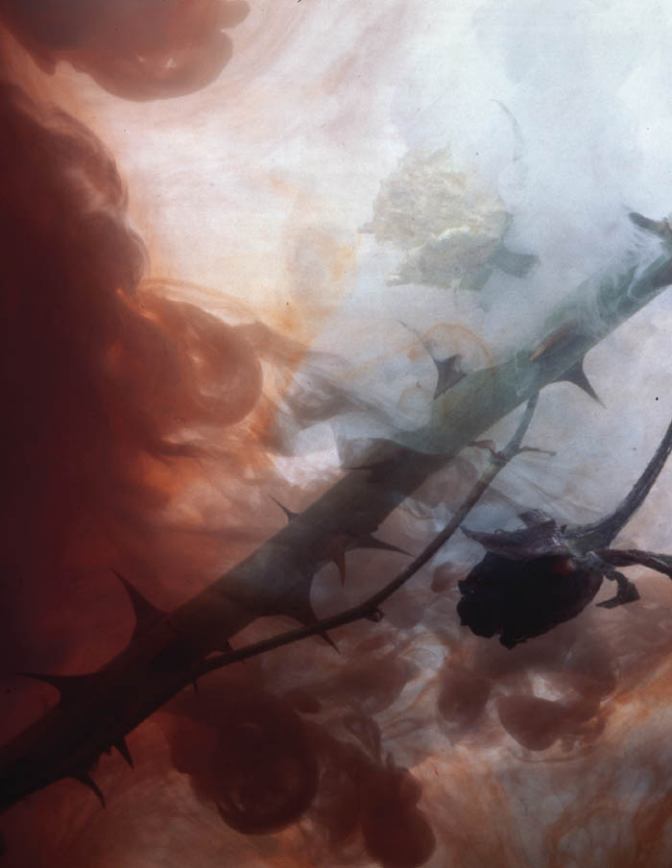


THE ARDEN SHAKESPEARE

KING RICHARD III

EDITED BY JAMES R. SIEMON



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RICHARD III

Edited by
JAMES R. SIEMON





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James R. Siemon is Professor of English at Boston University. He is the author of *Word Against Word: Shakespearean Utterance* (2002) and *Shakespearean Iconoclasm* (1985); he is the editor of Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* for the New Mermaids Series (1994).

For Alexandra, Johanna, Rosalie, Anna and Julia

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GENERAL EDITORS' PREFACE

The earliest volume in the first Arden series, Edward Dowden's *Hamlet*, was published in 1899. Since then the Arden Shakespeare has been widely acknowledged as the pre-eminent Shakespeare edition, valued by scholars, students, actors and 'the great variety of readers' alike for its clearly presented and reliable texts, its full annotation and its richly informative introductions.

In the third Arden series we seek to maintain these well-established qualities and general characteristics, preserving our predecessors' commitment to presenting the play as it has been shaped in history. Each volume necessarily has its own particular emphasis which reflects the unique possibilities and problems posed by the work in question, and the series as a whole seeks to maintain the highest standards of scholarship, combined with attractive and accessible presentation.

Newly edited from the original Quarto and Folio editions, texts are presented in fully modernized form, with a textual apparatus that records all substantial divergences from those early printings. The notes and introductions focus on the conditions and possibilities of meaning that editors, critics and performers (on stage and screen) have discovered in the play. While building upon the rich history of scholarly activity that has long shaped our understanding of Shakespeare's works, this third series of the Arden Shakespeare is enlivened by a new generation's encounter with Shakespeare.

THE TEXT

On each page of the play itself, readers will find a passage of text supported by commentary and textual notes. Act and scene

divisions (seldom present in the early editions and often the product of eighteenth-century or later scholarship) have been retained for ease of reference, but have been given less prominence than in previous series. Editorial indications of location of the action have been removed to the textual notes or commentary.

In the text itself, unfamiliar typographic conventions have been avoided in order to minimize obstacles to the reader. Elided forms in the early texts are spelt out in full in verse lines wherever they indicate a usual late twentieth-century pronunciation that requires no special indication and wherever they occur in prose (except where they indicate non-standard pronunciation). In verse speeches, marks of elision are retained where they are necessary guides to the scansion and pronunciation of the line. Final -ed in past tense and participial forms of verbs is always printed as -ed, without accent, never as -'d, but wherever the required pronunciation diverges from modern usage a note in the commentary draws attention to the fact. Where the final -ed should be given syllabic value contrary to modern usage, e.g.

Doth Silvia know that I am banished?
(*TGV* 3.1.214)

the note will take the form

214 **banished** banishèd

Conventional lineation of divided verse lines shared by two or more speakers has been reconsidered and sometimes rearranged. Except for the familiar *Exit* and *Exeunt*, Latin forms in stage directions and speech prefixes have been translated into English and the original Latin forms recorded in the textual notes.

COMMENTARY AND TEXTUAL NOTES

Notes in the commentary, for which a major source will be the *Oxford English Dictionary*, offer glossarial and other explication of verbal difficulties; they may also include discussion of points

of interpretation and, in relevant cases, substantial extracts from Shakespeare's source material. Editors will not usually offer glossarial notes for words adequately defined in the latest edition of *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* or *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, but in cases of doubt they will include notes. Attention, however, will be drawn to places where more than one likely interpretation can be proposed and to significant verbal and syntactic complexity. Notes preceded by * discuss editorial emendations or variant readings from the early edition(s) on which the text is based.

Headnotes to acts or scenes discuss, where appropriate, questions of scene location, Shakespeare's handling of his source materials, and major difficulties of staging. The list of roles (so headed to emphasize the play's status as a text for performance) is also considered in the commentary notes. These may include comment on plausible patterns of casting with the resources of an Elizabethan or Jacobean acting company and also on any variation in the description of roles in their speech prefixes in the early editions.

The textual notes are designed to let readers know when the edited text diverges from the early edition(s) or manuscript sources on which it is based. Wherever this happens the note will record the rejected reading of the early edition(s), in original spelling, and the source of the reading adopted in this edition. Other forms from the early edition(s) recorded in these notes will include some spellings of particular interest or significance and original forms of translated stage directions. Where two or more early editions are involved, for instance with *Othello*, the notes also record all important differences between them. The textual notes take a form that has been in use since the nineteenth century. This comprises, first: line reference, reading adopted in the text and closing square bracket; then: abbreviated reference, in italic, to the earliest edition to adopt the accepted reading, italic semicolon and noteworthy alternative reading(s), each with abbreviated italic reference to its source.

Conventions used in these textual notes include the following. The solidus / is used, in notes quoting verse or discussing verse lining, to indicate line endings. Distinctive spellings of the basic text (Q or F) follow the square bracket without indication of source and are enclosed in italic brackets. Names enclosed in italic brackets indicate originators of conjectural emendations when these did not originate in an edition of the text, or when the named edition records a conjecture not accepted into its text. Stage directions (SDs) are referred to by the number of the line within or immediately after which they are placed. Line numbers with a decimal point relate to centred entry SDs not falling within a verse line and to SDs more than one line long, with the number after the point indicating the line within the SD: e.g. 78.4 refers to the fourth line of the SD following line 78. Lines of SDs at the start of a scene are numbered 0.1, 0.2, etc. Where only a line number precedes a square bracket, e.g. 128], the note relates to the whole line; where SD is added to the number, it relates to the whole of a SD within or immediately following the line. Speech prefixes (SPs) follow similar conventions, 203 SP] referring to the speaker's name for line 203. Where a SP reference takes the form e.g. 38+ SP, it relates to all subsequent speeches assigned to that speaker in the scene in question.

Where, as with *King Henry V*, one of the early editions is a so-called 'bad quarto' (that is, a text either heavily adapted, or reconstructed from memory, or both), the divergences from the present edition are too great to be recorded in full in the notes. In these cases, with the exception of *Hamlet*, which prints an edited text of the quarto of 1603, the editions will include a reduced photographic facsimile of the 'bad quarto' in an appendix.

INTRODUCTION

Both the introduction and the commentary are designed to present the plays as texts for performance, and make appropriate reference

to stage, film and television versions, as well as introducing the reader to the range of critical approaches to the plays. They discuss the history of the reception of the texts within the theatre and scholarship and beyond, investigating the interdependency of the literary text and the surrounding 'cultural text' both at the time of the original production of Shakespeare's works and during their long and rich afterlife.

PREFACE

While editing any Shakespeare play can and should constitute an educational experience, editing *Richard III* for the Arden series has provided an extended intellectual and emotional challenge beyond anything I could initially have imagined. Although working on this edition sometimes demanded long hours spent far from family and friends, I have never felt lonely. Firstly, there was the extended Arden family of passionately devoted editors and lovers of Shakespeare who stood ready, anywhere, nearly anytime, with support, encouragement and, not least, criticism. Secondly, old friends rose to the occasion, and new friends appeared wherever I went. I may sometimes have bored unsuspecting strangers with discourses on derivative Quarto variants or printing by formes, but friends learned what to expect from me, and hung on nonetheless; over the years I got to know a world of people who cared deeply about Shakespeare. Finally, the challenge made me feel connected with generations of other editors. How they accomplished so much in the years before photocopies, interlibrary loan, microfilm, email, EEBO and JSTOR is beyond me. The list of collated editions in the present volume begins to suggest its indebtedness, but no list sufficiently conveys the feelings of personal relationship that the struggle to edit Shakespeare elicited. I came to look forward to seeing what Theobald had made of an opaque line, what Johnson saw in an obscure reference or what Furness would do with rival interpretations. Whether I agreed or not, I always learned from these encounters.

I am grateful to the extended Arden family, and especially to Richard Proudfoot, who embodies the Arden commitment to scholarly excellence and does so with inspiring graciousness. My heartfelt thanks to David Scott Kastan, who personally talked

me through countless revisions, cheering me on (and up) with unfailing humour and gentle reminders that the struggle was worth it. Grateful thanks also go to George Walton Williams for many thoughtful suggestions and corrections. Thank you, as well, to Jessica Hodge, Margaret Bartley and Anna Wormleighton for all manner of aid and encouragement; and to the very helpful proofreader, Jocelyn Stockley, for her acute attention to detail. Finally, and especially, I thank Jane Armstrong, without whose unflinching devotion to clarity, order and accuracy, to, in effect, editing the editor, this edition could never have hoped to aspire to Arden standards.

