# Shakespeare, Foxe and the Idea of Enormity in the English Chronicle Plays

by

Rory Leitch

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

at
Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
August 2006

© Copyright by Rory Leitch, 2006

Library and Archives Canada

Published Heritage Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et Archives Canada

Direction du Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

*Your file Votre référence*
*ISBN: 978-0-494-30878-3*
*Our file Notre référence*
*ISBN: 978-0-494-30878-3*

NOTICE:
The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:
L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

---

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

Canada

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

To comply with the Canadian Privacy Act the National Library of Canada has requested that the following pages be removed from this copy of the thesis:

Preliminary Pages
- Examiners Signature Page (pii)
- Dalhousie Library Copyright Agreement (piii)

Appendices
- Copyright Releases (if applicable)

## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated, first and foremost, to my wife, Sara. It is enough to say that Sara alone knows how long and embattled this argument could have been.

It is also dedicated to a great historian not mentioned in the thesis: Professor Louise Dechêne. In addition to encouraging me to pursue graduate studies in the first place, Professor Dechêne introduced me to the wonders of early modern religious culture and, as well, taught me the virtue of truly disagreeing: the people of New France did not ride their horses in church and Shakespeare was not a radical.

# Table of Contents


List of Illustrations vi
Abstract vii
Acknowledgments viii

Preface.
Authentic Shakespeare and the Theatre of Enormity. ix

Chapter One. Introduction.
Radical Shakespeare? Or, a Coherent Shakespearean Historiography. 1

Chapter Two.
Shakespeare's Modernity: Foxean Enormity as *Theme* and *Intertext*. 39

Chapter Three.
Devil without Horns? 84

Chapter Four.
Scenes of Death: Theatricality and Enormity in *2-3HenryVI* and *Richard III*. 112

Chapter Five.
Distinguishing Form in *Richard II*. 212

Chapter Six.
Richard II, John of Gaunt and the Time of Prophecy and Apostasy. 225

Chapter Seven.
Blessed Alchemy: Enormity, Grace and the Prodigal Prince Myth in the *Henriad*. 311

Chapter Eight.
"See you...these English monsters?" Enormity as False Hope in the *Henriad*. 416

Chapter Nine. Conclusion.
Pleasing the Wiser sort: Shakespeare and the Marketplace for Protestant Historical Culture. 433

Works Cited. 464

Illustrations. 473

## List of Illustrations

1. The picture of the burning and hanging of divers persons.... 473

2. The description of the cruell Martyrdom of Sir John Oldcastle.... 474

3. The decription of the horrible burning of John Badby.... 475

Abstract: *Shakespeare, Foxe and the Idea of Enormity in the English Chronicle Plays.*

In this thesis I explore the relationship between Shakespeare's English chronicle plays and John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. I argue that a series of extraordinary figures of "Enormity" in these plays links Shakespeare's interpretation of late-medieval English history with Foxe's apocalyptic interpretation of the same historical period. I find that there is a substantially positive and productive *intertextual* affiliation between Foxe's analysis of the origins of modernity, a period he defines as a culminating historical era of Antichristian Enormity, and Shakespeare's depictions of the tragic beginnings of modernity in Ricardian England, and of the transformation of that England into a modern "Golgotha" in the Lancastrian plays. Read from this novel historiographical and intertextual perspective, familiar characters such as Jack Cade, Henry V, and Falstaff step forward in a new light as stage-devilish emblems of the spiritual Enormity at the heart of apocalyptic modernity. Shakespeare's engagement with the Foxean intertext was thus a fundamental component of his art of history and one of the ways his stage functioned as a medium for the circulation of a distinctly Protestant historical culture.

Although the idea of Shakespeare as discoverer of historical modernity is venerable, my argument about Enormity and the Foxean intertext is unprecedented. Against the now orthodox assumption that Shakespeare's plays were radically antithetical to the motives of Tudor chronicle history, I argue that the relationship between Art and History in these plays is "organic" rather than "dialectical." Setting aside the post-Tillyardian obsession with the playwright's putative radicalism, a fascination which has so thoroughly occluded Shakespeare's actual historical thought that the idea of a coherent historiographical approach to the plays no longer applies, I attempt to place Shakespeare's "Theatre of Enormity" in a meaningful historiographical perspective by asking *whose* idea of modernity it is that we see coming into view in these plays. Whereas Foxe's book, along with Protestant Providentialism generally, has been dismissed as an example of a benighted kind of history "radical" Shakespeare did not do, this thesis is the first study of the positive literary relationship between Shakespeare and Foxe. This study recognizes that, prior to Shakespeare, Foxe altered the Tudor historiographical landscape by redefining the Wars of the Roses era as the beginning of English modernity, and it argues that Foxe's apocalyptic interpretation of modernity was a compelling and authoritative part of Shakespeare's historical culture. It shows, in a series of close readings of particular characters, how Foxe's robust conception of historical modernity shaped Shakespeare's representation of England's late-medieval past.

Acknowledgments

According to Foxe's apocalyptic worldview, the True Church is distinguished by its abjection: brutalized, impoverished and exiled, Foxe's heroes wander a desolate spiritual landscape overruled by cruel false shepherds and tyrannical persecutors whose sole aim seems to be to make the already incredible sufferings of Foxe's champions even worse. At the same time, Foxe's embattled protagonists are empowered and uplifted by Grace and emboldened by the "spirit of Elias" as they make their dissenting way towards the stake and their paradoxical victory over Antichrist in martyrdom. At the risk of suggesting a truly preposterous comparison, completing this thesis has also been no cake-walk, and I would like briefly to acknowledge the support and guidance of some truly spirited individuals without whom this project would have been impossible for me to complete. First and foremost, by taking on this project when it must have looked like a lost cause, and by applying a truly remarkable mixture of editorial rigour and restraint, my supervisor Dr. John Baxter has allowed me to make the case I wanted to make. The interpretive excesses and errors in this thesis are of course entirely mine, but if I have erred at all fruitfully here it is because Dr. Baxter has empowered and emboldened me to do so. Secondly, while this thesis might, at points, still look something like a precinct of the Wood of Error, it is immeasurably more accurate and error-free than it might have been due to the heroic scrutiny of the members of my supervisory committee—Dr. William Barker, Dr. Krista Kesselring, and Dr. Judith Thompson—and my external examiner, Dr. Richard Hillman. Thirdly, the timely interventions of Dr. Bruce Greenfield were crucial in helping to keep this thesis alive in a dark time, and I would also like to acknowledge the support of Dr. Kenneth Graham, whose unlooked-for invitation to the 2005 Waterloo Elizabethan Theatre conference was uplifting for me in ways he will never know. Finally, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Tim Stretton and all of the other members of the Medieval and Early Modern history reading group: conversing with these brilliant—and remarkably patient—scholars over the past seven years has taught me that I am not a historian, but that I might become a better critic by listening to the kinds of things historians say.

This thesis has been generously supported by grants from the Dalhousie Faculty of Graduate Studies, the Killam Foundation, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

## Preface. Authentic Shakespeare and the Theatre of Enormity

> Why would a play deliberately, as it seems, cultivate obscurity as an aspect of its texture. What is the dramatic function of this sense of sense as veiled or layered in too much possibility?"
>
> T.G. Bishop

> ...the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature: to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.
>
> *Hamlet*, 3.2.20-24

> It is a kind of history.
>
> *Taming of the Shrew*, Induction.2.141

*

In *Shakespeare and the Theatre of Wonder*, T.G. Bishop notes that while Johnson was right to insist that "theatre audiences are always in their right senses," the most compelling moments in Shakespeare often appear designed to be experienced in "translated or troped versions of those senses." The relations "between a plain sense and a figured sense" are "quite complex," Bishop argues, but audiences also tend to be "quite sophisticated about this in practice, and [able to] negotiate their way back and forth with a skill the more remarkable for being mostly unreflective." The theatre, Bishop concludes, "plays its strangest and most powerful tricks across this boundary" (2). As the title of his book suggests, the term Bishop uses to describe this complexly rational theatrical experience is "Wonder," and he argues that one of the primary aims of Shakespeare's characteristically over-determined sense of sense, his celebrated "cultivated obscurity," is to produce it. It is wonder, Bishop says, that we are dealing with on those "occasions on which plays desire and expect audiences to be 'overwhelmed' by what they see and hear"(2).

Defining aesthetic phenomena is of course never easy, and in attempting to characterize Shakespearean drama as a "theatre of wonder" Bishop has his work cut out for him. He has, first of all, carefully to qualify the term "overwhelmed": when we witness the blinding of Gloucester in *King Lear*, we are not *overwhelmed* by Shakespeare's representation of evil because, in reality, Shakespeare is providing us with the occasion for an "intense emotive response" that we expect, and have paid for, and he is doing so in a way that is, so to speak, *reasonable* to want to experience. And Bishop still has, moreover, to explain what this wonder is for. Lear's extraordinarily—wonderfully—vicious daughters are, as Shakespeare reminds us late in the play, *images* of horrors. And, rather than merely appalling or overwhelming us, the spectacular enormities of *King Lear* invite audiences to enter into what Bishop calls "a dynamic space of flux and intermediacy,"

> between the real and the impossible, between belief and skepticism, between reason and feeling. Into this space the audience lets itself be pulled. It is one of the most peculiar, and most welcomed, returns on our engaged attention, a feature regularly expected and applauded. Nor is it merely a matter of seeing strange and unusual sights in costume or staging, though these can be one source of theatrical wonder. More particularly, as Aristotle observes, wonder is an emotional response to certain events framed for inspection in the theatre as a particular action—events placed under a particular "pressure" towards the revelation of significance. (3)

This "disciplined wonder," Bishop argues, is "an especially potent gift in the theatre's pharmacopoeia," because it is a uniquely percipient and capacious "conduit of truth": in staging wonders, Shakespeare's art is at once fully and self-reflexively honest about itself—these are theatrical images—and, at the same time, capable of adumbrating a hyper real world beyond the stage which is both real and imagined: these are also horrors and there really is a promised end. Wonder, then, is a vertiginous theatrical experience which begins with a kind of aporia but which, by virtue of its combined

noetic and affective dimensions, is finally capable of registering a kind of higher-order truth: we feel, as Edgar puts it, "the *weight* of this sad time." It is thus not *catharsis*, or "the purging or conversion of wonder into something else" that Shakespeare's Theatre of Wonder seeks to produce, Bishop contends, but rather

> the placement of that emotion in relation to an audience's understanding of the action. In particular, wonder registers not the audience's analysis of the action, but something more like their sense of its significance. Wonder, that is, is less directed to the acquisition of knowledge than to the perception of meaning. (3-4)

A plain-speaking critic might object to all this that Bishop's analysis simply complicates the more concise description of theatrical wonder Shakespeare articulates, for instance, through Prince Hamlet: there *are* more things than the merely quotidian, and the theatre, in a way which is, again, uniquely percipient and capacious, *mirrors* them. However, just as Hamlet's lecture seemed necessary in Elsinore, so in the rotten state of Shakespeare criticism today, Bishop's question is, I would argue, exactly the kind of inquiry Shakespeare scholars ought to be rediscovering. That is, after the torments of New Historicism—after the relentless tying of Shakespearean theatre to the rack of "discourse"; after the implacable forcing of aesthetics into procrustean doxologies about "circulation of social energy," and "cultural poetics"; and, perhaps, worst of all, after the remorseless reduction of the language of critical appreciation to a series of forced confessions about Shakespeare's paradoxical complicity and subversion—Bishop's robust reconsideration of the nature and function of wonder, surely one of the most fundamental attributes of Shakespearean theatre, is entirely salutary. Bishop reanimates a key critical or aesthetic issue by restating it in meaningful *literary historical* terms: how did Shakespeare's Theatre of Wonder work and what was it for?

While my conclusions are quite different from Bishop's, in this thesis I will ask—and attempt to answer—the same question about Shakespeare's English chronicle plays. Where it has become almost obligatory to celebrate the way these plays "radically" de-mystify the world, I will argue that Shakespeare's chronicle plays are a Theatre of Wonders which worked very much as Bishop describes. Like *King Lear*, these chronicle plays in fact *re-mystify* the political world by discovering its apocalyptic dimension, inviting audiences to experience or witness the weight of historical reality under "pressure," and through a "translated or troped" theatrical perspective that is, quite literally, fraught with *revelatory* significance. However, where Bishop, like Stanley Cavell, understands the distinctive capacity of theatrical wonder to be a "conduit of truth" in largely psychoanalytic terms, generating a version of what Michael Taylor terms "historicized Freud" (57), I will argue that Shakespeare evokes wonder in the history plays for reasons which are more *historiographical* than *psychological*. What is more, I will argue that this historiographical wonder is an expression of a fundamentally religious, indeed apocalyptic, world-view, and not of a nascent secularism or atavistic existentialism.

Shakespeare, it needs to be said, was an Elizabethan Calvinist who took the religious dimension of chronicle history writing very seriously, and this is precisely why his history plays reify, and invite audiences feelingly to witness, a spectacular world of providential wonders. Doing history in a distinctively Elizabethan and Protestant way, Shakespeare uses his stage to mirror the complex apocalyptic truths of late-medieval English history as he and his audience had come to understand, and very much wanted to experience, those truths. Consequently, what I hope to show is that that distinctively Shakespearean "sense of sense," as Bishop puts it with accidental accuracy, as being "*veiled*...in too much possibility," is a rhetorical and dramaturgical

consequence of a fundamentally apocalyptic historiographical motive. Without denying that these plays are full of psychological insight, or that they can teach us a great deal about the human existential situation, and moreover without entirely dismissing the desire to discover the origins of our own historical culture in them, what I want to argue is that Shakespeare's plays were *designed* to mirror the "form and pressure" not of our time, but of the late-Elizabethan modernity experienced by Prince Hamlet, a fraught *Elizabethan* contemporaneity which, according to the argument of the two tetralogies, originated with the tragic apostasy of the last Plantagenet. And, whereas for Bishop theatrical wonder seems more closely affiliated with joy than with "sorrow...trauma and tears"(3), I find that the locus of wonder in Shakespeare often takes the form of spectacularly vicious characters, images of horrors such as King Lear's monstrous tigers-not-daughters. Although this is of course not always the case, in the history plays Shakespeare's Theatre of *Wonders* is very often a Theatre of *Enormity*.

Working with three basic critical coordinates—enormity, modernity, and John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*—I will argue that a series of spectacular figures of enormity in these plays function as *loci* of deliberate or cultivated obscurity or "wonder."[1] Employing the illuminating intertextual theories of Michael Riffaterre, I will try to show that these theatrical figures of enormity function as intertextual bridges which consolidate Shakespeare's portrayal of late-medieval English history in light of Foxe's apocalyptic account of the same era in *Acts and Monuments*. As perceptive critics of these plays have long recognized, one of Shakespeare's greatest achievements in the two tetralogies was to have discovered the origins of historical modernity. What I will be arguing here for the first time, however, is that the modernity Shakespeare and his audience were witnessing was not the passing of the

Middle Ages as we understand it, or the emergence of *our* modern world, but rather the emergence of an apocalyptic modernity captured on stage by the spectacularly intertextual presence of Shakespeare's figures of Enormity.

Like Bishop, I have my work cut out for me. As with most attempts at intertextual reading, my most obvious challenge, and one of the things I'll be working hardest to accomplish, is to show that my sense of a real and substantial affiliation between Foxe and Shakespeare is just that: a historically actual thing and not just a figment of my overwrought collocations and a dry brain. An even bigger challenge, however, one which can really only be pointed to in a Preface, is that to many readers the image of the committed and deeply pious Protestant playwright I will be adducing here simply will not sound "authentic," in the problematic sense discussed recently by Stephen Orgel. "It does not require a very large leap of the historical imagination," Orgel argues, to grasp that "to ears trained in Renaissance England Shakespeare sounded different," and that what "sounded Shakespearean to those ears...does not sound Shakespearean to ours" (234). Nonetheless, he notes, the *unavoidable likelihood* that Shakespeare's "contemporaries knew something we do not know, and saw things in Shakespeare that we no longer see or have edited out" never really seems to impinge upon or constrain our constructed images of what is and is not *authentically* Shakespearean (234). The reason for this, Orgel suggests, is that claims about Shakespeare are in practice never judged in terms of textual and historical evidence alone, but rather in terms of evidence apprised in light of firmly-held beliefs about how the plays *ought* to be construed and appreciated, beliefs which may or may not have anything to do with Shakespeare's art: some very fine critics, it is worth recalling, refused to believe that *King Lear* was even meant for the stage, let alone a

Theatre of Wonders. With disagreements about interpretive validity at this level, Orgel contends, and he is surely right about this,

> there is really no way of adjudicating the debate...arguments about the sound of Shakespeare are essentially circular. The question of authenticity, like the question of what constitutes evidence, is profoundly time bound, and different texts have sounded right or wrong at different periods, without much regard to evidence of any sort (234).

It would, I think, be destructive to insist that the relativistic phenomenon Orgel is describing is somehow wrong or illegitimate, that critics ought to be doing something other than constructing versions of what they think and feel is truly Shakespearean—New Historicism, it seems to me, has too often been an image of *that* horror. Rather, what I would like simply to point out here as a way of prefacing this thesis is that what seems *authentically* Shakespearean to me is a series of brilliantly crafted performances of religious conviction fashioned by a playwright determined to use his stage as a vehicle for the kind of history which he found in the great chronicles of his day. In writing this thesis I have been repeatedly thrilled to discover both how Shakespeare's religious seriousness is freshly illuminated by *Acts and Monuments*, and also by discovering how the act of tracing the Foxean intertext in the plays substantially deepens my appreciation of Shakespeare's achievement as an historical dramatist. Like the belief that Shakespeare was a heroic defender of the imagination in the face of modernity, or that he exemplifies the secular genius of the Renaissance, or that he is "Homo rhetoricus," or Jan Kott's contemporary, or that he "warbled his woodnotes wild," this religious conception of mine is neither *simply* "in the text" nor is it *merely* demanded by history: it is, rather, a vitally reasonable critical assumption which governs the way I have been attempting to read his plays. This is not a confession—forced or otherwise—but it seems to me that a lively respect for and

critical interest in the religious beliefs of zealous Elizabethan Protestants like Foxe, and in a master work like *Acts and Monuments*, ought to be part of our collective sense of what is authentically Shakespearean. Such a lively interest and respect is what I am hoping to contribute to Shakespeare studies.[2]

---

[1] "Enormity" is a term that was used occasionally by Foxe and once Shakespeare (*Coriolanus* 2.1.16; *Acts and Monuments* [1583 ed.] 322), but my use of it in this thesis does not imply any philological link with either writer. Rather, I am using the term in the common dictionary sense to connote the extreme acts of evil, moral depravity, and violence which are center stage, so to speak, in *Acts and Monuments*: "enormity" is not Foxe's word *per se*, but it seems to be the right word for the kind of things he was describing. Moreover, while I am arguing that Shakespeare's plays are full of violent enormities, I am by no means claiming to have surveyed all of the criticism on this theme. What I will note, however, is that four fairly recent studies appropriately titled *Shakespeare's Culture of Violence* (Cohen, 1993), *Shakespeare Power and Punishment* (Kendall, 1998), *Shakespeare & Violence* (Foakes, 2003), and *Shakespeare's Violated Bodies* (Aebischer, 2004), make no mention of Foxe's role in shaping the way Elizabethans construed enormity.

[2] A note on quotations. This thesis includes copious quotations from Foxe and Shakespeare, and in both cases there are questions about the accuracy of the quotations which need to be addressed. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from Foxe are from the great Cattley/Townsend or Victorian edition of *Acts and Monuments* of 1837-43 (reprinted with Townsend's revisions by AMS Press in 1965). Although this edition has been superseded by Professor David Loades' online Variorum edition recently, I have chosen to retain the older version for this thesis. This is largely due to time constraints and, moreover, because all of my thinking has emerged from my reading of the Victorian edition and it has seemed at least reasonable for my thesis to reflect that reality. That said, had time permitted I would have preferred to present Foxe as he is captured, much more accurately in my view, in the new edition. Based on the brief experience I have had with Loades' edition so far, I have no doubts that using it would strengthen my claims about the resonance and theatrical energy of the "Foxean intertext." Any future publication arising from this thesis will involve a complete revision of all quotations from Foxe using the Variorum *Acts and Monuments.* For Shakespeare, I have quoted the plays quite capriciously in this thesis, and in a fashion that is not consistent with standard practice. Most often my text has been Blakemore Evan's *Riverside Shakespeare*, but I have very frequently used other, sometimes older and sometimes more recent, editions, editions which I have been surveying for clues to dominant trends in 20th-century criticism. The strikingly flawed thinking behind this practice has been that, since modern editions of Shakespeare's plays are merely aides to imagining what the plays would have been like in performance, and that the broad strokes of characterization to which I will be referring do not vary from one edition to the next, it simply does not matter at any given point which text is being used. *Inter alia*, what I failed to consider is how utterly

vexatious this way of quoting Shakespeare would be to a reader interested in verifying the accuracy of my citations. Although I do not believe that my argument has been compromised, I do see the problem with my credibility and I would—again if time had permitted—very much like to have time to revise the entire thesis using one standard edition. In the end, I hope readers will recognize that these flaws are reflections of this student's inability totally to master the chaotic conditions under which his thesis has been written and published, and not any sort of indifference with respect to either authors' true meanings.

**Chapter One. Introduction.**
**Radical Shakespeare? Or, a Coherent Shakespearean Historiography**

> The spread of machiavellism in the play…is not to be wondered at.
>
> John F. Danby

> The *Henry IVs* inhabit the Tudor Erastian world. Religious references are mostly perfunctory….Despite themes of sin and expiation the plays develop in terms not of a supernatural metaphysic of history but of the practical ends of worldly action; they reflect a necessitarian view of political action, a sense of compelling reality….In this respect the chronicles point the way.
>
> A.R. Humphreys

> A history play must be regarded as a literary medium for history.
>
> Lily B. Campbell

> If there was an Elizabethan World Picture, Shakespeare questions it, shatters it, as surely as the new science did. No 'Source', no received conception, survives its incorporation into Shakespeare without sea-change.
>
> Stanley Cavell

> The author's use of this or that language may not be indirect or concealed but perfectly explicit; it may simply have been neglected by scholars who have been trained to look only for forms of thought considered important for reasons sometimes not historical at all.
>
> John Pocock

*

While it is anything but universally accepted, the idea that Shakespeare's English history plays chronicle the origins of historical "modernity" in a profound and brilliantly theatrical way is perhaps one of the most venerable and compelling claims of modern Shakespeare scholarship. This thesis revisits the idea of Shakespeare as a historian of English modernity, but it does so in a way which departs substantially from the Romantic critics who conceived of it originally and, as well, from the way Shakespeare scholars have dealt with it over the past half-century or so. It does so, to put it bluntly, because I argue that—like John Foxe—Shakespeare got modernity *wrong*. That is, the distinguishing feature of this thesis is its focus on John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments of these latter and perilous days*. Foxe's book is a master work of Elizabethan historical writing which, despite its singular and unparalleled influence

on the historical culture of early modern England, has not figured in our attempts to contextualize Shakespeare's chronicle plays historiographically.[1] More specifically, Foxe's role as a discoverer of English modernity has gone unrecognized and has had no impact on our thinking about Shakespeare's own discovery of modernity.[2] Whereas critics have either ignored Foxe, or have mentioned him only to consign him to historiographical oblivion, I will be presenting readers with a host of distinctively Foxean ideas, and I will be urging that, in a variety of previously unrecognized ways, these ideas constitute a "Foxean intertext" that was essential to the late-medieval history brought so vividly to life by Shakespeare on the stage.

And this is what I mean when I say Shakespeare got modernity *wrong*: as remarkably perspicuous as he was, Shakespeare could not and did not grasp the nature of the modernity coming into being in his day in the same way that we moderns, from the retrospective vantage point of the present, can and do. And, while there would seem to be little value in celebrating Shakespeare for something he did not, and could not, actually do, what is worth understanding and celebrating is the way Shakespeare was able to use his stage to represent a version of historical modernity that was at once both innovative and original and yet appreciable or recognizable to his contemporaries as history. In other words, rather than mistaking it for an "organic" reflection of historical reality—this is the enduringly orthodox Romantic fantasy—I want to argue that Shakespeare's highly-wrought image of emergent modernity is better understood as an historiographical *artifact*, an apocalyptic historical idea and an *interpretation* of reality derived, fundamentally, from Foxe's book and from the larger tradition of apocalyptic historical thought *Acts and Monuments* exemplifies. What is more, while I do not want to deny Shakespeare his place in the story of the emergence of our own ideas about historical "modernity," or indeed of modernity itself, I want to

insist that a real appreciation of Shakespeare's achievement as a historical dramatist begins not with assertions of the mystical continuity between his views and ours—again, the orthodox fantasy view—but rather with a recognition and celebration of his robust imaginative and intellectual engagement with the ideas of his own time. My question, in other words, is not *whether* Shakespeare was a discoverer of historical modernity, nor is it whether we can claim to discover the origins of *our* modernity in Shakespeare. Rather, what I want to pursue here is *what* and *whose* idea of modernity Shakespeare was purposefully discovering on the Elizabethan stage.

To help clarify this crucial distinction, I want to look briefly at one of the best modern discussions of Shakespeare's discovery of modernity, John Danby's remarkable essay on *1-2HenryIV* in *Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature* (1949). Paradoxically, Danby gets very close to Shakespeare's idea of modernity because he starts with the patently incorrect assumption that, *qua* historian, Shakespeare had nothing much to say in the second tetralogy. In the first tetralogy, he says, Shakespeare is "consciously concerned with an intellectual thesis that actively controls his material," whereas "in the second tetralogy he has lost interest in this thesis, and at the same time no scheme of comparable relevance or individual concern has presented itself"(81). This is nonsense, but Danby's belief that there is no historical argument at all in the second tetralogy seems to have freed him from the burden of supplying one, and hence allowed him to discover the powerful argument that is in fact there: Danby reads the plays and discovers a kind of "allegory" about modern England. "Analysis," Danby argues with singular lucidity, "leaves us…with symbols of Power and Appetite as the keys to the play's meaning:

> The world is disunited and corrupt at heart. Corruption and disunity spread, too, through the whole body politic. The England depicted in *Henry IV, Part 1 and 2* is neither ideally ordered nor happy. It is an England, on the one side, of

> bawdy-house and thieves kitchen, of waylaid merchants, badgered and bewildered Justices, and a peasantry wretched, betrayed, and recruited for the wars; an England, on the other side, of the chivalrous wolf-pack of Hotspur and Douglas, and of state-sponsored treachery in the person of Prince John—the whole presided over by a sick King, hag-ridden by conscience, dreaming of a Crusade to the Holy Land as M. Remorse thinks of slimming and repentance....It is a world where to be normal is to be anti-social, and to be social is to be anti-human. Humanity is split in two. One half is banished to an underworld where dignity and decency must inevitably submerge in brutality and riot. The other half is restricted to an over-world where the same dignity and decency succumb to heartlessness and frigidity. (98)

As a concise paraphrase of the historical-thematic onus of the second tetralogy, Danby's reading has, I think, never been bettered. And, while Danby's word for the presiding spirit of this corrupted world is "Commodity," it is clear that what he means is Modernity: "the concrete world of Elizabeth and her England" and the new "forces" which, he says, had come to govern the new "sixteenth-century state" (95). All of the sequences' major characters, Danby avers, are "new men."

Insofar as he captures the real imaginative impact of Shakespeare's anatomy of a dismal late-medieval England in *1-2HenryIV*, and more particularly insofar as he clearly grasps how all of the major characters function as "allotropic forms" of modernity or Commodity (93), Danby has, I think, gotten Shakespeare's image of modernity exactly right. Where he goes wrong, however, is in his quixotic claim that the plays somehow manage to be an "allegory" without having an argument, that rather than an "intellectual thesis" about modernity, Shakespeare provides an unmediated glimpse of the thing itself, that "behind the allegory is the concrete world of Elizabeth and her England" (94-95) and that "the whole body of the play's world now reveals clearly the mechanisms of sixteenth-century society" (100). This is, as I suggested above, a kind of fantastical nonsense: it is a version of the impossibly comprehensive Romantic genius-artist who, because of his "organic" relationship with

reality, somehow functions as a kind of oracle of his own time rather than an engaged participant in it. This is, moreover, also the core fantasy at the heart of New Historicism, which holds that Shakespeare's plays somehow give the critic an unparalleled, and again mystically unmediated, access to what Michael Neill imagines is the deep "psychic economy" of early modernity (3). This is a large caveat, but Danby's insight can be rescued by recognizing that what he takes for modernity in the plays is in fact precisely what he says it is not: it is an "intellectual thesis" which is a reflection not of Shakespeare's organic relationship with the supposedly nascent modernity of Elizabethan England itself, but rather a conscious expression of his imaginative and intellectual engagement with the providential historical thought of his day. Simply put, the plays adumbrate a spectacularly or astonishingly corrupt body politic because, from the point of view of Foxean history, this is precisely what *modernity* looks like.

Moreover, rather than a reality-driven de-mystification of an outmoded or discarded religious worldview, what Danby calls the "spread of machiavellianism in the play" is in fact designed quite precisely to be "wondered at" (93). That is, in Shakespeare's Theatre of Enormity, theatrical *wonder* is exactly what the spectacular representation of the enormity of modernity is for, and this wonder is, by design, meant to communicate a distinctively apocalyptic historical thesis about the world that we see coming into view in the plays.

*

While my emphasis on Foxean history in a discussion of Shakespearean modernity is unprecedented, the more unorthodox feature of this thesis—and real focus of this Introduction—is my claim that there was a positive, constructive, and fruitful artistic and *historiographical* relationship between Shakespeare's chronicle

plays and Elizabethan chronicle historical writing in general. This is also a venerable idea, and one which might seem to be anything but unorthodox. However, in pursuing what I call the "Foxean intertext," I have consistently run up against a regnant conception of Shakespeare which overrules any substantial or coherent *historiographical* grasp of Shakespeare's dramaturgy and which, as a result, makes Shakespeare's discovery of modernity impossible to understand and appreciate. I am referring to the assumption that Shakespeare's historical practice was "radically" different from the providential chronicle history-writing practiced by his contemporaries, by the authors of his chronicle sources, and hence that the only and proper way to celebrate Shakespeare's achievement as a historical dramatist is to imagine it as a kind of "radical" antithesis of the kind of Protestant providential history-making we find Foxe doing, for example, in *Acts and Monuments*.

*Radical Shakespeare*: this myopia—or rather critical and historiographical astigmatism—is captured in A.R. Humphreys' comments on Shakespeare's "sense of compelling reality."[3] Because the history plays look, often unflinchingly, at harsh social and political realities, because they contain "life-like" characters such as Bolingbroke, and most importantly because, for Humphreys, Shakespeare is a culture-hero defined, *ne plus ultra*, by Burckhardt's interpretation of the Renaissance as the birth of *his* modern world, his plays simply must articulate a robustly and "radically" modern and secular view of history, one in which "reality" becomes "compelling" precisely at the moment in which Shakespeare rescues it from a "supernatural metaphysics of history." Typically, for Humphreys this radicalism is what makes Shakespeare's history plays authentically Shakespearean. However, like Milton's darkness visible or, to switch metaphors, like some relentlessly ringing bell, what this way of thinking also does is to drown out the fundamental sound of Shakespeare's

historical dramaturgy, a distinctively Protestant and Providential voice which, I believe, made his plays sound so compelling to his contemporaries. For *those* admirers of Shakespeare, historical reality is compelling in the history plays because—like Foxe and other contemporary historians—Shakespeare holds a providential mirror to it, continuously asserting as he does so that, even at its most seemingly secular or Machiavellian, history is fully realized in the theater at those moments when we grasp the spiritual realities which suffuse and inform its conflicts, characters, and events. Leading chronicle historians like Foxe did "point the way in this," but not by helping Shakespeare to discover a "necessitarian view of political action"; they did so, rather, by authorizing the *theatrically potent* idea that *significant* historical conflict bears witness to the spiritual realities that make history and drama *wonder-full.*

Now to begin a discussion of the history plays in this way is, inevitably, to evoke the troublesome spectre of E.M.W. Tillyard. Although he did not mention Foxe, Tillyard famously insisted that we must view Shakespeare's historical art as the expression of a distinctively religious Elizabethan world-view—a kind of reduced or flattened Medievalism as he saw it—and the product of a distinctively literate Protestant providential historical culture.[4] And, as Paola Pugliatti argues,

> no work has been so vehemently confuted, none has been more radically demolished; nevertheless all readings of the history plays take us back to Tillyard as a necessary starting point. ("Shakespeare's Historicism" 339)

What Pugliatti is acknowledging is that critics who want, as Michael Taylor puts it, "to take Shakespeare seriously as a historian of the English past" (177) are perforce *post-Tillyardians*. Our question is not *whether,* but *how*, to proceed from *The Elizabethan World Picture* (1943) and *Shakespeare's History Plays* (1944) towards a

better understanding of how Shakespeare's chronicle plays functioned as history in their original Elizabethan context. The real reason, however, for Tillyard's continued relevance is that, while his arguments and conclusions have certainly been vehemently "confuted" by subsequent critics, they have not in any meaningful sense ever been "radically demolished." While Tillyard's ideas have been endlessly traduced, they have never been significantly challenged because Tillyard was largely right. That is, to the extent that he effectively introduced Shakespeare scholars to the fundamentally conservative Providentialism of mainstream Elizabethan historical thought, and moreover to the extent that he demonstrated the *historiographical* value of thinking beyond Shakespeare's immediate sources and in terms of a wider field of reference—his discussion of tapestries as a source for *Richard II*, for example—Tillyard set out the basic framework for a coherent historiographical approach to the history plays: his work is indeed a very good starting place for students of Shakespearean history.

A huge pitfall, however, is the assumption that Tillyard's more specific claims about the English history plays—the idea that, against the backdrop of a fabric of late-medieval "supreme commonplaces," Shakespeare rigidly applied the apologetic providentialism of Tudor historian Edward Hall to create the definitive providential framework for his version of the Wars of the Roses—somehow defines, circumscribes, and indeed exhausts an entire field of critical inquiry. Paradoxically, an overestimation of Tillyard's argument has fueled the conviction that a coherently historical approach to the chronicle plays cannot begin to account for their complexity and genius—hence the need for a notionally "radical" historiography—while, at the same time, rigidly limiting our thinking about the intellectual scope, interest, and energy of Tudor historical thought to the precincts of *Shakespeare's History Plays*.

Radical Shakespeare, in other words, is defined by a determination not to think *with* Tillyard and, at the same time, an inability to think without him.

If this sounds dismissive, an exigent example of this occluded thinking is the now commonplace assumption that because Tillyard exaggerated Shakespeare's allegiance to the providential pattern of Hall's "Tudor Myth," and because Tillyard's critical readings often neglect Shakespeare's complexity and irony, Shakespearean history must have been somehow *not providential at all*. Precipitously conflating Hall's *version* of Tudor providential thought with the entire phenomenon of early modern providentialism, this characteristically *post-Tillyardian* response disastrously conflates *understanding* Shakespeare with *refuting* Tillyard. Reified over time by dint of repetition and by the force of ringing assertion, the notion that Shakespeare was practicing a radically non-providential kind of history has become an unshakable tenet of Shakespearean orthodoxy. Thus, Wilbur Sanders concluded in 1968 that Shakespeare "never succeeded in believing in this external, meddlesome Providence in the way that is necessary for a creative artist"(111), and this opinion is echoed today by Michael Hattaway, who insists that "God's purposes are in no way to be deduced from the play[s]." Shakespeare, Hattaway proclaims, rejected "that kind of history that derives from theology and reads human chronicles as chapters in a book of God," and consequently "can be understood only if a reader or spectator attends closely to the plays' particular analytic techniques and does not interpret [them] in terms of any grand design"(*1HenryVI*, 14; *2HenryVI*, 7-8).

Beyond the strangely fervid need to defend Shakespeare from Christianity, and the fear of "reductive" historical criticism, what is truly striking about such post-Tillyardian thought is the coming to dominance of an explanatory paradigm which, while couched in robustly literary historiographical terms, is as divorced from the

historical dramas Shakespeare actually created, a series of plays rife with indications of providential agency and design, as it is from any coherent understanding of the historiographical culture in which these plays were originally conceived, performed, and witnessed. The post-Tillyardian attempt to rediscover, *contra* Tillyard, a radically secular Shakespearean history is nonsensical not only because his plays are explicitly providential, but also because, as historians from Tillyard to Daniel Woolf have documented, there simply was no non-providential Tudor chronicle history, Shakespearean or otherwise. "To subordinate fortune or chance to God or providence was not," Woolf writes, "simply a matter of intellectual convenience":

> it was *positively necessary* in the context of a Christian cosmology in which God was accepted as omnipotent First Cause. It is significant that Guicciardini, amid the turmoil of sixteenth-century Florence, probably came closer than anyone to a story of history in which fortune really was Polybius' random *Tyche*, but his English translator still turned fortune into the rational Christian providence…: Whether a writer used fortune, fate, providence, or any combination of these to explain the causes and the outcome of historical events, the result was the same. The course of history was predetermined…. These causes are *the animating forces in the world, and hence in history.* Behind them, for the post-Thomas Christian, lies the first cause of everything, God; it is ultimately by 'the providence of God [that] all things are governed and directed.' (*Idea of History* 7-9; my emphases)

The *historiographical* implications of Woolf's argument would seem to be inescapable. Providence was not a mere "intellectual convenience," to be adopted, dispensed with, or played around with as writers—or playwrights—saw fit: it was an intellectual and religious *conviction* that was irremovably part of the fabric of Tudor historical thought. Providentialism, Woolf argues, was

> *indispensable* in a universe where God's hand ultimately governed all….The later seventeenth-century revolt against strict predestinarianism would help to erode this attitude…but it was not until the eighteenth-century that God would really be made into a 'divine clockmaker'….In later decades, when God had been placed outside the realm of daily events by post-Newtonian science, concepts like fortune and chance could genuinely be used to denote the irrational, the die-roll of circumstance in an open-ended historical process where

> the future was merely possible. It was then that the *philosophes* and their eventual successors the metahistorians of the late eighteenth-century and nineteenth centuries could intervene to explain the nature of history in rational, not theological, terms. In the first few decades of the seventeenth-century, however, the rationalization of history lay well in the future. (262-3)

As I will suggest in a moment, if it is not entirely helpful to situate Shakespeare within such teleological pictures of the emergence of "rational" historical thought, the main point is clear: all serious historical thought in Shakespeare's day was tacitly providential, and Shakespeare was no more likely to have dispensed with it than a modern historian would ideas like economics, psychology, or culture.

