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**Witchcraft, Rebellion, and Misrule:
A Study of Shakespeare's First Tetralogy**

Elsie Wagner

**A Thesis
in
the Department of English**

**Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada**

September 1991

● **Elsie Wagner, 1991**



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ABSTRACT

Witchcraft, Rebellion, and Misrule: A study of Shakespeare's First Tetralogy

Elsie Wagner

Although most studies of Shakespeare's first tetralogy of English history plays concern themselves with the structure of power, the roles of witchcraft and diabolism, elements central to *1 Henry VI* and *Richard III*—the first and last plays of the tetralogy—have not been fully analyzed.

Witchcraft, introduced by Shakespeare as a structural device with the portrayal of Joan of Arc in *1 Henry VI*, is demonstrated to be, iconographically, rhetorically, and critically, linked with rebellion, carnival, and misrule.

The demonic paradigm that gradually emerges as the tetralogy develops is taken to be an expression of power—political and metaphysical—the end result being the apotheosis of the profane.

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Chapter 1: Witchcraft and 1 Henry VI</i>	5
1.1 Joan and the Feminist Context	5
1.2 The Elements of Witchcraft	11
1.3 Joan's Witchcraft: Illusion, Temptation, and Blasphemy	16
1.4 Witchcraft, Inversion, and the Figuration of the Feminine	30
<i>Chapter 2: Carnival and Carnage</i>	44
2.1 The World Turned Upside Down: Carnival, Witchcraft, and Rebellion.	44
2.2 Rebels as Devils: Diabolism and Misrule.	54
2.3 "More haughty than the devil": Beauford.	59
2.4 "Bookish rule": Henry VI and the Carnival Kingdom	62
<i>Chapter 3: "Women's matters" and the "help of hell"</i>	68
3.1 "Devilish practises": Eleanor of Gloucester	68
3.2 "Amazonian trull": Margaret of Anjou and <i>Henry VI</i>	75
3.3 "Devilish policy": Suffolk and Margaret	81
3.4 "Amazonian trull": Carnival Queen	89
3.5 "Foul wrinkled witch": Margaret and <i>Richard III</i>	104
<i>Chapter 4: "This dark monarchy": Richard III</i>	108
4.1 The York Clan	108
4.2 "When most I play the devil": Profaning the Sacred	112
4.3 "Tempted of the devil": Seduction, Vice, and Virtue	120
<i>Chapter 5: Anatomy of a Diabolarchy</i>	129
5.1 "Let the vile world end": Seeding the Apocalypse	129
5.2 "Hell's black intelligencer": Diabolarchy	133
5.3 "Vicious qualities": Deadly Sins.	142
5.4 "All several sins": Richard and the Iconography of Deadly Sin	153
5.5 "Bloody suppers": Gluttony, Carnival, and the Body Politic	158
<i>Chapter 6: Last Things</i>	163
<i>Conclusion</i>	171
<i>Works Cited</i>	174

Introduction

Most critical studies of the early history plays concern themselves with how Shakespeare shapes the structure of power—whether this takes the form of the providentialist view of the “Tudor myth,” developed by E. M. W. Tillyard and expanded upon by studies such as those of Irving Ribner, or the antiprovidentialist school advocated by such critics as Edward I. Berry, Henry Ansgar Kelly, and David Riggs. More recently, many feminist critics have been deconstructing Shakespeare’s depiction of events as the result of a patriarchal political and social structure. New historicism approaches the subject of power from a cultural materialist perspective, which discusses the plays as to their relationship to history and ideology. But for all their often diametrically opposed positions, all can be said to agree on the idea that the forms and uses of power, political and metaphysical, are central subjects in Shakespeare’s plays. Whether or not the narratives are presented as the result of God’s retribution, the workings of fortune, machiavellian machinations or the oppressive and stereotyping restrictions of misogynist patriarchy, or are reflections of cultural and economic discourses, it is the construct of power that is under scrutiny. As all these viewpoints have contributions to make, I shall be drawing on the insights of all these approaches to present witchcraft and diabolism as manifestations of Shakespeare’s presentation of power.

First, this thesis intends to survey and sometimes refute prevalent critical views of witchcraft in the Henry VI plays; second, it proposes to address the role of witchcraft by examining associated demonstrations of the diabolical, the carnivalesque, and misrule throughout the tetralogy, relying on references to the relevant medieval and Renaissance historical, social, and literary contexture.

It is a central part of my thesis to assume that Shakespeare acknowledges and introduces witchcraft and diabolism as forms of power; appropriates and develops their imagery and language in successive characterizations and events; and that they serve a purpose in the imagery and structure of social disorder and political chaos in the tetralogy. The final play, *Richard III*, will be treated as the culmination of these elements, as a form of tyranny, in which power is displayed as diabolarchy.

The iconography of diabolism in the tetralogy will be explored, including relevant discussions of witchcraft, the deadly sins, and the role of apocalyptic imagery. And, although providentialist readings of these plays are unfashionable, I will lastly touch on the possibility that the recurrent imagery of a corrupt church parallels a Calvinist model of historiography. Consistent throughout the tetralogy is the thematic iteration of virtue and piety corrupted or overthrown by vice; this, coupled with apocalyptic imagery—much of it borrowed from the Book of Revelation—may be, in part, a tropological account of the passing from the so-called “dark ages” of Catholicism to the “new day” of Protestantism. The central action of the plays revolves around war—often accompanied by opposing images of good versus evil—and it may be that these wars form, in part, an allegory of Judgement Day.

The subject of witchcraft—apart from feminist scrutiny—has not attracted the attention of many critics. When it does, it has been for the most part dismissed as mere incidental stagecraft. Even in *1 Henry VI*, where it appears most overtly in the form of Joan, it is treated as a mere dramatic hook: there is no “clear thematic function for witchcraft in it: it is simply a spectacular motif echoed throughout” (Ricks 48). In fact,

witchcraft never plays an actual part in the battles; other causes for French victories, either Joan’s strategy or English weaknesses, are always made clear. Joan’s personal magic...is not functional in the larger course of the wars. and her one attempt to enlist the support of the ‘fiends’ against the English fails (see V.iii). It appears, therefore, Shakespeare had inherited from Holinshed the suggestion that Joan of Arc was a witch, and he uses it to achieve spectacular effects. *But he does not seem to have integrated the motif of witchcraft with the central idea...of ‘civil broils’ and their destructive effects.* (Ricks 49, italics mine)

This statement sums up a received critical stance that regards witchcraft as an incidental theme distinct from “civil broils.” Witchcraft is seen as a dramatic anomaly, exploited by Shakespeare as a ‘special effect,’ disconnected from the larger events that spill out into the plays that follow. Macabre elements “are ornaments, gruesome but ornate, meant to make the flesh creep” (Briggs 89). In one instance

where a connection is made to other themes, the critic concludes that the charges of diabolism against the French are significant only as convenient historical fictions: “The general effect of [Joan’s] witchcraft is clear: only by supernatural aid...revealed to be demonic, could the French have won the battles against the English” (Williamson 45-46). Indeed, after Joan’s final exit in *I Henry VI*, critics give hardly more than cursory attention to witchcraft. Joan is treated as only one transient enemy among Shakespeare’s many villains in the series; once she is destroyed, it seems, Shakespeare gets on with the more substantial business of dealing with English politics. Pucelle’s witchcraft is appropriated to other topics, especially power and patriarchy.

For instance, in many feminist studies, witchcraft has been seen as a manifestation of how female power operates within the confines of patriarchy’s suppression. The role of the witch is overwhelmingly assigned the “unruly woman” syndrome (for instance, in Davis, French, Jardine, Rackin, and Williamson). This stance relies on an acceptance that Renaissance literary views of female power consisted typically of confining women (once having stepped from or having been pushed off the pedestal) to the roles of shrews, scolds, and witches, demonstrating “the unruliness and disruptiveness of the female voice” (Jardine 114). Witchcraft, I argue, is indeed a part of the structuring of power in Shakespeare’s first tetralogy, but it is not restricted to the depiction of female characters, nor does it fit quite so neatly into the niche carved for it by these critics.

The implications surrounding the origin, the nature, and the uses of this species of power mark the focus of this thesis. I will show that the witchcraft introduced with Joan informs the metaphorical life of the plays considered. What gradually emerges as the tetralogy develops, culminating in the action of *Richard III*, can be described as a demonic paradigm. This paradigm has a complex function as a form of power, and runs throughout the tetralogy. Introduced as witchcraft, it expands to the cognate of inversion, diablerie, rebellion, carnival, and even rhetoric—witchcraft and verbal powers of seduction are linked by Shakespeare to a species of corruption that is as closely tied to the primal paradigm of the first seduction (the biblical account of Eve

and the speaking snake) as to its uses as a form of persuasion for corrupt political ends.

Witchcraft in *1 Henry VI* is an important thematic device that functions as a kind of overture for the next three plays in the series. What is especially interesting is why witchcraft should be featured so overtly in a play that has been demonstrated to have been written *after* Parts Two and Three.¹ It may be that Shakespeare makes a deliberate point of showcasing, as it were, witchcraft as an appropriate thematic introduction to the action that follows.

I argue that witchcraft, introduced by Shakespeare as a structural device with Pucelle, not only pervades *1 Henry VI*, but is a manifestation of power—extended to both female and male characters—that is concomitant with the central ideas of political and moral corruption common to each play in the tetralogy. Further, since certain scenes in which witchcraft plays a key role are entirely of Shakespeare's invention (such as those between Joan and Talbot, and Talbot and the Countess), the deliberate manipulation of a thematic device becomes apparent. To view Joan and her witchcraft "simply" as one critic has it, as "a foil to glorify the virtue and prowess of the English in their eventual victory, in which they overcome even the forces of hell" (Kelly 247) is only a fragment of the whole picture: when does this "eventual victory" occur and just what exactly does it mean to "overcome the forces of hell"? I suggest that the final battle is won on Bosworth Field in *Richard III*, and that the "eventual victory" is not over Joan, but over a metaphoric diabolarchy that the witch has helped to establish.

¹ See especially Kristin Smidt, *Unconformities in Shakespeare's History Plays*, pp. 19–52.

Chapter I: Witchcraft and 1 Henry VI

1.1 Joan and the Feminist Context

Traditional criticism, for the most part, took Joan for what Shakespeare tells us what she is: the Renaissance embodiment of a witch. The characterization is based on the text of *1 Henry VI* and on the historiographical evidence: to English sources, at least, Joan was a “loose woman who indulged in ‘divelish witchcraft and sorcerie’” (Bullough 41), a creature who “is absolutely corrupt from beginning to end” (Pierce 47). However, some recent feminist critical re-examination analyses this corruption as a confluence of reactions—historical, political, psychological—that result in the “demonization of women” (Belsey 185).

It is not my intention to argue against the feminist historiography that, justly, holds that the Renaissance viewed “female eloquence as a transgression” and that “Witches were women who broke silence and found an unauthorized voice (ibid 191). As will be shown, Joan, Margaret, Elizabeth, the Duchess of Gloucester, all break silence to great effect. However, this model of a gender-based discourse of witchcraft and magic, despite its historiographical validity, does not alone account for the ways in which the role of the witch and the language and figurations of diablerie are integrated with the thematic narrative of Shakespeare’s first tetralogy.

I have narrowed the focus to view only those topics under discussion to demonstrate that some aspects of diabolism and witchcraft as expressed in these of Shakespeare’s plays have been overlooked.

While the sources report Joan’s witchcraft as a constant throughout her career, feminist critics largely repudiate it. Structurally, for these critics, witchcraft in Shakespeare is a reflection of the patriarchal impulse to silence women, witches being “voluble, unwomanly and possessed of an unauthorized power” (Belsey 185). Marilyn French sees Joan as an expression of the “feminine principle” rebelling against patriarchy, embodying recrudescing forces of female sexual power, of “darkness, disorder, and magic” (6). French maintains that the “real enemy” in *1 Henry VI* “is sexuality and ‘anarchy’—the urge located within the outlaw feminine

principle to overthrow all hierarchies, all legitimacy" (40). This stress on women as "outlaw" rebels against patriarchy is a variation on a theme outlined by Linda Woodbridge: "the central confrontation between opposing female character types in [Renaissance] literature was that between the Patient Grissil figure and the aggressive, liberty-minded woman, either a shrew or a whore" (211). Feminist critics tend to view Joan of Arc, Eleanor of Gloucester, and Margaret of Anjou as the victims of confrontation between the "masculine authority of history" and "the female challenge of physical presence" (Rackin 334). Association with witchcraft places women "beyond meaning" and "endows them with a (supernatural) power which it is precisely the project of patriarchy to deny" (Belsey 185).

Studies like those of French and Williamson concentrate on charges of misogyny and Shakespeare's generally negative portrayal of women in the plays. Phyllis Rackin judges that Joan's "shocking military success is explained as the product of witchcraft, the illicit supernatural power of a disorderly woman who has refused to abide by the limits of her natural role" (*Stages* 198). In other words, Joan is not actually a witch in Shakespeare, but rather an example of how patriarchy responds to women who commit "social and spiritual transgression" (*ibid.* 199). Other thematic approaches, such as those of Berry, Hibbard, and Kelly, fix on central ideas of antithesis and political disorder, of which witchcraft, if it appears at all, is at best a minor component.

For many feminist critics, the accusations of witchcraft that Shakespeare's characters make against Joan constitute misogynist attacks, in the face of which Joan's eloquence and courage indicate a positive, naturalistic character. Her outspokenness, then, is seen as a response to suppression: "In the man's world of the history play, the only power the woman can wield is her power to dismay through verbal abuse" (Jardine 118). Therefore, Joan is possessed not by evil but rather of

boldness, common sense, and resourcefulness. Comically, this supposed witch is the most down-to-earth pragmatist in the play: "had your watch been good / This sudden mischief never could have fallen" (2.1.158-59). In consequence, Talbot's repeated insistence that she is a witch sounds not dissimilar from the deluded allegations recounted by Reginald Scot [in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 1584]. (Jackson 63)

In this view, Joan is perceived to be a witch only by her enemies—the male (English) characters in the play. A similar idea receives expression in psychological analysis of her character: she presents “a composite portrait of the ways women are dangerous to men” (Kahn 55). She is a “man-woman, an outsider and a sensationalised freak” (Jardine 105), demonic to fearful opponents but heroic to her supporters. If her “actions conform to...the [Elizabethan] literary conventions defining a praiseworthy female warrior,” one who “fights in defense of her country” (Jackson 53), then it is England’s hero Talbot who is making “deluded allegations” (ibid. 63). Rackin adds that Joan’s dressing in armour connotes “sexual ambiguity” associating

the dangers that lurk at the boundaries of the known, rationalized world of sexual difference and exclusion constructed by patriarchal discourse, the inconceivable realities of female power and authority that threatened the idealized world of masculine longing constructed by Shakespeare’s historical myths. (*Stages* 200)

Shakespeare’s characterization, then, is part of another, more complex project to provide a context for transgressive women. This genre of analysis bases itself in part on the theory that Shakespeare took on an “antihistorical” project in creating characters like Joan:

Silenced and marginalized by Shakespeare’s historiographic sources, the common men, like the women, speak for the unarticulated residue of experience that eluded expression in the ideologically motivated discourse of historiography. Like the women, they represent a constant challenge to the mystifications of a historiographic tradition that was not only masculine but also elite. (Rackin, *Stages* 203)

These further topics in the theory of the relationship of Renaissance historiography and ideological discourse to Shakespeare are too absorbing and too substantial to address in this project. I must necessarily restrict the subject to a small sampling of the historiography—Renaissance and recent—as it relates specifically to witchcraft in these of Shakespeare’s history plays.

However, the underlying problem confronting any analysis that attempts to define Joan as anything other than a witch cannot sustain its argument without concluding, necessarily, that Shakespeare's portrayal is mystifyingly inconsistent:

the *disjunctive presentation* of Joan that shows her *first* as numinous, *then* as practically and subversively powerful, and *finally* as feminized and demonized is determined by Shakespeare's *progressive exploitation* of the *varied* ideological potential inherent in the topically relevant [Elizabethan] figure of the virago. Each of her *phases* reflects differently upon the chivalric, patriarchal males in the play. (Jackson 64-65, italics mine)

In order to justify what appears to be a disjointed and baffling characterization, Jackson resorts to concluding that the play

locates itself in areas of ideological discomfort. It uses culturally powerful images ambiguously, providing material for different members of a diverse audience to receive the drama in very different ways. (65)

Shakespeare certainly uses ambiguous imagery, not least in his construction of Joan. However, the dramatic tension that this deliberate equivocation produces—all climactically revealed in Act V—should not be confused with Shakespeare's equally deliberate characterization of her. Shakespeare in some specific instances makes careful use of "culturally powerful images" and, in fact, often signals ambiguity inherent in emblems (viz., the red and white roses in the Temple Garden Scene, *1H6* 2.4).¹ It is equally evident that Shakespeare's language and iconography would have been received in different ways by individuals in an audience, depending on their knowledge of history, the rules of rhetoric, and familiarity with biblical and mythical

¹ The encounter between the factions is devised as a series of balances: there is as much difference between York and Lancaster as "Between two hawks," "two dogs," "two blades," "two horses," "two girls" (2.4.11-15). The patterning "suggests that [Warwick] views their claims as being of equal validity" (Hibbard 63). But most important is how readily the imagery of the emblems the quarrellers use can be inverted. Plantagenet claims the "naked" (20) truth on his side; Somerset's icon of truth is radiantly "apparell'd" (24). Somerset's "pale" (47) rose is a sign of "truth and plainness" (46) or of "fear" (63) and cowardice. Plantagenet's rose is the colour of the blush of "shame," (66) or of the revenge which "Shall dye your white rose in a bloody red" (61). The ambiguity of the emblems points to how the iconic is treated generally in the plays: images and their putative meanings are subject to sudden reversals.

subjects. In the case of Joan, those to whom she was a familiar figure from history who, as an enemy of the English was burned at the stake for heresy, would have known from the outset that she is a witch, in spite of all her initial protestations. For others, the shattering of her pretence as a saintly avatar at the end of *I Henry VI* might have provided a gratifying (at least to the playwright) dramatic shock. Critically, however, to designate Joan's portrayal as an ambiguous series of "phases" leads to a flawed conclusion, that "At no stage is the allocation of value clearcut" (Jackson 65). In Act 5, Scene 3 of *I Henry VI*, Shakespeare deliberately shows Joan conjuring the fiends, who now refuse to help her. She is taken aback by their lack of "accustom'd diligence," noting that "I was wont to feed you with my blood" (9, 14). This graphic scene, clearly unambiguous, is a corroboration that she is indeed a witch. The suspense Shakespeare builds is an example of a dramatic device: toying with the 'is she or isn't she?' equivocation serves to enhance the impact of the final revelation.

Jackson centres her argument on the image of the Amazon/virago, with it appropriating what Jardine calls a "saving stereotype of female heroism."² But again, such an elaborate analysis precludes a coherent portrayal of Joan. Another feminist reading of Joan also tries to demonstrate that Shakespeare's is a "disjunctive presentation" (Williamson 45). To this view, Joan enters as a saint but then the playwright has her undergo some mysterious and unspecified corruptive metamorphosis. Only a series of "*phases*" are possible, whereby "Joan is *transformed* to a witch" (Williamson 45, italics mine): "In her degradation Joan lapses from the prophet-Amazon of the beginning to the strumpet who curses the England she cannot defeat" (ibid. 46). This notion of a "disjunctive presentation"³ is problematic. In an attempt to equip Joan's role with a discourse based on images of the heroic feminine—very much at odds with Shakespeare's finale—no clear portrait of such a creation can emerge; the contradiction inherent in Joan's conjuration scene precludes it. If, however, the events of Act 5 are accepted as Shakespeare's

² See Jardine, Chapter 6 (169-98). Jardine does not, however, add the Amazon figuration to her list of "saving stereotypes," which includes Chastity, Astraea, the patient woman and the lamenting woman.

³ Both Jackson (64) and Williamson (45) use the identical phrase.

revelation of her character as a witch, then there is no disjunction. Although Joan can be seen from various perspectives, and incoherence is certainly one of them, nevertheless all aspects of her role can be traced back to witchcraft, including her false posturing as a saint, her magically-induced beauty, and her ability to delude others by performing seeming miracles. Her characterization is very much in keeping with that of a witch. That she should delude others and falsify herself, not least in her pious, heroic posturing, is typical of witchcraft. Historically, during witchhunts, unfortunate victims so accused were denounced even if they appeared virtuous and were respected in their communities—in fact, especially if they seemed godly:

“demonologists retorted that a seemingly pious demeanor was a subtle trick of the Devil; the witches did everything a good Catholic should to achieve greater protection to carry on their devilish work” (Robbins 543). In fact, then, the lady protests too much—Shakespeare’s initial elaborations on Joan’s piety are in themselves suspicious, perhaps, for being so conspicuous. The saintly pretence can be seen, in fact, as a device that Shakespeare makes good use of later to point out the demonic nature of Richard III, his characterization an extension of the role of diablerie ascribed to Joan. The difference in the portrayal of their natures is that Shakespeare lets us see Joan for what she is at the end of *1 Henry VI*; he lets Richard, however, speak for himself from the very beginning of his characterization in *3 Henry VI* (3.2.124-95).

The dispute regarding Shakespeare’s characterization of Joan, then, stems from one critical perception that her portrayal is a series of “jarring contrasts” wherein “Shakespeare makes use of the two opposed views (roughly, the French and English views) of Joan as a saint and a sorceress to create a varied, interesting dramatic character” (Warren 77). But what role—besides an “interesting” one—does this dualistic “varied” character play? The issue, as I put it, boils down to three questions: Is Joan depicted consistently as a witch? If so, is her role as a witch structural to *1 Henry VI*? And if witchcraft is structural to the first play, how is it also relevant to *Henry VI, Parts 2 and 3* and *Richard III*?

1.2 The Elements of Witchcraft

The subject of Joan's portraiture serves as preface to the topic of witchcraft in Shakespeare's first tetralogy. In order to fully appreciate Shakespeare's Joan, it is necessary to briefly outline the elements of witchcraft, based on the historical context.

Shakespeare's portrayal of this witch reflects the received ideas of his time, as the discourse of demonism and witchcraft was part of the *Weltanschauung* of Shakespeare's society:

it cannot be denied that in 1607 Englishmen—even cultivated Englishmen—were seriously aware in a way that we are not of an invisible world about them, and that they spent an appreciable share of their time thinking and writing on spirits and on those affairs of men in which spirits were believed to join. The courtier who in 1606 or 1607 saw *Macbeth* on the stage...had perhaps a rather detailed understanding of scenes that in themselves are as vague to us now as the sword play in *Hamlet*. It is not likely that King James' [or Elizabeth's] courtiers interpreted spirit scenes by childhood impressions from Grimms fairy tales, as has many a critic in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They know rather more definitely than did editors two hundred years later what such things as *spirits*, *witches*, and *magicians* were conceived to be. These are terms that have nowadays only figurative or historical signification; but in 1607, as for centuries before and for generations to come, they or their equivalents were part of a universal faith that was, perhaps, as close to the people as technology to us. There were those who knew little and those who knew much of it; there were those who rejoiced in it and those who fretted against it. But there were few or none whom it did not touch. (West 2)

Shakespeare's plays are informed by a culture whose scholars treated pneumatology as a science and whose general population feared witchcraft, as the widespread persecutions attest:

At least some of Shakespeare's villains—Iago, Lady Macbeth, Edmund—draw upon a deep well of evil...at the same time that [the] movement toward humanism was reducing the Devil's stature, the sermons and the theatre of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries made him more colorful and real to the population at large than he ever had been. The great witch craze, which built upon this wide popular belief, was a phenomenon of the Renaissance, and the witch

craze was at its height in England at precisely the time that Shakespeare was at his. (Russell 244)

Given that witchcraft was topical, its employment as a device in Shakespeare's stagecraft attests—at the very least—to its dramatic power. What Shakespeare's opinion of witchcraft might have been is a topic I do not intend to address. The aim is to substantiate that, in the cultural context in question, the iconography of witchcraft and the language of demonologists formed a discourse familiar to Shakespeare and to his public.

The place and import of the discourse of witchcraft in the English Renaissance has been the subject of much study and debate (see Briggs, Clark, Russell, Robbins, Vickers, West). Although witchcraft is a familiar theme, determining its relationship to English social history is no simple task: "Of all the aspects of the occult, that connected with demonology and witchcraft seems the most difficult to come to terms with.... As an intellectual and social phenomenon, too, witchcraft is harder to understand than any of the other occult sciences and has provoked an extensive controversy" (Vickers, "Introduction" 23-24). But even though problematic, certain distinctions regarding witchcraft separating it from other forms of magic can be attempted.

Distinctions between sorcery, witchcraft, and magic—black and white, natural and artificial—are complex, and depend on several variables: the demonologist consulted, the culture involved, and chronology. But for the purpose of this study, definitions are restricted to English society, and to differentiating between categories of magic, sorcery, and witchcraft.

Magic is a generic term, and includes white and black—positive and negative—connotations. One helpful distinction made between magic and its divisions and witchcraft is delineated by Robert Hunter West:

Of magic dealing with spirits Shakespeare's contemporaries made two main divisions: ceremonial magic and witchcraft. Ceremonial magic was, roughly, the manipulation by a proper operator of certain occult and divine properties in things to attract, and perhaps, to coerce, unbodied spirits. Of this magic there were—in the intention of the operator, at least—two sorts: white, which tried to identify itself with Christian

worship; and black, which frankly made concessions to damned spirits. *Distinct from both white and black magic was witchcraft, which was complete abandonment to damned spirits, a deliberate and unreserved worship by bargain of the devil and his demons for worldly ends.* (3, italics mine)

This categorization of witchcraft as distinct from the practise of magic is also the rule in anthropology:

[Witchcraft] refers to the human performance of evil by means of transhuman power vested in the performer. It is usually distinguished from sorcery in that the latter may be learned whereas the capacity for witchcraft is intrinsic. *Unlike magic, which may be used either for good or for evil, witchcraft is always harmful.* (Hunter and Whitten 405-6, emphasis mine).

Magic (a generic term for miraculous events) and witchcraft (or black magic) have different natures—only the latter is inherently diabolical. This distinction is vital to the plays under consideration: the effects of witchcraft, and all of Shakespeare's characterizations connected with it, are by definition satanic.

Sorcery is a general term, applicable to many societies and cultures. However,

witchcraft is specifically limited to approximately three centuries from 1450 to 1750 and to Christian western Europe (with an excursion to Salem). Sorcery is an attempt to control nature.... On the other hand, witchcraft embraces sorcery, but goes far beyond it, for the witch contracts with the Devil to work magic for the purpose of denying, repudiating, and scorning the Christian God. The crimes both sorcerer and witch are supposed to commit...appear to be alike, but the motives are distinct. (Robbins 471)

In other words, witchcraft can be defined as "a conscious rejection of God and the Church" (Robbins 471). Further, "Witchcraft...differed from sorcery in that it was a form of religion, a Christian heresy" (Robbins 7). Renaissance witchcraft was, then, perceived to be inherently diabolical, and its practitioners were explicitly satanic agents:

The [church] fathers had argued that all evildoers are limbs of Satan whether or not they are conscious of it. This pact was considered to include explicit homage to the Devil.... The idea that witches were

worshippers of Satan and had signed a literal, explicit pact with him was the heart of the witch craze. (Russell 81)

When witches called on demons or fiends for aid, as Pucelle does in Act 5 of *1 Henry VI*, collusion with Satan was taken for granted. "Pact with the Devil was the essence of witchcraft" and "to every demonologist, Protestant as well as Catholic, the agreement to work with the Devil to deny and oppose the Christian God was the core of the crime" (Robbins 369). Charges of witchcraft, then, specified that the witch made a pact with diabolical forces, directed by Satan, dedicated to the opposition of the Christian society. On the strength of pact, witches could call on supernatural agents such as demons to perform the necessary delusionary tricks:

It was always taken for granted that demons had not lost their physical powers after their fall from grace and that their cumulative experience since the Creation, their subtle, airy, and refined quality, and their capacity for enormous speed, strength, and agility enabled them to achieve real effects beyond human ability. (Clark, "Scientific" 360)

Central to these "real effects beyond human ability" was Satan's power, extended to his servants, to create illusions:

He could corrupt sensory perception, charm the internal faculties with "ecstasies" or "frenzies," use his extraordinary powers over local motion to displace one object with another so quickly that transmutation appeared to occur, present illusory objects to the senses by influencing the air or wrapping fantastic shapes around real bodies...The devil was, therefore, severely limited in what he could really effect...but there was nothing he might not *appear* to effect. Demonologists consequently went to considerable lengths to expose such *glaucomata* or "lying wonders".... (Clark, "Scientific" 360)

These "lying wonders" or *glaucomata* are related to what demonologists termed "glamour" with reference to charms used by witches, as evidenced by *The Malleus Maleficarum*, a text that had, to clerical eyes, absolute authority for nearly 300 years on the subject of witchcraft:⁴

⁴ "The *Malleus Maleficarum*, printed about 1486 and the most celebrated of all books on witchcraft, was the work of Jakob Sprenger and Heinrich Kramer...it became the first manual to codify the heresy of witchcraft" (Robbins 9). Robbins goes on to quote these authors as affirming that "A belief that there are such things as witches is so

the senses are deluded...by the power of the devil...fascination may bring about a certain *glamour* and a leading astray...[and] there may be a certain fascination cast by the eyes over another person, and this may be harmful and bad. (Summers 17, italics mine)

[Deceptions] are caused by devils through an illusion or *glamour*...by confusing the organ of vision by transmuting the mental images in the imaginative faculty. (Ibid. 121, italics mine)

Glaucomata or “glamour” is a power given by the devil to his followers, a species of fascination,⁵ by which they can not only delude victims into seeing desired effects but also by which they can change shape: “The Devil is the chief of the shapeshifters; werewolves, vampires, and witches imitate their master in this quality in order to do his will” (Russell 79). *Glaucomata* is now an obscure term but it appears to have been in use among Renaissance demonologists as a common category of witchcraft. Something of its original meaning can be gleaned from consulting Smith’s Latin dictionary under “glaucoma,” the primary meaning of which refers to the common eye disease which obscures vision. Secondarily it was used “Comically: alicui glaucoman ob oculos objicere, *to throw dust into his eyes*” (*Dr. Smith’s Latin-English Dictionary*, William Smith [London: 1875]). The OED defines “glamour” as “Magic, enchantment, spell; esp. in the phrase *to cast the glamour over one* [1721]...A magical or fictitious beauty attending to any person or object; a delusive or alluring charm.” Although glamour and *glaucomata* can be used interchangeably, I use glamour: Further references to glamour and glamorous are to be understood as demonological terms referring to illusory effects created by satanic agency.

Witchcraft is, then, an explicitly diabolical agency, pact with Satan inherent. It is also a “Christian heresy” (Robbins 7)—blasphemous. Further, witchcraft can effect illusions. Glamorous illusions of fictions are by their natures designed to tempt.

essential a part of the Catholic faith that obstinately to maintain the opposite opinion savors of heresy” (ibid.).

⁵ “Fascination is a power derived from a pact with the Devil, who, when the so-called fascinator looks at another with an evil intent...he infects with evil the person at whom he looks” (Martin Antoine Del Rio, *Disquisitionum Magicarum* 1599, qtd. in Robbins, 194).

Temptation, in Western cultures, of course, has been, from Genesis forward, the archetypal satanic vocation.

1.3 Joan's Witchcraft: Illusion, Temptation, and Blasphemy

Elements of witchcraft inform Joan's role, and there can be no doubt that, from Joan's first entrance, Shakespeare makes iconic and rhetorical reference to her use of properties integral to the catalogue of witchcraft: illusion, temptation, and blasphemy.

Joan arrives in angelic (dis)guise, fantasized by some critics to be "a golden girl" (Fiedler 61), "a dazzling blond" (Tillyard 165).⁶ These critics accept Shakespeare's introduction of Joan as a kind of devil in disguise, as part of her figuration as a witch. They do not, however, go on to provide a context for Shakespeare's insistence on her glamorous facade, and do not demonstrate how it is related to witchcraft. Brockbank does, however, go a step further when he recognizes that "the trick of turning devil into seeming angel was a Morality-play commonplace" (99). But it is Shakespeare's underlining of Joan's ability to produce glamorous effects that provides the crucial link with witchcraft: a sugared facade is standard issue for a witch. She bewitches both with "wondrous feats" (1.2.64) and by appearing a "beauty" (1.2.86). Talbot understands that her "deceit" is "Contriv'd by art and baleful sorcery" (*IH6* 2.1.14-15). It is only at her trial that "the ugly witch" (5.3.34) is unmasked. The transformation can be seen as a modulation of satanic fall. To medieval theologians, "Lucifer's abrupt, undignified, and coarse expulsion from heaven accentuates the transformation of the bright angel into an ugly fiend" (Russell 252). Shakespeare's use of Joan's deception—her glamour—demonstrates that, from the outset, Joan is very much the conventional figure of a witch. There are two elements to this structure, one connected to the demonological depiction of the

⁶ Why "blondness" is assumed remains a mystery to me: nowhere in the play is there an indication of Joan's hair colour. I can only speculate that when Joan describes herself as once being "black and swart" (1.2.84) the 'golden' antithesis is a presumption made by these critics.

feminine founded on the Judeo-Christian tradition, and the second to a literary trope. First, the medieval church's perspective on women is exemplified by the following quote from the *Malleus Maleficarum*:

What else is a woman but a foe to friendship, a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic danger, a delectable detriment, an evil of nature, painted with fair colours! (Summers 43)

A woman is an embodiment of evil, "painted with fair colours," like all the very best temptations. Out of this notion comes the second element, a literary refinement on how women and demonism are connected: the devil in disguise.

The theme of the beautiful woman who is really a devil in disguise is a literary commonplace. Marlowe uses it twice in *Dr. Faustus*. First, when Faustus is offered a wife, "ENTER A DEVIL dressed like a woman" (*Dr. Faustus*, 1.5.149), and again when the image of Helen of Troy is conjured up, where she is described with imagery specific to a succuba: "Her lips suck forth my soul: see where it flies" (5.1.100). One critic notes that "as Lucifer and Mephostophilis arise from Hell to oversee the scene immediately following these lines, we are reminded [5.2.12-16] that the image Faustus worships is not even the actual ghost of Helen of Troy, *but merely a devil in a fair disguise*" (Medane 128, italics mine). Spenser's knight in *The Faerie Queene* is lustfully tempted by a "Spright" made from "charmes and hidden artes" whose "forged beauty" "beguiled with so goodly sight" (I.i.45). The trope is carried through in the next Canto: "the wicked witch" was "Like a faire Lady, but did fowle *Duessa* hide" (I.ii.35, 36), and "What not by right, she cast to win by guile" (I.ii.38). She, too, undergoes a transformation scene: the "hellish science" used to disguise her also reveals a "foule vgly forme" (I.ii.38). Iconically, the devil in disguise is a form of contrariety whereby vice poses as virtue. The principle of

contraries...harmonizes generally with the medieval tendency to see things in two distinct ways: in a carnal or worldly sense, and in a spiritual sense. The virtues may be false worldly virtues (vices masquerading as virtues), or true virtues. (Robertson 298)

Shakespeare seems to be drawing on this idea here, and in *Macbeth*: Malcolm says, "Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell. / Though all things foul would wear

the brows of grace, / Yet grace must still look so" (4.3.22-24). In *King Lear*, Albany says to Goneril, "Howe're thou art a fiend, / A woman's shape doth shield thee" (4.2.66-67).

Glamour, however, was not restricted to areas of visual delusion. It also had a specific extension as effecting verbal illusions, a category defined by Renaissance writers on "natural magic" as "*vis verborum*" or "verbal force," which "leads to fascination, telepathy, medicinal incantations, and most of the operations of witchcraft" (D.P. Walker 149). Interestingly, the etymology of "glamour" is connected with "grammar" (OED). Although specified only as a corruption of grammar, it is not unlikely that grammar in its incarnation as a form of rhetoric was linked with the powers of deception: Classically, rhetoric is a form of persuasion; demonologically, witchcraft and its powers of verbal glamour are also forms of persuasion, more precisely, of temptation. The rhetoric of witchcraft constitutes the "magical power of words, characters, figures, and incantations" (D. P. Walker 105) and is dependent on a definition of language specific to Renaissance theories of magic on the relationship of words to objects. Unlike contemporary philological definitions of a word as metaphor or sign, in magic, word and referent are not distinct: the "fusion of word and referent" is "basic to many forms of magic" (Vickers, "Analogy" 96).⁷ In the magical use of words,

This kind of verbal force rests on a theory of language according to which there is a real, not conventional, connection between words and what they denote; moreover the word is not merely like a quality of the thing it designates, such as its colour or weight; it is, or exactly represents, its essence or substance. A formula of words, therefore, may not only be an adequate substitute for the things denoted, but may even be more powerful. (D.P.Walker 80-81)

A scientific model of the relationship between language and the occult is useful here:

⁷ Of course, this idea was and still is in use in many societies, and is not confined to diabolical practice. There is the example of the medieval church, which held to a "magical notion that the mere pronunciation of words in a ritual manner could effect a change in the character of material objects" (Thomas, *Religion* 37).

In the scientific tradition...a clear distinction is made between words and things and between literal and metaphorical language. *The occult tradition does not recognize this distinction: Words are treated as if they are equivalent to things and can be substituted for them. Manipulate the one and you manipulate the other.* Analogies, instead of being, as they are in the scientific tradition, explanatory devices subordinate to argument and proof, or heuristic tools to make models that can be tested, corrected, and abandoned if necessary, are, instead, modes of conceiving relationships in the universe that reify, rigidify, and ultimately come to dominate through. One no longer uses analogies: One is used by them. (Vickers "Analogy" 95, italics mine)

The occult word, that is, the word or phrase invested with supernatural power, constitutes not analogy but the thing itself. "The occult sciences' practice of substitution or interchangeability of concepts depends fundamentally on the reification process, the breakdown of the line between the literal and the figurative" (Vickers 122). The ability of witches to draw on *vis verborum* challenges the distinction between mere verbalization and the reifying powers of incantation. In this paradigm, metaphoric language is invested with glamour—the diabolical extension of rhetorical power: "One no longer uses analogies: One is used by them." Because occult incantation has, uniquely, the power to reify, Shakespeare's insistence throughout the tetralogy on successive strains of diabolical persuasion, such as Joan's witchcraft, glamour, and bewitching rhetoric (also employed, as will be shown, by a succession of characters after Joan), becomes clear: words so empowered reify a state of affairs that ordinary, non-occult language and imagery simply do not have the authority to convey. Words diabolically invested, then, are possessed with more than the conventional powers usually ascribed to rhetoric.

Although Fiedler and Tillyard understand that their "golden girl" was a witch, they do not specify what kind of witchcraft is being practised. They do not relate her visual trickery to other parallel instances of glamour or to its metaphorical variations. In *Henry VI*, for instance, illusion wears two distinct and opposing faces. Counterbalancing diabolical glamour is the god-like ability not to delude but to dazzle, practised by the superhuman Henry V:

His brandish'd 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.

.....
 ...his deeds exceed all speech:
 He ne'er lift up his hand but conquered.
 (IH6 1.1.10-16)

In keeping with the perception of “the play as being built around the opposition between two forces or principles” (Bullough 36), Henry V's is the holy magic of divine approbation; witchcraft is the opposing, diabolical face of magic. The words “blind” and “dazzled” are part of the vocabulary of witchcraft, but here they are used to describe the god-like. That “his deeds exceed all speech” exhibits a power akin to incantatory reification. Talbot, too, has superhuman powers that are antithetical to those of hell: the Bastard says that “I think this Talbot be a fiend of hell,” but Reignier is afraid “If not of hell, the heavens sure favor him” (2.1.46-47). Not only are Joan and Talbot each other's antithesis—male/female, English/French, good/evil—but they practise opposing kinds of miraculous powers. Talbot “*above human thought / Enacted wonders with his sword and lance... / All the whole army stood agaz'd on him*” (1.1.121-22, 126). He recounts that “My *grisly countenance* made others fly, / None durst come near for fear of sudden death”; the French so feared him that “they suppos'd I could rend bars of steel, / And spurn in pieces posts of adamant” (1.4.47-48, 51-52). On the other hand, Joan's power of command granted by witchcraft is an inversion of divine power. By her incantations—*vis verborum*, or verbal force—the witch's soldiers win battles: “Joan de Pucelle hath *performed her word*” (1.6.3, italics mine). When Charles urges her to seduce Burgundy to come over to the French camp, he says “Speak, Pucelle, and *enchant him with thy words*” (3.3.40, italics mine). Joan's ability to enchant with words alone demonstrates that Shakespeare has invested her with supernatural power; and as enchantment is specifically a witch's trick, it follows that this power is necessarily demonic.

Talbot's soldiers, too, need only words invested with the magical power of *vis verborum*. They fight with “no other weapon but his *name*” (2.1.81, italics mine; also

1.4.50);⁸ an Englishman harries enemies with “The *cry* of Talbot serves me for a sword” (2.1.79, italics mine). Talbot’s god-like magic causes even Joan to fear him—she cuts short an opportunity to vaunt with, “Yet, Pucelle, hold thy peace, / If Talbot do but thunder, rain will follow” (3.2.58-59).