Then, my thanks go to colleagues from many institutions who shared insights, asked pointed questions, cajoled, challenged and provoked: Leeds Barroll and Susan Zimmerman, Emily Bartels, David Bevington, Peter Blayney, Keir Elam, Ed Gieskes, Andrew Gurr, Andrew Hartley, Diana Henderson, Jeff Henderson, Peter Holland, Jean Howard, Lauren Kehoe, Maydee Lande, Kirk Melnikoff, Cynthia Marshall, Joseph Navitsky, Lena Orlin, Gail Paster, Val Wayne and Robert Weimann. There were those who generously shared their own work and work-in-progress with me: M.C. Aune, Gina Bloom, Clara Calvo, Richard Dutton, Lukas Erne, Andrew Gordon, Andreas Hoefele, Alex Huang, Nina Levine, Barbara Mowat, Patricia Parker, Marie Plasse and Stuart Sillars. I owe special debts as well to those who read, listened to, published, consulted and commented on the work as it grew: especially Bill Carroll, Kent Cartwright, Pete Donaldson, Steve Esposito, Wes Folkerth, Marta Gibińska, Paul Hammer, Mick Hattaway, Jean Howard, Hugo Keiper, Roslyn Knutson, Bob Levine, Bruce Smith, Boika Sokolova, Alden and Ginger Vaughan, Paul Yachnin and Paul Werstine. I thank the Shakespeare Association of America, the International Shakespeare Association, the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey and the Shakespeare Theatre Company of Washington, DC, for opportunities to try out my ideas in formal ways. I am grateful for financial assistance from Boston University and its generous Humanities Foundation,

the Folger Shakespeare Library and the Arden Bursary. I am delighted to acknowledge the vital aid of librarians at Boston University (particularly Linda Carr), the British Library, the Shakespeare Centre Library, the Bodleian Library, the Public Record Office, the National Archives, the Harvard Theatre Collection, the Library of Congress and, especially, the Folger Shakespeare Library, where Betsy Walsh, Georgianna Ziegler and the dedicated staff make scholarship a joy.

I thank my students from many years of Shakespeare courses and seminars at Boston University for their numberless insights. Finally, and above all, for inspiration and sustenance, emotional and intellectual, I thank Alexandra Siemon, who never lost patience, and the four other brilliant interlocutors named in the dedication and always present in my thoughts. Where would I even begin? Thanks, not least, for the laughter: who would ever have imagined that Anna Siemon, Julia Siemon and Rachel Nolan could transform the rigours of proofreading into raucous competition?

*James R. Siemon
Brookline, Massachusetts*

INTRODUCTION

THE PLAY

Though it is easily the most performed of Shakespeare's histories, there is no consensus about the rank of *Richard III*, about what sort of play it is or about what to make of its unique 'crook-backed' villain protagonist. The earliest critical response cites the play as support for putting Shakespeare among the best for 'tragedy' (Meres, sig. Oo2^r). With no clear genre of 'history play', Francis Meres accepts the self-designation of the first edition, published in 1597 (Q1): '*The Tragedy of King Richard the third. Containing his treacherous Plots against his brother Clarence: the pittiefull murder of his innocent nephewes: his tyrannicall usurpation: with the whole course of his detested life, and most deserved death*'. The 1623 First Folio (F1) shows less certainty, placing the play as the last of the first eight histories but titling it, uniquely among them, a 'Tragedy'.¹ One thing is clear: it went through a remarkable number of early editions (see p. 423) and has remained a steady theatre favourite.

Subsequent responses debate merit as well as genre. In the early eighteenth century, Charles Gildon pronounced Richard 'shocking' and 'not a fit Character for the Stage', calling the histories failures of 'Tragic Imitation' lacking 'Design' or 'unity' of action and time, and describing them as suggesting a puppet

1 The Folio running title – *The Life and Death of Richard the Third* – suggests biography (Anderson, 111). It is unlikely that the plays were conceived as a group or in Folio order; they were probably never performed before the nineteenth century in chronological order (Mary Thomas Crane, 'The Shakespearean tetralogy', *SQ*, 36 (1985), 291–5; Kastan, *1H4*, 92–3), but some audience members for *Richard III* had probably seen the *Henry VI* plays.

show (Vickers, 2.245, 249). Eighteenth-century editors Lewis Theobald, William Warburton and Samuel Johnson ranked the play 'middling' or 'Class II' (Vickers, 2.459, 3.226). Johnson added 'deservedly', since 'some parts are trifling, others shocking, and some improbable' (Vickers, 5.134). Later sentimentalist and Romantic writers debated Richard's 'character' and his relation to tragic protagonists such as Macbeth (see Donohue). Twentieth-century scholarship placed Richard among his stock theatrical forerunners, the Vice (Spivack, Weimann) or the Machiavel (Charnes, Maus).¹ Genre and relation to Shakespeare's other histories remain debatable: is *Richard III* part of a unified national epic (A.W. Schlegel; Ulrici, 2.283), a moral history and the culmination of the first tetralogy (Tillyard, *History Plays*), a retro-political history imposing providential religious order upon Machiavellian political chaos (Rackin) or a paradoxical comic history treating the values of the earlier plays ironically (Rossiter, 22).² Taken by itself, is it melodrama (Wilson, xl; Van Laan, 146–7), tyrant tragedy (W.A. Armstrong), romance (Kastan), a conflicted combination (Brooke, 79; Wilks) or satire, religious or political (Birch, 199; Simpson; Campbell, 321–34)?³ Finally, after centuries of their omission, truncation or dismissal, what is to be said of the play's prominent, but problematic, female characters?⁴

Over the years, interpretation has assumed neoclassical, sentimentalist, Romantic, Victorian, modernist and post-modern inflections, but attention has consistently returned to the play's unusual protagonist, its highly patterned language and action, its female roles and its religious, historical and political implications.

- 1 Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theatre* (Baltimore, 1978).
- 2 A.W. Schlegel, *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*; trans. John Black (1900), 419; Phyllis Rackin, *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca, NY, 1990), 65.
- 3 W.A. Armstrong, 'The influence of Seneca and Machiavelli on the Elizabethan tyrant', *RES*, 24 (1948), 19–35; David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Shapes of Time* (Dover, NH, 1982), 132–3.
- 4 See Howard & Rackin; Nina S. Levine, *Women's Matters: Politics, Gender, and Nation in Shakespeare's Early History Plays* (Newark, Del., 1998).

Woven through these considerations are different reactions to its pervasive, multiform ironies and comic elements.

In plain sight: Richard

In Jasper Fforde's novel *The Eyre Affair*, *Richard III* appears as an interactive cult ritual modelled on *The Rocky Horror Show*. Performances begin with the audience chanting, 'When is the winter of our discontent?', to which the stage Richard, chosen nightly from among audience volunteers, responds, 'Now is the winter of our discontent.'¹ Although the premise is that *Richard III* might still resonate with 'our' discontents 'now', Richard's first line is, and always has been, distantly historical. When the play opened in the 1590s, it was about events already over a century past, and 'our discontent' refers to troubles of the York family. Richard's line is only the first of many to invoke grievances that pre-date the play itself. Yet Richard's speech is also about something immediately in our faces. Uniquely for Shakespeare, *Richard III* begins with the protagonist's soliloquy about *his* discontent. Elizabethans thought they already knew about Richard. From the early sixteenth-century narratives of Polydore Vergil and Sir Thomas More, the malformed bogeyman, whose crimes – real, imputed, intended or imagined – included regicide, fratricide, infanticide, uxoricide, incest and ecclesiastical corruption, had appeared not only in Shakespeare's immediate sources (Edward Hall's *Union*, Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* and *The Mirror for Magistrates*) but in sermons, ballads, plays, rhetorical exercises, satires, state propaganda and invective. In keeping with early modern clichés about the body expressing the soul, Richard was rendered hunchbacked, lame of arm, crabbed of feature and natally toothed. As far as I know, the limp begins with Shakespeare.²

1 Jasper Fforde, *The Eyre Affair: A Novel* (New York, 2002), 183. Lois Potter's 'Shakespeare performed: English and American Richards, Edwards and Henries', *SQ*, 54 (2004), 450–61, called Fforde to my attention.

2 Readers are invited to correct this claim.

No one before had made so much of Richard's bodily challenges: love is out because he is too crippled to dance; dogs bark as he halts by. Everyone else merrily pairs off, making love not war, capering and ambling, while he limps and grumbles:

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
I, that am rudely stamped, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
I, that am curtailed of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature,
Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them –
Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to see my shadow in the sun
And descant on mine own deformity.
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.

(1.1.14–31)

He speaks to himself, and also for us, Freud realized, for Richard provides something anyone can identify with.¹ Here, too, we encounter something to resist, interpret or share, an intellectual, kinetic and vocal energy that demands response (Sprague, *Actors*, 136; R. Berry). And he is funny. No Elizabethan would have expected that.

Easily dominating text, performance and criticism, Shakespeare's Richard has prompted extreme responses. There have

1 Freud takes Richard for 'an enormously magnified representation of something we can all discover in ourselves. We all think we have reason to reproach nature and our destiny for congenital and infantile disadvantages; we all demand reparation for early wounds to our narcissism, our self-love' (Freud, 4.322–3; cf. Garber).

been attempts to 'humanize' him on the stage, from Garrick to Branagh, and in sentimentalist commentary from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but other responses downplay 'inwardness' or 'subjective density' (Charnes, 93) to stress personification or monstrosity. He has been taken to embody 'genius' (Charles Lamb, in Bate, *Romantics*, 122), 'intellect' (Coleridge, in Bate, *Romantics*, 145–6), discredited Yorkist rule (Horace Walpole, in Donohue, 198), self-love (Freud, 4.322–3), civil violence (Tillyard, 208), capitalism (Siegel, 80) and masculine discursivity (Sanders, 193). He has been seen as a theatrical property: Punch (G.B. Shaw, in Sprague, *Actors* 135), Vice (Spivack), actor (Rossiter, 16–17), cartoon (H. Bloom, 66), Tudor 'bugaboo' (Budra, 82), or stage Machiavel (Charnes, 47–54).¹ Each designation merits attention; each needs qualification.