It could, of course, be argued that the hegemony of providentialism is not in dispute: what Shakespeare's "radical" theatrical history does, according to a more recent version of this post-Tillyardian view, is to expose or *enact* ideological rifts within that hegemony. Here again Woolf's work is important because he demonstrates the invalidity of simply assuming, on the basis of theory, that the hegemony of providentialism inevitably implies the presence of a subversive, substantially non-providential, historiographical counter-ideology upon which "radical Shakespeare" would naturally have seized:

> the existence and dominance of a collective, socially accepted set of political, religious, and social beliefs—rather like one of Thomas S. Kuhn's scientific paradigms—*in no way presupposes the concurrent existence, within the same political context, of other belief systems more radically opposed to it*; yet its internal contradictions and anomalies, and its failure to satisfy all interests equally well, may eventually give rise to these if the appropriate circumstances arise. (*Idea of History* xiii, my emphasis )

Although he is not writing about Shakespeare, Woolf demonstrates with painstaking detail that the circumstances of Shakespeare's era simply were not conducive to the kind of ideological ferment which might lead to the emergence of a radically new, non-providential, historiography:

> On most issues, at most times, late Tudor and early Stuart historians simply saw no need to pursue historical debate for its own sake...while one might take issue with a particular opinion or detail...no one ever questioned the fundamental 'facts' of history, nor sought to reshape them into an innovative interpretation. Thus there was often a kind of 'second order' refinement and rejection of facts (though historians usually resented doing even this) within a wider framework, but almost never did there occur 'first order' disagreements, paradigmatic shifts away from one set of beliefs or assumptions to another. Historians all agreed on essentials, and they wrote from an ideologically unified perspective, that of the Tudor and Stuart monarchy....we should [not] expect the historians of the period to have agreed on every aspect of the past, or its contemporary significance...but moderate dissent and subtle shadings in various historians' personal pictures of the past do not amount to the existence, still less the acceptance, of widespread historical debate. It would take civil war and the suspension of censorship in the 1640's to bring about a framework of historical discussion that was truly dialectical, even confrontational, rather than consensual in character. (30-32)

Woolf's revisionist historiographical perspective on the relationship between historical writing and ideology in early modern England clearly represents an enormous challenge to post-Tillyardian thought—which is presumably why it has been ignored by Shakespeare scholars. Simply put, if Woolf is correct, then the radically non-providential history play imagined by critics from Sanders to Hattaway is exposed as an impossibly a-historical concoction. Even if our radical playwright did somehow manage to transcend Woolf's consensual paradigm, the implications of this astounding conceptual leap would have been lost, entirely, on an audience which would have interpreted his plays through the lens of providence regardless. And, if Woolf's argument sounds like a more nuanced, and more substantially researched, version of Tillyard's infamous argument, this is not because the professional historian, lacking theory, has a weak grip on ideology, but because Tillyard's rather forward-looking revisionist intuitions about Shakespeare's historiographical background have turned out to be correct. Consequently, what must be repudiated by students of the history plays is not Tillyard, but all of that conventionally vehement confuting and

pseudo-demolishing of his work which has been carried out as a way of rescuing Shakespeare from the supposedly unacceptable implications of historiography. If—and this is a fairly substantial qualifier—we want to have an *historiographically* coherent understanding of Shakespeare's chronicle drama, then we have to begin by abandoning the idea that the best and only way to talk about Shakespeare as an historian is in terms of "radical" inversions of Tillyard's infamous argument.

*

While it is hard to deny that classic post-Tillyardian criticism of the chronicle plays is a paradoxically rank *and* barren field, it might still be objected that Shakespeare scholarship, informed by a rigorous New Historicism, has moved on from the idealized, quasi-historical, post-Tillyardian thinking of the 60's and 70's. Indeed it is often suggested that, by virtue of its desire to reduce the literary to historical forces, New Historicism is neo-Tillyardian. However, while there is no disputing the influence of New Historicism, I would argue that, far from helping to re-establish a coherent Shakespearean historiography, the impact of New Historicism has been to further erode it, generating an increasingly implausible post-Tillyardian understanding of "radical" Shakespeare. Where Shakespeare was once viewed by critics as an *avant garde* writer in tune with what many historians also believed was the new, and predominately secular, humanist history of the Renaissance, his putative radicalism is now typically presented in such extraordinarily a-historical terms that the idea of a coherent Shakespearean historiography no longer applies. Under New Historicism, in other words, the figure of "radical" Shakespeare has become more, rather than less, absurd, and, what is more, it has become so rarefied that it no longer capable of being informed by or affiliated with the work of professional historians like Woolf.

It would, I think, be difficult to find a more succinct and enthusiastic expression of this development than the passage quoted in the epigraph above from Stanley Cavell's brilliant and widely admired study, *Disowning Knowledge in Six Plays of Shakespeare*. Aside from Cavell's odd use of the word "if" in this passage—which raises the question of what Shakespeare was up to if there was no hegemonic World Picture to shatter—and his rather tenuous grip on the past tense, what is striking here is how far we have come from the critical realism not just of Tillyard himself, but of an entire generation of earlier post-Tillyardians. In contrast with the interest in Machiavelli and "politic" history that animated studies by Humphreys, Wilbur Sanders and Robert Ornstein, or the careful re-reading of the chronicles by Henry A. Kelly, Cavell is fanciful to the point of incoherence. While he appears to be interested in situating Shakespeare's radicalism historically, in terms of a scientific "revolution," this gesture at contextualization is impossible to square with the larger claim that Shakespeare was impervious to all received conceptions: were the concepts of "new science" somehow Shakespeare proof? Or did the sea-changing Bard choose not to shatter them? The point is moot, however, because, the "new science" revolution vaguely alluded to here was, if anything, a process driven precisely by the consolidation and expansion of received ideas. Whatever its merits as a way of articulating Shakespeare's radical philosophical potential for moderns—which potential, I would argue with Cavell, is very great—as a way of understanding Shakespeare as an Elizabethan historical thinker, Cavell's image is worse than useless. Having *almost* slipped the surly bonds of Tillyard, Cavell falls through the crack separating past and present.

Admittedly, Cavell is hardly a representative New Historicist, and so there is perhaps little to be gained by challenging his highly idealized view of Shakespeare as

the heroic forerunner of postmodern philosophy and psychology. A similar flight path can, however, be traced in a host of recent studies by reputedly more grounded literary historians. Consider, for example, the following passage from Jonathan Goldberg's widely admired study of Jacobean literature:

> Shakespeare's relation to his culture remains difficult to summarize, not because he is apart from it, but because he assumes no fixed relationship to it. This has often made it possible to act as if Shakespeare was some timeless figure, a man for all times and yet of none. This is, palpably, erroneous. Yet opposing attempts, for instance E.M.W. Tillyard's, to moor his political and historical attitudes in a morass of Elizabethan commonplaces, have foundered...The space of Shakespearean theatre is, as Greenblatt concludes, radically unstable, a place of improvisation where all beliefs of the culture are trotted out, tried on, but none is ultimately adopted. This is not Keatsian negative capability exactly; rather Shakespeare occupies a thoroughly theatrical space. But, we must add, his theatrical space is inscribed in a cultural theater. (230)

While many critics have found this kind of thinking compelling—presumably because it offers a way of being credibly "historical" without being "reductive"—there is, it seems to me, little to separate Goldberg's "theatrical space" from the "palpable" error it sets out to correct—other than some stultifying and obfuscatory jargon. Goldberg asserts that Shakespeare's relation to his culture is "difficult" to specify—which is true, and precisely why developing a coherent Shakespearean historiography is worth the effort—but he immediately defeats this difficulty by summarizing the essence of Shakespeare in precisely the same terms he is claiming to repudiate. That is, by virtue of some ineffable *mojo* (the theatricality of theatricality), which is the singular consequence of Shakespeare's lack of a "fixed relationship" with his own culture (a culture which is, however, mysteriously "inscribed" within a theater), Shakespeare's plays were incapable of conveying or performing authorial convictions.

To the extent that this is not simply nonsense, or Shakespeare's good old Keatsian impartiality repackaged in the language of cultural studies, what is perhaps

noteworthy here is the idea of Shakespeare's practice as "improvisation." It goes without saying that Shakespeare's plays were not "improvised" in any meaningful sense of the term—Prince Hamlet's withering comments on improvisation are perhaps apposite here—but what is truly striking is the extent to which in Goldberg's formulation a kind of nugatory pseudo-logic takes the place of the entire subject matter of a coherent Shakespearean historiography. The whole realm, that is, of serious intellectual, political, and religious thought and assertion is reduced to an absurd contrast between a "morass," on one hand, and, on the other, a purely manipulative and cynical process in which serious convictions are merely "trotted out." This is, to say the least, a vitiated understanding of the theatre's place in the history of ideas and, by the same token, of the playwright's role as artist and public intellectual. Rather than offering a better, more nuanced and perspicuous kind of Shakespearean historiography, this familiar New Historicist perspective is little more than a bizarre inversion of Tillyard's fundamental assumptions: it is a caricature of Tillyard's robust claim that the distinctive seriousness of Shakespeare's plays is properly understood as a consequence of his ability to use the stage to express specifically Elizabethan moral and intellectual convictions.

Having nullified Tillyard's key concept—Shakespeare's fundamentally religious seriousness—the critic is then free to project onto the plays any particular "radical" content he or she finds congenial. Shakespeare is thus rediscovered as "our contemporary" only now, rather than discovering secular politics with Machiavelli, or dancing on the edge of an existential abyss, he is conscripted into service as a poster boy for the pseudo-serious "politics" of postmodern radicalism. While the limitations of New Historicism have become increasingly evident, it is nonetheless valuable to consider just how thoroughly orthodox the figure of "radical" Shakespeare has

become in recent scholarship. To show this, I want to consider three influential recent commentaries on the history plays—by Graham Holderness, David Kastan, and Phyllis Rackin—all of which set out "to situate the history plays in the context of Tudor historiography, in his theater, and in his world"(Rackin, *Stages of History*, ix), but which end up describing the chronicle plays in terms of a rarefied and self-regarding radicalism which is as remote from Shakespeare's historical art as it is from the historiographical context in which his plays were conceived and performed.

*

Recycling the familiar post-Tillyardian emphasis on Shakespeare's *avant gardisme*, Graham Holderness reads the history plays as radical "chronicles of feudalism" which, while far ahead of their time, were nonetheless part of their Elizabethan historiographical milieu. Shakespeare's histories, Holderness contends:

> offer empirical reconstruction and theoretical analysis of a social formation firmly located in the past, and distinctly severed from the contemporary world. In this historiographical reconstruction...society is seen as a historical formation built on certain fundamental contradictions, and incapable of resolving or overcoming them within the framework of political and ideological determinants provided by the historical basis itself. (19)

Holderness' image of the playwright discovering the material and ideological contradictions which would render inevitable the collapse of feudalism is, to say the least, remote from the chronicle histories which Shakespeare read and relied upon for historical materials. Holderness' account is based largely on F. Smith Fussner's claim, first published in 1964, that there was a "revolution" in historical thought in Shakespeare's time. Or, rather, Holderness appropriates the *title* of Fussner's book, but fails to incorporate its *contents* into his argument. That is, taking up Fussner's notion of an historiographical revolution, Holderness sets aside the historian's meticulously detailed Kuhnian analysis of how, through a complex series of

interrelated developments occurring remote from the public theatre, new historical perspectives emerged in mid-seventeenth-century England. Although he traced the roots of the "revolution" back to the 1580s, Fussner's argument was that this new perspective, which first emerged in John Selden's *The Historie of Tithes* (1618), could not have existed earlier and only became part of the historiographical mainstream slowly over the course of the next century.

Running roughshod over this argument, Holderness simply asserts that Fussner's revolutionary new historical sensibility was fully articulated in Shakespeare and then translates this revolutionary capacity into a full blown proto-Marxism: whatever Selden could do, the radical Bard did earlier and better. Not surprisingly, what Holderness does not consider are Fussner's comments on the Tudor chronicles upon which Shakespeare actually based his plays. "What was *not* characteristic of English historiography under the Tudors," Fussner argues, "can be stated succinctly:

> there was, as Bacon observed, no history of learning and the arts. This meant no history of science, of technology, of philosophy, or of art and literature, and of course, no distinctive economic history....There was virtually no original speculation by Englishmen about the theory and philosophy of history....Continuity was more important than change, and the 'search for uniformities' predominated over appreciation of the unique among sixteenth-century historians. Most characteristic, perhaps, was the persistence of medieval attitudes and ideas...no one explicitly denied a providential framework for history. (*Tudor History* 234-5)

Holderness cites the historian, but his claims are, as I suggested above, uninformed by Fussner's argument. And, in addition to ignoring the substance of Fussner's "historiographical revolution" thesis, Holderness also does not consider the extent to which subsequent historical scholarship—including Fussner's own *Tudor History and the Historians* (1970)—has challenged the idea that any such revolution was in fact in the air in Shakespeare's time. Cautioning that "a lack of revolutionary change should

not be equated with stagnation," Woolf notes that due to the "whole debate over Fussner's thesis," "few scholars would now agree that there was anything terribly revolutionary about the developments in English historical writing" in the decades around the turn of the century. Far from supporting the "chronicles of feudalism" thesis, Fussner's work, and subsequent scholarship in response to it, quite explicitly *disproves* Holderness' proto-Marxist picture of Shakespeare's radical "new historicism."

Thanks in large measure to Tillyard's own reading of *Richard II*, the idea that Shakespeare had a firm historical grasp on the distinctiveness of medieval culture is a familiar concept which, as noted earlier, originated in the nineteenth-century Romantic criticism of A.W. Schlegel and Hermann Ulrici (McAlindon, 8-13). What is striking about Holderness' version of this conventional argument—the plays, he says, "embody a conscious understanding of feudal society as a peculiar historical formation"(31)—is how thoroughly it is governed by an impulse Vincent Pecora has described as the "New Historicist" tendency "to conflate methodological self-definition with the historical subject's self-definition"(26). While perhaps a wonderful brief for his own Marxist-inflected understanding of the emergence of modernity out of the ruins of feudalism, because it is predicated on an impossibly organic relationship between Shakespeare's thought and notionally "real" historical processes which would, by definition, have been invisible to him, Holderness' account excludes any consideration of what this fundamental process would have looked like viewed through the lens of 16$^{th}$-century providential history. Anything but Tillyard, in this case, leads to anything but Shakespeare.

Taking "radical" Shakespeare in a more concretely political direction, David Kastan claims that Shakespeare's history plays "nourished the cultural conditions that

eventually permitted the nation to bring its king to trial" (460-1). While he appears to acknowledge the difficulty of making substantial historical claims about the remote origins of the Civil War, Kastan resurrects the old idea, favoured by critics such as Gervinus and Chambers, that Shakespeare's history plays contributed to the erosion of support for the monarchy long before the fractious 1630's. However, whereas Chambers argued that the plays contained a clear "message" about the "evils inherent in the Tudor conception of monarchy," Kastan raises a fascinating possibility but makes no attempt to support his claim through an analysis of any of the plays' arguments.[5] Kastan makes no attempt to link the historical or political content of the plays with the volatile mixture of apocalyptic and republican historical thought which was, seemingly, a real crucible for anti-royal sentiment well back in the pre-war period. Rather, taking his "radical" thesis entirely for granted, Kastan claims that "[w]hatever their ideological content, [the] history plays inevitably, if unconsciously, weakened the structure of authority" (461). Conflating the staging of *Richard II* on the eve of the Essex rebellion with the events of the 1640's, Kastan contends that "by revealing that Elizabeth's politics of pageantry" was "appropriable," Shakespeare undermined the "sacramental illusions" which, apparently, kept "the people" from removing Charles' head (468-9, 459). That the rebellion and regicide might have been caused by seriously held religious beliefs, rather than "demystification," or that Shakespearean history might have arrested, rather than contributed to, the erosion of Stuart rule, are not even considered by Kastan as possibilities.

The reason for this is obvious: instead of a meaningful historiographical inquiry into the political ramifications of Shakespeare's historical dramaturgy, what Kastan offers is simply an elaborate inversion of Tillyard's thesis: where Tillyard argued that Shakespeare's history plays actively participated in a cultural matrix in

which providential beliefs contributed to political conservatism, Kastan insists that the history plays—and, again, it is nowhere explained why Shakespeare's plays stand out in this regard—inevitably participated in a cultural matrix in which the skeptical demystification of traditional religious categories was the source of "radical" politic art. This is not an argument; it is an unsatisfactory echo of one.

Finally, pushing the "radical history" thesis one step further, Phyllis Rackin argues that Shakespeare wrote a kind of skeptical "anti-history" which deconstructed not just "sacramental illusions" about the Stuarts, but indeed historical beliefs of all kinds:

> Destabilizing dramatic representations by an increasing metadramatic self-consciousness, the last three plays in the second tetralogy exploit the subversive potential implicit in the very act of theatrical performance to expose the limitations of historical writing....Translating the univocal historical writing that obscured contradictions into the polyphonic theatrical scripts that projected them into dramatic conflict, they enacted, by their very form, the tensions and struggles that shaped the heterogeneous, changing world in which they were produced. Speaking with a variety of voices, ranging from elevated literary verse to slangy colloquial prose, they constituted an arena for ideological contest. (*Stages of History* 222)

The subversive potential of these anti-history plays derived, Rackin suggests, from the theatrical presence of marginalized voices—poor people and women—which undermined the "clear, univocal voice of unquestioned tradition" and revealed that history is "a dubious construct, always provisional, always subject to erasure and reconstruction, and never adequate to recover the past or determine the course of future events"("Patriarchal History" 77). Trumping Holderness, whose "chronicles of feudalism" thesis at least seems to glance at early modern historical thought, and Kastan, who at least might be right that Shakespeare contributed to nascent republicanism, Rackin takes us through the looking-glass, portraying Shakespeare as a fully realized avatar of her own post-modern feminism and post-colonial skepticism.

That is, abandoning the critically realist historical perspective quoted above, Rackin argues that "the history I write is like the Renaissance history making it describes"(*Stages of History* ix), and, from this self-regarding perspective, discovers a radical theatrical deconstruction predicated on Shakespeare's refusal to credit anything. Rather than performing convictions about the past or the present, the history plays are an "arena" designed to "expose" and "enact tensions" within the historical record. Interestingly, unlike earlier post-Tillyardians, Rackin does not have to downplay the providential element in the plays because, like all other perspectives supposedly "staged" in them, providentialism is there in order to be "trotted out," and exposed as a tendentious fabrication generated by patriarchal ideology.

While it has proven very influential, Rackin's "deconstructive" reading of Shakespeare's historiographical practice is flawed in a number of key respects. For example, Rackin's emphasis on Shakespeare's use of multiple historical perspectives or emplotments is evidently influenced by Hayden White. However, in assuming that the plays' multiple historical languages or idioms cancel each other out, that they are somehow designed to produce a kind of historiographical aporia, Rackin misses the point of White's "tropical" approach, which is a structural analysis of the way historians produce a powerful sense of truth. And, while Rackin is right to urge that Elizabethan historical writing constituted a dense, ideologically conservative field, her portrayal of that ideology as paradoxically both inescapable and as a self-mystifying bubble waiting to be burst by the arrival of an unruly woman or a bastard largely ruins this insight. Her two most important claims in this regard—that women and poor people subversively entered "history" on the Shakespearean stage, and that "official" written history was a "univocal" discourse designed to occlude the "constructed" nature of historical truth—are suspect at best.

With respect to multivocality, to take the most obvious example, *Holinshed's Chronicles* was in fact produced by a multi-voiced syndicate with divergent political views, and not a "univocal" author.[6] By contrast, viewers of Shakespeare's plays undoubtedly knew that the plays they were watching had come from the pen of an "*absolute Johannes fac totum,* in his owne conceit the only Shake-scene in the countrey"(qtd. Blakemore Evans, 1835). *Pace* Rackin, it is Shakespeare's primary source, not his plays, which continuously call attention to the uncertain, constructed, nature of the historical record. As Fussner puts it, quoting the Preface to the 1587 edition of *Holinshed*, "truth mattered,"

> but Holinshed admitted that he had found contrariety, disagreement, negligence and rashness in the reports of sundry authors and had therefore 'in things doubtful rather chosen to shew the diversitie of their writings, than by overruling them, and using a peremptory censure, to frame them to agree to my liking: leaving it nevertheless to each man's judgement, to control them as he seeth cause.' (*Tudor History* 265)

Apparently failing to recognize one of the most distinctive features of Renaissance chronicle history writing—or simply confusing it with something else—Rackin contends for no apparent reason that this kind of metahistorical awareness was unique to Shakespeare's theater. Such reflexivity could be reproduced on stage—brilliantly, for example, in the first parts of *2HenryIV*—but in general the opposite of Rackin's argument appears to be true. For example, Holinshed says that it is impossible to know exactly how Richard II died, or even if he was murdered, and then lists some versions of the story of his death. Shakespeare shows us, with *singular* vividness, exactly how it happened and who did it.

Secondly, if, as Rackin seems to believe, the presence of disruptive female and/or plebeian voices is an indicator of historiographical radicalism, then the "official" written record must be more of an anti-history than Shakespeare's plays.

Rackin's tendentious generalizations do not convey this—"Reading Renaissance historiography one is hard put to remember that over 95 percent of the population of Shakespeare's England fell below the ranks of the gentry"(223)—but the claim that unruly plebeians, women, and even children, were not part of "official" history is simply false. Rackin's use of the term "official" is basically meaningless—is the King's acting company more or less "official" than the Holinshed syndicate or a writer like Hayward?—but if there was an official Elizabethan history it was *Acts and Monuments*, and Foxe's book by far exceeds Shakespeare in its portrayals of both plebeian and feminine historical agency. Moreover, Foxe consistently foregrounds the fact that his book has been put together in the midst of profound historiographical controversies: in arguing that poor men and women who were killed for their virtues are the true heroes of history, Foxe *purposely* embroils his readers in an ideological contest that was being carried out at the highest levels of learned historical controversy.[7]

While it might be too much to charge Rackin with suppressing Foxe's plebeian heroines in her effort to contrast patriarchal historical *writing* with subversively anti-historical *theatre*, it is fair to say that, in reducing the chronicles to an "official" canon of pernicious "ideologically motivated exclusions" (229), Rackin has, again, done little more than turn Tillyard inside out: where Tillyard saw it as a mark of distinction that Shakespeare understood and embraced the leading historical thought of his day, Rackin paints that thought in such rebarbative colours that our only recourse is to imagine Shakespeare's artistry as its antithesis, as "anti-history." And, while it follows a familiar post-Tillyardian pattern, Rackin's version of "radical Shakespeare" is even less convincing than the previous examples because the radical "insight" which she attributes to Shakespeare is, for all its postmodern academic

credentials, devoid of any real historiographical or theatrical interest. It is one thing to say that in the laboratory of critical analysis even Shakespeare's plays reveal their ideological complicity; it is quite another to confuse such banal academic dissections with the vivid and moving historical content of the plays themselves. *Henry V* is not a powerful Theatre of Wonders because it "enacts tensions": reducing the history plays to a bloodless academic pyrrhonism—plays about the impossibility of history rather than history plays—Rackin's deconstructive reading not only fails to illuminate Shakespeare's historiographic method, it ignores everything that makes the plays effective drama in the first place.

*

My point in the preceding paragraphs has not been merely to toss brickbats at some unfortunate arguments which we would, arguably, be better off simply forgetting: taken together, what the three versions of it surveyed above illustrate is how, under the impetus of a distinctly New Historicist kind of assertiveness, the orthodox post-Tillyardian obsession with Shakespeare's "radical" history has further eroded any coherently historiographical appreciation of Shakespeare's art. What began, with Tillyard, as an open-ended way of reading Shakespeare in light of a progressive understanding of the historical ideas of his era has been reduced to the increasingly tendentious reiteration of a single shopworn epideictic theme: the story of how Tillyard failed to see how Shakespeare outwitted the credulities of his era on the highroad to (post)modernity. Although it has no doubt made it easier for critics to speak authoritatively about Shakespeare's achievement as a historian, this development is, it seems to me, the opposite of critical progress. As Kastan seems to admit, to do this kind of criticism we no longer need to pay any attention to the language, imagery or thought of the plays—"whatever their ideological content" he

says—and we do not have to work to distinguish Shakespeare's supposed radicalism from that of other contemporary playwrights, or indeed, from "discourse" in general. We do not, moreover, need to engage with actual Renaissance historical writing or, by the same token, to pay any attention to recent scholarship on it: strong claims are made about Renaissance historiography, but one looks in vain for the kind of respectful and engaged reading which is, presumably, a *sine qua non* of a robust historiographical method.

"Radical" Shakespeare, in short, is an exhausted critical paradigm which has long ceased to have any real purchase on Shakespeare's art of history, and which has to be set aside if we are to have a coherent Shakespearean historiography. The question—or rather my question—therefore is: if not "radical Shakespeare" then what? One of the things I hope to show in this thesis is that it is possible to build upon Tillyard's claim that Shakespeare's historiographical seriousness was of a distinctly Elizabethan religious kind without thereby "reducing the plays to history" or doing some other form of interpretive violence to their sophisticated artistry and theatricality. Shakespeare's artistry must be a central concern of any robust historiographical inquiry because these are chronicle *plays*; however, acknowledging the literariness of the plays cannot, by the same token, take the form of refusing to accept that, as Lily Campbell lucidly puts it: "a history play must be regarded as a literary medium for history" (16). What is "organic" in these plays, from a coherently historiographical point of view, is not Shakespeare's relationship with reality, but rather the relationship between his theatrical artistry and his historical argument.

While it is true, as I noted earlier, that Tillyard deserves to be credited for helping to put the history plays on this historiographical *terra firma*, I have quoted Tillyard's woefully underrated contemporary, Lily B. Campbell, here because in a

number of ways her work is an even better "starting place" for my inquiry into the relationship between Foxe and Shakespeare than Tillyard's. Working independently of Tillyard, Campbell argued in *Shakespeare's 'Histories': Mirrors of Elizabethan Policy* that a properly historiographical approach to the chronicle plays was a fundamental critical desideratum. Such scholarship could, she suggested rather prophetically, help to disentangle Shakespeare's achievement from the grip of complacent idealizations and "comfortable postulates," and provide the basis for a comprehensive new research programme: "to try to ascertain the general relation of his thinking to that which prevailed about him while he lived" (6). This is Tillyardian, but whereas Tillyard saw historical writing as a vehicle for big ideas such as order, sin, and nature, and where he was deeply concerned with charting what might be called the "survival" of these essentially Medieval categories in the Renaissance, Campbell approached the history plays in terms of a more focused historiographical consideration of the aims and practices of late-Elizabethan chronicle writers, and did so in a way relatively untrammeled by such long-term, evolutionary, thinking. Much more than Tillyard, in other words, Campbell insisted that Shakespeare's chronicle dramas be "regarded" as a "literary medium" for a very specific kind of professional or semi-professional historical writing (16):

> just as dramatic tragedy has come to be better understood since it has been considered in relation to the broad concepts of tragedy manifest not only in dramatic but in non-dramatic works as well, so will history be better understood when we stop talking about it in terms of the ancient classical dramatic genres and consider it in relation to general principles of historical writing exemplified alike in dramatic and non-dramatic literature. (np)

From this starting point, Campbell advocates a comparative study of Shakespearean history based on two fundamental assumptions and a fairly straightforward procedural imperative. First, she assumes that the most important

meanings generated in the history plays must have been fundamentally *continuous* with the meanings generated by other kinds of contemporary historical writing. Doing history was, for Shakespeare, essentially the same thing it was for other historians: "we must turn to the aims and purposes and methods which the history plays shared with all other forms of historical writing" (17). Secondly, Campbell insists upon the essential *discontinuity* between the modern literary historian and her subject. That is, and here she also foreshadows the revisionism of Woolf and other modern historiographers, Campbell argues that in order effectively to study Shakespeare's historical theatre we must differentiate between two historical approaches to early modern historical writing itself. Reflecting upon the lack of interest in the Tudor chronicles even among historians of history, Campbell notes that the modern historian is:

> usually intent upon detecting the emergence of new ideas which have prevailed and which are now accepted. Like most of the literary critics who are today giving allegiance to 'the history of ideas,' he is primarily interested not in discovering what succeeding generations thought about history or how they wrote history, but in tracing the origins of what we today hold worthy or even of what he himself today holds worthy. (56)

Hammering her point home, Campbell highlights the error of conflating the history actually practiced by Elizabethan writers with the teleologically compiled images of "leading" historical thought produced by professional historians looking for the origins of their own discipline in the Renaissance.

What Campbell recognizes, with a clarity that is perhaps even more striking today than it was in 1947, is that while it is tempting to view Shakespeare as a pioneer in History's march to modernity, it is "time," as Woolf says, "to cease picking over the carcass of early modern historiography for the origins of modern method, and to reexamine our own definition of the historical before we seek to impose it on the past"

("Little Crosby" 131). To do this, Woolf urges with Campbell, we have to set aside a "lingering positivist notion of the gradual progress of historical knowledge, as the myths and legends accepted by a credulous Middle Ages were gradually dispelled by a heroic few." In so doing, Woolf continues, we are sure to discover that "certain phenomena that once looked like wrong turns" are not moribund errors which it was the character of heroic genius to discard, but instead "signs of a growing public interest" in history (*Social Circulation* 99): a "*historical culture*," Woolf says, "gives rise to, nurtures, and is itself ultimately influenced by the formal historical writing of an era," often in ways which "look suspicious from the point of view of other periods" (9). Consequently, and in a fashion which seems to me precisely antithetical to proponents of "radical" Shakespeare, the modern historiographer must be "devoted to exploring exactly what early seventeenth [or late sixteenth] century writers thought they were doing when they wrote 'history,' how they defined that subject, and how the meaning of the word changed" over smaller segments of time (*Idea of History* xii).

The procedural implications of this revisionist historiographical thinking are clear. While the attempt to situate Shakespeare—or Ralegh, or Foxe, or Thomas More—in relation to the long-term emergence of modern historical thought is a reasonable one, we will get literally nowhere unless we are capable of very deliberately re-reading Shakespeare's plays in the light of fresh engagements with actual early modern history writers, and the powerful ideas which their works embodied, while, just as deliberately, setting aside the biased phantoms which evolutionary historiography inevitably projects onto early modern historical culture. The point, as Woolf carefully sets out in the Introduction to *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture 1500-1730*, is not that all such scholarship is intrinsically flawed, but rather that it is of limited value if our attempt is to understand

the "historical culture" in which Shakespeare's history plays were originally produced and "circulated." Saying virtually the same thing, Campbell argues that "the literary historian approaches the study of history, as he does that of any other form of writing, from the past rather than the present" (56).

This is Campbell's idea of a coherent Shakespearean historiography, and if there is a better way of understanding Shakespeare's art of history, I cannot imagine what it would look like. Following Campbell's model of an engaged and informed comparative approach, I will be looking at the idea of modernity in Shakespeare's chronicle plays by attempting to trace an intertextual pattern which, I believe, linked Shakespeare's English history plays with the aims, methods, and meaning of *Acts and Monuments*. Where Campbell focused, quite rightly, on the way Shakespeare followed contemporary historians in using the events of the past to articulate or "mirror" contemporary political concerns and beliefs, I will try to show that, like Foxe, Shakespeare was also very much interested in exploring and representing the providential spiritual realities underlying the mirror-like events of the past, and in particular the tempestuous events of the 14th and 15th centuries. The idea that the past mirrors the present is, as Campbell expertly demonstrates, a humanist historical "trope," but it is also, as we will see, a Foxean apocalyptic one. For Foxe, modernity begins when the past, in the form of an original period of violent satanic liberty, is mirrored in the present: these latter days. One of the many figures in Shakespeare's rich tapestry, this Foxean intertext added depth and interest to his plays' analyses of history and contributed to their ability to generate the mysteriously pleasurable wonders of theatrical horror, pathos, pity, and fear. The basic elements out of which this pattern was woven—language, characters, and events—are of course familiar; I will be attempting to show, however, that when these familiar materials are viewed in

the light of *Acts and Monuments,* a specifically Foxean pattern comes into focus in them. The characters' words and actions are familiar, but, to echo historian John Pocock, the historical *language* these dramatic elements once spoke has gone unnoticed because un-looked for.

What is this Foxean theme? From Joan and Talbot in *1HenryVI* to Cordelia and her sisters in *King Lear* to Cranmer and Gardiner in *Henry VIII*, Shakespeare made history in his chronicle plays by staging dramatic conflicts between individuals he deemed to have been important figures in their eras, and through whom, presumably, he thought that the broader historical significance of those past eras could be explored and represented. Such figures and the conflicts in which they are engaged are never, in Shakespeare's art of history, merely black and white oppositions. Nevertheless, as a dramatist and as a historian, Shakespeare was dealing in representative figures of vice and virtue: Joan la Pucelle is a complex, even sympathetic, character, but she is also a witch, and, triumphing over the "stinking and fly-blown" corpse of the English hero Talbot, Joan is an *astonishing* villain. What I hope to show in this thesis is how, through an intertextual dynamic fundamental to the chronicle play genre as Shakespeare defined it, these history plays consistently invite interpretation in terms of the distinctively Protestant providential interpretation of history embodied in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments.* Requiring interpretation, Shakespeare's enigmatic figures of Enormity invite playgoers to view the action onstage in terms of Foxe's central idea that history is an apocalyptic theatre within which is staged the conflict between the spirit of Christ and its astonishing modern antithesis: Antichrist, a spirit which is manifested in the extraordinary spectacle of violence, brutality, and affliction which is modern history.

*

> Yea but,' quoth she, 'the perill of this place
> I better wot then you, though now too late
> To wish you backe returne with foule disgrace,
> Yet wisedome warnes whilest foot is in the grate,
> To stay the stepe, ere forcèd to retrate. (*FQ* 1.1.13.1-5)

As Edmund Spenser so memorably dramatized in the *Errour's Den* episode, some battles are not so much won as survived, and often not without getting horribly soiled in the process. While I do not expect readers to accept in some unqualified way all of my criticisms of "radical" Shakespeare, I hope at least to have shown that this post-Tillyardian orthodoxy exists and that, like Shakespeare's idea of modernity, it is an explanatory *construct* and not some inescapably natural fact. It is daunting, to say the least, to discover that over a half-century's worth of authoritative scholarship points in a direction entirely contrary to your own, and in fact seems designed to defeat your conclusions from the outset. However, while I am nowhere near as sanguine as Spenser's godly bachelor, I have been substantially emboldened by the discovery that stepping out of the narrow confines of critical orthodoxy is a way of rejoining a larger, and considerably more vital, discussion about early modern culture.

First and foremost, it seems indisputable that an investigation into the shaping influence of Foxe on Shakespeare's English history plays is long past due. Writing in 1969, William Lamont urged that it was time to stop thinking of Foxe as a mere "teller of Papist atrocities to credulous bigots" and to recognize the centrality of *Acts and Monuments*—and Foxean apocalyptic historical thought in general—to Renaissance culture (23). What Lamont was exposing was the then widespread assumption that apocalypticism was remote from the early modern cultural mainstream. Today, thanks to pioneers such as Lamont, Christopher Hill, and William Haller, to subsequent historical scholarship on Foxe, and to a huge body of historical

scholarship on popular Protestantism generally, Foxe's apocalyptic providential voice has been recast as one of the most resonant, compelling, and popular authorities on English history in the era: rather than the exclusive property of a marginal "puritan" subculture, *Acts and Monuments* is now widely recognized as a definitive expression of the "Calvinist consensus" which was at the heart of early modern English culture.[8]

Secondly, energetically participating in this discovery of popular Protestantism, a number of theatre historians interested in playwrights other than Shakespeare have illuminated the rich and fruitful symbiosis that linked Protestant piety and the early modern stage. While the idea that the early modern stage was the absolute cultural opposite of Protestant zeal is still strong, monographs by Paul W. White, Ritchie Kendall, Frank Ardolino, Julia Gaspar, Bryan Crockett, Margot Heinemann, Huston Diehl, John D. Cox, Deborah Shuger, Jeffrey Knapp, Kristen Poole, Donna Hamilton, Martin Butler, and Jack Heller have demonstrated that the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre functioned in terms of a positive interrelationship with Reformed beliefs and attitudes. Showing that godly people were also theatre people, these critics have demonstrated the poverty of an historical approach to the early modern drama which refuses to credit or acknowledge this basic historical fact.[9] Thus, to borrow an apposite phrase from Patrick Collinson, if "the story of the English nation without Foxe is like *Hamlet* without the Prince"( *Birthpangs* 12), then an account of Shakespeare's historical drama which fails to consider Foxe's profound influence on the historical consciousness of Renaissance England is clearly in need of revision.