Shakespeare’s sources note that Joan was given to “*visions*, traunses, and fables, full of blasphemy, supersticion and hypocrisy,” deluding the Dauphin “so was he *blynded*, & so was he *deceived* by the *devils* meanes” (Hall, qtd. in Bullough 57, italics mine). Shakespeare seems to acknowledge this description when he shows Joan exercising the same glamour on Burgundy, readily evident in her diabolical argument:

Look on thy country, *look* on fertile France,
 And *see* the cities and the towns defac’d

 As *looks* the mother on her lowly babe

See, see the pining malady of France!
Behold the wounds, the most unnatural wounds....
 (IH6 3.3.44-45, 47, 49-50, italics mine)

Joan conjures a vision by incantatory exhortations to “look” and “see” that are so compelling that Burgundy is “vanquished” (78). That the spoken word has been reified by *vis verborum* is evident in Burgundy’s description of the *physical* effect of the witch’s speech: “These haughty *words* of hers / Have *batt’red* me like roaring *cannon shot*” (3.3.78-79, italics mine). Diabolical glamour, visual and verbal, has concrete consequences.

Shakespeare presents the power of illusion or deception as a form of temptation, as the seduction of Burgundy demonstrates. Witches were almost invariably associated with carnal lust and are often depicted as lewd temptresses, for example, Spenser’s Duessa in *The Faerie Queene*). Duessa is “a false sorceresse” who “many errant knights hath brought to wretchednesse” (1.2.34). Riggs compares

⁸ Consistent with his epic stature, Talbot’s name alone confers the properties of Talbot on anyone who uses it: “the occult...indeed thought that ‘by names man can confer essential properties on things’” (Vickers, “Analogy” 100, qtd. from Galileo, *Discoveries and Opinions*).

“the stripping of Duessa in *The Faerie Queene*” with “the scenes in which [Joan] is exposed and burned as a witch” (107). Charles refers to Joan as “Bright star of *Venus, fall’n down on the earth*” (1.2.144, italics mine); she is later called a “Circe” (5.3.35).⁹ In the scene between Joan and the Dauphin, “the soldier and the lady have assumed unnatural roles of enervated warrior and seductress, signifying disorder in the cosmos and in the state as well” (Bevington 52). The association of women with lust and witchcraft is traditional. The notion that women are easily tempted by malefic influences begins with the Book of Genesis; latterly, it has been attributed by psychoanalysts and feminists to male abhorrence of female sexuality and power.

The connection stems from two ideas. First, that, historically, the only kind of power to which women had access was in resorting to extra-masculine activities like sorcery; second, that female lust signalled the implementation of sexual choices independent of patriarchal dictates. Witchcraft in this view is seen as an expression of female independence, and its suppression constitutes patriarchal revenge on feminine sexuality. French, for instance, finds that Shakespeare thought that women dominating men “abhorrent” and that “he never abandoned belief in male legitimacy or horror at a female sexuality, and these continued to color all his thinking” (7).

However, this model of witchcraft is inconsistent with the plays under discussion. Witchcraft in the context of these plays is not a manifestation of male “horror” of “female sexuality” but rather a signal of how dangerously infected the world has become—how susceptible it is to being undermined on many levels. I will show that the linkage of power and female sexuality is always seen as unnatural inversion, metaphorically only one symptom of many demonstrating the destruction of a violently disordered state.

In theology and folklore, it was commonly held that women—beginning with Eve—were easily seduced by Satan: “Learned authorities never had any doubt that the weaker sex was more vulnerable to the temptations of Satan” (Thomas, *Religion* 620); “All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable....

⁹ In Chaucer’s “The Knight’s Tale,” the walls of the temple of Venus depicted “Lust and Array” and “Th’enchautmentz of Medea and Circes” (ll. 1932, 1945).

Wherefore for the sake of fulfilling their lusts they consort even with devils” (Summers 47).

The link between Joan’s witchcraft and lust is sustained throughout Shakespeare’s portrayal. When Joan materializes suddenly, arriving to rescue “the honor of the forlorn French” (1.2.19), she presents “high terms” (93): her first act is to “exceed my sex” (90) by defeating Charles in single combat. This inspires not only his admiration but also his sexual ardour— “Impatiently I burn with thy desire” (108). When she encounters Talbot, also in single combat, she prompts his “salacious double entendres” (Bevington 53). On seeing “this high-minded strumpet” (1.5.12), he boasts that “I’ll have a bout with thee” (4). Another allusion to Joan’s ability to seduce men (power) comes when “the Dolphin and his trull...arm in arm” (2.2.28-29) are seen fleeing together; and, lastly, when Joan attempts to save herself from the stake by naming one lover after another (and so in denying her virginity she betrays her very name, Pucelle).

Lust is, in addition, a deadly sin, symbolic of corruption by satanic temptation. As Satan’s disciples, witches exemplify the “Female disorderliness” that “was first seen in the Garden of Eden, where Eve had been the first to yield to the serpent’s temptation and incite Adam to disobey the Lord” (Davis 147). This disobedience, which, it is extrapolated, “led [women] into the evil arts of witchcraft” (ibid. 148), parallels Lucifer’s rebellion against God, exile to hell mirroring exile from the garden. Satan’s power resides in his ability to tempt mortals to sin. Witches, with their special knowledge of evil, emulate their master by tempting victims not only with lust, but also with the whole register of cardinal sins, including envy, avarice and, most especially, pride.

Pucelle’s association with vice leads critics to note that Shakespeare honours the traditional and “characteristic eloquence of vice in the morality plays” (Belsey 60) in his characterization of Joan. She is clearly a variation on the figuration of the Vice: she “fills the world with vicious qualities” (5.4.35). Such eloquence, however, is verbal glamour in a witch’s mouth—infused, that is, with the reifying powers of diabolical incantation. Joan’s convincing manner is entirely due to witchcraft. Further,

vice extends to misrule; Joan can be seen “like Falstaff, as a comic figure, [who] is comic only in the same way as are the medieval mystery devils, whose grotesqueness reflects the essential disharmony of evil” (Silber 88). Joan as Vice “foreshadows Falstaff, anticipating [him] in her sarcasm, her indifference to honor in the face of physical reality, her witty perception of life’s incongruities” (Berry 17). She practises comic grotesquery when she reduces Talbot’s emblematic corpse to a “Stinking and fly-blown” heap (4.7.76). These lines spoken over Talbot’s corpse have not been, as far as I have been able to determine, connected with witchcraft. However,

Flies were often regarded as familiars, and Beelzebub, the devil of the flies, was a favourite in English folk tradition.... As early as the *Golden Ass of Apuleius* witches were supposed to assume the form of flies.
(Briggs 89)

In French, of course, ‘pucelle’ is also a flea, a blood-sucking creature. This innuendo along with the “fly-blown” image, I suggest, are further proofs that Joan is diabolical.

As his agent, the witch is part of Satan’s “process of temptation,” which deliberately plots “a rival discourse which legitimates sin and leads to hell” (Belsey 62). Belsey’s comment is not on Joan but comes in the course of a discussion on how the Vice in morality plays “invites the audience to identify—and his victim to submit to—an alternative to Christian knowledge in which ‘unChristian’ [policy] is an acceptable way of life” (62). I suggest that Joan operates in precisely this way, but with one exception: unlike most Vices, whose names reflect their identities, Joan’s name—La Pucelle—is an *inversion* of her identity, in keeping, as will be seen, with the operations of witchcraft.

The witch

was a member of an international movement, a powerful subversive force working day and night to destroy true religion and to prevent the establishment of God’s kingdom. The powers of evil were very strong, and it was touch and go whether the Christian God or the Christian devil would be victorious.... Witchcraft was treason against God....
(Robbins 5)

By practising glamour and temptation, the witch is guilty not only of witchcraft, but also of heresy. “For a human authority to claim the power to work miracles was blasphemy—a challenge to God’s omnipotence” (Thomas, *Religion* 59). Not only does Joan claim divine powers “By inspiration of celestial grace” (5.4.40), she also corrupts, deluding with a “false belief, the which is the principle of the devil’s craft.”¹⁰ Historically, Joan was burned at the stake, not so much for witchcraft as for heresy:

Many contemporary theologians...would not have agreed that the essence of witchcraft lay in the damage it did to other persons. For them witchcraft was not malevolent magic as such, but a heretical belief—Devil-worship. The witch owed any power she might possess to the pact she had made with Satan; and *her primary offence was not injuring other people, but heresy.* (Thomas, “Anthropology” 48-49, italics mine)

The *Malleus Maleficarum* puts the argument this way:

We must especially observe that this heresy, witchcraft, not only differs from all other heresy in this, that not merely by a tacit compact, but by a compact which is explicitly defined and expressed it blasphemes the Creator and endeavours to the utmost to profane Him and to harm His creatures, for all other simple heresies have made no open pact with the devil...of all superstition it is essentially the vilest, the most evil and the worst, wherefore it derives its name from doing evil, and from blaspheming the true faith. (Summers 20)

Joan’s divine pretence mocks God. The self-declared saint is in fact being depicted by Shakespeare as the saint inverted: a heretic.

Joan had been described to the Dauphin as “A holy maid” (1.2.51), but from the moment she makes her entrance she is steeped in highly allusive imagery, central to which is the association of witchcraft, lust, and heresy. The meeting between Joan and the Dauphin is, as David Bevington conclusively demonstrates, “sexual inversion and blasphemous parody,” the scene “clearly lampoon[ing] the right relation of men and women in a dazzling array of epic and Biblical allusions” (52). The imagery Shakespeare applies to Joan in this scene gives her away: she is also a “Venus, fall’n” (1.2.144), mocking the pious morality of “Helen, the mother of great

¹⁰ From the Lollard’s “Twelve Conclusions,” quoted in Thomas, *Religion* 58.

Constantine,” and “Saint Philip’s [virginal] daughters” (143-44). (In his analysis, however, Bevington does not mention that Spenser’s witch Duessa, a “deformed wight,” disguises herself as none other than Venus).¹¹ That the relationship depicts a witch and one who is bewitched by her is made explicit when Charles—the stagecraft presents a tableau of a king servile before a peasant—begs her to “look gracious on thy *prostrate thrall*” (1.2.117, italics mine). The images evoked with “fall’n,” and the tableau of Charles abasing himself before Joan (“How may I reverently worship thee enough?” [1.2.145]) detail his lust-inspired idolatry. And “thrall” is the language of witchcraft.

Idolatry, too, is another category of witchcraft as a form of blasphemy:

the allusion to Venus is laden with significant diabolical meaning in a pun familiar to the Renaissance.... Joan is both the goddess of love and the morning (or evening) star, bright Lucifer, whose description in *Isaiah*, xiv.12 was taken to mean the fall of Satan after his disobedience: “How are thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” The Dauphin’s apostrophe of Venus is thus a complex and ironic conceit, playing on the identification of Venus with Lucifer-Satan, and envisaging another descent or incarnation blasphemously analogous to that of Astraea, the Holy Ghost, and the angel of the annunciation. *Joan therefore not only practises with devils but is a devil herself, and the Dauphin’s deification of her is devil-worship even if he is unconscious of the irony of his allusions.* (Bevington 53)

The image, then, is of the beautiful devil in disguise who successfully tempts her quarry. But Bevington’s description of Joan as a “devil” is not precise. More accurately, the Dauphin’s “worship” of Pucelle is only proxy devil-worship; the Devil’s go-between is the witch.

And there are other hints to add to Bevington’s list that all is not as it seems: Charles himself undermines the entire scene by fearing aloud in the last line that she might “prove false” (1.2.150). Alanson remains suspicious, his choice of phrase summoning up a quintessentially biblical satanic image: “These women are shrewd tempters with their tongues” (123).

Shrewd diabolical temptation also forms the core of Shakespeare’s thematic use of idolatry and blasphemy, evident in *1 Henry VI* Act One, Scene 6, when Joan is,

¹¹ *The Faerie Queene* I.ii.39, I.i.45, 48.

in effect, proposed for canonization. In a short thirty-one lines Charles dispenses with Christian formalities to effect this new incarnation for his paramour:

...all the priests and friars in my realm
Shall in procession sing her endless praise.
A statlier pyramis to her I'll rear
Than Rhodope's [of] Memphis ever was.
In memory of her when she is dead,
Her ashes, in an urn more precious
Than the rich-jewell'd coffer of Darius,
Transported shall be at high festivals
Before the kings and queens of France.
No longer on Saint Denis will we cry,
But Joan de Pucelle shall be France's saint. (1.6.19-29)

The inversive shift, whereby a witch comes to be worshipped as a saint, is complete. To Bevington, the image of Rhodope emphasizes only sexual inversion, as she was “a profligate woman who captivated a king and usurped his role as performer of masculine deeds of glory” (53). By erecting a pyramid as monument to a supposed Christian saint, and usurping the incumbent Saint Denis, profane and pagan associations are underlined, like those which compare Joan with Venus.¹²

But there are further associations not mentioned by Bevington. The witch is promised a “statue in some holy place” to “have thee reverenc'd like a blessed saint” (3.3.14-15), that is, as *though* she were a saint. When the Dauphin calls her “Divinest creature” (1.6.4), idolatry is again at work (the words iterate the image of the Virgin Mary Pucelle claims to emulate). It is also an illustration of lust. Idolatry and lust in witchcraft are theologically connected:

The two great sins were fornication and idolatry, and they were in some sense the same sin. Each consisted in the deliberate substitution of

¹² Berry agrees with Bevington, also reading the French king's monument speech (1.6.17-29) as inversion:

From both a religious and an aesthetic perspective, the whole exotic mélange of popery and paganism is comically abhorrent. What would one expect of a realm still enamored of the whore of Babylon, after all, but pagan superstition and sainthood for a pucelle? (20)

However, this statement contains an error: “sainthood for a pucelle”—a virgin—is not in the least strange, as virginity is often *de rigueur* in the canonization of women.

another image for that of Almighty God—fornication in the body when a mortal image was allowed and encouraged to set itself in place of the law, idolatry in the soul when a spiritual image was allowed and encouraged to set itself in the place of That which is behind the Law. (Williams 129-30)

Iconographically, Shakespeare presents a witch who is at once an object of pious veneration and of lust. And, in addition, Shakespeare prods us with specific reminders not to be taken in: Charles's talk of her "ashes" blatantly evokes Joan's sordid end at the stake, utterly undermining the sumptuous "rich-jewll'd" urn imagery. This same undermining effect is achieved later when Joan appears on the walls of Rouen with a torch, "the happy wedding torch" (3.2.26), which unites France and is "burning fatal" (28) to Talbot—and fatal in the end to her.

Throughout Joan's portrayal, pagan and Christian emblems are deliberately contrasted and fused, not only for hyperbolic effect, but also to enact a kind of Gestalt switch: We see what Shakespeare wants us to see on the surface—Saint Joan—but we also glimpse the underside, "Venus [or Lucifer], fall'n." With Joan superior, the worlds above and below—heaven and hell—are exchanged. Shakespeare had used this trick in staging Joan's entry on the walls of Orleans (1.6) where, accompanied by a "Flourish," the exultant witch strikes a pose: iconographically, she appears, as Fleischer notes, the "image of unholy triumph" (206). Fleischer is one critic who, in her survey of the iconography of all of Shakespeare's history plays, comes to the conclusion that Joan is consistently depicted as a witch, or at least, as a baleful influence. Her study, however, does not address witchcraft directly, and some important linkages are missed. The imagery associating Pucelle with diabolism is evident not only in scenes like this, but throughout her career. Shakespeare illustrates Pucelle's deception, for instance, when she appears wielding her torch—an ambiguous emblem—on the walls of Rouen (3.2). The torch often emblemizes the light of victory, of truth, and so on; but it is also at the same time an attribute of the witch-queen Hecate (and of her companions the Furies). And, to confirm this, Shakespeare's Talbot calls her "railing Hecate" (3.2.64). Additionally, the link between burning torch and witch immediately suggests Joan's ultimate fate at the stake, thereby further undermining any positive associations.

In Joan's trial scene, a series of oppositions also switch between base and elevated imagery. Immediately after her shepherd-father testifies to her being a bastard— "the first fruits of my bach'lorship" (13)—Pucelle claims to be "issued from the progeny of kings; / Virtuous and holy, chosen from above" (*IH6* 5.4.38-39). She contends that she is a virgin (despite the eyewitness confirmation of "the Dolphin and his trull...[seen escaping] arm in arm" [2.2.28-29]); in the next breath she asks to be spared because she is pregnant (5.4.62). She insists "that I never had to do with wicked spirits" (5.4.42), but the scene just previous graphically enacts for the audience's benefit the conjuration of fiends (5.3.22). When Pucelle then claims no less than four different lovers in succession, it seems impossible to deny any longer that she has been lying about the source of her power and virginal status:

War: It's a sign she hath been liberal and free.
York: And forsooth she is a virgin pure.
(*IH6* 5.4.82-83)

Shakespeare again shows us two sides of Joan.

Shakespeare unmasks Joan before her trial, which serves two purposes. First, she can now be tried because she has lost her powers—one "proof" that witchhunters would use to damn someone as a witch was that of course the witch could perform no marvels because the Devil always abandoned them as soon as they were caught. Second, the trial scene doubles as a summary of Joan's characterization as a series of oppositions or negations: she is a bastard, not legitimate; she is a peasant, not noble; she has chosen her inspiration from below, and has not been "chosen from above" (5.4. 39); she is debauched, not virginal; she is diabolical, not saintly. The same pattern of oppositions—specious claims to legitimacy and nobility (Jack Cade's example being foremost), lust-inspired collaborations that undermine the State (Suffolk and Margaret), and further claims to pious righteousness disguising a diabolical nature (Richard III being the supreme example)—form shaping parts of the emerging pattern of antithesis in the *Henry VI* plays.

1.4 Witchcraft, Inversion, and the Figuration of the Feminine

Some critics, as is evident, have trouble coming to terms with Joan's role because it seems, on the surface, to be ambiguous. How does one deal with her initial appearance as a "A holy maid" (1.2.51) who later resorts to witchcraft (or only seems to)?

However, it is clear that it is not her portrait as a witch that is ambiguous; instead, any ambiguities that surround her arise with her saintly imagery. For all the descriptions of Joan as a saint and a virgin, Shakespeare counterbalances these with deliberate use of terms specific to witchcraft, some subtle, like "thrall" (1.2.117), and others more overt: "damned sorceress" (3.2.38), "Hecate" (3.2.64), "enchantress" (5.3.42). Shakespeare's carefully constructed iconography of Joan intentionally presents her at once as an object of pious veneration and lust: when these contradictory elements intermesh, it is the claim to divine inspiration—not her characterization as a witch—that comes into question.

But there are other clues in Joan's iconography that, although they may seem ambiguous on the surface, point to her diabolism. One of these is her figuration as "Amazon" (1.2.104); ambiguities surrounding this imagery also undermine any characterization of her as a heroic figure. Joan's Amazon figuration is, in part, one that Shakespeare, as Bullough notes, took from the chronicles and embellished: "Like Spencer's Amazon Britomart she overcomes Charles in a single combat not found in the chronicles" (26). As Montrose has pointed out, "Descriptions of the Amazons are ubiquitous in Elizabethan texts" ("Fantasies" 36), and gyneocracy—associated with witchcraft—provided a definition of inversion:

This [Elizabethan] cultural fantasy [of gyneocracy] assimilates Amazonian myth, witchcraft, and cannibalism into an anti-culture which precisely inverts European norms of political authority, sexual license, marriage practices, and inheritance rules. The attitude expressed in such Renaissance texts is a mixture of fascination and horror. ("Fantasies" 36)

Shakespeare provides in Pucelle the dramatic experience of this "mixture of fascination and horror"—she is at once glamorously compelling and diabolical. The

effect is what Belesy describes as one of the female “figures...seen as simulataneously dazzling and dangerous” (185).

Joan’s final confirmation as a witch is prefigured in her iconography. Evidence is to this effect is provided in Fleischer:

The overriding theme of the *Henry VI* trilogy—the numerous unnatural horrors of civil war—is embodied in a repeated emblem of Bellon [Bellona], pitiless, honorless, female war god: Joan in *I Henry VI*, Margaret in *II* and *III Henry VI*. Her man’s costume alone is unnatural, a Biblical emblem of her disobedience and of male permissiveness; *her actions in leading troops, overpowering the Dauphin and other men, and actually slaughtering her foes, are so unwomanly they evidence witchcraft.*

If the prevalent convention of secular iconography and Renaissance epic, representing militant or Roman virtues like Fortitude and Justice as armed women, is recognized at all in the histories, it is by *simple inversion. Not chastity but libertinism is implied by this figure, and Justice is too far removed to be in question....* In history plays, armed women are seen in Christian and tragic terms, making mockery of war as a judicial process. (Fleischer 219-20, italics mine)

But Fleischer’s commentary can be further qualified. Joan as an armed woman makes “mockery of war as a judicial process” by defeating both Charles and Talbot in single combat—hell, not heaven, prevailing—which is, it must be stressed, a traditional way of determining guilt or innocence that Shakespeare also uses in *Richard II* (1.1). It is by “simple inversion” (Fleischer 220) that Joan becomes a travesty of Justice.¹³ But further, Joan’s “keen-edg’d sword” (1.2.98) is double-edged: The image of the armed Amazon is at once unnatural (a woman defeating men) and conventional, as it

¹³ Shakespeare’s imagery surrounding Justice is emblematically consistent with a depiction in Green (who does not, however, make a connection with Joan). Chaos is a godless primal state, the result of justice obscured:

Into *ancient chaos* at last *all things would be confounded*
As when God as yet unknown was the soul of the globe.
Such is *the confusion of all mundane affairs,*
At what time soever *Justice the queen lies concealed.*

(Green’s trans. of Anulus’s emblem of chaos ‘Sine iustitia, confvsio’ in *Picta Poesis* [1555] 449, italics mine).

It is precisely to this emblematic forsaken world of “confusion” (the world upside down) that Shakespeare alludes.

operates also as an icon emblematic of justice. However, the Amazon is also sexually ambiguous: Medieval theologians and iconographers made Amazons “figures for lust” (Robertson 264), and “the inversion achieved by these ferocious ladies may be thought of as a triumph of the flesh.... They are, in effect, figures for rampant sensuality or effeminacy” (ibid. 265).

Joan’s figuration as Amazon/Justice is thoroughly undermined by these associations with lust and inversion—the same associations that are contiguous with witchcraft. Joan’s claims that “God’s Mother” (1.2.78) had appointed her a divine agent, and Charles calling her “Astraea’s daughter” (1.6.4), may seem to prove that, as Bevington notes, the “embodiment of justice in a mythic golden age, [is] now descended to earth once more in a type of incarnation” (52). However, although “The drawn sword may...be the implement of Justice,” it is also emblematic of treason and tyranny, an apparition of “the dread form of War, manifestation of Chaos” (Fleischer-187). Shakespeare’s deliberate equivocation of Joan’s portrayal in such scenes demonstrates something of the dramatic employment of emblematic elements: cues to indicate that Pucelle may not be what she claims. That she is described as an eagle of war and not as the dove of peace and divine inspiration is in line with the inverted icon of Justice as tyranny: “Was Mahomet inspired with a dove? / Thou with an eagle art inspired then” (*IH6* 1.2.140-41). Indeed, the first word of this scene (1.2.) is “Mars”—war—the martial icon tying in with “Amazon” and “eagle.” The reference to “Mahomet” is again a (Christian) invocation of paganism, a name that commonly in Shakespeare’s England was “recalled as a magician and a religious charlatan” (Riggs 101). When Joan insists that she comes “like that *proud insulting ship* / Which Caesar and his *fortune* bare at once” (138-39, italics mine), she means to allude to the notion that her presence is a specific against misfortune, as Caesar’s was to his crew. However, pride, cardinal among deadly sins, is here yoked with “fortune,” an ominous coupling. “To be governed by a woman was to be subject to Fortune, to mere whim and caprice” (Norbrook 103). Fortune is “a malicious spirit” (B. Walker 321). When applied to Joan, these caveats to the paying audience on the nature of Fortune are crucial: When she offers to carry the collective French fortunes into what

should be safe waters, her figuration is that of Pride at the prow, one which capsizes the image.¹⁴ Additionally, the “proud insulting ship” has elements of the medieval conceit of the Ship of Fools,¹⁵ reinforcing the imagery of inversion, the state navigated—or rather, hijacked—by misrule (Pucelle as the maidenhead of pride’s ship). The image of a woman at the prow prefigures “Captain Margaret” (3H6 2.6.75), who also asks that her followers trust her at the wheel of England’s ship (3H6 5.4.3-36).¹⁶ (Margaret, perhaps not ingenuously, also makes a point of wishing she had taken her near-shipwreck on her journey to England as an omen of her fate [2H6 3.2.88-113]). Other metaphoric references to shipwreck in the tetralogy (R3 4.4.233-35; 3H6 5.4.27) underline that the State has been commandeered by vice, by subversive forces governed by pride—the elemental satanic transgression.

Shakespeare’s Joan practises what Woodbridge terms “sexual-chiasma” (184), the inversion of male and female cultural attributes. Images of female dominance—no matter if they are heroically presented or not—are suspect in Shakespeare’s culture:

[Witchcraft’s] wider implications of attacks on the family, and of the fact that they were promoted largely by women, could hardly have been missed in a culture which accepted the patriarchal household as both

¹⁴ An emblem in Whitney, moralizing that even a well-outfitted ship is subject to shipwreck, ends with a warning to “[Those] on Fortunes wheele that clime / To beare in minde they haue but a time” (11).

¹⁵ It is interesting that Shakespeare should allude to this conceit, as it is linked with diabolism:

In 1484 Sebastien Brandt published his *Ship of Fools*, which had great influence. Humans are fools sailing on a ship captained by a fool. The fools represent the follies, hence the vices, and hence ultimately the demons.... As the personalities of the demons became more developed and their motivations more psychologically understandable, they became humanized; at the same time exploration of human emotions and motivations led to an internalization of demons in the human mind, and humanity became demonized. The two trends converged, the demons becoming more human and humans more evil. This convergence laid the basis for the replacement of the medieval Devil with Shakespeare’s human villain, in whom evil is restricted to the individual human personality” (Russell 261).

¹⁶ A survey of Shakespeare’s use of ships as emblems of the State is provided in Green (434-40).

the actual source and analogical representation of good government. The reversing of the human bodily hierarchies or of priorities in natural things had effects which could literally be felt throughout a world thought to be an organic unity of sentient. (Clark, "Inversion" 125)

When Joan wears armour (1.5.3), she not only reverses the bodily hierarchy¹⁷ but also demonstrates another instance of glamour. This witch, in fact, performs a double cross-dressing: She takes the trouble to disguise herself before the French court as a siren— "I was black and swart before" (*JH6* 1.2.84)—but then confounds this image and dresses like a man. She reverses masculine order of priority by insisting on being given military command, promising to defeat Talbot "If Dolphin and the rest will be but rul'd" (3.3.8). The inversion of feminine and masculine parallels political rebellion, whereby kings are deposed by social inferiors (levelling also implicit Shakespeare's spectacle of a monarch, the Dauphin, deferring to a peasant, Joan). The tension between illusion, corruption, physical body, and the body politic, looks forward to Richard III, who also upsets the "bodily hierarchy" in being a deformed king—an iconic oxymoron.

The Amazon surfaces in another characterization in *I Henry VI*. Shakespeare's invention of the Countess of Auvergne scene serves to demonstrate the nature of Talbot's power, but that it is set as an exercise contrasting subversive diablerie with an icon of chivalric excellence underlines Shakespeare's emphasis on contrasting sacred and profane elements, as he did with Joan. Witchcraft and sexual inversion are prominent:

...the Countess of Auvergne serves as one of a trio of temptresses [including Joan and Margaret], all of whom are French, associated with witchcraft, and potential emasculators of their victims; all figure prominently in episodes that perform a set of variations on the theme of love versus war. (Berry 2)

The Countess appears (2.2) without historical precedent, in what one critic describes as "a fictional and highly romantic episode" (Saccio 107). However, thematically it

¹⁷ In Holinshed, she is guilty by "shamefullie rejecting hir sex abominable in acts and apparell, to have counterfeit mankind" (Bullough 76).

reiterates that Talbot, in fact, conjures his own glamorous—magical—effects. Once Talbot is inside her walls, the Countess reveals to him, after much verbal abuse, that

Long time thy shadow hath been thrall to me,
For in my gallery thy picture hangs;
But now the substance shall endure the like,
And I will chain these legs and arms of thine.... (2.3.36-39)

Talbot responds with apparent mockery: “No, no, I am but shadow of myself” (50). Those “arms and legs” of his flesh, she discovers, are synecdoche for a whole of “what you see is but the smallest part” (52). Talbot represents the last instance of English virtue in the face of the disintegration to come, making “contrarities agree” (59). Soldiers “are his substance, sinews, arms, and strength”; he can be both fully himself and “aught but Talbot’s shadow” (46). Talbot’s magical effects lie in his epic stature, his “whole frame” (54) larger than his parts. Lucy in his eulogy draws on the same image: “Were but his picture left amongst you here, / It would amaze the proudest of you all” (4.6.83-84, the word “amaze” evoking glamour).

Shakespeare’s Talbot is a heroic ideal, a “Hercules,/ A second Hector” (2.3.19-20), emblem of the chivalric virtue that abandons England with his death.¹⁸ To Bevington, the scene with the Countess is “a narrative digression for the French wars but...thematically central” (55) as a demonstration of female sexual dominance. A promise of “peaceful comic sport” (2.2.45), with its sexual overtones, is, antithetically, a trap. It is a modulation of the single-combat scene between Joan and the Dauphin: “The Countess bears important similarities to Joan of Arc. She is a temptress, and an Amazon [Tomyris].... She wishes to be, like Joan of Arc or Deborah, the feminine saviour of her country,” a Circean “temptress who hopes to add Talbot to her menagerie” (Bevington55). But although she uses the language of the witch— “thrall” (2.3.36)—her words, unlike Joan’s, have no reifying power. One critic notes that,

When Talbot confronts a more natural woman [than Joan] —for the Countess of Auvergne, in spite of her weakly-conceived plot, is essentially “virtuous” and “modest”...his masculinity dominates, and

¹⁸ His speeches are “distinctly elegiac in tone,” meant “to solemnize the fall of the great English peers, of whom he is the last representative” (Riggs 107).

she hastens to apologize meekly and to fulfil her womanly duty of bringing forth "wine and cates." (Silber 89)

This, then, an image of harmony. Talbot "nobly exemplified the natural order of the right relation between Mars and Venus" (Bevington 56). Sexual puns and belittlement— "writhled shrimp" (23)—also parallel bouts with Joan, but the Countess cannot truly outrage Talbot because she has no real power: "What you have done hath not offended me" (76). They end by feasting, an act of consonance, proof of Talbot's ability to "make contrarities agree" (59). Harmony is, after all, the progeny of Mars and Venus.

One critic thinks that the episode "define[s] in political and military terms the value of chastity (in the Elizabethan sense, of course, of rational control of sexual passion)" (Berry 6). The association of lust and witchcraft is reiterated in this scene but, moreover, the image is a reflection of the now lost chivalric world; the players are already ghosts of the past as the inevitable future of civil war already looks on, and Margaret, a character Shakespeare has made infamous for her "tiger's heart" (*3H6* 1.4.137), will shortly take up the English sceptre. This 'right' relation is set as a tableau, contrasting with Joan's aggressive, inversive dealings with men.

The motif of the false image—of mistaking facsimile for substance—parallels Joan's use of glamorous delusion. The Countess "did *mistake* / The *outward composition* of his body" (2.3.74-75) much as the Dauphin mistakes Joan. The Countess sees at first only "a child, a silly dwarf," a "weak and writhled shrimp" (2.3.22-23). Talbot's outward appearance also belies: where Joan appears beautiful, he seems dwarfish. But where Talbot transcends his parts to emerge as something greater, Joan is more insubstantial than her outer aspect signifies. Talbot's misleading image masks his substance, but Joan's false aspect masks defect—glamorizes diablerie—and an ephemeral nature.

Talbot is called by the French general a "bloody scourge" (4.2.16), his body made up by his army, but Joan claims to be a "scourge" (1.2.129) who has her legions too—the source of her power—but of demons. The *OED* notes that one definition of "scourge" is as "A cause of (usually widespread) calamity. Applied, e.g. to a cruel tyrant, a warrior, a war, a disease that destroys many lives." Joan's witchcraft

appears in Shakespeare as a calamity visited on the English, carried out by a creature he takes care to figure as a warrior Amazon; her acts are “a plaguing mischeif” (5.3.38), a disease. Of course, another definition of “scourge” is “in figurative context; chiefly, a thing or person that is an instrument of divine chastisement,” and “one who ‘lashes’ vice or folly” (*OED*). As it is Joan who “fills the world with vicious qualities” (5.4.35), her combat with Talbot is figuratively that of the tyrant waging war against a divinely-inspired arm of God. The use of “scourge” to describe both Joan and Talbot is yet another instance of Shakespeare’s deliberate contrasting of these characters in terms of good and evil, divine magic and satanic diabolism.

Against Talbot, the Countess’s evocation of the Amazon proves just as ephemeral as Joan’s attempt at cloaking herself in images of virtue. The Amazon figuration is also, in a sense, an image of knighthood inverted. Pucelle is opposite in every way to the traditions of chivalric ideal: Tillyard calls her “Talbot’s evil genius” (141). And perhaps because she is so recognizably an inversion of himself, Talbot cannot be fooled by her: Pucelle’s power of glamour is instantly negated in his presence. Talbot can see through her: “thou art a witch” (*IH6* 1.5.6). But she can and does defeat him, first in combat by supernatural means, and later in battle. She does not kill him when she first has the chance— “Thy hour is not yet come” (1.5.13)—because at this static point in the play they appear to be opposite but equal powers, for the moment, tenuously balanced as contraries. The single-combat scene points to the pattern of counterbalances, an instance of Shakespeare’s structural use of antithesis:

Joan’s so-called patriotism...is a grotesque inversion of Talbot’s.... Talbot’s love for his son is counterbalanced by Joan’s repudiation of her father; his loyalty to his peers, Salisbury and Bedford, by her last-ditch paternity suit against Charles, Alençon and Reignier; his reverence to the king by her domination of Charles; his piety by her pact with the devil. (Berry10)

Talbot’s defeat at the hands of “A woman clad in armor” (1.5.3) parallels Joan’s rout of the Dauphin (1.2). Where the Dauphin took her superiority as proof of divine aid, Talbot sees the inverse: “*Heavens*, can you suffer *hell* so to prevail?” (1.5.9, italics mine). Because Joan is portrayed as a travesty of Justice, justice is necessarily

forfeit. Shocked by defeat, Talbot's disorientation reflects the reeling world of the play: "My thoughts are whirled like a potter's wheel, / I know not where I am, nor what I do" (19-20).

It is, by now, evident that Pucelle's pose as the virtuous Amazon enables her to prey on social expectations of the feminine. Shakespeare presents one such instance when Joan exploits maternal language to entice Burgundy to defect. She instructs him to look on France

*As looks the mother on her lowly babe
When death doth close his tender-dying eyes
.....
Behold the wounds, the most unnatural wounds,
Which thou thyself hast given her woeful breast.
(3.3.47-51, italics mine)*

In likening France to a sick child (and by implication, herself to its nurse), Shakespeare postures Pucelle as a maternal icon, here imaging the earth as wounded mother. It is an extremely effective device: the synergy created by witchcraft's glamour combined with rhetoric is compelling—and Burgundy is "bewitch'd" (3.3.58). Belsey makes a comment on this scene, without further qualification: "Joan of Arc, La Pucelle of *I King Henry VI* puts heart in her enemy by her rhetoric" (183). However, the strength of Pucelle's argument is attributable not to mere eloquence; her words are invested with the incantatory powers of what she later admits to be "charming spells" (*IH6* 5.3.2).

Jackson, however, justifies Joan's behaviour here as being, in fact, maternal: "defense of her children [is] a recognized motivation of the virtuous woman fighter" (53). But Joan is not a mother, and witches were infamous as destroyers of children. Further, the scene is clearly prefaced by Shakespeare as a diabolical ruse: Charles instructs her to "*enchant* him with thy words" (3.3.40, italics mine); Joan frankly states that she intends to use "fair persuasions, mix'd with sugar'd words" (3.3.18). Treacherous by nature, Joan merely provides the glamorous illusion of being the "virtuous woman fighter," an inversion paralleling her appearance as the pseudo-Astraea. Burgundy's response to Joan is, however, an example of how Shakespeare uses ambiguity to sustain the tensions surrounding Joan's figuration as saint/witch.

Burgundy says “*Either she has bewitched me with her words,/ Or nature makes me relent*” (3.3.58-59). In other words, Shakespeare may be deliberately creating a tension for dramatic purposes between what is attributable to the effects of an eloquent appeal and what is the effect of a more subtle form of persuasion: is she using witchcraft? or is it Burgundy’s “nature” or fondness for his maternal homeland that causes him to switch allegiances? And, in fact, Shakespeare had begun the play with a similar question regarding the nature of Henry V’s death:

What? shall we curse the planets of mishap
That plotted thus our glory’s overthrow?
Or shall we think the subtle-witted French
Conjurers and sorcerers, that, afraid of him
By magic verses have contriv’d his end?
(1.1.23-27)

Is the universe unfolding as it should, according to cosmic plan, the planetary influences being a part of nature’s order? Or is witchcraft to blame? With this example, it is apparent that Shakespeare meant to show from the outset that “the subtle-witted French”—exemplified by their leader, Pucelle—would be playing with a diabolical set of rules. From the beginning of *1 Henry VI*, then, Shakespeare toys with the audience’s expectations—is the violent action the result of a naturalistic, albeit, machiavellian world? Or is there something deeply sinister at the root of the ills to come? *Is Joan a saint—or a witch?*

As part of Pucelle’s Amazonian figuration, her outspokenness and disparagement of her male rivals is often cited by critics as evidence of her candour. When Joan exults over Talbot’s corpse, she cuts short Lucy’s obsequy and reduces Talbot to so much rotten flesh:

Here’s a silly stately style indeed!
The Turk, that two and fifty kingdoms hath
Writes not so tedious a style as this.
Him that thou magnifi’st with all these titles
Stinking and fly-blown lies here at our feet.
(4.7.72-76)

Judith Cook accounts for her style of speech as “the peasant’s dislike of fancy talk and high flown titles” (69), wielding “a sharp tongue and a simple, direct attitude” (68).

But there is nothing “simple” or “direct” about Joan—she is physically in disguise, and her pose is feigned. Deceit and “sugar’d words” are her stock in trade. Evidently, although Joan’s undercutting of heroic stature is often seen as a woman’s appropriate response to the constraints of patriarchy, it is more directly a symptom of her role: she is Shakespeare’s “minister of hell” (5.4.93). It is her vocation to subvert and destroy. Joan’s witchcraft and her proud Amazonian figuration create a dramatically valuable tension. She appears to be heroic but *sub rosa* carries out diabolical designs. But because she appears glamorously admirable,¹⁹ critics (exemplified by Jackson) cannot accept that Joan is corrupt because they reconcile witchcraft to eloquence as a feature of the “unruly woman” syndrome. Consequently, when Joan is charged with witchcraft, it is construed to be a misogynist attack made on Joan of Arc by Shakespeare. “Admirers of Joan of Arc have found it hard to believe that Shakespeare would write an attack on her which goes far beyond anything found in Hall or Holinshed” (Bullough 41). However, Joan’s fluency of speech, punctuated with astute observation, is evidence, not of a *woman’s* last resort in the face of patriarchy’s censure, but of the *witch’s* consummate ability to twist and invert words, images, and the very world itself. When she defends herself with, “Because you want the grace that others have, / You judge it straight a thing impossible / To compass wonders but by the help of devils” (5.4.46-48), she is lying about “grace” (she is no saint). But she does scrape together enough grains of truth in this observation on the nature of credulity to raise a few doubts and, it seems, not only the Dauphin falls for her ruses.²⁰ Shakespeare uses Joan’s fluency to demonstrate the power of

¹⁹ Bullough thought that even though Shakespeare’s “attack” on Joan exceeds historical precedent, her portrayal demonstrates a “patriotic” bent and “courage and resource so long as her demons support her” (41).

²⁰ Even a recent production of *I Henry VI* could not bring itself to present Joan’s role as the text dictates. In “The Wars of the Roses: King Henry VI, House of Lancaster” (The English Shakespeare Company, directed by Michael Bogdanov, 1990, Portman Classics), all references to Joan’s witchcraft were expunged. The instances are too many to enumerate, but a few examples suffice: all speeches in her first scene (1.2) that lend her characterization its ambiguity—such as “These women are shrewd tempters with their tongues—were deleted; Talbot does not call her “railing Hecate” or say “Thou art a witch” in his first meeting with her; Burgundy is convinced to defect to the French without announcing that he is unsure whether or not he has been

demonically-inspired words, words that persuade, tempt, delude, and corrupt. She is depicted as being powerful because she is a witch. It is a matter of course that the witch is eloquent: Shakespeare has necessarily created an intelligent, well-spoken Joan—how better to persuade rivals, victims, and spectators of the power of witchcraft?

At the end of her career, Joan begs the fiends “to take my soul—my body, soul, and all” (5.3.22). Such debasement of body and soul can be seen, of course, as being typical of Shakespeare’s villains: “The villains are anti-immortalists of course because their business is to reduce the spiritual to the corporeal” (Calderwood 197). When Joan declares herself pregnant (5.4.62), her willingness to admit to intercourse debases Saint Joan not only to the material plane but also to the sexual body. Bevington regards the sexual imagery as a “thematic device” to show “that sexual war is replacing military war” (53). However, this is inconsistent both with the plays forming the tetralogy (military friction escalates) and with the motif of witchcraft. He attributes “Joan’s method of seduction” to an “antifeminist...hypocritical combination of modesty and availability” (53), and suggests that she becomes so corrupt that she “Finally...turns to sexual practises with spirits as well as men” (54). While

“bewitch’d.” The most extraordinary disruption of text comes, however, when what should have been Joan’s scene with the conjuration of fiends was completely rewritten as follows:

Help gracious lady, appear to me,
Give sign and help me in my enterprise.
Help me this once, that France might get the field.
Oh, hold me not in silence overlong;
I’ll lop a member off and give it you
If you condescend to help me now.
Oh, she forsakes me ...
My holy supplications are too weak

And so on.