In its universality, Freud's figure of wounded 'self-love' that 'we all feel' parallels a relevant theological construct. The spinal curvature Thomas More added to Richard's alleged scapular inequality, whatever its relation to Tudor scapegoating of dynastic competitors, expresses a spiritual deformity that Christians thought 'we all' share as creatures bent and turned from God.² Not merely an ugly version of all of us, however, Richard embraces his symptom. Announcing himself 'determined to prove a villain' (1.1.30), he punningly accepts divine predestination to damnation and simultaneously chooses reprobation for himself.³ Let us descend, as the play does, from pathology and theology, to specifics.

1 Paul N. Siegel, *Shakespeare's English and Roman History Plays: A Marxist Approach* (Rutherford, NJ, 1986); Eve Rachel Sanders, *Gender and Literacy on the Stage in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1998); Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare and the Invention of the Human* (New York, 1998).

2 On humanity as 'curvatus', see e.g. Augustine's *Ennarationes* (on Psalm 37) in J.-P. Migne.

3 Richard lacks assurances of God's love, such as those William Perkins urges the Christian to remember: God 'created me a man, when hee might haue made me an vgly Toade' and made me 'of comely bodie, and of discretion whereas he might haue made me vgly, and deformed, franticke, and mad' (Perkins, *Treatise*, 113'). Rejection of brotherhood defines Richard as a reprobate: 'he that loueth not his brother' (Perkins, 'A Case of Conscience', *Works* (1592; STC 19665.5), sig. B3^{r-v}).

Deep tragedian or formal Vice

More calls Richard a 'deep dissimuler' and compares public life to playing upon a 'scaffold', but never calls him an 'actor' (*CW2*, 8).¹ *The Mirror for Magistrates* likens existence to a performance before God (*Mirror*, 'Buckingham', 43–9), but does not associate Richard with theatre. In *3 Henry VI*, however, Richard describes himself in terms that recall Elizabethan anti-player polemic – seductive mermaid, gaze-attracting basilisk, orator, deceptive Ulysses, treasonous Sinon, changeable chameleon, shape-shifting Proteus, murderous Machiavel (*3H6* 3.2.186–93).² *Richard III* surrounds him with theatrical self-references. Though such vocabulary is not unusual for Shakespeare or for his era, Richard gives these allusions particular resonance when he discusses acting techniques or likens himself to the stage figure polemic had warned theatre-goers they might become: 'you will learne to playe the vice' (Stubbes, L8').³

Richard's self-comparison to 'the formal Vice, Iniquity' and self-announced wordplay – 'Thus . . . I moralize two meanings in one word' (3.1.82–3) – invoke a stock character and his verbal tricks.⁴ Besides his exuberantly stagey wit, Richard also shares the Vice's double relationship to the dramatic action, outside as commentator and inside as participant. He introduces the play with commentary on his appearance, plans and nature. He introduces action already under way: 'Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous' (1.1.32), he says; cue victim number one: Enter Clarence.

- 1 More's Latin *History* comes closer: '[Richard] could assume whatever mask it pleased him to wear and he played the part he had chosen with the utmost diligence' (*CW2*, 8; cf. *CW2*, 168).
- 2 *The Anatomie of Abuses* claims theatre teaches one 'to play y^e Sodomits, or worse', to 'become a bawde, vnclane, and to deuerginat Mayds, to deflour honest Wyues . . . to murther, slaie, kill . . . to rebel against Princes, to co[m]mit treasons' (Stubbes, sig. L8'). Henry VI invokes the Roman actor 'Roscius' when confronting Richard in his death 'scene' (*3H6* 5.6.10).
- 3 On Elizabethan theatrical terminology, see Righter, 89–95.
- 4 'Iniquity' is the Vice in *Nice Wanton* (1560; STC 25016) and *King Darius* (1565; STC 6277). Cf. Inclination's reversal of sense (*Trial of Treasure*, 1561; STC 24271, sig. D4').

Such an induction is unparalleled in Shakespeare, but well-anticipated elsewhere. The figure of Dissimulation opens Robert Wilson's *Three Ladies of London* (1584), explaining his disguise as an 'honest' farmer, boasting of his aspiring mind, clever plans and sophisticated amorality, while bragging that everybody, 'men women and children', knows him by his grotesque 'powle [head] and beard painted motley' (sigs A2^v–A3^r). We share a secret that is no secret: everyone knows Dissimulation to be dishonest, just as everyone, with the possible exception of 'simple, plain' Clarence and his children, knows Richard to be villainous. External signs – motley beard or twisted body – and frequent soliloquies (five in Richard's first three scenes) should keep us focused.¹ We know what he is, and the other characters should too.

The Vice's particoloured head, like the 'notorious identity' blazoned by Richard's bodily disproportions, invites us to 'epistemological self-assurance'.² We laugh with these figures as they name, expose and manipulate the weaknesses of others. This makes seduction scenes irresistibly ridiculous. Still wearing his goofy beard, Dissimulation woos Lady Love in the sequel to *Three Ladies*, even though she recognizes him as the 'monster' and 'Deuill' who has caused her 'sorrowes' (R. Wilson, sigs D2^r–D3^v). No matter, the seducer protests, because 'the grieve / that I thy friend sustaine for thy distresse' is great, and they move straight into wit combat:

Dis. In thy affections I had once a place:
loue. These fond affections wrought me foule disgrace,
Dis. Ile make amends, if ought amisse were done:
loue. Who once are burn'd, the fire will euer shun.
(sig. D4^v)

1 On the placement of Richard's early soliloquies and later asides, see MacDonald & MacDonald, 59–60.

2 Concerning audience self-assurance, see Maus, 54; on Richard's 'notorious identity', see Charnes, 20–70.

Sound familiar? The two lengthy wooing scenes in *Richard III* (1.2, 4.4) are wholly invented history but heavily derivative drama (S. Thomas, *Antic*, 30). Richard and Dissimulation share visual stigmata, extra-dramatic commentary, dissembling and witty dialogue. They also share topical functions. Dissimulation mocks contemporary pieties, for example, by calling his evil intentions ‘inward zeale’ (*Three Ladies*, sig. A3^r), invoking a buzzword associated with hotter Protestants that Buckingham uses in praising Richard’s own ‘right Christian zeal’ (3.7.102). We are far from done with seduction or satiric topicality.

Murderous Machiavel

The Richard of the two early versions of *3 Henry VI* names villains he will outdo: ‘murderous *Macheuill*’ or ‘aspiring *Catalin*’. The Roman Catiline, as Ben Jonson’s play *Catiline, his Conspiracy* confirms, conjures up ambition pursued by factional politics. ‘Machiavel’ derives from Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), notorious for the *realpolitik* analyses of *The Prince* (published 1532) and *Discourses* (published 1531) and object of countless denunciations.¹ The name ‘Machiavel’ furnished a catch-all for any devious foe, and embodied anxieties about religious and social disorder (Maus, 47).

Richard shares characteristics with this figure of the polemical imagination and the popular stage. Above all, he acts out in *Richard III* the ruthless, self-interested ambition implied in his earlier renunciation (3*H6* 5.6.80–3) of roles ascribed by family and society. A self-professed hypocrite, he mocks authority, holds conscience in contempt, treats religion as a functional tool and delights in strategic manipulation. While some of Richard’s attitudes and practices are related to the rationalized power

1 Editions printed in England include John Wolfe’s false-imprint Italian printings in the 1580s; Latin and French editions were available. Many Elizabethans acquired their opinions from Innocent Gentillet’s *Discours . . . Contre Machiavel* (1576). See Meyer; Catherine Minshull, ‘Marlowe’s “Sound Machevill”’, *Renaissance Drama*, 13 (1982), 35–53; Peter S. Donaldson, *Machiavelli and Mystery of State* (New York, 1982); N.W. Bawcutt, ‘The “Myth of Gentillet” reconsidered: an aspect of Elizabethan Machiavellianism’, *MLR*, 99 (2004), 863–74.

politics of Machiavelli's works, his more immediate ancestry appears in contemporary polemic and drama.¹ For instance, the Elizabethan divine Henry Smith imagines Machiavel's followers, his 'apes', pervading England with what Katherine Maus calls their 'sinister interiority' (Maus, 40):

Oh, if Machauil had liued in our countrey, what a Monarch should he be? to what honour, and wealth, and power, and credite, might he haue risen vnto in short time, whether he had been a Lawier, or a Courtier, or a Prelate? me thinkes I see how many fingers would poynt at him in the streetes, as they doe at his apes, and say, there goeth a deepe fellowe, he hath more wit in his little finger then the rest in their whole bodie. You talke of Sectaries how fast they growe, and how fast they breed; I warrant you where any Sectary hath one sonne, Machauil hath a score, and those not the brats, but the fatlings of the Land, which if they had but a dram of religion for an ounce of their policie, they might goe like Saints among men.

(Smith, *Sermons*, 420)

Machiavels frequented the stage in the early 1590s: Richard is anticipated in Kyd's Lorenzo (*The Spanish Tragedy*) and Marlowe's Barabas (*The Jew of Malta*).² All express the alienation of Richard's 'I am myself alone'. Kyd's Lorenzo proclaims, 'Ile trust my selfe, my selfe shalbe my freend' (*Spanish Tragedy*, 3.2.125).³ Marlowe's Barabas announces, '*Ego mihi met sum semper*

1 On the figure's Machiavellian roots, see Margaret Scott, 'Machiavelli and the Machiavel', *Renaissance Drama*, 15 (1984), 147–74.

2 Henslowe records performances of *The Spanish Tragedy* in spring 1592 and of *The Jew of Malta* between February and June 1592 (Henslowe, 17, 170). 1591 also saw a play called 'Matchevell' (i.e. *Machiavel*) on Henslowe's stage. Jonathan Bate traces 'a direct line' from Marlowe through Aaron the Moor of *Titus Andronicus* to Richard III (Bate, *Tit*, 87–8).

