loving friends,
Bruised underneath the yoke of tyranny,
Thus far into the bowels of the land
Have we marched without impediment. (5.2.1-4)

Addressed as brothers in arms, this martial body is unified by the common language of bruises and by its opposition to a common tyranny. This masculine community, unlike that hailed in Richard's indictment of Hastings, has no fear of the feminine principle that has rewritten the masculine form in the "amorous looking-glass." Marching into the "bowels of the land / . . . without impediment," this martial body penetrates an appropriately docile countryside, symbolized by the silent and absent young Elizabeth, who will also be appropriately docile in the face of phallic power, and whose wholesome body will ostensibly consolidate the wholesome state. The collective mode of the revolutionary, nationalist community reinstates the primacy of hierarchy and masculinity through this incorporation of femininity.²⁴

Richmond's speech goes on to envision a general movement upward to the All-seeing vision of God: "Then in God's name march! / True hope is swift and flies with swallow's wings; / Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings" (5.2.22-4). Thus, the "Fellows in arms" are addressed, not in a levelling gesture, but in the context of a vertical iconography that defines nation and the martial body according to a vertical relationship between earth and heaven that posits a true totality, rather than a false, perspectival one. Buckingham's gallows speech, unlike those that come before him, ratifies this discourse and identifies it as the return of divine vision:

This, this All Souls' day to my fearful soul
Is the determined respite of my wrongs:
That high All-seer which I dallied with
Hath turned my feigned prayer upon my head
And given in earnest what I begged in jest. (5.1.18-22)

In admitting that he is the author of his own death, Buckingham at his execution becomes an unambiguous sign of functional dismemberment and visible exclusion. All Souls' day is the ultimate articulation of a communal sense of identity in a context of a vertically-oriented authoritative discourse. Like Richmond's speech and Buckingham's reflections on All Soul's day, the Ghost scene (5.3) maps in its parallel staging the recuperation of a horizontal, temporal mode of seeing by a vertically-oriented divine one. Balanced visually on the stage, the tents of the opponents mark the extremes of the temporal axis, Richard's self-defeating egotism on one end, and Richmond's nationalist unity on the other. Each dreamer sees only part of the Ghosts' message, Richard, the cursing "despair and die" (5.3.141) and, Richmond, the call to "Awake, and win the day!" (5.3.146). This partial vision coincides with the perspectival limitations of the horizontal field of sight, characteristic of the temporal world; taken together, however, the doubled message of the Ghosts represents an overarching supernatural gaze that can see both men, that can know them even in their dreams. It is this empyrean vantage point, of course, that coincides with our own in the audience. We, too, are given a vision in this scene which acts as a corrective lens, refocussing our gaze on an image of wholeness, good and evil balanced across the platform of stage by the intervening figures of the dead. As Richmond the rebel is reinscribed as saviour by the Ghosts' ratification of his challenge, his rising star eclipses Richard's waning one, returning Richard to the shadows. Ritualistically moving between condemnation and ratification, the Ghost scene enacts visible exclusion in its purest form, as the psychic dismemberment of the villain simultaneously consolidates the authority of the state.

Physically whole, but psychically wounded, Richard internalizes the fractured confusion that once characterized his ironic presence. The structural doubleness that was a source of his Vice-like power produces the madness of self-division once it is incorporated into his psychology: "Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am / Then fly. What, from myself? Great reason why-- / Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself?" (5.3.185). His soliloquy marks a violent recognition, the first in this long tetralogy, of the Other as the self. With this recognition, Richard fulfills the demands of the penal contract, admitting that he is the author of his own punishment. Once a "false glass" that reflected the shame, the ambition, and the fears of others, Richard must reflect upon himself. The "thousand several tongues" (5.3.194) of conscience "crying all, 'Guilty! guilty!'" (5.3.100) fulfill the role of the "cunning folk" whose presence is necessary to the proper exorcism of the devil, for they define him as an object of a judgemental gaze. The disarticulation that has made all signs ironic in the tetralogy has been distilled into this one anxious figure, starting from a nightmare. Thus localized, Richmond may kill disorder and Richard with the same stroke.

Notes

1. See Phyllis Rackin, "Engendering the Tragic Audience: The Case of *Richard III*"; Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy*; Ian Fredrick Moulton, "A Monster Great Deformed": The Unruly Masculinity of Richard III"; Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy* for extended discussion of these conventions.

2. For an extended discussion of the shift in the tetralogy from history to tragedy and the effect of this shift on the play's reading of femininity, see Phyllis Rackin, "Engendering the Tragic Audience: The Case of *Richard III*," where she argues that, while all drama was considered effeminizing, history plays redeemed theatrical performance by "[c]ommemorating the valiant deeds of heroic forefathers and celebrating the masculine virtues of courage, honour, and patriotism. . . . reclaiming the endangered masculinity of men in the theatre audience." Tragedy, on the other hand, was associated with, and often condemned for inspiring, "womanly emotions" ("Engendering" 48).

3. Bastardy is one extension of this "incontinent" loss of blood. Women's "incontinency," in terms of their supposed promiscuity, entails the involuntary "loss" of familial blood, as one man's blood-line is replaced by another's. The cuckold is in this way also figuratively effeminized.

4. Richard's unnatural character, duplicity, and premature birth would resonate later in Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl* (1611), where Moll Cutpurse is described as "a thing / One knows not how to name":

SIR ALEXANDER. her birth began
 Ere she was all made. 'Tis woman more than man,
 Man more than woman, and--which to none can hap--
 The sun gives her two shadows to one shape;
 Nay; more, let this strange thing walk, stand, or sit,
 No blazing star draws more eyes after it.
 SIR DAVY. A monster! 'Tis some monster! (1.2.128-34)

Moll's greatest crime here is her transgression of gender roles, but her monstrosity, like Richard's, is characterized by its compelling spectacularity, its deformity of premature appearance and its double shadow. It would be interesting to speculate whether Dekker and Middleton were intentionally capitalizing on the audience's familiarity with Richard's first soliloquy in order to heighten the sense of aversion expressed in the speeches of these old-school, reactionary patriarchs.

5. In his book, *Shakespeare and the Popular Dimension in the Theatre*, Robert Weimann maps out the conceptual space of the platform stage, dividing it into two domains loosely corresponding to centre and downstage spaces respectively: the *locus*, the

space or "world" of the play iconographically identified with hegemonic authority and hierarchy and; the *platea*, the liminal space between the "world" of the play and that of theatre, occupied by low characters who talk directly to the audience, commenting upon and relativizing the represented action. The *locus* is the space of representation, the *platea*, of presentation (74). While the anthropological basis of Weimann's model has been contested, it maintains its utility as a way to figure the relationship among the play-world, the self-reflexivity of characters like Richard, and the audience.