I can well understand that, as the icon of Joan of Arc is a sacred one for many, it may be difficult to make that necessary Gestalt switch to see her as a witch. However, not only is it highly anachronistic to do so; such changes profoundly violate the potential for a just playing of the text.

Shakespeare indeed plays her as a hypocrite, her penchant for sexual conquest is consistent with the figuration of a witch, seducing victims not for the pleasure of sexual play but for the more primal sport of diabolical corruption. In addition, “sexual practise with spirits” is part of the diabolical bargain the witch makes. When Joan offers body and soul to fiends it is not motivated by sexual depravity—it is the price of power that is being bargained for, and the nature of her depravity as a witch is exclusively concerned with power, not sex. And in the eyes of demonologists, the fact that the spirits conjured abandon her is in keeping with diabolical goals:

It is not, the *Malleus* says, for pleasure that the restless powers turn themselves into incubi or succubi; what have spirits to do with the pleasures of flesh and blood? nor do they seem to become flesh and blood for such a cause, but for malice only, and for the excitement of mortal luxury to satisfy diabolical malice. (Williams 130)

Clearly, it is malice, *maleficia*,²¹ that is Joan’s primary mandate. But when Joan is about to become a captive, she no longer interests the diabolical forces she serves: They leave her when she offers them her material self because she can no longer be used as an instrument of malice. The conjuring and trial scenes come as confirmation of Pucelle’s witchcraft—not as the end result of a corrupt sexual progression—and there is irony in that she is unmasked as a witch at precisely the same moment when she loses all her supernatural powers.

It may seem that, on one level, Joan exemplifies the “unruly woman,” as “English attempts to blacken the reputation of Joan of Arc concentrated on the charge of sexual aggressiveness” (Jardine 124). But although carnal references might serve “an organic function,” the “network of sexual and distasteful images...used to coarsen Joan la Pucelle so that we are prepared for her degrading trial scene” (Kay 3), Joan is no ordinary villain. She may be an “outsider” (Fiedler) or an “outlaw” (French), but she is alien first and foremost because she is a witch, *not* simply because she is female. Sexual indictments, “giglot wench” (4.7.41) or wanton, confirm her diabolical nature: lust is a symptom and a tool of witchcraft. Shakespeare

²¹ Acts of *maleficia* committed by witches were defined as “Misfortunes, injuries, and calamities suffered by persons, animals, or property, for which no immediate explanation could be found” (Robbins, 330).

shows her transgressing and challenging social codes by leading armies, but he has her do so because she is a “sorceress” (5.4.1) bent on disorderly conduct, not because she is a commonplace virago who amuses herself by baiting men. (And she is certainly not interested in promoting women.) Further, her fluent dissection of the behaviour of those around her— “turn and turn again” (3.3.85)—and her licentiousness are evidence, not of the playwright’s impulse to slander the outspoken and independent woman, but of Joan’s characteristic demonism. Illusion, lust, and heresy are forms of diabolical inversion: Pucelle is Bellona, not Justice; Circe, not Saint; profane, not divine.

Chapter 2: Carnival and Carnage

2.1 The World Turned Upside Down: Carnival, Witchcraft, and Rebellion

Shakespeare's Joan is exploitative. She manipulates the other characters and, in turn, the audience. But what has Joan to do with subsequent events that make up the narrative for the Wars of the Roses? In *1 Henry VI*, Shakespeare sets the events to come in the factionalization between rebellious men. So why include so prominently the figure of Joan of Arc? Although Joan seems no more than a compelling digression in the narrative, her witchcraft has, in fact, a specific context that is very much part of the definition of rebellion.

The witch's bag of tricks includes not only illusion, temptation, and blasphemy. Rebellion—political inversion—is also part of the definition. Stuart Clark's analysis of the history and sociology of Renaissance witchcraft sees diablerie and rebellion as faces of the same coin:

the Devil's regimen was a compendium of the paradoxes of misrule: a hierarchy governed from the lowest point of excellence, a society in which dishonour was the badge of status and a *speculum* imitable only by the politically vicious. This was worse than simple anarchy. "...*For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft*" (I Samuel xv. 23), could be used to demonstrate the identity in substance as well as in seriousness of the two sins.¹ Hence the sensitivity of French and English writers to the double meaning involved in the word "conjunction"... Even the many commonplaces to the effect that civil rebellions could only result from bewitching or sorcery or from "the mixing of heaven and hell" take on an added meaning. (Clark, "Inversion" 118-19)

¹ In the 1560 edition of the Geneva Bible, the passage in I Samuel xv. 23 reads: "For rebellion is as the sinne of witchcraft, and transgression is wickedness and idolatrie" (1276). The margin note reads: "God hateth nothing more than the disobedience of his commandment" (ibid.). The interesting note stuck here connects witchcraft with idolatry.

Throughout this thesis, many of the references will be to the Geneva Bible, as "The Geneva Bible of 1560...was the most popular Bible of Elizabethan England and remained so for decades after the publication of the King James Version" (Hoff 127).

Witchcraft and rebellion, then, are virtually synonymous. English demonologists used “the language of politics to convey the essential rebelliousness of his agents the witches” (Clark, “Inversion” 119). The witch not only imitates but is perceived to be an ally of the original Great Rebel, Satan. Perhaps in part, then, Shakespeare presents the wars against the French and the ensuing English civil war as episodes in an ongoing, more ancient battle—the primal, biblical war pitting God against Satan.

A witch commits political treason (an act of misrule) because he or she attempts to gain power by inverting norms of political and social order. Shakespeare habitually associates witchcraft with rebellion:

In the history plays and the tragedies, from the witchcraft of Joan of Arc in *Henry VI, Part One*, and the sorcery of Owen Glendower in *Henry IV* through the player-villain’s poison produced by “natural magic” in *Hamlet* (III.ii.259) and the evil witches of *Macbeth*, *Shakespeare typically associates magic and sorcery with subversion of proper order and with deception.* (Medane 192, italics mine)²

Critics like Medane note in passing that there seems to be a connection in Shakespeare between diablerie, subversion, and glamour, but the relationship between these elements and rebellion have not been clearly spelled out. Joan is a rebel *because* she is a witch, proclaiming herself as such with, “Assign’d am I to be the English scourge” (1.2.129), the use of the word “scourge” here also assigned the ambiguity in Joan’s figuration that typically accompanies all her appearances: Is she “Astraea’s daughter” (1.6.4) or a tyrant? Is she a patriotic rhetorician, or does she

² To Medane’s citation of *Hamlet* in this context, I add another instance from the play. When Hamlet denounces his mother for marrying Claudius, demonism, lust, blinding glamour and rebellion are once again linked:

...What *devil* was’t
That thus cozen’d you at *hoodman-blind*?
.....

...O shame, where is thy blush?
Rebellious hell,
If thou canst *mutine* in a matron’s bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax
And melt in her own *fire*.... (*Hamlet* 3.4.76-77, 81-85)

covertly bewitch with “spelling charms” (5.3.31)? The relationship between witchcraft and rebellion is made clear by the context. Joan as “scourge” is “a cruel tyrant, a warrior, a war” (OED), and it is this meaning of the word that ascribes the role of rebel to her: warfare waged by tyranny is typically an act of rebellion. Because Henry V had annexed France to his crown, Joan’s witchcraft spearheads a war that politically can be defined as a revolt. This revolt is not only against the English crown, but also against the sacrosanct icon of the late king himself. Joan commits treason by leading “false revolting Normans” (2H6 4.1.87); Burgundy addresses her faction as “Traitors” (1H6 2.1.19); Talbot vows to yoke their “rebellious necks” (1H6 2.3.64).³ Further, Joan’s attack on the English results, not in union in the face of a common enemy, but in factionalization. Shakespeare represents the genesis of the Wars of the Roses in the stubborn refusals of York and Somerset to aid Talbot in his fight with Pucelle’s forces, resulting in the loss of French territories (4.3.47-53; 4.4.13-46). Although Williamson thinks that the witchcraft in the play “*masks* the division and betrayals that lay behind the military defeats” (Williamson 46, italics mine), it should be evident that the witch does not “mask” division in Shakespeare’s structure but rather is one of its more powerful instigators. Further, Shakespeare also shows the causes of England’s military defeat to be clearly marked, taking his cue from at least one source in blaming “The fraud of England, not the force of France” (1H6 4.4.36) for Talbot’s death. The early disaster in France “is blamed entirely upon the discord among the English leaders” (Kelly248), for which Holinshed censured his countrymen:

Everie daie was looking for aid, but none came. And whie? Even because the *divelish division* that reigned in England, so incombered the heads of the noble men there, that the honor of the realm was cleerlie forgotten. (Qtd. in Brockbank 96, italics mine)

Diablerie, therefore, is evident not only on the French side: Holinshed specifies the acts of *English* rebels as “divelish division.” The heinousness of rebellion in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries cannot be overstated: A contemporary text states

³ The frequency of the words “treason,” “treachery,” and “treacherous” throughout the tetralogy testify to the centrality of the crime: in *1 Henry VI* these occur seventeen times (see, for example, 2.4.91, 92, 97; 3.2.36, 49, 4.1.61, 5.3.189).

that “A rebel is worse than the worst prince, and rebellion worse than the worst government of the worst prince.”⁴

Of course, political chaos was not the only result of rebellion. In a culture where the social metaphysic was crucial to the political fabric, revolt represented a fundamental rupture of social order:

In the Renaissance...the individual was seen as constituted by and in relation to—even the effect of—a preexisting order. To know oneself was to know that order.... the Renaissance view of identity as constituted (metaphysically) was also and quite explicitly a powerful metaphysic of social integration. (Dollimore, “Subjectivity” 54)

Since “social order is part of the divine order of the universe” (Siegel 48), the double transgressions of witchcraft and rebellion violate the social metaphysic. Not only may governments be brought down, but the communal body and the universe it inhabits are threatened with inversion:

the French social historian Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie has observed that in the mountains of southern France between 1580 and 1600...witch-hunts and popular revolts occurred together...Male peasant rebellion and female peasant witchcraft thus sought a similar objective[:]. . .to *turn the world upside down*. (Easley 37)

In Renaissance historiography, then, notions of turning the world upside down are common to witchcraft, rebellion, and carnival. Implicit are inversion and misrule:

sixteenth and seventeenth century witchcraft beliefs were a coherent, meaningful, and indeed necessary component of a larger intellectual system based upon principles of hierarchy, opposition, and inversion. *This system linked together with demonism, political sedition and rebellion, and female misrule as inversions of the divinely sanctioned order in the cosmos, state, and family.* (Montrose, “Fantasies” 58 n. 16, italics mine)⁵

Demonism, sedition, rebellion, female misrule: the list could double as a definition of Shakespeare’s portrayal of Joan, and describes much of the action of the first tetralogy.

⁴ Anonymous, *An Homily Against Disobedience and Willful Rebellion*, quoted in Ribner 313; Siegel 57.

⁵ Montrose provides this paragraph as a summary of Clark’s thesis in “Inversion.”

Misrule is, of course, associated with medieval and Renaissance carnival life. Witchcraft and the carnival conventions of misrule share common elements, but a distinction must be drawn between them. Generally, misrule participates in “the carnival idiom,” which, according to Bakhtin has a

characteristic logic, the peculiar logic of the ‘inside out’ (*à l’envers*), of the ‘turnabout,’ of a continual shifting from top to bottom, from front to rear, of numerous parodies and travesties, humiliations, profanations, comic crownings and uncrownings. A second life, a second world of folk culture is thus constructed; it is to a certain extent a parody of the extracarnival life, a ‘world inside out.’ (11)

By extension, witchcraft, along with the sexual and political inversions it accounts for, also shares this idiom:

Renaissance descriptions of the nature of Satan, the character of hell and, above all, the ritual activities of witches shared a *vocabulary of misrule*, that they were in effect part of a language conventionally employed to establish and condemn the properties of a disorderly world. (Clark, “Inversion” 100, italics mine)

However, although carnival and witchcraft both turn the world upside down (“both festive behaviour and learned demonology were dependent on inversion itself as a formal principle” [Clark, “Inversion” 102]), the elements of carnival misrule—carts before horses, fools ruling kings, women dressing as men—are almost always associated with parodic “symbolic inversion” (Babcock 14). Social rituals of inversion are seen, not as being destructive, but rather as

sources of order and stability in a hierarchical society. They clarify the structure by the process of reversing it. They can provide an expression of and a safety valve for conflicts within the system.... *they do not question the basic order of the society itself.* (Davis 153, italics mine)

In this model, social order may be temporarily upset “by the process of reversing it,” but “the basic order of the society” is left intact.⁶ It is at this point in the model that carnival and witchcraft part company: In these history plays of Shakespeare’s under

⁶ Although Davis argues “that comic and festive inversion could *undermine* as well as reinforce” social norms (154), her exposition of “Women on Top” does not address witchcraft.

discussion, the order of society is ruptured for a prolonged period by inversion, due in part to witchcraft. Carnival and witchcraft both depend on formal principles of inversion; they are, however, not interchangeable but contiguous.

Michael Bristol's discussion of carnival and the Renaissance also concludes, helpfully, that carnival inheres "*both* a social and an antisocial tendency" (25), although he makes no reference to witchcraft.⁷ Bristol does, however, connect carnival with diabolical elements and inversion:

The basic principle of grotesque or Carnival realism is to represent everything socially and spiritually exalted on the material, bodily level. This includes cursing, abusive and irreverent speech, symbolic and actual thrashing, and images of inversion and downward movement, both cosmological (the underworld, hell, devils) and anatomical.... (22-23)⁸

Given this definition, it becomes clear that Joan's cutting down of Talbot to a "stinking fly-blown heap" (*IH6* 4.7.76) is part of the carnival mode that razes the "spiritually

⁷ Bristol's view of carnival is based on a cultural materialist analysis of the dynamic of popular culture, power and domination:

Carnival is an heuristic instrument of considerable scope and flexibility. Though it is a festive and primarily symbolic activity, it has immediate pragmatic aims, most immediately that of objectifying a collective determination to conserve the authority of the community to set its own standards of behavior and social discipline, and to enforce those standards by appropriate means. At the same time Carnival is a form of resistance to arbitrarily imposed forms of domination, especially when the constraints imposed are perceived as an aggression against the customary norms of surveillance and social control. (52)

However, for the purposes of this study, the discussion is necessarily limited to carnival's symbolic figurations and to their roles in the plays cited.

⁸ A reference linking carnival and witchcraft appears in the *Malleus Maleficarum*:

bad Christians imitate [pagan] corruptions, turning them to lasciviousness when they run about at the time of Carnival with masks and jests and other superstitions. Similarly witches use these revelries of the devil for their own advantage (Summers 116)

Note that carnival is regarded as a pagan hold-over, specified as "superstition." Witchcraft and carnival are directly linked in this document.

exalted” to the “material, bodily level”; her irreverent speech signals carnival misrule.

Carnival elements lead to the violent impulses that pave the roads to rebellion and civil war:

When there is no longer any distinction to be made between rule and misrule, the possibility of order disappears because the differences that give rise to order have been abolished. Loss of difference gives rise to the terrifying possibility of indiscriminate violence and permanent loss of social cohesion. (Bristol 52)

The loss of distinction “between rule and misrule” (which does not, by the way, begin with Pucelle but in *IH6* 1.1. with the wrangling between the Bishop and Gloucester) is a recurrent theme in the tetralogy as a series of rebels and usurpers vie for power. “Important in the symbolism of Carnival is the rhythm of struggle, perpetual conflict and succession” (Bristol 72)—a definition that can be borrowed to encapsulate the action of the *Henry VI* plays.

Other of Bristol’s observations on carnival elements in Shakespeare, while not specific to Joan, can certainly be applied to her: “Guise, that is, the customary, appropriate garb or social integument, is permitted to mingle with *disguise* and the will to deception” (65). Further,

The mockery of ‘holy theology’ and of every other serious interpretation of the world is the normal state of affairs in every Carnavalesque procession because the basis of popular festive form is precisely the wearing of borrowed and misappropriated costumes to generate rude, foolish, abusive mimicry of everyday social distinctions. (65)

Joan’s blasphemy constitutes “mockery of ‘holy theology’,” and Shakespeare deliberately fabricates “borrowed costumes” for her so that she can mimic the figures of saint and Amazon. When she leads her forces against Rouen, Pucelle achieves success by entering “disguis’d,” “like the vulgar sort of market men” (*IH6* 3.2.4). Clearly, Shakespeare’s treatment of Joan is carnivalesque: “the characteristic expressive features of Carnival...include masquerades that take the form of travesty and misrepresentation, stylized conflict and agonistic misrule” (Bristol 52-53). Joan

travesties the heroic and misrepresents herself; Shakespeare features her in two tableaux of single combat—one against the Dauphin and later against Talbot—as well as showing her leading attacks. Further, her place of honour at the side of the deluded Dauphin is an image of misrule. The carnival motif, congruous with its complementary elements of witchcraft and rebellion—misrule wedded to diabolism—helps to make the portrait of Joan consistent with her figuration as a witch bent on havoc.

For Bristol, “Carnival pageantry is antithetical to allegory. Instead of figuring forth an invisible reality, it represents the arbitrary transitoriness of all social forms” (65). However, when it becomes clear that witchcraft and carnival are connected, Shakespeare’s form of demonic inversion is not “antithetical to allegory” (as Bevington’s analysis, for instance, of Joan’s figuration as Justice demonstrates). Further, witchcraft as an aspect of carnival indeed represents “an invisible reality,” the hidden demonic underworld—Shakespeare takes care to show us in Act 5 how Joan relies on its invisible power. Carnival mockery with its crowned fools may show “the arbitrary transitoriness of all social forms,” but witchcraft, more precisely, is a deliberate deformation of social forms for specific ends: Shakespeare’s York pointedly says that Joan’s role is “To fill the world with vicious qualities” (*IH6* 5.4.35).

As I suggest, then, witchcraft can be seen as congruent with carnival. The elements of illusion, temptation (to sin), and blasphemy that the witch employs are also all familiar components of carnival inversion. But where carnival misrule is typically “symbolic inversion” (Babcock 14), only a kind of make-believe mayhem, witchcraft is mayhem indeed. Where typical carnival temporarily turns the world upside down—after all, the fool is king only for a day—witchcraft is a dangerous reification of inversion, a darker carnival: it is capable of great destruction, both on material and spiritual planes. Actual and not symbolic, disastrous and not parodic, to Elizabethans witchcraft was not an abstract but a very real terror: “For most...the literal reality of demons seemed a fundamental article of faith” (Thomas, *Religion* 567). “For Englishmen of the Reformation period the Devil was a greater reality than ever—the ‘prince and God of this world’, as John Knox called him” (ibid. 561):

The battle with Satan and his hierarchy of demons was...a *literal reality* for most devout Englishmen.... The war with Satan was a perpetual combat in which the enemy seemed always to have the advantage...it seemed that God had given Satan a free run. (Thomas, *ibid.* 562, italics mine)

Further, the fear that the world could be inverted by witchcraft was not constructed as an imaginary one:

That trees might grow with their roots in the air, or left-handedness take priority, were not merely images of disorder but states of affairs that a man might expect to encounter.... *Thus, while the world turned upside-down undoubtedly became a topos with a purely literary or iconographical reference, we should not underestimate its original appeal as a description of real events consequent on acts of sin.* (Clark, "Inversion" 117, italics mine)

This Renaissance emphasis on witchcraft's power to disorder the world is consistent also with the deceptions of glamour, and the reifying potency of occult incantations—*vis verborum*—to conjure effects which, no matter how strange, seemed very substantial. So, when Joan performs her "word" (1.6.3) she can literally create havoc. The witch was a sort of Elizabethan terrorist: demonic rituals aimed "not to bring moral order and civil peace through the acting out of ideal roles but to ensure chaos by dehumanization and atrocities"(Clark, "Inversion" 122). Witchcraft's ability to reify an upside-down world endows the theme of rebellion and the disastrous civil war throughout the tetralogy with a satanic extension. Lucifer's rebellion against heaven resulted in an inverted hierarchy being established in hell. Joan's witchcraft, her inversions, and portrayal as a rebel leader parallel this satanic paradigm.

Abnormal, amoral and unnatural, witchcraft—unlike the regenerative or politically deconstructive functions of typical carnival—was part of the primal satanic conspiracy to test humanity, and had no social function other than to demolish the society it encountered. Witches were rebels; as for rebellions, "the *devyll* raise them" (Baldwin, qtd. in Fleischer 176).⁹ Shakespeare makes direct links between

⁹ Shakespeare keeps faith with this model in *Macbeth*: treasonous, rebellious Macbeth makes Scotland prey to "Great tyranny" (4.3.32). "Not in the legions / Of horrid hell

rebellion and witchcraft at the beginning of the tetralogy: “bad *revolting* stars” (1.1.4, italics mine) and “Conjurers and sorcerers” (1.1.27) prefigure later acts, “Erroneous, mutinous, and unnatural (*3H6* 2.5.90). Disaster on not merely a national, but cosmic scale frames the tetralogy from the outset: “adverse planets in the heavens” (*IH6* 1.1.54) and “malignant and ill-boding stars” (4.5.6) are in the ascendancy; Talbot is “hemm’d about with grim destruction” (4.3.21), and with him England’s hopes are “withered, bloody, pale, and dead” (4.2.38). News at the inception of the tetralogy is “Of loss, of slaughter, and discomfiture” (1.1.59). The “vulture of sedition / Feeds in the bosom of...great commanders” (4.4.47). With Joan’s success in witching Burgundy, Gloucester expresses his fury at the “revolt” (4.1.64) as the product of unnatural and corrupt influences:

O monstrous treachery! can this be so?
That in alliance, amity, and oaths,
There should be found such *false dissembling guile?*
(*IH6* 4.1.61-63, italics mine)

Glamour was Joan’s special effect, but “false dissembling guile” and “vicious qualities” (*IH6* 5.4.35) are not specific to the practising witch. Throughout the tetralogy, witchcraft’s metaphoric paradigm of rebellion and maleficence wears many faces.

By rebelling against the English crown, Joan challenges not only mundane authority: In the cosmic hierarchy, the king is God’s mortal representative, and it is to this metaphysic ultimately that Joan, like Satan, lays siege. When she seduces the Dauphin, his “fall is ethically more all-encompassing than the surrender to mere physical pleasure: it is the chaos of natural order in himself, his followers, and his country. He is bewitched” (Bevington 53). Joan’s tactics cause a chain reaction of inversions: a woman plans military strategy, the Dauphin is incited to rebel against England and, in the course of the war against the French, England’s nobles begin a fatal, regicidal quarrel. When witchcraft combines with insurrection in the *Henry VI*

come a devil more damn’d / In evils to top Macbeth” (4.3.55-57); it is a “Devilish Macbeth” (117) who usurps the crown.

plays, the resulting synergistic energy is extremely potent: it gathers the forces of chaos.

2.2 Rebels as Devils: Diabolism and Misrule

Once evident that witchcraft, carnival, and rebellion are interconnected paradigms, the witchcraft Shakespeare introduces with Joan emerges as an organizing device: Joan's role becomes structural not only to the play she appears in but to the tetralogy in general. Her figuration, the operations of "hellish mischief" (*1H6* 3.2.38-39) she introduces, and the architecture of Shakespeare's first history plays are related. G. R. Hibbard's analysis of the dramatic prose of the *Henry VI* plays is predicated on Shakespeare's overall "pattern of total opposition and balanced confrontation" (Hibbard 62), evident in Shakespeare's use of contrariety in structure, rhetoric and stagecraft. I suggest, however, that the pattern of opposition and inversion is informed—and, in part, shaped—by diablerie.

The temptation to seize the English crown seduces one character after another. Ambition leads to rebellion: "The prime motivating course behind the entire action [of the *Henry VI* plays] is human ambition; and...ambitious designs are neither respectable nor safe" (Hibbard 58). Would-be usurpers operate clandestinely, masking, like Joan, their true faces. The first character of the tetralogy revealed to have usurping motives is the Bishop of Winchester, later Cardinal Beauford (*1H6* 1.1). His example is followed by Somerset, Richard Plantagenet (later York), Suffolk (in league with Queen Margaret), Eleanor, Jack Cade, and finally the York brothers—Edward, Clarence, and Richard (later Richard III). In the course of each

characterization, treason and maleficence, informed by the operations of deadly sin invariably intertwine. Metaphorically, all rebels are diabolically inspired.

Perhaps the most overt use of the metaphoric paradigm linking diabolism with rebellion comes in Cade's characterization. Act 4 of *2 Henry VI* is concerned with only two events: Suffolk's execution and Cade's revolt and execution. The deliberate stagecraft connecting these figures (both die for treason) points to their alliance, metaphorical and political. This is reinforced not only by the imagery of diablerie, but also by Shakespeare's arrangement of Cade's career so that it is bracketed on one end with Suffolk's death (4.1)—the late would-be usurper—and on the other with the next usurper's entrance, York (5.1).

Like Pucelle, Cade is a rebel who comes to power by subterfuge (he is secretly York's puppet); both are peasants who claim a loftier lineage than the one they were born to (Cade, *2H6* 4.2.31-53; Joan, *1H6* 5.4.38); both die by execution.¹⁰ Critical attention paid to Cade figures him primarily as a figure of carnivalesque misrule. Bristol disagrees with the "conventional historicist criticism" of Cade "as a pathetic, ludicrous and potentially vicious aberration" and instead sees him as a fixture from carnival who commits a "powerful political and discursive indiscretion" (89). However, it seems that he is also informed by the diabolical energies of the dark carnival common to precursors like Joan and Suffolk.

Cade, like the Pucelle posing as "Astraea's daughter" (*1H6* 1.6.4), inverts justice by practising butchery (*2H6* 4.3), travestyng rules of social order: "I charge and command that...the pissing conduit run nothing but claret the first year of our reign" (*2H6* 4.6.2-4). Annabel Patterson suggests that

¹⁰ While Cade is assassinated for practising tyranny, Joan is ritually burned at the stake for witchcraft. Joan never truly becomes a tyrant because, although she rules the French court, she never possesses absolute power. Though the French think she "doth deserve a coronet of gold" (3.3.89), they never actually give her one. The Dauphin does not completely relinquish power to Joan; he goes only as far as to say "I will *divide* my crown with her" (1.6.17, italics mine). The image, of course, is also one of political division, French and English—a divided crown is a threat of rebellion and the factionalization of civil war.

when Cade finally appears, everything that he says is already suspect. Little is proved, therefore, by demonstrating how inconsistent is Cade in his recapitulation of the ancient tropes of levelling, or how much Shakespeare simplified and darkened the model he found in Hall.... Cade is also an impostor aristocrat, a traitor to his class, hawking his false claims to the name of Mortimer by way of romantic fiction, the tale of a noble child stolen from its cradle.... (49)

An impostor and traitor, like Pucelle, there is evidence that Cade is also diabolically inspired: Not only is there historical precedent to associate Cade with black arts ("Jack Cade was accused of raising the Devil and using magical books to promote his rebellion in 1450" [Thomas, *Religion* 276]), but when York leaves for Ireland he pointedly says, "This *devil* here shall be my *substitute*" (2*H6* 3.1.371, italics mine). Patterson notes that in Hall, Cade had already been cast as "a double agent in Ireland" (49). (And as a logical consequence, if Cade is York's "substitute," then York is a "devil" too.) Fleischer also sees Cade as a devil (4.10): "Cade's posture [lying on the grass] is that of trespassing Satan" and "literally represents the quintessential Edenic error" (168) of stealing from the garden. Joan is led to her execution with a curse on England (1*H6* 5.4.86-91), and Cade's dying words reiterate the curse on his country: "Wither, garden, and be henceforth a burying-place to all that do dwell in this house" (4.10.63-64). Additionally, York uses the language of temptation to describe Cade's recruitment: "I have *seduc'd* a headstrong Kentishman" (3.1.356, italics mine), linking seduction with witchcraft as did the scenes between Joan and the Dauphin and, as will be shown, those between Margaret and Suffolk, and Suffolk and Henry (for Margarét).

York uses Cade "for a minister of my intent" and "to make commotion" (2*H6* 3.1.355, 358).¹¹ That the "commotion" or insurrection is in part satanic is evident in

¹¹ Bristol asserts that "The substance of Jack Cade's political agenda is in sympathy with the popular utopian wishes of peasant revolutionary movements of the early modern period" (89). However, as Cade's rebellion is actually orchestrated by York—a member of the aristocracy—it may not truly represent a revolt by commoners but could be seen as part of York's power-struggle. York uses Cade as a troublemaker, relying on Cade's unrelenting self-aggrandizement, as the only promises that Cade ever makes are those proposing to replace the rule of "kings and

Shakespeare's language, as Cade relies on contradiction and inversion. He says both "king I will be" (4.2.70) and that "all things shall be in common" (4.7.19). The extreme violation of hierarchical norms is expressed in "we are in order when we are most out of order" (4.2.189-90). When Cade claims a noble birth, Stafford's brother replies "That's false" (4.2.140); Cade answers "I say 'tis true" (141)— "I invented it myself" (155). Whether something is true or false in this world is irrelevant since, by the reifying powers invested in verbal glamour, saying it makes it so.¹²

Cade turns the world upside down by mocking hierarchy and committing blasphemy. Further, it is hugely ironic that the diabolical Cade takes on the role of a witch-hunter. He orders the hanging of the unfortunate clerk of Chartam as "a villain and a traitor" (4.2.108) when his red-lettered sacred book is held to be incontrovertible proof of diablerie: "Nay, then he is a conjurer" (91). Like Joan, Cade inverts the sacred—after all, profaning scripture is outright heresy.

Inversion of the sacred and profane is also implied in Shakespeare's expression of Cade's tyranny over the elderly and palsied Lord Say. Captured by Cade, Lord Say addresses him with, "*Unless you be possess'd with devilish spirits / You cannot but forbear to murder me*" (4.7.75-76, italics mine). But Cade, in spite of feeling "remorse in myself with his words" (105-6), orders the old man's execution with, "Away with him, he has a familiar under his tongue, he speaks not a'God's name (107-8). Familiar is Cade's claim to speak with divine authority, as did Joan. He ironically accuses Say of witchcraft ("a familiar under his tongue"), and here the subject of the origin of the power of rhetoric is again iterated. Say is so eloquent that Cade is moved almost to "remorse"; the potency of his words are not due to any bewitching tactics, but as Cade is a temporary king of misrule, he inverts roles and

princes" (4.2.36) with the tyranny of Jack Cade: "king I will be" (4.2.70); "they may agree like brothers, and worship me as their lord" (4.2.74-75); "I hope to reign" (4.2.130).

¹² "The occult sciences' practice of substitution or interchangeability of concepts depends fundamentally on the reification process, the breakdown of the line between the literal and the figurative" (Vickers 122). Cade's short-lived domination depends on the incantatory power of "I say 'tis true."

meanings at will. Where Joan's seeming eloquence was actually the work of bewitchment masquerading as rhetoric, here, genuine eloquence is made to appear the work of the devil.

Like Pucelle, Cade practises glamour by not being what he seems: Shakespeare has Cade carry the secret that he is in York's pay to his grave. That secrecy, combined with the imagery of diabolism, creates a strong implication that the deal made between York and Cade is analogous to satanic pact. And perhaps this can account for one meaning of Cade's parchment speech:

Is not this a lamentable thing, that of the skin of an innocent lamb should be made parchment? that parchment, being so scribed o'er, should undo a man? Some say the bee stings, but I say, 'tis the bees wax; for I did but seal once to a thing, and I was never mine own man since. (2H6 4.2.77-83)

One proof of demonism is to enter into a pact with the devil, and I suggest that Shakespeare's implication of a "seal" Cade once put to parchment was such a bargain.¹³ That "parchment...should undo a man" implies his literal 'undoing': He was once an "innocent lamb," perhaps before his fall—corruption by York—but upon sealing the document "was never mine own man since" but the devil's. Iden confirms that he is a "*damned* wretch" as he dispatches Cade's "soul to *hell*" (4.10.77, 79, italics mine).

On the other hand, Cade's disparagement of parchment is also merely a manifestation of his carnival contempt for legal documents, these being sealed with "bees wax." The ambiguity of the parchment speech recalls the deliberate ambiguous treatment Shakespeare applies to Joan: Is what we hear and see to be taken at face value? Or is it subtle diablerie?

But the world is upside down even for Cade, who discovers that beneath London Stone is not solid earth but a shifting state of flux. His "rabblement" are persuaded within a few lines to abandon him (4.8.6-69). Escaping, he runs through the crowd "despite of the devils and hell," saying that "heavens and honor be

¹³ Clearly, this implicates York as well.

witness that no want of resolution in me, but only my followers' base and ignominious treasons, makes me betake to my heels" (4.8.60-64). Heaven and hell, invoked together, signal the violent clash of opposing forces. The abandonment of Cade to his fate is analogous to Joan's desertion by her spirits: they each lose power and their lives when the ability to command fiends and followers vanishes. Interestingly, Joan never renounces her witchcraft and, likewise, Cade has nothing to declare on exiting but an "unconquer'd soul" (4.10.64-65). Both die unrepentant, unreconciled to the pervading Christian society. It is further proof that the moral universe they inhabit is in collapse.

2.3 "More haughty than the devil": Beauford

The Bishop of Winchester, later Cardinal Beauford,¹⁴ is in many ways Pucelle's counterpart in the English court in *1 Henry VI*. They play parallel roles: both assume a devout manner, advise the Crown, are better soldiers than saints, and plot diabolical subversions. Joan's hagiography cloaks her diabolism; Beauford's priestly robes provide his glamour. And although persuasively disguised, both are instantly recognized and denounced by their godly enemies: Joan has her Talbot—"Thou art a witch" (*IH6* 1.5.6)—and the Bishop has his Gloucester. When Beauford attributes Henry V's success to the influence of the church—"The Church's prayers made him so prosperous"—Gloucester explodes:

Glou. The Church? where is it? Had not Churchmen pray'd,
His thread of life had not so soon decay'd.
None do you like but an effeminate prince,
Whom like a schoolboy you may overawe. (*IH6* 1.1.32-36)

Both Joan and the "Ambitious churchman" (*2H6* 2.1.178) undermine legitimate authority, Joan misleading the Dauphin, Beauford manipulating a young king. In asides the Bishop reveals the extent of his malicious ambition: "But long I will not be

¹⁴ For the sake of simplicity, I will use Beauford to refer to this character.

Jack out of office. / The King from Eltam I intend to send / And sit at chiefest stern of public weal" (1.1.175-7); "I'll either make thee [Gloucester] stoop and bend thy knee, / *Or sack this country with a mutiny*" (5.1.62, italics mine). These words prefigure the civil war to come. A subversive cleric is both a rebel and a heretic; the Church no longer buttresses the State but instead becomes an organ of decay. Prayers corrode where they should regenerate ("ne'er throughout the year to church thou go'st / Except it be to pray against thy foes" [1H6 1.1.42-43]), and raising an "effeminate prince" (1.1.35) contradicts an ideal: Such a prince will make a poor king. Shakespeare portrays Henry VI, of course, as being a woefully inadequate ruler, and explains it, in part, with an unflattering portrait of one of his mentors.

Shakespeare introduces Beauford and his clearly malicious nature before Pucelle steps on the stage; in fact, he opens the first scene of the tetralogy with a mud-slinging clash between the regent, Gloucester, and the bishop. Subversion by the church of the English state begins in Act One, Scene One. A parallel scene between Pucelle, who also claims to represent a divine mandate, and the French heads of state, is presented in Scene Two. This juxtaposition is significant: both in England and France, grave disorder is brewing. Shakespeare's stagecraft makes it all the more explicit that there is reason to be suspicious of Pucelle: if an English bishop so blatantly violates his sacred duty, then a French character declaring holy inspiration (which requires either a great leap of faith or extraordinary gullibility) is not to be trusted.

But there is more than the circumstantial evidence of juxtaposition that demonstrates that the bishop is linked to Pucelle and her diablerie. Consistently connected with the portrait of Beauford is a sinister coupling of malice and pride. The Mayor of London comments that "This cardinal's *more haughty than the devil*" (1H6 1.3.85, italics mine); Salisbury says

Pride went before, *ambition* follows him.

 Oft have I seen the *haughty* Cardinal,
 More like a soldier than a man o' th' church,
 As stout and *proud as he were lord of all*,

Swear like a ruffian, and demean himself
Unlike the ruler of a commonweal. (*2H6* 1.1.180-9, italics mine)

Pride is a deadly sin, the cause of Lucifer's fall. Gloucester names Beauford a "haughty prelate," "most usurping proditor," (31) and "manifest conspirator" (1.3.23, 31, 33). The "Presumptuous priest" (3.1.8) is, according to Gloucester, guilty of "vile outrageous crimes" (3.1.11), a portrait of evil:

...such is thy *audacious wickedness*,
Thy *lewd, pestiferous, and dissentious pranks*,
As very infants prattle of thy *pride*.
Thou art a most *pernicious usurer*,
Froward by nature, *enemy to peace*,
Lascivious, wanton, more than well beseems
A man of thy profession and degree;
And for thy *treachery*, what's more manifest?
(*1H6* 3.1.14-21, italics mine)

The description might be of Joan; this dissembling priest is also vice-ridden: lust, pride, "audacious wickedness," and "dissentious pranks" belong to the catalogue of deadly sins. The "saucy priest" is "an outlaw" (3.1.45, 47), a rebel. Beauford also harbours "envious malice" (3.1.36); Henry reminds him that "I have heard you preach / That malice was a great and grievous sin" (3.1.128). In this single scene, malice or envy and Beauford are coupled three times (3.1.26, 75, 128). The image of "holy churchmen" delighting "in broils" (3.1.111) belongs to the inversions of the carnival. Things are upside down when the primate of the English church is a lustful, wicked, ambitious outlaw. Further, Shakespeare's emphasis on the bishop's "malice" is borrowed from witchcraft's lexicon: malefic intent to cause harm (*maleficia*) is by definition the working of evil by supernatural means.¹⁵ In *2 Henry VI*, another description of Cardinal Beauford is explicitly demonic: "Beauford's red sparkling eyes blab his heart's malice" (3.1.154).

By claiming sainthood, Pucelle usurped sacred icons, undermining church and state. Beauford demonstrates that the English power base is going the way of the

¹⁵ Maleficia was "committed with the aid of Satan" (Robbins, under "Maleficia" 330). See also *OED*, "Malefic: Productive of disaster or evil; baleful in effect or purpose. Said *esp.* of stellar influences and magical arts or practises."

French, sabotaged by the blurring of sacred and profane. The relationship between divine sanction and high office is disintegrating, and an antithetical structure is subverting—indeed, replacing—the Christian moral order. The Cardinal leads an “evil life” (2H6 3.3.5), and his “Dying so bad a death argues a monstrous life” (30). Before the Cardinal dies “Blaspheming God and cursing men on earth” (2H6 3.2.373), Henry asks, “if thou think’st on heaven’s bliss, / Hold up thy hand, make signal of thy hope” (2H6 3.3.27-28). But “He dies, and makes no sign” (29). Like Joan and Cade before him, he is abandoned: there is no redemption, only silence. If not thinking on heaven, then on hell: “the busy meddling fiend”—Satan— “lays strong siege unto this wretch’s soul” (21-22). God, heaven and hope, opposed with curses, earth, and death provide a portrait of Henry’s England: it is an inverted, diabolically corrupted, world.

2.4 “Bookish rule”: Henry VI and the Carnival Kingdom

In *I Henry VI*, as the examples of Pucelle and Beauford make explicit, claims to piety are especially suspect. The Church in the person of Beauford conspires to usurp the English State: the “haughty Cardinal” is “More like a soldier than a man o’ th’ church” (2H6 1.1.185-6). Church and State, in fact, trade places: Henry is a better “man o’ th’ church” than Beauford; Warwick laments, if only the king “Were ... as famous and as bold in war / As he is fam’d for mildness, peace, and prayer” (3H6 2.1.155-6). Henry is fatally flawed by the lack of his father’s qualities: in an inverted world, as Pucelle demonstrates, seeming virtues are more likely to be vices in disguise.

Henry’s innocence and piety, however meritorious, cannot substitute for policy. The upside-down world shaped by Shakespeare dictates that these virtues can be dangerous liabilities. Henry makes bad decisions, blindly trusts that “rightful cause prevails” (2H6 2.1.201) and ineptly ignores his best advisor, Gloucester. Shakespeare shows that he is unstable, prone to contradicting himself: when urged to

marry, he answers that “fitter is my study and my books / Than wanton dalliance with a paramour” (*IH6* 5.1.22-23). He agrees, however, to do his duty and “be well content with any choice / Tends to God’s glory and my country’s weal” (26-27). He soon negates that concern for the weal not only by reversing his position, his credulity swayed by Suffolk’s glamorous and “wondrous rare description” (5.5.1) of Margaret, but also by allowing “passions in my heart” (4) to overrule him. Henry, like the Dauphin, is a victim of his own lust. Not quite a hypocrite—he is far too ingenuous—his persistent display of defective judgment constitutes a handbook of misrule. Henry tries to substitute a taste for the contemplative life for policy (“in devotion spend my latter days” [*3H6* 4.4.44]); but when “spleenful mutiny” (*2H6* 3.2.128) is loose, quoting scripture—“For blessed are the peacemakers on earth” (*2H6* 2.1.34)—to “furious peers” (*ibid.* 33) is hopelessly inadequate. Inaction, indecision, neglect, and naivete describe Henry’s reign. His vice, it may be said, is sloth. Neither has he any powers of verbal force. Henry’s piety (or his version of it) has no effect on the English universe he should be dominating as its king—this, along with the fact that his sacred word as king is impotent, is further proof that this microcosm no longer operates according to Christian rules of order.