3 Cf. *R3* 1.4.140–2, where the Second Murderer describes the man who would 'trust to himself'.

proximus' (*Jew of Malta*, 1.1.188).¹ All kill underlings, profess dissembling and boast of their politic strategy (*Jew of Malta*, 5.2.26–46, 110–23; *Spanish Tragedy*, 3.4.46).² Despite initial successes, all three come to confusion. However, Barabas and Richard differ from Lorenzo in the religious nature of their hypocrisy, in their revelation of systemic social corruption, in the sheer size of their roles and in their capacity to incite laughter.³

Barabas and Richard repeatedly invoke the Bible, lecture others on religious principles and offer 'counterfeit profession' of piety (*Jew of Malta*, 1.2.291–2), while mocking conscience (*Jew of Malta*, 1.1.118–20; *R3* 5.3.309–11) and charity (*Jew of Malta*, 2.3.29; *R3* 1.2.68–9). They also reveal faults in others: the brutality of Christian anti-semitism in *The Jew of Malta* (1.2.106–28) and the self-serving amorality of courtly culture in *Richard III*. Their humour, self-ridicule and ironic detachment differentiate them from truly Senecan villains (S. Thomas, *Antic*, 17). They revel in exaggerated performance, in speeches riddled with audience asides and in antics stretching to grotesque farce, as when Richard plays 'jolly thriving wooer', or Barabas a French musician, complete with lute, silly accent and poisoned flowers.

Deep tragedian

Richard III raises another theatrical option. As Richard and Buckingham plan to deceive the Londoners, they consider playing the 'deep tragedian':

RICHARD

Come, cousin, canst thou quake and change thy colour,
Murder thy breath in middle of a word,
And then again begin, and stop again,

- 1 Adopted from Terence, *Andria*, 'I am always nearest to myself'. Edward Meyer calls this 'the very pith and gist of all Machiavelli's teachings' (Meyer, 33).
- 2 Cf. *IH6* 5.3.74, where the phrase 'notorious Machiavel' suggests treachery, and *MW* 3.1.91, where the name denotes being 'politic' or 'subtle'.
- 3 Kyd's grotesque humour does not centrally involve the Machiavel.

As if thou were distraught and mad with terror?

BUCKINGHAM

Tut, I can counterfeit the deep tragedian,
Speak, and look back, and pry on every side,
Tremble and start at wagging of a straw,
Intending deep suspicion. Ghastly looks
Are at my service, like enforced smiles,
And both are ready in their offices,
At any time to grace my stratagems.

(3.5.1–11)

Does this passage evoke deportment truly appropriate to tragedy, or does it comment on the coarseness of the speakers or the naivety of their intended audience? Does it mock overacting or recommend melodramatic exaggeration?

Contemporary texts mock the overacting ‘tragedian’ who ‘swell[s] / In forcèd passion of affected strains’ (Marston, *2 Antonio and Mellida*, 2.3.109–10) or mimics Tamburlaine’s ‘high-set steps, and princely carriage’, filling his ‘wide-strained mouth’ with ‘Big sounding sentences, and words of state’ (J. Hall, 8). Hamlet denounces ‘overdone’ word and action and the player who ‘out-Herods Herod’, that ranting figure of medieval drama (*Ham* 3.2.1–34). Heywood warns against ‘oueracting trickes’ (Heywood, *Apology*, sig. C4^r). Yet Shakespeare does take emotive signifiers seriously: Clarence’s murderer has a ‘pale’ face and eyes that ‘menace’ (1.4.169; cf. *AYL* 4.4.168–70). Folio stage directions demand that characters ‘start’ at news of Clarence’s death (2.1.80 SD). Are Buckingham’s prescribed histrionics so different from breast-beating or lip-gnawing (2.2.3, 4.2.27)? Vergil records Richard’s lip-gnawing as habitual (227), though More describes him counterfeiting agitation by ‘knitting the browes, frowning and froting and knawing on hys lippes’ (*CW2*, 47). Othello gnaws his lip and rolls his eyes (*Oth* 5.2.38, 43); Wolsey ‘bites his lip, and starts, / Stops on a sudden’ (*H8* 3.2.113–14). So in theory Richard and Buckingham

advocate suitably 'tragic' action; yet their sheer enjoyment in contemplating the performance suggests the play's oddly close conjoining of tragedy, melodrama and self-irony.

The Mirror for Magistrates articulates a relevant paradox concerning feigned emotions. Rivers should have known Richard false, since 'counterfayte' emotions inevitably overdo the 'naturall mean' to convey 'depe' feeling (*Mirror*, 'Rivers', 410–20). But Richard's performative inventiveness expressed in 'so many a fals device' (*Mirror*, 'Rivers', 424–7) overwhelmed Rivers's scepticism. The victims of Shakespeare's Richard similarly recognize his hostility, duplicity and artificial emotion, but suffer entrapment anyway. Richard's behaviour may be stylized 'performance' and recognized as such, but this does not preclude his successes or mean the play lacks depth, only that depth resides elsewhere than within the 'deep' subjectivity of character.

Some early defenders of the stage claimed that a player could create the convincing illusion of being 'the person personated' (Heywood, *Apology*, sig. C4^r). Similarly, some critics have judged *Richard III* 'the drama of consummate *acting*', asserting that 'Except to the audience, [Richard] is invisible' (Rossiter, 17–18), or that his roles are 'completely successful . . . manag[ing] to deceive virtually everyone' (Richter, 97).¹ In fact almost no one is completely fooled (Ornstein, 70–1; D.G. Watson, 102).² Consummate performance, however, need not be equated with illusionistic personation. In 1793 George Steevens praised the role of Richard for its dizzying variety, as 'perhaps beyond all others variegated' and comprehending 'a trait of almost every species of character on the stage. The hero, the lover,

1 Van Laan calls Richard a 'magnificent actor', but claims he offers 'melodrama' rather than a convincing portrayal of saintliness (Van Laan, 145, 135, 147).

2 Queen Elizabeth recognizes 'interior hatred' from Richard's 'outward action' (1.3.65–6). Margaret assesses him (1.3.220). His mother discusses his deceptions (2.2.27–32). Hastings recognizes risks in attending him (3.2.27–9). Buckingham wisely deserts (4.2.119–20); the princes scorn him (3.1.120–35); citizens judge him dangerous (2.3.27).

the statesman, the buffoon, the hypocrite, the hardened and repenting sinner &c.' (Vickers, 6.594). Actors have agreed with this assessment, but an early modern account of the historical Richard as 'playing' various roles also deserves attention. Sir Walter Raleigh's *History* defines Richard's 'playing' as ensemble work, enlisting others into his play through manipulation of their 'affection' and self-interest:

Richard the Third, the greatest Maister in mischief of . . . all that fore-went him: who although, for the necessity of his Tragedie, hee had more parts to play, and more to performe in his owne person, then all the rest; yet hee so well fitted euery affection that played with him, as if each of them had but acted his owne interest. For he wrought so cunningly vpon the affections of Hastings, and Buckingham, enemies to the Queene and to all her kindred, as hee easily allured them to condescend, that Riuers and Grey, the Kings Maternall Vncle and halfe brother, should (for the first) be seuered from him: secondly, hee wrought their consent to haue them imprisoned, and lastly [()] for the auoyding of future inconvenience) to haue their heads seuered from their bodies.

(Raleigh, sigs A4^v–B1^r)

Raleigh represents Richard working on desires, circumstances and agencies provided by his social world. This Richard is suggestive for Shakespeare's. Consider the wooing of Anne, a scene often taken as demonstrating either Richard's deceptive 'acting' or Anne's deficient 'character'.

Jolly thriving wooer

Responding in 1779 to neoclassical strictures about the 'vulgarity and even indecency' of the wooing scene, William Richardson defends it as an 'imitation . . . of Nature', given Anne's 'character'. Richard's 'perfect knowledge of her disposition' recognizes her

weak principles, and ‘vanity’ as her ‘over-ruling passion’ (Vickers, 6.208–9). Such a reading (or its modern variants) focuses on the couple themselves, but in fact, as often, other characters awkwardly share the stage. These others also fall before Richard’s onslaught, and not because they are immoral, vain or female.

In a play so dominated by Richard’s body, that living symbol of period commonplaces about (mis)proportion and (dis)order on the social, personal and species levels, the wooing reveals a remarkable disjunction between the body social and the body physical. Fresh from pronouncing himself physically disempowered, Richard proves prodigiously powerful when he – alone, lame, with a withered arm and a single sword – halts a heavily armed procession and disarms a halberdier whose weapon points at his chest:

RICHARD

Villains, set down the corse, or by Saint Paul,
I’ll make a corse of him that disobeys.

GENTLEMAN

My lord, stand back and let the coffin pass.

RICHARD

Unmannered dog, stand thou when I command!
Advance thy halberd higher than my breast,
Or by Saint Paul I’ll strike thee to my foot
And spurn upon thee, beggar, for thy boldness.

(1.2.36–42)

This is not ‘acting’ – Richard could hardly convey a physical capacity to strike down and spurn the lot of them – but it is performance. As such it recalls unarmed Talbot suddenly revealing his corporate ‘substance’ by summoning his hidden troops (*IH6* 2.3); but Richard’s strength lies in the power of hierarchy and religion, not in armour or troops.

Richard and the halberdier replay a nightmare version of a scenario moralized in contemporary polemic. To explain why

multitudes have ‘humbled themselues’ before Queen Elizabeth, a 1589 tract adduces her miraculous control over her ‘big bodied Holberders’. Any minute, they might ‘bende euey man the point of his Holberde at her’, but ‘the Religion of the land’ causes a ‘sweet harmonie of peoples harts that remaine faithful and flexible to the shaking of her princely finger’ (2 *Pasquill*, sig. B1^{r-v}). No simple piety, or not simply piety, disarms Richard’s opponents, since they appear initially bound to Anne’s own religious undertaking before they give in. But give in to what? Richard is greater in substance than simply his own muscle or an armed company would suggest. Onstage he kills no one, no armed cohort supports him, except dubiously at Bosworth, where mental ‘shadows’ prove more powerful than the ‘substance of ten thousand soldiers’ (5.3.216–18). Rather, he manages to enlist, almost magically, the power of the legitimate social order’s demands for obedience and deference to hierarchy even while ruthlessly violating such demands himself. The moral ‘villain’ here shamelessly performs his own status, reducing Anne’s troupe to social ‘[v]illains’, ‘beggar[s]’ (1.2.36, 42) and finally lackeys who try to anticipate his desires (1.2.228–9). Fittingly, Richard invokes Saint Paul, the apostle identified with ‘obedience to authority’ (*STM*, 2.3.101; cf. *R3* 1.2.36n.).¹ No one need be completely duped to become ‘Grossly . . . captive’ (4.1.79) to the powers his performances enlist.