6. For a discussion of class in the play and of Richard's use of the language of commerce in his solicitation of audience complicity, see Ralph Berry: "Richard habitually expresses himself in a mode that is highly accommodating to his audience, one that is in essence bourgeois" ("Bonding" 121 *passim*).

7. Theatre itself is associated in contemporary discourse with an obscenity that is explicitly identified with the wounded body. In a letter from the Lord Mayor to the Queen's government in May of 1583, for example, theatres, along with bear-baiting arenas, were condemned for their tendency to attract "multitudes of the basist sort of people; and many enfected with sores runing on them" (qtd. in Lenz 835-6). Joseph Lenz observes that "It is the sight of open sores, a disfigurement historically associated with leprosy and now attributed to the plague and to syphilis, that one sees at the 'Theatre and Curtain'--not the plays, bear-baiting, or fencing that are performed there" (836). The obscenity of "open" sores is linked to theatre in a way that makes the spectator complicitous in a form of prurient looking.

8. This sense of complicity is as much part of the physical proximity of the actor to the audience as it is of Richard's moral and aesthetic seduction. As Dennis Kennedy suggests, this relation is heightened in the intimate spaces of small theatres and thrust and platform stages where the division between the play and the audience is tenuous. As a physical presence, the actor challenges the divisions between self and the represented Other: "As an undeniable presence, as a space-occupying creature distinctly like the watcher in size, vitality, and desire, the actor in a studio becomes both more human and more threatening" (5). This is so of Richard: the closer he comes to us--both physically and conceptually through his appeal to our desire for transgression and collusion--the more monstrous he becomes. That is, the more he insists that we are like him, the more we risk losing the distinction between his monstrosity and our own prurient desire for the monstrous.

9. A creature increasingly associated with death, Richard is like a *memento mori* "that, as bare bones, lacks altogether the opacity definitive of the corporeal" (L. Wilson "Harvey" 72).

10. Although the power of feminine speech cannot be denied, at this stage of the drama it turns in a closed circuit of self-reflexive cursing. In a scene that mirrors this one (4.4), Queen Elizabeth will, like Anne, fall into stychomythic exchange with Richard.

Whereas this rhetorical figure in the early scene represents Anne's enclosure in Richard's representational domain, in the later scene it signals his loss of representational control. Phyllis Rackin has an opposing view of Elizabeth's use of language, seeing her instead as a "ventriloquist's dummy": "She gives forceful and eloquent voice to Richard's crimes, but her own motives can remain ambiguous because they are finally irrelevant to the outcome of the plot" ("Engendering" 53). Appropriated by the forces of hegemony, Rackin suggests, Elizabeth's voice is evacuated of its disruptive potential, since her decision to wed her daughter to Richmond has no real dramatic effect on the ensuing battle. I would argue, however, that Elizabeth's ultimate resistance to Richard's power is in her ambivalence which leads to his fatal misreading of her as a "Relenting fool, and shallow, changing woman!" (4.4.431). While I do agree with Rackin that feminine disruption in this context is recuperated as part of a general re-establishment of hegemonic discourse, I do not agree, however, that this alignment with hegemony necessarily marks a disempowerment of feminine disruption in the play. Rackin tends to figure the structure of resistance dichotomously, so that the oppositions, Richard/hegemony, and femininity/hegemony align feminine disruption syllogistically with ricardian disruption. The recuperation by hegemonic discourse of Richard's disruption in her model, then, necessarily means the recuperation of feminine disruption. I would argue that Rackin does not account for the structural aspect of femininity that allows it to continue to be disruptive of *both* hegemonic discourse and Richard's anti-hegemonic discourse, despite its appropriation by both of these agendas.

11. For a different, although not necessarily opposing, view of Richard's linguistic control of the scene, see, for example, Marguerite Waller, "Usurpation." Waller's argument is informed by Derrida's interrogation of the "proper," and makes an interesting case for Richard and Anne's mutual dependence for their own "self-authorizing" discourses. While I find Waller's argument to be compelling and astute, a detailed discussion of its implications are beyond the scope of the present project. Waller is interested in the connections between language and subjectivity in the scene, while I place Anne in an iconographic context continuous with the earlier plays of the tetralogy, and with prevailing contemporary understanding of spectacular display.

12. Cover is extrapolating from the distinction made in S. Milgram's *Obedience to Authority* (1974) between the "autonomous" state of human behaviour that is naturally resistant to enacting violence, and the "agentic" state that can overcome autonomous behaviour in situations of hierarchical sanction, such as the penal system, in which executioners and wardens can enact violence in the name of justice (Cover 220-21). The murderers in this play, however, do the deed for money. The interplay of vassalage and capitalist exploitation will have to be worked into the mix if the model of inhibition-breaking "sanction" is to be fully workable. Richard's interposition of capital into the system of justice is consistent with his adherence to a horizontal epistemology, for money is a great leveller that circumvents traditional hierarchical structures of authority. The relationship between capitalism and feudalism in this context deserves some interrogation, but is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this chapter.

13. The disarticulation of penal spectacle is further emphasized by the fact that the emblematic punishment is enacted beyond the sight of the public eye that is necessary to its iconographic fulfilment. The breach of protocol will be echoed later in the play at the execution of Rivers, Vaughan and Grey. Led to their deaths by Sir Richard Ratcliffe, Richard's and Buckingham's personal bag man (literally so in the case of Hastings' head), Rivers exclaims:

O Pomfret, Pomfret! O thou bloody prison,

 Within the guilty closure of thy walls
 Richard the Second here was hacked to death;
 And, for more slander to thy dismal seat,
 We give thee our guiltless blood to drink. (3.3.9-14)

Rivers' apostrophe places himself and his companions in a genealogy of punishment that occurs, not only within the hidden space within the prison's walls, but also "within the guilty closure" of private vengeance and political exploitation of the penal system. The continuity of the genealogy of death is one of subverted protocols of justice.

14. In the Introduction to the Arden edition of the play, Antony Hammond observes that the malmsey butt is also a mockery of the Eucharist (112). For Carroll, "[r]edemption by Christ's blood has . . . devolved into another kind of mockery, a mechanical series of formulaic confessions by Richard's victims before their murders" (206).

15. Of course, Machiavelli's own example is not entirely free of irony, since it was Borgia himself who placed the cruel D'Orco in a position of power for the express purpose of executing him and gaining thereby the people's gratitude and loyalty (*The Prince* 27-8). Nevertheless, the iconography here signifies publicly the power and presence of sovereign authority.

16. Recall, for example, the capture and trial of Joan of Arc in *1 Henry VI*. Feeling secure in his power over her, York gloats: "See how the ugly witch doth bend her brows / As if, with Circe, she would change my shape" (*1 Henry VI* 5.3.34-5). Joan, who is *indicted* for witchcraft, is *condemned* for harlotry, a slippage that testifies, especially in the context of her usurpation of sovereign sight, to the dangerous relation among harlotry, witchcraft and the defining gaze.