Thirdly, theorists of early modern intertextuality such as Richard Hillman have demonstrated the limitations of a traditional approach to literary meaning which

strictly limits textual relations to a narrow canon of legitimate "sources" which have been identified and authenticated by rigorous critical "proofs."[10] While traditional source studies produce invaluable narratives about the provenance of literary works, these circumscribed accounts cannot finally do justice to the complex process through which literary works come into being. A list of authorized sources—plus "genius"—does not add up to a substantial account of a literary work's origins and it does not even begin to exhaust the full range of a work's meanings. Consequently, while "source" remains a vital concept, recent scholarship has recognized the need for an intertextual model of literary affiliations based on a more inclusive model of literary genetics. As Graham Allen puts it:

> [t]he act of reading, theorists claim, plunges us into a network of textual relations. To interpret a text, to discover its meaning, or meanings, is to trace those relations. Reading thus becomes a process of moving between texts. Meaning becomes something which exists between a text and all the other texts to which it refers and relates, moving out from the independent text into a network of textual relations. The text becomes the intertext. (1)

This intertextual tracing of relations, an expansion of the basic definition of a work of art to include the text, its direct sources and its intertexts, and the interpretive agency of authors and readers, (which agency is itself an intertextual phenomenon) has enormous implications for the study of Shakespeare's history plays. Under the iron rule of "source," a crucial intertext such as *Acts and Monuments* can be ruled-out, or simply ignored, as an illegitimate non-source; by contrast, under the more liberal regime of intertextuality, the same work clearly emerges as an intertext whose impress on the history plays, and on their ability to function *qua* history in performance, is enormous.

"Radical" Shakespeare notwithstanding, from the point of view of both history and of theory an intertextual study of Foxe and Shakespeare would seem to be a good

idea. Like Redcrosse Knight, I am willing to run the risk of erring in pursuit of Shakespeare's relationship with Foxe because it seems to me that doing so is a good way of refocusing attention on the profound religious seriousness which has been banished for too long from discussions of Shakespeare's history plays. My first chapter is devoted to a full theoretical and historiographical explanation of what I mean by Enormity and its relation to historical modernity, and in the subsequent chapters I will be attempting to follow the Foxean intertext by looking at figures of Enormity in *Richard III*, *2-3Henry VI*, *Richard II*, and the three plays of the *Henriad.* I will conclude by suggesting that recognizing the way Shakespeare's Theatre of Enormities worked in performance contributes to our understanding of Shakespeare's place in the Elizabethan marketplace for Godly popular culture.

---

[1] Although it deals with several of Foxe's most important historical ideas, this thesis is not intended to provide readers with either a general introduction to Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* or a survey of recent scholarship on it. As I explain below, my focus in this thesis is on Foxe's late-medieval history, the period coterminous with Shakespeare's plays, a section of *Acts and Monuments* which has attracted the attention neither of Foxe scholars nor Shakespeareans. The best brief introductions to Foxe's book are Warren W. Wooden's superb TEAS study of Foxe and the collection of introductory essays appended to the *Online Variorum Edition,* available at http://www.hrionline.shef.ac.uk/foxe.

[2] To be clear, I am not suggesting that Foxe's influence has been left out of our accounts of the history play genre as a whole, just that Foxe has been excluded from scholarship on Shakespearean history. In fact, thanks to the scholarship of Judith Doolin-Spikes, Julia Gaspar, and Marsha Robinson, it is now well established that a large group of Tudor and Stuart chronicle playwrights—Munday, Dekker, Rowley, Wilson, Drue, Heywood, Drayton, and Hathaway—drew heavily upon Foxe both for historical incidents and, as well, for the religio-historical message of their plays. As Judith Doolin-Spikes demonstrated, this continuous intertextual practice led to the creation of an immediately identifiable dramatic kind, the "Foxean History Play":

> Foxe's book provided a version of English history and a definition of English destiny which remained contemporary throughout three reigns…turn-of-the-century playwrights mining Foxe for dramatizable material carried away not only his stories but also his patterning of action both human and cosmic, his

> view of historical personalities, and his conception of the privileges and the responsibilities of being English. Read in the context of Foxe's apocalyptic scheme, these later history plays emerge as coherent expressions of a national—as opposed to merely dynastic—myth. (Spikes, 117-20)

As Doolin-Spikes and Robinson show, virtually all of the serious historiographical content in these plays is "directly traceable" to *Acts and Monuments* and "to the climate of belief and historical interpretation summed up by and promulgated through Foxe's book" (Doolin-Spikes, 118). What they also insist, however, without any substantial reason for doing so, is that this Foxean influence had no impact on Shakespeare. Obviously, Shakespeare's plays are not Foxean in the sense defined by the intertextual practices of these historical dramatists: but this does not mean that there is or can be nothing connecting Shakespeare's plays with *Acts and Monuments.*

[3] This passage is from the Introduction to Humphreys' 1959 New Arden edition of *1HenryIV* (li). In this highly influential reading, Humphreys decisively rejects John Danby's argument, which Humphreys claims reduces Shakespeare's historical outlook to a "moral chaos," and an "Elizabethan *Waste Land*"(liv). Although it is perhaps fanciful to say so, this seems to be a major turning point in modern criticism of the chronicle plays: in rejecting Danby in favour of a "comic" reading based on C.L. Barber and the New Critical formulae of Brooks and Heilman, and more recently Bakhtin, modern criticism has consigned Shakespeare's historical argument to oblivion.

[4] As will become clear in what follows, my goal here is to get away from, rather than to re-hash, the debate over Tillyard's notorious thesis. It is, however, worth noting that the charge of creating a falsely "monolithic" image of early modern culture which has been used by two generations of scholars to discredit Tillyard's work is itself largely factitious. While Tillyard used the term "World Picture," unlike many Foucault-inspired New Historicists, he did not in fact posit the existence of a monolithic or inescapable cultural whole; rather—and he is perfectly explicit about this—Tillyard set out to describe the discursive practices of an elite, literate subculture to which, very reasonably, he assumed Shakespeare belonged. Moreover, while his Elizabethan World Picture to some extent anticipates the pre Civil War "consensus" that has been the focus of more recent "revisionsist" historiography, like the revisionists, Tillyard is not denying or occluding the possibility of heterodoxy, opposition, and/or ideological contradiction in early modernity; rather, Tillyard's study is a pioneering work of cultural history which helps to illustrate some of the fundamental conceptual and rhetorical contexts or "languages" *in which such conflict eventually took place.* It is, for example, virtually impossible to understand the cultural consensus that was shattered by the Civil War without having some grasp of Tillyard's argument about how political history was employed as a vehicle for Big Ideas such as Sin and Disorder.

[5] Chambers is quoted in Forker's anthology of *Richard II* criticism (318). Gervinus' insightful commentary on *Richard II* is also reprinted by Forker (216-230). Interestingly, Gervinus views the play as a "revolutionary picture" which is related, in its political attitude towards divine right, to Milton's *Defensio pro Populo* and Dutch republicanism, but which is nonetheless, he says, "unsuitable" for raising rebellious or revolutionary excitement.

[6] *Pace* Rackin, Annabel Patterson's *Reading Holinshed's Chronicles* has shattered the commonplace post-Tillyardian assumption that "official" Elizabethan history was

merely an appendage of a repressive Tudor sociopolitical orthodoxy. This is, Patterson shows, not so much an argument about Tudor historical writing, as an excuse for not reading it. Post-Tillyardian criticism's jaundiced view of Tudor historical writing is, however, nothing if not durable. For example, closely following Rackin, Pugliatti defines all Tudor history as "an exercise in conformist ethics" designed to provide "legitimation and strength for the ruling class" and then defines Shakespeare's radically perspectival theatricality as an "entirely new feature of historical presentation, and one that could by no means have been derived from contemporary chronicles" (1996, 29-74). Interestingly, while Pugliatti goes well beyond Rackin in tracing Shakespeare's radically novel historiographical complexity to the probing, multivalent mind which was the product of the "rhetorical culture" of Renaissance humanism, she offers no explanation of how the historians, who were presumably as much a part of this culture as Shakespeare was, somehow managed to devolve into one-eyed "worshipper[s] of historical, political, and religious myths" (52).

[7] This claim might seem to contradict Woolf's argument about the relative absence of ideological conflict in Tudor-Stuart historiography. In fact, what Woolf argues is that whereas "historical narrative" in general "had yet to be firmly tied to the wagon of ideological and political conflict," the "most notable, and earliest, exception to this occurred in the arena of ecclesiastical history" (1990, 35). Ironically, while insisting that "history" in the Renaissance was a site or locus of ideological struggle, New Historicism has largely overlooked the one arena of early modern historical writing in which this was unmistakably the case. Shakespeare, it seems to me, would not have been equipped with such weak radar for ideology.

[8] For a succinct overview of this sea-change, see Fred Cogswell, Richard Cust, and Peter Lake, "Revisionism and its Legacies: the Work of Conrad Russell." As these historians put it, due to the movement's "significance and profundity...we are all working in the ruins of an historiographical world shattered by revisionism." They add, moreover, that "polemical inversions" and "brutal either/or interpretive choices are perhaps an inevitable part of any genuine historiographical revolution" (14-16). This statement is particularly relevant to the study of Shakespeare and Protestantism, where two starkly divergent interpretive choices seem to be in play: hold tight to the traditional idea that Calvinist culture was, as Lori Anne Ferrell puts it, a "doctrinally off-putting, culturally anorexic, and socially resistible" ideology, one that could not and did not have any positive impact on our favorite playwright, or, refusing to accept a self-imposed exile from the best new historical scholarship, recognize that the religious historiographical *status quo ante* was profoundly misleading and reconsider Shakespeare in light of the "radical re-evaluation of the English church as a...Calvinist church and of 'Puritanism' as, in many of its most distinctive forms...a distinctly establishment creed"(4-5). Looking at Foxe and Shakespeare is one way, among many, to opt for the latter.

[9] This is not meant to be a complete list of works which have contributed to the current "religious turn" in early modern theatre studies, just the ones major which have shaped my own thinking about Protestantism and the theatre. The degree to which the ongoing "religious turn" in early modern theatre studies has recognized that the popular stage was a locus for zealous Protestantism, rather than its cultural opposite, is impressive; however, in my opinion, Jack Heller is correct to note that while "more critics now acknowledge" that there was a robust "tradition of Protestant drama extending into the Jacobean era," this recognition has for the most part "not yet

shaped the presuppositions which critics generally bring to the Renaissance plays they examine"(22).

[10] See especially Hillman's introductory essay on the relationship between intertextual criticism and both New Historicism/Cultural Materialism and traditional source studies in *Intertextuality and Romance in Renaissance Drama* (1-25). Somewhat like Riffaterre, whose theories will be discussed more fully in the next chapter, Hillman's thinking is especially significant because, while theoretically sophisticated in a postmodern sense, it is nonetheless informed by a fundamental critical realism, and hence historically coherent, understanding of how meaning is produced in the theatre.

## Chapter Two. Shakespeare's Modernity: Foxean Enormity as *Theme* and *Intertext*

> I have striven not so much to tell a story about historiography, leading somewhere, as to paint the cultural landscape against which historiography developed; that landscape was itself unstable and looked much different in 1700 than it had a century or so earlier...I wish to explore a number of contexts within which the social circulation of the past occurred (many of which might appear to have precious little to do with historical writing *per se*) and how, within and through those *circulatory occasions*, a distinctive historical culture emerged by 1730 that was qualitatively different from the one that existed two centuries previously.
>
> Daniel Woolf

> A text is a *relational event*, and not a substance to be analyzed.
>
> Harold Bloom

> So let us find out what sorts of things strike people as terrible.
>
> Aristotle

*

As outlined in the Introduction, this thesis addresses a very basic literary *historiographical* question: how are we to understand Shakespeare's discovery of historical modernity in the English chronicle plays in relation to the specific historical culture of early modern England? My response to this question follows two complementary trajectories—one thematic and the other formal or rhetorical—which suggest that a substantial part of the answer to this question lies in a rich intertextual relationship linking Shakespeare's portrayal of late-medieval English history with John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. What I hope to be able to conclude, after a series of readings governed by this claim, is that reading Shakespeare in the light of *Acts and Monuments* not only illuminates the meaning of his plays, but is, as well, a good way of both understanding Shakespeare's participation in the marketplace for popular religious and historical literature of his time, and of situating that participation within the larger collaborative phenomenon Daniel Woolf describes as the "social circulation of the past" in early modern England. Underlying this argument is the convergence of

two related ideas: Daniel Woolf's definition of an historical culture as a dynamic agglomeration of "circulatory occasions" and Harold Bloom's recognition that literary texts are intertextual "relational events." *Acts and Monuments* was not a primary source for Shakespeare in the same way or to the same extent that *Holinshed's Chronicles* was; however, when Shakespeare's plays are read side by side with Foxe, affiliations emerge which suggest that Shakespeare's engagement with Foxe was a significant and continuous presence in his English history. As Lily Campbell urged, Shakespeare's English chronicle plays were a medium for history: I take this to mean that the plays need to be understood as culturally formative events in which Foxean history circulated.

The idea that Shakespeare's history plays involved the circulation of a variety of ways of representing the past, and that this process participated in a specific historical culture, is uncontroversial: indeed, something very much like this has emerged as a definitive part of the New Historicist understanding of Shakespeare's "theatricality." As I have argued, however, it is simply inadequate to define this participation in terms of metaphors of transcendence, in terms of dull paradoxes about subversion and containment, or in terms of absurdist reductions of the theatre to a kind of marginal counter-cultural "playpen" in which Shakespeare "aped" serious religious historical discourse in the half-light of some vaguely construed theatrical "liminality."[1] What is required, in other words, is to replace "radical" Shakespeare with the recognition that historical drama was, for both Shakespeare and his audience, a serious *performance of convictions*, and that producing historical drama was a *Godly enterprise*.

The first of these illuminating epithets comes from Kenneth Graham's study *The Performance of Conviction: Plainness and Rhetoric in the Early English*

*Renaissance*. Graham argues that a "clear bias" towards "skeptical commitments" has obscured the fact that renaissance literature was "a ground...where convictions [could] be performed." This bias is nowhere more apparent than in Shakespeare studies, and Graham's vigorous demonstration that conviction, as much as deconstructive irony, was a leading literary motive in the Renaissance clears the way for a renewed emphasis on the confessional element in Shakespeare's historical dramaturgy.[2] The second appellation, "Godly enterprise," comes from Jeffrey Knapp's *Shakespeare's Tribe: Church, Nation, and Theater in Renaissance England*. Early modern dramatists, Knapp argues, consistently "depicted their plays as Godly enterprises," and this self-understanding "had a major impact on the theater:

> Ignorance of these views, or dismissal of them, has distorted our understanding of Renaissance drama in several crucial ways. On the level of practical criticism, secularist readings of Renaissance plays have failed to explain some of the most prominent recurring plots, themes, and character types in the plays, or even to notice the existence of such recurrences. In historiographical terms, the secularist bias among modern critics has helped sustain the myth that piety and popular entertainments in Renaissance England were cultural opposites and waged war on one another (even new-historical critics have tended to abandon their usual skepticism to embrace this fantasy.) And finally, by insisting that Renaissance plays were exclusively secular in aim and effect, modern scholars have lent credibility to a paradoxically mystical vision of Shakespeare as a writer so miraculously disinterested that religious beliefs—indeed, beliefs of any kind—could have no hold on him. (2)

Adding an important socioeconomic dimension to the idea of Shakespeare's plays as committed performances of convictions, Knapp recognizes that a fruitful symbiosis linked drama and reform within the marketplace for popular Calvinist culture in Elizabethan England, and that the growth and development of the Elizabethan theatre—along with the proliferation of printed sermons, Godly ballads, chronicle histories, providential murder pamphlets, and a host of other literary products—was driven in large measure by the attempt to "supply" the "demand" for works of popular piety generated by reform.[3]

If Shakespeare's historical dramaturgy is a performance of convictions and a godly enterprise, then it is clear that Foxe has to be taken into account. A seminal influence on and a central expression of Elizabethan historical culture, and a major part of the literary historical marketplace, *Acts and Monuments* embodied the kinds of religious historical convictions—notions, *inter alia*, about Christ and Antichrist and the meaning of heroism, about the meaning of violence and suffering, about the relationship between recent history and the remote past, about the shape of historical time itself, and about the historical relationship between politics and providence—that animated the works of engaged artists like Spenser and Shakespeare, and that contemporary audiences were eager to see when they patronized their works. This does not mean, of course, that we can reduce Shakespeare to Foxe, or that Shakespeare was somehow inescapably bound to redact Foxe's history on stage. What it does mean, as John D. Cox puts it very straightforwardly, is that "Foxe's book is important to students of Tudor drama, because it helps to clarify what the dramatists aimed to achieve" (*The Devil and the Sacred*, 93).

That said—and I think it is saying a lot—the attempt to show that an intertextual link between Shakespeare and Foxe "emerges" as a result of a certain kind of focused reading nevertheless presents a considerable apodictic challenge. What I have in abundance are strong *impressions* of a Foxean intertext in Shakespeare, and a similarly robust sense of the cultural historical context in which this intertextuality occurred, but my problem is to translate these impressions into a convincing *demonstration* that Shakespeare's plays were, in fact, significantly affiliated with Foxean history. What this has required is a great deal of quotation and paraphrase from *Acts and Monuments* itself. Although potentially off-putting, the provision of extensive quotations and the reiteration of key Foxean themes is a way of

demonstrating not only that there was a distinctively Foxean historical idiom, but also that it was spiritually compelling, intellectually stimulating, and ripe with dramatic potentiality for a playwright and an audience seriously interested in late-medieval England. Because all my witnesses are long dead, I cannot expect to prove my case, as in a courtroom, beyond a shadow of a doubt; my hope, however, is that by conveying a solid image of this Foxean language, and showing that Shakespeare was to some extent speaking it, I will be able to demonstrate that the presence of the Foxean intertext is a key to Shakespeare's complex religious-historical vision. Moreover, from a much wider network or web of potential affiliations linking Foxe and Shakespeare, I have organized my reading under one all-encompassing concept—Enormity—and I have largely restricted myself to the sections of Foxe's book which are historically coterminous with the plays themselves. The linchpin of my argument, Foxean Enormity—in the sense of violent atrocity, heinousness, monstrousness, depravity, and outrage—works in two complementary ways in these history plays: as historical *theme* and as *intertext*. The rest of this chapter is devoted to explaining these two key ideas.

*

The *theme* of enormity was central to Foxe's apocalyptic vision of history in *Acts and Monuments*. For Foxe, writing history involved applying the tools of humanist research and argument in order to anatomize the vast historical evidence of violence, war, and depravity under the apocalyptic sign of Satanic or Antichristian power and hegemony. As we will see, because his idea of history writing is so fundamentally linked with inspired scriptural interpretation, the line between exegesis and research becomes blurred in Foxe, with the roles of historian and prophet in discovering Antichrist overlapping considerably. By the same token, particularly

when presented with images of violent persecution, "reading" history in the Foxean scheme of things is a highly charged act of "detecting" the real presence of satanic power within mundane history and "witnessing" the prophetic fact that, while irresistible, Satan's worldly power was circumscribed by apocalyptic time. Images of Enormity, then, are central to an intensely pious, reformed, and Foxean way of responding to historical violence, especially to persecutorial violence involving excessive asymmetries of power.

Just as it is unhelpful to regard Shakespeare as a pointless, amoral *bricoleur*, it would be a tremendous mistake simply to conflate Shakespearean history, as both play-writing and play-going, with Foxe's intensely pious and rigorously historical way of doing history. The heroic poet is, as Sidney says, a prophetic or *vatic* figure, but simply to conflate the two would be a "saucy" comparison detrimental both to the prestige of the prophet and to the autonomy of the poet. Keeping this crucial difference firmly in view, it seems reasonable to surmise that for Shakespeare and his audience, a generation of Elizabethans raised on the *Acts and Monuments,* the idea of an authentically serious historical drama—again a performance of convictions and a godly enterprise—would have been to some extent predicated on the ability of the playwright and his audience to assume, in some analogous form, the complex mantle of roles defined by Foxe's book. Shakespeare's *King Lear* appears to be a performance of apocalyptic convictions, and consider also Prince Hamlet's play *The Mousetrap*: although it is perhaps not quite the success he thinks it is, Hamlet's play *detects* historical enormity, boldly *denounces* it, and *prophesies* its inevitable destruction.

Simply put, my point is that Shakespeare staged enormity in a recognizably Foxean thematic sense in the chronicle plays in order to invest his "Theatre of

Wonders" with a measure of religious-historical seriousness it would otherwise have lacked. For original audiences, the recognition that the action on stage was both like and unlike *Acts and Monuments* would have constituted a significant part of the experience of the watching the plays. To use some of Shakespeare's own language for this, in inviting playgoers to *see* his "English Monsters" on stage, Shakespeare was inviting them to *detect* and to *witness* a distinctive kind of apocalyptic Enormity. As I hope will become clear over the course of this thesis, one reason for thinking this way is that Shakespeare was an astute historical dramatist who knew a good thing when he saw it, and Foxean enormity was a remarkably compelling and dramatic historical theme. Although Foxe profoundly *spiritualizes* enormity, investing it with all sorts of supplementary spiritual significance, he does so, paradoxically, entirely in the spirit of worldly realism which is a hallmark of Renaissance humanism. Indeed, it is often argued that by *demystifying* the *Golden Legend* tradition, *Acts and Monuments* contributed to secularization—or at least to religious secularity.[4] Thus, where a critic like Humphreys assumes, as we saw earlier, a fundamental dichotomy between theological abstraction and compelling reality, Foxe views human history through the same eyes as Machiavelli, whom he admired, but discovers, at the same time, a political world totally suffused with spiritual powers.

As well, and contrary to a fairly common misconception, although Foxe is vigorously anti-Catholic and committed to the apocalyptic idea that Rome is Antichrist, he does not define Antichristian enormity narrowly and tendentiously in terms of some notional non-Anglican Other. Foxe does not, in other words, simply conflate evil with being Catholic; rather, he denounces enormity wherever he finds it—which is pretty much everywhere in the modern world—so that in *Acts and Monuments* what might be called the endless *libido dominandi* of history becomes

saturated with intimations of Satanic spirituality and apocalyptic time.[5] And, what is more, the theme of enormity was a particularly important element in Foxe's re-interpretation of the "Tudor Myth," in which he brilliantly re-inscribed the existing idea of England's dark 14th-century era of violence and civil chaos into an apocalyptic account of the emergence of "modernity." Thus, as an historical theme, Foxean enormity was a robust and distinctively Protestant Big Idea which Shakespeare was able to use—in the sense of incorporate, draw upon, and deploy—to extend his theatre's capacity to represent serious history and to amplify the religious historical scope and significance of his chronicle plays. Foxean enormity helped Shakespeare, in other words, to mirror the "form and pressure" of the "time" in which he and his audience lived.

Now for readers familiar with Foxean martyrology, and with his role as a compiler of Reformed saints' lives or spiritual biographies, this will seem like an oddly one-sided way of dealing with *Acts and Monuments*. To be clear, I am convinced that a great deal remains to be said about the relationship between the positive or heroic side of Foxean martyrology and Shakespeare's plays. Tragic characters such as Cordelia, Edgar, Desdemona, and Hermione express, I find, a distinctly Foxean exemplarity and pathos, and some of Shakespeare's most interesting comic plots appear to draw on Foxe's exemplary stories of virtuous dissent and obedience. For example, Petruccio's anti-social, seemingly irreligious, but also miraculously therapeutic, antics resonate quite strikingly with Foxe's comic versions of Protestant and proto-Protestant dissent; the story of Kate's regeneration is, it seems to me, inescapably *like* Foxe's story of the True Church's difficult and fragile, but nonetheless wonderful, deliverance from error and apostasy. Similarly, while Malvolio is hardly a martyr, Shakespeare's strikingly negative and castigatory

portrayal of "puritan bashing" in *Twelfth Night* owes more to Foxe, it seems to me, than it does to Bakhtin or "impartiality." Consequently, to echo some familiar New Historicist commonplaces, I have no doubts that a thorough consideration of Shakespeare in light of *Acts and Monuments* would find that, rather than "killing belief" or preserving a residually and subversively "poetic" counter-reformation spirit, Shakespeare's plays both engaged fruitfully with Foxe's paradigm of Godly Christian virtue, and contributed his own substantial "energy" to the sense of a world animated by Grace which was one of the hallmark features of Calvinist spiritualism. Cordelia's apotheosis is, in other words, also an event in which Foxean history circulated.

However, as potentially compelling as Foxe's heroes and heroines are as Shakespearean intertexts, I am primarily concerned with the other side of Foxean history, the persecutors, a cast of exemplary villains who, by virtue of their acts of outrageous enormity, were defined by Foxe as Satan, "that other church or chapel of the devil," and whose role in the drama of apocalyptic history was continuously to "deface and malign" the virtuous defenders of truth (1.xix). The reason for this focus is that Shakespeare appears to have been more engaged by Foxean vice than by Foxean virtue in the chronicle plays: his depictions of political history draw more upon Foxe's apocalyptic anatomy of Antichristian power than they do the "dance," as Foxe puts it, of the "mild and constant" martyrs (xxv-vi). That is, although Shakespeare does, at the end of *2HenryIV*, explicitly state that "Oldcastle died a martyr"—a spectacularly important caveat, in my view—his plays are not martyrologies; they do not portray a succession of pious champions killed specifically for their Protestant or Proto-Protestant religious dissent. Similarly, while Shakespeare created some powerfully memorable Roman Catholic villains—Winchester,

Pandulph, and Wolsey—his plays do not redact Foxean ecclesiastical history by portraying the historical continuity or "progress" of Reform or the True Church.

This does not, however, negate Foxe's presence because what the chronicle plays have in abundance is extraordinary enormity—acts of brutal and depraved viciousness which are committed by powerful and power-hungry men and women over defenseless, and often unresisting victims, and which are acted out, often very explicitly, against a backdrop of apocalyptic time, of apocalyptic modernity. If Shakespeare accomplished anything in his history plays, it was to portray the enormity of history with, for the stage, an unprecedented and unflinching historiographical *energia* (Lanham 65). As has been widely commented upon, Shakespearean history presents audiences with an apparently inescapable "theatre" of excessive cruelty, violence, and hatred, one in which even the "famous" victories—from the burning of La Pucelle to Agincourt—are saturated with images of slaughter and outrage. Viewed from the perspective of *our* modernity, of existentialism, secularism, and historical materialism, Shakespeare's disconsolate historical vision of course seems atavistic, making him "our contemporary" rather than a fellow traveler with *Acts and Monuments*. My argument, however, is that when Shakespeare's Theatre of Enormity is considered in light of the historiographical expectations, attitudes, and beliefs engendered by Foxe, and in the context of the literary marketplace for Reformed culture which his *Book of Martyrs* helped to foster, these plays reveal a very different—apocalyptic and spiritually Protestant—character.

Although my emphasis on Foxean Enormity is novel, the general idea that Shakespeare's plays dramatize particular *themes* seems uncontroversial. Historical dramas reify, often in complex ways, patterns of historiographical thought. And, as Norman Rabkin argues,

> the good Shakespeare critic must point out the patterns of the dance. He must find terms in which the oppositions and conflicts and problems within a play can be stated while recognizing the reductiveness of those terms. He must fight the temptation to proclaim what it boils down to; he must fight against the urge to closure which, as a gifted audience, he feels with particular intensity. He must learn to point to the centers of energy and turbulence without regarding them as coded elements of a thematic formula. (25)

Rabkin's model of interpretive restraint and critical self-awareness is hard to beat. Acknowledging that thematic analysis is a critical dissection which cannot account for anything like a play's full potential for meaning, Rabkin's critic pursues a specific theme and claims, albeit *provisionally*, that it is what the play boils down to. Reciprocally, readers of thematic criticism appreciate both the "particular intensity" of thematic closure and the implicitly provisional nature of its proclamations. What also needs to be recognized, however, is that Shakespeare did not write his plays for good critics, but for a very differently "gifted audience" which was not compelled to wrap its interpretations in a web of provisionality and qualification. That is, while I am of course trying to be a good critic myself, what I am trying to describe in this thesis is not Shakespeare's singular and inexhaustible multiplicity, but rather the way Shakespearean history successfully appealed to the "urge to closure" of original audiences. He did so by providing them, quite precisely, with an opportunity to experience a sense wonder in the discovery of what history "boils down" to.

This leads me to the second, and somewhat more abstract, function of enormity in the history plays: as *intertext*. As I see it, enormity is a key element in Shakespeare's response to the problem of using the professional stage as a vehicle for historical Truth. Truth, as Hayden White has shown, is what historians aim for, and Shakespeare is no exception: his historical dramaturgy aims to produce of a specifically theatrical kind of historical truth. And, while Shakespeare's "radical" independence from historiographical orthodoxy is relentlessly asserted in post-

Tillyardian criticism, it seems to me that a relationship of dependence and contiguity, and the ability to draw upon existing historical authorities in order to demonstrate and consolidate his historiographical legitimacy, must be at the heart of Shakespeare's achievement as a historical playwright. There is, however, a considerable difference between productive dependency and merely slavish imitation: to be truly credible, Shakespeare had to reproduce received historical truth, but he had to do so in a way which communicated his own distinctive *authority* as well.

Although it has been read in all sorts of ways, something like this blend of orthodoxy and autonomy seems to ground Shakespeare's image of the theatrical *author* and his reader in the Prologue to *Henry V*. What the Prologue demonstrates, that is, is that Shakespeare's art of history does not involve the merely straightforward redaction of authorized history or the merely passive reception of it by the audience, but it just as clearly is not the anomic "theatricality" imagined by New Historicism. Rather, what Shakespeare seems to be saying is that he can engage playgoers in a kind of visionary "reading" which involves actively applying their own historiographical skills, knowledge, and experience in order to discover or "piece out" the significant historical truths embedded in the action. Thus, while the Prologue's ostensible theme is the limitations of the stage as a vehicle for serious history, it is finally an argument about rhetorical mastery: not mastery *over* the audience or *over* "official" history, but the playwright's mastery over his own difficult medium, his ability to use the stage to dramatize received historical truth in a specifically theatrical way and, at the same time, about the theatre audience's unique ability to look past the stage's inbuilt limitations and to witness the historical truth latent in the plays.

Shakespeare's claim, in other words, is that the historiographical legitimacy of his chronicle plays is a function not of the strict or illusionistic accuracy of his

representations, which are ostensibly imperfect, nor, certainly, is it due to some radical or subversive novelty, which his comments rule out altogether. Rather the plays' Truth is a consequence of the playwright's ability to adumbrate and enliven true history *in relation to* an existing and authoritative "great account" using the peculiar—but not ignoble or non-serious—resources of the stage. Extrapolating from the Prologue, and enlisting the post-structuralist intertextual theories of Michael Riffaterre, I will argue that by staging complexly emblematic figures and episodes of enormity, Shakespeare purposefully generates highly charged moments of interpretive difficulty. These emblematic cruxes function not as deconstructive aporias, but as focal points for a constructive Foxean intertextuality. Foxean enormity works in the chronicle plays, intertextually, by simultaneously encouraging audiences to see the historical events represented in the plays in seriously religio-historical terms, even as they are encouraged to recognize the unique artistry of the playwright and the actors who have imitated them.

*

Moving from theme to intertext, my definition of enormity has become somewhat abstract, and so I would like to continue by introducing a specific example from the early history plays which will help to demonstrate more concretely what I mean by enormity as *theme* and *intertext*. In *2HenryVI*, Jack Cade's follower, Dick, a bizarre and terrifyingly clownish mass murderer, is pointedly characterized as, and proves to be, a "butcher" of human beings; later, in *3HenryVI*, Dick's namesake, Richard of Gloucester, is portrayed as, among other things, a "devil," a "wolf," and a "persecutor." Richard is a prodigious man-child born with teeth in order "to bite the world," who revels in "murthering innocents," and who was "ordain'd" to "slaughter" "prophet[s]." As we will see repeatedly in this thesis—and as readers who are at all

familiar with *Acts and Monuments* will have already noted—all of this violent imagery resonates powerfully with the language of Enormity in *Acts and Monuments.* Over and over again, Foxe uses precisely these epithets to characterize the spirit of Antichristian enormity, and, as well, draws a similar parallel between outrageous popular or demotic violence and the terrors of royal or magisterial tyranny. What is more, Foxe regularly adopts a similar metaphorical connection between violence and *theatrical* clowning. Like virtually all apocalyptic writers, Foxe regarded history as a providential "theatre," but, perhaps because he was a playwright and an enthusiastic supporter of drama himself, Foxe's depictions of Antichristian enormity in particular resonate with the stage demons of Tudor drama: like Shakespeare's Richard III, in other words, Foxe's satanic antagonists imitate "the formal Vice, Iniquity." I would argue that no engaged reader of *Acts and Monuments* confronted with these characters would fail to recall, if only fleetingly, Foxean enormity: with Foxe "in mind," so to speak, I cannot "see" Shakespeare's collocation of King-clown-devil-butcher-persecutor in the same way I did before reading *Acts and Monuments*. Once I have seen this connection, I can no longer not see it.

Let us start again. Assuming that Shakespeare was not simply playing around in the examples listed above, and that he knew what he was doing, we are left with something very much like the question T.G. Bishop asks about theatrical wonder in general: the resonantly over-determined quality of these demonic comparisons has to be taken seriously in some historiographically meaningful sense, but what is it? Referring specifically to *Richard III*, Antony Hammond suggests that "though diabolical in his interests and behaviour [Richard] is not actually intended to be a representation of Satan or Lucifer" (102). This is a compelling observation because it recognizes that, despite occasional ghosts and other prodigies, a certain kind of

realism is the dominant mode of Shakespearean history, and that to conflate this notorious medieval King with Satan would violate this essentially *historical* focus. This is not necessarily a question about belief, about whether "Satan or Lucifer" exists, but whether He is in this play's *dramatis personae.* And Hammond is certainly right: Richard is Richard, a specific historical man and not that infamous fallen angel and demigod. More pointedly though, Hammond's simile—Richard is *like* Satan, but he is *in reality* a devil*ish* man—is satisfying because it liberates Shakespeare's meaning from any literal or historical belief in Satan.[6] That is, what Hammond sees is Shakespeare using demonic language and imagery to express a *similitude* between actual or historical human villainy and a notional Satanic power which is itself more imaginary than real. And, it is precisely because Shakespeare thus does not demand that we identify Richard metaphorically (and credulously) with a mythic or supernatural creature like Satan that we can, in effect, take him seriously, both as an artist and *qua* historian.

What I find particularly interesting about Hammond's response to Richard's demonic identity, moreover, is that it appears to follow fairly closely the interpretive procedure which Shakespeare sets out for the chronicle play genre in the Prologue to *Henry V*:

> Can this cockpit hold
> The mighty fields of France? Or may we cram
> Within this wooden O the very casques
> That did affright the air at Agincourt?
> O pardon: since a crookèd figure may
> Attest in little place a million,
> And let us, ciphers to this great account,
> On your imaginary forces work...
> Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts:
> Into a thousand parts divide one man,
> And make imaginary puissance. (1.0.11-26)

Beginning with a mimetic or interpretive crux—the problem, that is, of how to "see" the devilish enormity of Richard III as an historical reality—the modern reader responds to this "crookèd figure" by making Richard's demonic "puissance" literally "imaginary." We regard Shakespeare's use of the diabolic as a way of figuratively shadowing not some supernatural and extra-historical bogeyman, but rather the terribly real and material consequences of political tyranny, violent rebellion, and civil war. This response works because it makes sense of an apparent unreality in Richard's characterization by translating Shakespeare's portrayal of an exaggerated, excessive, and thus *unhistorical*, enormity into a seriously historical dramatic purpose and argument.

So far so good. As Shakespeare's Prologue also makes clear, however, the ability of the stage to represent "imaginary puissance" in a historically credible fashion depends not just on the interpretive agency of playgoers, on their willingness to dress the characters and actions with the right "thought," but on the particular "great account" which they supply, imaginatively, in order to do so. Thus, while it might seem to be "common sense," or an "unmediated" reading of the text, Hammond's solution to the puzzle of Richard's diabolic identity is nothing of the sort. Rather, exactly as the Prologue describes, Hammond responds by *supplementing* Shakespeare's mimesis with a distinctly modern and materialistic intertext, one which says that English Kings cannot be "Satan" because they are men, and because the Devil is real only as a similitude for really evil historical phenomena. Hammond also brings to the table, so to speak, a very particular historical narrative in which Shakespeare, exemplifying "Renaissance," plays a central role in the cultural progress which brought this demystified, realistically materialist—and correct—idea of history into being. And there is the rub. Despite its undeniable clarity—indeed precisely

because it seems like exactly the right way to think about Richard's villainy—Hammond's response inevitably overshadows the way Richard's character would have appeared to Shakespeare and to the members of his original audience. The reason it does this is that, while they seem to be exactly the "great account[s]" required by Shakespeare's "cipher," Hammond's intertexts are not the ones Shakespeare was thinking about when he created his diabolical character or the one his Elizabethan playgoers would have supplied to puzzle out the meaning of Richard's diabolical enormity for themselves.