It is an “effeminate prince” (*IH6* 1.1.35) who holds “the scepter in his childish fist” (*2H6* 1.1.244, 245); York’s assessment that “church-like humors fits not for a crown” (*2H6* 1.1.247) is all too accurate. That the stress on Henry’s piety indicates credulity and ill-judgment—not the virtues of strength of faith—is evident in the Simpcox scene (*2H6* 2.1). It recounts how a man and his wife commit fraud by claiming to be the beneficiaries of a miracle. Simpcox and his wife appear on Henry’s cue, as he comments on fractious peers:

How irksome is this music to my heart!
 When such strings jar, what hope of harmony?
 I pray, my lords, let me compound this strife.
Enter one crying, “A miracle!” (*2H6* 2 1.54-57)

Henry is all too willing to accept Simpcox’s claim to new-found sight, but Gloucester is intensely skeptical of anything having to do with the Church—his criticism of

Beauford makes this plain—and uncovers the deception.¹⁶ Henry's horrified exclamation on realizing that the "miracle" was a deception—"O God, seest thou this, and bearest so long?" (2.1.151)—echoes Talbot's despair at being defeated in his first encounter with Pucelle.¹⁷ Witchcraft routed Talbot and here a similar deception contributes to the overthrow of virtue by corruption. Henry perceives that the situation is sinking further into chaos: "Oh God, what mischiefs work the wicked ones, / Heaping confusion on their own heads thereby!" (182-3). Henry's evocation of the "confusion" and wickedness of the times, echoing Exeter's earlier "There comes the ruin, there begins confusion" (*IH6* 4.1.194), invokes a scope of disaster, apocalyptic in tone, far larger than the petty buffoonery just played out. The false miracle is a variation on the inversion of sacred and profane: the successes of Pucelle's witchcraft are by their diabolical natures forms of false miracles, inversions of divine magic. Further, the Simpcoxes not only profane the sacred but employ glamour: the fact that the episode locates deception precisely as a visual trick ties it directly to this species of diabolical fraud. (The Simpcoxes of this world see all too well; it is the state that is blind.) Also, it is significant that it is at this point that news of Eleanor Duchess of Gloucester's arrest for witchcraft comes. Witchcraft, false appearances—glamour—and false miracles are deliberately juxtaposed.

Henry's "bookish rule hath pull'd fair England down" (*2H6* 1.1.259). Not only down, but upside down; "bookish rule" in this context is an oxymoron, and Henry's molehill scene graphically demonstrates that his misrule has created a state of civil war—inversion. By mismanagement Henry is, in a way, guilty of treason for not performing his duty. It epitomizes an extreme of civil war: the king abuses not only the Crown but his own citizens.

¹⁶ Possibly, Shakespeare implies that the Cardinal arranged for this demonstration, although he makes no express point of it. The charge of clerical interference comes from at least one source: John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (1583) recounts this episode with the statement that it demonstrates "the craftye working of false miracles in the clergy" (Bullough 127; *Riverside Shakespeare*, 639a).

¹⁷ "Heavens, can you suffer hell so to prevail?" (*IH6* 1.5.9).

Given this state of affairs, it follows that Henry should witness the ruin he has contributed to, and that Shakespeare should show him surveying his capsized kingdom while son slaughters father, father slaughters son; it is the inverted world in action. Henry is, in effect, deposed; his wife and closest allies refuse to allow him on the field of battle (*3H6* 2.5.16-18); iconographically, the king is stripped of emblematic pomp: "State is simply negated when the king appears alone or with one other person, lacking proper attendance" (Fleischer 80).¹⁸ Instead of a throne, Henry sits on a molehill, the inversion an image borrowed from carnival misrule.¹⁹ The scene, iconically and rhetorically, is a graphic demonstration that the world is literally upside down. From his inverted position, the king can only see "unnatural" and "ruthful deeds" (*3H6* 2.5.90, 95).

Although the scene has been viewed as a morality play within a play,²⁰ and as a lament emblematic of the "social consequences" of civil war (Hibbard 68) it is also, I suggest, linked with a form of satanic temptation. The first part of Henry's meditation ("methinks it were a happy life / To be no better than a homely swain" [*3H6* 2.5.21-22]) falls into a category of delusion akin to the glamour of witchcraft, a form of temptation: Henry's arcadian vision recalls the illusions conjured by Satan, specifically those of Christ's temptation described in Luke 4.5-8. Christ, humanity's shepherd, possessor of the heavenly crown, was offered the rewards of the material world; England's king already has possession of the material world's crown. Metaphysically, he is Christ's mortal representative, the "spiritually pastoral" king-as-shepherd (Montrose, *Pastoral* 45), a complex that includes "The religious mystery of Christ's double nature" (ibid. 43). Christ withstood Satan's assault—the force of his glamour and *vis verborum*—and kept his spiritual sovereignty. Paradoxically,

¹⁸ When Edward IV is captured in a field and brought out "*in his gown, sitting in a chair*" (*3H6* 4.3, italics mine) he is also bereft of kingly trappings: a "chair" instead of a throne, a nightgown instead of robes of office. The imagery parallels that of Henry here as a mock-king.

¹⁹ "The logic of crownings and uncrownings, in direct or in indirect form, organizes the serious elements in the organization of Shakespeare's drama" (Bakhtin 275).

²⁰ "With Henry, sitting apart on his molehill, serving as audience and chorus, the figures of Sorrow act out their allegory in the timeless ritual of grief" (Ricks 94).

pious Henry acquiesces to an inverted temptation: he has traded the Crown—his duty—for a fantasy shepherd’s crook. Montrose defines the pastoral mode as the “rejection of aspiration and the celebration of *otium*” (*Pastoral* 36). Because Shakespeare portrays Henry as a very bad judge—of character, of wives, of miracles—at this late stage, it is difficult to see anything but folly in utopian meditations. “Ah! what a life were this!” he thinks, “how sweet! how lovely” to be with “silly sheep” (2.5.41, 43). Shakespeare invests his words with a terrible irony: he speaks of “silly” or innocent, otiose qualities while overseeing the brutal slaughter of soldiers—fathers and sons—for whom he is responsible as their sovereign. Fleischer briefly touches on this scene to note how effectively it subverts Henry’s view:

If we momentarily share Henry’s belief in the conscious rationality of private life despite omnipresent intestine broils, we are soon disabused by the next spectacle of ignorant and meaningless patricide and infanticide. By analogy, the Christian hypothesis of a meaningful order in history seems subverted rather than supported by the actualities represented in vivid contradiction to the king’s pastoral wishes. (Fleischer 171)

Fleischer does not expand on how the “meaningful order in history seems subverted,” but if this is a carnival king making a mockery of rule by allowing diabolical forces free reign, then the subverted order is necessarily that of the Christian moral universe.

The pastoral “performs a wide range of symbolic operations upon the network of social relationships at whose center was the sovereign” (Montrose, *Pastoral* 35). Metaphorically, then, Henry is *already* a shepherd, but a negligent, slothful one who does not act but only witnesses. Henry should function, like Christ, as a protector. As king and embodiment of political will, it should be in his power to exert the authority to control rebels who are, in fact, his subjects. In his soliloquy, however, he misses the point of his role by electing to be a bystander instead of a commander. Inherent in this image is a world not only abandoned by its king, but also by its God: an abandoned world is left as spoil to diabolarchy. Henry’s literally inverted position

(dethroned king as lowest subject) emblemizes chaos. When the world is upside down, the view is necessarily one of political anarchy and human holocaust. And what necessarily remains for Henry is the ultimate consequence of political inversion: regicide.

Chapter 3. "Women's matters" and the "help of hell"

3.1 "Devilish practises": Eleanor of Gloucester

With Joan, Shakespeare sets a pattern for two other principal female characters. Eleanor and Margaret emulate her—they are treacherous, ambitious and corrupt. Like Pucelle, these women pretend to virtues they do not possess. Furthermore, witchcraft figures directly in Eleanor's downfall; Margaret takes on a witch-like aspect as her characterization progresses. The sexual world of the plays is distinctly carnivalesque, where both sexes are ruled by vice and where men are ruled by women: Joan led the Dauphin and his army, the Duke of Gloucester follows Eleanor to his downfall, and Margaret, not Henry, becomes the true power on the English throne.

Since witchcraft is heresy, Shakespeare takes care to link this element with direct references to spiritually corruptive deadly sin. Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester, is the first woman mentioned in the tetralogy, and it is significant that the reference made is to her pride: Winchester tells Gloucester "Thy wife is proud" (*1H6* 1.1.38); he deepens this by adding another: "she holdeth thee in awe, / More than God or religious churchmen may" (38-39), that is, she is guilty of idolatry. Margaret calls her "that proud dame" (*2H6* 1.3.76). Like the Dauphin before him, Gloucester is ruled by "a woman of / an invincible spirit" (*2H6* 1.4.6-7).

Eleanor threatens to attack Margaret "with my nails...to set my ten commandments in your face" (*2H6* 1.3.141-42). Before she takes to witchcraft, Eleanor's character already exhibits a tendency to blasphemy: she is guilty of the sins of pride, idolatry and envy, making her "lewdly bent" (*2H6* 2.1.163). Gloucester tells his wife at her trial that, "In sight of God and us your guilt is great" (*2H6* 2.3.2). She is a heretic, as was Joan before her.

But it must also be pointed out that although Eleanor commits the treason, it is Gloucester's indulgence of her that leads to their mutual downfall. Gloucester's enemies understand that he is conveniently uxorious: "Thy sumptuous buildings and thy wive's attire /

Have cost a mass of public treasury” (2H6 1.3.130-1). Shakespeare is careful to confirm that the charges are substantiated: Eleanor’s husband too quickly forgives her jealousy of the queen, Gloucester apologizing for his admonishments (“Nay, be not angry, I am pleas’d again” [1.2.55]). As between the Dauphin and Pucelle, such blind ardor spells trouble. And there is a connection between witchcraft and a wife’s ability to lead her spouse astray: the *Malleus Maleficarum* states that “...devils can by witchcraft cause a man to be unable to see his wife rightly” (Summers 63).

Tolerance of wifely error proves highly serviceable to Gloucester’s cartel of enemies, who can bring against him charges of complicity:¹

The Duchess *by his subornation*,

 began her devilish practises;
 Or if he were not privy to those faults,
 Yet, by reputed of his high descent,
 As next the King he was successive heir,
 And such high vaunts of his nobility,
Did instigate the bedlam brain-sick Duchess
 By wicked means to frame our sovereign’s fall.
 (3.1.45-52, italics mine)

Because Eleanor is caught “Dealing with witches and with conjurers” (2H6 2.1.168), Gloucester will also shortly fall. Like Talbot before him, the Duke will die, in part, by the infection of witchcraft. Gloucester and, later, Henry are both blinded by love’s

¹ The Duke is held fully accountable (“Gloucester, see here the tainture of thy nest” [3.1.184]) because by the era’s legal and social convention husbands were responsible for the actions of their wives:

[The unruly woman was] on one hand not accountable for what she did. Given over to the sway of her lower passions, she was not responsible; the responsibility lay with her husband, to whom she was subject. Indeed, this “incapacity” was embodied in varying degrees in English law and in some French customary law. In England, in almost any felonious action by a married woman to which her husband could be shown to be privy or at which he was present, the wife could not be held entirely culpable.... The full weight of the law fell only on the ruling male. (Davis 176-77)

Women “bring men to ruin: there can be no greater curse wished upon an enemy than that he be ruled by women” (paraphrased by Easlea, from Jean Bodin’s *De la Demonomanie des Sorciers* (1586) 18).

glamour, and this parallel underlines not only the ambition of the women but stresses the weakness of the men.

Margaret and Eleanor are vilified by the playwright, one critic suggests, because “ambitious and aggressive women carry away much of the opprobrium which might otherwise fall on their virtuous if ineffectual husbands” (Williamson 51). However, I suggest that Shakespeare takes care to point out that Gloucester and his king are each responsible for their own destruction by choosing to ignore the threats to themselves that their wives represent. They each become figures of domestic misrule. Clearly, the carnivalesque rupture of the social metaphysic begins at home, prefiguring the larger political inversions to come: When such an upside-down state of affairs exists between husband and wife, subject and Crown, and even a king and his queen, it follows that such chaotic, inverted relations are possible on all levels of society.

Envy and pride combine to impel Eleanor to seek diabolical aid. The undercurrent of such corruption is evident in the description of England as a garden going to ruin, suggested by the imagery of cankered roses (*1H6* 2.4.68), and in “weeds” that “choke the herbs for want of husbandry” (*2H6* 3.1.31-33). England is being compared with a degenerate Eden, the irredeemably lost garden.² “Virtue is chok’d with foul ambition” (*2H6* 3.1.143); as was true of Joan, the face of virtue is tainted. When we see Eleanor first addressing her husband, it is with an image of the unharvested garden: “Why droops my lord, like over-ripen’d corn / Hanging the head at Ceres’ plenteous load?” (1.2.1-2). Powerless to order the kingdom, Gloucester the gardener is doomed to let the harvest rot (the loss of Henry V’s legacy implicit).³

Eleanor reveals her ambitions in this scene:

What seest thou there? King Henry’s diadem,
Enchas’d with all the honors of the world?

² John Wilders writes: “The fulfilment of human hopes was possible only in the world before the Fall. Shakespeare’s historical characters struggle with their limited capacities to regain it but the plays imply that it has been irrecoverably lost” (52).

³ Images of Gloucester as gardener recur: Describing the Duke’s face after his murder, Warwick notes “His well-proportioned beard make rough and rugged, / Like to the summer’s corn by tempest lodged” (*2H6* 3.2.175-76). When York plots to overthrow Gloucester, he says he will “reap the harvest which that rascal sow’d” (*2H6* 3.1.381).

If so, gaze on, and grovel on thy face,
Until thy head be circled with the same.
Put forth thy hand, reach at the glorious gold.
(2H6 1.2.7-11)

That gardens and treason are linked is clear in this context, along with the reference to the gardens of Eden⁴ and the Gethemene of Christ's betrayal, and consequently the betrayal of Christian moral principles, implicit.⁵ In the previous scene when York soliloquized on his own ambition, he vowed to "raise aloft the milk-white rose" (1.1.254). This evocation of the Temple Garden scene in *1 Henry VI* is immediately followed up in Gloucester's reply to his wife: "Banish the *canker* of ambitious thoughts!" (1.2.18, italics mine). Ambition rots the English rose garden. Opposition structures this scene: Virtue (Gloucester) gives in to corruption (Eleanor) and thereby treason subverts loyalty; wife is disobedient to husband, and delusion is mistaken for prophecy, as in Pucelle's case. Eleanor misinterprets Gloucester's foreboding dream, dismissing the significant image of his broken staff of office piking the heads of Somerset and Suffolk as "nothing but an argument / That he that breaks a stick of Gloucester's grove / Shall lose his head for his presumption" (32-34). That she is deluded is verified by her recounting of her fantasy of being queen and by Gloucester's infuriated reaction. Her jealousy and ambition are so corrosive that being "second woman in the realm" (43) and having "worldly pleasure at command" (45) are not enough. Envy incites Eleanor to reveal in soliloquy her independent plans:⁶

⁴ In The Geneva Bible, the margin gloss for Genesis 3.6 gives a helpful note on why exactly it was that Adam listened to Eve: Adam ate the fruit "not so much to please his wife, as moved by ambition at her persuasion." What is most relevant here, of course, is that ambition is associated with the first crime. Of course, it is very apt a gloss for *Macbeth*.

⁵ Fleischer notes that this is the first of several garden venues in *2 Henry VI*, and "All are scenes of evil" (166; 2H6 1.4, 2.2, 3.1, 4.10.). The garden imagery surrounding Gloucester is here carried over with its undercurrents of primal fall (disobedience of women, satanic temptation) and betrayal.

⁶ Hibbard comments that "since ambitious designs are neither respectable nor safe, they usually find their expression through soliloquy" (58).

Follow I must, I cannot go before
While Gloucester bears this base and humble mind.
Were I a man, a duke, and next of blood,
I would remove these stumbling-blocks,
And smooth my way upon their headless necks;
And, being a woman, I will not be slack
To play my part in Fortune's pageant. (1.2.61-67)

Fortune and pride in the form of feminine ambition are again linked, as they were with Pucelle when the latter compared herself to a ship bearing "Caesar and his *fortune*" (*IH6* 1.2.138-39): the linkage is a reminder that "To be governed by a woman was to be subject to Fortune, to mere whim and caprice" (Norbrook 103) and that fortune was regarded as "a malicious spirit" (B. Walker 321).

Eleanor's speech makes it apparent why critics see in her Lady Macbeth's prototype, but her duke lacks ambition and she cannot convince him to become her accomplice. Her language more immediately prefigures Richard III, who while yet Duke of Gloucester murderously removes "stumbling-blocks."

The duchess understands her subordinate position ("Follow I must, I cannot go before"), but resorts to subversion and diabolism as did Pucelle. The scene between husband and wife is another modulation of the seduction scene enacted between Joan and the Dauphin. Eleanor, too, attempts to sway Gloucester with glamour; it is a fantasy she conjures up when she urges him to "gaze on" (1.2.9) the prize with her (as Joan exhorted Burgundy to "Behold" France in *IH6* 3.3.50). But by misreading a prophetic dream Eleanor reflexively becomes victim to her own powers of delusion.

When Eleanor overtly turns to diablerie, she hires "Margery Jordan, the cunning witch" and "Roger Bolingbrook, the conjurer" (*2H6* 1.2.75-76) to provide her with the necessary demonic aid.⁷ To resort to these tools is an act of diabolical rebellion, against not only the political state and the will of her husband, but against the social hierarchy. Historically,

⁷ Fleischer mistakenly asserts that "Margaret of Anjou conjures up the demons which visualize Dame Eleanor's pride" (166), confusing the witch Margery Jordan with Margaret.

there was a specific sense in which demoniac allegiance was necessarily associated with disobedience and its consequences. The voluntary contract with the Devil which was thought to be the essence of malevolent witchcraft could be seen, primarily, as spiritual apostasy.... English Puritan demonologists argued that the proper spiritual response to the tribulations of Satan was that of Job, while using the language of politics to convey the essential rebelliousness of his agents the witches. William Perkins, for instance, recommended that the natural law enjoining the death penalty for all enemies of the state be extended to “the most notorious traytor and rebell that can be.... For [the witch] renounceth God himselfe, the King of Kings, she leaves the societie of his Church and people, she bindeth herself in league with the devil.” (Clark, “Inversion” 119)

By allying herself with witchcraft, Eleanor is guilty, like Joan, of a satanic pact: The Duchess is also, as “traytor and rebell,” a heretic. Disobedience of her husband echoes Eve’s primal disobedience, which gives the garden imagery she uses added resonance. She eats the fruit of temptation, fatally seduced by ambition. In disobeying her husband and resorting to “the help of hell,” a phrase last applied to Joan (*IH6* 2.1.18), she is also guilty of rebellion against king and God.⁸ Heresy and rebellion conspire to upset the social metaphysic:

[Since] identity is clearly constituted by the structures of power, of position, allegiance, and service, any disturbance within or of identity could be as dangerous to that order as to the individual subject. Hooker ...asked: “see we not plainly that obedience of creature unto the law of nature is the stay of the whole world?” (1:157). Equally plain of course is that in this view *disobedience is literally world shattering*. (Dollimore, *Subjectivity* 55, italics mine)

⁸ Compare Kate’s speech qualifying the virtues of wifely obedience in *The Taming of the Shrew*:

Thy husband is thy *lord*, thy life, thy keeper,
 Thy head, thy *sovereign*

Such duty as the subject owes the prince,
Even such a woman oweth to her husband;
 And when she is froward, peevish, sullen, sour,
 And *not obedient* to his honest will,
 What is she but a *foul contending rebel*
 And graceless *traitor* to her loving lord? (5.2.146-47, 155-60, italics mine)

3.2 “Amazonian trull”: Margaret of Anjou in *Henry VI*

Margaret and Joan are both linked with witchcraft: like Joan, Margaret at first exerts a bewitching influence and becomes a temptress of two men whose careers end in disaster; she inverts the feminine by appropriating the Amazonian figuration; she possesses a rebellious spirit which at once usurps husband and king. Her sins—lust and pride, along with adultery and murder—provide another figuration of misrule.

When Joan exits, transfigured from a saintly vision into “the ugly witch” (*IH6* 5.3.34), an “*Alarum*” sounds, and Suffolk immediately enters “*with MARGARET* in his hand.”¹⁰ Without transition (there is no scene change), Margaret and Joan are iconically juxtaposed. Not everyone, however, agrees that Margaret and Joan are so coupled:

there is no adequate reason to support the view of Tillyard...regarding Margaret as the diabolical successor of Joan in the saga of England's divine punishment. In [*2 Henry VI*] Gloucester objects to the marriage to Margaret not because of any breach of contract or offense against God, but because it involves the loss of Anjou and Maine. (Kelly 253)

However, Pucelle's rebellious nature is proof that witchcraft and politics are entangled.¹¹ Margaret too is “an enchantress and a beguiling snare” (Ranald 175). Both Joan and Margaret begin infamous careers as beautiful snares—Joan is in disguise and Margaret is perceived as a beauty—and end as hags (Joan a “felling hagg” in *IH6* 5.3.42, Margaret a “Foul wrinkled witch” and “hateful with red hag” who also exits cursing in *R3* 1.3.163, 214). Margaret is not a true witch, as she is never depicted conjuring, but it is significant that York brands her with one of Joan's titles: “Outcast of Naples, England's bloody *scourge*” (*2H6* 5.1.118, italics mine). And they are each possessed of a glamorous beauty that instantly beguiles.

Heretical witches—sinful, tempting, destructive, inersive—are embodiments of misrule. Their sexuality is necessarily expressed as lust, antithetical to love and

¹⁰ Tillyard states that, “It is possible that we are meant to think that [Joan's] evil spells are transferred to another Frenchwoman, Margaret of Anjou” (168).

¹¹ Summers asserts that “Witchcraft was inextricably mixed with politics” (p. v), and follows up this statement with an inventory of contemporary political conspiracies in England and France where charges of diabolism were involved (pp. v-vii).

procreation. The seductive witch inspires greedy and illicit passions: Joan was a “Circe” (*IH6* 5.3.35) and an “enchantress” (42), and Margaret, though Suffolk’s prisoner, metaphorically becomes his captor.¹² Glamour’s “gorgeous beauty” (5.3.64) so dazzles Suffolk that he is tempted to release her: “My hand would free her, but my heart says no” (5.3.61). Paralleling the initial scene between Joan and the Dauphin, Suffolk is stricken by lust: “She’s beautiful; and therefore to be wooed” (5.3.78); “beauty’s princely majesty is such, / ‘Confounds the tongue and makes the senses rough” (5.3.70-71). That she emulates Joan by performing verbal glamour is shortly made evident in Henry’s reaction to her: “Her sight did ravish, but her *grace in speech*, / Her words *yclad with wisdom’s majesty*, / Makes me from wondr’ing fall to weeping joys” (*2H6* 1.1.32-34, italics mine). Unable to bear letting her go (“how can Margaret be thy paramour?” [82]), Suffolk defies plans already laid for the union of France and England through the house of Armagnac (*IH6* 5.1) and devises a way to keep her: “I’ll win this Lady Margaret. For whom? / Why, for my king” (5.3.88-89). Immediately, a new scene returns Joan to the stage with, “Bring forth that sorceress condemn’d to burn” (5.4.1). Margaret had been introduced as a prisoner, and here Pucelle is led on as a prisoner. Seduction begins Margaret’s career, as it had begun Joan’s. Moreover, Suffolk’s description of Margaret, with Joan’s spectre still fresh from her trial, has the effect of damning where it praises: He tells us that she possesses “valiant courage and undaunted spirit / (More than in women is commonly seen)” (*IH6* 5.3.70-71). Having just witnessed the spectacle of what such uncommon qualities in a woman can wreak, these words can only be treated with suspicion. Exactly as in Pucelle’s case (where ‘the Virgin’ was not), virtues are readily corrupted, inverted to become vices. Inherent in Margaret is the subversive image of the lust-inspiring witch: Margaret’s love for Suffolk, no matter how genuine (expressed in their scene of mutual passion in 3.2), is fatally undermined. Moreover, the inclusion of corrosive cursing as part of a tender scene of “heavy leave” (3.2.306)

¹² Throughout the *Henry VI* plays, there are repeated scenes of capture and escape (Joan and Talbot, Talbot and the Countess), metaphors of prey and victim, trapper and trapped. See Kay for a complete analysis of the imagery.

utterly subverts the redemptive value of love. These are damned creatures, and theirs is the image of ideal love inverted to become adultery and lust.

Temptress Margaret “advertizes both Pride and lack of chastity in the habitual wearing of finery referred to in the text” (Fleischer 84). When Margaret and Eleanor clash at court, the “women’s social and sexual insurrection illustrates political rebellion” (ibid.):

Not all these lords do vex me half so much
As that proud dame, the Lord Protector’s wife:
She sweeps it through the court with troops of ladies,
More like an empress than Duke Humphrey’s wife.
Strangers in court do take her for the Queen.
She bears a duke’s revenues on her back,
And in her heart she scorns our poverty.
Shall I not live to be aveng’d on her?
Contemptuous base-born callot as she is,
She vaunted ‘mongst her minions t’other day,
The very train of her worst wearing gown
Was better worth than all my father’s lands,
Till Suffolk gave two dukedoms for his daughter.
(2H6 1.3.75-87)

Since Henry is politically impotent, Margaret makes Gloucester her target, but reserves her malice for Eleanor. The realm breaks out into open combat soon enough, but the strife is prefigured in the “mock-battle” (Fleischer 220) between these rivals. The single-combat that Joan was so adept at is evident in Margaret’s portrayal. Virulently denounced by Margaret, Gloucester attempts to counter Margaret with an order designed to silence her: “These are no women’s matters” (2H6 1.3.117). But the arguments over claim to “regentship” (104) are very much “women’s matters”; Margaret and Eleanor make it their exclusive concern. In spite of references to clothing and hierarchy, true interests lie not in the costume trappings of power but in power itself. When Margaret threatens to execute Gloucester, he exits abruptly, speechless with fury. The queen, no longer facing her more powerful contender, turns on his proxy:

[The Queen lets fall her fan.]
Give me my fan. What, minion, can ye not?
[She gives the Duchess a box on the ear]

I cry you mercy, madam; was it you?
Duch. Was't I? yea, I it was, proud Frenchwoman.
 Could I come near your beauty with my nails,
 I could set my ten commandments in your face.
King. Sweet aunt, be quiet, 'twas against her will.
Duch. Against her will, good king? Look to't in time,
 She'll hamper thee, and dandle thee like a baby.
 Though in this place most master wear no breeches,
 She shall not strike Dame Eleanor unreveng'd.
 (2H6 1.3.138-47)

Elements of carnival-style inversion inform this passage: women, not men, are shown engaged in stylized combat (when Margaret drops her fan it is “a pseudo-gauntlet” [Fleischer 220]); “in this place,” as in the French court not long before, “most master wear no breeches.” Pride (“proud Frenchwoman”) and “will” are specified as the primal authors of enmity, and to emphasize this, the sin of pride is invoked when York taunts Suffolk with, “I cannot flatter thee in pride” (166). Warwick, himself later called “*Proud* setter-up and puller down of kings” (3H6 3.3.157, italics mine), joins the fray with accusations of treason by calling Suffolk “Image of pride” (176).

Margaret soon after commits a public act that confirms her alliance with the cartel of would-be usurpers. She dares to order Gloucester to give up his staff of office:

I see no reason why a king of years
 Should be protected like a child.
 God and King Henry govern England's realm.
 Give up your staff, sir, and the King his realm.
 (2.3.28-30)

Iconically, the Duke gives up the staff to Henry, “willingly at thy feet I leave it / As others would ambitiously receive it” (35-36), but the reference to ambitious “others” makes it clear that Gloucester understands Margaret’s purpose. Margaret considers it her staff: “now is Henry king and Margaret queen” (39). Two readings are implicit in Margaret’s “Give up your staff, sir, and the King his realm”: She orders the staff handed to the king, but she also implies that when Gloucester gives it up, king gives

up his realm—to queen. The emblematic tableau, of a silent king outreached by a grasping wife, is an image of misrule.¹³

That misrule has come to the throne is made explicit in the newly-empowered queen's first concern: to arrange for Gloucester's murder (*2H6* 3.1.80-81, 223-81). Margaret commits a gross transgression of justice (Gloucester's face is a "map of honor, truth, and loyalty" [3.1.203]), Shakespeare demonstrates that "conscience with injustice is corrupted" (*2H6* 3.2.235). In the queen's first speech of any length (3.1.4-41), Margaret's slander of Gloucester is an exercise in lust for power which, as moral corruption, is an extension of the sexual lust inspired by Suffolk. Vice usurps by rancour, perjury and injustice: "charity chas'd hence by rancor's hand; / Foul subornation is predominant, / And equity exil'd" (3.1.144-46).¹⁴ The emphasis on injustice and the words "equity exil'd" recall the image of Joan as justice inverted, the Astraea figure who has abandoned (or has been "exil'd" from) the world. Margaret's language is patterned as a series of oppositions: she rates Gloucester not a dove but a "hateful raven" (3.1.75-76), not a "lamb" as "he's inclin'd as is the ravenous wolves" (3.1.77-78). In this poisonous atmosphere, speeches intend the inverse of their surface meanings and glamour is at work—verbal and visual—in Margaret's tempting of the court to regard Gloucester as Henry's enemy. The queen exhorts the court to literally see things her way with, "Can you not *see?* or will ye not *observe* / the strangeness of his alter'd *countenance?*" (3.1.4-5, italics mine). The emphasis on the power of visual delusion may be a deliberate echo of Pucelle's exhortation to

¹³ The image of the grasping usurper recurs in this warning in *King John*:

A sceptre snatched with an unruly hand
Must be as boisterously maintained as gained,
And he that stands upon a slippery place
Makes nice of no vile hold to stay him up.
(3.4.135-38)

Margaret's "unruly hand" snatches at power in this scene; emblematically, the gesture makes explicit both her "slippery" position and her unscrupulous tactics.

¹⁴ This is evidently taken from Hall: "all the common wealth was set aside, and justice and equity clerely exiled" (qtd. in Bullough 121).

Burgundy. Margaret's depiction of Gloucester is of course self-referring: she herself is raven and wolf. Suffolk does the same when he says, "The fox barks not when he would steal the lamb" (55). Somerset (his entrance made on Shakespeare's cue with "fraudful man" [81]), means only ill with "All health to my gracious sovereign!" (82). The Cardinal, archly hypocritical, cautions against "treason's secret knife and traitor's rage" (174). Malfeasance has a firm foothold: Gloucester may be too "virtuous, mild, and too well given / To dream on evil" (3.1.72-73), but his enemies not only "dream on," but perform "evil." The *Astraea/Justice* banished by Joan remains absent.

That malfeasance in the form of seduction and betrayal does indeed infect the court is emblemized in snake-in-the-grass tropes: "Who scapes the lurking serpent's mortal sting?" (*3H6* 2.2.15).¹⁵ Margaret, travesty justice as did Pucelle, slanders Gloucester as an evil seducer:

...Gloucester's show
 Beguiles [Henry] as the mournful crocodile
 With sorrow snares relenting passengers;
 Or as the snake roll'd in a flow'ring bank,
 With shining checker'd slough, doth sting a child
 That for the beauty thinks it excellent.
 (*2H6* 3.1.225-30)

Margaret's snake imagery reveals, of course, not the Duke's treachery, but her own. The glamorous use of "show," "Beguiles" and "beauty" points to malefic seduction.¹⁶ Gloucester's gardener imagery (*2H6* 1.2.1-2, 3.2.175-76) and the comparison of England to a cankered rose garden (*2H6* 2.4.68, 3.1.31-33, 143) unmistakably combine with the intrusion of snakes to echo Eden's satanic corruption.¹⁷ Other lurking snakes include York, who soliloquizes his planned betrayal with, "I fear me you but warm the starved snake, / Who, cherish'd in your

¹⁵ Fleischer notes that this trope consistently points to treason (168-69), which is, in turn, linked to the diabolical structure.

¹⁶ Shakespeare may have borrowed his imagery from Hall's account of Margaret of Anjou's policy: "the serpent lurked under the grasse, & under sugered speache, was hid pestiferous poison" (Bullough 125).

¹⁷ The *Malleus Maleficarum* explains that "more witchcraft [is] performed by means of serpents, which are more subject to incantations than other animals, because that was the first instrument of the devil" (Summers 167).

breasts, will sting your hearts” (3.1.343-44). Suffolk too is a “serpent,” one of several “fell serpents” (3.2.259, 266) with “envenomed and fatal sting” (267)—Salisbury denounces Suffolk as “a serpent...with forked tongue, / That slily glided towards your Majesty” (2H6 3.2.259-60). The “forked tongue” is certainly a pointer to the double-speaking that has been the hallmark of the invaded English garden, reminiscent of the “fair persuasions, mix’d with sug’red” words” (1H6 3.3.18) typical of Joan’s deceit.

3.3 “Devlish policy”: Suffolk and Margaret

After Pucelle exits to her stake, tangible demonic elements of her legacy—illusion, temptation and heresy—remain operative. Translated to metaphor, the language, obfuscations and manipulations typical of witchcraft inform exchanges throughout the tetralogy. The ability to delude with the “lying wonders” of glamour persists in the rhetoric of characters in whom the will to power is paramount. The trick of *vis verborum* or verbal force is exemplified, especially in courtly Petrarchan passages, cloaked as they are with words and images borrowed from the lexicon of witchcraft. Petrarchan rhetoric is, on one level, a formula of words designed to attract, persuade and, often enough, to deceive. It is in this extension that the power of courtly rhetoric, of treacherous characters like Suffolk, is analogous to witchcraft: words are capable of bewitchment.

Elements of the bewitching, lust-inspiring witch reappear in the form of several seductive women (Margaret, Eleanor, Elizabeth, Anne). The schemes of Suffolk and Richard, Duke of Gloucester, can only succeed if they can persuade followers to join in their treasons—their language is infused with devilish temptations. Vice continues to pose as virtue: Joan’s witching of the Dauphin is emulated by Margaret’s adulterous pretence as Henry’s loving queen; Suffolk’s charming rhetoric camouflages his treason. The patterns of conspiracy and rebellion enacted by one dissembler after another are mutant forms of witchcraft’s glamour. The verbal leverage of persuasive

Petrarchan rhetoric is a modulation of diabolical persuasion to commit transgressions. The impulse to sin—which is, after all, the end purpose of diablerie—pervades characterizations in the tetralogy.

The Duke of Suffolk is executed for treason and tyranny. But Suffolk is more than an opportunist: Shakespeare takes the trouble, as he does with Joan, Eleanor and Margaret, to portray Suffolk as an outlaw linked to the dark carnival paradigm of rebellion and diabolism.

Suffolk, “Image of pride” (2H6 1.3.176), has his kinship with traitors—like Winchester, Somerset and the York clan—declared, significantly, in the Temple Garden scene, emblematic of the strife to come (in Shakespeare’s narrative, the trigger for civil war):

Faith, I have been a truant in the law,
And never yet could frame my will to it,
And therefore frame the law unto my will.
(1H6 2.4.7-9)

“Faith” is contradicted in the same line with his admission that he is a “truant” of an anarchic bent, the rhetorical device of chiasmus (ll. 8-9) pointing to inversion. He is outside the law, unable to “frame my will to it.” Pride is evident in his hubristic, defiant references to a criminal nature in the double emphasis on “will.”

Because witchcraft suffused Pucelle’s rhetoric, she “batt’red” Burgundy into submission with “haughty words” (1H6 3.3.78-79). Shakespeare extends to Suffolk’s Petrarchan-style rhetoric the power of *vis verborum*. In magic, this verbal force “leads to fascination...and most of the operations of witchcraft” (D.P. Walker 149). Charming speech is a form of temptation and bewitchment. In witchcraft, “A formula of words...may not only be an adequate substitute for the things denoted, but may even be more powerful” (D.P. Walker 81). Further, as “the idiom of contrariety was the basis of...the Petrarchan love sonnet” (Clark, “Inversion” 108), contrariety is invested with more than rhetorical ornament. When such rhetoric as Suffolk’s is merged with diabolical, inversive intent, the authority of the word is empowered to turn the world upside down.

Because the rhetoric of courtly love and of seduction can be seen as a species of verbal glamour, courtly wooing has a kinship with diabolical summoning: the lover seduces by bewitching the object of desire with visions the conceits verbally summon. Suffolk (paralleling Richard III's later seduction of Anne [R3 1.2]) inverts the ideal role of the Petrarchan lover—the movement is not upward toward the ideal of celestial celebration of love, but downward, to selfish ambition, lust and deadly sin. Suffolk wilfully chooses this path, even after warning himself that “Thou mayst not wander in that labyrinth; / There Minotaurs and ugly treasons lurk” (5.3.188-9). Suffolk inspires lust in Margaret, which, along with pride, informs their mutual corruption.

When Suffolk first meets Margaret (*IH6* 5.3), the link between Joan, witchcraft and the future queen is fresh:

It is by a kind of metempsychosis that Margaret becomes inspired with Pucelle's witchcraft at the moment of her death, [and] a similarly mysterious psychic energy inflates Suffolk's rhetoric to the extent that it bewitches the king. It is a heady Petrarchism indeed that can provoke at second hand a response like Henry's. (Berry 3)

Suffolk's scheme to crown Margaret so that he may become both her ruler and Henry's parallels Joan's seduction of the Dauphin. The link between bewitchment and witchcraft is made when Suffolk resolves to “bereave [Henry] of his wits with wonder” (5.3.195). Just as Joan exercised satanic seduction to enthral her Dauphin, Suffolk uses the glamorous power of rhetoric to “Solicit Henry with her wondrous praise” (*IH6* 5.3.190). Author of her succession, Suffolk's malice is practised first on Margaret and then, in “the style of a professional philanderer” (Brockbank 100), on his king. Shakespeare does not provide Suffolk's full description of the princess, but as the final scene of *I Henry VI* opens with Henry already swooning under a glamorous spell, it is clear that it had extraordinary power:

Your wondrous rare description, noble Earl,
Of beauteous Margaret hath astonish'd me.
Her virtues, graced with external gifts,
Do breed love's settled passions in my heart,
And like as the rigor of tempestuous gusts
Provokes the mightiest bulk against the tide,
So am I driven by breath of her renown,

Either to suffer shipwrack, or arrive
Where I may have fruition of her love.
(*IH6* 5.5.1-9)

Henry becomes a “lover with all the diseased Petrarchan symptoms” (Bevington 57), the scene “indicat[ing] the spreading moral blight” (Baker 590b) begun with Joan. Suffolk pretends to denigrate his own blazon as a “superficial tale,” only “a preface of her worthy praise” (10-11); he says it would require “a volume of enticing lines / ...to ravish any dull conceit” (14-15). However, he suddenly arrests the hyperbole to say that “she is not so divine” (16); “She is content to be at your command” (19). This qualification suggests that, however ravishing this “nature’s miracle” (5.3.54), like Joan she is “not so divine,” and the references to “virtuous and chaste intents” (20) spoken by her seducer have the same undermining effect that had the scene between Joan and the Dauphin: the divine exterior gilds iniquity, and though both Joan and Margaret might have arrived in their respective courts as virgins, lust and a parade of deadly sins arrived with them. That corruption and Margaret have one face is emphasized in the same scene when Gloucester, upon hearing Henry agree to marry Margaret, immediately retorts, “So should I give consent to flatter *sin*” (5.5.25, italics mine).

While critics may connect seduction with treason and betrayal, and some even agree that witchcraft is extended metaphorically to Margaret, beyond these initial links the theme of witchcraft is largely ignored for the remainder of the tetralogy. But ties with the paradigm of witchcraft remain intact with Suffolk: ambition, malice, and betrayal inform his acts, which are gradually revealed by Shakespeare to be animated by a demonic energy. Suffolk maliciously counters his king: he has no authority to make a deal with Reignier and his act is a breach of “contract” (*IH6* 5.5.28). His plot involving Margaret is, politically and morally, a crime. Suffolk’s private agenda (prefiguring Richard III, whose similar secret intentions also include seducing women) is actively bellicose, rebellious:

Thus Suffolk hath prevail'd, 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 Troyan did.
 Margaret shall now be Queen, and rule the King;
 But I will rule both her, the King, and realm.
 (1H6 5.5.103-8)

A Paris, he plots to steal the queen. However, to invoke the Trojan war is to foreshadow catastrophe, and to hope to “prosper better” is hubristic.

Suffolk uses glamorous eloquence to explain away England’s loss of a “large and sumptuous dowry” (5.1.20), which includes Anjou and Maine (2H6 1.1.51), as the triumph of love over politics:

A dow'r, my lords? disgrace not so your king,
 That he should be so abject, base, and poor,
 To choose for wealth and not for perfect love.
 Henry is able to enrich his queen,
 And not to seek a queen to make him rich:
 So worthless peasants bargain for their wives,
 As market men for oxen, sheep, or horse.
 Marriage is matter of more worth
 Than to be dealt in by attorneyship.