17. We might consider, for example, Roland Mushat Frye's discovery of Edward Alleyn's portrait of Richard III (c. 1618), now in the collections of Dulwich College. The painting is a replica of the anonymous portrait of the king in the National Gallery, but with important differences. Whereas the official painting depicts none of the deformities associated with Richard in the popular imagination, Alleyn's "post-Shakespearean" portrait has been visibly altered and sports a pronounced hunch. The "misaligned eyes . . . the

tight mouth, and the lines of the forehead provide suggestions of malevolence and guilt" (354). Richard's "blasted sapling" is not visible in early portraits, but "appears" in this later version, just as it "appears" in the indictment scene as part of a deliberate discourse of vilification and mythmaking. In this case, as in the play, the appearance of the withered arm has the effect of casting Richard as both villainous and a victim of a malevolent transformative power.

18. Rackin writes: "The power that Richard takes from women is not only the power to curse and seduce; it is also the power to transcend the frame of historical representation, the ability to address the audience directly without the knowledge of the other characters, and the theatrical energy that serves to monopolize the audience's attention" ("Engendering" 54). I disagree with this formulation of feminine power as *plateaic*, since at no time in the first tetralogy, with the possible exception of Margaret's asides in 1.3 and 4.4, does a female character occupy the *platea* the way that Richard does. Rackin's primary examples of such feminine power, Joan of Arc and Margaret, subvert patriarchy in my reading, not through access to the liminal space of the *platea*, but, rather through strategies of occlusion: adultery, mysticism, and pregnancy (see Chapters Two and Three). While Joan is characterized by a hypervisibility similar to Richard's, she never steps out of the frame of the *locus* to address the audience directly or to solicit our complicity in a false narration of events in the *locus*. She is the object of conflicting and desiring gazes and so appears to us as the multiplicitous product of perspectival representation. In a sense, Joan is never truly visible at all. Richard, on the other hand, is defined, not by contradiction, but by irony; he seeks to occupy the privileged position of the primary gazer, to usurp the position of panoptic vision and replace it with his own totality, the illusion that is perspective vision. Unlike the occulted powers of femininity which allow Joan to slip out of the visual domain, Richard's excessive visibility signals that he will be brought under the control of the regulating discourse of the hegemonic visible economy. I will expand on this discussion below.

19. For some extended discussion of this painting's relationship to knowledge and subjectivity, see: Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*; Francis Barker, *Tremulous Private Body*, and; Barbara Freedman, *Staging the Gaze*.

20. For discussion of the relationship between prodigies and sin, see Moulton (262-65); Anne Jacobson Schutte, "'Such Monstrous Births': A Neglected Aspect of the Antinomian Controversy" for a contemporary American instance of the moral discourse of prodigious birth; Ulinka Rublack, "Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Female Body in Early Modern Germany," for a compelling discussion of the relationship between a mother's mental state, as well as social and political violence, and the health and appearance of the baby. She has an especially interesting section on the effect of penal spectacle on pregnant women. Camille Naish tells the tale of Mme. Guillotin, who heard someone being broken on the wheel, the horror of which brought on her labour pains (*Death Comes to the Maiden*, 108). It is debatable whether her son, the inventor of the guillotine, is an actual prodigy, but her experience of execution is continuous, in the logic of prodigality, with his

own.

21. An index of Richard's fall is the degree to which he himself comes to credit superstitious knowledge. In the throne scene, for example, Richard recalls Henry VI's prophesy that Richmond shall be king (4.2.94-7), and that "a bard of Ireland told me once / I should not live long after I saw Richmond" (4.2.105-6).

22. Note Richard's use of the slander of bastardy to control the signification of his own body. Inferring the bastardy of Edward, "being not like the duke" (3.7.11), Richard of York, in appearance, Buckingham offers Richard's body as "the right idea" of his father, "Both in your form and nobleness of mind" (3.7.13-14). Patently absurd, the claim proffers Richard's body as the only one untainted by adultery (feminine will and transformation), and as such, the only possible embodiment of divine kingship. This is the greatest of Richard's fictions. It is no wonder that the citizens "are mum."

23. It is this reluctance to ratify Buckingham's story that inclines me to qualify Hassel's (via Hall's) compelling account of the Mayor's self-serving and ambitious motivation, at least as he appears in this play. His linguistic evasions suggest that his collusion is far from voluntary, and his later anxious prayer--"Marry, God defend his grace should say us nay!" (3.7.81)--demonstrates, in light of this earlier reluctance, a complex fear for both the state and himself. Having seen at least one head roll as a "prop" in Richard's grim theatre, he is cognizant of the real consequences of his refusal to play his part. Understandably, he would rather have a speaking part than literally to be taken apart as a grisly stage property. Furthermore, the charges of bastardy in Edward's line are hardly more dangerous to the state than the prospect of another minority king, the consequences of which have occupied the first three plays of the increasingly bloody tetralogy.

24. This recuperation is, of course, provisional. I will discuss this issue at greater length in the Epilogue.

Epilogue

Not shine to-day? Why, what is that to me
More than to Richmond? For the selfsame heaven
That frowns on me looks sadly upon him.

(*Richard III* 5.3.286-8)

With the image of the Ghosts pacing the stage between the devil Richard and the saviour Richmond, the world is put right again as the play moves toward its closing moments. If the play were to end right after the parade of the dead, we would be left with a final instance of perfectly realized ritual, where a kind of Tillyardian order is established through the exorcism of the devil who has so tempted us to revel in mayhem. But the play does not end here, and the grand narrative of order is uncomfortable, especially for late twentieth-century readers, directors and audiences who, having become (if possible) more cynical than Shakespeare himself with regard to temporal relations, chafe under the pat closure of the Providential plan. This discomfort is readily apparent in production. Consider, for example, the conclusion of the BBC videotape version of *Richard III*, which writes beyond the ending in order to pull apart the Providential theme through a compelling visual emblem. Following Richmond's closing speech, the camera pans slowly up a pyramid of dead bodies culminating at the top with Margaret, cackling like one of *Macbeth's* weird sisters, cradling the dead Richard in her arms. An ironic reenactment of the pieta, the image, Hassel argues, seems to contradict what comes before: "Providence is either identified with the cackling Margaret or with all of the wanton violence that she

has invoked. Our last taste is not of the return of order and good governance, but of chaos and arbitrary violence. If there is a providence at all, it is bloodthirsty" (28).