In other words, what Hammond's response illustrates is what it means to say, with Harold Bloom, that a literary text is a "relational event" and not just a substance to be analyzed. Thinking about Hammond's response to Richard's character helps to show *how* Shakespeare's art of historical characterization works, but not *what* it would have meant in the context of an early modern historical culture dominated by providential histories such as *Acts and Monuments*. Richard's character is, to use Bishop's term again, a theatrical "wonder," and in order to make sense, Shakespeare's representation of Richard's seemingly excessive and unhistorical nature has to be inscribed, transfiguratively so to speak, within a dramatic "argument" which is both seriously realistic and substantially historical. What is crucial, moreover, is that in the process of working through this interpretive process we discover not only a satisfying or "right" understanding of Richard's character, but also, and certainly no less significantly, that Shakespeare's artistry involves getting history right in an unexpected, stimulating, and uniquely theatrical way. What remains to be considered, however, is what authoritative intertexts or "great account[s]" actually extant within Elizabethan historical culture were available to Shakespeare and his audience to

figure out, as Hammond does, Richard's—and Dick the Butcher's—diabolic enormity.

The most obvious contemporary candidate is of course Thomas More's *History of king Richarde the Thirde*, Shakespeare's primary (albeit indirect) source for Richard's character and reign. However, if only because the majority of Shakespeare's playgoers would not have read More, or even his biography as it appeared in other printed chronicles, Shakespeare's meaning cannot be solely dependent on More's portrait. Without challenging the importance of More's *History*, my answer is *Acts and Monuments*: where Hammond accomplishes his decoding by applying what is to him a compelling and satisfying historical *simile*, and where students of More's *History* see Richard as a theatrical version of More's epideictic biographical masterpiece, many of Shakespeare's playgoers would have been led, I believe, to detect or witness, lurking behind the clownish villainy of Dick and Richard, not "Satan or Lucifer" but the terribly serious figure of Foxe's historical Antichrist. This is because, as I suggested earlier, at precisely the point where it presents playgoers with an interpretive crux or crisis, Shakespeare's language explicitly alludes to Foxe, signaling to his audience that the key to this particular puzzle lies in *Acts and Monuments*. Strikingly, from this Foxean perspective playgoers are enabled to discover exactly what Hammond's reading excludes: that Richard and Dick are literally satanic or diabolic, but in a sense that depends on precisely the same kind of figurative transformation of an extra-historical or superhuman identity which does not belong in the play into a human or historical one which does. Unlike More's *History*, the Foxean intertext works this way because one of the defining features of Foxean history was the way it attempted a wholesale reconceptualization of the idea of Satan, one in which what Foxe calls the "fantastical

and imagined" Satan of traditional exegesis, the "fabling tale of that Antichrist to come"(3.147), was displaced by a concept of demonic agency in which human perfidy and the Satanic were absolutely identified, within rather than outside or at the end of history. Thus, in Foxean terms, it is precisely the recognition that Richard *is not* Lucifer, the fallen angel who will return at the end of time, but a peculiarly devilish man in a particularly devilish time that cements or canalizes the diabolic identity suggested by Shakespeare's use of loaded terms such as "wolf," "butcher," "persecutor," and by his allusions to the murder of "innocents" and "prophets." At the same time, the Foxean intertext effectively *historicizes* Richard by linking him, figuratively, with the central argument of *Acts and Monuments*: that Antichrist is historical phenomena embodied, literally, in figures of enormity such as Richard III and Dick the Butcher.

*

Enormity as Historical Theme (again)

Although this is not always adequately recognized, *Acts and Monuments* was much more than an account of religious persecution under Mary Tudor; it was, moreover, considerably more than a tendentiously nationalistic and anti-Catholic defense of the established Elizabethan church. More broadly and accurately construed, *Acts and Monuments* was, next to the vernacular scriptures themselves, the central expression of the radically biblical, and more specifically apocalyptic, Protestant literary culture that emerged in England over the course of the 16$^{th}$-century. Begun as a modest compilation of tales of persecution from the time of Huss, Wycliff and the Lollards, *Acts and Monuments* evolved over two decades of intense labour (roughly from the late 1550's to the early 1580's) on the part of Foxe, his printer John Day, and a host of promoters and contributors, into a universal ecclesiastical history

which told the story of the Christian community in England and Europe from the Roman era down to the present. This history was predicated on two key ideas: that there were two "churches" in history, not one, and that the Scriptures provided the key to unlocking this fundamental truth about history. Accordingly, through a fertile combination of exegetical and historical argument, Foxe aimed to demonstrate that the Roman Church, the institution whose origins and growth had been the subject of traditional ecclesiastical history, was an apostate innovation which embodied not the succession of the apostolic church instituted by Christ, but rather the worldly power of Antichrist prophesied in Revelations. The True Church, which was also defined by key prophetic images such as the saving remnant and the persecuted flock, was identified with those Christians who had witnessed and dissented from this apostasy and, consequently, had suffered oppression and persecution in various forms.[7]

Demonstrating the continuity of the True Christian Church over time, and charting the rise of its dialectically Antichristian antagonist, Foxe supplied English Protestantism with an authoritative justification for the split from Rome which was at once so rhetorically effective and so widely disseminated that it literally captivated the English Protestant historical imagination. As Frances Yates recognized, *Acts and Monuments* was "the prism through which many Elizabethans saw the history of their country"(68) so that, as Anthony Kemp puts it, "more than any other book, it is to the *Acts and Monuments* that one must turn in order to see what the past looked like to the post-Lutheran world"(84). One of the things that made *Acts and Monuments* what John R. Knott calls an "inescapable text" (*Discourses of Martyrdom* 2) was the fact that Foxe's "Two Churches" scheme, which he derived from Tyndale, Bale, and Luther, but which also had deep roots in the medieval Reformism of Wycliff and the Lollards, was itself a central expression of the wholesale revision of the concept of

Satan and the demonic in Reformed apocalyptic thought and literature.[8] Refuting the traditional prophetic idea of Satan—he is a kind of demigod who will return at the end of time—Foxe advanced the Reformed view that Satan or Antichrist had always been here and that he was a combined spiritual and materially human phenomenon rather than a superhuman deity. What Foxe added, moreover, was a virtually unimpeachable demonstration that historical research, carried out in the light of Scripture, proved this apocalyptic truth.

In effect portraying the career of Antichrist since apostolic times, Foxe used history as a vehicle to chart the progress of a Satanic spiritual phenomenon linked in a complex and dynamic historical dialectic with the spirit of Christ. So, while Judith Anderson is correct to describe *Acts and Monuments* as the period's definitive "biography of the Holy Spirit"(130), it is equally true that Foxe's book was, as Jessie Lander puts it, the era's most "compendious register of iniquity"(69). Brutalized, impoverished, exiled, and, in extreme cases, martyred—but supported by Grace and armed with the plain truth—Foxe's heroes navigate a *realpolitik* labyrinth populated by an unparalleled cast of vicious antagonists, characters whose falseness, divisive violence, hatred, and lust for power signifies the Antichristian spirit which defined both them and the nature of the times in which they rage. Thus, in typically humanist fashion, Foxe deals in figures of exemplary virtue and vice, but he combines these exemplary figures with a compelling interpretation of the shape of human history. Using the lives and writings of the martyrs and other innocent prophets and witnesses to adumbrate the true Christian spirit informing the "society of scourged professors of Christ"(8.525), and, conversely, compiling acts of enormity to reveal the satanic spiritual energy which produced the terrible record of history, Foxe presented readers with a post-millennial view of history divided into three distinct spiritual eras: the

period of persecution under the Roman Empire (roughly to 324 AD), the millennium defined by the "binding" of Satan (324-1324) and modernity, the "latter and perilous dayes" of Foxe's title, which is defined by the recrudescence of Satanic power and which is the last phase of human history.

Thus, coming to the year 1360, Foxe halts his narrative in order to give readers a succinct recapitulation of the three "special times" adumbrated in Revelations XX—the "being abroad of Satan to deceive the world...the binding up of him...and the loosing out of him, after a thousand years consummate, for a time"—and then carefully explains what this binding and loosing means:

> I see the common opinion of many to be deceived by ignorance of histories, and the state of things done in the church; they supposing that the chaining up of Satan for a thousand years, spoken of in Revelation, was meant from the birth of Christ our Lord. Wherein I grant that spiritually the strength and dominion of Satan, in accusing us and condemning us for sin, was cast down at the passion and by the passion of Christ our Saviour, and locked up, not only for a thousand years but for ever and ever. Albeit, as touching the malicious hatred and fury of that serpent against the outward bodies of Christ's poor saints (which is the heel of Christ), to afflict and torment the church outwardly; that I judge to be meant in the Revelation of St. John, not to be restrained till the ceasing of those terrible persecutions of the primitive church, at the time when it pleased God to pity the sorrowful affliction of his poor flock, being so long under persecution, the space of three hundred years; and so to assuage their griefs and torments; which is meant by the binding up of Satan, worker of all those mischiefs: understanding thereby, that forasmuch as the devil, the prince of this world, had now, by the death of Christ the Son of God, lost all his power and interest against the soul of man, he should turn his furious rage and malice, which he had to Christ, against the people of Christ, which is meant by the heel of the seed [Gen. iii], in tormenting their outward bodies; which yet should not be for ever, but for a determinate time, when it should please the Lord to bridle the malice, and snaffle the power, of the old serpent, and give rest unto his church for the term of a thousand years; which time being expired, the said serpent should be suffered loose again for a certain or a small time. (2.724-5)

Foxe then carefully outlines the *historiographical* significance of these apocalyptic insights for readers who are about to enter into the bulk of *Acts and Monuments* :

> These things thus premised for the loosing out of Satan, according to the prophecy of the Apocalypse, now let us enter (Christ willing) upon the

> declaration of these latter times which followed after the loosing out of Satan into the world; describing the wonderous perturbations and cruel tyranny stirred up by him against Christ's church, and also the valiant resistance the church of Christ against him and Antichrist, as in these our books here following may appear, the argument of which consisteth in two parts: first, to treat of the raging fury of Satan now loosed, and of Antichrist, against the saints of Christ fighting and travailing for the maintenance of truth, and the reformation of the church. Secondly, to declare the decay and ruin of the said Antichrist, through the power of the word of God; being at length, either in a great part of the world overthrown, or, at least, universally detected. (2.727)

As Foxe works hard to clarify in these crucial passages, Christian faith dictates that Christ's victory over Satan is assured, timeless and unchanging. The subject of *history*, however—or at least the Reformed kind of history which looks, in the light of Scriptures, beneath the surface of events to discover their real significance—is a dynamic spiritual struggle which is perennial rather than timeless, has distinct historical epochs, the binding and loosing of Satan, and which changes with "the times," getting better or worse depending on the quality of government and citizenry in any given place or moment.[9] The tenor of this dialectical anatomy is spiritual, but its vehicle, so to speak, is a relentlessly material: the historical struggle between Christ and Antichrist is a political one—the persecution of truth by corrupt worldly authorities and institutions—and the devil will, quite literally, be discovered in the dismally repetitive and horribly violent details.

Like the idea that history will culminate, as Shakespeare's doomed Prince says in *Richard III*, in a "general all ending day," Satanic enormity is thus a historical idea which lies at the heart of Foxe's providential history and which circulated widely, as Woolf puts it, in the apocalyptic historical culture of late-Elizabethan England. Depicted and documented with all of the rhetorical resources available to the historian, images of brutality, disorder, dissent, and persecution were the focal points at which Foxe's two main discursive modes—humanist history and apocalyptic

exegesis—came together. Seamlessly combining these elite historiographical modes with more popular ways of remembering the past—songs, carnivalesque satires, tales of miraculous escapes and providential retributions, and, of course, the famous woodcuts—Foxe generated a powerful explanatory paradigm through which English Protestants were taught to see historical depictions of tyranny, violence, and conflict as literal images of Satan and Antichrist, just as they were urged to see the heroic dissent of martyrs like Anne Askew, and less-perfect champions like Queen Elizabeth, as dramatic evidence of the materially real spirit of Christ operating in the theatre of history. Foxe's readers were, moreover, taught to relate this paradigmatic dichotomy not just to a generally providential understanding of the world, but to the more highly charged and chronologically focused apocalyptic providentialism of Reformed culture: enormity was a sign of Satan's worldly hegemony, of the reality of a specifically post-millennial modernity, and the hence of the immanence of what Edgar in *King Lear* calls the "promised end."[10]

Because Foxean apocalypticism has become for many an example of what Woolf calls an evolutionary "wrong turn," it takes real effort to acknowledge how paradigmatic it was at the moment Shakespeare arrived on the historiographical scene, and how thoroughly credible and respectable Foxe's redefinition of Antichrist would have appeared to anyone with a serious interest in history. Combining an unparalleled historiographical skill with an equally powerful grasp of apocalyptic rhetoric, Foxe produced one of the defining works of early modern English historical culture. As William Lamont urges, Foxe was far more than just a "great chronicler of the sufferings of the Protestant martyrs in Mary's reign"; he was "the man *who gave meaning* to these sufferings," powerfully yoking the expansion of historical consciousness, the famous renaissance 'discovery' of the past, with the apocalyptic

idea that signs of God's purposes are discernible in the relationship between mundane events and biblical prophecy:

> *before* the Civil War no great daring was needed to pin one's hopes for salvation on the prophecies in Revelation. One man had made the pursuit of the Millennium respectable and orthodox. The man who domesticated the Apocalypse was John Foxe....When Foxe had synthesized the old Sibylline eschatology with a detailed account of the sufferings of the Marian martyrs, he had created a masterpiece. It was the harrowing descriptions of the martyrdoms that gave the book its emotive appeal; it was the underlying philosophy that canalized these emotions. Without this philosophy, Foxe would have written a compelling tract against Rome; and nothing more. The philosophy made it...indispensable. (33, Lamont's emphases)

The profound influence of this "prince of English historical mythmakers"(Fairfield, 119) on the historical culture of renaissance England has become a central theme among cultural historians who have increasingly emphasized the degree to which early modern English popular culture was saturated by apocalyptic providentialism. Noting that "[r]eligion, perhaps more than other matters, provided an arena for the continued circulation of historical knowledge between, writing, print, and orality," Woolf argues that

> no book published in the sixteenth-century had a greater impact on historical consciousness than John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*.... It would indeed be difficult to overestimate the role of the 'Book of Martyrs' in creating a Protestant vision of national history, and its message long outlasted the Reformation to reach into the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries. It is also the example *par excellence* of an expensive, learned work of historical research and writing, based on both documentary and oral sources, and exercising a potent influence on popular consciousness of the nation's past; it accomplished this through a skillful mix of truth and fiction, underpinned by illustrations...Foxe and other religious writers created a counterpart of the late medieval cautionary tale. The *Acts and Monuments* in particular supplied a 'Corpus of Protestant legend and folklore' as compelling and robust as the Catholic saints' tales it displaced. (*Reading History* 309)

And, referring to Foxe as "the English Plutarch," Patrick Collinson has suggested that "for the three generations which intervened between the Elizabethan settlement and

the puritan commonwealth the Bible and Foxe between them entirely satisfied the demand for edifying biographical history" (*Godly People* 507).

As suggested earlier, while it has not been consistently recognized by critics, the profound influence of Foxe's exemplary figures of virtue on early modern literature is both striking and obvious: from Una to Cordelia to Abdiel, it is no exaggeration to say that until we have read *Acts and Monuments* we have not fully grasped what it means to say that such characters are *good.* The significance of Foxean enormity is similarly "inescapable": to understand the representation of evil in Renaissance drama we must consider how Foxe's anatomy of Satanic enormity defined *bad* for Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

Perhaps the most important thing to recognize about this Foxean theme is that while reactionary Roman Catholicism or "Popery" was cognate in Foxe with "enormity," he does not simply equate Evil with Catholicism—if this were true *Acts and Monuments* would not be "one of the most influential English books ever written"(Wooden, 93), and would have been of little interest to Shakespeare, a playwright whose works were not designed to provoke or inflame anti-Catholic sentiment. Although it is possible to *misread* Foxe in such reductive terms, Satanic enormity is not restricted in *Acts and Monuments* to a narrowly polemical and sectarian opposition between good (English) Protestants and bad (Foreign) Catholics and recusants. Thus, as Sarah Covington points out in her recent social history of martyrdom in early modern England,

> [d]uring the later years of the sixteenth century, some notable voices would give expression to a sense of doubt concerning the efficacy of religious singularity backed by persecutory measures. In many respects, John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*...can be viewed as an indictment of persecution through the ages—including, somewhat uncomfortably, the persecutions which occurred under Henry, Edward, and, contemporaneously, Elizabeth. Indeed, a mark of the papists and their false church, as Foxe presents it, is violence—the violence of persecuting authorities, the violence foretold by the book of

> Revelation. While others of Foxe's generation did not have much of a problem in maintaining double standards when it came to issues of tolerance and intolerance, Foxe himself held to a consistency when it came to the issue of authorities wielding power through violence, even if that power was now on the side of God (and of Foxe). (9)

This is not to argue that Foxe was a liberal, or that he was not embroiled in anti-Catholic polemic; it is, however, to recognize that the concept of enormity is a much more interestingly metaphysical and historiographical one than is conjured up by the image of sectarian controversy.[11] Foxe anatomizes history under the dichotomous signs of tyranny and persecution, of wealth, and of institutional power and authority, and he interprets these in terms of a conflict between spiritual wolves (many of whom are English and not Roman Catholic) and sheep (many of whom likewise are neither English nor Protestant).

In other words, to read *Acts and Monuments* in the thoughtful fashion which the book deserves is to discover that for Foxe what is definitive is enormity itself: the envy, divisiveness, and blood-thirsty rigor of worldly powers whose characteristically *extraordinary* viciousness signifies the demonic Other, and historical antagonist, of the true Christian community. Consequently, what is striking about the historical theme of enormity is not that it reduces the richly dramatic and universal theme of the conflict between good and evil to a catalogue of bigoted things to think and say about Catholics; rather, it is that by effectively saturating the realm of historical individuals and *realpolitik* events with intimations of apocalyptic spiritualism, Foxe provided his readers—and other writers—with an authoritative basis for imaginatively extending the depth and meaning of violence, conflict, and suffering beyond the merely literal. Demonstrating a thoroughly humanistic interest in historical particularity *and* a total commitment to a providential understanding of the human existential situation, Foxe *represents* enormity with all of the psychological and political acuity, and all of the

evidentiary support, available to the "renaissance" historian; and yet, despite this "modern" realism, Foxe never allows readers to lose sight of the fact that what is being depicted in *Acts and Monuments* is a fundamentally spiritual phenomenon—Satan and Antichrist. As John Pocock explains, for Protestant writers like Foxe, providential historiography was the consequence of a total involvement in, not an escape or alienation from, secular institutions and politics: apocalyptic history was, he argues, "a technique likely to be adopted only by minds so deeply committed to the secular that they are willing to invoke sacred history to explain it" ("England," 112).

While this is difficult to square with the idea of a rapidly secularizing historical culture which has dominated post-Tillyardian criticism of the history plays, Foxean enormity was a fundamental "language" in terms of which English Protestants understood the meaning of historical violence and suffering, of pathos, and of the conflict between heroism and villainy. As Helen C. White argues,

> There can have been few books in the world like it, few that would give an innocent reader such a sense of being in the know, past, present, and future, that would give a man so complete a picture of the world in which he found himself and how it came to be so; few books that would so completely furnish forth an untutored mind with a whole intellectual world, so perfectly suited to its tastes and adapted to its powers, so completely to arm it against the challenges and pressures of an age of unprecedented moral and mental aggression (2).

While Foxe tries hard to contain his narrative to ecclesiastical matters, and while his readers are never allowed to stray too far from the arena of sectarian controversy, of the fear of recrudescent Catholicism which was a definitive feature of mainstream Calvinist culture, his theme of enormity is a capacious and flexible concept applicable to a wider purview of destructive human perfidy and falseness, and the onerous institutions it tends to generate. Although such comparisons are slippery, Foxean enormity can thus be compared with Big Ideas such as class or ideology in Marxist

thought, unconscious drives in Freudianism, or Foucault's *discourse*. While Foxe was arguably more a popularizer than a brilliantly original thinker, he is like these philosopher-historians insofar as he helped to create a compelling anatomy of the dismal metaphysics of power which came to occupy a central place in the cultural logic of his time. That is, just as the dissemination of Marxist, Freudian, and Foucauldian thought has taught many modern readers to "see" the underlying meaning of history through the lens of resonant organizing concepts or metaphors, readers of *Acts and Monuments* were taught by Foxe to be relentless detectors of Satanic or Antichristian Enormity in the nightmare of human history.

Thus, due to Foxe's tremendous influence and popular authority within the apocalyptic mainstream, historical representations of enormity had become, by Shakespeare's day, focal points for Protestant piety and for a Reformed engagement with the underlying meaning of history. Foxean enormity was eminently suitable for "circulation" in the works of a lay dramatist who, impressed by the chronicles, interpreted, selected, and represented his materials in accordance with the leading ideas about human agency and the significance of historical events in relation to providence that he found in them. To be clear, I am not suggesting that images of enormity were inevitably linked to pious Protestantism. To do so would be to miss the point that recent cultural historians have been making about the remarkable adaptability of discourse in this period, and of the sheer diversity of purposes which representations of violence in particular could perform, ranging from the pious to the pornographic.[12] For example, as Richard Verstegan's illicitly published Catholic martyrology, the *Theatrum Crudelitatum Haereticorum Nostri Temporis* (1587) [*A Theatre of the Cruelties of Heretics in our Time*], makes abundantly clear, what I am calling "Foxean" imagery could serve very different (albeit similarly serious and

religious) purposes. While it is difficult to imagine Shakespeare (or anyone else) using the public stage to perform the kinds of radical convictions found in Verstegen—not even "liminality" would have allowed that[13]—Shakespeare certainly could have "appropriated" images of religious enormity for non-serious purposes: to disgust, shock or simply entertain his audiences. What I am saying is that this is not, in fact, true in Shakespeare's case. To complete my analogy, it is no more strange to find Shakespeare presenting audiences with historical images pregnant with implications of Antichristian enormity—or indeed to discover a rich strain of engaged anti-Popery in them—than it is to encounter modern dramatists referring, dramaturgically, to the pernicious consequences of class, ideology, repression, or discourse. Or, to try a perhaps more relevant parallel, it is no more shocking to find Shakespeare performing the convictions of Foxean history than it is to recognize how today's cinematic serial murderers are invariably "psychos," or the way our innumerable vampires and zombies inevitably conjure the specter of biological contagion. These things, as Aristotle said, strike people as terrible, and hence are the stuff of effective drama.

*

## Enormity and the "Tudor Myth"

By linking the realistic historical depiction of violence and human suffering with apocalyptic exegesis and prophesy, Foxe supplied Shakespeare with a potent dramatic metaphor that was *latent*, so to speak, in virtually any historical representation of extraordinary violence, cruelty and suffering. The theme of enormity in *Acts and Monuments* was of particular interest to Shakespeare because, beyond its

general potential, it was also the key to Foxe's distinctive version of the "Tudor myth." As we have seen, at the heart of Foxean history was an anatomy of Satanic enormity based, as Warren Wooden puts it, on a "paradoxical combination of an anachronistically modern and realistic foreground within a mythic controlling framework"(24). This combination is paradoxical because what Wooden calls the "mythic" framework was history itself: a dynamic historical process driven by real human beings within real political institutions and in "real time." In the words of Foxe's contemporary, William Fulke, this historical Antichrist was "a whole succession of men, in one state of devilish government"(qtd. in Emmerson, 210).

Thus, the Pope and the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Roman church was Antichrist, or a group of Antichrists, the Ottoman Turks another, Philip II of Spain another, King Henry VIII another, because, as Christopher Hill has argued, Antichrist was the name for "political repression in the name of religion, for the coercive organs associated therewith, and especially for the persecution of the righteous"(5), and the whole of *Acts and Monuments* is an apocalyptic biography of Satan designed to demonstrate the historical truth of Protestant exegetical tradition. However, one of Foxe's original contributions to apocalyptic history was to alter the eschatological time-frame that he had inherited from Tyndale and Bale so that it would better explain the historical period defined by the "Tudor Myth." "Common opinion," Foxe argues in the passage quoted earlier, dated the millennial binding of Satan from the time of Christ, whereas it had in fact occurred, he argued, with the end of the first era of Roman persecution in the mid 4$^{th}$-century. As a result, the end of the millennium, and the "loosing out of Satan," now coincided in England with the late 14$^{th}$-century transition from Edward III to Richard II and Henry IV. And, consequently, the historical moment which earlier Tudor historians such as Hall and Polydore Vergil

had identified as the origin of England's terrible civil war era now coincided with the final period in Foxean history, which begins with the attempted persecution of Wycliff under Richard II, "at whose time this furious fire of persecution seemed to take his first original and beginning"(2.791), but really takes off, so to speak, with Henry IV and V, the apostate regicides whose reigns inaugurate the burning of martyrs in England.

Although this part of Foxe's narrative has not attracted much attention from Foxe scholars—or Shakespeareans—the significance of his revised chronology for historically engaged readers of Shakespeare's time was substantial.[14] By subsuming existing attitudes about the tumultuous 14th-century within his apocalyptic scheme, Foxe revitalized a moribund providential story from the early Tudor period, transforming it into a newly relevant account of the origins of modernity, the "latter and perilous dayes" in which Foxe and his readers actually lived. Moreover, by shifting the providential focus of the story to apocalyptic, Foxe liberated the "Tudor Myth" from the narrowly dynastic and apologetic role for which it had been originally constructed. Although Foxe was willing to give monarchs such as Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth their due, he did not attribute any pivotal or epochal significance to the Tudor dynasty itself. Foxe did not consider the rise of the Tudors as the providential culmination of a process begun in Richard's time, nor did he represent Henry VIII—the persecutor of Anne Askew and many others—or Elizabeth as saviours who had ushered in a positively new "modern" era. This is because, for Foxe, the "latter times" had begun in the middle of the 14th-century, with the "loosing out of Satan," and, right up to his own day, had not yet ended.[15]

What Foxe did do, however, was transform the "Tudor Myth" into a compelling account of the origins of the contemporary world, tracing its origins back

to the Ricardian era and representing it in terms of a massively illustrated anatomy of "these latter and perilous dayes" organized, precisely and exhaustively, according to the two-sided argument quoted above: the end of Satan's millennial binding unleashes a modern era which, by virtue of its manifest violence, parallels the primitive era of Roman persecution, and which must be represented, historically, in terms of the dialectical struggle between the two "churches" of Truth and Enormity. In this "time of Antichrist and loosing out of Satan," Foxe argues, "both doctrine and sincerity of life were utterly, almost, extinguished" (1.4-5):

> [T]his is out of all doubt, that at that time, the world was in a most desperate and vile estate, and that the lamentable ignorance and darkness of God's truth had overshadowed the whole earth...the whole state and condition, not only of worldly things, but also of religion, was depraved and corrupted. (2.792)

Naturally, Foxe focuses on the Papacy and its agents as the chief exemplars of satanic persecution: "the whole glut of monks and friars was set in a rage and madness, who, even as hornets with their sharp stings, did assail this good man [Wycliff] on every side"(2.796-7), but it is clear that Foxe's historical vision includes the "whole state and condition" of society, and not just the church. The image of the clergy, consumed by "rage and madness," and transformed into a swarm of vicious insects is symbolic of the way the whole of Christendom, with the exception of a minority of godly holdouts, had descended into apostasy and Satanic persecution. From this apocalyptic perspective, the well-established "Tudor Myth" of a dark period of societal upheaval and unprecedented violence, culminating in the "Wars of the Roses," presented itself as a natural component of Foxe's argument. Foxe makes this explicit near the beginning of *Acts and Monuments* when he identifies the Wars of the Roses with the "furious rage of persecution" of the Roman emperor Domitius Nero, who "reigned fourteen years, with such fury and tyranny, that he slew the most part of the senators,

and destroyed the whole order of knighthood in Rome"(1.90). Just as the Romans in the first era of Satanic liberty were "consumed and plagued by their own emperors, but also by civil wars" (1.91), likewise in 15th-century England:

> [N]ot many years past, God, seeing idolatry, superstition, hypocrisy, and wicked living, used in this realm, raised up that godly-learned man John Wycliff, to preach unto our father's repentance; and to extort them to amend their lives, to forsake their papistry and idolatry, their hypocrisy and superstition, and to walk in the fear of God. His exhortations were not regarded, he, with his sermons, was despised, his books, and he after his death, were burnt. What Followed? They slew their right king and set up three wrong kings on a row, under whom all the noble blood of the realm was slain up, and half the commons in addition thereto. What in France, with their own sword in fighting amongst themselves for a crown; while the cities and towns [i.e. in England] were decayed, and the land brought half into a wilderness, in respect of what it was before. O extreme plagues of God's vengeance! (1.93).

Foxe thus sets the basic material of the "Tudor Myth," in an entirely different providential context, focusing not on the "long division between the two houses of York and Lancaster" (3.739) itself, but picturing the nation as a whole descending into a chaos redolent of the renewal of Satanic power prophesied in Scriptures. And, while Foxe's main focus is ecclesiastical history, he makes it perfectly clear that the renewal of Satanic power is manifested as much in the history of the English monarchy and ruling aristocracy as the church. The worst, most notorious, episode of this magisterial enormity was, of course, the reign of Mary Tudor, but the Marian persecution was part of a "succession" of "devilish government" in England that stretched back to the "fall" of Richard II:

> [W]hat storms of persecution they sustained, what little rest they had, with what enemies they were matched, with what crosses pressed, under what princes, under what prelates, they lived, or rather died, in the days of King Henry the fourth, King Henry the fifth, King Henry the seventh, King Henry the eighth; queen Mary, etc... at what time children were caused to set fires to fathers, the father adjured to accuse the son, the wife to accuse the husband, the husband the wife, brother the sister, sister the brother; examples whereof in this book plenty are to be seen. (1.xxxiv).

Later, near the beginning of his account of the reign of Henry VI, Foxe again highlights the theme of royal apostasy as the defining reality of the violent era:

> Thus it may appear how Kings and Princes have been blinded and abused by the false prelates of the church, insomuch as they have been their slaves and butchers, to slay Christ's poor innocent members. See, therefore, what danger it is for Princes not to have knowledge and understanding themselves, but to be led by other men's eyes, and especially trusting to such guides, who, through hypocrisy, both deceive them and through cruelty, devour the people (3.229).

Revising the familiar story of post-Ricardian England's decline into chaos, violence, and civil war, Foxe argued that this enormity constituted evidence of an epochal shift in the spiritual state of human affairs, a transformation that amounted, ultimately, to the origins of a violent and divisive modernity. Thus, if it is true, as Woolf avers, that "most" chronicle historians were "uninterested in the potential of history as a tool for explaining the present, an account of the emergence of contemporary man, his customs, and institutions"(*Idea of History* 262), Foxe is a major exception. And, it seems to me, the distinctive perspicuity of Foxe's thinking would not have escaped a sophisticated reader of history such as Shakespeare, even though he was not interested in ecclesiastical history *per se*. With effectiveness completely unmatched in English historiography, Foxe applied the full arsenal of early modern historical argument and harnessed an unprecedented mass and variety of historical materials to communicate this powerful idea about the meaning of medieval history to his readers. By making the devil real, Foxe taught Shakespeare and his audience what serious modern history boiled down to.[16]

Enormity as intertext (again): Riffaterre and literariness

Recalling Antony Hammond's response to Richard's diabolic nature, it might well be objected that it is enough to say that we should avoid applying an inadequately historicized understanding of the term "Satan," and that to read Foxe is to recognize that our modern sense of the clear distinction between devils and men, myth and history, is anachronistic. However, while I am stressing the need to consider past meanings—we cannot assume that Shakespeare did not intend literally to represent Satan unless we know what Satan meant to him and his contemporaries—I am also trying to suggest that recognizing the fundamentally *intertextual* character of Shakespearean enormity is way of understanding and asserting the *literary* complexity of Shakespeare's historical art. That is, Shakespeare does not simply portray Richard as Satan in a way that a historically uninformed modern might be excused for neglecting, he authenticates his own, distinctively literary, historiographic practice by generating a particularly *theatrical* emblem of uncertainty—what kind of stage devils are Richard and Dick?—and by providing the intertextual key to solving this difficulty *in the performance itself.* This is the part that Hammond gets right, and it is the *intertextual* relationship between the rhetorical structure of Shakespeare's complex mimesis and its surrounding, and changing, historical culture that I want to pursue here, and not just inert or antiquated semantic possibilities.

While I began with Bloom, the idea of intertextuality that I am employing in this thesis is more closely related to the post-structuralist literary hermeneutics of Michael Riffaterre. Like all important theorists of intertextuality, Riffaterre is interested in textual indeterminacy, and in defining the literary work as an event which includes the text, its intertexts, and the interpretive agency of readers. Thus, in a wide ranging series of books and articles, Riffaterre describes a process in which,

responding to what he variously calls "ungrammaticalities," "syllepses," "mimesis hurdles," or "signposts" embedded in literary works themselves, readers engage in a distinctively literary kind of reading or "semiosis" wherein the meaning of individual works is discovered as readers trace the works' intertexts in the light of a clear recognition that the resultant meaning is the unique property of the works themselves:

> [t]wo modalities of reader response are inseparable. One is the readers' feeling that they need surcease from the demands the text puts on their ingenuity, and from the text's departures from accepted linguistic usage or narrative and descriptive conventions. The other is the constraints or limitations the same text puts on the readers' search for that relief. Indeed, contrary to critics' favorite reaction to difficulty (they too often are content to invoke ambiguity and do not seem to think there is a way out of deconstruction), facts of reading suggest that, when it mobilizes the intertext, the text leaves little leeway to readers and controls closely their response. It is thus that the text maintains its identity despite changing times, despite the evolution of the sociolect, and despite the ascent of readerships unforeseen by the author...[t]his awareness in itself may be enough to make readers experience the text's literariness....It is obvious that such a process must be an imperative of reading. The urge to understand compels readers to look to the intertext to fill out the text's gaps, spell out its implications and find out what rules of idiolectic grammar account for the text's departures from logic, from accepted usage (that is from the sociolect), from the cause-and-effect sequence of the narrative, and from verisimilitude in the descriptive. ("Compulsory Reader Response" 57-8)

With his combined focus on the way the work generates a desire to overcome its "mimesis hurdles" and yet "controls its own decoding," and on the way the literary work's peculiar autonomy seems to be produced through a paradoxical relationship of dependence on, and independence from, authoritative cultural intertexts, Riffaterre's model seems like an almost perfect gloss on Shakespeare's Prologue to *Henry V*. Like Riffaterre, Shakespeare in the Prologue defines the drama in terms of a mimesis that is fundamentally distinct from the verisimilar—the actors on stage, Shakespeare says, obviously do not look like what they represent. Rather, like Riffaterre, what Shakespeare is describing is a more complex kind of allegoresis in which drama signifies history by alluding to a reality which exists in the extra-textual "great

account," an epithet suggestive, collectively, of memory, legend, and the chronicles. The actors are, quite precisely, syllepses: in the crammed "O" they are abject; in "history" they are "great."

The "intertextual drive," Riffaterre urges, "is tropological rather than psychoanalytical," insofar as it is "dictated by the tantalizing combination within each connective of the enigma and the answer, of the text as Sphinx and the Intertext as Oedipus." While this model of literary semiosis might seem to have little to do with Shakespearean drama, and indeed might seem to do little more than muddy Shakespeare's lucid explanation of how his plays work, I find Riffaterre's literary hermeneutics, and especially his identification of the "ungrammaticality" or "mimesis hurdle" as the *starting point* of a distinctively intertextual literary semiosis, very helpful in clarifying the complex relationship of dependence and autonomy vis-à-vis the surrounding historical culture which was, as discussed above, fundamental to the chronicle play genre. Riffaterre helps, moreover, to explain how the complex theatrical experience T.G Bishop calls Wonder could function as a "conduit of Truth" in a specifically literary historical sense.

This becomes clearer if we compare Riffaterre's more challenging model of intertextual mimesis with the more conventional thinking of Richard Levin. While both critics argue that the literary text cannot be reduced to history or textuality, Levin defends the autonomy of Shakespearean drama by insisting that "in its primary aspect" the play is "a literal representation of particular characters engaged in particular actions" and that the responses these literal representations "evoke will constitute the dramatic experience which the play was designed for" (199). What is, I think, immediately notable is that Levin's version of theatrical realism, or rather literalism, is quite alien to the theatrical experience described in Shakespeare's

Prologue. Levin is right, that is, to insist with Shakespeare that the play's meaning is inextricably linked to the immediacy of the action on stage and to the embodied presence of the actors, but he is quite mistaken to infer that Shakespeare's "characters and events" must be "understood in themselves" alone, and not "in terms of some body of knowledge external to the play," and that Shakespeare never "evokes...a form of code or puzzle requiring some special lore to unlock"(199-200).