 For what is wedlock forced, but a hell,
 An age of discord and continual strife?
 Whereas the contrary bringeth bliss,
 And a pattern of celestial peace. (1H6 5.5.48-65)

However, it was Henry’s duty to honour the marriage Gloucester had arranged (1H6 5.1.441-45; 5.5.26-29), representing a crucial alliance ending prolonged warfare. It was not conceived as a love-match, and its being treated as though it were one signals both Henry’s obtuseness and the degree of Suffolk’s treachery. Suffolk’s words regarding “wedlock forced” are self-referring: he forces a marriage by breaking a contract and misleading the court. Suffolk’s own words describe the consequences of such coercion: “a *hell*, / *An age of discord and continual strife*” (italics mine). When he says that “the *contrary* bringeth bliss, / *And a pattern of celestial peace*” (italics mine), he ironically defines what a world free of undermining rebels like himself would be like. Opposition structures the passage: heaven and hell, discord versus concord. What is presented as the greatest good (marriage with Margaret) is in fact injurious,

while the course dismissed as the horse-trading of peasants ("market men" [54]) would be entirely in order.

By arranging that the queen will "rule the King" (recalling Joan and the Dauphin), Suffolk violates the social hierarchy. For a traitor and adulterer to rule over king and country is tyranny, the ultimate inversion of legitimate rule: "a tyrant was simply one who turned every rule of political life upside-down" (Clark, "Inversion" 112). Too late, Henry sees what Suffolk is: "Upon thy eyeballs murderous tyranny / Sits in grim majesty, to fright the world" (2H6 3.2.49-50). Already Shakespeare's Richard III is prefigured: The false courtier is unmasked as a tyrant. Like Pucelle, Suffolk was maleficence disguised, his true aspect revealed only shortly before his execution.

Before Margaret even sets foot in England, Shakespeare prearranges her role: She is Suffolk's agent, like Cade, installed by traitorous motives. The marriage arranged by guile effectively puts the finishing touches on what Joan's witchcraft and rebellion had begun, the eradication of Henry V's and Talbot's hard-won French legacy:

Fatal this marriage, *cancelling* your fame,
Blotting your names from the books of memory,
Rasing the characters of your renown,
Defacing monuments of conquer'd France,
Undoing all, as all had never been! (2H6 1.1.99-104, italics mine)

Gloucester's anaphoric iteration of obliteration and the antistrophic "fame," "memory," and "renown" stress loss, not of mere territories, but of a part of history itself. The language of annihilation verges on the apocalyptic. Such extreme damage has extreme consequences: Gloucester's lines look not only on the past but to the future.

Like Joan, Suffolk is revealed by degrees to be infected by diablerie, the imagery applied to him becoming progressively satanic in nature. Charged with conspiracy in the murder of Gloucester, Suffolk is a "serpent" "with forked tongue," one of many "fell serpents" (3.2.259, 266) with "envenomed and fatal sting" (267). He is a "raven" (3.2.40), "snake" (47), and "basilisk" (52). (Shakespeare's Anne

Neville uses the same order of imagery to describe Richard [R3 1.2]). Henry tells his rival, “Hide not thy poison with sug’red words” (45), recalling how Joan similarly “sug’red” words to coat a poisonous ruse (*IH6* 3.3.18). Henry finds that Suffolk’s touch “affrights me as a serpent’s sting” (47). On Suffolk’s arrest, Salisbury says he is protecting the king “From such fell serpents as false Suffolk is” (*2H6* 3.2.266). Warwick, however, puts the definitive stamp of fiendishness on the queen’s favourite, saying he would “Give thee thy hire and send thy soul to hell, / Pernicious blood-sucker of sleeping men” (*2H6* 3.2.225-6)—the image of the vampiric incuba is explicitly diabolic.

When he is banished, Suffolk takes leave of Margaret by warning to “dread curses” (*2H6* 3.2.330) that intensify in acrimony with each line: “Poison be their drink! / Gall, worse than gall, the daintiest that they taste!” (*2H6* 3.2.321-2). Margaret finally cuts him off, significantly when he invokes “All the *foul* terrors in *dark-seated hell*” (328, italics mine). The link with underworld imagery is reinforced by the Hades-like landscape of his execution scene:

The gaudy, blabbing, and remorseful day
Is crept into the bosom of the sea;
And now loud-howling wolves arouse the jades
That drag the tragic melancholy night;
Who with their drowsy, slow, and flagging wings
Cleep men’s graves, and from their misty jaws
Breathe foul contagious darkness in the air. (*2H6* 4.1.1-7)

Suffolk’s career as a traitor began with Margaret, and it is appropriate that the Lieutenant who captures Suffolk begins his list of crimes with her:

Thy lips that kiss’d the Queen shall sweep the ground,
And thou that smil’dst at good Duke Humphrey’s death
Against the senseless winds shall grin in vain,
Who in contempt shall hiss at thee again;
And wedded be thou to the hags of hell,
For daring to affy a mighty lord
Unto the daughter of a worthless king,
Having neither subject, wealth, nor diadem.
By devlish policy art thou grown great,
And like ambitious Sylla, overgorg’d
With gobbets of thy [mother’s] bleeding heart.

By thee Anjou and Maine were sold to France.
(2H6 4.1.75-86, italics mine)

Suffolk is charged with lust and adultery (“lips that kiss’d the Queen”), murder (“Humphrey’s death”), treasonous pride (“daring to affy”),¹⁸ fraud (alliance with “a worthless king”), diabolical collusion (“devilish policy”), and tyranny (“ambitious Sylla, overgorg’d”). The general state of rebellion is described as being his fault too:

And now the house of York, thrust from the crown
By shameful murder of a guiltless king
*And lofty, proud, encroaching tyranny,
Burns with revenging fire...*

.....
The commons here in Kent are up in arms,
And to conclude, reproach and beggary
Is crept into the palace of our king
And all by thee.... (94-103, italics mine)

As a rebel and one of the primary authors of the “encroaching tyranny,” Suffolk is integral to the diabolical infrastructure; the scene functions to show that the world is indeed upside down. Although to Suffolk it seems “impossible” (110) that he should die by the hand of a social inferior— “such a lowly vassal” (111)—in the inverted state a duke can be executed by a ship’s mate, just as the French Gunner’s son can kill mature English soldiers (1H6 1.4). Likewise, Horner’s social inferior Peter can defeat him in single combat (2H6 2.3.59-105), Gloucester can be murdered by his social inferiors, and the peasant Cade, in the next few scenes, will execute members of the peerage. Hierarchy is violated by the litany of lessers killing superiors in the same way that images of women ruling men invert the ideal order. Images of hierarchical rupture reinforce the structure of inversion: the upside-down world, spiked with the malicious, anarchic energies of the carnival, has no regard for rules of order.

¹⁸ Suffolk’s fatal arrogance was prefigured when he spoke of “the commons, rude unpolish’d hinds” as “a sort of tinkers” (2H6 3.2.271, 277). His “imperial tongue” (121) expresses itself several times in this encounter: “Jove sometime went disguis’d, and why not I?” (48); “O that I were a god, to shoot forth thunder” (104). He compares his death to those of Roman “Great men” (134): Cicero, Caesar, Pompey. He calls his captors “paltry, servile, abject drudges” (105) and “vild besonians” (134). He finds it intolerable that he should be done in by these “base men” (106): “It is impossible that I should die / By such a lowly vassal” (110-11).

Suffolk's portrait is, ultimately, that of a tyrant, linked by his imagery to the arch-tyrant, Satan.

3.4 "Amazonian Trull": Carnival Queen

Margaret comes to England's throne by guile. Joan's witchcraft concealed her nature, and similarly Margaret (having disposed of Gloucester) resorts to the "forked tongue" (2*H6* 3.2.259) of verbal glamour to persuade Henry of her sincerity:

And for myself, foe as [Gloucester] was to me,
Might liquid tears or heart-offending groans
Or blood-consuming sighs recall his life,
I would be blind with weeping, sick with groans,
Look pale as primrose with blood-drinking sighs,
And all to have the noble Duke alive. (2*H6* 3.2.59-64)

However, the language of her feigned grief ("groans" and "sighs") is infected — "pale," "blind," "sick"—and Margaret's choice of imagery gives her away: "heart-offending," "blood-consuming," "blood-drinking." When Henry realizes that his wife takes part in the "conventicles" (3.1.166) against his Protector, Shakespeare partners the sin of envy with subversion:

What low'ring star now *envies* thy estate,
That these great lords, and Margaret our queen,
Do seek *subversion* of thy harmless life?
(3.1.206-8, italics mine)

The scene underlines Henry's utter impotence and Margaret's dominance. Sexual inversion is played out when Henry exits, to his wife's scorn, because he is "Too full of foolish pity" (225): His "pity," more typical of women, is contrasted with Margaret's unnatural resolve to murder Gloucester. (The scene prefigures another inversion of male and female attributes when Margaret calls Suffolk "coward woman" [3.2.307]). Killing is customarily reserved as masculine sport, but here a bloody-minded woman appears as the court's political centre (3.1.223-330), an iconic correspondence with Joan at the French court; later in *3 Henry VI*, like Joan, an

Amazonian Margaret leads her armies (as "general" [1.2.68], as "Captain Margaret," [2.6.755, 4.1-38]).

It is when Henry learns of Gloucester's murder (3.2) that his weakness literally overcomes him, and he effectively abdicates, Shakespeare emblematically depicting a fainting king:

In *II Henry VI* the king swoons with grief at the news of Duke Humphrey's death; his literal fall is mirrored in his immediate and ultimate losses of power. In the earlier Parliament scene, Humphrey, already denuded of his staff of office, is arrested and taken away under guard, despite Henry's assertion of his innocence; Henry climbs down from his throne and follows his former Protector off the stage. Effective power is abandoned to Margaret, who remains on the throne and arranges for Humphrey's assassination. (Fleischer 69)

The scene reiterates that misrule—Margaret—commands the throne. That Henry is ruled and not ruler is made explicit in the last lines of his molehill scene: "Nay take me with thee... / Not that I fear to stay, but *love* to go / Whither the Queen intends" (*3H6* 2.5.137-39, italics mine). Like Gloucester, Henry is fatally uxorious.

With Henry's effective abdication, the murder of Gloucester, and the queen's rise to power, the pattern for the political future comes into focus. The state of affairs is, in fact, descriptive of carnival misrule. Bristol provides a definition of carnival misrule that, while not specific to the first tetralogy, can be appropriated to sketch the shape of the world of Henry VI:

When there is no longer any distinction to be made between rule and misrule, the possibility of order disappears because the differences that give rise to order have been abolished. Loss of difference gives rise to the terrifying possibility of indiscriminate violence and permanent loss of social cohesion. (52)

Carnival misrule eradicates order; in these plays, in its place it builds on the wreck of the state a new order based on violence and social and political inversion. The picture that begins to emerge of the Henry VI plays is a narrative of an elaborate, protracted dark carnival, presided over by assorted Lords of Misrule each in their turn.

That Margaret and misrule are synonymous is evident in her ultimate carnivalesque travesty of rule, order, and the feminine when she torments York on the

molehill (3H6 1.4). But the exchange of the comely qualities Suffolk once found so intoxicating for the harridan's near-bestiality is prepared for by Shakespeare. The playwright provides a context of sorts for the queen's unnatural behaviour. Pucelle was informed by an unmitigated demonic nature; she exhibits from first to last wholly evil ambitions. Shakespeare has Margaret begin her role as an innocent charmed by the snake-like Suffolk; corrupted, she engages in ambitious political subversion, ending in Gloucester's murder. But her descent into the depravity that makes her capable of not only conspiracy but of taking a physical hand in the cold-blooded murder of her enemies comes when Suffolk dies. With her lover's bloody head in her lap, Margaret becomes fully brutalized:

Oft have I heard that grief softens the mind,
And makes it fearful and degenerate;
Think therefore on revenge and cease to weep.
But who can cease to weep and look on this?
(2H6 4.4.1-4)

Even as she weeps, grief is traded for revenge, and her feminine aspect is repudiated. As York will shortly describe her, "Women are soft, mild, pitiful, and flexible; / Thou stern, obdurate, flinty, rough, remorseless" (3H6 1.4.141-42). Witnessing his queen's anguish over Suffolk's fate, Henry complains, "I fear me, love; if that I had been dead, / Thou wouldst not have mourn'd so much for me" (4.4.23-24). Margaret answers "No, my love, I should not mourn, but die for thee" (25). On the surface, the line is an instance of Margaret's deceitful nature, but I suggest that she also means precisely what she says: now that her paramour is dead, along with his schemes, Margaret's identity is wholly dependent on her office as Henry's wife: as she is no queen in her own right, she has no claim to power without him. The iteration of "love" in these lines is ironic, as she is no longer capable of love in a world bereft of Suffolk. She would "not mourn, but die" because the queen—her power, her name—would die, would cease to exist on the king's decease.

With the queen's resolve to "Think therefore on revenge and cease to weep" (2H6 4.4.3), she also makes a pact with the prevailing diablerie: her image begins to take on the characteristics of the Fury she becomes ("Which of you trembles not that

looks on me?"; "I am hungry for revenge" [R3 1.3.159, 4.4.61]). Senecan lament is typically reserved for the powerless ("lament is the epilogue to fall" [Hibbard 60]), and it is the only role all the surviving women are left with by the end of the tetralogy [R3 4.4.1-135]). But here, Margaret espouses bloody vengeance (she says later that "'Twere childish weakness to lament or fear" [5.4.37-38]). Shakespeare devises another parallel between Pucelle and Margaret by showing them each undergoing a transformation, from the appearance of virtue to the revelation of the ugly nature that lies beneath. Both are types of the devil-in-disguise, and are variations on a theme: Where Joan is gradually revealed to be the witch she has been all along, Margaret is also gradually stripped of her surface beauty by the corruption of lust and ambition to reveal the face of the fiend-like aspect beneath the mask of the once "gorgeous beauty" (IH6 5.3.64). Her "face" becomes "vizard-like, unchanging, / Made impudent with the use of evil deeds" (3H6 1.4.116-17).¹⁹ Margaret associates herself with the clan of unnatural women—Amazons and witches—degenerating by *Richard III* into a "scarcely human figure" (Tillyard 212). With the loss of love, the possibility of saving grace dissolves—such abandonment makes way for diablerie. When Henry says that he puts his hope in God, Margaret answers "My hope is gone, now Suffolk is deceas'd" (4.4.56). It was idolatry, as well as adultery, to love the duke, and with this denial of saving grace—to lose hope is to deny God—Margaret commits blasphemy.

¹⁹ In social historiography, choosing to collaborate with evil— "revenge" and "evil deeds"—is an important connection with the diabolical:

In general God permits Satan and demons to achieve destructive effects only with the collaboration of humans—nearly always women—who *of their own free will* give themselves to the service of mankind's and God's enemy. (Easlea 7, italics mine)

Of course, in a moral Christian society, retaliation against enemies is reprehensible: "Revenge is mine, saith the Lord."

The iconography concerning Margaret that figures prominently in *3 Henry IV* is that of the Amazon, a firm link with Pucelle (*1H6* 1.2.104).²⁰ York's denunciation on the molehill of the queen is an inverted blazon of womanhood:

How ill-beseeming is it in thy sex
 To triumph like an *Amazonian trull*

 'Tis beauty that doth oft make women proud;
 But God he knows thy share thereof is small.
 'Tis virtue that doth make them most admir'd,
 The contrary doth make thee wond' red at.
 'Tis government that makes them seem divine,
 The want thereof makes thee abominable.
Thou art as opposite to every good
As the antipodes are unto us,
Or as the south to the septentrion.

Women are soft, mild, pitiful, and flexible;
Thou stern, obdurate, flinty, rough, remorseless.
 (*3H6* 1.4.113-14, 128-36, 141-42, italics mine)

York's speech is set as a series of inversions. Central to it is the idea that ungoverned women—Amazons—are “abominable.” When Margaret taunts York with the handkerchief Clifford had dipped in his son's blood (79-81), images of maternal inversion reflect the queen's unnaturalness:

²⁰ Shakespeare's image of Margaret is drawn, in part, from Hall:

the Quene his wife, was a woman of a greate witte, and yet of no greater witte, then of haute stomacke, desirous of glory, and covetous of honor, and of reason, pollicye, counsaill, and other giftes and talentes of nature belongyng to a man, full and flowyng: of witte and wilnesse she lacked nothyng, nor of diligence, studie, and businesse, she was not unexperte: but yet she had one poynt of a very woman: for often tyme, when she was vehement and fully bente in a matter, she was sodainly like a wethercocke, mutable, and turnyng.... (Bullough 105-6)

This manly woman, this coragious quene...determined with her self, to take upon her the rule and regiment, bothe of the kyng and his kyngdome, & to deprive & evict out of al rule and authoritie, the [Duke of Gloucester].... (Bullough 106)

In spite of the litany of admirable qualities, one element in this description is outstanding: she had “talentes of nature belongyng to a man,” highly suggestive of the Amazon.

O tiger's heart wrapp'd in a woman's hide!
How could'st thou drain the life-blood of the child,
To bid the father wipe his eyes withal,
Yet be seen to wear a woman's face?

.....
That face of his the hungry cannibals
 Would not have touch'd, would not have stained with blood;
But you are more inhuman, more inexorable,
O, ten times more, than tigers of Hyrcania.
 See, ruthless queen, a hapless father's tears!
(1.4.137-40, 152-56)

Margaret's bestial "tiger's heart" and "inhuman" ruthlessness are counterpointed by York's affliction: Margaret has renounced grief, while York lets fall "a hapless father's tears." The masculine gives way to compassion while the feminine inversely hardens. Margaret is distinctly witch-like in this role: witches kill children. There can be no doubt that the state of affairs is upside down.

Margaret also invokes the Amazon to express her readiness to fight. Her message to her rival Edward IV states, "Tell him, my mourning weeds are laid aside, / And I am ready to put armour on". (3H6 3.3.229-30). Reiterating her resolution on Suffolk's death, she scorns grief in favour of action and explicitly appropriates the image of the Amazon warrior. Appearing at her army's head in 3 *Henry VI* while Henry is prisoner, she does indeed "play the Amazon" (4.1.106), but, interestingly, to the approbation of the Lancastrian faction. Margaret's speech is a model of not only royal address but also a warrior's exhortation to the troops. She enlarges upon a conceit of England as a shipwrecked kingdom, with herself as rescuing captain:

What though the mast be now blown overboard,
The cable broke, the holding-anchor lost,
And half our sailors swallow'd in the flood?
Yet lives our pilot still.

.....
 though unskillful, why not Ned and I
For once allow'd the skillful pilot's charge?
We will not from the helm to sit and weep,
But keep our course (though the rough wind say no)
From shelves and rocks that threaten us with wrack.
As good to chide the waves as speak them fair.
And what is Edward but a ruthless sea?

What Clarence but a quicksand of deceit?
And Richard but a [ragged] fatal rock?

.....
Why, courage then! what cannot be avoided,
'Twere childish weakness to lament or fear.
(5.4.3-6, 19-27, 37-38)

This speech, of course, is a modulation of the use of incantatory rhetoric to charm the listeners; it is a form of the demonic power of *vis verborum* to reify a state of affairs—ships and rocks are conjured up to beguile an audience. And the verbal seduction, as always, works. Margaret's son calls her "a woman of this valiant spirit" (5.4.39), prompting Oxford to exclaim: "Women and children of so high a courage, / And warriors faint! why, 'twere perpetual shame" (50-51). A woman and her child lead an army into battle and, instead of horrifying their soldiers with the spectacle of unnatural inversion, serve as inspiration. In addition to being an example of verbal seduction, this reaction to Margaret's speech-making provides evidence for Montrose's argument that the Renaissance figuration of the Amazon is indeed ambiguous, "a mixture of fascination and horror" ("Fantasies" 36). As he did in his portrait of Pucelle, Shakespeare flicks the Gestalt switch: Margaret is to be both abhorred and admired.

Because Margaret is a "ruthless Queen" (2*H6* 2.1.61), critics often assume that the vilifying male rivals to the throne are justified in blaming Margaret for the catastrophic state of affairs. Edward (later Edward IV) believes that if only Margaret had been "meek," the Yorks would have "slipp'd our claim until another age" (3*H6* 2.2.160, 162). His brother Richard suggests, in an Amazonian allusion, "That you might still have worn the petticoat, / And ne'er have stol'n the breech from Lancaster" (3*H6* 5.5.23-24). However, these are the accusations not of impartial witnesses but of usurpers. Such words are demonstrably suspicious in a world no longer rightside up. Margaret's portrayal seems deliberately constructed to ensure her liability but, significantly, this latter Margaret is seen only through the eyes of her enemies, Edward and Richard, who are each described as tyrants (3*H6* 3.3.206; *R3* 4.4.52). As

negative as Shakespeare's portrayal of the women may seem, it is clear that he balances the wicked acts of his female characters with those of equally malicious men.

Although Shakespeare demonstrates that both women and men are culpable for the generalized degeneration narrated in these plays, some critics assume that the portrayal of the women is especially negatively biased. This assumption leads to arguments like those put forward by Marilyn French, who thinks that Shakespeare minimizes Margaret's political clout in order to mount what appears to be a gratuitous misogynist attack:

As he did to Joan, Shakespeare omits references to Margaret's real power and ability, and he "taints" her with sexual "impurity." Margaret is powerful, but she is not powerful—she works through treachery and "policy," much as Joan worked through magic and policy. (47)

She argues further that, in digressing from his sources, Shakespeare appears to

[remove] Margaret from any direct political power or action, although by depicting the actual events, he could have laid responsibility for the war entirely on her. However, that would also show Margaret to be a very powerful woman, able to muster an army of her own, and fight against a union of the most powerful nobles in the land (which she was, and did). (French 53)

While it is evident that Shakespeare "taints" Margaret and links her with Pucelle and magic, he does not, however, omit references "to Margaret's real power and ability." The playwright is careful to invent a scene that equips her with a sceptre (2H6 2.3.28-30) and shows her to be in a bargaining position equal to any of the contending parties (she claims the throne, not for Henry, but for her son). Shakespeare depicts Margaret mustering an army, and her first military command results in the defeat of the Yorkist forces, proving her to be a formidable opponent. It is perhaps meant as a statement of colossal hubris on the younger Richard of York's part when he says "A woman's general: what should we fear?" (1.2.68)—a great deal, as it turns out. The line is a deliberate evocation on Shakespeare's part of Pucelle, who once played general too, with disastrous results for the English. Margaret not only wins the battle (1.4, 2.1) but takes a personal hand in the execution of Richard's father.

Margaret's murder of York is a powerful act. A critical event, it generates vengeful impulses in his son, the increasingly dangerous Richard—his murderous revenge leads to his eventual usurpation of England's throne. Margaret's exercise of military command is in deadly earnest, and Richard's underestimation of her points to the error of assuming otherwise. She is Lancaster's best soldier: Henry is ordered away from the battlefield because "The Queen hath best success when you are absent" (2.2.74). Although it might appear that Margaret "attempts to subvert [Henry's] authority in the political sphere by leading the royal army" (Ranald 178),²¹ it should be evident that Henry has given her no choice but to act as his proxy since he has consistently refused his duty in favour of pious meditation ("in devotion spend my latter days" [*3H6* 4.4.44]). In fact, Margaret's behaviour has been no different from that of the men surrounding her, who also work "through treachery and 'policy'." Margaret is vilified by critics as a divisive factor: "Liaisons with women [in the tetralogy] are invariably disastrous because they subvert or destroy more valued alliances between men" (Kahn 55). However, this would only be true only if masculine confederations were models of loyalty. It is blatantly obvious that any such "valued alliances" are either in the process of decay or have already been demolished—Gloucester and Suffolk have both been victims of factionalization; the English armies have split loyalties and wage war against one another; Henry's claim to being the 'legitimate' king is in grave doubt; nearly every player can be accused of betrayal and treason. Margaret plays the Amazon—the inversion of the feminine—because she is indeed, perhaps necessarily, behaving like the men.

At this point in the chronology, although Margaret and Henry trade roles in a by now familiar pattern of sexual inversion, the queen's actions are no longer politically subversive. The staff of office has been in her hands for some time; the

²¹ Ranald assumes that there is a "royal army," but this is a feudal system and these armies are headed, not in fact by the Crown, but by loyal nobles who muster their own men and arms. It is, in fact, an admirably pragmatic accomplishment on Margaret's part to successfully seek out and organize allies, something Henry is clearly incapable of doing. Far from being disregarded, I suggest that the queen's aptitude for organization cited in the sources is also evident in Shakespeare's portrayal of her. She is as militarily capable as was Pucelle.

“timorous wretch” Henry (*3H6* 1.1.231) has abdicated through negligence. Further, with Suffolk gone Margaret is no longer interested in usurping Henry, since to do so would only endanger her position. Not only does she need Henry in order to preserve her title: she must now attempt, through her son, to salvage the Lancastrian claim to the throne.

Margaret played carnival queen of misrule while Henry’s sceptre was in her hand, but when Henry is deposed she finds herself invoking his legitimacy as king in order to preserve her own authority. Suddenly, she must defend her husband’s claim—still playing the Amazon—but she does not fight for Henry’s sake, but rather for their son’s legacy. Henry’s renunciation of the Lancastrian line with “my son / ...I unnaturally shall disinherit” (*3H6* 1.1.193) has the immediate effect of outraging not only Margaret but also the few allies left to him. He is called “degenerate king” (183), Northumberland abandoning him with the words “unmanly deed!” (186).²² When Margaret effectively divorces Henry (247-48), Shakespeare presents it as a legitimate response in the defense of her son, a response evident in these reactions of members of Henry’s court. At least one critic, however, reduces Margaret’s fury on Henry’s submission to York to “the bathos of domestic comedy” (Berry 54), entirely misreading the scene as the theatrical commonplace of shrew versus henpecked husband. Margaret is here clearly empowered with what she and her allies deem to be a just cause: She enters with, “Who can be patient in such extremes?” (217). Henry’s pious patience is inappropriate, whereas her will to action is entirely in order, and it is Henry who is being perverse. He is twice accused of being an “unnatural” father (194, 216).

It is an act of disorder for Margaret to command her husband rather than to obey him. However, in this case, when by her disobedience a wife is in the right, the aberrancy of the state of misrule is emphasized: It demonstrates, not that Margaret has suddenly

²² In answer to critical charges that Margaret is consistently portrayed an emasculating woman (e.g., Khan), this scene can be cited to show that Henry is also culpable for his own undoing.

become a model of virtue, but that Henry, so often in the wrong, commits a fatal error. With a few words he betrays his son, his wife, his legacy, and everyone who fought to keep him on the throne. Margaret may degenerate into a feral Amazon, but she is *obligated* to act out her role as maternal defender:

What is it, but to make thy sepulchre,
And creep into it far before thy time?
.....
Had I been there, which am a silly woman,
The soldiers should have toss'd me on their pikes,
Before I would have granted to that act.
But thou prefer'st thy life before thine honor;
And seeing thou dost, I here divorce myself
Both from thy table, Henry, and thy bed,
Until that act of parliament be repeal'd
Whereby my son is disinherited. (1.1.236-37, 243-50)

Within her rights, Margaret invokes "honor" and legal prerogative, initiating military action with just cause. But in a world turned upside down there is no justice; and when a woman elects to direct her own fate along with that of the state, Fortune's capricious ship (*IH6* 1.2.138-9) sets sail with "Captain Margaret" (2.6.75) at the helm.

The killing of York is contrasted with Margaret's maternal protection of her son's legacy. Margaret becomes "ruthless Queen" (2.1.61), "warlike queen" (2.1.123), "proud insulting queen" (2.1.168). By the time she becomes "Captain Margaret" (2.6.75),

Role reversal is...almost total in *3 Henry VI*, with Margaret the 'better capteine than the king,...a manly woman, vysying to rule and not be ruled' [Hall]. Henry, bereft of power, is left to lament on his molehill, while Margaret does battle. (Ranald 179)

York is executed by a Fury, victim of Margaret's vengeance:

What, was it you that would be England's king?
Was't you that revell'd in our parliament,
And made a preachment of your high descent?
.....
Alas, poor York, but that I hate thee deadly,
I should lament thy miserable state. (1.4.70-72, 84-85).

It is always pointed out (for example, Saccio 138) that this scene is Shakespeare's invention and that its function is to show the extent of Margaret's deformation:

From this time on, Margaret becomes a monster.... Shakespeare increases the horror of her transformation by departing from his sources.... In her taunting of [York] she goes much further than the later Lady Macbeth in unsexing herself, attempting to become more masculine than a man, exulting in the death of the youngest Yorkist son, Rutland, and developing a coronation ritual for his doomed father in an ironic and frighteningly detailed parody of the Crucifixion: a molehill becomes his Golgotha, a handkerchief soaked in the blood of "pretty Rutland," the veil of Veronica, and a paper crown the crown of thorns. (Ranald 178)

The blood-stained handkerchief, Margaret's gruesome ridicule, and the mock-crowning all fuse in a blasphemous carnivalesque pageant exhibiting subversion and inversion of the sacred, Pucelle's—witchcraft's—hallmark. That vice is operative is conveyed emblematically. York reiterates Margaret's corruption by emphasizing the sin of pride: "proud queen" is repeated twice (118, 125). York dies when Margaret stabs him with a dagger (176). Emblematically, envy (Margaret) murders ambition (York): "the dagger was worn by the Vice in morality plays," the "chosen implement of treachery and murder," "a traditional weapon of Cain, the first murderer and prefigurer of the crucifiers of Christ, and hence of deadly Envy" (Fleischer 152). Like Joan, Margaret is vice-ridden, and triumphs in gory victories (viz. Joan standing over Talbot's corpse). In the taunting of York, misrule burlesques misrule; Margaret crowns the usurper York a mock-king, overtly carnivalesque imagery describing his last mock-coronation when he "*revell'd* in our parliament" (italics mine). Bristol notes that "Carnival is a travesty; costumes, insignia of rank and identity, and all other symbolic manifestations are mimicked or misappropriated for purposes of aggressive mockery and laughter"(63). The description might be of this scene, so closely does it follow the pattern; the language and gestures of carnival infuse Margaret's speech and acts:

I prithee grieve, to *make me merry*, York.
What, hath thy fiery heart so parch'd thine entrails
That not a tear can fall for Rutland's death?

Why art thou patient, man? Thou should'st be *mad*;
And I, to make thee *mad*, do *mock* thee thus.

Stamp, rave, and fret, that I may sing and dance.

Thou wouldst be fee'd, I see, to *make me sport*:

York cannot speak unless he wear a crown.

A crown for York! and, lords, bow low to him;

Hold you his hands whilst I do set it on.

[Putting a paper crown on his head.]

Ay, marry, sir, now looks he like a king! (86-96, italics mine)

“Anarchism...is more dramatic when it is iconoclastic,” and in this scene it

mutilates the idols of Knighthood, Kingship, Womanhood, and Fatherhood.... Holinshed tells how the Lancastrians made obeisance and cried, ‘Haile, king without rule’— ‘as the Jewes did unto Christ’.... Although Shakespeare suppresses the open blasphemy, he keeps the crucifixion parallel with the line, ‘now looks he like a king’ (1.4.96). (Brockbank 116)

But the “open blasphemy” is not “suppressed.” By enacting the mock-crowning of Christ, Shakespeare’s Margaret is blasphemous twice over: first, by mocking a scene emulating Christ’s passion; second, in ridiculing York’s compassion she denigrates a Christian virtue. Not only hierarchically inversive (a woman kills a man), metaphysically the tableau signifies heresy: Margaret’s performance has a satanic resonance. Further, her extreme act of injustice, saturated with parodic and blasphemous language, evokes the effigy of justice travestied—Joan’s image of Astraea inverted is again emblematically reproduced, and Margaret is linked with the heretical—witchcraft.

Margaret’s political undoing comes with the loss of her son. After having been so thoroughly vilified, recidivist tendencies show when she exhibits a natural, genuine, maternal grief on Prince Edward’s murder. With Henry deposed and her son dead, Margaret’s claim to England’s throne is finished. Loss of power means the end of her dominance, as did Pucelle’s abandonment by her fiends. Prince Edward’s stabbing by a succession of hands (5.5.38-40) iconically and rhetorically reenacts Rutland’s murder (1.3) and echoes her own murder of York. In her shock, she forgets that she too condoned the killing of a child: “You have no children butchers; if you had, / The thought of them would have stirr’d up remorse” (5.5.63-64). But she feels no

remorse, only defiance. Defeated and subverted, she orders Clarence to kill her too, absolving him of a murder charge with an inversive phrase: "'Twas sin before, but now 'tis charity" (5.5.76). She is "*led out forcibly*," Shakespeare manipulating the scene so that she exits on a curse: "So come to you, and yours, as to this prince!" (82). Both Joan and Cade, two other diabolically informed figures of misrule, also exit cursing (*IH6* 5.4.86-91; *2H6* 4.10.63-65). Edward does not allow Richard to kill her—"for we have done too much" (43)—and "Hard-favor'd Richard" (78) proves a prophet. Where Pucelle "hath liv'd too long, / To fill the world with vicious qualities" (*IH6* 5.4.35), Margaret lives (in *Richard III*) "to fill the world with words" (*3H6* 5.5.44).

3.5 "Foul wrinkled witch": Margaret and *Richard III*

Margaret appears in *Richard III* as "Chorus for [Richard's] Tragedy of Blood" (Neill 100); in historical terms, she anachronistically materializes from banishment to act as witness for the prosecution. The stage directions tell us she is "old" (*R3* 1.3.109), and seems to Richard a "Foul wrinkled witch" (1.3.163). As in Pucelle's case, loss of power forfeits glamour. Shakespeare sends a ghost-like Margaret to haunt the future king: she is a "hysterically selfish woman" who degenerates into a "scarcely human figure" (Tillyard 182, 212). She is "the furious prophetess" (Neill 100), "the living ghost of Lancaster, the walking dead, memorializing the long, cruel, treacherous, bloody conflict" (Rossiter 77). The once "captive scold" (*3H6* 5.5.29) resumes her maledictions, an echo of Pucelle's appearance as a "Fell banning hag" (*IH6* 5.3.42). The displaced Margaret resorts to the "curse of the scold" (Jardine 118), possessed of "a carping voice, somewhere between witch and female prophet" (ibid. 117). While her speeches can be seen as evidence of her impotence—"the only power the woman can wield is her power to display through verbal abuse" (ibid. 118)—Margaret's

figure also clearly evokes the Pucelle who exited as an ugly, cursing creature.

Margaret is

a needling, railing, lamenting, cursing woman in whom are embodied past, present, and future as she chants her continual litanies of past crimes and sorrows (recalled with editorial suppression of her own guilt) and prophesies the fates of her enemies. Through her curses the play is held together, with the motifs of vengeance, crime, and punishment never out of sight or hearing. She is no longer a great beauty, and fallen from power she is both victim and Nemesis, the equivalent of the Senecan furies She has refused to make peace with God or humankind; she has learned no charity, no resignation, and feels no guilt for her crimes. Her frustrated energy remains, but it has all gone into exultant vengeance, into the world of words, curses which can strike fear even into the heart of Richard III. (Ranald 180)

“She is endlessly called upon to fill that chorus-like role of furious fate that in *Macbeth* could be portrayed only by witches” (Wood 215).

Margaret’s witch-like appearance in *Richard III* is iconographically consistent with her characterization in the previous plays:

[She] evokes several malignant icons. One is Envy, as in the common “Invidiae descriptio”: her head is covered with snaky locks signifying her viperous thoughts; her sore eyes and feeble, aged body show how she pines away while others thrive; her bleeding breast, clawed by her own long nails, shows how “her selfe, doth work her owne unrest.” (Fleischer 163)²³

“She is also associated with Pride” as she corresponds to the icon of “Niobe in grief among the slain victims of her pride” (Fleischer 163). In *Richard III*, she is still irrepressible, the texture of her words recalling the Margaret of 2 *Henry VI* who railed against her rival Eleanor (1.3). With a verbal assault—the battering power of words—Margaret addresses Richard and Queen Elizabeth’s court:

A husband and a son thou ow'st to me—
And thou a kingdom—all of you allegiance.
This sorrow that I have, by right is yours,
And all the pleasures you usurp are mine.
(1.3.169-72)

²³ Fleischer’s quotation is from Andrea Alciati’s emblem book, quoted in Green 432.

When Elizabeth applauds Richard's curse on her, Margaret calls her "Poor painted queen, vain flourish of my fortune!" (240). In a later scene, Margaret elaborates with carnival imagery:

I call'd thee then *vain flourish* of my fortune;
I call'd thee then *poor shadow, painted queen,*
The *presentation* of but what I was;
The *flattering* index of a *direful pageant*;
One *heav'd a-high*, to be *hurl'd down below*;
A mother only *mock'd* with two fair babes;
A *dream* of what thou wast, a *garish flag*
To be the aim of every dangerous shot;
A *sign* of dignity, a breath, a bubble;
A *queen in jest*, only to fill the scene.
(4.4.82-91, italics mine)

Elizabeth is portrayed as a mock-queen, corrupted by pride, deluded by vanity and ambition. Her reign has been but a "dream," an inverted, "direful pageant," now a microcosm of antithesis:

For happy wife, a most distressed widow;
For joyful mother, one that wails the name;
For one being sued to, one that humbly sues;
For queen, a very caitiff crown'd with care;
For she that scorn'd at me, now scorn'd of me;
For she commanding all, obey'd of none.
Thus hath the course of justice whirl'd about,
And left thee but a very prey to time.... (4.4.98-106)²⁴

Of course, Margaret's descriptions are self-reflexive: she knows exactly how to describe Elizabeth's state, as it mirrors her own.

When Elizabeth begs her to stop her recriminations, "O Harry's wife, triumph not in my woes!" (59), Margaret is unsympathetic:

Thou didst usurp my place, and dost thou not
Usurp the just proportion of my sorrow?
.....
Farewell, York's wife, and queen of sad mischance,
These English woes shall make me smile in France.
(4.4.109-10, 114-15)

²⁴ The image evoked by "the course of justice whirl'd about" is reminiscent of Talbot's words on his defeat by the witch posing as justice/Astraea: "My thoughts are whirl'd like a potter's wheel" (*IH6* 1.5.19).

This scene of cursing and lamenting women has been interpreted as a counterpoint to male rivalry, a tableau of mutual female compassion, a “positive progression of women from a condition of bickering rivalry to a condition of sympathetic camaraderie” wherein the women “evidence a new humanity” (Miner 45). However, the quality of feeling is not quite so fine as this: Iconically and rhetorically Margaret remains consistent with the figure of envy.²⁵ Margaret never confesses any pity for Elizabeth and, moreover, she exits by saying she will “smile” to think on Elizabeth’s woes.²⁶ (Richard uses the same image to frame his cruelty: “I can smile, and murder whiles I smile” [3H6 3.2.182]). When Margaret tortures her captive on the molehill— “make me merry, York” (3H6 1.4.86)—her mock-smile is akin to a satanic grin. Margaret and Richard’s iniquities, and their mutual figurations as malefic agents, make them equals: Both are unrepentant criminals (as Richard puts it, “Sin will pluck on sin” [R3 4.2.64]), handy with a dagger, keepers of the blood-feud between Lancaster and York.

Quite apart from how she is characterized in *Richard III*, it is Margaret’s very presence that is also important to the play. Without Margaret’s central denunciations of Richard, much of his demonic aspect is expurgated, as the bulk of Shakespeare’s explicitly satanic imagery applied to him is derived from her (1.3, 4.4). Richard had revealed himself only in soliloquy, and only once in another’s company—to Henry just before committing regicide (3H6 5.6). It is in Margaret’s speeches that Richard’s nature is *publicly*, for the first time, revealed to be diabolical: She names him a “devil”

²⁵ The following description of an emblem depicting envy (Whitney 94) could, I suggest, without alteration, serve as a portrait of Margaret in *Richard III*:

What hideous hagge with visage sterne appears?
Whose feeble limmes, can scarce the bodie staie:
This, Enuie is: leane, pale, and full of yeares,
Who with the blisse of other pines awaie.
And what declares, her eating vipers broode?
That poysoned thoughtes, bee euermore her foode.

²⁶ For Ovid’s Envy, “Only the sight of suffering could bring a smile to her lips” (*Metamorphosis* 71).

(*R3* 1.3.117), calls him “elvish-mark’d” (227) and “son of hell” (229); she says “Hie thee to hell... / Thou cacodemon, there thy kingdom is” (141-42). That she is thought to be “lunatic” (253) underscores her Cassandra-like role. Her speeches have great power, Smidt granting that “Margaret’s curses are no mere displays of clairvoyance but obviously potent agents in bringing about the events she prophesies” (56). While Smidt does not categorize the nature of these “potent agents,” Margaret’s curses do closely resemble the incantatory power of *vis verborum*.

“Academic commentators on *Richard III* have found much to admire in the character Richard” (Waller 161), and this attitude expresses a critical tendency to valorize Richard’s observations and devalue those made on Richard by Margaret. To the deposed queen, and in the eyes of the women facing him in the same scenes with Margaret, he is evil incarnate.²⁷ Omitting Margaret dramatically allows for a charismatic Richard—humanly Machiavellian—and discounts the import of diabolical connections made between his coronation and events that went before.²⁸ Margaret’s confrontation is a bridge with the Richard of the previous two plays, a vital linkage

²⁷ Waller calls attention “to the enormous [critical] discrepancy concerning what judgment is to be made of, what value is to be seen in, the figure of Richard” (162). “He has been called, among other things, ‘buoyantly vital,’ ‘fascinating,’ ‘creative,’ ‘self-knowing,’ ‘a great artist,’ ‘a great actor,’ ‘a wit,’ ‘an ironist,’ ‘a human representative, bolder than ourselves, resisting the oppression of history,’ ‘a ruthless, demonic comedian with...the seductive appeal of an irresistible gusto.’ By contrast, the female characters within the play refer to him as a ‘wretch,’ a ‘villain slave,’ ‘the slave of nature,’ ‘a toad,’” (ibid. 161). Agreeing with Waller’s contention that critics—predominantly male—tend to disregard the cues Shakespeare provides in the women’s lines, I would add that commentators tend to exalt the antihero Richard, while the speeches in the text denounce an antichrist.