A similar, if more fleeting and subtle, gesture is made in Richard Loncraine's MGM film version of the play, with Ian McKellen as Richard. Here, in the final moments of the film, Richard leaps to his death to be consumed by fire. Not to be cheated of his glory, however, Richmond shoots a couple of bullets at the falling Richard in a belated attempt to claim the credit for the tyrant's death. The moment is private; there is no-one but the audience to contest Richmond's victory or to protest that Richard's laughing leap into hell has robbed the new hero and future king of martial triumph. In this instant, Richmond looks directly at the camera with a collusive smile, the same smile that we have seen throughout the film--on Richard's face. Richmond does not vanquish the seductive player-King: he becomes him. The film's final line, which Richard addresses with an outstretched hand to Richmond, stages what appears to be an ironic enactment of succession, a collusion between the tyrant and the golden hero: "[L]et us to it pell mell, / If not to heaven, then hand in hand to hell" (5.3.313-14).

It may be argued that such interpretive decisions in production reflect an imposition onto the play of a desire for a subversive Shakespeare who will be able to hold his own in a critical climate where a monarchist propagandist becomes a rather tarnished literary hero. However, E.M. Tillyard's construction of a Shakespeare who is little more than a mouthpiece for a conservative "worldview" of absolute order has been sufficiently challenged over the last half century, and it is generally accepted that the "worldview" which Shakespeare's plays reflect and help to form is far from monolithic or uniformly

supportive of the status quo. As Jonathan Dollimore argues, the response of drama to the rapidly changing, incipiently capitalist contemporary culture "was not a retreat into aesthetic and ideological conceptions of order, integration, equilibrium and so on," but transgressed, rather, in many ways "the Elizabethan equivalent of the modern obsession with a *telos* of harmonic integration" (*Radical Tragedy* 5). There is ample evidence in the play to suggest that the resolution offered at the close of *Richard III* is not as clear cut as it first appears, for there are structural challenges to the ideals of kingship that may be masked, but are not eliminated, by the fact that the king who is deposed is a bad king. The subversive impulse becomes more visible if this play is put into its context as part of a tetralogy and, with the addition of *King John*, as part of a larger exploration of the contradictions at the heart of legitimating discourses grounded in the regulative gestures of the visible economy.

That there is a counter-current that complicates the Providential ending of *Richard III* should not be surprising, since most of the play is defined by precisely the kind of dialectical interaction which allows no point of view to assume monolithic status. Richmond's startling appropriation of Richard's seductive gaze in the Loncraine film may be extratextual, but it nevertheless draws on this subversive impulse in the last act of the play as Richmond's star begins to rise. If we consider, for example, Richmond as a principle of order and his identification with a unified vision as God's elected saviour of the nation, we find tell-tale instances to suggest that the strict dichotomization of Richmond's unity to Richard's fragmentation is not so unassailable as it first appears. On Bosworth field, for instance, Richard enters on foot, calling for a horse and determined to

"stand the hazard of the die" (5.4.10) that he has cast. He continues: "I think that there be six Richmonds in the field; / Five have I slain today instead of him" (5.4.11-12). It was a standard safety precaution in contemporary warfare for the leader of the army to deploy decoys wearing his insignia. But Richard appears in this scene as himself alone, and it is Richmond who has turned to a form of disguise that literally multiplies him while allowing him to be absent. This multiplication places Richmond in a genealogy that includes, not only Richard, but his father, Richard Duke of York, whose duplicity, in *2 Henry VI*, gives rise to a retinue of proxies. "Shadows" and "counterfeit beams," those qualities definitive of Richard's devilish intelligence and strategies of presentation, appear to be, like the collusive smile in Loncraine's film, part of Richmond's repertoire. What is more, this tactic is not an aberration, but is standard military practice; multiplicity and misreading are actively deployed, not only on the part of Richard's deconstructive agenda, or the new principle of "order" and "unity," but as a traditional aspect of the system of governance.

Throughout the play Richard's status as actor and dissimulator serves to set the stage for his later designation as the Other against whom Richmond's status as saviour is defined. But what becomes of Richmond's status when that dichotomy begins to erode? What is the status of the unifying impulse of legitimate kingship when multiplicity and fragmentation appear within unity itself? As Harry Berger Jr. notes, Henry IV uses the same military tactic as Richmond at the close of *1 Henry IV*. Douglas, having confronted several of Henry IV's decoys, meets the real king at last, but refuses to recognize him: "Another king? They grow like Hydra's heads. / . . . / . . . What art thou / That counterfeit's the person of the king?" (5.4.24, 26-7). Berger connects Douglas's use of the

Hydra to a common contemporary association between the mythical creature and rebellion. Samuel Daniel, in his *First Four Bookes of the Civile Wars*, makes the connection explicit, lamenting that "new *Hydraes* lo, new heades appear / T' afflict that peace reputed then so sure" (qtd. in Berger 80). Berger concludes: "Daniel's 'heades' are rebellious factions and their armies, whereas Douglas's are kings, but Henry's tainted succession jeopardizes the distinction, and Douglas's language makes the most of the uncertainty" (80). For Berger, Henry IV's use of decoys is a symbolic realization both of his insecure claim to the crown and of the divisiveness that will continue "T' afflict that peace reputed then so sure." We can, therefore, add to our genealogy of fragmentation Henry IV, whose proxies die in his name on the battlefield, and even Falstaff, who feigns death on the battlefield at Shrewsbury. For Falstaff, life, death and counterfeit are all one: "but to counterfeit dying when a man thereby liveth, is to be no counterfeit, but the true and perfect image of life indeed" (*1 Henry IV* 5.4.116-18). Encompassing both kings and frauds, the notion of counterfeit death and decoys threatens to undo the distinction between legitimacy and its opposite.

William C. Carroll makes a similar objection to Richmond's claim, observing that it is Richard, after all, who adheres to "natural" succession--if somewhat hurried along by a few calculated murders--while it is the "re-sacramentalized emblem of 'ceremonious' order, Richmond, who intervenes when the 'chair' of state is *not* 'empty,' when the 'empire' is *not* 'unpossessed'" (218). In *Richard III*, Richmond's arrival marks the unification of the nation, as the role-call of counties at the end of 4.4. illustrates, but his real status as invader and rebel is only masked by the efficient strategies of Othering within the play that

cast Richard, rather, as the outsider. This manipulation of status represents a positive reversal of what Linda Woodbridge calls the "*Lucrece/Titus* phenomenon": "[S]ubjects who turn against their monarch are configured as foreign invaders. To maintain the less disturbing fiction that the enemy is without, rebels are laundered by foreign travel, and appear as invaders from abroad: Bolingbroke invades from France, Hotspur (hailing from the perilous north) invades from Wales" ("Palisading" 282). Richmond, too, invades from France, but, far from appearing as an outsider, he is redefined as the force that will unify Providential England against Richard as an externalized villain.