‘Captivation’ provides an approximate term for this process, but the powers Richard wields are not simply matters of hereditary status, religion or faction. Clarity of motive empowers him. When he has the sheer nerve to literalize the hoariest Petrarchan cliché by kneeling and ‘*lay[ing] his breast open*’ to his lady’s fatal blow (1.2.181 SD), he offers ‘revenge’ but ‘in terms that render it farcically irrelevant’ (Neill, 104). Killing would only grant the abject lover his wish. Anne ‘falls to Richard precisely because she is *not* deceived, because (as he intends) she

1 Romans, 13.1–5, commanding subjection to authority, is frequently invoked; cf. Perkins, *Works*, 48.

is bowled over by the nerve, the *sprezzatura*, of that performance itself' (Neill, 104). She never takes back her epithets – devil, minister of hell, villain, murderer – and submits with 'Arise, dissembler' (1.2.187). It is not that 'Richard's amorality matters little to her' (D.G. Watson, 104), because in fact, it does matter; it is his *morality* that matters little. Michael Neill's 'ostentatious theatricality' and 'compelling staginess' seem appropriate, but there is more to say, even if Anne never says it, about the social bases for his successes.

Richard 'so well fitted every affection that playd with him, as if each of them had but acted his owne interest' (Raleigh, *History*, sig. A4^v). Anne never articulates her 'owne interest', but Queen Elizabeth defines the fearful position of a noble woman without a husband and clarifies the (unremarked) security Richard offers: 'If [Edward] were dead,' Elizabeth demands, 'what would betide on me? . . . The loss of such a lord includes all harms' (1.3.6–8).¹ Systemic female vulnerability surely contributes to Richard's power. So does faction: Richard played upon the 'affections' of Hastings and Buckingham as 'enemies to the Queene and to all her kindred', Raleigh writes. Self-alienated from his own family, Richard, himself alone, measures exactly how others intersect and interact as families and groups. Thus his pious rebuff to Margaret – 'God, not we, hath plagued thy bloody deed' (1.3.180) – instantly enlists bitterly divided opponents into a supporting chorus, suddenly united, like Anne's armed entourage, behind him.

Finally, the play develops one other factor in Richard's power: religious hypocrisy. When he lays open his breast, whatever his (unspoken) sense of Anne's (unacknowledged) vulnerability as unprotected female or as disempowered family

1 Cf. Camille Wells Slight, *The Casuistical Tradition in Shakespeare, Donne, Herbert, and Milton* (Princeton, NJ, 1981), 75. Concerning the basis of the historical union, see Kendall, 105–9 (love); C. Ross, *Richard*, 27–8 (status and wealth); the Crowland Continuator (in J.L. Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens: English Queenship 1445–1503* (Oxford, 2004), 70) (property interests). In 1474 the Italian Christofforo di Bollato reports that Richard wed Anne 'by force' (Laynesmith, 70).

member, Richard counts on her having limits and being ignorant of exactly where those limits lie. He routinely flouts eternal damnation by blasphemously invoking Christian virtues and transgressing Christian commandments, while others, to varying degrees, appear subject to limits.¹ Anne can no more kill a disarmed kneeling suitor than, for similarly unspoken reasons of latent principle or repugnance, Buckingham can kill the princes. Lesser agents undertake or subcontract such unspeakable acts, but the warrior elite of the *Henry VI* plays does not furnish their number. Times have changed since the days of bloody Clifford, and ultimately Richard enacts a micro-version of the historical phenomenon known as bastard feudalism, paying clowns, boys and marginal hangers-on to get the dirtier jobs done – offstage. One stabbing (1.4), one severed head (3.5) and one death in battle (5.4) are nothing to the mayhem of earlier histories; instead, this play abounds in complicitous nobles and clerics who are, like Anne, passively compromised. Their motto might be her self-exculpating formula, ‘To take is not to give’ (1.2.205) – as if acquiescence did not entail volition and, ultimately, accountability. For the smaller fry who take what Richard has on offer – the bishops, the Mayor, clerics like Dr Shaw and others – Brakenbury provides a rationale: ‘I will not reason what is meant hereby / Because I will be guiltless from the meaning’ (1.4.93–4). So would we all, if life or this play allowed. Here too resides a source of Richard’s power.

Richard’s performances are highly theatrical, but the nature of their taking power is under-articulated. We are prompted to marvel at his sheer audacity, his clarity of motive, his ruthless exploitation of the factional and ideological limits that constrain others, his watchful alertness among half-conscious sleep-walkers, egotists, blinkered factionalists and time-servers. Richard may halt, but his social command is deft. The Scrivener puts it succinctly: ‘Who is

1 With the possible exception of Margaret. For Richard’s relation to the forms he flouts, see William C. Carroll, ‘Desacralization and succession in *Richard III*’, *Deutsche Shakespeare Gesellschaft West, Jahrbuch* (1991), 82–96.

so gross / That cannot see this palpable device? / Yet who so bold
but says he sees it not?' (3.6.10–12).

Tell-tale women and tender babes

Well, some do speak up. Female characters, including the unhistorical Margaret, speak approximately twenty-two per cent of *Richard III* (Howard & Rackin, 217–18). Prominence does not simply equate with empowerment, of course, but the words 'mother' and 'children' (and cognates) are more numerous than in any other Shakespeare play, and that suggests something important. Sometimes desired, the women are more often resented, mocked, manipulated and marginalized. Janet Adelman finds Shakespeare's first history plays move women 'from positions of power and authority to positions of utter powerlessness, and finally moves them off the stage altogether' (Adelman, 9). Phyllis Rackin observes that the active female characters are negatively depicted, while 'The more sympathetically depicted female characters, such as the victimized women in *Richard III*, never go to war, they play no part in the affairs of state, and they seem to spend most of their limited time on stage in tears' (Rackin, 75–6; cf. Howard & Rackin, 98). These otherwise accurate assessments fail to link female tears to railing, lamentation and cursing, utterances that indeed constitute 'affairs of state'.

The females of *Richard III* appear more choric than active. Margaret, who was boldly erotic, political and military in Shakespeare's *Henry VI* plays, becomes a mouthpiece for passionate exclamations. Margaret Beaufort, who historically furthered both her son's marriage to Elizabeth of York and his English campaign, appears only in references to Richmond's 'mother' or the 'wayward' or sick 'wife' whom Stanley excuses (1.3.20–9) and to whom he must 'look' (4.2.91). The notorious Jane Shore is the unseen object of snide jokes (1.1.93–102) and ridiculous accusations (3.4.67–74). Finally, scenes that could have sympathetically represented female emotion are often treated ironically or omitted (contrast *CW2*, 41), contributing to

the play's general avoidance of pathos (A.W. Schlegel, in Bate, *Romantics*, 506). But if 'tenderness of heart' and 'effeminate remorse' are mocked and debased (3.7.209–10), lament, denunciation and curse comprise a powerful female idiom of bitter tears (G. Bloom, 92–4).

Initially, female lamentations, curses and denunciations are isolated, ineffective, even laughable. Anne's laments and curses so quickly change to murmured submission that Richard's delight at female fickleness (1.2.230–2) and her shame at her 'woman's heart' (4.1.78–80) seem validated.¹ It is difficult to resist laughter when Richard's wisecracks cause Margaret to breathe her own 'curse against [herself]' (1.3.230–9). Queen Elizabeth and the Duchess of York become blackly comic as they contest for pre-eminence in grief, only to be rebuffed by Clarence's insolent orphans (2.2.62–5). Yet ultimately, female outbursts convey compelling truths, and the women themselves bond in something larger than self-interest. Even Margaret wins grudging respect.

In a remarkable moment of unity despite factionalism and self-interest, Anne, Queen Elizabeth and the Duchess of York join to denounce Richard, affirm love for the princes and demand their mutual right. Under an expanded definition of 'mother' they oppose Richard's representative:

QUEEN ELIZABETH

... I am their mother. Who shall bar me from them?

DUCHESS

I am their father's mother. I will see them.

ANNE

Their aunt I am in law, in love their mother.

Then bring me to their sights. I'll bear thy blame

And take thy office from thee, on my peril.

(4.1.21–5)

1 Though Anne's curse upon any woman who might marry Richard (1.2.26–8) would register prophetically, if not quite accurately in details, with the audience, as it later does with her (4.1.73–84).

Here for the first time motherhood combines rather than divides; being a mother, even if only in feeling ('in love'), trumps self-interest.¹ Affirming this bond empowers an activism that contrasts the women with those who would remain 'guiltless from the meaning' of the wrongs they allow and perpetrate: Brakenbury (1.4.94), the First Murderer (1.4.167), the Cardinal (3.1.57), the witnesses of Hastings's assassination (3.4.78).² The women embrace the consequences of doing what is right. Nor is their act of *speaking* negligible.

In this light, Margaret's attainment of one title denied by her mockers acquires particular importance. She never resumes the title 'Queen', but words win her another title. Instead of 'witch' or 'frantic curs[ing]' madwoman (1.3.163, 246), Margaret is ultimately validated as 'prophetess' (1.3.300, 5.1.27) of God's justice (5.1.20). This might appear small consolation, since 'the politically astute Margaret of the early play becomes "poor Margaret . . . prophetess". The curse of the scold is feared . . . as the records of the witch-trials remind us, but it achieves nothing.'³ Yet the play opens with the deadly effects of 'prophecies, libels and dreams' (1.1.33) and concludes with an armed tyrant shaken by a 'prophet', a dream and a libel (4.2.94–105; 5.3.177–206, 303–5). The roles of 'prophetess' and 'mother' may have power against murderers and tyrants; even dreams may count.⁴ A mother's curse could be terrible, as James I warned his son: 'the blessing or curse of the Parents, hath almost euer a Propheticke power ioyned with it' (James I, 44). Nor is it clear that a 'scold' necessarily 'achieves nothing'.

1 Nicole Loraux, *Mothers in Mourning*, trans. Corinne Pache (Ithaca, NY, 1998), 3. See also Doris Martin, *Shakespeares 'Fiend-like Queens'* (Heidelberg, 1992), 71–82.