²⁸ Margaret’s role argues strongly that *Richard III* should be treated as part of a tetralogy and not as an independent entity. Charles T. Wood discusses how productions of *Richard III*, from Colley Cibber to Laurence Olivier, omit Margaret out of a misplaced regard for historical verisimilitude (the real Margaret of Anjou was exiled to France after Tewkesbury and never returned to England). Margaret “is conspicuous by her absence in Olivier” (Wood 215). To Wood’s conclusion that to omit her for the sake of historical accuracy is misguided, I would add that her expurgation ruptures Shakespeare’s structure. Shakespeare took the trouble to arrange for her presence in his play: She is the focus of two extended scenes, insisting on drama not chronicle. Her sudden, dramatic and unexpected appearance from the past of *Henry VI*—with its intense, central images of Margaret as a Fury—is vital to Richard’s demonic figuration.

without which Richard's character loses much not only of its chronological but of its structural and metaphoric context. Since Margaret's caustic accusations generalize into wholesale denunciation by all the women, her speeches are pivotal to his characterization. Excluding Margaret has the effect of blunting Richard's edge, making him, perhaps, psychologically more palatable. Margaret is resurrected by Shakespeare because she equips us with eyes through which we are meant to see him: "Sin, death, and hell have set their marks on him" (1.3.292). Margaret is clearly elemental, not incidental, to Richard's portrayal.

Chapter 4. "This dark monarchy": Richard III

4.1 The York Clan

The Henry VI plays are informed by the dark carnival—the inverted world—of diablerie, rebellion, and misrule. The State is the antithesis of unity and moral order, where, literally, nothing is sacred—the church is corrupt, as Beauford amply demonstrates, no one and everyone has a legitimate claim to the throne, the loyalties of factions are unpredictable (Pucelle's "turn and turn again") and a murderous civil war illustrates the extent of the damage being done to the country.

The York clan—Richard of York and his three sons—figures as a short list of Shakespeare's thematic devices in the tetralogy: rebellion, carnival misrule, diabolism. A decidedly unholy trinity of Yorks appear in turn as kings of misrule: first the elder York, who is given a paper crown in a distinctly carnivalesque ceremony (*3H6* 1.4); next, Edward, who during his reign is described as making a mockery of royal oaths, neglecting his duties, and engaging in immoral behaviour; and finally Richard, who is portrayed by Shakespeare in explicitly diabolic language.

Shakespeare keeps to the pattern of linking diablerie and temptation in his depiction of Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York. York uses the language of temptation to describe Cade's recruitment: "I have *seduc'd* a headstrong Kentishman" (*2H6* 3.1.356, italics mine). Shakespeare explicitly uses the appellation of "devil" to describe Cade (*2H6* 3.1.371), and by extension, York is also devilish: his "substitute" Cade, too, was a "monstrous traitor" (*2H6* 4.10.66). The synergistic union of seduction and diabolical subversion first introduced with Pucelle has not lost its impulse. Like most of the powerful characters in the tetralogy, York is ambitious and proud: "dogged York, that reaches at the moon" has an "overweening arm" (*2H6* 3.1.158-9). He is a "monstrous traitor," an "audacious traitor" (5.1.106, 108): these images taken together form a character in whom rebellion and diablerie are linked once more. That York is also a figure of misrule, based on a satanic paradigm, is demonstrated in the first scene of *3 Henry VI*. Fleischer has pointed out in what ways

York emulates the diabolic pattern of mockery and rebellion. In Parliament, “the sturdy *rebel*” (1.1.50, italics mine) climbs onto the throne:¹

Here York physically ascends the throne, while his sons assume the places of honor beside him. When King Henry enters, York does not move, not until Henry has agreed to adopt him heir. Henry wears the crown, but he is made to stand in the place of a subject while York sits in the seat of power. When York does leave, Henry still does not take his rightful place, but chooses to mock Christlike humiliation.... This scene very clearly reveals the dual valence of stage emblems. *York shows satanic fallaciousness in his presumption....* (Fleischer 74, italics mine)

When Henry literally allows York to take his place, both characters become figures of misrule:

Usurpation...visibly defies both God and Fortune; but more, the laborious and undignified business of clambering up onto the seat of state and laying hands on the sacred attributes of power is a piece of conventional buffoonery inherited from the mystery cycles, *a specific allusion to Satan's form of wilfull stupidity.... in the English history play, to take the crown is to imitate Satan*, in one kind of mockery; to suffer a coronation is to imitate Christ in his Mocking and Scourging.... usurpation—with great psychological as well as political validity—conventionally appears as a series of parallel scenes or a pageant of divided royalty, doubled again by a parodic, mock-state plotting which reinforces both allusions. (Fleischer 73, italics mine)

What Fleischer terms the “parodic, mock-state plotting” can be further defined: the parody being played out is another instalment in the account of the inversion of the Christian moral order begun in *1 Henry VI* with Pucelle and Beauford. York the usurper imitates the satanic will to undermine order. The mock king is killed in a blasphemous parody of a sacred Christian icon, the Mocking of Christ. The graphic rise and fall of the Duke of York takes place within the space of a single act; Shakespeare's handling of the material underscores the political instability: the world all too readily turns upside down.

¹ For dramatic purposes, Shakespeare collated a number of parliamentary events and rearranged the chronology. No single event such as the one depicted here actually took place. However, it is interesting that a Parliament called by Queen Margaret in 1459 to declare York and his allies traitors, in part dramatically reproduced in this scene, became known as the *Parliament of Devils* (Saccio 134-5, italics mine).

York's son Edward in *3 Henry VI* also becomes a figure of misrule by falling into the same trap that contributed to the ruin of Henry VI before him: his marriage to Elizabeth Grey, the result of a seduction, breaks a vital contract. Warwick, like Gloucester before him, wishes to see France and England united with a judicious marriage. He arranges for Bona, sister to the French king, to wed Edward in a marriage intended to rectify the bad bargain made for Margaret. Edward initially approves of Warwick's plan:

... in thy shoulder do I build my seat,
And never will I undertake the thing
Wherein thy counsel and consent is wanting.
(*3H6* 2.6.100-2)

Edward repeats a vow destined to be broken, just as Henry had once vowed to obey his regent's wishes, only to marry a "daughter of a worthless king" (*2H6* 4.1.81). In France, Warwick's rhetoric proves so compelling that Bona, Edward IV's intended bride, is bewitched: Bona says "*Mine ear hath tempted judgment to desire*" (133, italics mine)—Bona's seduction by proxy parallels not only Henry's by Suffolk, but repeats the motif of the primal seduction of Eve. Edward breaks his oath when struck with a sudden lust. Lady Grey, in a parallel with the young Margaret of Anjou, practises unintentional glamour. Though Edward had no plans for anything more than sexual play ("I aim to lie with thee" [3.2.69]), he gets tangled in his own web of seduction and agrees to marry the widow, and thereby, in fact, "Edward capitulates to her terms" (Hibbard 60). Edward's rash decision (his brother Richard scorning it as "ten days' wonder at the least" [3.2.113]) points to his flawed material as king, and has three grave repercussions. First, it permanently ruptures the immediate possibility of peace with France; second, it causes a devoted ally in Warwick to defect, which once again undermines the king's ability to unify the kingdom; third, it incurs the dangerous Richard's disgust with his brother's lack of judgment—the same flaw which undid Henry—and sets in motion the series of events that will lead to the future king's tyranny.

.....
I came from Edward as ambassador,
But I return his sworn and mortal foe.
.....

...I shall turn his *jest* to sorrow.
I was the chief that *rais'd him to the crown*,
And I'll be the chief to *bring him down again*;
Not that I pity Henry's misery,
But seek revenge on Edward's *mockery*.
(*3H6* 3.3.224-5, 229-30, 232, 254-5, 256-65, italics mine)

The words “masquers,” “revel,” “uncrown,” the quick succession of contrarities, “ambassador” to “foe,” “jest to sorrow,” all signify the inversions familiar to carnival, and are repeated for dramatic emphasis word for word by the Post in the next scene (4.1.92-111). The Amazon once again puts “armor on” and taunts a member of the York clan. Clarence—symbol of the state of civil war, a rebel against his own brothers—states the consequence of Edward’s “lustful” haste: “King Lewis / becomes your enemy, for mocking him” (4.1.29-30). The scene is Bakhtinian “typical carnival” wherein everything “is inverted in relation to the outside world. All who are highest are debased, all who are lowest are crowned” (Bakhtin 383). Mockery, as Shakespeare demonstrated with Joan and Margaret, is linked with blasphemy, a signal that this carnival world is heretical. The word “mockery” (265) ends Act 3 of *3 Henry VI*, and with it the inverted kingdom, ruled by mock-kings—first Henry and then Edward—is explicitly reified as a travesty of proper state and order. Travesty anticipates the next tyrant—diabolical mockery is the Duke of Gloucester’s chief characteristic.

4.2 “When most I play the devil”: Profaning the Sacred

Richard of York emulates the maledictions of Joan, Suffolk, and Cade when he curses England just before he dies with a paper crown on his head: “My ashes, as the phoenix, may bring forth / A bird that will revenge upon you all” (*3H6* 1.4.35-36). York’s son Richard steps forward as early as *2 Henry VI* as the shape of things to

come: "heap of wrath, foul indigested lump! / As crooked in thy manners as thy shape!" (5.1.157-8). He is the image of future kingship, the only possible consequence of so distorted a world: the inverted king, the monstrous tyrant. In *Richard III*, the themes of witchcraft, diablerie and rebellion fuse, expressed as a synergy of diabolical energy: Richard III.

Subversion by witchcraft and diablerie triggered rebellion and inversion; Pucelle's appearance heralded an infection of the metaphysic, in the form of witchcraft, followed by the litany of rebels and mock kings. Richard's "difus'd infection" (*R3* 1.2.78) is the worst of these miasmatic contaminations: it is diabolarchy—and what is diabolarchy but the apotheosis of the profane?

There is one direct reference to witchcraft in *Richard III*. To consolidate his position, Richard uses charges of witchcraft against potential enemies, a tactic recalling how Suffolk's faction disposed of Eleanor of Gloucester in *2 Henry 6*. Richard accuses both Queen Elizabeth and Edward's mistress Jane Shore of witchcraft, and presents a life-long deformity (cited in *3H6* 3.2.156) as evidence against the women. The verbal force and glamour of diabolic agency are evident in the passage:

I pray you all, tell me what they deserve
That do conspire my death with devilish plots
Of damned witchcraft, and that have prevail'd
Upon my body with their hellish charms?
.....
...be your eyes the witness of their evil.
Look how I am bewitch'd; *behold*, mine arm
Is like a blasted sapling, wither'd up;
And this is Edward's wife, that monstrous witch,
Consorted with that harlot, strumpet Shore,
That by their witchcraft thus have marked me.
(3.4.59-62, 67-72, italics mine)

Richard's pronounced inflection of "eyes," "witness," "Look," and "behold" are reminiscent of Pucelle's artful emphasis on bewitching glamour (*IH6* 3.3). Further, the accusations are politically useful: they slander would-be rivals with the familiar

configuration of lust and witchcraft,² and, neatly, provide a pretext for manipulating Hastings into a fatal hesitation.³ Metaphorically, however, witchcraft is highly self-referring: the “devilish plots” and “hellish charms” are his own; when the “black magician” (1.2.34) accuses others of “damned witchcraft,” it is, as he admits, to “clothe my naked villainy” (1.3.35). Pucelle used a similar form of disguise. Glamour is at work.

Witchcraft is marked by illusion, temptation, and blasphemy, and both Richard and Pucelle share these quintessential satanic traits. But there is one more figuration to add to Shakespeare’s list of idolatrous icons, the ultimate form of diabolical inversion. In medieval and Renaissance theology, the figure of the antichrist is the consummation of satanic vice: the *Malleus Maleficarum* states that, “the works of the Antichrist may be said to be deceptions, since they are done with a view to the *seduction* of men” (Summers 64, my italics). Joan used deception to seduce her victims, and Richard does the same. One synopsis of medieval accounts of the Last Judgment could double as a description of Richard:

Antichrist goes out into the world, working false miracles, deluding the populace, persecuting the saints, encouraging unjust rulers and corrupt bishops, and preparing for the final battle against Christ. (Russell 272)

The portrait can serve as a shorthand description of the action begun in *1 Henry VI*: Pucelle worked “false miracles”; Henry believed the “false miracle” perpetrated by the Simpcoxes. The “deluding of the populace” was the purpose of Joan’s witchcraft, along with the assorted visual and verbal deceptions and seductions practised by

² This attempt on Richard’s part to remove women of the court who have achieved measures of legitimacy by associations with powerful men is more effective than political slander. Given Richard’s precarious position, any charges of treason against them would necessarily be vague and would risk stirring up supporters. Witchcraft, however, neatly disposes of these problems. Such charges would be difficult—if not impossible—to disprove, virtually guaranteeing conviction.

³ These lines instantly spark in Hastings the revelation of what Richard is—Hastings indeed sees diablerie, but not in the direction Richard would have him look. It is a fatal Medusa-like look: Hastings merely uses the word “If” in his appraisal of the witchcraft charge (73) and with the equivocation in that word finds himself within five lines declared a traitor under sentence of death.

Suffolk, Margaret, York, and Cade. “Persecuting of saints” was effected by Pucelle not only when she pushed Saint Denis from his place as France’s saint (*IH6* 1.6.28-29), but also by her rebellion when she destroyed Henry V’s legacy and desecrated the body of Talbot, both characters having been described in near-hagiographic terms. “Unjust rulers” have been the status quo in the plays, “corrupt bishops” epitomized by Beauford, and “the final battle” is alluded to in some of the apocalyptic imagery, as will be seen. Moreover, there is a gloss in the Geneva Bible to Revelation 17 that is also illuminating: “Antichrist is copared [sic] to an harlot because he seduceth ye worlde with vaine words, doctrines of lies, & outwarde appearace [sic].” Joan was described as a “high-minded strumpet” (*IH6* 1.5.12) and a “trull” (2.2.28) or whore, as was Margaret, an “Amazonian trull” (*3H6* 1.4.114). In her figuration as a harlot/witch, she prefigures Richard/antichrist who also “seduceth ye worlde” with verbal and visual glamour.

That Richard should finally emerge as an explicitly antichrist-like figure is in keeping with the picture Shakespeare has been painting of the world of the tetralogy. As in the above description of the antichrist, Richard depends on the “seduction of men” for his rise to power and uses glamour as a device of diabolical temptation. His successes can be seen as forms of “false miracles”—his wooing of Anne and his spectacular conquest of all obstacles to the throne are instances. He is an “unjust” ruler; he uses two “corrupt bishops” (3.7.94) as a frame for his presentation of himself as an icon of piety. And lastly, he prepares for his “final battle” against a virtuous opponent, Richmond, who Shakespeare displays with a full set of distinctly Christian values.

Richard, a heretic like Pucelle, makes a game of profaning the sacred:

I do the wrong, and first begin to brawl.
 The secret mischiefs that I set abroach
 I lay unto the grievous charge of others.
 Clarence, whom I indeed have cast in darkness,
 I do bewEEP to many simple gulls—
 Namely, to Derby, Hastings, Buckingham—
 And tell them ‘tis the Queen and her allies

That stir the King against the Duke my brother.
 Now they believe it, and withal whet me
 To be reveng'd on Rivers, Dorset, Grey.
 But then I sigh, and, *with a piece of scripture,*
Tell them that God bids us do good for evil:
And thus I clothe my naked villainy
With odd old ends stol'n forth of holy writ,
And seem a saint, when most I play the devil.
 (R3 1.3.323-37, italics mine)

Richard gloatingly prides himself on abusing scripture. In this pious pretence, he is linked both with Pucelle and Cardinal Beauford, who arrogated the offices of the Church to the subversion of the State. Richard makes a show of “not lulling on a lewd love-bed, / But [being] on his knees at meditation” (3.7.72-73). We know already, from Shakespeare’s example of Henry, that monk-like meditations are not necessarily indicative of positive values. Richard’s pious pretence is also heretical, as Anne makes clear: “Villain, thou knows’t nor law of God nor man” (1.2.70). The Murtherers Richard hires not only commit a crime: Shakespeare also has them “war with God” (1.4.253). When Richard orders the execution of innocents, he lays a hypocritical as well as heretical claim to Christian justice when he says, “think you we are Turks or infidels?” (3.5.41). Infidel indeed—like Joan he is a kind of devil-in-disguise.

Iconographically analogous to Pucelle’s appearing “aloft” on city walls (*IH6* 1.4.7; 1.6)—Joan at once the image of exalted saint and the triumph of diabolism—is Richard’s appearance in Act Three Scene Seven “*aloft, between two BISHOPS*” (94):

Two props of virtue for a Christian prince,
 To stay him from the fall of vanity;
 And see, a book of prayer in his hand—
 True ornaments to know a holy man. (3.7.96-99)

Like Joan, he takes care to surround himself with all the right “props”— “True ornaments to know a holy man.” Richard disguises his diabolical person not with a handsome face but with religious “ornaments.” That this scene is an intentional evocation by Shakespeare of Pucelle is, I suggest, made in Buckingham’s exhortation to Richard:

And look you get a prayer-book in your hand,
 And stand between two churchmen, good my lord—

For on that ground I'll make a holy descant—
 And be not easily won to our requests:
Play the maid's part, still answer nay, and take it.
 (3.7.47-51, italics mine)

To "*Play the maid's part*" may be a calculated modulation of Pucelle's performance: she pretended to be a virgin, "a maid," when she was in fact a witch, and claimed many lovers. The link between Pucelle and Richard is made with, "Ah! that deceit should steal such gentle shape, / And with a virtuous visor hide such deep vice" (2.2.27-28); Richard, like the witch, is a "false glass" (53). The essential difference between Shakespeare's presentation of Joan's characterization and Richard's lies with the latter's stage management: no ambiguity surrounds his role as there was in Joan's portrayal. There is no transformation scene of revelation. From the beginning, he announces himself to be "subtle, false, treacherous" (R3 1.1.37). The imagery becomes only more emphatically diabolic as the play progresses: In his presence "Earth gapes, hell burns, fiends roar" (R3 4.4.75).

Shakespeare punctuates Richard's malicious character by adding emphasis on his heresy, which is in part the purpose of his scene with Edward's widow. Elizabeth challenges Richard to swear by a single instance of something he has not desecrated. She recites a litany of broken oaths:

[*K. Rich.*] Now by my George, my Garter, and my crown—
Q. Eliz. Profan'd, dishonor'd, and the third usurp'd.
K. Rich. I swear—
Q. Eliz. By nothing, for this is no oath:
 Thy George, profan'd, hath lost his lordly honor;
 Thy Garter, blemish'd, pawn'd his knightly virtue;
 Thy crown, usurp'd, disgrac'd his kingly glory.
 If something thou would's't swear to be believ'd,
 Swear then by something that thou hast not wrong'd.
K. Rich. Then by myself—
Q. Eliz. Thyself is self-misus'd.
K. Rich. Now by the world—
Q. Eliz. 'Tis full of thy foul wrongs.
K. Rich. My father's death—
Q. Eliz. Thy life hath it dishonor'd.
K. Rich. Why then, by [God]—

Q. Eliz. [God's] wrong is most of all:
 If thou didst fear to break an oath with him,
 The unity the King my husband made
 Thou hadst not broken...

 Thy broken faith hath made the prey for worms.
 What canst thou swear by now?
K. Rich. The time to come.
Q. Eliz. That thou hast wronged in the time o'erpast (4.4.366-80,
 386-88)

Every time Richard attempts to justify himself, Elizabeth goes him one better: This scene serves to underline that Richard's gravest transgression is of divine law, his "broken faith" indicating disobedience to God. That he also breaks temporal English law only increases his degree of profanity. So severe is the rupture presented by his rule that even "time to come" and "time o'erpast"—history itself—is violated.⁴

The confounding of vice and virtue, and the use of glamour both visual and verbal, is vital to Richard's guise as the Christian courtier. Richard had once lamented his inability to play the role: to "*witch* sweet ladies with my words and looks" was "more unlikely / Than to accomplish twenty golden crowns" (3*H6* 3.2.150-51, italics mine). But that was when he did "but dream on sovereignty, / Like one that...spies a far-off shore where he would tread" (ibid., 134-6). Having shipwrecked the kingdom on that shore, witching ladies is now no less impossible than being crowned king. As Castiglione's courtier is wise to "praise or dispraise according to his fancie, alwaies covering a vice with the name of the next vertue to it, and a vertue with the name of the next vice" (Castiglione 31), so Richard knows exactly how to comport himself. Courtly language is appropriated as a form of glamour, as Suffolk had done before him; further, as the courtier's role is model for a "Christian prince" (3.7.96), Richard's pretence is yet another echo of Pucelle's aptitude for the inversion of sacred and profane. Richard claims he is "too child-foolish for this world" (1.3.141), and

⁴ This arch-rebel commits not only treason, but wrongs "the time o'erpast" in the same way that the diablerie of Pucelle's rebellion and Margaret's arrival demolished the legacy of Henry V (2*H6* 1.1.99-104).

Hastings plays false witness when he says that no “man in Christendom / Can lesser hide his love or hate than he, / For by *his face straight* you shall know his heart” (3.4.51-53, emphasis mine). These claims to guileless Christian virtue could well be a parody of Henry; Richard, expert at mockery, is playing at being Christian and kingly, mocking the king he has murdered.

Paradoxically exploiting his diabolical deformity to advantage—in contrast to Pucelle, who by witchcraft fashioned a pleasing aspect with which to tempt her victims—Richard perversely uses his unattractive public face to advantage:

Because I cannot flatter and look fair,
Smile in men’s faces, smooth, deceive, and cog,
Duck with French nods and apish courtesy,
I must be held a rancorous enemy.
Cannot a plain man live and think no harm,
But thus his simple truth must be abus’d
With silken, sly, insinuating Jacks? (1.3.47-53)

Claiming to be a “plain man,” he makes a pretence of eschewing courtly courtesy, practising a variation on glamour. He uses *vis verborum* to “flatter and look fair.” Whereas Pucelle depended on her outer appearance to delude, Richard paradoxically uses his deformity to mask his ambitions:

Yet so much is my poverty of spirit,
So mighty and so many my defects,
That I would rather hide me from my greatness—
.....

I am unfit for state and majesty. (3.7.159-61, 205)

Shakespeare here duplicates in Richard Suffolk’s ability to exploit courtly language in order to play seducer. In Richard’s portraiture, with its extraordinary emphasis on the language of counterfeiting, “the black magician” (1.2.34) controls the *vis verborum* of diabolical rhetoric: when Richard taunts Henry with the memory of his son’s murder, Henry exclaims, “Ah, kill me with thy weapon, *not with words*” (3H6 5.6.26, italics mine). Pucelle’s enchantments, too, were weapons of assault: she “batt’red [Burgundy] like roaring cannon shot” (1H6 3.3.79), and Richard batters the world

verbally when he likes to “buzz abroad” false rumours (*3H6* 5.6.86),⁵ spread “envious slanders” (*R3* 1.3.26), and recite “odd old ends stol’n forth of holy writ” (1.3.336). Richard, making good on a threat, has hewed out his way to the throne “with a bloody axe” (*2H6* 3.2.181). His words are as much his weapons as sword and dagger, as are the acts that fill the world “with cursing cries and deep exclaims” (*R3* 1.2.52): these make “the happy earth [Richard’s] hell” (*ibid.* 51).

4.3 “Tempted of the devil”: Seduction, Vice, and Virtue

Witchcraft’s glamour and the accompanying deadly sin of lust have been linked throughout the tetralogy in seduction scenes (Pucelle and the Dauphin, Margaret and Suffolk, Henry and Margaret). In *Richard III*, lust is again corruptive and subversive, a practical tool, subsumed to the uses of policy. Two central temptation scenes—between Anne and Richard, and Richard and Queen Elizabeth—are devoted to wooing. That they both take up a disproportionate amount of text is a testament to their import.

The wooing of Anne, a virtuoso exhibition of Richard’s glamour, reproduces Pucelle’s bewitching tactics. Here, Shakespeare uses the conquest of Anne to show not so much her weakness as Richard’s supreme domination of his environment, illustrating Richard’s command of the antithetical world.

Richard solicits Lady Anne in a “burlesque of Petrarchan chivalry” (Fleischer 96). The scene is “a horrible elaboration of the funeral of Henry V in the initial play,” the corpse of Henry VI being the “body politic, gored” (*ibid.*). Richard’s exploitation of Anne recalls Suffolk’s wooing of Margaret in that the true objective, behind the rhetorical obfuscation, is a “secret close intent” (*R3* 1.1.158). The seduction of Anne

⁵ The word “buzz” again evokes flies, familiars, and the presence of Beelzebub.

is “a calculated experiment in courtly love.... Her pity for him excites not the gratitude of the courtly lover, but scorn” (Dusinberre 149). But the diabolically-inspired seduction sustains the metaphorical witchcraft of Petrarchan glamour practised by Joan, Margaret and Suffolk. The connection between wooing and bewitchment remains unbroken: the instant Anne hears Richard’s voice she exclaims, “What black magician conjures up this fiend / To stop devoted charitable deeds?” (1.2.34). As Richard delights in blasphemy, his desecration of charity is a matter of course:

Throughout the exchange, two sets of love conventions are manipulated: the Petrarchan mode, familiar from earlier wooings in the series, and the Christian, introduced for the first time in Richard’s repudiation of charity at the end of Part III [3*H*6 5.6.81-83]. (Berry 78)⁶

Like Joan, Richard manipulates language to delude his victims.⁷ The sparring is a constant stream of inversions: he calls Anne “Sweet saint” and she retorts with “Foul devil” (1.2.49-50). Devils invert:

Your 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.

 It is a quarrel most unnatural,
 To be reveng’d on him that loveth thee.

⁶ But this is not the first time that Richard has disparaged charity. In *2 Henry VI* Richard had threatened Clifford with:

Fie! charity, for shame! speak not in spite,
 For you shall sup with Jesu Christ to-night.

 If not in heaven, you’ll surely sup in hell.
 (5.1.213-16)

In *Richard III*, Anne’s charity is called upon twice more:

Sweet saint, for charity, be not so curst.

 Lady, you know no rules of charity,
 Which renders good for bad, blessings for curses. (1.2.49, 68-69)

⁷ “Richard, as befits a diabolic character, is consistently well-informed on religious matters, sufficiently furnished with theological information to be efficiently profane” (Tillyard 195).

.....
 Never came poison from so sweet a place.

 [Anne's eyes] kill me with a living death.

 This hand, for which thy love did kill thy love,
 Shall for thy love kill a far truer love. (1.2.122-4, 134-5, 146, 152, 189-90)

His brilliant manipulation—declared in his intent “To undertake the death of all the world”—ends in Anne’s self-damnation. When she tells him he is “unfit for any place, but hell” (109) he answers her with his idea of what he is fit for— “Your bedchamber” (111). Richard inverts a locus of love-making into a hell, as had Suffolk, who had once argued “what is wedlock forced but a hell[?]” (*IH6* 5.5.62).

Richard succeeds in doing what should be impossible: after admitting to murder and regicide, he coaxes to his bed the widow of a man he has murdered. He thrills to his *succès fou*:

Was ever woman in this humor woo'd?
 Was ever woman in this humor won?
 I'll have her, but I will not keep her long.
 What? I, that kill'd her husband and his father,
 To take her in her heart's extremest hate,
 With curses in her mouth, tears in her eyes,
 The bleeding witness of my hatred by,
 Having God, her conscience, and these bars against me,
 And I no friends to back my suit [at all]
 But the plain devil and dissembling looks?
 And yet to win her! All the world to nothing!
 Hah!

 And will she yet abase her eyes on me

 On me, that halts and am misshapen thus? (1.2.227-50)

A deformed, blaspheming “plain devil” tempts a woman to submit to an unnatural marriage. The scene, of course, is yet another modulation of other tableaux of single combat where diabolism prevailed—Joan defeated both the Dauphin and Talbot in military confrontation, but also used the verbal force of rhetoric to defeat her victims. Suffolk did the same in his verbal domination of Margaret and Henry.

The scene between Anne and Richard not only underscores the extent of the future king's powers to delude: it also demonstrates, paradoxically, that Richard's powers are waning. This is evident with the indication that feminine qualities—once disparaged—are again presented as virtues. Although Anne is vulnerable and naive, she is not entirely a fool; in her exchange with Richard she holds her own until he executes his *coup de grace* with the sword as prop. The scene between Anne and Richard is a contest between virtue and vice. Vice wins. But the overall movement of the play is towards the reintroduction of familiar, uninverted attributes: “those who support [Richard], even Tyrrel, who murders the two princes in the Tower, grant importance to ‘feminine’ qualities like pity and mercy” (French 60-61). When she agrees to take his ring, Anne says that, “it joys me too, / To see you are become so penitent” (219-20). What she exhibits, besides naivete, are traces of what the world had lost: feminine virtues. Pity instead of condemnation, humane instincts instead of brutality, forgiveness instead of revenge now manifest themselves in *Richard III*. And not only women demonstrate this shift. It is also the case in Clarence's argument when he tries to dissuade his killers:

I Mur. ‘Relent? tis cowardly and womanish.
Clar. Not to relent is beastly, savage, devilish.
 (R3 1.4.257-8)

Clarence sees “pity and compassion as human rather than feminine attributes; pitilessness is not masculine but subhuman” (Woodbridge 170). To be “womanish,” then, is to be humane, kindly, and angelic. When Anne succumbs to Richard's trickery, it is because the world is still upside down, and virtue is still hostage to vice. However, the cold universe of *Henry VI* is thawing, and feminine qualities are being outrightly disparaged only by Richard.

Dramatically apposite to Shakespeare's structure, a second wooing scene in *Richard III* repeals the first; in the context of the tetralogy, diabolical seduction fails at last. Elizabeth, widow of Richard's brother Edward is the last person to be “tempted of the devil” (R3 4.4.418).

Elizabeth has already been linked with the theme of seduction, glamour and betrayal: as Pucelle ensured the Dauphin's cooperation by diabolically inspiring lust, and Margaret's beautiful mask snared two men, Lady Grey had been so irresistible to Edward that desire for her prevailed over a vital agreement (*3H6* 3.2). But although women and lust have been closely linked with witchcraft, the deadly sin of lust infects the men as well. In fact, in every case, it is not the women but the men who are guilty of "matching more for wanton lust than honor" (*3H6* 3.3.210). Although Elizabeth is typical of women in the tetralogy in being a catalyst for disaster, it is a man's decision that is directly responsible for the situation. For any position or action of consequence on the part of the women in the plays, Shakespeare balances this with an equally flawed man to blame: the Dauphin, Suffolk, Gloucester, Henry and Edward. When Richard and Clarence object to the preference of the queen's family, Edward, not Elizabeth, is appropriately made the target of censure by Clarence:

In choosing for yourself, you show'd your judgment;
Which being shallow, you shall give me leave
To play the broker in mine own behalf;
And to that end I shortly mind to leave you.
(4.1.61-64)

This rupture among the York brothers draws out the theme of internecine warfare and rebellion. Clearly, in this play women are implicated as not so much players as pawns.

Richard requires Elizabeth's daughter—his own niece—to provide a veneer of legitimacy.⁸ However, hubris so corrupts him that he does not foresee that he cannot seduce Elizabeth as he had Anne:

⁸ Appropriating an aristocratic woman is "the symbol and point of access to legitimate authority, thus...the potential substitute for blood and a basis for counterfeit power" (Tennenhouse 114). Richard, through Buckingham, had earlier attempted to denounce Elizabeth and Edward with charges of lust, thereby ruining their progeny's claims to the crown:

A care-craz'd mother to a many sons,
A beauty-waning and distressed widow,
Even in the afternoon of her best days,
Made prize and purchase of his wanton eye,

If Richard's wooing of Anne shows the audience how he can manage all the opposition to his will, his loss of control is first signalled by the corresponding scene with Elizabeth in which he believes he has won her daughter after a similar rhetorical struggle.... Richard tries again the inverted power transactions that worked with Anne (Williamson 54)

In contrast to the courting of Anne, it is Elizabeth who instead wields a virtuous version of *vis verborum* with which to assault Richard:

No doubt the murd'rous knife was dull and blunt
Till it was whetted on thy stone-cold heart
To revel in the entrails of my lambs.
But that still use of grief makes wild grief tame,
My tongue should to thy ears not name my boys
Till that my nails were anchor'd in thine eyes;
And I, in such a desp'rate bay of death,
Like a poor bark of sails and tacking reft,
Rush all to pieces on thy rocky bosom. (4.4.227-35)

The conceit of anchor, bay and ship is press-ganged to this image of desperate annihilation, recalling Margaret's likening of Richard to a "[ragged] fatal rock" (3H6 5.4.27), modulating the recurrent theme of the shipwrecked state. Throughout the confrontation, Elizabeth deliberately misconstrues his meanings—practises her own glamour—prompting an increasingly frustrated Richard to admonish her with "Be not so hasty to confound my meaning" (262). The scene "is a mirror image of his wooing of Anne Neville" (Hibbard72); "Richard's misogyny proves his weakness, for he misjudges Elizabeth" (Williamson 55). That she only pretends to capitulate is evident in the skilful rhetorical handling of her opponent, her success conspicuous with Richard's, "You mock me, madam, this [is] not the way / To win your daughter" (4.4.284-5). Indeed, she has no intention of giving up the princess. She also succeeds in making him confess his crimes, to which he answers in exasperation:

Look what is done cannot be now amended:
Men shall deal unadvisedly sometimes,
Which after-hours gives leisure to repent.

Seduc'd the pitch and hight of his degree
To base declension and loath'd bigamy. (R3 3.7.184-9)

If I did take the kingdom from your sons,
To make amends I'll give it to your daughter
(4.4.291-5)

When Elizabeth asks how long he will let her daughter live, he answers, "As long as heaven and nature lengthens it" (353); she then inverts this with, "As long as hell and Richard likes of it" (354): "it is in her lines we find double meanings" (Sheriff 62) and not in Richard's. If Elizabeth seems an unlikely candidate as a forceful character, Richard himself once remarked on her substantial qualities: he observed that her son was "Bold, quick, ingenious, forward, capable: / He is all *the mother's*, from top to toe" (*R3* 3.1.155-6, italics mine). By neglecting the significance of his own remark, Richard is shown to be too arrogant to see a threat in virtue. Prince Edward's mother, it should be remembered, had already once won a verbal duel with another York: Edward IV was manipulated into marrying her, not only by the vice of lust, but also by her skilful rhetoric, by which she kept her virtue intact.⁹

And, in the upside-down diabolarchy of *Richard III* it is now, paradoxically, virtue—not vice—that becomes subversive. Further, it is significant that the icon is embodied in a woman. After relentless defamation of the feminine in a procession of women representing sins of envy, lust and pride, Elizabeth's portrait is the first new face of a new hierarchy. Wooing scenes in *Richard III*—successively between Richard and Anne, and Richard and Elizabeth—are designed to show that long-denied feminine virtue is being reintroduced. To underline Elizabeth's determination, each of her answers to Richard are put, in fact, in the form of questions, and though they can be construed as rhetorically ambiguous, the next scene proves that the answer to each is an emphatic 'No':

Shall I be tempted of the devil thus?
.....

⁹ In *3 Henry VI*, most of their dialogue is set in stichomythic lines (3.2), the widow ably defending her vulnerable position:

K. Edw. To tell thee plain, I aim to lie with thee.
L. Grey To tell you plain, I had rather lie in prison.
(69-70)

Shall I forget myself to be myself?

.....
Shall I go win my daughter to thy will?
(4.4.418, 420, 426)

Significantly, nowhere is there an affirmative statement. To all of Richard's entreaties Elizabeth answers with her final indictment: "Yet thou didst kill my children" (422). Her overriding commitment to the preservation of her children had been prefigured in her earlier decision to go into sanctuary (*3H6* 4.4), underlining her sense of maternal obligation. It is abundantly clear that Richard does not convince her.¹⁰ Her language is too deep, her pain too evident:

K. Rich. Your reasons are too shallow and too quick.

Q. Eliz. O no, my reasons are too deep and dead—

Too deep and dead, poor infants, in their graves.
(4.4.361-3).

She tells Richard that "you shall understand from me her mind" (429), and in the next scene her answer comes in her message to Richmond: "Withal say that the Queen hath heartily consented / He should espouse Elizabeth her daughter" (4.5.7-8). Scene 5 is only 20 lines long and is included for the sole purpose of providing Elizabeth's decision. Elizabeth's quiet virtue was lost on Richard; she exited only to his slander: "Relenting fool, and shallow,

¹⁰ Critics are split over whether or not Elizabeth capitulates. Smidt and French are typical of critics who see Elizabeth as Richard's dupe:

... we may in any case be reasonably certain that Queen Elizabeth disappoints our expectations in the end and proves momentarily to be what Richard calls her, a 'relenting fool, and shallow, changing woman'.
(Smidt, 65)

Richard claims that if he does not marry the princess, the civil wars will continue... This argument, coming after the lamentations of the early part of the scene, has great force. The women agree about the futility of struggles of right for right: what is important is the children, the future... The voluntary submission of Elizabeth and her daughter might be the price of harmony. (French, 65)

However, it is precisely for the sake of "harmony" that Elizabeth cannot submit. Further, as Reese puts it best, Richard "does not persuade her. She promises to inform him later of her decision: The phrase...unmistakeably means 'no' to any pedlar that still has his wits about him" (220).

changing woman!" (4.4.431).¹¹ That it is now Richard who is being manipulated is a signal that a shift of power is to come.

¹¹ In Olivier's production this scene is omitted, thereby validating only Richard's wrongheaded assessment of her frame of mind.

Chapter 5: Anatomy of a Diabolarchy

5.1 “Let the vile world end”: Seeding the Apocalypse

Beginning with Joan, the first tetralogy describes a dark process of disintegration, one that includes the collapse and inversion of the Christian moral order and develops into the diabolarchy of Richard III. In a discussion of Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus*, Catherine Belsey describes Faustus’s ambition for god-like powers by making a pact with the devil as being doomed because “the only fully articulated, coherent alternative to Christian knowledge is the *discourse of hell* which is service to Lucifer” (Belsey 74, italics mine). Something like the Faustian articulation of a “discourse of hell” is at work in these history plays. The inverted carnival world, with its emphasis on vice and slaughter, is wholly opposite to a Christian moral order: Shakespeare invests character after character—Pucelle, Eleanor, Suffolk, York, Cade, Richard—with so all-consuming possessive, illicit lusts for power that only a satanic metaphor, with apocalyptic undertones, can be damning enough to underline their corruption and immorality.

With the breakdown of the English chivalric world, emblemized by the deaths of Henry V and Talbot, and with the introduction of Joan’s diabolism and the rise of dissenting English factions, the moral order of the world of Henry VI is in collapse, and misrule moves into the void. In *1 Henry 6*, witchcraft, the dark carnival inversions it spawns, and rebellion inform the events to follow in the next plays. Emblematically, rhetorically, politically, and morally, the plays of the first tetralogy sketch out, on one level, the mechanics of diablerie.

The idea that diabolical forces like Joan’s had metapolitical agendas was familiar in the Renaissance: “Churchmen fostered the public delusion that witches were engaged in a vast secret plot, under the devil’s guidance, to overthrow the kingdom of God on earth” (B. Walker 1084). Since the inversion of social order motivates both revolt and witchcraft, it follows that a diabolical agent would employ a strategy of inversion as a matter of course. No surprise, then, that Shakespeare

adopts this approach, and Joan wears armour, defeats seasoned warriors like the Dauphin and Talbot in single combat, undoes the legacy of Henry V by inducing defection and betrayal, and commits blasphemy by claiming to embrace holy aims, a tactic by which she inverts—deliberately confuses—heaven and hell by masquerading as an angelic avatar.

That Joan is not only a satanic agent but also operates to prefigure the diabolarchy of Richard III comes in a scene, overlooked by critics, that hints at diabolical “secret policies” (*IH6* 3.3.13). Joan and her men come to the gates of Rouen disguised (glamour is at work here) as “Poor market folks that come to sell their corn” (3.2.15). After entering the city, she appears on its walls—emblematically superior once more—taunting her enemies:

Good morrow, gallants, want ye corn for bread?
I think the Duke of Burgundy will fast
Before he'll buy again at such a rate.
'Twas full of darnel; do you like the taste?
(3.2.41-44)

Tormenting the citizenry by wreaking havoc, witches were notorious for causing crop failure. The verbal picture of Joan offering weeds rather than wheat reinforces her figuration as a witch, an inversion of feminine and, especially, of maternal imagery—where she should feed she starves. The “corn” also links Joan with the inverted *Astraea*: Frances Yates relates how *Astraea* (Justice) left the world to live as the constellation *Virgo*, where she “shines in the sky, bearing an ear of corn in her hand,” and how in “the seventh canto of *Faerie Queene* August is accompanied by *Virgo-Astraea*” crowned “With eares of corne” (31). When “*Astraea*’s daughter” here withholds the corn, she inverts the image by metaphorically offering rotten corn.¹

More interesting, however, is Shakespeare’s use of the word “darnel.” The *OED* defines it as “A deleterious grass...which in some countries grows as a weed among corn,” applied “from OE. times to render or represent the *zizania* of the

¹ The inversion is also paralleled in *Astraea* as *Virgo*, the virgin: *Pucelle* makes the same (false) claim for herself.