Only through this efficient Othering of Richard, which I have outlined in the previous chapter, can Richmond's military coup be figured as anything but a violent mutilation of the social body and a decapitation of the state. In this light, the Providential closure partakes of the efficacies of salutary anxiety, in which the spectre of the Other is raised in order to show that order is at hand. This model of state empowerment would seem to ratify the New Historicist assertion that "the provocation, challenging and defeat of subversion is in fact one of the means by which a dominant ideology secures its power" (Holderness, "Introduction" 12).¹ Such containment, however, is ruptured even at the moment of its inception by the play's own subtle suggestion that the dichotomy between Richmond and Richard is permeable, that Richmond's status is in fact dependent upon that dichotomy, and that the terms of definition are unstable. The important fact that Richard himself is able to manipulate salutary anxiety in the indictment of Hastings and during the confrontation with the Lord Mayor suggests that the strategy is not essentially or naturally bound to the forces of order. The picture becomes more clear if we consider that such a

collapse of dichotomies is part of a pattern of epistemological crisis established in *I Henry VI*, where the boundaries between the English self and the French Other are deployed in much the same way to justify nationalist dispute. Only the violent defining moments of the sorcery scene and the "trial" of Joan of Arc can re-establish this crumbling dichotomy, but that very violence, the wilful disruption of judicial protocols by the English judges in the latter scene, reveals to what extent such a distinction is a salutary fiction. The manipulation of the audience in these scenes, the way in which our understanding of truth and evidence are problematized in the condemnation of Joan, should signal for us that the pat re-alignment of the audience in *Richard III* may be similarly problematic. Even as Richmond's piety and the acclamation of the Ghosts functions, like the division of the stage in the Ghost scene, to declare an absolute difference between the two contenders, the very emphasis on dichotomization in a series of plays obsessed with the interrogation of that desire suggests that the challenges to the legitimating discourses of kingship are not so easily contained.

It is possible further to elucidate this adumbrated crisis through an examination of the complex deployments of femininity in the tetralogy in light of Richmond's marriage to young Elizabeth in the final play. Uniting the marital and martial economies that have been at odds in the tetralogy, the alliance with Elizabeth will suture the wound in the state, as Richmond insists:

All this divided York and Lancaster,
 Divided in their dire division,
 O, now let Richmond and Elizabeth,
 The true succeeders of each royal house,
 By God's fair ordinance conjoin together! (5.5.27-32)

Named, but never produced, Elizabeth, as Phyllis Rackin asserts, "literalizes the legal status of a married woman as a *femme couvert*, reduced to a disembodied name, a place-marker for the genealogical authority that Richmond's son will inherit" ("Engendering" 60). As in most of Shakespeare's history plays, Rackin observes, the marriage is deferred: "Representing, through its own theatrical machinery, the patriarchal incorporation of female genealogical authority, a wedding is a dangerous moment when that authority cannot be denied. The weddings, like female authority itself, are endlessly deferred, pushed to the margins of Shakespeare's historical scripts" (*Stages* 176). We never see Elizabeth, although 230 lines of 4.4. are dedicated to the negotiation of her status as wife.

Like Blanch in *King John*, her body is the condition of "fair England's peace" (*Richard III* 4.4.343), but, unlike Blanch, who appears on stage to be rhetorically dismembered by her alliance, young Elizabeth is not contaminated by her visibility. Blanch, as the object of the masculine gaze and as a counter in the game of state, submits to the demands of the role of obedient ward and answers John's request for the marriage alliance in the third person: "That she is bound in honor still to do / What you in your wisdom vouchsafe to say" (*King John* 2.1.522-23). Framed, however, by the discourse of bawdry and political pandering that defines the scene before Angiers, Blanch, precisely as the object of the gaze, is invested with some hint of disruptive energy. Lewis protests: "I never loved myself / Till now infixèd I beheld myself, / Drawn in the flattering table of her eye" (2.1.501-3). Responding with characteristic witty acumen, the Bastard identifies Lewis as "love's traitor" (2.1.507) who is "Drawn in the flattering table of her eye! / Hanged in the frowning wrinkle of her brow! / And quartered in her heart!" (2.1.504-6).

Hanged, drawn and quartered by Blanch's beauty, and seeing himself as if for the first time through Blanch's eye, Lewis's love-making reveals the double threat of femininity in the scene. First is the transformative power of the feminine gaze that objectifies the masculine subject even as he effaces her presence by turning her into a mirror; recognizing this power of the returning gaze the Bastard equates the "drawing" of the masculine body in the marital economy with a fracturing of masculinity. This fragmentation is figured as a violation of the body's integrity. In both scaffold spectacle and petrarchan wooing, the male self is transformed into a grammar of another's desire. Second is the contamination of Blanch's chaste body by her visibility. Contemporary puritan diatribes against the theatre abounded in invective against the exposure of women as spectators of plays where they become, in Jean Howard's words, "the object[s] of promiscuous gazing": "[T]he female playgoer is symbolically whored by the gaze of many men, each woman a potential Cressida in the camp of the Greeks, vulnerable, alone, and open to whatever imputations men might cast upon her." Women in the theatre, she concludes, "have become unanchored from the structures of surveillance and control" ("Spectators" 71). Traded for political purposes by "That smooth-faced gentleman, tickling commodity" (2.1.573), to use the Bastard's words, in a scene that foregrounds its own theatricality, Blanch's identity is painfully torn between the roles of wife and whore, for her very status as wife is constituted in the language of the "promiscuous" gaze. Elizabeth, by contrast, is carefully sequestered from this volatile site where identities are constituted and contested. Whereas Blanch's status as political commodity is cynically emphasized by the degrading association of marriage with the volatility of the theatrical metaphor, Elizabeth's political

utility is shrouded in discrete darkness outside the ludic space; she is a pure cypher, without desire, without sexuality. Furthermore, the hint of transformative power that glimmers through Lewis's petrarchan wooing is evaded in Richmond's marriage alliance, for, while Elizabeth's body will transform the state from "dire division" to wholeness, it is only Richmond who we see actualizing this healing gesture as he accepts the golden circle of the crown.²