In fact, this is precisely what Shakespeare does: anticipating Riffaterre, Shakespeare recognizes that mimetic difficulty is the starting point of the authentic literary experience—"Can this cockpit hold/ The mighty fields of France?"—but not its end or goal. Rather than literal representations, Shakespeare's "crookèd figures" are like Riffaterre's poetic signposts; they are "ciphers" that "work," because they are "specific, specialized signs [that] can at once stand for the intertext, point to its locus, and uncover its identity" (58). Where Shakespeare urges playgoers to "piece out [these] imperfections with [their] thoughts," Riffaterre says,

> These signposts are words and phrases indicating, on the one hand, a difficulty—an obscure or incomplete utterance in the text—that only an intertext can remedy; and, on the other, pointing the way to where the solution can be sought. Such features, lexical and phrasal, are distinguished from their context by their dual nature. They are both the problem, when seen from the text, and the solution to that problem when their other, intertextual side is revealed. (58)

And, just as it clearly indicates that the meaning of the play is dependent upon the "great account," the Prologue also indicates the vital difference between these authoritative intertexts and the theatrical experience playgoers are about to undergo. Likewise, Riffaterre argues, ungrammaticalities generate a specifically literary experience because,

> [t]hey belong equally in text and intertext, linking the two and signaling in each the presence of their mutually complementary traits. Accordingly, I shall call them connectives. And in addition to identifying them, I shall try to show that the connectives combine the sign systems of text and intertext into new semiotic clusters, thereby freeing the text from its dependency...subordinating its descriptive and narrative devices to a signifying strategy unique to the text. (58)

As Graham Allen points out, it is Riffaterre's keen understanding of the "overdetermination of the poetic sign" that makes him attractive to critics interested in pursuing a more inclusive, intertextual, idea of literary meaning without abandoning the idea that meaning in effect belongs to the work itself:

> Riffaterre manages to avoid unraveling the text into the infinitely regressive domains of a post-structuralist vision of the general or social text. Riffaterre's interpretive practice is dependent upon discovering the ways in which texts produce semiotic unity by transforming socially shared codes, clichés, oppositions and descriptive systems; yet such an approach refuses to accept that such a reliance...involves the text in anything other than its own...unique significance. Whilst Barthes, Kristeva and other post-structuralist textual or semiotic analysts...explode the traditional idea of textual unity, Riffaterre reads in a backwards movement...from mimetic ungrammaticalities to semiotic unity....In this sense, the poem's significance depends upon the reader's bringing to the text a knowledge of the sociolect which will unlock its...meanings. Texts pre-suppose inter-texts, which the reader must then actualize within a semiotic reading of the text. The theory depends heavily on the belief not only that texts give us clear clues to their decoding...but also that readers have the capacity...to perform such a successful decoding. (125)

Although there is no necessary connection between images of violence and the kind of mimetic complexity or uncertainty which, according to Riffaterre, is the starting point for literary semiosis, by virtue of its very excessiveness, Foxean enormity provided Shakespeare with a natural source of theatrical ungrammaticality and an unlimited source of "crooked figures" of Enormity. The Richard/Dick-Persecutor/Butcher nexus alluded to earlier is an example of Shakespeare's use of overdetermined rhetorical signposts, connectives linking *his*

ciphers to Foxe's great account, in order to infuse his dramaturgy with what might be called poet-historical authority.

*

The plan for the rest of this thesis, first and foremost, is to take an in-depth look at series of figures of what I want to call Foxean enormity in the English chronicle plays. The point of these readings is to describe how this resonant Foxean idea about apocalyptic modernity binds the plays, intertextually, to *Acts and Monuments* in a way which helps Shakespeare to do history in a way which is both distinctively serious, in a religious sense, and distinctively literary or theatrical. In each case, this demonstration will consist of two, mutually reinforcing, parts: first I will attempt to disentangle Shakespeare's characters from the clutches of what I take to be the foundational version of "radical" Shakespeare in each case; then I will present new readings which detail the way Shakespeare engages the Foxean intertext by presenting audiences with enigmatic and extraordinary figures of enormity. What I hope to show is that, like Dick the Butcher and Richard, these stage-diabolical figures are designed to invite interpretation beyond a merely literal reading of the action, and in terms of the authoritative Foxeian intertext. Secondly, as suggested at the outset, my goal here is not only to say something new about how Shakespeare's Theatre of Enormity works, but also to conclude by situating Shakespeare's performances of conviction within their own distinctive *historical culture* as that complex phenomenon has been understood and described by cultural historians rather than literary scholars. From this novel perspective, the social circulation of Foxean history in print and pictures, in sermons and from the popular stage itself, can be

viewed as a major contributor to the formation of a distinctively Protestant, even Godly, providential historical culture in late-Elizabethan and Jacobean England. Because it was, I believe, his intention to do so, Shakespeare added his voice to (and to some extent gained his reputation by) participating in this culturally productive process.

---

[1] The terms "ape" and "playpen" are actually used by historian Peter Lake to describe the theatre in *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (321).

[2] While he is determined, as he says, to "rescue" conviction "from the dustbin of literary history," in dividing plain speakers into Humanist and Calvinist camps, Graham's analysis threatens to leave religious conviction—which he defines in opposition to the brilliantly dialectical "rhetorical plainness" of humanism—in the clutches of this same broad bias. Nevertheless, Graham's willingness to address head-on the "bias" towards skepticism is an invaluable piece of revisionist thinking. I would like to thank Dr. Graham for inviting me to participate in the *Seventeenth Waterloo Conference on Elizabethan Theatre* in 2005, where I gave a paper based on Chapter Five of this thesis.

[3] Although he frames the issue of Shakespeare's place in the marketplace for godly culture brilliantly, Knapp's belief that Shakespeare belonged to a roguish "tribe" of theatre people who practiced their own brand of Protestantism in opposition to that of "the Preachers" is impossible to credit.

[4] This is John D. Cox's thesis in *The Devil and the Sacred in English Drama.* While Cox's argument about the Protestantization of the early modern stage devil is invaluable, his reading of Shakespeare's relationship with Foxean history is undermined by his typically post-Tillyardian obsession with Shakespeare's singular secularism and by his disappointingly reductive reading of Foxe's spiritualism as displaced nationalism. Cox's and Knapp's books are, it seems to me, redolent examples of Jack Heller's point about the limitations of the recent "religious turn" in theatre studies (see Preface, endnote 9).

[5] These qualifications are important for Shakespeare scholars because, while *Acts and Monuments* is based on a powerful dichotomy—Christ and Antichrist—and is "ideologically" committed, the complexity of Foxe's historical vision offers little in the way of a target for theatrical "deconstruction." Begun in exile, and compiled by a writer whose dissent from Elizabethan religio-political orthodoxy is clear, *Acts and Monuments* was an "official" history which was, according to Anthony Kemp, so "radical" in both its rejection of authoritative church history and its embrace of resistance as praxis as to invite comparison with Foucault and Derrida! What Foxe's book illustrates, in other words, is how much the often super-simplified categories of New Historicism are in need of rethinking.

[6] Or, more precisely Hammond's similitude liberates my ability to construe that meaning from such literalism: Shakespeare's play consistently asserts that Richard somehow really is a devil, even if Richard himself thinks he is just *playing* at being one. This is an example of a pronounced dramatic irony which Hammond's modern reading cannot accommodate.

[7] Following what he considered to be the truth of scriptural exegesis, Foxe identified the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Roman church with Antichrist. This fundamental anti-popery did not, however, lead Foxe to conflate the True Church with any of the Reformed European churches, and certainly not the English one. It simply cannot be over-stressed that what distinguishes the True and False churches in *Acts and Monuments* is not national identity (which counts for very little in Foxe's thinking), or even particular forms of church government and doctrine (although these are much more important), but the contrast between two diametrically opposed responses to the "progress" of history itself. Modernity is defined by Foxe in terms of the expansion of Satanic power in the world, and Antichrist or Roman Catholicism is one aspect or "member" of that power. The spiritual identity of an exemplary figure is defined by his or her response to this spiritual reality: there is inspired dissent—the bold public voice of Foxe's prophets or witnesses and, less spectacularly, the right reading of *Acts and Monuments* itself—and its opposite: apostasy, persecution, and the pursuit of power driven by Satanic hatred, divisiveness, and rigour.

[8] The Protestant redefinition of Antichrist, which is central to the argument of this thesis, was first discussed in detail by Christopher Hill in *Antichrist in the Seventeenth-Century*, especially 1-40. Hill's work is complemented by Emmerson (204-236) and Christianson (9-46). Foxe's contribution in particular is discussed by Bauckham (91-144).

[9] It is important to note as well that, while Foxe eulogizes peaceable governors who refuse to use violence for religious purposes, or who actively protect Christians from

persecution, "bad" times in Foxean history are paradoxically salutary in that they lead to conflict and martyrdom. While it is horrible in and of itself, martyrdom is a necessary form of spiritual illumination. By the same token, Foxe refers to the millennial period of Antichrist's bondage as a golden age of peace and as a period of darkness and backsliding.

[10] To be clear, by defining Foxean Enormity as "Protestant," I am not arguing that thinking about the antichristian or apocalyptic significance of persecution or modern politics was either unique to Protestants or alien or unthinkable to non-Protestants; rather, by describing Foxean history as Protestant, I am simply noting that it was central to the religio-historical habits of thought of people—such as Shakespeare and the majority of his London audiences—who were, in fact, committed Protestants.

[11] This is really two points. First, our modern sense of the inherently undignified and inartistic nature of anti-Catholic polemic is largely anachronistic: think Spenser, think Milton. Elizabethan intellectuals were, of course, capable of discriminating between legitimate anti-Catholic commentary and ignorant bigotry. For example, as Anthony Milton argues, the Laudian "crackdown" on virulent anti-Catholic rhetoric was motivated less by the sense that it was wrong to argue against Rome, than by the belief that to do so coarsely and ineffectively actually caused converts (377-455). Somewhat similarly, whereas the anonymous play *The Troublesome Reign of King John* defines popery in terms of coarse clowning, in *King John* Shakespeare gives us Pandulph, an extraordinary moral monster who revels in the idea of Prince Arthur's bloody murder and the civil chaos which will inevitably ensue, and whose "breath" stirs up a "tempest" which vitiates the once vigorous King John and robs him of his sovereignty. Shakespeare's anti-popery is not, as is often asserted, *less* pronounced than that of the anonymous play, it is more historiographically sophisticated, serious, and dramatically compelling. Secondly, as the example of *King John* makes clear, sectarianism could be used to perform complex, richly philosophical and imaginative, literary intentions, without thereby ceasing to participate in the arena of polemical sectarian controversy. Dreams about miraculous impartiality notwithstanding, there is no more reason to avoid Shakespeare's anti-Catholicism than there is to deny that George Orwell was against British Imperialism or that Virginia Woolf was a feminist.

[12] In *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, Peter Lake demonstrates this fluidity and scope in exhaustive detail. As noted above, while he provides a rich picture of the religio-cultural field in which popular writers like Shakespeare worked, Lake at times appears to be so entranced by his explanatory metaphors that he forgets to consider what the "appropriation" of religious discourse was for in particular cases. Thus, after over one hundred pages on the precise early-Stuart religious-historical background to *Measure for Measure*, Lake reduces Shakespeare's stage to a "playpen" and concludes that "the value of texts like Measure for Measure is that they show us Tudor and Stuart subjects confronting and playing with such potentially explosive issues precisely when they were not on their best behaviour"(694).

[13] For an excellent introduction to Recusant martyrology in Shakespeare's England, see Highley and King eds. *John Foxe and his World*, which contains articles on Verstegan, counter-Reformation visual arts, and literary responses to the story of Edmund Campion. By mentioning Verstegan, I have purposely raised what could be a serious objection to my argument, especially in light of the long-standing claim that Shakespeare harboured strong recusant sympathies. Because Shakespeare is rarely absolutely explicit about his sectarian commitments—the conflicts between Winchester and the Good Duke, Pandulph and King John, Wolsey and Cranmer being

obvious exceptions—it might be argued that Shakespeare is shadowing Verstegan as much as Foxe, and perhaps subversively dramatizing Protestant tyranny and Recusant pathos rather than orthodox Protestant values. It seems to me exactly right to argue that if Shakespeare was staging Foxean enormity, his plays would have been open to appropriation by other religious persuasions and perspectives. As Ian Green argues, one of the distinctive features of early modern Providentialism was that, while it clearly functioned as a "cement between 'godly' doctrine and popular culture," it was also a "shared frontier" with Roman Catholicism and Recusancy, and "looked and functioned differently according to where one was standing" (437-38). Thus, from a perspective shaped by the tyranny of Elizabethan religious conformity, Hermione and Leontes might well appear to mirror the trials of English Recusancy and the ex officio oath, rather than Foxe's "popish" Antichrist. What I would argue, however, is that the preponderance of the textual evidence suggests that this alternative reading is not Shakespeare's interpretation: Hermione and Paulina are "godly people" as much as Malvolio is a "stage puritan." And, while it is notoriously difficult to infer the views of the majority of Shakespeare's audience, I would argue that for Protestant playgoers who were both readers of Foxe and who took Shakespeare seriously, Shakespeare's scenes of enormity would have communicated their Foxean affiliations quite unmistakably. What I would argue, moreover, is that this potential ambiguity or duplicity inherent in Shakespeare's staging of enormity neither situates him in some transcendental cloud of impartiality, nor involves him in some notional "deconstruction" of Foxe's categories. In fact, in light of Foxe's well-known advocacy against his own government's violent persecution of Recusants, and more generally his compelling anatomy of the inherently evil nature of all persecution, the way that Shakespeare appears to speak on both sides of the confessional divide would seem decidedly Foxean.

[14] In "Richard II and the Wars of the Roses," which is still the best survey of the versions of the story that were available to Shakespeare, Margaret Aston identified the three defining characteristics of the "Tudor Myth": an exaggerated emphasis on the violence and chaos of the period, the tracing of its origins back to the reign of Richard II, and an emphasis on providence. Unfortunately, while she clearly recognized the importance and influence of Foxe's version of the 15th-century crisis in the late Elizabethan period, Aston somehow completely neglected Foxe's apocalyptic historical framework and hence misconstrued Foxe's view as an ecclesiastical version of Hall (291-300).

[15] Contrary to Frances Yates' well-known claims about Foxe and Elizabethan "imperial virgin" iconography, and contrary to a very common misconception, there is little or no triumphal Tudor propaganda in *Acts and Monuments*. Looking, in what might be called classic Warburgian fashion, only at the pictures, Yates perceptively noted that Foxe's political narrative was structured around a clash between illegitimate papal power and a distinctively imperial monarchical authority; she erred, however, in claiming that "right and justice [were] always on the side of the latter" and that "the story culminates in the throwing off of the papal power by the imperial majesty of Henry VIII"(68). *Acts and Monuments* clearly does not "culminate" in the reign of Henry VIII: Foxe credits Henry for severing the English church from Rome, as he praises all magisterial resistance to papal dominion, but this praise is completely undercut by the late-Henrician reaction: Henry is a persecutor, of Anne Askew and many others, and Foxe sends him to hell for it. Although she very effectively opened the question of Foxe's influence on Tudor imperial iconography, Yates misunderstood

Foxe's decidedly non-celebratory apocalyptic message. There is no "Tudor renovatio" in *Acts and Monuments* (70), just breathing room, and even this inevitably leads to backsliding.

[16] If there has been any recognition or acknowledgment of Foxe's distinctive version of Ricardian-Lancastrian history in the long history of criticism on Shakespeare's English chronicle plays, I have not been able to detect it.

## Chapter Three. Devil Without Horns?

> To think we are seeing anything like sober history in this play is *derisible naïvety*. What we are offered is a formally patterned sequence presenting two things: on the one hand, a rigid Tudor *schema* of retributive justice...and on the other, a huge triumphant stage-personality, an early old masterpiece of the art of rhetorical stage-writing, a monstrous being incredible in any sober, historical scheme of things—Richard himself.
>
> A.P. Rossiter

> It is a distinctive quality of Shakespeare's representation of reality that, though the physical and social world is tangible and real, it is at the same time subject to intrusion and redefinition from something the plays' characters experience as beyond the material....The individual events in *Richard III* are not simply events in themselves. They are subject to prophecy, prefiguration, and repetition. They fall within larger patterns of symbolic meaning.
>
> John Jowett

> The character of the devil in the English Mysteries is almost entirely serious. This peculiarity is due, not only to the nature of the devil-scenes, which are, in themselves, tragical, but also to the fact that the devil of the English stage is the creation, not of the people, but of theology....as long as this serious conception of the nature of the devil was retained, it was not possible to treat him satirically or humorously.
>
> L. W. Cushman

*

Near the beginning of Act Three in *Richard III*, the actor playing Richard turns to the audience and, in a celebrated and widely remarked-upon aside, explicitly identifies his character with the Morality Play Vice:

> I say, without characters fame lives long.
> [Aside.] Thus, like the formal Vice, Iniquity,
> I moralize two meanings in one word. (3.1.70-72)

Perhaps more than any other single critical concern, post-Tillyardian criticism of *Richard III* is distinguished by its insistence upon the imaginative impact of Shakespeare's artfully *metadramatic* conflation, here and elsewhere in the first tetralogy, of the historical Richard III with the Vice.[1] Just as typically, the attempt by modern critics to explain *how* Shakespeare's boldly metatheatrical characterization of

the Duke of Gloucester is actually designed to function in the play, to reconstruct how Richard's Vice-like stage presence would have both profoundly complicated and substantially contributed to Shakespeare's dramatization of the reign of Richard III, has been undermined by the workings of a paradigmatic habit of thought I have identified as "radical" Shakespeare. Exemplified by A.P. Rossiter's comments on Richard's "huge triumphant stage-personality," this "radical" response to Richard's character hinges on the assumption that the primary function or consequence of the Vice character's presence must be to liberate us and the play from the imaginative, moral, and intellectual constraints of Tudor Providentialism. As in Rossiter's famous "dialectical" reading of Richard as an "Angel with Horns," radical Shakespeare criticism consistently misses the point in insisting that, by virtue of his being monstrously "incredible in any sober, historical scheme of things," Richard's onstage presence inevitably reifies a kind of "radical" or dialectical alternative to (Tudor) History in the form of Theatricality.

In the following two chapters I want to argue that the post-Tillyardian emphasis on the formal or structural impact of Shakespeare's complex *metatheatrical* irony is itself entirely appropriate, but that in order to make any coherent historiographical sense of it, we have to begin by replacing the notion that Theatricality is somehow dialectically antithetical to History in the early plays. What is required instead, I will argue in this chapter, is something more like what John Jowett is getting at when he acknowledges that Shakespeare's staging does not work against historical realism, but to deepen or expand the history's mimetic range "beyond the material." Richard is, as Rossiter recognizes, a monstrous being, but he is not alone in this and, even more importantly, he is not at all "incredible" from a "sober" point of view. On the contrary, Shakespeare's metatheatrical irony intrudes

upon and redefines what is, historically speaking, profoundly *credible* in these plays. Richard is not an Angel with Horns; he is a real historical tyrant and, somehow, like the Vice, *our* real diabolical enemy. Identifying himself as the Vice, Shakespeare's Richard invites us to experience his character in terms of what we have called a troped or transfigured sense of rational wonder, so that while we remain rooted in material historical reality, Richard's astonishingly Vice-like villainy in effect turns Shakespeare's playhouse into a spectacular Theatre of Enormity. What is more, this invitation is, as I will attempt to demonstrate in the next chapter especially, governed or informed by a decisive intertextual engagement with Foxean history as well as, more obviously, theatrical tradition. This intertextual affiliation hinges on the presence of a similar Vice-like histrionic Enormity in Foxe and is, I will argue, at the heart of Shakespeare's discovery of the origins of apocalyptic modernity in the chaotic Wars of the Roses era depicted in the *2-3HenryVI—Richard III* sequence.

*

I have come, in other words, to praise Rossiter in this chapter, but I what I really need to do to is to bury him. A truly remarkable example of the conservatism of post-Tillyardian orthopraxis, A.P. Rossiter's ideas about "dialectical unity" have had a profoundly limiting influence on criticism of *Richard III.* This influence is best understood in terms of a familiar cliché: there is good news and bad news. The good news, first, is Rossiter's discovery of the Vice, a complex metatheatrical trope that Shakespeare derived from morality drama in order to characterize Richard Duke of Gloucester and, beyond that, to create a kind of unifying metatheatrical structure for his dramatization of the Wars of the Roses. While Rossiter was not the first commentator to recognize Richard's Vice-like attributes, he was the first critic to grasp the extent to which Shakespeare's metatheatrical metaphor anchors a unified

dramatic *structure* which in turn produces a kind of overall dramatic *effect* or impression on the audience. Although this claim, like all claims about unifying structure in Shakespeare, is debatable, it seems to me that by emphasizing the Vice metaphor's structural function, Rossiter identified the key to unlocking the combination of theatrical and historical thinking behind Shakespeare's dramatization of Richard's reign and the Wars of the Roses era. This is an illustration of the value of formal analysis for Shakespearean historiography: we need to see the dramatic structure which, by design, coalesces around the Vice in order fully to grasp Shakespeare's historical argument. The bad news, however, is that in discovering the Vice, Rossiter adamantly refused to consider what it was doing—*qua* history—in Shakespeare's plays. That is, combining a radically ahistorical aesthetic with a pronounced animosity towards Christian providentialism (or, more accurately, towards the spectre of dogma, or moral or intellectual orthodoxy, in all forms), Rossiter turned Shakespeare's Vice-like Richard into a resplendent embodiment of the freedom of Art by outlawing the historiographically necessary idea that Shakespeare's dramaturgy was rooted in the providential historical thought of his day.

This news is bad not so much because Rossiter himself had no interest in Elizabethan historical thought, but because, while it has rejected Rossiter's radically ahistorical aesthetic ideas, subsequent post-Tillyardian scholarship has remained faithfully wedded to his basic conception of the function of the Vice. Opting to *historicize* Rossiter, rather than *think historically* about the Vice's function, subsequent criticism has set up camp in a kind of historiographical nowhere-land, so that, ironically, Rossiter's ahistorical reading has not only been conscripted into the service of the kind of literary historical inquiry it was designed to defeat, but has also become a bastion for precisely the kind of orthodox thinking which he found so

uncongenial. Moreover, as a result of this canonization of Rossiter's dialectic, one of the most exigent questions raised by the discovery of the Vice has never been seriously considered. That is: what is the serious *historiographical* purpose behind Shakespeare's use of this strikingly over-determined metatheatrical metaphor in the Wars of the Roses sequence? Reducing all serious historiographical interest in *Richard III* to "derisible naivety," Rossiter obliterates this fundamental critical question—basically rendering it a *non*-question—and, bizarrely, subsequent scholarship has embraced his absurdly prescriptive thinking instead of developing other, more historiographically cogent, ways of exploring the Vice's function.

Banishing serious history by fiat, Rossiter defines Richard's Vice-like identity as essentially anti-historical—at least insofar as doing history involves motives other than the creation of timeless poetical antitheses. Rejecting in particular the suggestion that Richard's character embodies divine retribution or any other "rigid" moral "*schema*," Rossiter views Richard as an "angel with horns," a "triumphant" figure of pure artistic paradox who is irreducible to the tyrannous serial murderer and royal *failure* of the chronicles because he has in effect no positive historiographical identity, no serious historical function or meaning, at all. Richard's role is solely to produce the dialectical negation of any and all "sober" historical motives. Identifying true art—and the critic's "full awareness" of it—with aleatory structures of paradox, Rossiter argues that the weight of orthodox providential history demanded that Shakespeare produce a countervailing "*artist* in evil," and that Shakespeare found the basis for this necessary fallen angel in the morality play Vice:

> It is this unholy jocularity, the readiness of sarcastic, sardonic, profane and sometimes blasphemous wit, the demonic gusto of it all, which not only wins the audience over to accepting the Devil as hero, but also points towards the central paradox of the play. And, through that to a full critical awareness of its unity.... (20)

Thus, thinking about Richard as a Vice-like character is reduced, in Rossiter's dialectic, to the single critical act of recognizing—again with that hyper-percipient full awareness which escapes literary historians and other groundlings—an "overall system of paradox" which is "built above all by Richard's demonic appeal." Richard's purely structural function in this unity is to be the "inverter of moral order" and the "antithesis of Christian sentiment." And because of this, Rossiter avers, "the naïve, optimistic, 'Christian' principle of history, consoling and comfortable, modulates" in Shakespeare's hands, "into its opposite" (21-2).

Although he labels this antipodal end-product "comic *history*," Rossiter does not in fact construe the modal transformation supposedly governed by Richard's Vice-like presence as a shift from one *type* of serious history to another, more modern or secular, kind. Rather, for Rossiter Richard's demonic virtuosity effectively removes the play from the field of *actual* historiography altogether. More musical structure than narrative argument or mimesis, Rossiter's *Richard III* is a history play in name only—it is in fact a lyric poem in the guise of a chronicle play. Rossiter's thinking about *Richard III* is therefore as fundamentally ahistorical as it is thoroughly anti-historiographical. Like Stanley Cavell, Rossiter alludes to a historical context, but does so in a way that is entirely gestural. Rossiter notes, for instance, that Shakespeare "wrote in an *unstable equilibrium* between a 'World' or 'Universe-of-thought' of faith in God-ordainedness, and another…the Inverted World of belief only in Power"(59; my emphasis). While this curious oxymoron—what is an equilibrium if not stable?—appears to be a description of a transitional historical moment, and therefore an effort to place Shakespeare's putative rejection of providential history within a recognizably historical process, what Rossiter wants, rather, is to situate Shakespeare in an essentially timeless zone between medievalism and modernity, and he does so

because he is determined to see Shakespeare's dialectical portrayal of Richard as a function of the timelessly radical "rule" of art, and not the product of a particular historical moment. Shakespeare is not, he says (sounding a lot like Philip Sidney and Phyllis Rackin), "debunking" or "disproving" the Tudor Myth, because "he is not 'proving' anything" (22): "He is not," Rossiter insists, "tied to his age" (62).[2]

Radically unconstrained by either history or historiography, Rossiter's reading of *Richard III* is more a figment of post-Romantic enthusiasm, of the belief that all truth is subversive, and a creature of theory, the New Critic's identification of Art with structural aporia, than it is the product of a judicious reading of Shakespeare's character or the sequence of chronicle plays in which he figures so largely. For instance, while Richard's Vice-like identity no doubt includes a kind of insinuating verbal alacrity and power, he rarely if ever succeeds by virtue of brilliant deceit. Richard of course *claims* that he can "set the murderous Machiavel to school," but his stratagems are consistently presented as "palpable devices" which fool nobody other than children and the culpably credulous. Rossiter ignores this ironic perspective on Richard's theatrical *virtu* and, moreover, fails to notice the extent to which it links Richard with other, also less-than-consummate metadramatic figures such as Simpcox, Jack Cade, and Queen Margaret—and Falstaff. Richard loves play-acting, to be sure, but it does not follow that the play is a "drama of *consummate* acting" (18, my emphasis). Rather, what Shakespeare shows us over and over again in these plays are *bad actors acting badly.* Descanting on his own deformity, Richard entertains and deludes himself, but it is Shakespeare, the serious historical dramatist whose artistry frames Richard's histrionic antics, who entertains and instructs us. *Pace* Rossiter, it is no more true of *Richard III* that the audience is won over "to accepting the Devil as hero" than it is to say, with Blake, that true poets must be members of the Devil's

party, and that Satan "triumphs" in and is the hero of *Paradise Lost*. The reason for this, lost in the confusion between dramatist and character, is that Shakespeare's bloody tyrant is a preposterous actor, not our Hero and not an Artist.

Rossiter's dialectical reading of Richard as a transcendent "Angel with Horns" is important and influential, and thus worth revisiting with real scrutiny. Rossiter was right to insist that much of what is dramatically engaging and significant in the early chronicle plays is a product of Shakespeare's complex reflections on the relationship between history and "histrionic art," and to recognize that Richard's Vice-like character is a theatrical embodiment of these complex reflections which anchors a distinctive metatheatrical structure of meaning. However, as an interpretation of what Shakespeare was actually saying about Richard and the Wars of the Roses era, Rossiter's argument is inadequate. In addition to failing to note that Shakespeare's metatheatrical irony extends beyond the portrayal of Richard in *Richard III*, Rossiter ruins his insight by refusing to countenance any intercourse between Shakespeare's dramaturgy and the providential historical culture of his day—and any middle ground between Art and Propaganda. As a result, Rossiter divests the plays of all contemporary historiographical significance: only "full awareness" will do, and committed Providentialists, original audiences, literary historians, and other sober-minded naïfs simply do not get it.

Shakespeare's characterization of Richard as a demonic Vice-King is undoubtedly fundamental to the sequence's capacity to generate an overall historical effect or impression, one which hinges on the way scenes of tyranny and violence are continuously suffused with intimations of Vice-like playing or play-acting. It hardly follows, however, that Shakespeare regarded this metatheatricality simply or even primarily as an embodiment of his own art and profession. Similarly, the idea that

Richard's Vice-like presence in the plays, that simultaneously energized and vitiated juvenile delinquency which Rossiter tries to pass off as "deep political penetration"(59), somehow inevitably indicates Shakespeare's desire to abrogate "sober" providential history cannot withstand real scrutiny. Take away the dogmatic claim that providential historical thought is by nature an optimistic ideology that appeals only to repressive authorities and simpletons—and thus that it is inimical to Art—and the substance of his argument vanishes: the putatively dialectical opposition between providential "frame" and subversive "truth" is a house of cards, a groundless predication which has no purchase either on a Renaissance historical culture in which artists consistently asserted God's dominion, or on Shakespeare's texts, which continuously perform similar providential convictions. What needs to be recognized, moreover, is that by rendering Shakespeare's art "dialectical," Rossiter banishes the possibility that Shakespeare's metatheatrical irony and his sober Providentialism might be correlative, inter-illuminating components of one seriously religious and politically sophisticated historical argument. What is more, Rossiter never considers that Shakespeare's historical art might be structured in terms of a very different dialectic, one in which a serious and sophisticated providential frame contains and exposes the enormity of the plays' histrionically antic villains. Rossiter gives us a way of thinking about the Vice's role in these plays, but it is one which—by design—can tell us nothing about the historiographical motives informing Shakespeare's brilliantly metatheatrical portrayal of Richard and the Wars of the Roses.

*

It is not news that Rossiter was a post-Tillyardian New Critic, nor is it particularly surprising to discover that he responded violently to Tillyard by turning Shakespeare's providentialism into a straw-man for the timelessly radical ambiguity

which is, he says, Shakespeare's "true genre." What is remarkable, however, is the extent to which Rossiter's thinking has canalized subsequent criticism dealing with Richard's character and with the larger meaning and function of the metatheatrical element within the early history plays. Simply put, Rossiter's once-vigorously far-fetched "Angel with Horns" thesis has been transformed over time into a kind of pseudo-historical orthodoxy, one which has militated against a more focused literary critical consideration of the historiographical function of Shakespeare's metatheatricality in this sequence. While it has continued to focus on the Vice's role, post-Tillyardian criticism has done little more than to reiterate and revamp Rossiter's ahistorical and anti-historiographical "dialectic," and as a result one of the most important components of Shakespeare's early historical dramaturgy has largely disappeared as an object of critical scrutiny. To see this we need look no further than the two most important subsequent studies of the Vice in Shakespeare, Bernard Spivack's *Shakespeare Allegory of Evil* and Robert Weimann's *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition*. Although they present very different narratives, Weimann and Spivack both replicate Rossiter's reading as history by embedding his dialectical structure in an explanatory historical process or context. Thus, whereas Spivack argues that the Vice evolved from homiletic origins to become a distinctly amoral theatrical property, and Weimann counters that the origins and function of the Vice metaphor must be seen in terms of the enduringly secular "social dimension" of a "popular tradition" of histrionic playing, both arrive at virtually the same point: Rossiter's idea that the function of Richard's character is to sabotage "sober" providential historical meaning.

While it is more recent, Weimann's argument is actually the older of the two positions. Revising, in the light of Marxist aesthetics, E.K. Chambers' claim that the

Vice developed from popular clowns and jesters, Weimann charts the transformation of the English stage from what he refers to rather vaguely as its "pre-feudal" origins to Shakespeare, an ideal craftsman/artist whose capaciously inclusive social dimension represents the apotheosis of the "popular tradition" in the theatre, and the melancholy twilight of pre-modern, pre-bourgeois social cohesiveness.[3] Accordingly, Weimann argues that the figure of the morality play Vice derived its essence and vitality from a "popular" theatrical mode, and was only secondarily homiletic or humanistic. Nothing if not complex, Weimann's Vice is "an ambiguous affair" which is internally divided between the expressive social dimensions of *locus* and *platea*, with the former understood as the nexus of seriously representational or illusionistic dramaturgy, the apparatus, apparently, of aristocrats, priests, and other ideological authorities, and the latter the center of its dialectical opposite, the subversive play, heterodoxy, and non-representational or self-embodying mode of popular—meaning both plebian and, for the philosophical Marxist, "real"—theatricality (151-60). While he very carefully stresses the multivalent and transitional nature of the Vice, Weimann defines the figure in terms of its essentially sportive, demotic, and popularly subversive, dimension:

> The unique relationship between the Vice's jolly Christmas or Shrovetide spirit and the audience's festive mood was reflected in the *platea*-like position that the Vice assumed on the stage....The Vice criticizes from the audience's point of view...his is the standard of values associated with the *platea* as against the quite different claims of a *locus*-oriented Virtue. Thus the relationship between Vice actor and audience does not operate at the level of moral fiction or dramatic illusion, but exists rather on the very boards of the stage; for the Vice stands, as champion of "sporte" and game, between the fiction of the moral action and the audience's festive expectations. (152-3)

It is this festively nonrepresentational champion, Weimann says, that Shakespeare inherited and whose dynamic onstage presence gives Richard his distinctive character.

While Weimann carefully avoids simply casting Richard as the audience's plebeian Christmas buddy, and indeed firmly acknowledges the extent to which Richard's "place" is the play's seriously representational *locus*, he argues nevertheless that Richard's Vice-like identity—"the punning, self-expressive ambidexter directing, in continuous contact with the audience, his own murderous rise to the throne"(159)—persists in a way which defines not only his character but also the *structure* (Weimann's word) of the play:

> Thus, the Vice's heir, in ironically abdicating his traditional responsibility to provide "sportive tricks," reassumes it on a tragic scale....The ancient freedom of topsy-turveydom has, finally, become the modern passion of self-destruction. But this, most important of all, marks the point of departure for modern tragedy...it is not the *Schiksalsdrama*, not the inscrutable workings of the gods, that finally tips the scales of life and death but the *Charakterdrama* of an individual passion and a self-willed personality "determined to prove a villain." (160)

Although it is a familiar one, this is an odd conclusion for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that Weimann's claim about Richard as a "point of departure" for modern tragic isolation would seem to have nothing to do with his original question. That is, while it might be perfectly reasonable to place Richard near the beginning of the long-term development of modern tragic characterization, such retrospective considerations can hardly account for the play's "social dimension" in the early 1590s. Leaping, like Rossiter, from pre-feudal to modern, Weimann tells us little about the impression Shakespeare's Richard might have made on Elizabethan audiences who came to the theatre to watch a chronicle play about an infamous historical tyrant from the Wars of Roses era, and who were confronted with a spectacularly refurbished stage devil. Weimann's reading of Richard as a "tragic" figure can be usefully contrasted with the L.W. Cushman's comments quoted above. While Weimann's incipient modern tragic isolation may help to explain why Richard

looks the way he does to us, or what modern theatre professionals have made of him, it has less real purchase on Shakespeare or his audience; Cushman's point about the relationship between theology, tragic pathos, and the limits of humour, on the other hand, would seem to be invaluable if we want to understand what Shakespeare was doing when he superimposed the Vice's diabolic character onto Richard.

Having arrived at one of the central questions raised by his book— how to understand, historically, the impact of Shakespeare's enigmatic portrayal of Richard as a demonic vice-King, denizen at once of *locus* and *platea*—Weimann abandons his materialist perspective in favour of what looks like a purely formalist abstraction. This is *perhaps* harsh, but what is clear here is the operation of the paradigmatic assumption that Shakespeare's Art excludes the possibility of providential history. Like Rossiter, Weimann is adamant that *Richard III* "is not the *Schiksalsdrama*," but nothing in his account of the "social dimension" of the play supports this rejection. We do need to understand the carnivalesque element in Shakespeare metatheatrical metaphor, especially when trying to understand how Richard's Vice-like character is connected, as *theme* and *intertext*, with earlier affiliated figures like Cade and Dick the Butcher. This carnivalesque element needs to be understood, however, as part of Shakespeare's providential argument, not as an expression of its impossibly pre-feudal /proto-modern antithesis.

In insisting on the "popular" provenance of the Vice, Weimann was taking aim at Bernard Spivack's earlier study, which had set out to show how a moralized theatrical metaphor derived from Christian eschatology came to function in a whole series of amorally villainous Shakespeare characters, "Iago's family." Adopting a baroque mixture of explanatory metaphors drawn from the natural sciences, Spivack charts the "life" of the Vice figure in terms of a process of pseudo-evolution whereby

allegorical figures from the Psychomachia tradition first entered the drama (birth), became the Vice, the central religious/moral property in the tradition of the Morality play (middle age), and then, under the impetus of the "secular revolution" of the Renaissance, evolved into a purely theatrical metaphor, a still-powerful stage presence, but one which was no longer vitally linked to its original, or any other, religious allegorical meaning (dotage). It is the dynamic presence of this decadent, fundamentally amoral, figure, Spivack argues, which defines Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard, transforming him from a denizen of orthodox moral history into a purely theatrical creature and the history play into something no longer historical.