2 Cf. Madonne M. Miner, "'Neither mother, wife, nor England's Queen': the roles of women in *Richard III*", in Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene and Carol Thomas Neely (eds), *The Woman's Part* (Urbana, Ill., 1980), 35–55.

3 Lisa Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters* (Brighton, 1983), 118; cf. Marcus, 94; contrast Kathryn Schwarz, *Tough Love: Amazon Encounters in the English Renaissance* (Durham, NC, 2000), 104.

4 'Dream' (with cognates) also occurs more often in *Richard III* than in any other Shakespeare play; see Marvin Spevack, *A Complete and Systematic Concordance to the Works of Shakespeare* (Hildesheim, 1968–80).

Margaret's authority should not be overstated. True, she resembles Richard in her imposing, extra-dramatic, solo pronouncements: compare her 'induction' and entry prompt 'now' (4.4.1–8) with Richard's opening (1.1.1–40; cf. Hodgdon, *End*, 107–8). Yet despite her eerie appearances and disappearances – manifesting herself invisibly, pronouncing judgement, engaging, then 'withdraw[ing]' (4.4.8, 125) with impunity from a world that others traverse or escape with difficulty – and despite the preponderant accuracy of her predictions, Margaret speaks neither for God nor for Tudor history, at least not entirely. Her prognostications are only absolutely accurate when they concern the violent ends of violent men and the 'course of justice' (4.4.105). Any Elizabethan would have recognized the accurate dooms she pronounces for Richard and his cronies, as well as her general homiletic orthodoxy. But Elizabethans would also have perceived her glaring errors. Above all, Queen Elizabeth will *not* end up childless (1.3.203–8), and her child will wed Richmond, a figure Margaret apparently knows nothing about, to found the Tudor dynasty (Brooks, 'Unhistorical', 727). Margaret also wrongly predicts that Richard's most fearful dream will be (as in the sources) a 'hell of ugly devils' (1.3.226). Her foresight is limited to commonplace notions of divine retributive justice and earthly mutability: the violent shall die violently (5.1.23–4), the mighty shall fall (3.4.95–100), the evil shall torment one another here (2.1.14–15) and be tormented by devils hereafter. She is no mouthpiece for Tudor providentialism, nor does she recognize the power of empathy. Any ethical or political vision transcending feudal clan loyalties and competitive grudges lies beyond her. She may eerily anticipate the new king's words for Richard, 'The bloody dog is dead' (4.4.78, 5.5.2), but she perceives neither the power of hope that Richmond embodies (5.2.23–4, 5.3.173) nor the power of victims who curse, frighten or bless.

Attributing power to victims is not mere sentimentality. More claims that after the princes' deaths Richard 'neuer hadde quiet

in his minde, hee neuer thought himself sure' (*CW2*, 87) because the murders caused political insecurity. Killing competitors and claimants was hardly unusual, but 'having Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan and Grey put to death in 1483 was not usual late fifteenth-century violence' (Gillingham, 13; cf. Bellamy, 215).¹ Child murder carried particular stigma.² Early chroniclers compared the princes to the innocents slaughtered by Herod, a biblical analogy fraught with peril for perpetrators; rulers apparently postponed judgement and execution of underage pretenders and rebels until they were old enough no longer to be perceived as innocent children (Gillingham, 14; Pollard, 136–8). The treatment of the death of Rutland (historically seventeen years old) as the murder of an 'innocent child' (*3H6* 1.3.8; cf. *R3* 1.2.160–1, 1.3.176–93, 4.4.45) reflects an assessment of violence against children as being so heinous as to cause 'Tyrants themselves' to weep and all men to 'prophe[sy] revenge for it' (1.3.184–5).³ Richard's crime against the 'little souls' prompts his own mother to regret not having aborted him (4.4.192, 138). Historically, the degree of Richard's guilt mattered less than the political significance of evident facts: 'Because he had deposed his nephew, usurped his throne, shut him and his brother in prison in the Tower and took no steps whatsoever to demonstrate to the world that they were still alive, Richard was believed to have killed them. Because they were innocent children, not adults who had offended, his crime was judged to be even worse' (Pollard, 138). Across multiple lines of alliance and antagonism, continental contemporaries expressed condemnation (Gillingham, 16–17). In London men wept openly (Mancini, 93).

- 1 John G. Bellamy, *The Law of Treason in England in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1970).
- 2 The princes were eleven and thirteen in 1483; the play accentuates their youthfulness (4.1.97–102); cf. 'tender' George Stanley (5.3.95).
- 3 Cf. the 'pretie innocents' murdered in Robert Yarrington's *Two Lamentable Tragedies* (1601; STC 26076) by hired killers who fall out like the murderers of Clarence (1.4), and the ballad 'The Children in the Wood' (Stationers' Register, 15 October 1595; Var, 611–17). Cf. Wiggins, 116–21.

Such public outbursts were political. They could crystallize opinion, incite violence or prompt powerful figures to capitalize on them. Richard rightly fears that citizens might 'wail [Hastings's] death' (3.5.61), as in other plays rulers fear similar outbursts (*Tit* 4.4.1–26; *Ham* 4.3.4–7; *R2* 1.4.24–36). Without a standing army or professional police, Richard's authority, like that of subsequent Tudor monarchs, depended on a widespread conviction of his sanctity and power.¹ Thus denunciations, prophecies or curses were actionable. If three or more people publicly joined in an outcry, furthermore, the complaint could be construed as riot, a term which, William Lambarde suggested, 'signifieth to braule, or scolde' (Lambarde, 175). Passionate outcries directed at a monarch constituted grounds for prosecution as treason.² Although Tudor regimes repeatedly modified fourteenth-century definitions, enactments until the early seventeenth century included 'treason by words', which embraced name-calling – 'calling the king (or his heirs) a heretic, tyrant, schismatic, infidel or usurper' – and 'prophecies foretelling the future, whereby the king's death, deposition or incapacity were predicted'.³ The name-calling and prophecies of the play's women constitute treasonous acts (4.4.136–96). This is hardly domestic 'scolding', but women who did 'Rail on the Lord's anointed' (4.4.151) were partly shielded by a gendered presumption.⁴

Were they not female, the railing mothers would be risking death alongside those men who balk even slightly at Richard's tyranny. However, his petulant responses to 'tell-tale women',

1 See Carole Levin, "'We shall never have a merry world while the Queene lyveth': gender, monarchy and the power of words", in Julia M. Walker (ed.), *Dissing Elizabeth: Negative Representations of Gloriana* (Durham, NC, 1998), 79.

2 For public outcry and mourning by Londoners, see Archer, 33.

3 See John G. Bellamy, *The Tudor Law of Treason* (1979), 51–2.

4 So, for example, one woman punished for publicly ridiculing a bishop in the Vestiarian controversy of 1566–7 was set upon a cucking-stool, but continued rejoicing in her 'lewd behavior' (Martin Ingram, "'Scolding women cuckold or washed": a crisis in gender relations in early modern England?', in Jennifer Kermode and Garthine Walker (eds), *Women, Crime and the Courts in Early Modern England* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1994), 61).

ordering flourishes and drums to drown their 'impatience', bluntly refusing to listen, mocking his mother's emotional 'condition' while urging his own martial affairs, suggest comic trivialization, as if it were all merely female temper, best dealt with by condescension and getting on with more important business (4.4.149–80). This refusal to take women seriously resembles the treatment historically accorded female agency, but presumptions of reduced agency could also lessen criminal culpability. William Lambarde criticizes the legal ambiguity surrounding indictment of women for breach of the peace without a person of 'discretion' – i.e. an adult male – to blame for instigating their actions (Lambarde, 179; Houlbrooke, 182).

The prominence of female 'prophets' and 'petitioners' in public outcries directed at authority from the time of Henry VIII through to the time of the English Civil War suggests a potential strength in presumed weakness. Some action consisted of quietly pursued resolution, as in recusant women's refusal to participate in prescribed worship (Willen, 154); other acts were public and/or collective. Women participated in a range of causes, from confrontation with Anne Boleyn in 1531 (Capp, 138–9) to grain and anti-enclosure riots in the early seventeenth century (Houlbrooke, 176–83).¹ Religious controversy prompted public demonstrations: in assemblies during the Vestiarian controversies of the 1560s (Collinson, *Puritan*, 93; Houlbrooke, 176) or in distributing the Marprelate tracts in the 1580s (Willen, 146). Individuals spoke out, as did Margaret Lawson who confronted Bishop John Aylmer, aided the Hackett conspirators in 1591 (Walsham, 34) and, for 'the immodestie of her tongue' (Cooper, 39), became notorious as the muse of Marprelate's invective (*Almond*, sig. B1^r), 'the shrew at Pauls Gate / and enemie to all dumb dogs and tyrannical prelates' (Marprelate, *Epistle*, 9–10). In the 1640s collective female petitioning and prophecy became

1 Bernard Capp, 'Separate domains? Women and authority in early modern England', in Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox and Steve Hindle (eds), *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (New York, 1996).

major political phenomena.¹ Such evidence complicates gendered limits: Phyllis Mack has argued that the socially attributed 'female' qualities of passivity, irrationality and passion which justified exclusion from authority could sometimes confer a power of their own in public outcry or prophecy.²

Ever so briefly, female agency in *Richard III* assumes collective form; female public outcry against Richard differs from the actions of the individual women warriors, witches and seductresses in the *Henry VI* plays. Their 'woman's war', directing the 'bitter clamour of . . . eager tongues' (R2 1.1.48–9) against Richard, constitutes more open resistance than anyone else manages before Richmond's invasion. In *Richard III*, as Gilles Deleuze says, 'the women do battle for themselves'.³ Their outburst contrasts with the silence of common Londoners (3.7.3), of clerics (3.4) and of nobles such as Stanley (4.4.491–3). Their 'complaint' adapts the medieval '*ubi sunt*' ('where be?') mutability trope to demand temporal answers. A lyrical form expressing passive loss becomes public indictment.⁴ They name names and irritate, even frighten, the killer before his own men (4.4). Nor do their demands for accountability stop at missing relatives: even 'kind Hastings' gets remembered among the disappeared (4.4.148). There is more.