For Rackin, "Richmond's victory, in fact, re-enacts in benevolent form Richard's earlier appropriation of the feminine. Just as the play begins with Richard's appropriation of Margaret's power of subversive speech, it ends with Richmond's appropriation of the moral authority of bereaved and suffering women to authorize his victory" ("Engendering" 61). While this appropriation signals for Rackin the co-optation of feminine disruption by hegemonic discourse, Elizabeth's placement in a genealogy of women in the tetralogy, along with the tendency for this feminine disruption to be appropriated by opposing agendas, raise the possibility that the containment of femininity is not so complete as Rackin seems to suggest. Rackin herself argues that marriage is a dangerous site in the world of Shakespearean history. Elizabeth, even as *femme couvert*, is one of a long line of women whose wedding has important implications for the state. Discretely hidden from the stage, with its implication in the promiscuity of the gaze, Elizabeth is nonetheless invoked in Richmond's closing speech as a mother whose heirs, Richmond prays, will "Enrich the time to come with smooth-faced peace" (5.5.33) (no relation, he hopes, to the Bastard's "smooth-faced gentleman, tickling commodity"). What goes unsaid here is what follows on the marriage--as Wycherley's Horner would say: "Why, the next thing that is

to be heard is, thou'rt a cuckold" (Act I, p. 70)--that fault which, King John avows resignedly, "lies on the hazards of all husbands / That marry wives" (*King John* 1.1.119-20). While Elizabeth is protected both by invisibility and the close of the play from this imputation, we have seen throughout the early history plays that marriage is more often than not a site of disruption: Queen Margaret's marriage to Henry VI occasions the incursion of the French, feminine Other into the carefully circumscribed borders of the English, masculine, martial self; Blanch's marriage to Lewis becomes his occasion to invade England and claim the crown in her name; Elizabeth's marriage to Edward IV instigates Clarence's desertion for the Lancastrian camp, Warwick's desertion over the humiliation of the broken nuptial contract with Lady Bona, the French king's rekindled support for the Lancastrian cause, and the establishment of an "effeminate peace" whose narrative power becomes the ostensible cause of Richard's villainy. As a wife, the *femme covert* may mobilize and manipulate silence itself for subversive purposes, for, as Lady Faulconbridge demonstrates, the woman as mother can "come between" the genealogical progression from husband to son and install her whoreson as heir as long as her transgression is hidden.

The masculine desire to know femininity, to reduce it to manageable categories, involves a confrontation with the contradictions inherent to the visible economy that underwrites masculine and sovereign power, for there are dangers in the regulative impulses of both invisibility and exposure. In *King John*, Lady Faulconbridge's indeterminacy is contained by her visible exclusion, but the terms of this exposure have dire implications for John in his drama of power before the walls of Angiers. Here, he too

becomes the object of a defining gaze that reinscribes his martial display as solicitation, his sovereign word as empty rhetoric, and his crown as a prop in a drama that is evacuated of its penetrative power and is revealed to be "merely" theatrical. Joan la Pucelle likewise submits to visible exclusion where she is forced to perform a psychic dance of seven veils, displaying and stripping away her multiple identities before her English judges. Joan's uncertain status as maid/whore, virgin/mother evades categorization and reduction, and the judges' attempts to solidify that identity demands that they circumvent judicial protocols in order to use her possible pregnancy as an excuse to withhold, rather than to grant, mercy. Joan's status as a potential mother is conflated with whoredom in a violation of categories that implicates the English in the heinous crime of the murder of innocents. Queen Margaret's suckling "child," her lover's severed head, is a loaded image that, while it verifies her status as adulteress and implies the bastardy of her son, Edward, also emblemizes the potential for feminine desire and procreative power to unhinge the precarious connection of masculine identity to history, a conjunction of the corporeal to the idealizing discourse of succession that subtends the continuity of sovereign power. In each case, the visible exclusion that seeks to stabilize patriarchal identity through the exposure of the feminine subject has serious consequences for that identity. Seeking to draw himself in the flattering table of the feminine eye, the masculine subject repeatedly finds that the mirror reflection that attests to his primacy also has the tendency to transform his image.

The womb in these instances is the threshold of masculine power and knowledge, the epistemological limit of the visible economy. It is this "nest of spicery" where men

"breed / Selves of themselves" (*Richard III* 4.4.424-5) that Richard attempts, but fails, to conquer in his negotiations with Queen Elizabeth for the consolidating power of her daughter's procreative body. It is this body that Richmond inherits and that is elided from the play. Assuming this power to breed a self of himself, Richmond also inherits at least three plays' worth of anxiety that surrounds the vessel of that power, and the nagging understanding that marriage goes in lockstep with the fear of unseen infiltration. Moving through all four plays finally to outlive her time in *Richard III*, Margaret is the most powerful embodiment of this infiltration, and the continuity of her presence testifies to the continuity of this anxiety. The elision of Elizabeth's procreative body marks this confrontation between the contradictory desires of the visible economy even as the representational tactic seeks to avoid it. She hovers in the liminal spaces between the masculine desire to see and to know the female self, and the masculine fear that this exposure opens the feminine subject to promiscuous gazing. This feminine subject is constituted within what Patricia Parker calls "pornographic doubleness" (117), where the "epistemological hunger" to expose "what lay hid to the scrutiny of the gaze" (115-16) is caught up in the dangers of feminine "enlargement." This doubled desire "both to see and not to see, to display to the eye and to discourage or refrain from looking" (116) eroticizes the female body in the very act of attempting to contain her potential for unregulated eroticism. Coupled with this pornographic doubleness is the equally unsettling notion that the masculine desire to see the self in the mirror of femininity is caught up in this double bind, for to see the self in the feminine eye is to risk objectification.

In appropriating femininity then, both Richard and Richmond appropriate as well this highly conflicted relationship with visibility that has important consequences for the legitimating discourses of sovereignty. Rackin asserts that femininity is doubly co-opted in *Richard III*, both by Richard's counter-hegemonic discourse and by Richmond's hegemonic re-establishment of patriarchal dominance over the silent body of the docile wife, Elizabeth. Yet it is this very indeterminacy of the feminine self that makes it available for appropriation by both sides of the dynastic conflict. When she seeks to protect young Elizabeth from Richard's advances, Queen Elizabeth offers to "Throw over her the veil of infamy" and "confess she was not Edward's daughter" (4.4.209, 211). The veil of infamy is a figure for a visible exclusion that would bring the hypothetical "whoreson" (or, rather, daughter) to light in order to disqualify young Elizabeth from Richard's genealogical project of consolidation. In this sense, Queen Elizabeth has appropriated the disparaged category of bastardy as part of a hegemonic resistance to Richard's disruptive agenda. The gambit, however, could have no strategic efficacy if the uncertainty over paternity were not a real and pervasive concern. It is this same anxiety over the unknowable status of women, their ability to remain silent and to hover thereby dangerously between the reductive roles of wife and whore, that allows Richard plausibly to imply the bastardy of Edward's children and to declare all bodies but his own contaminated by feminine indeterminacy. The very availability of femininity to co-optation by both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces suggests that, in spite of the defining force of visible regulation, there is something contingent about femininity that resists naturalization.

Appropriated in multiple ways for multiple purposes, femininity becomes a "prop," or, in Mary Ann Doane's terms, a "masquerade" that reveals "that it is femininity itself which is constructed as mask--as the decorative layer which conceals a non-identity" (234). Revealing femininity to be "merely" theatrical, the masquerade "destabiliz[es] the image" and "confounds this masculine structure of the look. It effects a defamiliarization of female iconography" (235). Far from representing patriarchal foreclosure of feminine disruption, as Rackin insists, the appropriation of femininity by *both* Richard and Richmond reveals, rather, that any project grounded in such an appropriation is grounded in a radical absence. Femininity as excess, as indeterminacy, as contingent narrative, or reductive role continues to undermine masculine identity, whether it is aligned with hegemonic discourse or against it.