Vulgate in Matt. xiii.”² Christ’s parable on the world as a field mixed with good and evil grains appears in Matthew 13, and sheds light on Shakespeare’s choice of words and imagery in this scene :

The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares [orig. darnel in Wyclif] among the wheat, and went his way.... (*King James*, Matt. 13.24-25)

While the English sleep, the “enemie,” in the form of Pucelle, comes upon them figuratively sowing darnel.³ That this scene in Shakespeare and the biblical parable have a parallel structure can be seen more clearly when comparing first, Burgundy’s answer to Pucelle’s taunts, and second, Christ’s answer to his disciples when he was asked to explain the parable:

Bur. Scoff on, vile fiend and shameless courtezan!
I trust ere long to choke thee with thine own,
And make thee curse the harvest of that corn.
(*IH6* 3.2.45-47)

... the field is the world...the tares are the children of the wicked, / *And the enemie that soweth them, is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the worlde*, and the reapers be the Angels. / As then the tares are gathered and burned in the fyre, so shal it be in the end of this worlde.
(Geneva Bible, Matt. 13.38-40, italics mine)

Burgundy’s reply to Joan refers to the “harvest of that corn.” The biblical passage makes explicit that “the enemie...is the devil,”⁴ “the fyre” of the Judgement Day an apocalyptic reference and, as it happens, analogous to Joan’s burning at the stake.⁵ The words “corn” and “darnel” serve two functions: first, to evoke this biblical image

² Under “Darnel,” also known as “corn cockle” (under ‘Cockle’). Wyclif (1382) preferred “darnel” to weeds (*OED*).

³ Kenneth Muir, in a gloss to *King Lear*, notes that darnel (“tares”) “has narcotic powers.” This is borne out in the *OED*, which describes darnel as being liable to be “infested by ergot,” a hallucinogenic. It is tempting to tie this added meaning to Pucelle’s ability to delude by witchcraft.

⁴ *OED* cites “1590 H. Barkow *Brief Discov.* 3: ‘[Satan] sowing his darnel of errors and tares of discord among them’.”

⁵ The margin note in the Geneva Bible to Matthew 13.39 reinforces this passage as an apocalyptic one, as the cross reference is to Revelation 14.15, which reads in part: “Thrust in thy sickle & reape: for the time is come to reape: for the harvest of the earth is ripe.”

of Joan as a servant of the devil, mixing weeds with wheat; second, to reinforce Joan's travesty of justice (Astraea who carries an ear of corn).⁶ This brief scene, then, in *I Henry VI* makes reference to the apocalypse.

Shakespeare seeds one explicit reference that borrows from the rhetoric of Revelation to describe an English Armageddon:

O, let the *vile world end*,
And the promised *flames* of the *last day*
Knit earth and heaven together!
Now let the general trumpet blow his blast...
(*2H6* 5.2.40-43)

Shakespeare exploits the imagery of Apocalypse, which functions "as an underlying cultural myth" (Berry 94), to cue his audience to the demonic nature of rebellion, and to heighten the symbolic impact of civil war. At the inception of the tetralogy, the Bishop of Winchester eulogizes Henry V in biblical, eschatological language:

He was king blest of the King of kings.
Unto the French the dreadful Judgement Day
So dreadful will not be as was his sight.
The battles of the Lord of hosts he fought ...
(*IH6* 1.1.28-31)

But even this speech is tainted by diabolism: it comes out of the mouth of a man "more haughty than the devil" (*IH6* 1.3.85). Shakespeare's evocations of "the dreadful Judgement Day" and "the last day" lend to events the implication that

⁶ Shakespeare may be borrowing from the parable again in Henry V's words spoken on the night before Agincourt, but this time (in an uninverted world) the Christian prince is wily enough even for the devil: Henry says that the danger from the French only increases English courage and preparedness, and "Thus we may gather honey from the weed, / And make a moral of the devil himself" (*H5* 4.1.11-12).

Also, in *King Lear*, "darnel" and "corn" again appear together, used to describe an apocalyptic event, the king's madness: Cordelia says,

Alack, 'tis he! Why, he was met even now
As mad as the vex'd sea ...
Crown'd with rank [femiter] and furrow-weeds,
.....
Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow
In our sustaining corn. (4.4.1-6)

struggle between political factions has an allegorical extension of a contest between divine and evil powers. Finally, what is an apocalypse without its antichrist?

There are those passages in *Richard III* where the king is perceived as Antichrist; in the same play, Elizabeth sees in 'the downfall of our house /...the end of all' (III.i.49, 54), the Prince looks ahead 'to the general all-ending day' (III.i.78), and Richmond proclaims, 'the sun will not be seen today' (V.iii.212). (Wittreich 177)

All these references to an Armageddon, scattered throughout the tetralogy, and heavily accented with diabolism, help to prepare for the culmination of the plays—the meteoric rise and apocalyptic fall of Richard III.

5.2 “Hell’s black intelligencer”: Diabolarchy

For the culmination of the tetralogy, Shakespeare creates Richard III—explicitly diabolical, the logical consequence of an upside-down carnivalesque world that for three plays has been infected by witchcraft, rebellion, and civil war. These synergistic energies generate this “excellent grand tyrant of the earth” (*R3* 4.4.52)—“excellent” because his figure represents a perfect inversion of Christian moral order: Richard’s wilful assumption of the throne is the apotheosis of misrule. Henry V’s untimely death was a rupture that opened “unnatural wounds” (*IH6* 3.3.50) and left an inept son open to the machinations of usurpers, loosed Joan’s diabolical forces, inspired the Church to subvert the State, caused civil war to scar the body politic and relinquished the sceptre to misrule. The unimpeded outcome of such a malign state of affairs is the ultimate form of misrule: the diabolarchy of “hell’s black intelligencer” (*R3* 4.4.71).

Shakespeare’s Richard is the final, most dominant manifestation of the diablerie begun with Joan: she was a witch; he is a powerful “black magician” (1.2.34). Richard too, like Joan, does not undergo a series of transformative phases, nor does he “shift from credible human being to symbol” (Tillyard 211). But unlike the dissention regarding Pucelle’s figuration, critics agree, for the most part, on Richard’s characterization. Clearly, “there is no ‘shift’” (Fleischer 25): “the same

man continues into the last part of Richard's trilogy" (Spivack 391). "His character does not grow upon us; from the first it is complete" (Dowden 182). He emerges out of the chaos of an inverted metaphysic not only as its product but as its master. "He is a kind of deity of evil" (Calderwood 200). He unmakes creation: Richard's reduction of "All the world to nothing" (*R3* 1.2.237) is an image of utter devolution. In *3 Henry VI*, he describes himself to have a "disproportion...in every part, / Like to a chaos" (3.2.160-61). The world he emerges from as its master is one that is a God-abandoned chaos: "the world of the history plays like those of *Lear* and *Titus* is one from which the gods appear to be absent" (Wilders 55). "It is as though God (at best) has withdrawn His light from the fallen world and left it for the devil, Richard, to bustle in" (Neill 103):

Shakespeare's Richard is of the diabolical...(something more cheerful than the criminal) class...he is single-hearted in his devotion to evil. Richard does not serve two masters He inverts the moral order of things, and tries to live in this inverted system. He does not succeed; he dashes himself to pieces against the laws of the world which he has outraged. (Dowden 189)

The inverted universe of *Richard III* is metaphysically and rhetorically expressed as antithesis:

This overall system of *paradox* is the play's unity. It is revealed as a constant displaying of inversions, or reversals of meaning: whether we consider the verbal patterns (the *peripeteias* or reversals of act and intention or expectation); the antithesis of false and true in the histrionic character; or the constant inversions of irony. (Rossiter 82)

Richard is an avatar of Satan, already catalogued by Margaret in *3 Henry VI* as "that devil's butcher" (*3H6* 5.5.77).⁷ Henry, presaging his fate at Richard's hands, recounts an ominous birth:

The owl shriek'd at thy birth, an evil sign;
The night-crow cried, aboding luckless time;
Dogs howl'd, and hideous tempest shook down trees;
The raven rook'd her on the chimney's top,

⁷ Richard was perhaps already prefigured eponymously in Dick the Butcher, Jack Cade's man, who anticallly undermined and inverted every line of Cade's mock-kingly speech-making in *2 Henry VI* (4.2.32-63).

And chatt'ring pies in dismal discords sung;
 Thy mother felt more than a mother's pain,
 And yet brought forth less than a mother's hope,
 To wit, an indigested and deformed lump,
 Not like the fruit of such a goodly tree.
 Teeth hadst thou in thy head when thou wast born,
 To signify thou cam'st to bite the world;
 And if the rest be true which I have heard,
 Thou cam'st— (3H6 5.6.44-56)

Henry, by now accustomed to being cut short, is fatally silenced by Richard's dagger with "Down, down to hell, and say I sent thee thither" (67), leaving no doubt that he is hell's agent or "minister" like Joan before him (1H6 5.4.93). Richard's demonic blood-lust is affirmed when he gratuitously "*Stabs him again*," crowing "I...have neither pity, love, nor fear" (68). Richard is utterly inhumane: "Tear falling pity dwells not in this eye" (R3 4.2.65), although, ironically, in *3 Henry VI* he says that "I can...wet my cheeks with artificial tears" (3.2.184). In one of the paradoxes of an inverted world, only the diabolical can be honest: Richard does not begrudge Henry's black description, admitting "Indeed, 'tis true that Henry told me of" (3H6 5.6.69).

In the scene immediately following, Richard reveals his malign opposition in an aside, when on kissing Queen Elizabeth he acknowledges, "so Judas kiss'd his master, / And cried 'All hail!' when as he meant all harm" (3H6 5.7.33-34). With this overtly biblical referent, Richard crosses the threshold to the allegorical as a morality Vice. "The play may be taken...as part revenge drama, with Margaret as Divine Nemesis, and part morality, with Richard as 'the formal Vice, Iniquity' [R3 3.1.82]" (Riggs 144). He is a "hybrid image" both allegorical and a psychologically independent persona: "The historical figure who ruled England dissolves into the theatrical figure who ruled the English stage" (Spivack 395).⁸ On one level, it seems that "only the medieval heritage—from the comic devils with their *Schadenfreude*, and

⁸ Richard has much in common with the morality Vice:

The defining characteristics of the Vice are precisely isolation and self-assertion. Kin only to the Devil, who often carries them off on his back at the end of the play, Vices trust no one and their friendship is always feigning. They boast of their exploits, drawing attention to the power of evil in the world. (Belsey, 37)

the Vice as comic inverter of order and decency—can fully explain the new Richard of this apparent sequel to the *Henry VI* series” (Rossiter 78). But this is not, however, a “new Richard”; he is evidentially the same regicidal creature as in *3 Henry VI*, and even as early as *2 Henry VI*, where Shakespeare announces him (via Clifford’s description) as a “foul indigested lump, / As crooked in thy manners as thy shape!” (5.1.157-8). What was implicit regarding Richard’s amoral nature in the two previous plays is made explicit in the last, effected iconically:

Physical deformity of the king’s body, the outward sign of Satanic soul, brings the scenes of state in *Richard III*...very close to contemporary woodcuts of Satan as a black monster on a throne. The psychologizing of the emblem, incidentally, may be Shakespeare’s invention But his vision is obviously in the medieval tradition...of costuming the devil as a monster (Fleischer 82-83)

Richard, “who has so much of the Vice and Clown in his make-up, never degenerates into an early version of Mr Punch” (Hibbard 88). Although he has comedic elements (he is a self-conscious “Roscius” [*3H6* 5.6.10]), it is “hell’s black intelligencer” (*R3* 4.4.71) who becomes England’s king:

even as Shakespeare represents the king quite literally as a monster, the playwright still has this monster preserve the iconic relationship between the two bodies of the monarch. In being so disfigured in his body the power of blood will also be restored to its natural form with Richard’s defeat. (Tennenhouse 77)

Or, put in the context of the dark carnival world of the *Henry VI* plays, when inversion is inverted, it becomes order. When Buckingham “stages a public entreaty...his description of the present state of governance is oddly pertinent (and impertinent) to the man he is apparently addressing: ‘The noble isle doth want her proper limbs; / Her face defac’d with scars of infamy’” [3.7.125-6] (Garber 39). “Not only does Richard theorize his own deformity, he generates and theorizes deformity as a form of power” (Garber 42). But what is most essential regarding deformity and power is that the relationship is a component of the grammar and iconography of diabolism. Richard emerges to dominate the legacy of the upside-down world of the *Henry VI* plays as the inverted word made flesh: his enthronement is a kind of satanic reification. He

announces that “since the heavens have shap’d my body so, / Let hell make crook’d my mind to answer it” (3H6 5.6.78-79). He expressly determines to shape his—diabolical—world to fit him. In an earlier scene Richard had acknowledged the inversion of sacred and profane with “I’ll make my heaven to dream upon the crown / And, whiles I live, t’account *this world but hell*” (3H6 3.2.68-69, italics mine). Richard is “a kind of travesty Creator, making a new earth in the image of his own deformity” (Neill 113). Richard was denounced by Clifford as a grotesque “foul indigested lump” (2H6 5.1.157) but, more precisely, Richard names his deformity “like to a chaos” (3H6 3.2.161)—matching the disorder in the body politic. Margaret understands who he is: “Hie thee to hell for shame, and leave this world, / Thou cacodemon, there thy kingdom is” (1.3.142-3).⁹ Clarence’s dream, an apocalyptic vision, is of “the kingdom of perpetual night”: “I, trembling.../ Could not believe but that I was in hell” (R3 1.4.47, 61-62).¹⁰ All these references point to England’s state: it is a hell, an inverted kingdom, ruled by an antichrist.

Richard epitomizes “the stress on contrariness and inverse behaviour in demonism,” since “the nature of Satan, the character of hell and, above all, the ritual activities of witches shared a vocabulary of misrule” (Clark, “Inversion” 100). Richard is the embodiment of inversion and misrule—king for a play—and as its “grand tyrant” (4.4.52) kills children (the princes in the tower—murder of children is the prerogative of witchcraft) and marries a woman who loathes him.¹¹ Arch-heretic

⁹ Peggy Endel comments:

Perhaps the most familiar visual analogue to Shakespeare’s Richard seated on the throne is Hieronymus Bosch’s Satan seated on a privy in the Hell-panel of the Millennium ... Like Bosch’s defacatory Satan, Shakespeare’s King of Hell is a “cacodemon,” that is, a *kaka*-demon or devil of dung. (119)

¹⁰ “‘Apocalyptic’ is the best term for the eschatological style and content of this vision” (Hassel 30). Hassel notes as well that “the best visionary passages of Revelation usually describe the new Jerusalem, not hell” (31); it is apt that in the upside-down world of *Richard III* Clarence’s dream is in fact a nightmare, an inversion of a heavenly vision.

¹¹ Clark cites *Macbeth* as “the best example of a dramatic fusion” of witchcraft and the imagery of inversion. I am confident, however, that his observations on *Macbeth* apply equally aptly to *Richard III*:

Richard is the pattern of the original usurper, Lucifer: Richard's explicitly diabolical characterization (not least by his own admission), coinciding with the paradigm of witchcraft, inversion and misrule, associate him with diablerie's extreme, the antichrist. Margaret observes that "Sin, death, and hell have set their marks on him, / And all their ministers *attend on him*" (R3 1.3.292-3, italics mine); her description suggests that the underworld and its denizens "attend" to Richard's bidding, just as Joan was able to conjure fiends. The imagery, along with descriptions such as "black magician" and "Hell's black intelligencer" (1.2.34, 4.4.71) implies as well that he is not merely a servant of hell, but one of its masters. An antichrist is "Nature inverted" (Clark, "Inversion" 113), a figuration that subsumes even the bestial to the diabolical. When Anne tells him that "No beast so fierce but knows some touch of pity," this exchange follows:

Glou. But I know none, and therefore am no beast.
Anne. O wonderful, when devils tell the [troth]!
 (1.2.72-73)

A devil is worse than bestial, and Richard is worse than both. At least one chronicler pointedly named Richard the "antichrist."¹² Neill describes Richard as "a terrible anti-Christ" (113). Fleischer provides additional context for this perception:

Richard infiltrates our sympathies with devilish cunning. His opposing *persona* as gentle saint, soul tempered by the humiliation of his ugly body, helps to universalize Shakespeare's villain as a doomed hero of man's agony within his given limits, solipsism and mortality; Richard also calls himself a Vice and tricks us with the insinuating and engaging

It is a critical commonplace that the pervasive disorder in the play is expressed in a series of multiple inversions of contraries in the personal, political and natural planes. Especially striking in the present context are the *substitutions of tyranny for true magistracy*...and the reiterated consequences of disobedience to anointed kings and fathers...[Witchcraft] is vital, for it establishes the two crucial features of the play's atmosphere. One is the sense of obscurity, uncertainty and dissimulation....The other is *the repeated expression in linguistic antithesis of the inversions*.... ("Inversion" 126, italics mine)

¹² John Rous, qtd. in Charles Ross, *Richard III* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1981) p. xxi.

humor of the verbal buffoon...By the time Richard ascends the throne we are fully prepared to perceive the analogy, to expect and to fear the ascension of the antichrist (83)

Vice, devil, antichrist: Richard's figuration fuses the iconography and language of witchcraft, rebellion and inversion. In the world of the tetralogy, where Shakespeare from the very beginning shows a succession of masked rebels and usurpers waging civil war, Richard, dissembler par excellence, is the ultimate form of rebellion, political and metaphysical.¹³ The figure that emerges to sit on a throne in an inverted world is necessarily, unambiguously, an incarnation of evil: "That foul defacer of God's handiwork, / That excellent grand tyrant of the earth" (4.4.51-52)—Richard is reified as a kind of Lucifer. "I am myself alone" (3H6 5.6.83) not only divorces him from all community and severs any residual ties with moral order; it also asserts his alienation from a God-ordered universe, a proclamation of antithesis befitting a satanic tyrant. Renaissance definitions of tyranny in part centred on antithesis:

The qualities and duties of the prince, deduced from theological and moral postulates, were portrayed in terms of the perfectly virtuous man governing in an ideal situation. This paradigm ruler was to be contrasted with his opposite, whose government was in every respect contrary to the good; hence the emergence of a *speculum principum* tradition in political theory, history-writing and drama in which *descriptions of tyranny rested on nothing more than a species of inversion....*Erasmus argued that *the actions of the true monarch and of the tyrant were at the opposite ends of every moral continuum* and could not therefore be separately conceived or taught; *a tyrant was simply one who turned every rule of political life upside-down.* (Clark, "Inversion" 112, italics mine)

A sixteenth-century description of tyranny provides what could describe a synopsis of Richard's character:

the king conforms himself to the laws of nature, while the tyrant treads them underfoot; the one maintains religion, justice and faith, the other has neither God, faith nor law; the one does all that he thinks will serve the public good and safety of his subjects, the other does nothing except for his particular profit, revenge or pleasure; the one strives to enrich his

¹³ Rule by diabolarchy is "a world turned upside-down by disobedience and tyranny. For demonic inversion was inseparable...from notions of archetypal rebellion and pseudo-monarchy" (Clark, "Inversion" 118).

subjects by all the means he can think of, the other improves his own fortune only at their expense; the one avenges the public injuries and pardons those against himself, the other cruelly avenges his own and pardons those against others; the one spares the honour of chaste women, the other triumphs in their shame¹⁴

The definition shortlists Richard's crimes: he is unnatural, sacrilegious, unjust, vengeful, cruel, and misogynist. Disobedient, amoral, "inhuman and unnatural" (*R3* 1.2.60), Richard conforms to this tyrant who is

playne contrarie ... in place of justice, he receaveth injustice, for right wronge, for vertue vice, for lawe will, for love hatred, for trueth falshod [sic], for playne dealing dissimulation, for religion superstition, for true worshippe detestable idolatrie: and to be shorte, for God Sathan, for Christ Antichrist.¹⁵

Although Richard is "playne contrarie" in the same ways as was Joan—inverting justice and substituting diabolism for divinity—the figure of the satanic tyrant is necessarily male:

The Devil is a[l]most always seen as masculine, for the masculine reason that the ruler of hell, like the king of heaven, must be male, but he is attended and supported by female spirits, whom folklore transposes into witches. (Russell 149)

Additionally, this description of witches as Satan's attendants is additional support for regarding Pucelle as Richard's harbinger.

Berry thinks that critics underplay Richard's role as antichrist and sees the play structured apocalyptically, cautioning, however, that the Apocalypse is not employed as explicit allegory but functions "as an underlying cultural myth" (94). But as with the example of Pucelle's sowing of "darnel" (*IH6* 3.2.41-44), this "underlying cultural myth" has had expression before *Richard III*. The Armageddon that had been called down by Clifford in *2 Henry VI* (5.2.40-42) is enacted at Bosworth, the battle between metaphoric good and evil elements putting an end to an epic struggle played out to stabilize the power base.

¹⁴ Barnaud, *Le miroir des francois* (1581), quoted in Clark, "Inversion" 112-13.

¹⁵ Christopher Goodman, *How Superior Powers ought to be Obeyed of Their Subjects* (1558), quoted in Clark, "Inversion" 113.

Hassel notes a correspondence between Revelation, *Richard III*, and the antichrist:

Perhaps the most impressive connections to Revelation are the parallels between its "Argument" and that of the play. The *Geneva Bible* describes the contents of Revelation as

a summe of...prophecies....Herein therefore is lively set for the...the providence of God for his elect, and of their glorie and consolation in the day of vengeance: how that the hupocrites which sting like scorpions the members of Christ, shalbe destroyed.... The livelie description of Antichrist is set forthe, whose time and power notwithstanding is limited, and albeit that he is permitted to rage against the elect, yet his power stretcheth no farther then to the hurt of their bodies: and at length he shal be destroyed by the wrath of God, when as the elect shal give praise to God for the victorie; nevertheles for a ceason God wil permit this Antichrist, and strompet under colour of faire speache and pleasant doctrine to deceive the worlde.... Satan that for a long time was untied, is now cast with his ministers into the pit of fyre

Soften the theological edge a bit, and this could be the argument of *Richard III*, so often does it parallel the play in action, structure, tone, and meaning. (27)

As Hassel says, it is difficult to resist the notion that Shakespeare may have based his characterization of Richard, in part, on the Geneva Bible's version of the antichrist. And, I would add, Joan. Again, the references to "strompet" and deception by verbal glamour, "faire speache and pleasant doctrine," are very familiar.

The last ghost appearing to Richard summarizes the litany of accusations against him, "Perjury, perjury, in the highest degree" (5.3.196), and refers to his "tyranny" (168), assuring him that "God and good angels fight on Richmond's side, / And Richard falls in height of all his pride" (175-6). Richmond's oration to his troops also stresses tyranny:

A bloody *tyrant* and a *homicide*;
.....
One that hath ever been *God's enemy*.
Then if you fight against *God's enemy*,
God will in justice ward you as his soldiers;

If you do sweat to put a *tyrant* down,
You sleep in peace, the *tyrant* being slain
(5.3.246, 252-6, italics mine)

His language befits an Armageddon, with the reiteration of Richard as “God’s enemy.” However, Hassel has a useful cautionary note on the relationship of the play to Revelation: “Richard is only devilish, not the beast himself; Richmond is Christlike, not Christ. But these actors, like their actions and the tones of some of their apocalyptic speeches, are not unlike their counterparts in Revelation” (28).

5.3 “Vicious qualities”: Deadly Sins

Evidence that the tetralogy is, in part, a narrative of the rise of a diabolarchy is provided by recurrent images of corruption. These are ordered, in part, as deadly sins. Witchcraft and satanism traditionally rely on their powers to tempt victims to the cardinal sins—pride, avarice, envy, lust, wrath, gluttony, sloth. Shakespeare tells us that Pucelle is an amalgam of “vicious qualities” (*IH6* 5.4.35). The vices she embodies are loosed, spilling like the contents of Pandora’s Box on Shakespeare’s stage, to infect the motives and actions of characters who follow.

Rebellion is linked with ambition, the “prime motivating force” (Hibbard 58) for the action of the plays. Ambition is emblemized particularly as envy and pride, consistent not only with Joan, Margaret, and Eleanor but also in the characterizations of Winchester, Suffolk, Somerset, York, Cade, and Clifford. It should be noted that Reese mentions, without going into detail, that *2 Henry VI* “adopts in the main the structure of the morality, with *Respublica* threatened by the various personifications of Lust, Pride and Ambition” (181). However, to critics like Smidt, for instance, stressing the “allegorical element” is going too far, although she concedes that “one cannot overlook the tendency to represent the characters at times as abstract qualities in a pageant where Ambition and Goodness play for mastery....These

attributions stick with remarkable consistency" (28-29). It is this "remarkable consistency" that attracts attention.

Shakespeare typically invests the chaotic, rebellious world of *Henry VI* with cues emblematic of deadly sin.¹⁶ Envy and pride figure in Satan's fall, and in each of Shakespeare's portraits of malignant creatures (Margaret, Eleanor, Suffolk, Winchester) they appear together.¹⁷ The iteration of these sins, coupled consistently with treasonous behaviour, reinforces the assertion that Shakespeare links rebellion with diabolism.¹⁸ The chaos of civil war compels a strong central metaphor capable of inspiring images powerful enough to convey the extremity of the damage: structurally and stylistically, what can be more emphatic than a metaphoric parallel with diabolical subversion?

The register of deadly sin usually begins with sloth, and, interestingly, so do the *Henry VI* plays. Sloth makes possible the entry for other deadly sins, and Shakespeare gives sloth a particular emphasis by appearing in Act One, Scene One of the tetralogy: a messenger from France declares, "Awake, awake, English nobility! / Let not *sloth* dim your honors new begot" (*IH6* 1.1.78-79, italics mine). Bedford

¹⁶ Shakespeare is consistent with this use of imagery in *Macbeth*, a play also devoted to the malice of usurpers: When Malcolm tests Macduff's loyalty, he presents corruption as a litany of deadly sins. Malcolm says that Macbeth is "bloody, / Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful, / Sudden, malicious, *smacking of every sin / That has a name*" (4.3.57-60, italics mine).

¹⁷ Bloomfield notes that although "it was generally agreed that Lucifer fell because of pride....Satan's fall is [also] attributed to both pride and envy" (382 n. 16).

Theologically, the categorization of deadly sin is a highly technical matter. In Chaucer's "Parson's Tale," for instance, one sin alone, pride, includes subcategories of "Inobedience, Avauntynge, Ypocrisie, Despit, Arrogance, Inpudence, Swellynge of Herte, Insolence, Elacioun, Inpacience, Strif, Contumacie, Presumpcioun, Irreverence, Pertinacie, Veyne Glorie, and many another....(510). Obviously, with this one example from the canon of literature dealing with the matter, the subject of the operations of deadly sin, even when confined to their iteration in these history plays, is large enough to merit a study of its own. (However, the above list does provide a neat synopsis of Richard's attributes.)

¹⁸ "Pride...is the sin of rebellion against God....Pride meant rebellion, dangerous independent thinking, setting up one's own interests as supreme; meant disobedience, upsetting the divinely appointed order, and—above all—ultimately heresy. So it was that to medieval order and discipline, pride appeared as the worst of all the sins and the root of all evil" (Bloomfield 75).

blames himself for Talbot's losses "For living *idly* here in pomp and ease" (*IH6* 1.1.142, italics mine). When Pucelle comes to the gates of Rouen she finds "the *slothful* watch but weak" (3.2.7, italics mine); sloth allows a witch, combining her "spelling charms" (*IH6* 5.3.31) and "vicious qualities" (*IH6* 5.4.35), to defeat the English armies.¹⁹ The loss of Henry V's legacy is also directly attributed to this deadly sin: "*Sleeping neglection* doth betray to loss / The conquest of our scarce-cold conqueror" (*IH6* 4.3.49-50, italics mine). Spenser called "sluggish *Idleness* the nurse of sin" (*The Faerie Queene* I.iv.18), and Shakespeare takes care to show that it is sloth that nurses the iniquities to come. In a sense, Henry's sloth—his preference for otium rather than action as the molehill scene demonstrates—is in part

¹⁹ There is a possibility that Joan's figuration as "Circe" (*IH6* 5.3.35) also embodies allusions to sloth. In Chaucer, along with portraits of "Medea and Circes," the "porter" depicted at Venus's temple is "Ydelness" ("The Knight's Tale," ll. 1940, 1944). Nicholas Reusner in *The Golden Emblems* (1581) tags his emblem of Circe with the motto "Slothfulness is the wicked Siren" (Green 251). Whitney (82) links Circe's thrall with "wicked loue," wilful descent into idleness, and bestiality. Ulysses's men

...when they might haue their former shape againe,
 They did refuse, and rather wish'd, still brutishe to remaine.
 Which shewes those foolishe sorte, whome wicked loue dothe thrall,
 Like brutishe beastes do pursue their time, and haue no sense at all.

 ...they had rather CIRCE serue, and burne in their desire.

Circe's ability to turn men into beasts parallels the coincidence of Pucelle's arrival and the descent of England into the animal-like brutality of civil war: Circe's Christian interpreters used her as an example to show that "a man who gives himself up to vices ceases...to be a man and becomes a beast" (Robertson 153). Under Whitney's emblem is a motto Green (251) translates as "Under a shameless mistress he has become base and witless."

It is interesting, too, that Shakespeare has Joan's figuration as Circe come from the Duke of York's mouth: "See how the ugly witch doth bend her brows, / As if, with Circe, she would change my shape!" (*IH6* 5.3.34-35). Perhaps her "spelling charms" (31) have more power than he realizes; York's deformed son Richard is described in *Richard III* in a series of bestial images.

responsible for the catastrophe that befalls him. Bad luck does not depose Henry, but naivete and negligence of political affairs, which is a species of sloth.²⁰

Shakespeare ensures that pride consistently companions every major figure: York taunts Suffolk with, "I cannot flatter thee in pride" (2H6 1.3.166); Warwick labels Suffolk the "Image of pride" (1.3.176). Pride is reiterated iconically and verbally in every exchange where opposing forces of "proud birds" (3H6 2.1.170) meet. Pucelle's "haughty words" (1H6 3.3.78) inspired Burgundy to turn traitor. Edward tells Margaret, when all possibility of conciliation is past, "For what hath broach'd this tumult but thy pride?" (3H6 2.2.159). Margaret is called "proud insulting queen" (3H6 2.1.168); she in turn calls Edward "proud insulting boy" (2.2.84).

But pride without ambition would be mere vanity; consequently, it follows that Shakespeare ensures that pride and ambition are always coupled: of Winchester it is observed that "*Pride* went before, *ambition* follows him" (2H6 1.1.180, italics mine); a pact is made to "bridle and suppress / The *pride* of Suffolk and the Cardinal, / With Somerset's and Buckingham's *ambition*" (2H6 1.1.200-203, italics mine), repeated by York ("Beauford's pride" and "Somerset's ambition" [2.2.71]); in 3 *Henry VI* appear "proud ambitious Edward" (3.3.27) and "proud ambitious York" (5.5.17); Henry calls York "that hateful duke, / Whose haughty spirit, winged with desire, / Will cost my crown" (1.1.266-8).

²⁰ It is interesting that Spenser describes *Ydleness* dressed "Like to an holy Monck," who

From worldly cares himselfe he did esloyne,
And greatly shunned manly exercise,
From euery worke he chalenged essoyned,
For contemplation sake....
(*Faerie Queene* I.iv.18, 20)

Shakespeare's characterization may be implying that sloth infects Henry: he is monk-like, and shuns "manly exercise" (his wife is the soldier) and worldly concerns for "contemplation sake."

Sloth sets the stage for pride; pride begets avarice, which Shakespeare equates with ambition. In Hall, avarice and ambition are also interchangeable. It is a “covetous Cade” who rebels; Suffolk is a “covetous counsailor” (qtd. in Bullough 114, 122). Further, that these vices when yoked together indicate rebellion and inversion are also indicated in a passage from Hall:

the duke of Yorke, so altered the myndes of many persones of high estate, that they liked not the worlde, as it then wavered, nor approved thactes of the kyng, or his counsail. And because, that *ambicion and avarice*, was newly entered into their hartes, they studied, sodainly, to change al thynges, and *to turne the world upsetdoun*. (qtd. in Bullough 122, italics mine)

Lust is a source of diabolical temptation, linked to Pucelle, Margaret and Suffolk, and has been discussed as an element of witchcraft.²¹ Envy is not only relevant to the portraits of the women in the plays, but is cited specifically as the root cause of rebellion. Sloth, pride, and avarice cultivate rebellion, but envy motivates action. Exeter names the conflicts of nobles as this “base and *envious* discord” (*IH6* 3.1.193, italics mine):

This jarring discord of nobility,
This shouldering of each other in the court,
This factious bandying of their favorites,
But that it doth presage some ill event.
'Tis much, when sceptres are in children's hands;
But more, when *envy breeds unkind division*:
There comes the ruin, there begins confusion.
(*IH6* 4.1.188-94, italics mine)

Gloucester accuses Winchester of harbouring “envious malice of thy swelling heart” (*IH6* 3.1.26), Buckingham carries “an envious load” (*2H6* 3.1.157), and Suffolk curses his enemies with as much “deadly hate, / As lean-fac'd Envy in her loathsome cave” (*2H6* 3.2.314-15). In *Richard III*, the court resounds with “envious slanders” (1.3.26); Queen Elizabeth counters Richard with, “you envy my advancement” (1.3.74).

²¹ Richard, while still Duke of Gloucester, charges his brother with lust: “between my soul's desire and me—/ The lustful Edward's title buried” (*3H6* 3.2.128-9).

When the sins of sloth, pride, envy, and avarice succeed in causing violence to break out, it is another sin, wrath, that becomes a central icon. Wrath has specific emblematic traditions associated with it, and Spenser's description of wrath in *The Faerie Queene* provides a synopsis:

And him [Envy] beside rides fierce reuenging *Wrath*,
Vpon a Lion, loth for to be led;
And in his hand a burning brond he hath,
The which he brandisheth about his hed;
His eyes did hurle forth sparkles fiery red,
And stared stern on all, that him beheld,
As ashes pale of hew and seeming ded;
And on his dagger still his hand he held,
Trembling through hasty rage, when cholere in him sweld.

.....

Full many mischiefes follow cruell *Wrath*;
Abhorred bloudshed, and tumultuous strife,
Vnmanly murder, and vnthrifty scath,
Bitter despight, with rancours rusty knife....
(I.iv.33, 35)

In medieval and Renaissance tradition, associated with wrath are "the color red, blood, the swelling spleen, the knife (held aloft), the brand, the lion (or the cat), the fixed stare, treachery, irrationality, and murder" (Brown 220). In the tetralogy, most of these elements do appear in imagistic clusters, but certain of them are given individual distinction. For instance, when the brand appears in Pucelle's hand, it is the torch carried by the Furies; but it is at the same time also emblematic of wrath: her "burning torch" is "like a comet of revenge" (*IH6* 3.2.30-31).²² The brand appears also as an image of murderous destruction when the loss of French territory is compared by York to do him as much damage "As did the fatal brand Althaea burnt / Unto the Prince's heart of Calydon" (*2H6* 1.1.234-5).²³ Exeter uses the image of

²² Fleischer categorizes the torch imagery as a representation of "Divine Wrath" (187), jibing with providentialist readings like Tillyard's which depict Joan as a tool of divine wrath.

²³ Inherent in this story from Ovid is an emblem of internecine war: After Meleager (Prince of Calydon), Althea's son, killed her brothers in a rage, Althea threw the log or brand that ruled his fate into the fire and killed him. She then committed suicide. In this story, all murders are committed in wrath, and the victims are all members of the

Is as a *fury* to torment my soul...
(3H6 1.3.29-31, italics mine)

Confronted by Clifford and Margaret on the molehill, York recognizes them as Furies, agents of wrath: "I am faint, and cannot fly their *fury*; / And were I strong, I would not shun their *fury*"; "I dare your *quenchless fury* to more rage" (3H6 1.4.23-24, 28, italics mine). He is "slaught' red by the *ireful arm* / of *unrelenting* Clifford and the Queen" (3H6 2.1.57-58, italics mine). Shakespeare persistently uses the language of wrath to link his characters' actions with sin and irrationality.

Wrath's splenetic fury is also an integral element of battle: John Talbot is urged to fight with "youthful spleen and warlike rage" (1H6 4.6.13); the commons are in "spleenful mutiny" (2H6 3.2.128); Warwick's soldiers fight with "heated spleen" (3H6 2.1.124). For wrath's association with staring eyes, compare Spenser's "His eyes did hurle forth sparkles fiery red" with "Beauford's red sparkling eyes blab his heart's malice" (2H6 3.1.154), and Margaret's description of her enemies:

Edward and Richard, like a brace of greyhounds
Having the fearful flying hare in sight,
With *fiery eyes sparkling for very wrath*,
And bloody steel grasp'd in their *ireful* hands,
Are at our backs.... (3H6 2.5.129-33, italics mine)

But just as there are two kinds of magic—the black witchcraft of Pucelle versus the divinely-inspired ability to dazzle of Henry V and Talbot—there is a wrath that is a deadly sin, and a righteous wrath. John Talbot had also been depicted as a wrathful lion, an "angry guardant" (1H6 4.7.9), by his father:

His bloody sword he brandish'd over me,
And like a hungry lion did commence
Rough deeds of rage and stern impatience....
(4.7.6-12)

Critics miss the emblematic level of meaning: Pierce, for instance, glosses this figuration only as an example of "Talbot's animal force" (45).

This second category of wrath is outlined by Chaucer in "The Parson's Tale," where "the synne of Ire" is divided into two parts: "oon of hem is good, and that oother is wikked." The good ire is "not wrooth agayns the man, but wrooth with the mysdede of the man," while the bad is the "wikked wil to do vengeance" (519-20).

Likewise, this distinction appears to be at work in the tetralogy: the Talbots and the first Duke of Gloucester fight with the righteous wrath of righting the “mysdedes” of others, while on the other hand, the York clan and Margaret, for instance, display the wrath of revenge—the wrong kind.

With this distinction in mind, the *Henry VI* plays are littered with references to wrath: Gloucester’s “moody discontented fury” (*IH6* 3.1.123) gets him killed; John Talbot goes into battle with “Dizzy-ey’d fury and great rage of heart” (*IH6* 4.7.11); Talbot Senior is left “to the rage of France” (*IH6* 4.6.3) and “Frenchman’s rage” (4.6.34, which again links Pucelle with wrath); Clifford has an “angry look” for York (*2H6* 5.1.126); Suffolk and Warwick have “wrathful weapons drawn” (*2H6* 3.2.237); Gloucester tells Winchester that “Rancor will out. Proud prelate, in thy face / I see thy fury” (*2H6* 1.1.142-3); Winchester ironically warns against “treason’s secret knife and traitor’s rage” (*2H6* 3.1.174), an echo of Spenser’s “rancours rusty knife”; contesting “furious peers” (*2H6* 2.1.33) precipitate civil war; Westmerland says, “My heart for anger burns” (*3H6* 1.1.60) while Margaret’s “looks bewray her anger” (211) and York’s opposition makes “her break out into terms of rage” (265).

Shakespeare extends to wrath an emblematic centrality. Wrath, the colour red, and images of blood merge in the Temple Garden scene, where Shakespeare does not specify the cause of the argument that leads to war but refers to its consequences. Somerset, his cheeks pale with “anger” (*IH6* 2.4.65), vows to “dye [Plantagenet’s] white rose in a bloody red” (61) and to “wear my bleeding roses” (72); Plantagenet says he will wear “this pale and angry rose” (107). The references to “pale” seem also to be attributes of wrath: In Spenser, wrath “stared sterne on all....As ashes pale of hew and seeming ded” (*Faerie Queene* 1.4.33, ll. 6-7).

York, the rebellious usurper, is associated with wrath from the outset of his characterization, making explicit the connection between wrath and rebellion: “Mad ire and wrathful fury makes me weep” (*IH6* 4.3.28); the “passions” of York’s heart harbour “More rancorous spite, more furious raging broils, / Than can yet be imagined” (*IH6* 4.1.183-86). On deferring to Henry’s rule he explodes with,

Scarce can I speak, my *choler* is so great.
O, I could hew up rocks and fight with flint,
I am so *angry* at these abject terms;
And now, like Ajax Telamonius,
On sheep or oxen could I spend my *fury*. (2H6 5.1.23-27)

York speaks as one possessed—he has “not a thought but thinks on dignity” (2H6 3.1.338). He makes his aims known in a soliloquy that explicitly marks him as a manifestation of wrath:

I will *stir up* in England some *black storm*
Shall blow ten thousand souls to heaven or hell;
And this *fell tempest* shall not cease to *rage*
Until the golden circuit on my head,
.....
Do calm the *fury* of this *mad-bred flaw*.
(2H6 3.1.347-54, italics mine)

It is clear that in the scheme of diablerie—of a world ruled by vice—York is governed by wrath. He is possessed by an ambitious and choleric temper: “angry choler” (1H6 4.1.168); “my choler is so great” (2H6 5.1.23).

Wrath is also emblematic of the irrational. In *1 Henry VI*, wrath and madness are equated in characters whose rationality has been eclipsed by ambition.²⁶ In *1 Henry VI*, as Margaret is being sued by a scheming Suffolk, she thinks “sure the man is mad” (5.3.85); Salisbury is “mad-brained” (1.2.15); Henry is appalled by “what madness rules in brain-sick men” (4.1.111); York displays “Mad ire” (4.3.28). In *2 Henry VI*, York’s “mind was troubled with deep melancholy” (5.1.34), melancholia usually associated with unbalanced minds; Suffolk says that in being parted from Margaret, “I should be raging mad” (3.2.394); Salisbury is “mad

²⁶ Irrationality is also a hallmark of Chaucer’s wrath: “he is all out of judgement of reason” (“The Parson’s Tale” 520). Wrath, irrationality or madness, and the emblem of the cat appear in Chaucer’s “The Knight’s Tale.” Palamon and Arcite fight like mad, feral cats: they “were a *wood* leon, / And as a *crueel* tigre” (ll. 1656-7, emphasis mine). Madness and wrath are coupled again when Chaucer goes on to describe that in the temple of Mars, “saugh I *Woodnesse*, *laughyng in his rage*” (l. 2011, emphasis mine).