Sustaining the emotional momentum of this joint outcry, Richard's own mother calls down the guilty memories that will vex his ultimate dream, cursing him with a tormenting vision very different from the demons that Margaret or the sources predict (4.4.191–4).⁵ Not devils, but innocent victims

1 See Keith Thomas, 'Women and the Civil War sects', *Past & Present*, 13 (1958), 42–57.

2 Phyllis Mack, 'Women as prophets during the English Civil War', *Feminist Studies*, 8 (1982), 19–45.

3 Gilles Deleuze, 'One manifesto less', in Constantin Boundas (ed.), *The Deleuze Reader* (New York, 1993), 205.

4 Cf. the identification of the play's female utterance with Ovidian complaint (Bate, *Ovid*, 66–7).

5 The 'images like terrible diuels, which pulled and haled' Richard, go back to Vergil, and appear in Hall, Grafton and Holinshed (see 5.3.117.1n.); cf. Stephen Batman, *The Doom Warning all Men to the Judgement* (1581; STC 1582), 281.

and 'friends' will haunt him. Furthermore, Queen Elizabeth manages, unlike Anne, to overrule a 'woman's heart' (4.1.78) and, contradicting the sources, says 'not now' to Richard's proposal while meaning 'never', despite his perverse appeals to her as his 'mother' (4.4.315–17).¹ To dismiss these female accusations and negotiations is to underestimate the strength and strategic cunning necessary to resist a tyrant. That Queen Elizabeth accuses and temporizes with the devil himself while avoiding cursing is also revealing. Her resolute critique logically deprives Richard of grounds for oaths and eventually gets him, in frustration, to curse himself (Birney, 36–42; 4.4.399–405n.). Her careful treading marks this scene as different from all other encounters with Richard.

Unlike Shakespeare's Lucrece, whose laments and curses this scene echoes, Elizabeth acknowledges words as means of aggression and self-consolation (4.4.116–17, 130–1) rather than as pointless wind (*Luc* 1027, 1330); she does not curse the tyrant with 'Himself himself' confound (*Luc* 998), but cleverly allows Richard his 'Myself myself confound' (4.4.399). Violated Lucrece, in keeping with the popular genre of female complaint, lyrically expresses the lonely pathos of self-punishment; she submits to the definition of pollution determined by the male order, leaving death her only 'remedy' (*Luc* 1028–9). If political implications are to be drawn from her suicide, men must draw them, or, as nearly happens, not draw them (*Luc* 1730–855).²

By contrast with Lucrece, Joan and the Margaret of the *Henry VI* plays, Elizabeth and the Duchess neither kill themselves, lead armies nor direct campaigns. But they turn the stereotypes allotted them – as impatient (1.3.1) 'indirect and peevish' (3.1.31),

- 1 For reactions to Queen Elizabeth's supposed co-operation with Richard, see 4.4.426–31n.
- 2 On the political implications of female literary complaint in the 1590s, cf. Hallett Smith, *Elizabethan Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), 102–30, with Heather Dubrow, 'A mirror for complaints: Shakespeare's *Lucrece* and generic tradition', in Barbara K. Lewalski (ed.), *Renaissance Genres: Essays on Theory, History and Interpretation* (Cambridge, Mass., 1986), 399–417.

petulant in 'condition' (4.4.158–9), 'lunatic' (1.3.253), 'frantic' (1.3.246), 'wayward' (1.3.29) or 'shallow, changing' (4.4.431) – to use against the tyrant. An analogous use of advantage appears in the right of childish outspokenness that the princes exercise in 'taunt and scorn' described as 'all the mother's' (3.1.153–6). This mother (whom Richard will perversely urge to be his own 'mother'), his biological mother and Margaret Beaufort, Stanley's 'wife' and Richmond's 'mother', do what they can with the licence allowed them, even if, like Stanley, they cannot do what they will (5.3.91). If, unlike Stanley, they openly oppose tyranny, the likelihood of their being 'put to silence' (*JC* 1.2.285) is lessened by gendered attitudes.

Finally, it is important to note an agency falsely attributed to the women. The charge of witchcraft against Queen Elizabeth and Jane Shore is laughable (*R3* 3.4.67–71; More *CW2*, 48). But the historical Richard officially accused Elizabeth of witchcraft, and the earlier histories portrayed 'real' conjurers, spirits, witches and witchcraft (*IH6* 5.3; *2H6* 1.4). Margaret's 'charms' *mostly* come to pass.¹ Does this make her what Richard calls her?

Thomas Cooper puts the positive case: 'When a bad-tongued woman shall curse a party, and death shall shortly follow, this is a shrewd token that she is a witch' (K. Thomas, 512). However, Reginald Scot sceptically dismisses 'witch' as a social slur based on the appearance and characteristic utterance of lonely, enfeebled old women, the guilty consciences of the community and the inevitable misfortunes of earthly circumstance. Those called witches, Scot claims, are 'commonly old, lame, bleare-eyed, pale, fowle, and full of wrinkles; poore, sullen, superstitious, and papists' (Scot, sig. C3^r). Their 'chief fault', Scot maintains, 'is that they are scolds' (sig. E1^v). Responding to abuses and slights real or imagined, the characteristically accusatory utterances of the 'scold', much like Margaret's own, could sound like or

1 For the charge against Elizabeth, see the 1483 Parliamentary text 'Titulus Regius' accusing her of bewitching Edward into marriage (*Rotuli Parliamentorum*, ed. J. Strachey (1776–7), 6.240–1).

become in fact curses. Denied respect, aid and sustenance ‘the witch waxeth odious and tedious to hir neighbors’ until ‘in processe of time they haue all displeased hir, and she hath wished euill lucke unto them all; perhaps with curses and imprecations made in forme. Doubtlesse (at length) some of hir neighbours die, or fall sick’ (sig. C4^v).¹ It takes a community to make a ‘foul, wrinkled witch’ – or a tyrant. If ever a community deserved a Margaret or a Richard, it is the England of this play.

CO-TEXTS: INVECTIVE, SATIRE, LIBEL

Along with ‘dream’, ‘mother’ and ‘children’, which appear more frequently in *Richard III* than in any other Shakespeare play, the word ‘news’ occurs many times – in frequency second only to its appearance in *2 Henry IV*. Understanding of the play can be enhanced by considering not only its pre-history in sources and analogues and post-history in reception and performance, but also its co-history of articulation in the early 1590s. Literary and ideological ‘backgrounds’, ‘sources’ or ‘origins’ (Tillyard; Churchill; Jones, *Origins*) scarcely exhaust the discursive environment of its shaping.

Richard III shares its language and protagonist with a vast tide of contemporary polemic and invective (Simpson; Campbell, 321). The historical Richard provided material for mudslingers of every stripe. The texts involved include the most widely known of the period. *Leicester’s Commonwealth* (*The Copy of a Letter Written by a Master of Arts of Cambridge*) (1584), for example, a benchmark character assassination, invokes Richard to denounce the Earl of Leicester. Similarly, the work popularly termed *The Papists’ Commonwealth* (*A Treatise of Treasons*) (1572), which troubled the Privy Council for decades, devotes twenty pages to ‘infinite resemblances’ between Richard’s

1 For disputes concerning the ‘scapegoat’ theory of witchcraft, see *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester and Gareth Roberts (Cambridge, 1996), 1–45.

England and the 'Machiauellian State' under Elizabeth I's chief counsellor, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, an 'vnknown Traitour . . . taken for the chiefe and most lawful Gouvernour' (*Treatise*, 'Preface', sig. 121^r). The incendiary classic *A Conference about the Next Succession* (1595) cites the deposing of Richard to urge Englishmen to determine royal succession (Parsons, pt 1, 61). There is much more.

Anti-Cecil discourse peaked dramatically in 1591–2, the years of the elevation of Burghley's son to the Privy Council, with the text called *Burghley's Commonwealth* (*A Declaration of the True Causes of the Great Troubles*) (1592) and *An Aduertisement Written to a Secretary* (1592). Both attack Burghley for the anti-Catholic Royal Proclamations of October 1591.¹ Furthermore, over the following twenty years, manuscript libels compared Robert Cecil to Richard, demanding: 'Richard, or Robert, wch is the worse? / A Crooktback great in state is Englands curse' (Bod. Tanner MS 299, fol. 13^r). Richard's ambition, strategic villainy and bodily configuration suggested comparison with a younger son who rose despite physical limitations to vast power and authority amid factionalized politics.²

Richard also appears in anti-Catholic works such as George Whetstone's *The English myrror* (1586), which compares the Pope, 'the Archtyrant of the earth', to 'our arch tyraunt', Richard III, 'manifest monster' and 'sonne of the diuel' (Whetstone, 96, 116–17, 9). Furthermore, just beyond direct reference, various texts levy charges of ambition, factional manipulation, religious hypocrisy and physical deformity in vocabulary and in style

1 *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ed. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, 3 vols (New Haven, Conn., 1964–9), 3.86–95. On the affair and on Robert Parsons's Latin *Responsio*, see Victor Houlston, 'The Lord Treasurer and the Jesuit: Robert Parsons's satirical *Responsio* to the 1591 Proclamation', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 32 (2001), 383–401.

2 The most widely known of relevant Cecil materials, Bacon's 'Of Deformity', does not invoke Richard III, but its treatment of the strengths, advantages and strategies incumbent upon disability is revealing (see Bacon, *Works*, 6.480–1; cf. James Siemon, 'Sign, cause or general habit: toward an "historicist ontology" of character on the early modern stage', in Hugo Keiper, Christopher Bode and Richard J. Utz (eds), *Nominalism and Literary Discourse: New Perspectives* (Amsterdam, 1998), 237–50).

shared with the play. Pre-eminent among these are the pro- and anti-Episcopal writings of the Marprelate controversy (1589–90), which in turn shaped the ‘prophecies’ and ‘libells’ of the Hackett rebellion (July 1591) on behalf of reformers imprisoned by Archbishop Whitgift, and which ultimately anticipated the Elizabethan satirical vogue.¹ Furthermore, the contemporary ‘invention’ of the stereotypical ‘Puritan’ also casts light on aspects of Shakespeare’s play and protagonist.