Not only the appropriation of femininity by masculine forces, but the extent to which masculine characters are feminized by the visible economy demonstrates that femininity as a category in these plays is neither stable nor essential. Henry VI is repeatedly cast as an "effeminate prince," whose disastrous marriage to the Amazonian Margaret is figured as an emasculation of the state. Edward IV, who "hath kept an evil diet long / And overmuch consumed his royal person" (*Richard III* 1.1.139-40), is transformed from a martial hero to a hedonistic lover whose marital league so debases the nobility "That wrens make prey where eagles dare not perch" (*Richard III* 1.3.70). In *Richard III*, Richard, who actively manipulates the fears of the feminine Other to mask his own appropriation of feminine "coming between," is himself defined by a marital economy that makes his bodily excess signify as deformity. Blaming his villainy on a womb that

released him both too late to succeed to the throne and so early that he was "scarce half made up," Richard's subjectivity, no less than his strategies of subversion, is shaped by the feminine power to transform the masculine body. Likewise, King John, forced to submit to the gaze of the Citizen Angiers, finds his martial display reconfigured as solicitation. The penetrative spectacle of sovereignty is contaminated by a discourse of whoredom that is inextricably linked to his presentation as the object of a defining gaze. John's submission to a reductive, and feminizing, gaze parallels Richard's own reduction to a "proper" visibility: Richard is reduced to an object of a censoring gaze in the state scene (4.1) and submits at last to visible exclusion. Unlike Joan of Arc, whose genuine multiplicity allows her to evade this regulating gaze, Richard's duplicity allows him to be "brought to light" as his "hidden" subversive energy is reduced to "proper" visibility. Like the exorcism of the witch, this bringing to light is coextensive with the collapse of Richard's power. Unable to stage a penetrative spectacle of power, both kings are revealed to be "merely" theatrical, "mere" shadows, "mere" actors who wear the costume of royalty but can wield none of its power.

In both of these instances, the regulating gaze works on the part of hegemonic discourse to depose a "bad" king, and to suggest that it is their status as usurpers that makes them vulnerable to the censoring gaze that ultimately undoes them. But the application of the reductive gaze of the visible economy to kingship itself has important implications, for, even as the gesture returns the state to a kind of order, it simultaneously posits sovereignty itself as open to the gaze. As in the regulation of femininity in these plays, sovereign spectacle is revealed to be plagued by its pornographic doubleness. The

sovereign subject must see all, must be seen by all, but cannot be seen as an *object* of a returning gaze. Penetrative spectacle operates within a paradigm of total exposure (such as the "complete" glory of the Holy Mother's appearance to Joan la Pucelle), but must at the same time elide the viewing subject; it must be seen, but it must negate the act of seeing itself, or face the consequences of what Homi Bhabha calls in another context the "threatened return of the look" (3).³ Joseph Lenz observes this contradiction at work in *Troilus and Cressida*, where Achilles sulks in his tent, paralysed by the conflicting desires to be seen and not to be seen: "Hiding in his tent, Achilles has no value, no self. Displayed, he takes on that self he perceives . . . in the other's gaze. Achilles thus becomes conscious of his devaluation and of his complicity in that process (by subjecting himself to their gaze he allows their gaze to construct his image)" (850). Achilles, like John, like Talbot in the French triumph, and all the peers bound to "death's triumphal car," faces the humiliating prospect of a transformative objectification.

There can be posited, therefore, a striking analogy between the constitution of the feminine subject in these plays and the subversion of sovereignty. Femininity is equally imbricated in the conflicted masculine desires to reveal and to elide from view. Throughout the plays, women are subjected to a regulating gaze that inscribes them according to the reductive categories of mother, whore, wife. In each case, however, there is an excess that resists such regulation, and the controlling impulse of the gaze rebounds on the patriarchal system and its representatives. Constituted through pornographic doubleness, open to appropriation by opposed agendas, the female subject becomes a kind of shadow of conflicting desires, a mask that is so infinitely transferable

that even men can wear it, voluntarily or not. Femininity as masquerade suggests that the patriarchal regulation of womanhood in the plays can be undermined by the "mere" theatricality of reductive feminine roles. Consistently interimplicated in the visible economy with feminine disruption, sovereign spectacle risks being revealed as masquerade, as a mask that is as infinitely transferable, as unanchored, as unessential, as unnatural as femininity itself.

While Richard's disruptive energy is contained by the Providential frame of the play, the challenge he represents is not, for, in exploiting the terms of the visible economy, Richard reveals the spectacular foundation of kingship to be in crisis. Richard cannot mobilize the spectacular language of kingship because he is not a legitimate king. But the very discourse of legitimacy is itself grounded in a spectacular language that Richard reveals to be "merely" theatrical. As the crown changes hands again and again in these plays, it is repeatedly shown to be a "prop," an empty signifier, and, since an empty vessel makes the most sound, it produces, not order, but endless sophistry and violence. In this sense, the tetralogy's extended exploration of the gap between "The king is dead" and "Long live the King" is an exploration of this emptiness, and is best illustrated by Henry VI, returning to his kingdom in disguise in *3 Henry VI*, only to deliver a eulogy: "No, Harry, Harry, 'tis no land of thine" (3.1.15). Beneath his monk's clothes, there is no king, no presence, only an endless deferral. Henry is like Edward IV, a shadow in the sun. Even Henry V, whose presence haunts the tetralogy, cannot bear the weight of the ideal he should embody, for the contradictions of the visible economy will undo these ideals in the very instant of their actualization. Henry V *must* be dead at the opening of the

tetralogy in order to operate as a "lost" ideal, for, in staging corporeal presence, the professional drama collapses sovereign spectacle into theatricality and threatens to reveal monarchy's own pornographic doubleness and contradiction. Like young Elizabeth, Henry V must be discretely elided from the ludic space or face the consequences.