Significantly, in this tale, too, the images of tyranny and massacre (“A thousand slayn” [l. 2014]) are specified as inversions related to the dark carnival of a world dedicated to ruin: the same scene includes the image of the “The cartere overryden with his carte” (l. 2022).

misleader of thy brain-sick son" (5.1.163); York's ambition craves the crown in order to "calm the fury of this mad-bred flaw" (3.1.354). When York lays claim to the throne, Clifford cries "To Bedlam with him! is the man grown mad?" (2H6 5.1.131); York is possessed of "a bedlam and ambitious humour" which "Makes him oppose himself against his king" (5.1.132-3). Rebellion is a kind of madness, just as both rebellion and madness inform the carnival mode; however, in keeping with the dark carnival of the Henry VI plays, these elements are dangerous, subversive, and demonic.

All the deadly sins play their parts, but wrath is given a particular emphasis. Perhaps it is because madness is a form of inversion: it iterates the chaos that "mad-brained" (1H6 1.2.15) characters cause and underlines that both state of mind and the State—the body politic—are upside down. Further, Shakespeare links madness and witchcraft: Eleanor is called a "bedlam brain-sick Duchess" when she is caught practising "wicked" witchcraft (2H6 3.1.51, 52).

The iteration of madness connected with Henry's England, in addition to its emblemization in images of wrath and ambitious avarice, figures subtextually as an element of Shakespeare's portrayal of Henry. According to the sources, the historical Henry VI went mad for a period in his reign (Saccio 130-31) and this was what led, in fact, to Margaret of Anjou's emergence as a power. Shakespeare omits this context entirely, substituting instead the portrayal of a pathologically weak and misguided king. This suggests that Shakespeare may have intended to portray a Henry entirely culpable for his actions—a mad king would be excused of wilful negligence. Henry seems conceived not as a hapless victim of circumstances beyond his control but as a perpetrator responsible, not only for the actions of his nobles, but for his own downfall. Shakespeare, it can be argued, deliberately does not invest Henry with a lunatic character; instead, Shakespeare extends the metaphor of madness it to the whole of Henry's state, political and metaphysical, in the final image in the tetralogy of the body politic: not Henry, but "*England* hath long been mad" (R3 5.5.23, italics mine).

In the emblematic extensions given to wrath, Shakespeare integrates the combined forces of deadly sin, madness, witchcraft, and rebellion: these elements dispose the State to chaos—vice, misrule, and civil war.

5.4 “All several sins”: Richard and the Iconography of Deadly Sin

Under Henry’s slothful negligence, pious intentions paved the way to hell; in the course of Edward’s rule, Richard’s avarice and ambition were fired by his “hate [of] the *idle* pleasures of these days” (1.1.31, italics mine). As Joan was a compendium of “vicious qualities” (*IH6* 5.4.35), Richard also embodies the deadly sins, especially pride, envy, avarice, gluttony, and wrath.²⁷ He is “So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin” (*R3* 4.2.64). When his “lights burn blue” (5.3.180), even Richard’s own conscience recognizes and his condemns his sins:

Perjury, perjury in the highest degree,
Murther, stern murther, in the direst degree;
All several sins, all us’d in each degree,
Throng to the bar, crying all, “Guilty! guilty!”
(5.3.196-9, italics mine)

Of these “several sins,” pride takes first place in the Duchess of York’s description of her son: “proud, subtle, sly, and bloody” (*R3* 4.4.172). Richard tells Anne, “My proud heart sues” (1.2.170). Envy is coupled with pride when Richard in his early soliloquy not only reveals that “my heart o’erweens too much” (*3H6* 3.2.144), but refers to his hump as “an *envious* mountain on my back, / Where sits deformity to mock my body” (*2H6* 3.2.157-8, italics mine). Elizabeth refers to Richard as an emblem of envy when she says of her imprisoned sons that “*envy* hath immur’d” them in the Tower (*R3* 4.1.99, italics mine). In these sins Richard emulates Lucifer.²⁸

²⁷ One particular subcategory of Chaucer’s description of pride seems especially to apply to Richard: “Elacioun is whan he ne may neither suffre to have maister ne felawe” (“The Parson’s Tale” 511). In it can be heard Richard’s “I am myself alone” (*3H6* 5.6.83).

²⁸ Bloomfield records that sins “cross hard-and-fast lines” of categorization, as, in Christian theology, “envy is discussed under pride as well as by itself” (212).

Buckingham says that the piety Richard feigns will “stay him from the *fall of vanity*” (3.7.97, italics mine).²⁹ But before Bosworth, Buckingham’s ghost repeats the image of the quintessential satanic flaw: “God and good angels fight on Richmond’s side, / And Richard *falls in height of all his pride!*” (5.3.175-6, italics mine).

Catherine Belsey notes that there is “a common medieval representation of pride, a knight who spurs his horse forward beyond its powers until he is thrown to the ground” (51), using this instance of the emblematic tradition to gloss Macbeth’s “I have no spur / To prick the sides of my intent, but only / Vaulting ambition, which o’er leaps itself” (*Macbeth* 1.7.25-27).³⁰ Belsey does not apply this icon to the *Henry VI* plays or to *Richard III*, but Shakespeare often links Richard’s pride with horses. In *3 Henry VI*, pride and horses are linked twice: Warwick, “*Proud* setter-up and puller down of kings” (3.3.157, italics mine), says “I’ll kill my horse, because I will not fly” (2.3.24); York tells Margaret on the molehill that her insult to him “boots thee not, *proud* queen, / Unless the adage must be verified, / That beggars mounted run their *horse* to death” (1.4.125-7, italics mine). Richard’s England is compared to an “ungovern’d” state, “Where every horse bears his commanding reign” (2.2.127-8)—an image of inversion, the animal and not the rider in control. Richard cautions himself in the course of his plotting with “But yet I run before my horse to market” (1.1.160), suggestive both of rash thought and the unhorsed rider. Richard decides to send his brother George “pack’d with post-horse up to heaven” (1.1.146). Richard compares himself to a pack-horse: he was to Henry VI “a pack-horse in his great affairs” (1.3.121). When Shakespeare links the pack-horse to Fortune, the imagery

²⁹ Pride as vanity had been evoked when Richard celebrated success with Anne:

I’ll be at charges for a looking-glass,
And entertain a score or two of tailors
To study fashions to adorn my body:
Since I am crept in favour with myself,
I will maintain it at some little cost.
(1.2.255-9)

³⁰ I add here another instance of medieval emblemization: Bloomfield notes that “Pride is a man falling from a horse in scenes in stone at Chartres and Conques” (199).

applied to Richard is a modulation of Pucelle's figuration as the ship of pride bearing fortune (*IH6* 1.2.138):

Cousin of Buckingham, and sage grave men,
Since you will buckle Fortune on my back,
To bear her burthen, whe're I will or no,
I must have patience to endure the load....
(3.7.227-30)

As both Pucelle and Richard are doomed, fortune is once more linked to linked to fall.³¹ And when Hastings relates that "Three times to-day my foot-cloth horse did stumble" (3.4.84), the ill omen is emblemized as a horse about to unseat its rider: horse, pride, fortune, and fall are all represented in the verbal picture. But the most emphatic association of horses, pride, and Richard's coming fall appears in Act 5. As Buckingham's Ghost notifies the sleeping Richmond that heaven supports him, Richard starts awake and, significantly, the first words he utters are a demand for "another horse":

God and good angels fight on Richmond's side,
And Richard falls in height of all his pride!
[*The Ghosts vanish.*]
Richard starteth up out of a dream.
K. Rich. Give me another horse! (5.3.175-7)

Here, and when Richard urges his army to "*Spur your proud horses hard, and ride in blood*" (5.3.340, italics mine), the medieval icon of the "knight who spurs his horse forward beyond its powers" is surely being invoked. The image recurs: during the battle, news comes that Richard's "horse is slain, and all on foot he fights" (5.4.4). Richard wanders the stage unhorsed, desperately crying not once, but twice, "A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse" (5.4.7, 13). Belsey assures us that the "early seventeenth century audience [was] well versed in the emblematic tradition" (51); and although she does not make the connection, doubtless, by this time in the

³¹ "Sir Thomas More [in his poem *Fortune*] connects pride and envy from the seven sins with Fortune and her wheel" (Bloomfield 425 n. 309). This connection is also consistent with Shakespeare's portrait of Joan, Eleanor, and Margaret, all of whom have been linked with pride, envy, and fortune's caprice.

narrative, many in the audience would have instantly recognized this representation as an unequivocal icon of the fall of pride.

Pride inspires Richard to play the courtier; like Pucelle, he exploits lust as a means to an end. His suit for Anne is “not all so much for love” (1.1.157)—not so much for love, but for power. Anne and, later, Elizabeth’s daughter are sued for their bloodlines to legitimize his claim to the throne. The same motive lies behind his attempt to bastardize Edward’s issue. He instructs Buckingham to tell the Guildhall of the late king’s “*hateful luxury / And bestial appetite in change of lust,*” whose “*raging eye or savage heart, / Without control, lusted to make a prey*” (3.5.80-81, 83-84, italics mine). Wrath, its attendant bestial madness, and lust form a familiar configuration of deadly sins. In *Richard III*, the primary role given to lust is not ascribed to Richard but to Edward.

Madness, wrath, and diablerie have been linked throughout the tetralogy, and wrath figures prominently in Richard’s characterization: as early as *2 Henry VI* Clifford calls Richard a “heap of wrath” (5.1.157); Richard orders his “heart, be wrathful still” (5.2.70).³² Later Margaret reports his “fiery eyes sparkling for very wrath” (*3H6* 2.5.131).³³ In *Richard III*, his mother describes his youth as “desp’rate, wild, and

³² One of Shakespeare’s sources also attributes deadly sins to Richard. Sir Thomas More cites wrath, envy, and pride as elements in Richard’s character: “He was malicious, wrothfull and envious...arrogante of herte” (qtd. in Bullough 253).

³³ Peggy Endel relates Richard’s figuration as wrath to “the butt-end of civil war, the dregs of history in its demonic phase” (121). She also points out that wrath is an element in another of Shakespeare’s sources:

Into Richard’s first line, ‘Now is the winter of our discontent,’ the dramatist compresses the opening stanzas of his chief poetic source, Sackville’s *Induction*, which begins,

The wrathful winter proching on a pace
With blustering blastes had al ybard the treen
And old Saturnus with his frosty face
With chilling colde had pearst the tender green.

Wrathful winter...and, above all, ascendant “olde Saturnus with his frosty face”—this is the setting for Sackville’s descent with Sorrow into Hell.... (ibid.)

furious" (4.4.170); Margaret says her dead son's "bright out-shining beams thy cloudy wrath" (1.3.267). When Edward IV reluctantly orders Clarence's execution, stage-managed, of course, by Richard, he says that it was "brutish wrath" that "Sinfully pluck'd" (2.1.199-20) from his mind all of Clarence's good graces. Clarence says that wrath was responsible for his part in the killing of Prince Edward, but Richard is integral to his act: when Murderer One asks "Who made thee then a bloody minister[?]," Clarence replies, "My brother's love, the *devil*, and my *rage*" (1.4.220, 223). Richard, wrath, and diablerie are the acknowledged collaborators. Richard himself concedes that his criminal acts were committed "in my rage" (2.1.57).

Wrath in *Richard III* also serves as part of the pattern of eschatological imagery in the plays:

The tiger now hath seiz'd the gentle hind;
 Insulting tyranny begins to jut
 Upon the innocent and aweless throne.
 Welcome destruction, blood, and massacre!
 I see (as in a map) the end of all. (2.4.50-54)

Elizabeth's lines merge wrath the "tiger" (the feral cat of wrath), the tyrant (the ultimate rebel), and Armageddon in "the end of all." Richard's "frantic outrage" and "damned spleen" (2.4.61, 64) make him the author of "the death of all the world" (1.2.123); the Prince who shortly dies by Richard's hand says "the truth should live from age to age, /...Even to the general all-ending day" (3.1.76, 78); Hastings prophesies "the fearfull'st time" to England "That ever wretched age hath look'd

Endel, however, prefers to cast Richard primarily as an emblem not of wrath but of Melancholy:

the most calamitous of the four humors; associated with cold, dry winter, the most severe of the four seasons; with old age, the most discontented of the four ages; with earth, the grossest of the four elements; and with cold, dry Saturn, the planetary god of death and dung, whom iconographers depict as a savage king, enthroned, devouring a living child. (ibid.)

However, Richard's association with wrath—and the *Dies Irae*—is more to the point in Shakespeare's portrayal; and what Endel refers to as the "demonic phase" of civil war can be extended to include the Armageddon of Richard's (self-)destruction.

upon” (3.4.104, 105). These references linking Richard to the Last Judgement contribute to his depiction as the antichrist. Moreover, an explicit reference to wrath in the Geneva Bible’s “Argument” prefacing Revelation helps to explain why the last mention in *Richard III*—and in the tetralogy—is to the wrath of God: “Antichrist...shal be destroyed by the wrath of God” on the Dies Irae. Pucelle’s demonic witchcraft had been contrasted with the divinely-inspired magical powers of Henry V and Talbot. Likewise, there are two kinds of wrath: one sacred, the other profane. Richmond appeals to God with, “Look on my forces with a gracious eye; / Put in their hands thy bruising irons of wrath” (5.3.109-10). Although wrath throughout these history plays is primarily figured as a deadly sin, Shakespeare flanks the tetralogy with divine wrath: opening *1 Henry VI* is an evocation of Henry V as divine avatar, whose eyes were “replete with wrathful fire” which “dazzled and drove back his enemies” (1.1.12-13).

5.5 “Bloody Suppers”: Gluttony, Carnival, and the Body Politic

One final deadly sin has not yet been discussed, having been left to the last because gluttony, and the imagery surrounding it, as will be seen, is key to Richard’s destruction.

In keeping with the paradigm of diabolism, the deadly sin of gluttony is not represented as the carnivalesque, Bakhtinian account of Gargantuan excess: instead, it is imaged in the tetralogy, especially in *Richard III*, in the eating and drinking of flesh and blood. The portrayal of this gluttony, usually as a rather popular and jovial vice-figure, is as a negative pole of the carnival paradigm, an inversion that, like witchcraft, has no generative extension. Like witchcraft, too, gluttony in the tetralogy is associated with cannibalism: witches purportedly killed and ate children; metaphorically, the inverted state of civil war kills and eats its citizens—and in Clifford’s and Richard’s cases the victims of diabolical murder are indeed children.

With *Richard III*, the violent, destructive powers of the dark carnival are at their zenith (or apogee), the inverted world reified as an apocalyptic vision of rule by diabolarchy. Richard is the final Lord of Misrule, and Bristol's description of the carnival state, while not specific to *Richard III*, is fitting:

The Lord of Misrule does not rule and govern from above: he is immersed in the folly he undertakes to regulate. Transgression becomes the law; *the rule of abstinence and moderation becomes a rule of unrestricted consumption*, the rule of deference and obedience is replaced by a rule of irreverent speech and rude gesture. (67, italics mine)

Gluttony has a usual role to play in the excesses of carnival, but when applied to rebellion, civil war, and diabolarchy, the "unrestricted consumption" takes on a sinister cast.

Throughout the tetralogy, all feasting imagery is presented in an inverted form, with two exceptions: feasting proper occurs between Talbot and the Countess (*1H6* 2.3), and Henry on the molehill refers to "the shepherd's homely curds" and "cold thin drink" as being "far beyond a prince's delicates" (*3H6* 2.5.47-48, 51). Otherwise, feasting is a glut of blood, an image of civil war as a form of cannibalism: Pucelle admonishes her fiends with, "I was wont to feed you with my blood" (*1H6* 5.3.14); Suffolk is a "Pernicious blood-sucker of sleeping men" (*2H6* 3.2.226); Margaret's feigned grief on Gloucester's death is expressed in "blood-consuming sighs," "blood-drinking sighs" (*2H6* 3.2.61, 63); her appetite makes her only "hungry for revenge" (*R3* 4.4.61). When York denounces Margaret as "an Amazonian trull" (*3H6* 1.4.14), he says that even "hungry cannibals / Would not have touch'd" his son Rutland. This image, merged with gluttony and the paradigm of diabolical inversion, adds another dimension to the figuration of Pucelle and Margaret as Amazons. Amazons and cannibals prove to be a familiar configuration in Renaissance historiography: "The linkage of Amazon, witch, and cannibal exemplifies a logic of inversion ingrained in European categories of thought" (Montrose 58 n. 16). The image of the Amazon/witch reiterates that witchcraft formed a "coherent, meaningful, and indeed necessary component of a larger intellectual system based upon principles

of hierarchy, opposition, and inversion,” and that “*demonism, political sedition and rebellion*, and female misrule [were] inversions of the divinely sanctioned order in the cosmos, state, and family” (ibid., italics mine).

The Temple Garden scene ends with “This quarrel will drink blood another day” (1H6 2.4.133). Civil war begins as “The vulture of sedition” that “Feeds in the bosom” of rebellious lords (1H6 4.3.47-48); battle is “a feast of death” (1H6 4.5.7). After having “feasted with Queen Margaret” (2H6 4.1.58), Suffolk’s “yawning mouth” is condemned for “swallowing up the treasure of the realm” (2H6 4.1.73-74)—he is “like ambitious Sylla, overgorg’d / With gobbets of thy [mother’s] bleeding heart” (2H6 4.1.84-85). Henry says that York will “like an empty eagle / Tire on the flesh of me and of my son” (3H6 1.1.268-9). Cannibalism is the extreme of gluttony, but is also the obverse of the feast of plenty: in this inverted kingdom, the cornucopia of harvest is heaped with human flesh. Both Margaret and York specifically associate each other with cannibals: Margaret and her allies are “hungry cannibals” (3H6 1.4.152); York’s clan are “bloody cannibals” (3H6 5.5.61).

In *Richard III*, where destruction and self-destruction are at their apex, gluttony is a central metaphor for the body politic feeding on itself. Richard and blood-feasting have long been linked. He offers to send young Clifford to “sup with Jesu Christ,” but “if not in heaven, you’ll surely sup in hell” (2H6 5.1.214, 216). When Richard exits to murder Henry, Clarence says he goes “To make a bloody supper in the Tower” (3H6 5.5.85). This is ironic, of course: Richard later makes a “bloody supper” of Clarence in the same Tower. Clarence was “frank’d up to fatting for his pains” (R3 1.3.313), and he dies in a black image of gluttonous excess by being drowned in a butt of malmsey. Richard’s England is his “slaughter-house” (3.4.86; also 2H6 3.1.212, 4.3.5). Edward IV dies, Richard implies, because he was gluttonous: he “hath kept an evil diet long, / And overmuch consum’d his royal person” (1.1.140).

When Anne curses Richard, she uses drinking and eating images:

O earth! which this *blood drink’st*, revenge [Henry VI’s] death!

.....

Or earth gape open wide and *eat him quick*,
As thou dost *swallow up this good king's blood*,
Which his hell-govern'd arm hath butchered!
(1.2.63, 65-67, italics mine)

Richard's men "are damned blood-suckers" (3.3.6); Pomfret, where the nobles are sent to be executed, is given "our guiltless blood to drink" (3.3.14). Richard, about to order Hastings's execution, makes a sudden demand for strawberries (3.4.32)—blood-lust and gluttony fuse.³⁴ He adds that he "will not dine" (77) until he sees Hastings's head. The Duchess of York sums up Richard's vampirism with "England's lawful earth, / Unlawfully made drunk with innocent blood" (4.4.29-30). Elizabeth agonizing over his murder of her sons, tells Richard that his knife was "whetted on thy stone-hard heart / To revel in the entrails of my lambs" (4.4.228-9). In his figuration as the boar, Richard gluttonously "Swills through your warm blood like wash and makes his trough / In your embowell'd bosoms" (5.1.9-10). But Richard's self-annihilation comes in an image that fuses cannibalism and gluttony: when Margaret tells his mother, the Duchess of York, "that this carnal cur / Preys on the issue of his mother's body" (4.4.56-57), Shakespeare intimates, as Richard is the "issue of his mother's body," that it is, ultimately, upon himself that he feeds. The image of the "cur" is picked up again when Richard is killed: Richmond announces that "the bloody dog is dead" (5.5.2).

Elizabeth baits Richard into admitting that, having destroyed everything else, he is in the process of destroying himself as well: "Thyself is self-misus'd" (4.4.374). Self against self is the ultimate *reductio ad absurdum* of civil war. Neill comments that "there is an inverting tendency for the ironies to become self-reflexive: the biter bit

³⁴ The incident is a historical one. It has been accounted for in various ways, including as a ruse on Richard's part to exclude the Bishop of Ely from the council and as a means of inducing a rash to authenticate his charge of witchcraft to account for his withered arm. For a survey of sources and opinions, see Lawrence J. Ross, "The Meaning of Strawberries in Shakespeare," *Studies in the Renaissance* 7 (1960):225-40. Fleischer links the episode with the serpent-in-the-grass trope with her evidence that "a strawberry plant, like grass, hides the serpent in Whitney's emblem [189a]" (105n). However, given Richard's litany of deadly sins, dramatically, gluttony most directly accounts for his anomalous behaviour.

becomes the biter bitten, by himself" (117). The tetralogy's frame has gradually been enclosing narrowing forms of civil war: faction against faction, nobles and queen against king, father against son. The litany of events which constitute rebellion and civil war has come to its climax, as the Duchess of York understands:

..... the conquerors,
Make war upon themselves, brother to brother,
Blood to blood, self against self. (*R3* 2.4.61-64)

The penultimate war—Richard's private war against everyone—reduces further to the self-reflexive impulse to self-annihilation. When he "Preys on the issue of his mother's body" (4.4.57), Richard consumes himself.

Chapter 6: Last Things

On the one hand, the Henry VI plays have been seen as a chaotic cycle informed by providentialism (Tillyard et al). On the other, the events are instead attributable to the discourses of political and economic life in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, along with an emphasis on psychological realism typical of human greed and ambition:

The characters who dominate the worlds of these plays act on the Machiavellian principle of self-interest, and they prevail because they live in a Machiavellian universe governed by force and fortune rather than the providential hand of God. (Rackin, *Stages* 71)

Rackin goes on to say that, in fact, “the providential order” was “deconstructed in the Henry VI plays,” and that “Shakespeare’s second tetralogy self-consciously reconstructs the providential order” (ibid). However, there may be an argument acknowledging that a kind of “providential order” does indeed play its part in the first tetralogy, although not in the usual sense of a “Tudor myth.”

Besides the references in the opening scene of *I Henry VI* to a ‘golden age’ of Henry V (“his deeds exceed all speech: / He ne’er lift up his hand but conquered” (1.1.15-16), of which its Talbots, père et fils, are reminders of such a past, providentialism also comes in the form of crime and punishment (the revenge motif is carried throughout the plays), and the cycle of rise and fall, documented by critics like Ribner and Hibbard. But there is evidence, suggested by Linda Kay Hoff’s study of *Hamlet*, that Shakespeare was drawing on a biblical paradigm of providentialism, specifically, an anti-Catholic Calvinist version of biblical historiography. In this light, it may be that the tetralogy on one level is tracing an allegorical outline which acknowledges England’s shift from Catholicism to Protestantism.

Hamlet makes very specific references, as Hoff demonstrates, to Revelation and to Catholicism. And while she makes no reference in her study to these earlier plays, there are some intriguing parallels to be drawn between Hoff’s observations, the Geneva Bible’s version of Revelation, and the iconography of Shakespeare’s historical narrative in the first tetralogy.

Hoff notes that “literary critics, even those of the historical persuasion, rarely make appropriate acknowledgment of the seething religious background of Shakespeare’s England” (25), and emphasizes that “Elizabethans...were only one or two generations removed from the Catholic era in England” (206). Another critic states that, although the Renaissance in England is generally looked upon as being preoccupied with neo-classical and protestant concerns, the Catholic past and Revelation’s prophecies had a strong influence:

It is now generally recognized that, whilst Renaissance scholars were rediscovering the glories of the classical inheritance, their perspective was still in large measure governed by the Christian concept of end-time, with all the traditions of Last Things built up in the Middle Ages. Antichrist was still expected imminently.... (Reeves 61-62)

Wittreich provides an important caveat with respect to Elizabethan attitudes towards historiography, apocalypse, and to Shakespeare’s place therein:

...there is no easy correlation between the ideology of the Apocalypse and that of the history plays, nor even between history as conceived by Shakespeare and by the Tudor historians who found their providentialist schemes authorized by the Apocalypse. Shakespeare’s great contribution, it has been proposed, was to undo the synthesis of his contemporaries and to neutralize their moralizations. Despite his mocking at drunken and astrological prophecies, *Shakespeare introduces into his histories and tragedies an important prophetic component, often with apocalyptic figurations, with no hint of aspersion and with every intention of making functional use of prophecy. These prophetic and apocalyptic elements are, very simply, an aspect of the artist’s relationship to his own times.* (Wittreich 177-78, italics mine)

To this I would add that Margaret is a case in point: her voice in *Richard III* is prophetic, and all the warnings she gives to the court about Richard come to pass.

It is possible that Shakespeare may have, in these early plays, employed analogies borrowed from the Geneva Bible’s version of Revelation to hint at the ecclesiastical state of affairs. It must be noted that “The Geneva Bible of 1560...was the most popular Bible of Elizabethan England and remained so for decades after the publication of the King James Version” (Hoff 127). And as far as the important religious changes went, the Book of Revelation took on a special role and was treated as a book of prophecy. It was appropriated by Calvinist and other reformers as the

revealed truth of England's lot under Catholicism; Protestant zeal interpreted it as the 'revelation' of God's will that a new religious order should replace the corrupt Catholic church. Protestants held the "belief that Revelation could and should be interpreted historiographically" (Hoff 119), and so it was duly employed to denounce the religious errors of the past:

The Geneva Bible was the fruit of the labors of the Calvinist Marian exiles and hence the basis of many Calvinist attitudes toward Revelation in general and the Beast and the Whore of Babylon in Particular. Almost every Englishman who owned a Bible...owned a Geneva Bible, and even those who did not actually own Geneva Bibles were undoubtedly very familiar with the beliefs of those who were responsible for translating, annotating, and publishing it because these beliefs were disseminated through the populace in sermons, at which attendance was compulsory. Those who are offended by the virulence of the sentiments expressed by these Calvinist commentators should remember that religion was a matter of life and death to sixteenth-century men and women who held firm convictions. (Hoff 127)

In order to underline Catholic corruption, "Protestants agreed that the course of the papacy...was characterized by a steady increase in wealth, greed, worldliness, materialism, carnality, hedonism, pomp, ritual, witchcraft, superstition, and idolatry" (Hoff 124). All of these elements, of course, appear in the Henry VI plays—often as deadly sins—in starring roles.

It must be added that, certainly, witchcraft and Catholicism were often linked. Thomas notes that "Protestant reformers rejected the magical powers and supernatural sanctions which had been so plentifully invoked by the medieval church...It was not the rediscovery of classical magic which underlay the complaints of reformers: it was the basic ritual of the Catholic church" (Thomas, *Religion* 78). Not only this, but "Catholic miracles were confidently attributed to witchcraft." (ibid.). Glancing through the first tetralogy, it is not difficult to link witchcraft with Catholicism: Joan appears by declaring herself a servant of Mother Mary and is more or less canonized by the Dauphin (*IH6* 1.6). The motif of witchcraft, then, would also be notable for its inclusion as a mark of an idolatrous Catholic heresy.

Evidence that a corrupt Catholic state is being described is provided by the depiction of the church in the tetralogy. It is for the head of the English church, significantly, that Shakespeare reserves some of the most spleenful denunciations in any of these plays. In one of several recrimination scenes involving Beauford, he is condemned as a vice-ridden charlatan, a catalogue of every deadly sin:

. . . such is thy *audacious wickedness*,
Thy *lewd, pestiferous, and dissentious pranks*,
As very infants prattle of thy *pride*.
Thou art a most *pernicious usurer*,
Froward by nature, *enemy to peace*,
Lascivious, wanton, more than well beseems
A man of thy profession and degree;
And for thy *treachery*, what's more manifest?
(*IH6* 3.1.14-21, italics mine)

Not even Joan's witchcraft seems quite so wicked in comparison. It is not until *Richard III* that we are again treated to a similar stream of invectives, those which Shakespeare puts into Margaret's speeches aimed at Richard.

The portrait of the church that Shakespeare provides in the Henry VI plays is consistently corrupt. The tetralogy makes a point of beginning with blackening Beauford's character: "Name not religion," says Gloucester, "for thou lov'st the flesh" (*IH6* 1.1.41). Beauford is explicitly accounted a fraud, a "scarlet hypocrite" (*IH6* 1.3.56). With reference to the trappings of the Catholic church and their emblemization, Hoff notes that

The habit as it had been worn by religious orders had been a conventional, officially recognized symbol of hypocrisy, dissembling, and cloaked sin since long before Calvinism gained widespread acceptance within England.... To Calvinists, then, Catholicism was a religion in which a superficial "habit" of grace covered, cloaked, and colored an inherently and unalterably sinful interior. (33-34)

By extension the false saints Pucelle and Richard too wear the robes of "cloaked sin," wrapping themselves in the visible trappings of sanctity, and by this would have been linked, rhetorically and emblematically, to Catholicism. Additionally, the emphasis throughout the tetralogy on deadly sin then fits with what Hoff describes as "the Calvinist perception of the Catholic Church as characterized by moral laxity and

luxury” (140). Hoff also brings to attention an interesting gloss in the Geneva Bible (9.3), where the clergy are equated with vice:

Prelates, with Monkes, Freres, Cardinals, Patriarkes, Archebishops, Bishops, Doctors...which forsake Christ to mainteine false doctrine”—in which “false doctrine” is, of course, Catholicism...such is the facion of the hypocrites”...In the margin the “Popes clergie” is further described as / “*proud, ambicious, bolde...rebellious, cruel, lecherous*” (128-29, italics mine)

Pucelle, Beauford, and Richard may each fit without difficulty into the above description, a catalogue of vice—more specifically, Catholic vice. Another critic makes note of the link between biblical apocalyptic imagery and Catholicism: he notes the Protestants found “proof that the papacy was indeed Antichrist,” and that they “found it in the scandalous lives and false doctrines of popes through the centuries, and most of all in papal ambition for worldly power” (Capp 94).

Questions as to why Shakespeare may not have been explicit about his references to the religious foment going on are answered by Hoff: “Shakespeare was working under the constraints of censorship that prohibited his touching directly on ecclesiastical matters” (53), and that certainly, “controversial ecclesiastical matters [were] forbidden to playwrights” (211). If the references are couched in elliptical metaphors, it is for this reason.

Hoff notes that in the *Argument* prefacing Revelation in the Geneva Bible of 1560, the book of Last Things promises “to show how ‘hypocrites’ (always a code word for Catholics in Calvinist interpretations...) will be destroyed even though ‘for a ceason God wil permit this Antichrist, and strumpet...to deceive the world” (127). Hypocrite, strompet, antichrist—all appear as manifestations of Catholic vice, and together form a tableau that might be said to emblematically depict the subject matter of the Henry VI plays. And the specific, providentialist gloss in this *Argument* that “God wil permit” the deceptions of “this Antichrist, and strompet”—evil only appears because God *allows* it—has not so much to do with the kind of providentialism espoused by the “Tudor myth” version of historiography but instead appears as a function of the time. It answers one of the questions that may be asked

of Shakespeare's first tetralogy: If the plays operate providentially as manifestations of God's will, how is it that God allows such diabolical creatures as Joan and Richard to gain power? The Calvinist interpreters of the Geneva Bible's Revelation responded to the question of evil with, "for a ceason God wil permit this Antichrist, and strompet...to deceive the world." In *1 Henry VI* Joan is very specifically accounted a "high-minded strompet" (1.5.12); Richard's iconography, as has been shown, is consistent with the figure of the antichrist. That "for a ceason God will permit this Antichrist" explains why, for instance, Joan can defeat Talbot in single combat, and why Richard can talk his way into Anne's bed and smile his way onto the throne.

Joan and Richard are linked not only by their figurations in the plays, but also in this meta-theological realm:

Revelation's Babylon was Rome...the universal Catholic Church. The woman of Revelation 17—the Whore of Babylon, its Harlot Queen—was the "image" of the city of Rome.... Sometimes the Whore was also Antichrist, since she was extremely concupiscent.... The Whore's wealth, decadence, and lust were linked to the opulence, greed, and hedonism that prevailed, in the Protestant perception, the Roman Catholic Church. (Hoff 133)

Joan, already characterized a whore, becomes the "Harlot Queen" of France when she seduces the Dauphin and when she is described in her mock-canonization as the new saint of France (*1 Henry 6* 1.6.19-29); when Dauphin says "I will divide my crown with her" the iconography here makes her visibly, emblematically, a harlot queen. Heresy, lust and hedonism are her hallmarks, as they are of the Whore of Babylon. Shakespeare links her with his antichrist Richard by giving them both the same powers of glamorous deception. And it requires no strenuous imaginative leap to see Shakespeare casting Richard as the Beast of Revelation: bestial images are liberally used throughout his portrayal— "dog," "rooting hog, "poisonous bunch-back'd toad" (*R3* 1.3.215, 227, 245).

Aside from the more obvious candidates for inclusion into this Calvinist paradigm, there are other specific parallels to be drawn from the landscape of Revelation. One instance concerns Elizabeth, who refused Richard's offer of alliance.

Hoff makes note that “after the mini-Doomsday of the “fall of Babylon” [Revelation], the Woman in the Wilderness, a nameless Protestant ecclesiological symbol derived from the Woman of Revelation 12, would return as the “true church” (125). Elizabeth was relegated to the metaphorical wilderness of powerlessness with her dethronement and exile to sanctuary (*R3* 2.4). Drawing on Hoff’s commentary here on Revelation may help to explain why Shakespeare arranges for Elizabeth to show herself to be a paragon of virtue in not relenting to Richard’s imprecations for her daughter. Shakespeare specifies that it is a woman who helps to rectify the state arrogated by the antichrist—Elizabeth chooses to ally herself with Richmond, helping to bring Richard down.

And this brings us to Richmond’s victory, and how it fits into this revelatory schemata. In Revelation, Christ says he will give the conqueror of the Antichrist “a rodde of yron” (Geneva 2:26) with which to rule; Richmond asks God for “bruising irons of wrath” (*R3* 5.3.110). This ruler in Revelation is further specified as the son of the Woman of Revelation 12 who flees to the Wilderness; as Richmond is cast as her future son-in-law, then that figure, too, fits.

As for the apocalyptic references in the first tetralogy, they too find places in the Calvinist Revelation of the Geneva Bible. The Calvinist consensus on biblical interpretation was as following, according to Hoff:

they believed they had identified Antichrist on earth in the person of the pope, that the final “half a time” either would begin very shortly or had already begun, and that this final “half a time,” which had begun with the Reformation and the fall of the Roman Catholic Church, would end with the apocalypse. (131)

In the Henry VI plays, apocalyptic imagery is evident, with explicit references that begin *I Henry VI*— “bad revolting stars,” “dreadful Judgement Day” (1.14, 29)—and with Joan’s sowing of darnel (*IH6* 3.2), and Clifford’s invocation of apocalypse (*2H6* 5.2.40-43), among others. Constant war is a feature of the entire tetralogy, and here again is a parallel to be drawn with Hoff’s reading of Hamlet, when she notes that the play begins and ends with “images of war” (236):

Or has a war of sorts been going on all the while, an allegorical religious war that Shakespeare was able to express only in sounds and symbols because it touched on topical ecclesiastical matters?...a war like the Wars of the Antichrist where good (the reform movement) and evil (the corrupted Catholic church) meet in conflict.... (238)

Or a war like the Wars of the Roses?

In summary, the following comment from Hoff regards *Hamlet*, but it can be applied to the culmination of the Henry VI plays as well:

While critics have not failed to notice apocalyptic imagery in *Hamlet*, they have tended to overlook the fact that some English *Protestant historiographical interpreters of Revelation thought of Doomsday as occurring on two levels, one tropological and the other real*. In both cases Doomsday was not an end but a beginning. Tropologically, the fall of Babylon, the Roman Catholic Church, marked the end of the central "times" and the beginning of the long "latter day" of the Reformation. In real terms, however, Doomsday proper would take place at the end of the Reformation's "latter day," and it would bring the end of linear time and the beginning of the Kingdom of God. Accordingly, the calamitous end of Claudius'[s] Denmark need not be equated with the apocalypse proper, for...*Shakespeare may have intended for this apocalyptic end to be perceived tropologically: as a new beginning*. (143, italics mine)

When this view is applied to *Richard III*, tropologically, Richmond replaces the diabolarchy of Richard; in Calvinist terms, it marks the end of Catholic rule with the promise of the new beginning of Protestantism. It may be that in these early history plays, Shakespeare was dipping into the rich warehouse of imagery the Geneva Bible provided with which to stock his dramatic narrative, along with the historical sources.

Conclusion

Shakespeare's first English history tetralogy is based, in part, on a paradigm of diabolism, which constitutes, iconographically and rhetorically, a potent central metaphor for the extreme political and metaphysical chaos depicted in the plays.

The turbulence of these early plays has caused them to be categorized

in one of three ways: as overtly political texts which one can interpret by reference to the historical source material; as dramatic entertainments to be classed as an aesthetic genre comparable with comedy, tragedy or romance; or as part of a process of Shakespeare's personal development which accompanied his youthful comedies and preceded the grand metaphysical tragedies and the mature vision of his lyrical romances. (Tennenhouse 2)

In short, "as part of the process of Shakespeare's personal development" (ibid.), these plays are viewed as experimental, "considerably less coherent...less marked by the clear presence of a dominating intention" (Traversi 1) than the later histories and tragedies. They are construed as the product of a playwright who is not "in control of his material" (Blanpied 24). The presumed incoherence of the tetralogy is to Blanpied a result of "the record of its own coming-into-being—which is to say, the quality of the 'hazard' that the playwright takes along the way" (ibid. 25). Another critic also takes the confusion to be structural: "The swirling action...which almost baffles summary, may be regarded as an emblem of the confusion that engulfs a kingdom torn by civil war" (Baker 592b). Likewise,

instability often seems both matrix and matter...character after character is engulfed by confusion—like Talbot, "whirlèd like a potter's wheel"...unlike the comedies, these plays do not provide a reassuring sense of underlying design; they do not encourage the intuition that things will resolve themselves satisfyingly—that is in a form that is equal to the chaos. (Blanpied 24)

While I agree that disorder is the whole point of the experience of the plays, I would also suggest that the seeming jumble of events depicting confusion do not represent a meaningless, incomprehensible chaos, but are instead integral to a metaphoric structure introduced by the motif of witchcraft, and structured, in part, as an upside-down world of rebellion and misrule.

At the inception of the tetralogy, Pucelle appears as signal of malefic inversion; an antithetical, diabolical clockwork is set in motion. At the tetralogy's close, the downfall of the tyrant as embodiment of an antichrist—consequence of witchcraft, rebellion, and inversion—is analyzed.

The cosmos of the tetralogy is expressed as a dichotomy between celestial order and chaos, a polarity achieved by diabolical influence, suggested first in the language of witchcraft and in the iconography of illusion, heresy, and deadly sin. Contrariety dictates structure: witchcraft, not divine inspiration; rebellion, not order; inequity, not justice; impiety, not reverence. Vice counterfeits virtue, so that what is a lie and what a truth, for the characters, becomes almost impossible to distinguish.

Richard and Joan, polarities in chronology only, are both explicitly diabolical: they practise glamour—they lie, use powers of rhetorical delusion and inversion, and employ every vice and sin in diabolism's catalogue. By representing the negative pole, the upside-down world, they bear a heretical relation to order and nature. Both are "shrewd tempters with their tongues" (*IH6* 1.2.123)—practitioners of *vis verborum*—the verbal force of rhetorical combat emulating, exacerbating, and ultimately reifying the combat of war and the attendant massacres. Other "shrewd tempters," such as Margaret, Eleanor, Suffolk, and Cade, are also rebels. However, it is Richard who is most fully implicated in the iconography of the ur-rebel Lucifer.

The relentless pursuit of power is provided with a diabolical expression to emphasize the outrages ambitious characters perpetrate. It is one thing to look at Suffolk, for instance, as a typical self-promoting courtier, who gets into trouble when he is found out; it is quite another to give him a metaphoric extension which accounts him to be "a serpent" (*2H6* 3.2.259), and sets his death scene in a hell-like tableau for his "devilish policy" (*2H6* 4.1.83). It is in the dark carnival world of a landscape stripped of its social markers—for legitimacy, law, order, gender—that one misruler after another takes the stage. Only an event emulating the force of an apocalypse can end the carnival.

As metaphor, the paradigms of witchcraft, rebellion, and inversion compose a context for the pattern of contrariety that help to make up the upside-down worlds of *Henry VI* and *Richard III*. If Shakespeare had sought a central metaphor by which to

communicate the holocaust of civil war, brought about by the volatile mix of deadly ambition and an unstable throne, he found it, I suggest, in constructing a diabolarchy, based in part on biblical cues. Diabolism, with its traditional expressions and iconography familiar to both the English medieval and Renaissance traditions could provide a focus from which to develop an emblematic, iconographic, and rhetorical language powerful enough to convey the scale and horror of the chaos described—and what can be more chaotic than an apocalypse?

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