Excellent grand tyrant of the earth or lump of foul deformity

Any Elizabethan would know the ‘deformed and ill shaped’ Richard III for a ‘cruell murderer, a wretched caitiffe, a moste tragically tyraunt, and blood succour [sucker], bothe of his nephewes, and brother’ (Rainolde, sig. D1^r). The first theatre-goers might have been surprised by *how* ‘ill shaped’ Shakespeare’s Richard is and by *how much* everyone carries on about it. They might also have been surprised to find that, amid the play’s ‘violent and vituperative speech’ (Chambers, *Shakespeare*, 1.302), Richard himself weeps, sighs, ‘play[s] the saint’, meekly endures insults and quotes scripture. The violent abuse directed at Richard and his own hypocritical piety and arch foolery carry contemporary polemical resonance.

On the one hand, insults inflate Richard to cosmic dimensions; on the other, they reduce him to subhuman triviality. As ‘grand tyrant of the earth’ he shares epithets with world-class enemies like the Pope or Philip II of Spain; all three are declared a scourge of God to punish sinful humanity, or even the Antichrist himself – a figure who, it is prophesied, will end creation with ‘tyranny and all-embracing persecution, and . . . a mocking and counterfeit religiosity’.² Identifying Richard with this

1 For the Hackett rebellion, see Walsham. On the nine figures imprisoned around London, see Collinson, 412–31. The imprisonments were ‘so taken to heart; amongst the reforming and zealous brotherhood’ as to threaten armed reaction (Bancroft, *Positions*, 146), 338.

2 See Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1997), 338.

satanic charlatan goes back to John Rous (Hanham, 123–4). But the play's 'devil' (1.2.45), 'cacodemon' (1.3.143) 'hell-hound' (4.4.48), hell's 'minister' (1.2.46), 'son of hell' (1.3. 229), hell's 'factor' (4.4.72), 'hell's black intelligencer' (4.4.71) and 'God's enemy' (5.3.252) is also reductively called 'dog' (1.3.215, 4.4.49, 5.5.2), 'spider' (1.3.241), 'abortive, rooting hog' (1.3.227), 'wolf' (4.4.23), 'toad' (4.4.81), 'Fool' (5.3.192), 'Vice' (3.1.82), 'villain-slave' (4.4.144) and 'lump of foul deformity' (1.2.57). This polarized lexicon has antecedents in treatments of Satan in the Bible or medieval drama, but it also echoes contemporary polemical usage.

Protestants attacked both the Pope and the King of Spain as 'Archtyrant of the earth' (Whetstone, 96; *Declaration*, 76), but also, reductively, compared 'Antichrist' to a 'cocke, w^t neuer a feather on her back' or a mouse-like abortive fetus (Whetstone, 121, 123, 159–60). Philip, 'Tyrant of Spayne', father of 'Monsters', 'horrible and hiddious', begetter of 'ignorance, malice, deceit, guile, hypocrisie, robbing, theft, incest, feigned Religion, all kinde of execrations, murder sacrilidge and parricide', is also an 'olde Foxe' with a 'mishapen masse or lumpe' of followers.¹ Catholics attacked Burghley – 'the *Archpolitike*', the 'tyra[n]t Nero' and '*Machiauil*l', master of 'actors', instigator of 'defamatorie libells' (*Declaration*, 43, 52–3, 33) and a 'Cataline' who has 'diuided [England] into factions' – as merely a spoiled child, 'weeping and whining, like a boye and a babe' (*Treatise*, fols 119^r, 166^v, sig. i2^v). However, for sheer sensationalism nothing exceeds the polarized invective that Protestants hurled at one another in 'the biggest scandal of Elizabeth I's reign'.²

Between two bishops

In 1589 Bishop Thomas Cooper complained that since the Armada, English Protestants had turned to warring over the

1 *The Masque of the League and the Spanyard discovered* (1592; STC 7), sigs B1^r–B4^v, C4^v.

2 See *The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill* (Amherst, Mass., 1985), 1.75.

office of bishop (Cooper, 33–5; cf. Bancroft, *Sermon*, 52; *Almond*, sig. A4^r). This stage of England's ecclesiastical controversies came to be known for the pseudonymous 'Martin Marprelate', whose name with those of his followers appeared on publications between October 1588 and September 1589 and in counter-attacks by officially sponsored writers.¹ This affair contributed to the factionalizing of Elizabethan politics in the early 1590s (Hammer, 390), to the decade's vogue for satire and to the stereotype of 'the Puritan'.² Marprelate's innovation was to mix multi-form humour and burlesque piety with religious critique and bitter invective; the mix would have been inescapably familiar to the first audiences of *Richard III*.

Government spokesmen rightly claimed that the Marprelate authors derived their abusive terms from Presbyterians (Rogers, *Sermon*, 13); this vocabulary also overlapped with anti-papal invective (and the charges aimed at Shakespeare's Richard): satanic ambition, tyrannical usurpation, bestiality, hypocrisy and gross deformity. However, terminology was the least of it. The polarities are familiar: the bishops are 'vsurping Antichristes' (Marprelate, *Epistle*, 8), 'the Lords scourge' (*Theses*, sig. D1^v), but also merely 'Hogges, Dogges, Wolues, Foxes' who render the Church a 'deformed bodie' (Bancroft, *Positions*, 63; Rogers, *Sermon*, 8). John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, 'Pope of Lambeth', 'cruell persecutour' and 'tyrant', bears 'the curse of God' and is warned to expect 'a fearefull ende' (*Theses*, sig. D3^{r-v}).³ But a new ingredient renders the Marprelate texts 'impudent in the hiest degree' (Rogers, *Sermon*, 13). Whitgift is also jokily represented as bumbling 'nunckle Canterbury' (*Theses*, sig. D3^{r-v})

- 1 On the main and peripheral Marprelate materials, see Joseph Black, 'The rhetoric of reaction: the Martin Marprelate tracts (1588–89), Anti-Martinism, and the uses of print in early modern England', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 28 (1997), 707–25.
- 2 Patrick Collinson, 'Ecclesiastical vitriol: religious satire in the 1590s and the invention of Puritanism', in John Guy (ed.), *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade* (Cambridge, 1995), 150–70; cf. Kristin Poole, 'Facing Puritanism: Falstaff, Martin Marprelate and the grotesque Puritan', in Ronald Knowles (ed.), *Shakespeare and Carnival: After Bakhtin* (Basingstoke, 1998), 97–122.
- 3 Cf. Lake & Questier, 513, on this rhetoric.

and warned with a story about saucy dogs who might treat a bishop's regalia as disrespectfully as Shakespeare's Richard says they treat his limping gait:

[T]he B[ishop] did sweat (you must think he labored hard ouer his trencher) The dogg flies at the B. & tooke of his corner capp (he thought belike it had bene a cheese cake) and so away goes the dog with it to his master. Truely my masters of the cleargie / I woulde neuer weare corner cap againe / seeing dogs runne away with them.

(Marprelate, *Epistle*, 43)

Marprelate recasts Antichrist as a sweating trencherman, his idolatrous headgear as cheese cake, his violent rule as pet-wrestling. Similar funny stories abound, such as the one about the preacher who, having once acted the 'vice in a playe', cannot resist running off abruptly mid-service to join passing revellers while mumbling his liturgy.¹ Furthermore, Marprelate narrators mix attack with self-deprecation, adopting the persona of a childlike dunce or 'Plain Percevall', a hunchbacked rustic who admonishes readers, 'thinking belike to ride vpon my Crupshoulders: I am no Ape Carrier'.²

Once the bishops stopped huffing, they turned to professional writers to return similar abuse and similar jokes. Of course, Marprelate is Satan's 'intelligencer' or Antichrist, who lamely limps, but leads followers with his name 'on their foreheads' to hell (*Almond*, sigs B2^v, C2^v). Or he is a 'Dunce', 'dogge', 'hogge' or 'abhorteue childe' (*Almond*, sigs D3^v, C2^v, B1^r) mouthing '*tinkers termes*' and '*iestes first Tarleton [put] on the Stage*' (*Mar-Martine*, sig. A4^v). Comical images of bishops are countered with comical representations of 'Puritans' as hypocritical cheapskates who quote scripture with sham 'zeal'. One such, for example, when asked by his 'good Ladie' to repay

1 Martin Marprelate, *Hay any Worke for Cooper* ([Coventry,] 1589; STC 17456), 3–4.

2 *Plaine Percevall, the Peace-Maker of England* (1590; STC 12914), 12.

a loan, 'began to storme, and said, he thought her not the child of God, for they must lend, looking for nothing againe; & so to acquite himself of the blot of vsurie, he kept the principall' (*Pappe*, sigs C4^v–D2^r). Another, to save funeral costs 'tombled his wife naked into the earth . . . without sheete or shroude to couer her shame, breathing ouer her . . . Naked came I out of my mothers wombe, and naked shall I returne againe' (*Almond*, sig. B1^v).

A perverse eroticism with a special interest in widows constitutes a significant element in the anti-Marprelate polemic and associated anti-Puritan discourse (cf. Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair*). *Almond* attacks Martin (and his 'puritane perusers') as a 'wretched seducer, that vnder wolues raiment deuourest widowes houses' (*Almond*, sigs B1^v, F3^v); compare Richard's attempts on widows Anne and Elizabeth. The paradoxical image of the seducer outwardly wearing a wolf's raiment rather than sheep's clothing may be a misprint, but it suggests oxymoronic qualities in 'Puritan' and Ricardian seduction.

Puritans, though monsters of 'ambition', 'male-con[ten]ted mela[n]choly' and 'seditious discontent' (*Almond*, sig. D2^r), are also associated with harsh moralism, blasphemous mocking, material self-interest and hyper-seductiveness. Thinking 'to carrie all away with censoricall lookes, with gogling the eye, with lifting vppe the hand, with vehement speeches', the 'Puritane[s]' purvey 'rayling & reuiling Pamphlets' (2 *Pasquill*, sig. B4^v). But these 'seducers' are like 'mermaides' hiding sinfulness with 'faire speeches' (Bancroft, *Sermon*, 5–6). 'Hypocritically,' they act 'as though all they said proceeded of meere love and Christian charitie', with 'great sighes and grones . . . with a heavy countenance, with casting downe their heads, and with a pittiful voice' (Bancroft, *Sermon*, 92). References to such performance pervades an erotic sub-genre. Puritans may 'seduce' male followers, but '*most labour hath bene bestowed to win and reteine towards this cause them whose iudgements are commonlie weakest by reason of their sex*'; women are '*after through that*