This was the conundrum faced by Elizabeth I, who obsessively worked to control the presentation of her body to the gaze.⁴ Childless, the queen worked against the eroticism of the visible economy by figuring herself as the Virgin Queen, and the state as the Phoenix who could rise from its own ashes without sexual reproduction. The sovereign seeks through this careful manipulation of presence to assert an unassailable connection between the ideal of kingship and the mortal embodiment on which it depends, to present the corporeal self to the gaze without submitting to objectification. In its ideal formulation--that nostalgically associated with Henry V's penetrating, blinding gaze--monarchical spectacle is the embodiment of *universitas*, the sovereign Word made flesh. In this model, the martial body, like the penal body, is a language of the state where nation is articulated. These bodies are the sites where the ideal and the material come together without residue. The traitor dismembered in single combat, the body subjected to anatomy, the penitent in the white sheet, are points of revelation where the sovereign's authorized word materializes. This body appears in these plays at important junctures: Humphrey's murdered body, anatomized by Warwick in *2 Henry VI*, exposes Suffolk and Winchester's traitorous dealings and causes a global convulsion; Arthur Plantagenet's broken body, found at the bottom of the prison tower in *King John*, exposes John's murderous intent and galvanizes the moral opposition of the peers; the bodies of the

Princes murdered in the Tower in *Richard III*, narrated by Tyrrel's soliloquy and his gestures, realign words and bodies in a powerful indictment of Richard's ironic manipulation of appearances; the recitation of counties and titles in 4.4 of *Richard III* binds the nation to its history and territory through the figures of its peers.

The body as the language of the state, however, is precarious and prone to polysemy in a context where identities are grounded in the instabilities of the visible economy. Instead of transubstantiation there is representation, where the body and the word fit together inefficiently, where there is always an uncontained excess to trouble the processes of legitimation. This is what Jonathan Hart calls the "fall into language" where "only a memory or a myth of a godlike or bird's-eye view coexists with the realization of the fragility and fragmentation of human knowledge and judgement" (4-5). It is in this fallen world that Talbot must confront the jeering crowd of the French triumphal parade and see himself through their eyes, as a "scarecrow" and "writhled shrimp," whose corporeal presence is both necessary to and disruptive of his mythic stature as England's last martial hero. In this world, the sovereign word is replaced by rhetoric and sophistry, the language that degrades the martial body and inscribes it instead with the signs of solicitation. A point of rhetorical or hermeneutic contention, this body becomes available to multiple narratives; it becomes ironic. In a perspectival world, the body is seen only in fragments that can never add up to a whole. In a sense, the world as the tetralogy represents it is like a cubist painting, where multiple perspective lines are displayed all in one plane. The resulting figure may be a representation of the "whole" object or person, but nevertheless appears monstrous and deformed. in other words, disarticulated.

Inadequate to the task of defining or articulating a body whose excess explodes reductive categories, the spectacular language of power can only figure this multiplicitous body in terms of mutilation.

Recognizing the tenuousness of the connection between the authorizing word and the material deeds that are its actualization, Richard is able to "come between" and appropriate rites and ceremonies of all kinds. His interference capitalizes on the body's unruly resistance to reduction. Thus, Clarence's penal body is multiply inscribed as both victim and criminal, just as Henry VI's corpse is at once deposed king, usurper, murder victim, and token of Richard's "love." Neither of these bodies can fulfil their ceremonial function and consolidate state power. Appearing as early as *2 Henry VI* when Eleanor of Cobham paces the stage in her penitential sheet, the post-penal subject returns again and again in these plays to trouble the ceremonial consolidation of the state. The epistemological wounding that should create the body as a site of revelation turns instead to proliferating mutilation that speaks of the overdetermined nature of the ironic, perspectival body. An embodiment of a crisis in the founding metaphors of sovereign presence, the grotesque circulation of severed heads in *2 Henry VI* is a ghastly visual analogue for the circulation of crowned heads, especially in *3 Henry VI* and *Richard III*. Richard's "coming between" may be the ostensible justification of his Othering in the latter half of the play, and this Othering may ratify the installation of a new golden hero, Richmond, but the disarticulation that Richard exploits has its roots in the broader context of a crisis of sovereign articulation of presence. Richard is very much like Margaret, who, as a "counterfeit beam" succeeds in her infiltration and destabilization only because she so

closely resembles the disease that already defines the Court. Richard's Othering is a salutary fiction, an exorcism that, like almost all of the visible exclusions that occur throughout the tetralogy and in *King John*, masks an ulcer in the very act of tenting it to the quick.

It is, perhaps, a discomfort with the salutary fiction that prompts the interpolation of ironic gestures at the end of modern productions of *Richard III*. Richmond's collusive smile in the Loncraine film, and Margaret's ghastly pieta in the BBC version seem to touch on this deconstructive energy that threatens to break the smooth surface of Providential closure. Whether these gestures are effective within the complex interpretive systems of their particular productions is the subject of another project. But both these endings point to the anxious site where bodies, power and the gaze converge, where the shadowy presence of an alternative reality seeks articulation.

Notes

1. Holderness outlines concisely in the Introduction both New Historicist methodologies and the various critiques of the subversion/containment model launched from feminist, marxist, and cultural materialist corners. The later schools object to the New Historicist understanding of hegemonic power as that which generates opposition in order to consolidate itself, for this model does not account for discontinuity, unresolvable contradiction, positive resistance or historical change. For an interesting reading of both New Historicist models and those of its more politically interventionist opponents, see David Aers, "A Whisper in the Ear of Early Modernists; or, Reflections on Literary Critics Writing the 'History of the Subject'."

2. In the Loncraine film, Elizabeth is visible on several occasions as a silent observer whose adolescent appearance serves to heighten the repugnance we feel regarding Richard's construction of her as a sexual and procreative being in his conference with her mother in 4.4. This is especially so because of the obvious age difference between her and Ian McKellen's Richard, which makes her seem a child by comparison. She is, however, sexualized in an interpolated scene after her marriage (which is also interpolated). Richmond, waking from his wonderful dreams (which are excised from the film), finds her naked and astride him in a posture of clearly active participation in their sexual relationship. While the balanced Ghost scene is severely cut, the shift of England's fortune from Richard's impotence to Richmond's manly potency is marked in the sexual maturation of the kingdom's future Queen mother.

3. "In the objectification of the scopic drive there is always the threatened return of the look; in the identification of the Imaginary relation there is always the alienating other (or mirror) which crucially returns its image to the subject; and in that form of substitution and fixation that is a fetishism there is always the trace of loss, absence" (Bhabha 33). Speaking of colonialist scopic relations with the colonized subject, Bhabha maps a similar relationship to "otherness" and visibility to the one I have posited in order to think through the materialization of femininity in the histories. For Bhabha, "colonial discourse produces the colonised as a fixed reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible" (23), a relation which depends, Bhabha argues, following Christian Metz, on the surveilled subject's active consent or submission to that defining, reductive and totalizing gaze (29).

4. There is, in fact, a story that Essex, the queen's erstwhile favourite, upon returning in shame from his disastrous Irish command, "burst in on the queen unannounced, his face and clothes muddy and unwashed. The queen was not yet dressed and he found her her without her wig, her jewels, her make-up" (S. Freedman 127). Although he was already treading on extremely thin ice with Elizabeth insofar as their relationship went, the story of this violation of the queen's presence gives his later demise mythic resonance: like Acteon, who stumbled upon the bathing Diana--a popular

analogue for the queen--Essex is doomed for his wandering and intrusive gazing.

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