Amassing a wealth of details from the morality plays which demonstrate the morally serious, homiletic function of the Vice at its "height," and which link Shakespearean characters such as Aaron, Richard, Don John, and Iago with this traditional figure, Spivack's study effectively dispelled any doubt that Shakespeare used the Vice as a template for Richard's character. Unfortunately, like Rossiter and Weimann, Spivack fails seriously to consider the metaphor's historiographical function. While he does not mention Rossiter, and while his argument lacks an informing aesthetic theory, Spivack reproduces Rossiter's dialectical structure, arguing that once the Richard character has been "invaded" by the Vice, he can no longer be construed as an "intelligible" historical character and, consequently, that any suggestion of serious moral history is "abrogated." As a result, Spivack has nothing to say about the relationship between the Vice and the chronicle play as a historical genre, other than to intimate that there can be nothing to say. Noting that "the play does not do violence to the early historical estimate of Richard's character," Spivack nonetheless argues that "from time to time it has recourse to a dramatic

method that has no relevance to either history or character, imitates neither, and in fact, abrogates both":

> For the playwright not only follows history, he *dramatizes* it for the theater; and he does so by the techniques native to his stage and unerring in popular effect. The portrait of Richard in the chronicles, with its emphasis on his guile and depravity, invites and gets a dramatization in several notable scenes that reproduce once more the pungent *theatrical* image with which homiletic allegory endowed the popular stage. Shakespeare's rendition of Richard's character does not recast the historical figure, but from time to time it abrogates him entirely. It abrogates him because it applies to him the method of a performance designed originally for a timeless personification in a staged homily, not for a literal person in the moral dimension of history. (388, 393)

Although it is easy to concur with the claim that Shakespeare was dramatizing history, it is very difficult to see what kind of artistic process Spivack is actually describing here. In addition to the weirdly virus-like way the Vice character supposedly invades Shakespeare's play, the idea that Shakespeare can somehow "abrogate" history without "doing violence" to it seems impossible to credit. While it is reasonable to assume that Shakespeare's chronicle histories were designed to be popular and entertaining, and indeed that the creation of an expressly theatrical kind of experience was fundamental to Shakespeare's recourse to the Vice metaphor, it simply does not follow that Shakespeare's goal was to produce some putatively pure theatrical experience which is by definition devoid of serious historical meaning. Spivack does not exactly say this, of course, but how else are we to explain the idea that Shakespeare brought in the Vice to "abrogate" history? Why else would he vandalize his own play in this way? Since he does not explain it, it is impossible to say what, if anything, Spivack actually means by this odd image of Shakespeare carefully and judiciously constructing a serious moral history based on his chronicle sources only to spoil it "from time to time" with Richard's "larger than life" character. What is clear, however, is that once again thanks to Rossiter's dialectical reasoning the possibility

that the Vice metaphor *had some serious moral historical function of its own* is excluded before it is even considered.

Following Rossiter, both Weimann and Spivack vigorously maintain that the Vice's primary function is to deconstruct providential or moral history. The result of this recycling is not, however, merely stasis: by embedding Rossiter's dialectic within historical, or rather pseudo-historical, narratives, these critics add a measure of specious historical authority to what were once patently a-historical claims. And, it is precisely in this nowhere-land between formalist aesthetics and pseudo-historical argument that post-Tillyardian criticism has rested its case about the Vice. A telling recent example of how commonplace Rossiter's dialectic has become can be found in the Introduction to Janice Lull's 1999 New Cambridge edition of *Richard III.*[4] Marching along with Weimann and Spivack, Lull argues that Shakespeare uses "curses and prophecies" and other "invocations of providence" in *Richard III* as a way of "reminding the audience that human events may be viewed...as manifestations in time of the timeless divine will." She quickly adds, however, that

> the play presents the issue of historical determinism—inseparable in Shakespeare's time from issues of religion—not as an assertion, but as one side of an argument. On the other side stands Richard himself, representing a secular theory of history that finds the causes of human events in individual actions rather than in providential will. Richard is both a stage 'Machiavel' and a personification of the Machiavellian view of history as power politics. (7)

Although we have moved slightly here from an explicit Theatrical Art-versus-History model to one in which "radical" history is pitted against orthodox providentialism and determinism, Lull follows Rossiter in assuming that the play's argumentative structure is a "dialectical" one anchored entirely in Richard's seriocomic and Vice-like identity. And, albeit without any of Weimann's cautious qualifications, Lull follows Weimann in assuming that this dialectical structure places Richard "on

another plane" from the play's ostensibly providential frame and in finding this structure embodied in Richard's line—"I am determinèd to prove a villain"—a Vice-like comment to the audience which at once alludes to the play's pseudo-serious providential "frame" even as it treats it as a "joke" (8):

> the divine determinism at work in *Richard III* does not seem to be the 'special providence' that arranges each event in human history; God does not necessarily contrive or even notice the fall of every sparrow....The providence of *Richard III* is rather the grand design of human salvation and damnation... the fate of the human soul—in this case Richard's. He is in this sense a tragic hero, opposing the will of the universe with his own, 'all the world to nothing'. (8-9)

While her reading of *Richard III* as a kind of protomodern tragic Psychomachia, in which Richard plays both Vice (determinism) and Virtue (radical history) in a battle for his own "soul" is perhaps too idiosyncratic to be labeled orthodox, what is typical here is the unexamined assumption that Richard's role as Vice subverts providentialism, and that this dialectical structure is at the heart of the play's inevitably subversive engagement with non-radical contemporary historical writing.

What is particularly striking here, in other words, is the extent to which dressing up Rossiter's model with vague assertions about Machiavellian history has come to take the place of a historiographically informed approach to this play. Lull's Rackin-like suggestion that intimations of providence in *Richard III* are "one side of an argument" but somehow "not an assertion"(7), reproduces Rossiter's anti-providential and ahistorical biases as if they were self-evident historiographical realities. While this kind of assertion has become so familiar that it escapes critical scrutiny, this conception fails to come to grips with the phenomenon of Tudor Providentialism, and with the prospect of representing it on stage in a cultural context in which providential agency was understood an inescapable reality. That is, to reduce providence to "not an assertion" is to translate it into something other than a firmly

held conviction and belief, which is what it was for Shakespeare and his audience, and thus to create a straw-man without any real weight or meaning. While she might appear to be judiciously acknowledging the onus of Shakespeare's providentialism, Lull is in fact reproducing Rossiter's dismissal of all providential thought as "too doctrinaire and narrowly moral for Shakespeare's mind"(59). Similarly, while she gestures towards the specific historical culture in which Shakespeare worked, Lull's allusion to the "secular theory of history that finds the causes of human events in individual actions *rather than* in providential will" is irrelevant. This is not because Machiavelli had no influence on contemporary historical thought, but because, as historians from Tillyard and Campbell to Woolf have demonstrated, his influence did not produce a "secular theory of history," or indeed anything like the dichotomous opposition between secular and providential history which Lull, determinèd to prove Richard dialectical, takes for granted.

Lull's Introduction exemplifies the way in which Rossiter's timeless zone of poetic freedom has come to be viewed as the historically determining or "material" historiographical context of Shakespeare's plays. Where it has taken-up Rossiter's discovery of the Vice in *Richard III,* post-Tillyardian criticism has run entirely in one direction, maintaining that Shakespeare's metatheatricality inevitably subverts, undermines, abrogates, or deconstructs providence. While subsequent critics have *historicized* Rossiter, adding layer after layer of varnish to the original claim, the fact remains that there has never been any basis for assuming that Shakespeare's structure of metatheatrical metaphors in *2-3HenryVI* and *Richard III* was not consistent with a "sober" religious historical interpretation of this era.

Setting Rossiter's Angel with Horns aside in favour of a fresh consideration of Shakespeare's metatheatricality, and building upon the idea that Shakespeare's

Theatre of Enormity works intertextually, by deploying the intrinsically riddling or "ungrammatical" nature of theatrical wonder to provoke serious interpretation and to generate complex historical meanings, I want to suggest that Shakespeare does use metatheatrical metaphors in *2-3HenryVI* and *Richard III* to complicate the otherwise realistic surface narrative of the plays. He does this, however, not to deconstruct or otherwise "abrogate" providential history, but rather to do providential history in his own effectively theatrical and seriously religious historical manner. At the heart of this argument is the intertextual connection between, on one hand, Shakespeare's representation of historical violence and tyranny as a species of demonic theatricality, and, on the other, Foxe's use of the same basic metaphorical association in *Acts and Monuments*. Starting with the obvious, that as Vice-King Richard is both a man and a stage devil, I will argue in the following chapter that Shakespeare engages the Foxeian intertext in these plays in order to cast the serial representations of villainy which make up the bulk of the action in the light of Foxe's apocalyptic reading of the meaning of the Civil War era in English history. These scenes of Vice-like violence and tyranny reveal one of those powerfully significant "larger patterns of symbolic meaning" which, as John Jowett perceptively notes, it was a "distinctive quality of Shakespeare's representation of reality" to reify on the stage (44). Shakespeare makes the distinctively *apocalyptic* historical import of this symbolism explicit when, looking back on the action represented in these plays from the vantage point of *Richard II*, he has Bishop Carlisle prophecy that England will become a "field of Golgotha." Simply put, the apocalyptic vision of England's future which is represented as true *prophecy* in *Richard II* had already been realized on stage as *history* in these earlier plays. Playing devils, and stage-managing grotesque "scenes of death," Shakespeare's vice-like villains enable him to transform the stage into a

powerful mirror of the apocalyptic realities shaping England's past, present, and future.

*

Before turning to these intertextually resonant scenes of death, however, I would like to conclude this chapter by revisiting the episode from Act Three of *Richard III* with which we began. What I want to show, very briefly, is how setting aside "radical Shakespeare" allows the distinctive theatrical and historiographical richness of Shakespeare's dramaturgy to re-emerge in its own light, so to speak. Richard, we noted, steps forward to declare that he is the Vice; the episode begins, however, with the young Prince Edward stepping forward and making an arresting assertion of his own:

> *Prince.* I do not like that Tower, of any place.
> Did Julius Caesar build that place, my Lord?
> *Buck.* He did, my gracious lord, begin that place,
> Which, succeeding ages have re-edified.
> *Prince.* Is it upon record, or else reported
> Successively from age to age, he built it?
> *Buck.* Upon record, my gracious lord.
> *Prince.* But say, my lord, it were not regist'red,
> Methinks the truth should live from age to age,
> As 'twere retail'd to all posterity,
> Even to the general all ending day. (3.1. 68-78)

While we gather that Richard hates and wants to destroy Edward because the young Prince stands in his path to the throne, as Richard's Vice-like asides makes clear, it is the Prince's precocious sententiousness that most irritates him. This rankling effect contributes, of course, to Shakespeare's strategic representation of Richard in the guise of the Vice:

> *Glou.* [aside] So wise and so young, they say do
> never live long.
> *Prince.* What say you, uncle?
> *Glou.* I say, without characters fame lives long.
> [Aside.] Thus, like the formal Vice, Iniquity,

I moralize two meanings in one word.

Edward does not hear Richard's aside, but as we reflect upon Richard's histrionic "genius," we hear Edward's resonant and ironically relevant point about true "wit":

> *Prince.* That Julius Caesar was a famous man;
> With what his valour did increase his wit,
> His wit set down to make his valure [sic] live.
> Death makes no conquest of this conqueror,
> For now he lives in fame though not in life. (3.1.79-88)

This confrontation between "prodigies" is, as I have been arguing along with Rossiter, one of those peculiarly over-determined moments in Shakespeare in which our sense of the significance of the action seems to outweigh its narrative consequence. But what exactly is happening here?

Because Shakespeare ostensibly pits Edward's "sober" history lesson against Richard's "triumphant" theatricality, this brief encounter might seem to confirm Rossiter's dialectic. However, while there is a kind of logic to the Rossiterian assumption that Richard, in stepping forward as the Vice, *stands for* Shakespearean theatricality *per se*, this reading fails to convince because Richard is not, in fact, the only Morality Play figure in this scene. As L.W. Cushman demonstrated long ago, the fundamental attribute of the Vice is his implacably diabolical hatred of the Good, and the Good, like the Vice, is a venerable stage presence:

> The Vice as enemy: *The object of the Vice's persistent hatred* is the allegorical representation of the Good. This character, the Vice's counterpart, named Reason, Pity, Mercy, Conscience is an honorable exalted personage, dressed usually in a long cloak and wearing a long flowing beard. The animosity of the Vice towards this person finds expression in slander, mockery, threats, and abuses of all sorts, including bodily assaults....Other objects of the Vice's enmity, besides Reason, Mercy, and the like, are the church and various social institutions and customs, and moral ideals, especially temperance, industry, piety. (77)

Although the difference between Shakespeare's brilliantly realized *minor* character and Cushman's allegorically robed and bearded Old Man is, as we will see, an exigent one, it is crucial to recognize that Prince Edward also steps forward here in a transfigured, *metatheatrical* light: he becomes this *honorable* and *exalted* personage. He remains the *famous* historical Prince of Wales, but his other name, so to speak, is History.

And History surely does not come across here as a credulous dupe or a foil for the superior insight of Theatricality. Rather, striking a balance between a piously providential, indeed apocalyptic, sense of history, a sensibility which is itself touched with a hint of inspired or prophetic insight, and a more typically "secular" humanist emphasis on history as a guarantor of Fame, and concerned, similarly, with balancing the competing claims of popular or oral and elite or written modes of historical testimony, the young Prince at this moment seems to embody something like Shakespeare's ideal historiographical attitude.[5] Where Richard sees a precocious brat, what Shakespeare expects his audience to recognize is that the Prince's broad-minded and sophisticated *historiographical* intelligence, a percipience which, as Richard makes us keenly aware, is even more remarkable in so young a man, is something like a personification of the excellence of History *per se.* What is more, the dramatically ironic point Shakespeare is making here is that Richard's vaunted wit—he claims to be superior to Machiavelli—is a kind of stage-devilish parody of Edward's mature historical intelligence. *Qua* Vice, Richard is a kind of clown; in history, the Duke of Gloucester is an idiotic brute who fails to have any grasp of history, oral or written, popular or elite. Not only does Richard mangle his sentence—a sure sign of a rote learner *and* of the Vice—he is so single-mindedly, so *witlessly*, bent on the destruction of this percipient and sensitive young man that he fails to grasp the

Prince's point about Fame. As History proclaims, Julius Caesar is *famous* both because he was a virtuous man and because he was a "perfect" historian who inscribed his virtue into the indelible historical record. Edward does the same thing, here, and he lives on, likewise, in Shakespeare's play. Richard, by the same token, is a vicious buffoon whose inane striving will lead, inexorably, to nothing but death and *infamy*.

What comes across as profoundly vulgar here, in other words, is not oral or popular history, which the young Prince defends against Buckingham's more narrow elitism, but the spectacular Enormity adumbrated by the usurper's ignorance of and antipathy towards history. Richard does come across as an "anti-historian" in this scene, but this is because Shakespeare wants us to witness the spectacular intellectual and cultural degeneracy that goes along with Richard's physical and moral degeneracy and his tyranny. *Qua* Vice, Richard stands not for the Theatre, but for a diabolically destructive and ignorant hatred of learning: Richard hates and wants to destroy Edward because Edward stands for History, and History, like Reason, Pity, Mercy, and Conscience, is Good. It is Richard, in other words, not Shakespeare, who finds "sober history" to be derisibly naïve—and the joke is on him. Assuming we want to be alive to the real implications of Shakespeare's metatheatrical irony, Shakespeare's point surely must be that, while Richard III can usurp the kingdom, and can murder a defenseless young man, the Vice cannot usurp the stage or escape the inevitable revelations of History. Richard tries to turn England into a demonic playpen, but, while horrible, his triumphs are pyrrhic and short-lived. By the same token, to grasp the episode's metadramatic resonances, we have to acknowledge, with Cushman, that the Vice's relations with his victims are "tragical" in the full affective and theological senses of that term. Shakespeare not only asserts that History—*lux*

*veritas*—is Good, he horrifies us with the prospect of its destruction at the hands of this demonic man-child. While it may be true, as Rossiter puts it, that Richard's "practical jokes" generate "roars of laughter," this response hardly seems adequate to Shakespeare's double-vision of the tragic confrontation between the Vice and History, murderous tyrant and brilliant doomed youth. Rossiter urges that "we meet the fools to be taken in on Richard's terms, see them with his mind, and rejoice with him in their stultification" (15-16), but this way of thinking fails, it seems to me, entirely to acknowledge the theological significance and the pathos of Shakespeare's scene: it makes no more sense to talk about our enjoyment of the "stultification" of Edward than it does to talk about the pleasure we take in Lady Anne's capitulation or the murder of Clarence.

As Edward's sober reflections on the Tower should have made much more palpably clear, Richard III's Vice-like character is anything but *liberating*. The impressive dialectical collision Shakespeare stages in this brief scene is not between History and Theatricality, but rather between History, which is conceived of in robustly Christian Humanist terms as a fundamental Good, and its antithesis, a profoundly *anti-Christian* ignorance and hatred of, and destructive antipathy towards, the *lux veritas*. Showing virtue her feature and scorn her own image, Shakespeare superimposes the figures of the Vice and his allegorical counterpart onto this historically realistic characterization of an infamous tyrant and his victim in order to probe more deeply, and in a way which combines the insights of theatrical tradition with chronicle history, into what Hamlet calls the "form and pressure" of this important era in English history. As I noted earlier, this interpretation involves seeing Richard's brutal rise to power, and the Vice's pseudo-Triumph over History, in terms of Foxe's apocalyptic conception of historical modernity. Turning from Rossiter to

Foxe, I want to conclude my brief reading of this episode by noting that, while there is, as I acknowledged earlier, a kind of rationale for aligning Richard's vicious clownage with the real genius of the play, and while I want to affirm that Shakespeare's affinity with this dangerous figure is a crucial aspect of what might be called Shakespeare's theatrical autonomy, it seems to me considerably more illuminating to note, for once, the similarities between Shakespeare and Edward, and between Edward and the Protestant historian Foxe.

Like the Prince, Shakespeare was a precocious young man who was deeply committed to History; like the Prince's speech, Shakespeare's chronicle plays were a precociously new and serious kind of historical writing, one which had, at the time Shakespeare was writing *Richard III*, provoked the scorn and antipathy of some of his more established contemporaries. Moreover, as critics have endlessly noted about *Richard II*, this combination of precocity and historiographical seriousness could, in fact, lead to the Tower. What is more, there is distinct similarity between Edward's expressly *inclusive* attitude toward the different kinds of historical testimony and Shakespeare's historical art. Like Edward's multi-voiced record, Shakespeare's plays involve an inter-illuminating combination of written and oral testimony and are, likewise, an inclusive form which incorporates both popular and elite ways of remembering the past. And, just as Edward's metadramatic character is strikingly both new and old, Shakespeare's play is part of the Elizabethan *avant garde* and, by virtue of its connections with the Morality play tradition, ostensibly "old school." Indeed, it does not seem too much of a stretch to say that, in watching the early history plays, Shakespeare's audiences would have been able, in effect, to see young Shakespeare, like young Prince Edward, boldly wrapping himself in the mantle of L. W. Cushman's History.

At the same time, and quite strikingly it seems to me, Edward's distinctive stage presence as a precocious youth and a victim of tyranny written, so to speak, over the palimpsest of the allegorical personage History, the venerably bearded old man in robes, resonates powerfully with what might be called the distinctive social presence of Foxe and Foxean history in late-Elizabethan England. Very simply, if there was a single venerable old man who embodied in life the allegorical personage described by Cushman—as the persistent object of the enmity of the Vice known as Popery—it was John Foxe. And, while Foxe and his revision of ecclesiastical history was—like Reform doctrine in general—attacked and derided as a precocious *novelty*, what it asserted in the face of its detractors was that the reality behind the appearance of novelty was of authentic Venerability and unquestionable historical Truth. Moreover, to complete the parallel, Foxe's book was, *ne plus ultra*, an example of the kind of inclusive, and therefore true, historical narration championed by Shakespeare's Prince. Foxe's book, to quote Woolf once again, is "the example *par excellence* of an expensive, learned work of historical research and writing, based on both documentary and oral sources, and exercising a potent influence on popular consciousness of the nation's past; it accomplished this through a skillful mix of truth and fiction, underpinned by illustrations" (*Reading History* 309). My play, Shakespeare says in this episode, donning the new/old mantle of *Protestant* Theatricality and History, an enlightened and enlightening figure who, in the modern world, is menaced by brutality, darkness, and ignorance—is like this.

---

[1] As cumbersome and as critically ramified as it is, the term metatheatrical is the best word I know to describe those moments in Shakespeare in which the world represented on the stage is compared, metaphorically, to the actual stage. Vices and stage devils are metatheatrical because they are part of the represented action and, at

the same time, call attention to the fact that the action is a specifically theatrical representation. As I will use it in this thesis, the essential thing about metatheatricality in the history plays is the way that it complicates the mimesis of historical events without completely disrupting it. Crucially my point is that this complicating of the action serves to extend the historical import of the action, taking the audience deeper into, rather than out of, history. Something like background music in a movie, metatheatricality is an essentially unrealistic attribute which nevertheless contributes to both the realism and the fraught *meaningful-ness* of the *mis en scene.* It is also completely rhetorical, insofar as filmmakers consciously use it to make their representations more, rather than less, effective.

[2] While he would no doubt approve of the parallel with Sidney, Rossiter would be surprised to find himself the father of a "new historicism." It is, however, fairly clear that that is what he is.

[3] The profound influence of Chambers' theories about the origins and function of stage devils on Weimann and other critics is discussed in detail by Cox in *The Devil and the Sacred in English Drama, 1350-1642.*

[4] While he adds a leaven of Bakhtin to the mix, and shifts his enthusiasm from Richard to Jack Cade, Ronald Knowles is another critic who continues to think within the precincts established by Rossiter. The idea that Shakespeare presents Jack Cade as a villain, Knowles argues, is "crude," even when it is rendered "with subtlety and insight"; this is because, he argues, there can be no "moral judgement" which is not, by definition, "simplistic," and which is not antithetical to "the sheer dramatic power of Shakespeare's creative ambivalence"(65). Knowles' concluding comments on *2Henry VI* reproduce Rossiter's dialectic almost *verbatim*:

> The ideological certainties of chronicle histories have gone. History is dynamically reconstituted by the relativistic freedom of art. We confront not the farce of the subplot but the possible farce of history in which self-interest, dishonour and barbarism invert, distort and burlesque fealty, honour and love, while protesting their integrity. (105-6)

The idea that Shakespeare's Jack Cade is meant to embody the "the freedom of Art" is, it seems to me, so desperately not Shakespeare's point that it helps to illuminate the error of assuming the same thing about his viciously histrionic counter-part, Richard III.

[5] It is important to note that worldly Fame and Infamy were not intrinsically or exclusively secular historiographical categories: one of Foxe's primary aims in writing *Acts and Monuments* was to broadcast and immortalize the Fame of the martyrs and, simultaneously, to make a discursive monument to the infamy of their anti-Christian persecutors. This is a good example of how, in a fundamentally religious culture, what seem to us like purely secular notions can in fact be profoundly religious.

**Chapter Four.**
**Scenes of Death: Theatricality and Enormity in *2-3HenryVI* and *Richard III*.**

> To grace his tragedy (played in the theatre of the world) with the suitable pageantry, and to strengthen it in all its parts...the demon has also fashioned enthusiasts.
>
> Hans Johann Weyer (21)

Shakespeare's complex metatheatrical metaphors in the early chronicle plays demand a correspondingly sophisticated critical response. If, as I have argued, Shakespeare's plays were designed to perform the convictions of providential history, and not to mock, transcend, or otherwise "deconstruct" it, and if it is thus inadequate to translate Shakespeare's metatheatricality into a timeless symbol of the aleatory power of Art, or to chalk it up to some other notionally "radical" motive, the question that remains is how to understand the early chronicle plays in a way which at once acknowledges Shakespeare's serious historical purposes and, at the same time, adequately appreciates a pronounced metatheatricality which does, at first glance, seem contrary to the motives of "sober" history. How does Shakespeare's robust and engaging metatheatricality contribute to a correspondingly robust historical argument? Turning this question around: how was it that the existing Tudor ars historica was capacious and imaginative enough to allow these strikingly metaphorical representations to "count" as serious history in the minds of Shakespeare and his audience?

Shakespeare's metatheatrical strategy works on two mutually reinforcing levels as theme and as intertext. First, through his copious use of stage metaphors, Shakespeare asserts that a distinctive theatricality was a defining historical reality in and behind the chaotic violence of the Wars of the Roses era. Watching these plays involves witnessing a kind of Wonder in which the familiar world of historical reality is transformed into a kind

of theatre. As curious as this claim might sound to modern ears, Shakespeare argues that a Vice-like theatricality was a real and exigent phenomenon in England's late-medieval history, and, more particularly, that the connection between brutal violence and vicious histrionic playing is a key to understanding the spiritual nature and significance of the Enormities of this infamous era. As will be explored in this chapter, this idea applies to all of the sequence's main villains, effectively affiliating each of them in terms of a species of violent histrionics, and it works as well to anatomize the sequence's major episodes—the fall of Duke Humphrey, the Cade rebellion, the Civil War, and Richard's reign—under the sign of a specifically theatrical kind of Enormity. And, to the extent that it is an assertively meaning-full historical trope, Shakespeare's metatheatricality also functions as a representation or mimesis of spiritual historical realities, a providential index which infuses the material reality represented onstage with intimations of a larger sphere of metaphysical, supramundane agency. Turning to the historical culture, we find that this reading makes sense because there is an abundance of historiographical thought which would confirm and consolidate some kind of connection between theatricality, violence, and apocalyptic providence. Thus, while the primary source for Shakespeare's metatheatrical idea was undoubtedly his own experience of the theatre, his dramaturgy also resonates with a host of powerfully commonplace Elizabethan notions linking providence with the theatre. More specifically, as I will be attempting to demonstrate here, Shakespeare's metatheatrical practice corresponds strikingly with Foxe's distinctively apocalyptic interpretation of the Wars of the Roses era. Consequently, Shakespeare's metatheatricality can be viewed as an intertextual bridge to Acts and Monuments, a deliberate attempt to engage constructively with the Foxean intertext by

linking the action represented on stage with the "already read," so to speak, of authoritative Foxean history.[1]

Secondly, Shakespeare's metatheatrical metaphors also complicate and extend his argument by continuously reminding audiences that they are encountering serious providential history in a novel and potentially problematic context: performed by paid actors in the public theatre. This raises a complex cultural-historical problem, but my basic point is the familiar one that in attempting to translate serious chronicle history into effective theatre, Shakespeare faced a network of cultural prejudices, anxieties, and concerns—many of which he seems to have shared—which to some extent militated against the commercial stage functioning as a legitimate vehicle for serious providential history. Fantasies about "radical" dramaturgy notwithstanding, Shakespeare's response to this dilemma was to use metatheatrical metaphors to disarm or mitigate these concerns and to authorize the chronicle drama by suggesting that the stage has a unique grasp on a key historical reality—the connection between enormity and theatricality—and is therefore a legitimate vehicle for serious history. As in the collision between histrionic Vice-King and the new/old figure of History in Richard III discussed above, this second level of metatheatrical assertion hinges on Shakespeare's careful elucidation of the distinction between two opposed kinds of theatre: Shakespeare's professional stage, which is a locus for the theatrical interpretation of significant historical Truths, and the demonic theatre of the Vices, an ironic historical metaphor the Protestant dramatist uses to explore and expose the Antichristian spiritual realities underlying the civil war era.

In this double perspective, the apparently ahistorical radicalism of Shakespeare's metatheatricality gives way to an inventively self-conscious assertion of a kind of

orthodoxy. As in the case of Richard III, while Vice-like clowning and antic histrionic self-assertion might seem to undermine the historiographical seriousness of the drama, the basic function of metatheatricality is to allow Shakespeare to perform serious historical convictions by bringing to life on the stage a metaphor that was shared by dramatists and providential historians, while, at the same time, articulating the legitimacy and autonomy of these performances.

Stage metaphors, like bawdy puns, are notorious for running riot, and yet I think the risk of interpretive excess is worthwhile if it helps to show how, by deliberately complicating his historical mise en scene with reflexive metaphors, Shakespeare created a uniquely theatrical mimesis of significant historical truth—not just a dismal chronicle of "one damned thing after another," but a distinctively theatrical interpretive mirror of the deeper, providential and spiritual, meaning of the Wars of the Roses era. To use the terms Shakespeare would later use in Henry V, these plays were Shakespeare's first attempt to fashion a drama of "cyphers," a quasi-allegorical mimesis in which the deeper and more conceptually rich significance of the action represented onstage is generated by encouraging and enabling playgoers to solve the plays' "crooked figures" via the existing framework, or "great account," of authoritative chronicle history. A paradigmatic example of Riffaterrean intertextuality, the basic effect of Shakespeare's metatheatrical metaphor is to generate wonder, of mimetic uncertainty or "ungrammaticality" that raises perplexing questions—What kind of people were the real historical men and woman represented by these strange vice-like characters? What is the nature of the times in which they flourished? How can this vertiginously seriocomic stage business represent the serious truth of history?—and by pointing to the intertextual authority in terms of which

this web or structure of "mimesis hurdles" can be satisfactorily solved. Although other textual possibilities abound, the historiographical intertext that appears to me to be consistently mobilized by Shakespeare's metatheatrical signposts is Acts and Monuments. This is because, with a provocative and sustained interpretive vividness, Foxe deploys the same theatrical metaphors for essentially the same historiographical purpose: to capture the deeper, spiritually significant, historical realities underlying and informing the violent history of the Wars of the Roses era.

I am not arguing that Acts and Monuments is somehow the real chronicle source for these plays: leaving the plays' traditional provenance more-or-less alone, what I want to consider is the way Foxean history supplemented Shakespeare's chronicle sources, providing him with a productively historiographical intertext for the distinctively metatheatrical element in his dramaturgy. Shakespeare did not simply or necessarily derive his metatheatrical idea from Foxe; rather, he found in Foxe's account an interpretation of England's past which not only bore the stamp of Truth, but which did so in a way which affirmed his own, distinctively theatrical, understanding of the spiritual significance of the violence and the pathos of civil war. Similarly, I am not arguing that the notion of history as pageant or theatre was a uniquely Foxean trope, or that Shakespeare's use of it inevitably connects him with Acts and Monuments. As Anne Righter demonstrated in Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play, the similitude between the world and the stage was a theme which ran rife in Elizabethan drama, and, as historian Alexandra Walsham has more recently demonstrated, the idea that human history, like the natural world, is a kind of theatre in which the spectacle of God's providence is played-out for all to see was a commonplace found throughout early modern providential

discourse.[2] Furthermore, while less familiar to modern readers, Hans Johann Weyer's conceit, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, linking Satan or Antichrist with acting and the stage was also a cultural commonplace of the Reformation era, one that, like so much that is distinctive of early modern Protestantism, finds characteristic expression in Tyndale:

> [Antichrist] is a spiritual thing; and is as much as to say as, against Christ; ... Antichrist was in the Old Testament, and fought with the prophets; he was also in the time of Christ and the apostles, as thou readest in the epistles of John, and of Paul...Antichrist is now, and shall (I doubt not) endure till the world's end. But his nature is (when he is uttered, and overcome with the word of God) to go out of the play for a season, and to disguise himself, and then to come in again with a new name and a new raiment. (42)

However, whereas conventional wisdom would seize upon the ubiquity of this idea to rule out any special or particular connection between Foxe and Shakespeare, it is, I think, more illuminating, and certainly far more logical, to view these commonplace linkages of history, Providence, and the Devil with acting and the stage as a fertile cultural backdrop for a potentially more focused and compelling connection between Shakespeare and Foxe, one which stands-out from the commonplace, so to speak, by virtue of the sheer interpretive weight each writer places upon the theatre metaphor as a key to understanding the religious-historical significance of 14th and 15th century English political history.

*

Like critics of Shakespeare's early history plays, modern students of Acts and Monuments have been consistently impressed by the extent to which boldly drawn images of the theatre and acting recur throughout Foxe's narrative. Referring to Latimer's

often-quoted "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man" speech, William Haller noted that "one can only marvel, here as at other points in Foxe's book, at the unfailing gift which all sorts of English people in that time seem to have had a command for appropriate, expressive, dramatic speech (*Foxe's Book* 193). Developing this idea extensively, Warren Wooden notes that "stage metaphors are so frequent" in Acts and Monuments "that they ultimately suggest a way of looking at history as pageant" (67). For Wooden, the essential point of Foxe's theatricality is the performance of the martyrs themselves, godly role models who provide exemplary dramatizations of the "art of holy dying" (44-66ff). Wooden is right to a point: Foxe creates a resonant paradigm of godly acting in which a whole range of godly histrionics, especially those connected with the stake, is imbued with apocalyptic spiritual significance. However, while this positive role playing is a distinctive Foxean trope, Foxe uses theatrical metaphors more frequently and more emphatically to produce a similarly resonant paradigm of demonic acting and theatricality, one which adds considerable rhetorical substance to his anatomy of the historical Antichrist. Following Tyndale—and his friend and mentor John Bale—Foxe portrays Antichrist as a pervasive spiritual force which can be detected not just in religious persecution, but in the demonic spirit in which this persecution takes place. This spiritual reality is captured in the figure of the vice-like actor who, like Shakespeare's Richard III, attempts to usurp the morally ordered world of grace, turning it into a preposterous theatre of horrible seriocomic clowning. Just as the martyrs "play the man" or, as Tyndale put it, "counterfeit Christ" (20), Antichrist is a role which has been enthusiastically played by his members throughout history.

Thus, when Foxe first introduces the concept of the "loosing out of Satan" at the beginning of Acts and Monuments, he urges readers to imagine a theater usurped by popish, upstart players: "so up started a new sort of players, to furnish the stage, as school-doctors, canonists, and the four orders of the friars" (1.xxi). This stage metaphor, which recurs literally countless times throughout the book, is repeated in more violent terms when Foxe comes to the beginning of the Wars of the Roses era:

> suffer me a little by your license, gentle reader, to talk with these cruel blood-suckers; whereby they, being admonished, may repent; or if they will not, that they may behold, to their great shame and rebuke, whether they will or no, their wicked cruelty and great slaughters, laid before them, as it were upon a stage. (3.98)

More than a rhetorical cliché, Foxe's emphasis on demonic theatricality is an essential part of the argument of Acts and Monuments—it is a sign which allows readers more fully to "witness" the spiritual reality behind the history of persecutorial slaughter and cruelty which Foxe anatomizes in his chronicle. As Richard Bauckham notes in his discussion of Foxe and "the marks of Antichrist" in Tudor Apocalypse, "the idea of Antichrist suggests certain theatricality":

> This is hypocrisy refined to such a devilish art as to 'to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect' [Mark 13.22].... Antichrist's facility for adopting different disguises prompted Tyndale's use of a dramatic metaphor [quoted above]...[and] this or a similar observation must have been in John Foxe's mind when he turned the Antichrist theme into Christus Triumphans, where the recurring theatrical imagery is certainly more than a clever manipulation of the medium....[Foxe has] a broad vision of history as a divine drama, but it is the Satanic characters in particular who behave like actors, leaving the stage and returning in different disguises. (105)

In the intensely metatheatrical play Christus Triumphans alluded to by Bauckham here, Foxe's central Vice-figure is Dioctes, a role which is played by "that unhappy old Devil" Satan, and a character who represents the persecuting power of secular powers who are

the "lover[s] of the famous whore of Babylon, Pornapolis." Driven off the stage of history at the epochal "binding up of Satan," Dioctes is told to "play [his] part in the manner of the stage" and not to give up hope since "in comedies, characters never finally go out until the play is finished" (303n3).

Much as Bale does in King Johan, Foxe repeatedly shows the Vice-like Antichrist/Dioctes and his accomplices putting on new theatrical disguises as they announce their evil plots directly to the audience:

> As the place changes, so must our plans be changed along with it. There we proceeded by force, but here we'll manage our business cleverly and by guile" (337).

Bale's theatre is worth recalling here because, by casting Antichristian persecution in terms of a peculiarly seriocomic theatricality in Acts and Monuments, Foxe was in fact appropriating a key strategy of Bale's early Protestant theatre—the satirical representation of Antichrist as a Vice-like actor and the exposure of popish apostasy through the ironic use of grotesquely comic play-acting imagery. Not surprisingly, scholars of early Reformation theatre have grasped this stage metaphor most clearly. Paul White, for example, argues that the "most effective weapon" in Bale's iconoclastic theatre was a kind of ironic metatheatricality:

> in medieval drama Catholic priests were commonly represented in the acting place as agents of virtue and repentance who counsel the unregenerate characters in the teachings of the church and mediate between God and man through the offering of the sacraments as the means of salvation....What Bale does with these traditional stage images of religious truth is to expose them for what they are—mere images, without an underlying reality; they are still presented, almost certainly dressed as they would have been in traditional plays, but they are now revealed to be the old "Vices" in disguise. Thus Bale's chief Vices, Infidelity (Three Laws) and Sedition (King Johan), make their initial appearances as conventional proponents of Evil—as Vices—only to turn up later in the action dressed as Catholic clerics.

> Commenting on his work, the Elizabethan reformer Laurence Humphrey would later say that Bale "tore away the mask that Pope and Popery wore." Actually, in King Johan Pope and Popery do not wear the mask; they are the mask, the fictions of true religion behind which diablerie and Antichrist hide and cozen the public into damnation. (35)

Although the contradiction between "no underlying reality" and "diablerie and Antichrist" needs to be corrected—the diabolical spirit of Antichrist is the underlying reality that Bale is depicting—White effectively demonstrates the importance of a structure of self-conscious theatrical irony in Bale's theatre. No less richly spiritual than its medieval predecessor, Bale's iconoclastic drama uses the conventional antics of the Vices as a metatheatrical metaphor which defines and exposes a vital spiritual reality—the power of Antichrist which has vitiated and corrupted political life and the church throughout history. Presented as a kind of grotesque playing within Bale's serious historical play, the spiritual reality lying behind these comic popish vices is relentlessly framed and exposed through the lens of Bale's dramatic irony. Thus, White explains,

> after his early appearance in the play [King Johan] as the Vice, Sedition does come into the acting place again with a new name and a new raiment, that of a monk named Good Perfection, who is called on by Nobility to hear Confession. The parody of Auricular Confession then begins, following the orthodox procedure, with Sedition donning the stole required by the Church for the Confessor, and seating himself before Nobility. The Confessional, as depicted, is very typical of the times, but of course the context in which it takes place exposes it as a sham. For the Confessor here is a Devil, and as we learn a few minutes later, the purpose of the Confession is not to grant forgiveness of sin, but to make Nobility a traitor to the English state and an agent of Antichrist. (36)

Although he does not develop this idea in any depth, White goes on to draw a suggestive link between Bale's iconoclastic staging and Acts and Monuments:

> In another scene of King Johan, the formal pronouncement of Excommunication... with "cross, book, bell, and candle," is applied to King John by Usurped Power,

> alias the Pope. The ritual involved here is highly theatrical and emblematic...[and] again the incongruous context of the ritual holds it up for ridicule and shows it for what Bale thought it was: a piece of good theatre. Bale apparently was not the only Protestant who perceived the Anathema in theatrical terms. According to John Foxe, one Thomas Benet laughed when he saw it publicly pronounced, and then asked "Who can forbear, seeing such conceits and interludes played by the priests?" (37)

This is a crucial insight about the relationship between Foxe's prose and Bale's reformed drama. Looking at the two theatre images from Acts and Monuments quoted above in light of White's analysis, what we can now see is that Foxe is using two very different stage metaphors. The first one, in which the emergence of a group of vicious "upstart players" symbolizes the resurgence of Antichristian power and liberty in the world, is countered by, or rather contained within, the larger apocalyptic "theatre" of Acts and Monuments itself, a Truth-oriented stage in which the viciousness of popery and Antichrist is exposed. Like Bale's audience, Foxe's readers are positioned as witnesses of what is in effect an ungodly kind of playing within a godly theatre.[3]

Thus, while the association between Vice-like theatricality and satanic apostasy is palpable in Foxe and Bale, what needs to be clarified and emphasized is that for both writers such spectacles are not merely "images," and certainly not "good theatre"; rather, Foxe and Bale develop what might well be called an "image of two theatres" which corresponds with the central reformed doctrine of the Two Churches. For both Foxe and Bale, Vice-like playing and pageantry thus do not epitomize theatricality per se, nor are they to be confused with the art of Protestant theatre or martyrology—no more than Una is to be confused with Duessa because both are women. Rather, this species of diabolic playing is a symbol of the Antichristian component within apocalyptic history which

Christian theatre—either God's or its godly surrogate—is particularly good at capturing and exposing. This is a theatrical image of bad actors acting badly, in the double sense of moral reprehensibility and, as well, in the sense that the debased fraudulence of demonic theatricality is exposed through the lens of godly dramatic irony. As Thomas Benet's laughter signifies, Foxe's point is that, despite its worldly power, and despite its ability to delude Christians into apostasy, demonic theatre always flops in the eyes of real "understanders": the attempt at dignified ceremony backfires, revealing instead the monstrously degraded spirituality of the performers.

Now it is commonly, and I think rightly, assumed that Shakespeare did not know Bale's drama, and it is even less likely that he knew Foxe's play Christus Triumphans. However, the lack of a clear link between Shakespeare and the original sources of Foxe's theatrical imagery is largely irrelevant. What is vital to acknowledge is the extent to which Bale's symbolic redefinition of the theatrical Vice role is implicit, as a palimpsest, in Foxe's prose, and implicit, moreover, in a way which infuses Bale's iconoclastic polemical irony with a wholly Foxean level of historiographical weight, authority, and spiritual seriousness. Approached with an eye for both Truth and for usable theatrical elements—which would seem to be precisely how Shakespeare read his history—Acts and Monuments thus reads like a chronicle history that wants to be a powerfully moving Protestant chronicle play. This is because Foxe's prose originated in Bale's reformation theatre, but also because Foxe transformed Balean iconoclasm into a richer, more historiographically engaged and emotionally moving, exploration of Antichristian enormity. While this is pure speculation on my part, I think this palpably theatrical element or appeal is one of the things that would have fascinated Shakespeare about Acts

and Monuments. To the extent that Foxe's book was, as I have been arguing, suffused with the theatrical energy of the Reformation stage, and was as well a source of nearly unimpeachable historical Truth, Acts and Monuments was ripe to be "discovered" by Shakespeare as a kind of historiographical capacitor: it showed him not just how the commonplace linking of world and stage might be re-energized as a way of doing serious history on the stage, but also indicated how a venerable stage presence was still capable of generating pathos and provocative historical meanings in the minds of contemporary audiences.

To see more clearly how Foxe drew upon the structural irony of Bale's reformation theatre in order to expose and anatomize the historical Antichrist in Acts and Monuments, I want to look at a series of episodes involving the ceremony of priestly "degradation." Like the Anathema ceremony mentioned by White, these stories highlight Foxe's use of the demonic theatricality trope. Although seemingly remote from the historiographical concerns of Shakespeare's plays, it is important to remember that the spectacle of degradation is, in Foxe's account, a key index to the late-medieval times in which the Wars of the Roses occurred. Carefully considered, these linked episodes help to substantiate the idea of a Foxean intertext connecting Shakespeare's metatheatrical dramaturgy with Foxe's apocalyptic view of history.

Near the beginning of his account of the reign of Henry VI, Foxe halts his narrative of the outbreak of persecution in Suffolk and Norfolk in order to present a set-piece account of the martyrdom of an Italian Carmelite friar, Thomas of Rennes. Like Luther, Rennes begins his career as an outspoken reformer after witnessing the corruption

of Rome, but unlike Luther, does not manage to avoid persecution for long. In 1431, Foxe reports,

> after his imprisonment, and divers and sundry grievous torments, he was brought before the judges. The wolf sat in judgement; the lamb was accused. Why? because he had troubled the spring. But here need not many words. This good man Thomas, not being able to resist the malice of these mighty potentates, had offended enough, and was easily convicted and condemned to be burned: but in such sort, as first of all he should be deprived of all such degrees as he had taken to priesthood; for it is counted an unlawful thing, that a priest should be punished with profane judgment, when, notwithstanding, it is lawful for priests to put any layman to death, be he ever so guiltless.... Wherefore, before he should come unto punishment, this good man Thomas must be degraded. The order and manner of this popish degrading is partly touched upon in the story of William Taylor. (3.603-4)

With this reference, Foxe sends his readers back a few pages to the story of an English priest, William Taylor, whose degradation and martyrdom in 1424 helps to fill in the picture of this "orderly" spectacle of Antichristian ceremonialism:

> The manner of his degrading was all one with the degrading of John Huss before; for the papists use but one form for all men. First, degrading them from the priesthood, by taking from them the chalice and patin, and the casule and stole; from deaconship, by taking from them the gospel-book, and the dalmatic and stole; from sub-deaconship, by taking from them the epistle-book, and the dalmatic and maniple; from acolyteship, by taking from them the cruet and taper-holder; from an exorcist, by taking away the book of exorcisms; from the sextonship, by taking away the church keys, and the albe and amice; and likewise from bene't, by taking away the surplice and first tonsure, &c. All which they orderly accomplished upon this godly martyr, before his burning. (3.584)

As White intimated, a kind of Balean theatrical irony is at work here, insofar as Foxe's satirically copious depiction of the "orderly" ceremony of degradation is meant to suggest its exact opposite—an absurd and profoundly disordered theatricality. Albeit transposed into the key of serious history, these men are acting like Bale's demonic vices: stage-devils dressed up as priests they engage in a perniciously pseudo-religious ritual.

However, while this ironic exposure of the apostate theatricality of the degradation ceremony is like the antics of Bale's popish vices, Foxe adds a degree of spiritual profundity largely absent in Bale by emphasizing the connection between such Antichristian "playing" and the horrifying, seemingly inhuman, violence of the ceremony. These are not just pompous clowns, they are wolves as well, and, in Foxe's image of such lupine spirits sitting in judgement of the lamb, Bale's characteristically derisive laughter gives way to a much more terribly seriocomic horror and pathos.

To get the full flavour of Foxe's tragic irony, we need only follow his clear indexing a little further back in time to the degrading ceremony of John Huss. Huss' martyrdom, one of Foxe's central martyrological episodes and a definitive image of the Antichristian enormity which had been "loosed" upon late-medieval society, presents readers with a full-blown image of the degraded spectacle of degradation by graphically supplying the horrors implicit in Foxe's understated reference to the "first tonsure &c":

> At last the seven bishops who were chosen out to degrade him of his priesthood, commanded him to put on the garments pertaining to unto priesthood; which thing when he had done until he came to the putting on of the albe, he called to his remembrance the white vesture which Herod put on Jesus Christ to mock him withal....Then he was commanded to come down to the execution of his judgement, and in his coming down, one of the seven bishops before rehearsed, first took away the chalice from him which he held in his hand, saying; "O cursed Judas! why hast thou forsaken the council and ways of peace, and hast counselled with the Jews? We take away from thee this chalice of thy salvation."... Then followed the other bishops in order, who every one of them took away the vestments from him which they had put on, each one giving him their curse. Whereunto John Huss answered: That he did willingly embrace and hear those blasphemies for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. At last they came to the rasing of his shaven crown; but before the bishops would go in hand with it, there was a great contention between them, with what instrument it should be done; with a razor, or with a pair of shears. In the mean season, John Huss, turning himself towards the emperor, said: "I marvel that forasmuch as they be all of like cruel mind and stomach, yet they cannot agree upon their kind of cruelty." Notwithstanding, at last they agreed to cut off the crown of his head with a pair of shears. And when they had done that, they added

> these words: "Now hath the church taken away all her ornaments and privileges from him. Now there resteth nothing else, but that he should be delivered over unto the secular power." But before they did that, there yet remained another knack of reproach; for they caused to be made a certain crown of paper, almost a cubit deep, on which were painted three devils of wonderfully ugly shape, and this title set over their heads, "Heresiarcha." Which, when he saw, he said: "My Lord Jesus Christ for my sake, did wear a crown of thorns; why should not I then, for his sake again wear this light crown, be it ever so ignominious? ...These contumelious opprobries thus ended, the bishops, turning themselves towards the emperor, said: "This most sacred synod of Constance leaveth now John Huss...unto the civil judgment and power." Then the emperor commanded Louis, duke of Bavaria, who stood before him in his robes, holding the golden apple with the cross in his hand...by whom he was led to the place of execution, before the church doors he saw his books burning, whereat he smiled and laughed. (3.491-3)

As Wooden might argue (and as my deletions from the full account obscure to some extent), Huss' godly histrionics are central to the overwhelmingly theatrical tenor of this episode. Huss plays to, and wins over, the crowd in a performance of (literally) inspired role-playing in imitation of Christ; his virtuosity, which takes the form of a kind of marvelously courageous eloquence and wit, is meant to signify the presence of grace working to sustain and embolden the martyr. On balance, however, this godly playing seems to function less as the main emphasis in Foxe's narrative than as a kind of foil for the grotesque theatrics of Huss' persecutors. Foxe seems, that is, to invest considerably more energy in his satirically ironic portrayal of the "contumelious opprobries" of Huss's tormentors, and Huss's laughter at the end of the passage seems to make him less the central actor in a sacred drama than an understanding member of the audience. Huss gets the joke: these religious and secular "potentates" engage in a self-consciously theatrical ceremony which, they believe, manifests the superior dignity and holiness of their profession, but their act backfires and they are revealed, instead, to be bloodthirsty "wolves" and, just as pointedly, an undignified rabble of butchers and barbers. Strikingly,

this rabble of butchers includes not just priests but also secular powers, represented here by no less a personage than the Emperor, who becomes an eager participant in this unholy spectacle.

With these prior scenes of popish degradation in mind, the deeper significance of Foxe's portrayal of Rome as a would-be theatre of holiness in the story of Thomas of Rennes comes into focus:

> For where ought more abundance of virtue and good living to be, than in that place which is counted to be the fort and fountain of all religion? And how could it other wise be, but that where so great holiness is professed; whereupon all men's are bent as upon a stage. (3.601)

Rome is a theatre, Foxe continues, but a usurped one in which "all things were turned bottom upwards":

> Wherefore, gentle reader, it is not to be marvelled at, why that he [Rennes], being now a layman, should die, who lived, being a priest. But this thou mayest more marvel at, what folly and madness was in those men's minds, who, through such acts and doings, would set themselves forth to be a mocking-stock unto the whole world and, not only to be derided of men, but to be abominable and accursed before God. (3.604; my emphases)

As the phrase "acts and doings" seems clearly to intimate, the topsy turvy theatre of Roman persecution is contained or framed by another, antithetical, theater of "marvels," which is Acts and Monuments itself. Although the starring role on this stage is the martyr, a role played, so to speak, by Grace, the real show stopper is Antichrist, a contrary spirit who is type-cast as the Vice, a bad actor who revels in the "abominable and accursed" histrionics of the degradation ceremony and martyrdom itself.

*

These Foxean images of "popish" degradation are not "sources," in the normal sense of the word, for anything in Shakespeare's Wars of the Roses sequence. What is striking, however, is the extent to which, despite their apparent remoteness, Foxe's narratives seem capable, like a lens, of bringing Shakespeare's metatheatrical dramaturgy into focus. It does not, that is, require much imagination to see Shakespeare's portrayal of the destruction of "good" Duke Humphrey reflected in Foxe's bitter exposure of the "theatre" in which Rennes and Huss are destroyed; Huss' murderers are startlingly mirrored in Jack Cade's butcherly counter-Reformation, and, even more palpably, the battlefield antics of Margaret's mock crucifixion of York are clearly reflected in the speculum of the "contumelious opprobries" done to Huss. Reading Acts and Monuments, Shakespeare's audience learned to see their own history as a pageant of satanic executions in which the Antichristian character of the persecutors is revealed by their rage, literally, to play the devil. Moreover, and here we get to the heart of the Foxeian intertext in these plays, what is striking about Shakespeare's staging is the way he repeatedly invokes Foxe not solely in terms of the metatheatrical metaphor itself, but in terms of a series of correlative or cognate tropes which point to Foxe's book as the "great account" lying behind the action. Rendered with an almost schematic precision, the constellation of intertextual "signposts" that I will be pursuing in this chapter is given in condensed form in the climactic confrontation between King Henry and Richard of Gloucester in 3HenryVI:

> Henry: 'Good Gloucester' and 'Good devil' were alike
> And both preposterous; therefore not 'good lord'.
> Gloucester (to the Lieutenant): Sirrah, leave us to ourselves, we must confer.
> Exit the Lieutenant
> Henry: So flies the reckless shepherd from the wolf,

> So first the harmless sheep doth yield his fleece
> And next his throat unto the butcher's knife.
> What scene of death hath Roscius now to act? (5.6.4-10)

As we saw earlier, the combination of Richard's demonic or devilish nature with the image of wolves and butchers is itself an overdetermined poetic sign which seems to indicate the intertextual presence of Foxean Enormity. Here, Henry's resonantly metatheatrical allusion adds a further level of mimetic complexity which also deepens the sense of an intertextual engagement with Foxe—the historical Richard is a devil, a wolf, and a butcher, and, now, a comic actor from the Roman theatre bent on performing yet another "preposterous" tragedy, another brutal "scene of death." In Foxe's apocalyptic reading of the chronicles, the familiar horrors of the Wars of the Roses era were recast as explosive evidence of the "loosing out of Satan," an epochal transformation in the spiritual state of society which inaugurated the "latter and perillous dayes" of apocalyptic modernity and, as well, a kind of spiritual return to the first period of Satanic persecution in the Roman empire. Foxe taught his readers to connect the infamous violence of the Wars of the Roses era with the image of a fraternity of vice-like actors driven to turn the world into a horrifying theatre-of-the-absurd by engaging in spectacle after preposterous spectacle of vicious and brutal "playing." Far from mere rhetorical embellishment, this identification of historical violence and theatricality is a key figure in Foxe's argument, one which links the realm of political history with the apocalyptic "loosing out of Satan" adumbrated in Revelations. Using it, as we will see, in conjunction with a set of similarly resonant apocalyptic images—wolf, devil, butcher—Shakespeare also consistently places the stage metaphor at the heart of his dramatic argument. As a result, I will argue here,

Shakespeare's design was to allow his audience to discover the same Antichristian spirit raging throughout 2-3HenryVI and Richard III

*

Near the beginning of 3HenryVI, standing alone on a bare stage representing the battlefield at Towton, the actor playing the Duke of York speaks directly to the audience about being pursued and overwhelmed by an implacable force:

> And all my followers to the eager foe
> Turn back and fly, like ships before the wind,
> Or lambs pursu'd by hunger-starv'd wolves. (1.4.3-5)

While this moment can be viewed simply as a realistic expression of the character's fear, and fatigued sense of defeat, the combination of direct address to the audience and figural language that Shakespeare employs at this key moment points, I think, to a level of historical reality beyond what might be called the natural or material realm, an arena of conflict in which familial and political issues and motives, York versus Lancaster, seem momentarily epiphenomenal. Because they are fleeing, and being slaughtered, York sees himself and his followers as "lambs" and their pursuers as "wolves," and this impression confirms what the audience has just witnessed in the slaughter of young Rutland at the hands of Clifford:

> So looks the pent-up lion oe'r the wretch
> That trembles under his devouring paws;
> And so he walks, insulting oe'r his prey,
> And so he comes, to rend his limbs asunder. (1.3.12-15)

However, following York's murder at the hands of Queen Margaret, that infamous tigress "wrapped in a woman's hide"(1.4.137), this imagistic pattern is reversed, so that by the

end of Act Two it is the Lancastrians who, "like a fearful flying hare," are hunted by a "brace of greyhounds," and pursued to death by the "chafed bull" Warwick (2.5.125-30). Evidently, Shakespeare's imagery is meant to suggest that all of the aggressors in this conflict engage in, or are reduced to, animalistic violence, regardless of which "side" they are on. Something like this would seem to be the obvious point of the allegory involving King Henry and the nameless father and son in 2.5:

> O piteous spectacle, O bloody times!
> Whiles lions war and battle for their dens,
> Poor harmless lambs abide their enmity. (2.5.73-75)

Lions war and lambs abide: just as the wolf-menaced lamb displaces the wind-driven ship in York's speech, the fundamental onus of Shakespeare's imagery seems to be to discover, behind or beneath the vagaries of Fortune, a moral reality which is reflected in the fearful symmetry linking inhuman predators and their prey. Thus, quite unlike the rational process described by "politic" historians such as Machiavelli, or the chivalric combat associated with Romance, war, or at least civil war, is devoid here of any potential for virtuous action—the best that you can be, so to speak, in this nightmarish military world, is a pathetic "wretch," the prey to some devouring lion who will, soon enough, be eaten by some other, equally bloodthirsty, beast.[4]

While Shakespeare's perspective on war might appear very modern or forward-looking, it has in fact deep roots in medieval Christian historiography. According to Nancy Partner, for instance, the 12th-century monastic chronicler William of Newburgh was "boldly antichivalrous or antifeudal in [his] mockery of the glory of warfare," especially the "endless bloody frivolity" of civil wars which involved, as he put it,

"Christian Princes...killing and consuming one another one by one"(103-4). What is novel here is not Shakespeare's withering deflation of warfare, but rather the way this conventional moral perspective is shot through with a distinctively metatheatrical meaning when it is brought to life on the stage. In this respect the comparison with the medieval chronicler is revealing. Highlighting the medieval historian's sharply contrasting views of civil warfare and crusading, Partner writes that for William "war at home is brute force in the service of ambition and irritated pride, and all at the mercy of unpredictable fortune; but war in the Holy Land is a series of moral movements across spiritually charged ground"(105). The function of the metatheatrical element in Shakespeare is to complicate this distinction between natural and spiritual kinds of warfare. That is, while Shakespeare portrays "brute force in the service of ambition and irritated pride" as trenchantly as anyone, and while his portrayal of the various combatants as "lambs," "wolves," "lions," and "greyhounds" could produce something like the older William's basically secular view of civil war, Shakespeare's insistent metatheatricality seems designed to indicate that something more is going on, that the England of the play is precisely "spiritually charged ground." Moreover, to return again to a point which I think is key to Shakespeare's interpretation of the sequence, to grasp the substance of this metaphysical idea we need to see it as a kind of proleptic fulfillment of Carlisle's apocalyptic prophecy in Richard II: Carlisle predicts that England will be transformed into "a field of Golgotha and dead men's skulls," and this is exactly what we see happening in the earlier plays.

Thus, where our medieval chronicler saves his spiritual metaphors for fighting in the Holy Land, and views civil conflict as a natural consequence of the beastliness of the

warrior class, Shakespeare infuses this perspective with spiritual intimations of a very different kind: look, he seems to be saying to the audience, at how England became a kind of unholy land, a spiritually charged field of persecution linked, typologically, with Golgotha. This spiritual level or component is manifested in the peculiar way the nation's natural leaders assert their virtú histrionically, either by playing the part of vicious, persecuting wolves or, conversely, abiding the slaughter like lambs. Stepping forward to address the audience, York presents himself not simply as a man expressing his feelings, but as a man whose feelings are an expression of a spiritual transformation: like an actor trying on a new role, York seems to be experiencing one of those intrusions and redefinions of the material world which, as Jowett says, defines Shakespeare's deeper historical vision. In this view, York's arresting epiphany can be viewed as one of the two antithetically linked metadramatic metaphors or symbols which Shakespeare uses to extend his representation of battlefield violence to include providence and the sacred: York's new role will be, as Tyndale says, to "counterfeit Christ".

Admittedly, the spiritual dimension I am seeing in this moment may not be readily apparent, but it at least makes sense to emphasize the histrionic element in York's character here, at the point where, as Randall Martin puts it, he "belatedly develops a near-heroic capacity for suffering" (12),[5] if only because Shakespeare has worked so hard to establish York as a denizen of the theatre earlier in the chronicle sequence.[6] In two striking soliloquies in 2HenryVI, York clearly reveals himself as a Vice character: at the conclusion of 1.1 he lingers, in classic Vice/Stage Machiavel fashion, to explicitly define himself as a quasi-allegorical figure of Ambition and Rankled Nobility, and to divulge his guileful strategy directly to the audience:

> A day will come when York shall claim his own
> And therefore will I take the Nevilles' parts
> And make a show of love to proud Duke Humphrey,
> And when I spy advantage, claim the crown,
> For that's the golden mark I seek to hit. (1.1.238-242)

York's Vice-like nature becomes even more pronounced in 3.1 when, in a similarly arresting and memorable soliloquy, he divulges that his "brain, more tedious than the labouring spider,/ Weaves tedious snares to trap [his] enemies." Having successfully—and devilishly—used the pretense of confederacy to get the anti-Duke Humphrey cabal to "put sharp weapons in a madman's hands," York plays the Vice by again announcing his plan to the audience: he will "stir up in England" a "black storm," the Cade rebellion, which "shall blow ten thousand souls to heaven or hell"(3.1.345-50). As we will see later, while York's is just one part in a veritable circus of vicious theatrical playing which destroys Duke Humphrey and propels England towards its Golgotha, the metatheatrical emphasis in Shakespeare's portrayal of the would-be king can hardly be overstated. Martin usefully notes that in 2HenryVI York not only "recalls" famous roles such as Tamburlaine and Fergus from Gorboduc, but also "the civic-pageant tradition of presenter narrators who expound the meaning of what was just seen for observers"; most importantly though, he notes that York's "theatrical power derives from the double role he plays both within and outside the action," a role which is "largely defined by traditional Luciferian qualities of transgressive pride and love of dominance inherited from the mystery-play and interlude traditions"(11-12). This is right: York presents himself as a "starvèd snake," lurking in the hearts of his enemy/allies, and one whose

"substitute" is the morris-dancing "devil," Jack Cade, because, like his infamous progeny, he is a stage devil.

Viewed in light of his earlier Vice-like stage identity, York's change of heart at the beginning of 3HenryVI seemingly demands to be understood as a continuation of the metatheatrical metaphor—but an arresting or ungrammatical one. York is, as I said, trying on a new role—sheep to the slaughter instead of Vice-like promoter of scenes of death—and he does so just in time for his virtuoso performance as Christ-like martyr in the horrifying mock-crucifixion Margaret is about to stage on the battlefield. As Anne Righter noted, Warwick's comment upon hearing of York's death seems designed to keep the stage metaphor firmly in view:

> Why stand we like soft-hearted women here,
> Wailing our losses whiles the foe doth rage,
> And look upon, as if the tragedy
> Were played in jest by counterfeiting actors? (*3H6*:2.3.25-8)

"All at once," Righter argues, "the king-maker feels the unnaturalness of his own inaction. His momentary isolation from the battle which rages before him seems now to reflect an attitude more suited to the audience at a play"(92). This seems right to a point, but rather than the unnaturalness of inaction—it is martial cannibalism which is unnatural—what Shakespeare seems to be intimating is that, rather than being brought back to "reality" by Richard's chiding—"A Warwick, why hast thou withdrawn thyself"—Warwick is lead by Richard's urgings to chose one theatrical role over another:

> Thy brother's blood the thirsty earth hath drunk,
> Broached with the steely point of Clifford's lance,
> And in the very pangs of death he cried,
> Like to a dismal clangor heard from far,
> 'Warwick revenge, brother revenge my death!' (*3H6*:2.3.15-19)

Richard does not draw Warwick back to natural reality, but rather back into the unnatural spectacle of civil war, and he does this by offering him what looks like a lead role in a Senecan revenge play. For his part, Warwick responds with a piece of "scenical strutting" which is as absurdly histrionic as it is shockingly anti-Christian:

> Then let the earth be drunken with our blood.
> I'll kill my horse because I will not fly.
> ...
> Here on my knee I vow to God above
> I'll never pause again, never stand still,
> Till either death hath closed these eyes of mine
> Or fortune given me measure of revenge. (23-32)

Eagerly joining in this impious spectacle, Edward enthusiastically conflates Warwick with God, the "setter-up and plucker-down of Kings"(37), and, for his part, Richard caps off Warwick's return to "reality" with a well-timed application of Vice's tears, the perfect theatrical antithesis to the pathos York has embraced and which Warwick has eschewed in favour of revenge: "I that did never weep now melt with woe,/That winter should cut off our springtime so"(46-7).

To be clear, my point is not that Shakespeare's actors prance around the stage, winking at the audience and generally turning serious historical mimesis into farce, but rather that he is using one of the most venerable resources of the stage to index the spiritual realities informing the military history he is dramatizing. In opting to assert himself in the role of martyr, York elevates himself in the eyes of the audience even as he prepares to be degraded on a battlefield in which chivalry and virtu have been replaced by a kind of insane and bloodthirsty posturing. Like the profoundly ennobling theatrics of

Huss in Foxe's account, York's determination literally to play the man presents itself not merely as an arresting conversion, itself a powerful signifier of providential agency, but as a precise foil for the various episodes of histrionic self-assertion which we see elsewhere in the play. What Shakespeare seems to saying, in other words, is that civil war is a "piteous spectacle" because it is driven by the spiritual desire of men and women to act out in the role of wolvish persecutors and bloody-minded revengers and, conversely, because this preposterous and spectacular behaviour transforms real virtuosity into the willingness to play the role of wretch, sheep, and martyr.

The sense of wonder produced by these metaphors in the plays is palpable, but it is also palpably Foxean. As J.P. Brockbank put it in "The Frame of Disorder," while we might feel we are watching "murderous automatons whose reactions are predictable in terms of certain quasi-Hobbesian assumptions about human nature," these "anarchic, egocentric impulses are not presented as the inescapable laws of human nature," but rather as "manifestations of forces that automatically take over" when, he says, "men cease to believe" in "Law and Order" (60). Adding a sharper focus on the self-consciously theatrical violence which seems to stand for this profoundly anarchic apostasy, Alexander Leggatt argues that

> what we see in the trilogy as a whole is a society that has lost the forms and myths of order and is evolving new ones to embody violence. It does this at first unconsciously, though the playwright's formal shaping of his materials makes the audience aware of what is happening. But by the opening of Part 3 the killings have become consciously ritualized, York's being the conspicuous example, and this last play of the trilogy is full of set pieces of conflict and defiance. (23)

This reading is very persuasive, but I would argue that for Shakespeare and his audience society tends to "embody" much more than it does to "evolve," and that what it embodies

are the exemplary places and people of sacred history: Jerusalem, Babylon, Golgotha, Herod, Christ, and the Jews. Leggatt's key terms—societal breakdown, consciously ritualized violence, conflict and defiance—can thus be reconceived in terms of such sacred embodiments, and Shakespeare's use of apocalyptic signifiers makes it abundantly clear where we should look. That is, what we see as the emergence through the evolution of a culture of ritualized violence, Shakespeare's presents as an embodiment, in modern England, of the primal scene of Antichristian apostasy. This is because, using precisely the same combination of animal imagery and stage metaphors, such an image of national apostasy is exactly what Foxe taught his audiences to look for in the violence of the Wars of the Roses era. In this "time of Antichrist and loosing out of Satan," Foxe argues again and again, "both doctrine and sincerity of life were utterly, almost, extinguished" (1.4-5):

> [T]his is out of all doubt, that at that time, the world was in a most desperate and vile estate, and that the lamentable ignorance and darkness of God's truth had overshadowed the whole earth...the whole state and condition, not only of worldly things, but also of religion, was depraved and corrupted. (2.792)

Read in light of this powerfully organizing historical idea, Shakespeare's metatheatrical wolf and sheep imagery works not as a demystification of warfare but as an attempt to capture an historically determining spiritual reality on the stage. Lions and wolves are one thing, the spectre of powerful men and women driven or determined to "play" lions and wolves by consuming one another in a bloody and pointless civil war is entirely another: it is symbolic of the demonic force which takes over at a time of national apostasy.

*

We have already surveyed Foxe's use of the theatre metaphor as a sign of Antichristian power, we need only recall how Foxe makes the Antichristian character of

the 15th-century civil war era explicit by identifying it with the "furious rage of persecution" of Roman emperors like Domitius Nero, who "reigned fourteen years, with such fury and tyranny, that he slew the most part of the senators, and destroyed the whole order of knighthood in Rome" (1.90). Just as the Romans in the first era of Satanic liberty were "consumed and plagued by their own emperors, but also by civil wars" (1.91), likewise in 15th-century England:

> They slew their right king and set up three wrong kings on a row, under whom all the noble blood of the realm was slain up, and half the commons in addition thereto. What in France, with their own sword in fighting amongst themselves for a crown; while the cities and towns [i.e. in England] were decayed, and the land brought half into a wilderness, in respect of what it was before. O extreme plagues of God's vengeance! (1.93)

However, where Foxe can only allude to the theatre, regularly urging his audience to imagine the action as if it were taking place in the providential theatre, Shakespeare's historical re-enactments bring that metaphor vividly to life in a way which is totally beyond the power of Foxe's prose. Thus, even as he is building a conceptual bridge to Foxe, anchoring his metadramatic irony in Foxe's apocalyptic "stage within a stage," Shakespeare is also calling attention to the distinctive mimetic power of his stage to capture and represent this historical Truth. If the Wars of the Roses were coterminous with the "loosing out of Satan," Shakespeare says to his audience, making England a modern Golgotha, and if the distinctive styles of Christ and Antichrist are a dignified pathos and a preposterous theatricality, then I can show this better than anyone. Moreover, while drawing on Foxe's historical anatomy of Antichrist, he argues, in effect, that there is more to the story than is captured in Foxe's ecclesiastical history. That is, whereas Foxe argues very generally that the Wars of the Roses are a manifestation of the

"loosing out of Satan," he does not typically engage in military history per se.[7] Shakespeare fills in this gap by taking us onto the battlefield and discovering, in the actual behaviour of the combatants, scenes of death which seem to be as potentially redolent of the apocalyptic clash between Christ and Antichrist as Foxe's martyr-narratives. While this is military history, Shakespeare's version of the series of large-scale military engagements which led to Yorkist rule takes the form of a series of battlefield murders of helpless victims at the hands of overpowering enemies. To the extent that he stages civil war as a series of executions, translating military history into a history of persecution, Shakespeare's treatment is already inherently Foxeian. What readers of Acts and Monuments would have immediately recognized as a deeper, more significant, historical meaning is the way Shakespeare's play adumbrates the presence, operating within the complex events of the battlefield, of clash of spiritually charged roles: persecutors and victims, wolves and sheep. Read from the perspective of the Acts and Monuments, Shakespeare's "set pieces of conflict and defiance" emblematize a satanic politics of persecution and martyrdom.

Thus, Rutland's image of Clifford as a "pent-up lion" is terribly appropriate, prophetic even, because it captures the inhumanity of Clifford's bloodthirsty rage even as it exposes the absurdly self-dramatizing element in Clifford's hellish "fury." This is not merely realpolitik, it is political striving seen through the lens of satanic apostasy, a cannibalistic madness which turns Clifford into a raging Herod and England into Golgotha. Clifford is immune to Rutland's pathos because, as he says himself, his ears are full of blood: he is too immersed in his own role—Medea with manly shoulders—to be affected by it:

> No, if I digged up thy forefathers' graves
> And hung their rotten coffins up in chains,
> It could not slake mine ire nor ease my heart.
> The sight of any of the house of York
> Is as a fury to torment my soul,
> And till I root out their accursèd line,
> And leave not one alive, I live in hell."(*3H6*:1.3.33)

We will consider the Foxean implications of this sepulchral language in a moment, but what is suggestive here is how, eagerly setting aside his humanity, Clifford turns the serious business of civil war into demonic play. He is like a demonic Stanislavskian in a Senecan revenge play, and the result of this spirit—there is no better word for it—is the very real (and now familiar) spectacle of the slaughter of an innocent, but morally prescient, boy at the hands of a demonic man-child. And, while Shakespeare does not simply fashion Rutland according to the Foxean anti-type, Rutland's final words—Dii faciant laudis summa sit ista tuae [may the Gods grant that this be your crowning praise]—seem designed to recall the verbal victories of Foxe's martyrs. Not only does Rutland's pathos and eloquence elevate him over Clifford intellectually (the would-be Senecan has no Latin), it also clearly situates Clifford's histrionic playing within a larger, dramatically ironic, providential frame which is much like the one Foxe draws around the priestly degradation ceremonies we looked at earlier: Clifford will spare a priest, but not an innocent boy—"Chaplain away, thy priesthood saves thy life"(1.3.3)—and he is, as Foxe says of the murderers of Thomas of Rennes, determined "to be a mocking-stock unto the whole world and, not only to be derided of men, but to be abominable and accursed before God":

> Ah Clifford, murder not this innocent child,
> Lest thou be hated both of God and Man. (1.3.8-9)

Moreover, as we watch him put the martyr-like Rutland to the sword, we are, I think, meant to recall that young Clifford has also had an epiphanic moment of sorts, when upon discovering the corpse of his father he saw the hellishness of Civil War "framed," so to speak, on the apocalyptic stage:

> O let the vile world end,
> And the premisèd flames of the last day
> Knit earth and heaven together. (*2H6*: 5.2.31-33; 40-42)

However, whereas Rutland opts to play the man, Clifford's response to this apocalyptic spiritual "breakthrough" is to deny it and give himself over to a species of willfully demonic role-playing. Like Richard III later, Clifford's entire experience is captured by the way he is "determined to play the villain":

> Henceforth I will not have to do with pity.
> Meet I an infant of the house of York,
> Into as many gobbets will I cut it
> As wild Medea young Absyrtus did.
> In cruelty will I seek out my fame.

Clifford's desire for revenge is, as Foxe would say, no marvel, but what is marvellous is the spectacle of impious "folly and madness" which results:

> He takes his father's body upon his back
> As did Aeneas old Anchises bear,
> So bear I thee upon my manly shoulders .
> But then Aeneas bare a living load,
> Nothing so heavy as these woes of mine. (5.2.62-65)

The absurdity of Clifford's raging Senecanism is punctuated almost too perfectly in this stage-business, as the actor playing Clifford hoists Old Clifford's body offstage in a parody of Virgil's exemplary hero. Revealing the exact opposite spirit—apostasy rather

than piety—of the famous role Clifford feels he is adopting, Shakespeare's metatheatricality here brilliantly exposes the satanic "folly and madness" of civil war.

*

In light of such battlefield antics, and of the dignified pathos of the "wretches" who fall victim to it, the doomed King Henry's gnomic comment—"What scene of death hath Roscius now to act?"—perfectly captures the sense that a kind of seriocomically violent theatricality is the key to the events we have been witnessing in the play. Although Shakespeare's Richard III has, as we have seen, a large company, he defines diabolically bad acting when he vows to

> ... play the orator as well as Nestor,
> Deceive more slyly than Ulysses could
> And, like a Sinon, take another Troy.
> I can add colours to the chameleon,
> Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
> And set the murderous Machiavel to school. (3.2. 188-93)

As I argued earlier, while they are impressive-sounding, these claims to theatrical virtuosity have to be compared with the kind of performing Richard actually does in the plays. Paradigmatic in this respect is the opening scene of 3HenryVI, where Richard produces the severed head of Somerset in a dramatic gesture designed to upstage the vaunting of his confederates:

> Edward: Lord Stafford's father, Duke of Buckingham,
> Is either slain or wounded dangerous:
> I cleft his beaver with a downright blow.
> That this is true, father, behold his blood.
> Montague: And, brother, here's the Earl of Wiltshire's blood,
> Whom I encountered as the battles joined.
> Richard: Speak for me, and tell them what I did.
> [Throwing down the Duke of Somerset's head]
> York: Richard hath best deserved of all my sons—

But is your grace dead, my lord of Somerset? (1.1.10-18)

While it is like the vaunting of Edward and Montague, Richard's gesture suggests a self-conscious theatricality on an entirely different scale. And, while there is an element of talent here—it takes some skill, presumably, to hide a head—this is hardly the work of a genius. Richard's metier, rather, is the shocking special effect, the grotesque cheap trick which momentarily wows the groundlings, but which not only does not amount to brilliant acting, but which should not fool anyone—although he fools York, we know that Richard did not, in fact, even kill Somerset.

As an astute theatre goer such as Prince Hamlet might say, Richard here imitates humanity abominably because he is an abominable human. He is, in this respect, affiliated with scenical strutters Clifford and Warwick, and so a similarly ironic and detached perspective on Richard's performance is needed to grasp Shakespeare's castigatory point: far from wanting us to revel in Richard's histrionic "brilliance," the playwright wants us to reflect on the astonishing fact that, despite his bad acting, Richard wins the boasting contest. Rather than rebuking Richard for his disgraceful violation of aristocratic decorum, the older men eagerly fall in with Richard, and the real horror is the way Richard's debased gesture initiates a broader spectacle, transforming the manly comparison of military prowess into a degraded and monstrously child-like playing.[8] This is meant to be surreal, vertiginous even, but not beyond meaningful interpretation: to use Foxe's terms again, the marvel or mystery here is not Richard's skill, but the spirit in which he, the future king, and the rest of the English nobility seem determined to "set themselves forth to be a mocking-stock unto the whole world" by playing puppets with a

bloody severed head. This opening spectacle, in which the Yorks very effectively dramatize their own degraded natures, is repeated in an even more expansive emblem of demonic playing in Act Two, with the discovery of Clifford's corpse.

Although easily missed in reading, the dramatic impact of this macabre scene, its grotesque comedy, derives from the way the mistreatment of the corpse takes the form of an obviously theatrical clowning. We have just seen a horrible puppet-show using a human head, and now we watch as the natural rulers of society take turns railing at and "torturing" a dead body:

> Richard: 'Tis but policy to counterfeit
> Because he would avoid such bitter taunts
> Which in the time of death he gave our father.
> George: If thou think'st, vex him with eager words.
> Richard: Clifford, ask mercy and obtain no grace.
> Edward: Clifford, repent in bootless penitence.
> Warwick: Clifford, devise excuses for thy faults.
> George: While we devise fell tortures for thy faults. (2.6.65-72)

While Shakespeare's use of stichomythia suggests that, like Clifford earlier, the men are reveling in the role of Senecan revengers, the gross physicality of the action, especially the efforts of the actor playing Clifford to "counterfeit" death, are more redolent of a kind of violent clowning. What is also remarkable is that in their efforts to make a spectacle of Clifford, the Yorks assume the parts of priests in a degraded parody of the sacrament of penance. We seem to be back with Bale's stage devils, vice-like clowns playing priests in a mock-religious ceremony; or, more to the point, we seem to have come within the orbit of Foxe's exposure of "popish" degradation.

While this might seem far-fetched, the Yorks' seriocomic raging at Clifford's corpse seems to imitate Foxe's anatomy of the degraded spectacle of "popish penance"

(3.598gloss), another species of religious persecution which, like the ceremony of priestly degradation, is described in detail in the section of Acts and Monuments dealing with the civil war era. In the same section in which he describes the degrading of Huss, Taylor, and Rennes, Foxe vividly describes a series of harsh public penances exacted in England during the reign of Henry VI:

> The like also (albeit somewhat more sharp) happened unto John Finch who…being suspected of heresy, was attached at Ipswich...and brought before the bishop there, before whom he, being convicted of the like articles, as all the others before him, was enjoined penance, namely, three disciplinings at solemn procession about the cathedral church of Norwich three several Sundays; and three disciplinings about the marketplace of Norwich three principal market-days; his head, neck, and feet, being bare, and his body covered only with a short shirt or vesture, having in his hands a taper of wax of a pound weight, which, the next Sunday after his penance, he should offer to the Trinity; and that for the space of three years after, every Ash-Wednesday and Maundy-Thursday, he should appear in the cathedral church at Norwich, before the bishop...to do open penance among the other penitentiaries for his offences. (3.598)

While Foxe's images of popish penance are not expressly mirrored in the battlefield high jinx of Richard and his brothers, what does resonate is the precise dramatic irony which structures both spectacles of penitential enormity. For Foxe, the palpable irony is that in devising "fell tortures" to make a spectacle of dissent, the priests dramatize their own Antichristian apostasy. Like the degradation ritual, Foxe's "popish penance" is a form of failed theatrics which, in the larger theatre of Acts and Monuments, confirms that such reactionary religious persecution is an image of Antichristian modernity. By evoking the spectre of enforced confession and torture, Shakespeare's staging of battlefield atrocities not only recalls Foxe's "unsavoury and heathenish doctrine of penance"(1.77), it does so in a way which hinges on a distinctively Foxean dramatic irony: Richard, emerging here not merely as an actor, but as an actor-manager and impresario, usurps the stage of

chivalric combat in an attempt to fashion an arena for him and his "brothers" to play in; however, rather than participating in any such debased playing, Shakespeare's theatre frames and exposes this demonic performance for the degraded spectacle that it is.

Although it is worthwhile to consider whether Shakespeare's audience might have "caught" the allusion to penance in this scene as an image of popery, what resonates more largely with Foxe here and throughout the play is the degree to which such seriocomically grotesque playing with heads and corpses creates what we have called Wonder in the form of a composite figure of ungrammatical Enormity. Simply put, this lurid stage business is hard to digest in a serious historical representation of battle, and so the audience has either to dismiss it as farce or try to figure out what its serious import might be. It is in this sense that such histrionics can be compared with several vividly drawn episodes in Acts and Monuments, episodes in which the spirit of Antichristian persecution takes the form of a similar necrophilic theatricality. Foxe recounts, to cite one key example, how the authorities exhumed the bones of Wycliff in order to burn them:

> What Heraclitus would not laugh, or what Democritus would not weep, to see these so sage and reverend Catos occupying their heads to take up a poor man's body, so long dead and buried before, by the space of forty-one years; and yet peradventure, they were not able to find his right bones, but took up another body, and so of a catholic made a heretic! (3.95-6)

Displaying a perfect command of rhetorical irony, Foxe creates a kind of aporia by detailing how the attempt to make a solemn spectacle of the public exhumation and posthumous burning of Wycliff's remains results in a remarkable instance of failed theatrics. Instead of demonstrating their righteousness and Wycliff's heresy, the prelates degrade themselves in a grotesque comic spectacle. Accompanied by a woodcut image

depicting ghoulish priests digging out the bones and burning them, Foxe's satire on the "mad folly" (3.95) of the priests is meant to be both comic and horrifying, recalling as it inevitably does the terrible violence that was done to the live bodies of the martyrs. Viewed in terms of this centrally Foxean intertext, the Yorks' treatment of Clifford's corpse reveals the presence of unquenchable spirit of supramundane violence and hatred which is anything but humorous. Like the priests in Foxe's narrative, Richard would bring Clifford back to life in order to rail at, and then silence, him again:

> What not an oath? Nay then, the world goes hard
> When Clifford cannot spare his friends an oath.
> I know by that he's dead; and, by my soul,
> If this right hand would buy two-hours' life,
> That I in all despite might rail at him,
> This hand should chop it off and, with the issuing blood,
> Stifle the villain whose unstaunched thirst
> York and young Rutland could not satisfy (2.6.77-84)

Richard is acting here—he would no more cut off his own hand than let Lady Anne kill him—but, at the same time, his theatrical raging is "true" in the dramatically ironic way it reveals how his own violent desires are "unstaunched" by Clifford's death. Transcending any natural grief or anger, Richard's urge to resurrect Clifford in order to "stifle" him again is a riddling signpost—what kind of man is this?—which seems designed to invite interpretation in light of Foxe's anatomy of Antichristian enormity. Consider, for example, Foxe's comments on the "deluded cruelty" of the persecutors of Cranmer:

> I think there was never cruelty more notably or better in time deluded and deceived; for it is not to be doubted that they looked for a glorious victory and a perpetual triumph...[so they] began to let down their ears, to rage, to fret and fume; and so much the more because they could not revenge their grief—for they could no longer threaten or hurt him. For the most miserable man in the world can die but once...he could not be killed twice of them. And so, when they could do nothing else of him,

> yet, lest they should say nothing, they ceased not to object unto him his falsehood and dissimulation. (8:90)

With its subtle evocation of the theatrical Vice, Foxe's remarks provide another resonant intertext for Shakespeare's staging. The point is not, of course, that Clifford is a proto-Protestant martyr, but that, much like the ghoulish "Catos" Foxe catches in the act of degrading one of their own, Richard finds no satisfaction in military triumph and cannot "revenge his grief" on Clifford. The result is the "opprobrious contumelies" of Clifford's "penance" and a powerful theatrical symbol of the spirit of Antichrist.

*

Although he excels at bad acting, and will dominate the stage in Richard III, Richard's "scenes of death" are more than matched on the battlefield of 3HenryVI by Queen Margaret's mock crucifixion of the Duke of York. This scene has long been recognized as an intensely metatheatrical parody of the biblical crucifixion; beyond merely alluding to the sacred drama of Christ's murder, Shakespeare makes the theatricality of the murder the key to the relationship between York's death and the scriptural model. More than any other single dramatic climax in the earlier plays, it is the spectacle of York's murder which seems to fulfill Carlisle's prophetic vision of England as a modern Golgotha, and so it is remarkable how Foxe's martyrological narratives provide Shakespeare with a religious-historical framework within which to work.[9] Although transposed, so to speak, into the more Shakespearean key of military history, the spiritual significance of this scene is corroborated, intertextually, by virtue of the way it replicates Foxe's anatomy of Antichristian persecution almost seamlessly. Thus, in her

play, Margaret consciously evokes the christological pattern in order to mock York's earlier pretensions:

> Come make him stand upon this molehill here
> That raught at mountains with outstretched arms,
> Yet parted but the shadow with his hand.
> What, was it you that would be England's king? (1.4.67-70)

Her satire fails, however, because it is embedded in the same larger pattern of Foxean dramatic irony which we have been considering. Margaret wants to make a spectacle of York's guilt by having him play a mad man, to make him "stamp, rave, and fret" or, at the very least, to make him "grieve, to make [her] merry" (1.4.86-91). As Anne Righter brilliantly noted, there is a certain rationale behind Margaret's dramaturgy: she casts York as a Lord of Misrule because this is, in a sense, what he has been; what Margaret has not witnessed, however, is York's transformation on the battlefield. Like Foxe's absurd priests, Margaret literally has the wrong man.

York's initial silence, part of his explicit refusal to play the role assigned to him in Margaret's play—"Thou would'st be feed, I see, to make me sport"(1.4.92)—is a crucial element in this scene, one which Shakespeare expresses in terms which seem designed to recollect not festive misrule but "conflict and defiance" in Foxe's theatre of martyrdom: "What, hath thy fiery heart so parch'd thine entrails/ That not a tear can fall for Rutland's death?"(1.4.87-8). This combination of bitterly blasphemous taunting with images of blood, fire, and parched entrails, set against York's resolute perseverance, is unmistakably Foxean. Moreover, York's impressive "orisons," which are held back until Margaret's theatrical raging has spent itself, recall the many verbal triumphs of Foxe's martyrs. Most importantly, rather than directly recalling the Biblical crucifixion, in the

arresting speech which Greene found so offensively good, York castigates Margaret as a "she-wolf...but worse than wolves" and "a tiger's heart in a woman's hide" (1.4.111; 137) in a way which indirectly alludes to Christ's pathos by echoing literally countless moments in the Acts and Monuments where either Foxe or the martyrs denounce the persecutors as "murdering wolves in sheeps' clothing" (3.328gloss). For example, set as he is on the stage of Margaret's demonic ceremonialism, buffeted, mocked, and replete with his own paper crown, it seems impossible not to "see" the spiritual affinity linking Shakespeare's York with the exemplary spirit of Huss, Foxe's great scaffold orator: "Then he (according as the manner of the ceremony is), going up to the top of the scaffold, being full of tears, spake unto the people" (3.492).

While Foxe is neither Shakespeare's only model for copious and emotionally charged set speeches of defiant pathos, nor the direct "source" for York's powerfully moving "orisons," Acts and Monuments is a crucial intertext here. To see this, we need only compare York's attack on Margaret with the voice of Foxe's prefatory "Address to the Persecutors of God's Truth":

> [S]ee and behold, I beseech you, here in this story, the pitiful slaughter of your butchery! Behold your own handiwork! consider the number, almost out of number, of so many silly and simple lambs of Christ, whose blood you have sought and sucked; whose lives you have vexed; whose bodies you have slain, racked, and tormented; some also you have cast on dunghills, to be devoured of fowls and dogs; without mercy, without measure, without all sense of humanity! See, I say, and behold here present before your eyes, the heaps of slain bodies, of so many men and women, both old, young , children, infants, new born, married, unmarried, wives, widows, maids, blind men, lame men, whole men...whose wounds, yet bleeding before the face of God, cry vengeance! (1.xii)

York dies, finally, with a pious exclamation which could have been lifted from any number of Foxe's martyrdoms: "Open thy gates of mercy, Gracious God! / My soul flies

through these wounds to seek out thee" (1.6.177-8). You can almost see the Foxean banderole.

Like Foxe's linked images of ceremonial degradation, penance, and martyrdom, Margaret's mock crucifixion is spiritually affiliated with the theatrics of the Yorks because, from the point of view of the audience, her play is a flop contained within Shakespeare's masterfully controlled scene of historical enormity: failing to make a spectacle of York, Margaret exposes the Antichristian spirit which drives her to crucify him. The devil, however, is in the details, and the pervasively Foxean irony of Shakespeare's staging is deepened by the reactions of Northumberland. Rather than being caught up in the spirit of Margaret's blasphemous playing—which is what she wants—Northumberland is literally converted by the scene of York's torment:

> Beshrew me, but his passions moves me so
> That hardly can I check my eyes from tears.
> ...
> Had he been slaughter-man to all my kin,
> I should not for my life but weep with him. (1.4.150-70)

The ironic implications of Northumberland's response are clear: Margaret wants to make a grotesque comedy of the Duke, but her audience weeps; her theatrical gesture is intended as an instrument of vengeance, but Northumberland declares that he has been moved beyond all thoughts of revenge.

Creating what I have called a powerful Theatre of Enormity, Shakespeare's staging in this climactic scene allows for a kind of transfiguration of both Margaret and York into types of the persecutor and the persecuted using a form of dramatic irony which explicitly recalls the rhetorical irony of Foxe's martyrological narratives. As we have

seen, persecution in the Acts and Monuments is almost always carried out as a public spectacle designed to ridicule the faith of the godly and to dissuade others from following their example. Equally consistently, these efforts fail: albeit in a spirit of plainness and humility which is the antithesis of the arrogant the pride of their tormentors, Foxe's martyrs rebuke their mocking antagonists and prove their spiritual strength just as the persecutors display their apostasy. Acts and Monuments is therefore as much a chronicle of the "acts" of the martyrs as it is a massive record of the failed theatrics of Antichristian persecutors. Foxe is, however, doing much more than scandalizing Roman Catholics; he is using history as a "conduit" of a profound spiritual Truth. Typically, the martyrdom of Robert Samuel forcefully illuminates the truth not only of his reformed beliefs, but of the worldly dominion of Satan and of Christ's ultimately triumphant sacrifice. His death appalls and horrifies, but also profoundly enlightens those who are graced with the ability truthfully to witness his martyrdom:

> The report goeth among some that were there present, and saw him burn, that his body in burning did shine as bright and white as new tried silver in the eyes of them that stood by: as I am informed by some which were there, and did behold the sight. (7.374)

As in the Golden Legend, Foxe's readers are encouraged to witness a miracle and a mystery here. The miracle is the superabundant Grace which is manifested in the extraordinary courage and perseverance of the martyr; the mystery is the apocalyptic spiritual reality—the loosing out of Satan—which underlines all such persecution. Although we never lose sight of the particular man, Robert Samuel, we also see here, literally, the power of Christ triumphing over the, equally literal, raging hatred of Satan.[10] For Foxe modern history amounts to a succession of mock-crucifixions in which vice-like

tyrants foolishly mistake Christ for a criminal and put him to death in absurdly self-incriminating spectacles of ritualized violence. For all their obvious differences, the way that Shakespeare's York and Foxe's Huss "counterfeit Christ" in a way which all but ruins the spectacle of their would-be detractors would have enabled Elizabethan audiences to read this scene in Foxean terms. Moreover, if, as Righter suggests, this scene "haunted the London audience"(120), this is surely due to the way Shakespeare's portrayal of this raging Queen tapped into one of his own historical culture's most frightening memories: the murderous reign of Mary Tudor.

Like Richard's raging at Clifford, Margaret's failed theatrics resonate with Foxe's account of the martyrdom of Cranmer, a key figure in the Marian persecutions and, according to Foxe, "almost the middle-man of all the martyrs that were burned" (8:90). From the outset, Foxe represents Cranmer's death as a theatrical spectacle stage-managed, so to speak, by Queen Mary. He relates how the Queen and her clerical minions, having coerced Cranmer into recanting his beliefs, plan to dramatize his capitulation and return to the church. There is to be a public spectacle co-starring Dr. Cole, a cleric who, like Cranmer, was "ready to play his part" (8.83). Foxe sees Cole as an actor not only because he will be participating in the spectacle, but also because the whole public recantation is itself a farce:

> In the mean-time, while these things were adoing (as I said) in the prison among the doctors, the queen, taking secret counsel how to dispatch Cranmer out of the way...appointed Dr. Cole, and secretly gave him a commandment, that against the 21st of march, he should prepare a funeral sermon for Cranmer's burning. (8.83)

Cranmer, however, has his own script and plans to upstage his enemies, using their play to recant his recantation:

> But yet the archbishop being not ignorant whereunto their secret devices tended, and thinking that the time was at hand, in which he could no longer dissemble the profession of his faith with Christ's people, he put secretly in his bosom his prayer with his exhortations written in another paper, which he minded to recite to the people, before he should make the last profession of his faith, fearing lest, if they had heard the profession of his faith first, they would not afterward have suffered him to exhort the people. (8.83-4)

In the event, Cranmer is "set up upon a stage" (8.84gloss) where he makes—Foxe says—a wonderfully sincere demonstration of his true faith. Others in the audience were, however, decidedly hostile:

> and when he began to speak more of the sacrament and of the papacy, some of them began to cry out, yelp and bawl, and specially Dr. Cole cried out upon him, 'Stop the heretics mouth and take him away.'...and then Cranmer being pulled down from the stage, was led to the fire, accompanied by those friars, vexing, troubling, and threatening him most cruelly. (8.85)

The spectacle does not of course end with Cranmer being pulled from the stage. Rather, his rhetorical victory leads to the inevitable climax of the narrative: the violent spectacle of public burning, and Foxe of course provides an account of Cranmer's last "act" in the graphic style which has made him famous.

It is, as I have been arguing in this chapter, difficult to overstate Foxe's use of the theatrical metaphor in this paradigmatic account of martyrdom:

> There was a stage set over against the pulpit, of a mean height from the ground where Cranmer had his standing, waiting until Dr. Cole made him ready to his sermon...The lamentable case and sight of that man gave a sorrowful spectacle to all Christian eyes that beheld him. He that late was archbishop, metropolitain, and primate of England, and the king's privy councillor, being now in a bare and ragged gown, and ill-favouredly clothed, with an old square cap, exposed to the contempt of all men, did admonish men not only of his own calamity, but also of their state and fortune. For who would not pity his case, and bewail his fortune, and might not fear his own chance, to see such a prelate, so grave a councillor, and of so long continued honour, after so many dignities...judged to die and in so painful a death to

> end his life, and now presently from such fresh ornaments, to descend to such a vile and ragged apparel. (8.84)

The repeated emphasis on Cranmer's "steadfastness," the use of "ragged apparel" to degrade him, the way he admonishes his persecutors of their "state and fortune," the timing of his "sermon," and his dramatically highlighted "last words," combine to make a striking intertext for the spectacle of York's mock crucifixion in 3HenryVI.

Foxe's narrative represents Cranmer's execution as a spectacle of violent mockery which works, despite the best efforts of the Queen and Cole, as a kind of instrumental drama which creates a world of persecutors and their prey, lambs and wolves. As suggested above, the underlying pattern for Foxe's ironic use of the theatrical metaphor is the biblical crucifixion itself. Just as the priests who burn Wycliff's remains inadvertently reveal their Antichristian character by playing the roles of "Pharisees and sepulchre-knights," so too is Queen Mary linked, typologically, with the persecution of Jesus:

> all readers and rulers may not only see how the Lord did work against her [i.e. Queen Mary] there-for, but also by her may be advertised and learn what a perilous thing it is for men and women in authority, upon blind zeal and opinion, to stir up persecution...lest it prove in the end with them, (as it did here), that while they think to persecute heretics, they stumble on the same stone as did the jews, in persecuting Christ and his true members to death, to their own confusion and destruction. (8.628)

Mary is scandalized, stumbling on the same stone as the biblical Jews, Foxe says, because her England is morally charged ground: it is, typologically speaking, quite literally a modern Golgotha. Reading Shakespeare's dramaturgy in light of this intertext, we can see how Shakespeare translated the infamous story of York's mock crucifixion into a dramatic emblem of civil war which resonates with Foxe's idea of history as a pageant of

spectacular murders linked typologically with the biblical crucifixion. At what is arguably the definitive moment in his dramatization of the civil war, Shakespeare presents his audience with a scene in which England has literally sunk into the darkness of apostasy, revealing the battlefield as "a field of Golgotha, and dead men's skulls."

*

In the Introduction to his recent Arden edition of 3HenryVI, John Cox argues that what Shakespeare "renders" in this play is

> not sacred history, which is definitively begun, directed and ended by God, with little or no consideration for the secondary dependence of one event upon another in diurnal time. Rather, Shakespeare seems to draw on the force of emotionally and morally charged events from the drama of salvation history in order to emphasize the priority of human action in dramas of secular history, where the focus is on the attempts of powerful men and women to acquire and maintain political influence, and where emotional impact seldom coincides with moral significance, as it does in the passion plays. (110)

Even in the hands of an astute reader like Cox, this secularizing approach to the staging of civil war in 3HenryVI cannot but misconstrue Shakespeare's historical argument. While representing the will to power of "powerful men and women" is no doubt Shakespeare's primary concern in this play, Cox's strict partitioning of sacred and diurnal time, of human action and providence, and of pathos and the sacred, is based on an unwarranted division of existential categories which Shakespeare seems determined to correlate.

As Cox recognizes, quoting the same passage from "The Frame of Disorder" twice in his Introduction, J.P. Brockbank was right to argue that the "catastrophes" of civil war shown in 3HenryVI are not some vaguely "inescapable inheritance from the distant past but are generated by the happenings we are made to witness"(Brockbank 98;

qtd. in Cox 64, 124). It is however precisely because of the mimetic complexity and immediacy of Shakespeare's dramaturgy that a purely "political" or naturalistic reading will not suffice to explain the extraordinary "happenings" which, as Brockbank felicitously puts it, Shakespeare makes us witness on the battlefield in this play. Focusing on the way Shakespeare represents warfare as a kind of violent histrionic playing in 3HenryVI, I have argued thus far that Shakespeare portrays civil warfare as an Enormity which goes not only beyond York versus Lancaster, but indeed far beyond the "politics" which orthodox criticism insists was Shakespeare's sole concern as a historian. Taking an essentially secular and medieval view of the horrors of civil war—William of Newburgh's view—Shakespeare purposefully re-mystifies history by using the resources of the stage to adumbrate the apocalyptic historical significance of the Wars. Without collapsing his own interpretation into Foxe's, Shakespeare energizes the Foxean intertext in order to allow playgoers to witness the horrors of the Wars of the Roses much as they witnessed sacred history in Acts and Monuments—as a sign of the times.

Looking forward to Richard III, this reading of demonic playing on the battlefield has obvious implications for Shakespeare's portrayal of a notorious tyrant whose "Kingdom is Hell," but whose acting career begins with the debased clowning of 3HenryVI. However, rather than considering how Shakespeare's strikingly metatheatrical account of Richard's exploits might be linked with Foxean history, I want to look back at Shakespeare's staging of the events which led to the outbreak of civil war in 2HenryVI. Shakespeare portrays the lead up to civil war in two broad phases or movements—the destruction of Duke Humphrey and the Cade rebellion.[11] The point I want to make about this preliminary action is very simple: albeit in different modes, these movements are

structured in terms of the same metatheatrical metaphor which is at the heart of the fighting itself. In the first phase, Shakespeare aligns his own stage with Foxe's theatre of God's judgments as a way of exposing the Satanic nature of the "political theatre" which destroys Duke Humphrey, and, in the second, he links the violent clowning of Cade and his men with the histrionic self-fashioning of Foxe's popish Antichrist in order to "mirror" the aristocratic antics of Duke Humphrey's enemies and to foreshadow the outbreak of civil war in 3HenryVI.

*

It has long been recognized that Acts and Monuments was a direct or primary source for Shakespeare's portrayal of the fall of Duke Humphrey in 2HenryVI.[12] That Foxe was one of Shakespeare's sources is a vital fact about the provenance of 2HenryVI, but what is as critically important, it seems to me, is that Shakespeare was reading Foxe when he was writing the play, and so he could see, in advance, so to speak, how his tragic portrayal of Humphrey's destruction would resonate with members of his audience raised on Acts and Monuments. What Shakespeare could not have failed to notice, in other words, is that for a sizeable portion of his Elizabethan audiences Humphrey's "tragedy" must have seemed to come right out of the pages of Foxe's book:

> Of manners he seemed meek and gentle, loving the commonwealth, a supporter of the poor commons, of wit and wisdom, discreet and studious, well affected to religion, and a friend to verity; and, no less an enemy to pride and ambition, especially in haughty prelates, which was his undoing in this present evil world. (3.712)

This is why David Riggs' argument that Shakespeare portrays Humphrey as a "new type of ideal ruler...the Ciceronian Governor," and hence that the process leading to his

murder represents Shakespeare's "most severe possible judgement on the ambitious nobles" is useful, but seems to miss the point (115-6). While it is true that Shakespeare's Duke is an exemplary figure of good government, a "shepherd" whose destruction makes room for Cade and then for all out civil war, and hence that the play renders a harsh judgement on an English court whose members are all, to varying degrees, culpable in his murder, Riggs' analysis fails to acknowledge how thoroughly Shakespeare's portrayal is based on specifically Protestant, rather than generally neoclassical, political and historical thought. Riggs neglects the extent to which the dismal story of Humphrey's fall is a tragedy structured along Foxean lines.[13] Shakespeare's "playlet," The Fall of Duke Humphrey, is as Emrys Jones argues, "tragedy in little" contained within 2HenryVI and with Humphrey as its principal character (35). Derived from Foxean history, Humphrey's fall is, more precisely, a Protestant providential tragedy in which an actively virtuous man is singled out, persecuted, and ultimately destroyed by the powers of Antichrist, powers who are, in turn, destroyed by the avenging arm of Providence.[14]

Translating Foxean categories onto the stage, Shakespeare begins the play by focusing on the "ancient bickerings" between Humphrey and the Catholic Cardinal Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, an instinctive and irreconcilable opposition between the Duke's commitment to the commonweal and the self-aggrandizing "rancor" and "fury" of this "proud prelate"(1.1.139-41). Not surprisingly, the same ancient grudge between Humphrey and Beaufort merits considerable attention and emphasis from Foxe, who includes a set-piece narrative entitled "The contention between the rich Cardinal of Winchester, and Duke Humphrey, the Good Duke of Gloucester"(3.709-711). Foxe details how, because his "noble heart...could not abide the proud doings of the Cardinal,"

Gloucester attempted to use legitimate parliamentary means to curb the Cardinal's "doings"—a catalogue of rapacious criminality which includes everything from simony to plotting sedition with foreign powers—but was defeated by the power of the churchmen and the impotence of the King, factors which are, for Foxe, two sides of the same apostate coin:

> When the King heard these accusations, he committed the hearing thereof to his council, whereof the most part were spiritual persons. So, what for fear, and what for favour, the matter was winked at, and dallied out, and nothing said thereunto; and a fair countenance was made to the duke, as though no displeasure had been taken, nor malice borne in these spiritual stomachs. But, shortly after, the smoke hereof, not able to keep in any longer within the spiritual breasts of these charitable churchmen, burst out in flames of mischief. (711)

Evoking a startling image of the Antichristian "charity" which resides in "spiritual" men who are animated, internally, by the fires of persecution, Foxe brilliantly deploys the art of "politic" history—the skeptical analysis of the inner workings of power at court—to create apocalyptic meaning: this is realpolitik viewed through the lens of the "loosing out of Satan."[15]

Reproducing Foxe's analysis, Shakespeare shows how Humphrey's emphatic response to the terms of Henry's ill-conceived nuptials—he is nearly overcome by the "common grief of all the land," and then he tries to engage the other "pillars of the state" in an attempt to reform the situation—leads to the formation of a cabal united solely by their desire to destroy him (1.1.50-74). While Cardinal Beaufort does not dominate the cabal, it is his dubious rhetoric which leads to its formation in the first place and, dressed in suitably lavish red Cardinal's robes, Shakespeare's unambiguously Catholic villain is an obvious cynosure for a Protestant audience well versed in the symbolism of religious

polemic.[16] Shakespeare knew this, of course, and so we lose both his intentions and his audience's response to the play if, as Riggs does, we allow Beaufort's religious identity to dissolve into the cabal of ambitious aristocrats. Rather, Shakespeare's Beaufort is one of Foxe's "spiritual" men, and Shakespeare's emphasis on Humphrey's "popish" antagonist in turn defines the spiritual nature of the cabal which forms to destroy him, just as it very clearly establishes Duke Humphrey in the Foxean role of Godly magistrate. This impression is powerfully confirmed in the ensuing action.

Following the brief portrait of the Duke's character quoted above, Foxe recounts in lively detail the "false miracle" at Saint Alban's, a story which was Shakespeare's direct source for the Saunders Simpcox episode in Act Two. For Foxe, Humphrey's exposure of the fraudulent Catholic miracle illustrates the Duke's "discreet wisdom and singular prudence," showing how he "had not only a head to discern and dissever truth from forged and feigned hypocrisy; but diligence likewise...to reform that which was amiss" (3.712-13). As we have seen, according to Foxe such qualities had been almost, but not totally, extinguished in England at this time, and so the Duke invites a striking comparison with those biblical stand-outs who

> have not bowed their knees unto Baal, as in times past the Pharasiacal people had their Nicodemus and Gamaliel: although that these kind of people are very rare and hard to be found; and few of them, either for fear of peril, or loss of substance, dare openly profess that which they think. (3.724)

However, while celebrating and commemorating this rare virtue, and using it to prove that there were Protestants before Luther, Foxe's also uses Humphrey's singularity to exemplify one of the great tragic themes of his apocalyptic history: in "this evil world,"

shaped as it is by the resurgently modern power of Satan, the inevitable fate of actively virtuous men like Humphrey is antagonism, isolation, and persecution:

> [T]he nature of true virtue is commonly such, that, as the flame ever beareth his smoke, and the body his shadow, so the brightness of virtue never blazeth, but hath some disdain or envy waiting upon it...this good duke of Gloucester, albeit being both the king's sole uncle, and having so many well-willers through the whole realm, yet lacked not he his Satan, lacked not he his secret maligners. Of whom, specially, was Henry Beaufort, cardinal, bishop of Winchester. (3.714)[17]

Although Foxe's Humphrey is not associated with religious dissent, and not quite a full-fledged martyr, the blazing imagery in this passage again clearly situates his trial and political assassination within the apocalyptic pattern of satanic persecution and godly martyrdom. Singled out, persecuted, and then murdered by satanic "secret maligners," Gloucester is a key figure in Foxe's argument that the era of Lancastrian rule was dominated by apostasy and "the grievous and sundry persecutions raised up by Antichrist"(3.582). He is, moreover, a tragic exemplar of Foxe's apocalyptic understanding of the limits of virtuous political action in the modern world. This, Foxe says, with a tragically providential grip on realpolitik history as firm as Machiavelli's, is what really happens, not what ought to happen—and sometimes God takes notice.[18]

Again like Foxe, Shakespeare does not define Humphrey's death as martyrdom per se, but his staging of Gloucester's destruction at the hands of the venomous cabal led by Winchester is pure Foxean tragedy. The obvious dramatic irony behind Salisbury's attempt to help Gloucester by joining forces with the "secret maligner" York contributes to Humphrey's rapid spiritual isolation, as does his return home to find his wife dreaming of sedition. Even the exposure of Simpcox and his wife as perpetrators of "popish" fraud—which is a triumph of sorts for Humphrey—shows him to be alone in the

kingdom, surrounded on all sides by a mounting apostasy which can be exposed, but not opposed or reformed in any effective way. Foxe's tragic theme also seems to be behind the striking anticlimax Shakespeare weaves into the action of Act 2, scene 1, in which he anticipates a dramatic physical confrontation between Humphrey and Beaufort—and presumably a victory for the Duke—only to have Humphrey "vanquished" by the news that his wife has been caught "practicing" sedition with priests, witches, and conjured demons.[19] And, with respect to isolation, the clinching irony is of course that Humphrey's only real supporter in the kingdom is King Henry, a pious impotent whose "mind," as Queen Margaret puts it, is "all bent" to popish "holiness":

> To number Ave-Maries on his beads;
> His champions are the prophets and apostles,
> His weapons holy saws of sacred writ,
> His study is his tilt-yard, and his loves
> Are brazen images of canonized saints.
> I would the College of Cardinals
> Would choose him Pope and carry him to Rome
> And set the Triple Crown upon his head:
> That were a fit state for his holiness. (1.3.56-65)

Foxean tragic history is also behind the oddly passive way the Duke responds to the mounting threats to his life in the play. While Humphrey's evolving attitude appears unfocused—he moves from righteous anger, to tears, to the optimistic belief that his own virtue and the law will secure him from harm—the overall effect is of a curiously submissive, even pathetic, response from this once fiery and aggressive Duke. Humphrey's unlooked-for docility seems to dramatize Foxe's epithet, "meek and humble," and can be compared with the paradigmatically passive resistance displayed by Foxe's martyrs. As we will consider more fully later in relation to John of Gaunt, a

character who is Duke Humphrey's spiritual heir even if he is the bastard Cardinal Beaufort's biological father, the peculiar combination of equanimity, emotionalism, and eloquence which defines Humphrey's tragic character is clearly traceable to the distinctively Protestantized "apatheia" which was, as Patrick Collinson has shown, one of the definitive features of Foxean spiritual biography (1983, 513).

Finally, Shakespeare's language, replete as it is with images of ravening wolves and sheep, foxes and lambs, snares and innocent birds, and in particular the striking slaughter-house imagery used by the King to lament Gloucester's fall, implicates the entire proceedings against Humphrey within the Foxean paradigm of Antichristian persecutors and their prey:

> Thou never didst them wrong nor no man wrong.
> And as the butcher takes away the calf
> And binds the wretch, and beats it when it strains,
> Bearing it to the bloody slaughter-house,
> Even so remorseless have they borne him hence;
> And as the dam runs lowing up and down,
> Looking the way her harmless young one went,
> And can do naught but wail her darling's loss,
> Even so myself bewails good Gloucester's case
> With sad unhelpful tears, and with dimmed eyes
> Look after him, and cannot do him good,
> So mighty are his vowèd enemies. (3.1.209-20)

We will consider the Foxean implications of such butchery more fully in relation to Cade, but the powerful irony here is that the apostate King does not in fact "look after" Gloucester, and so while Henry's recognition of the spiritual forces at work is impressively Foxean in its own right, his feckless histrionics are at the heart of Shakespeare's brilliantly theatrical interpretation of an era of apostate rule and the kind of

political society which flows from it—or rather into the void which it creates—and the consequences of such satanic politics for a man like Duke Humphrey.[20]

The wolf, as Foxe says of Thomas of Rennes, sits in judgement, and the lamb is accused: if there is any doubt that Shakespeare is generating Foxean tragic history in this phase of the play, it is dispelled by the dénouement. That is, while modern critics have tried to deny this, the immediate and spectacular end of Humphrey's chief enemies is an unmistakable sign of providential justice at work. [21] These providential scenes also tie the action securely to Foxean tragedy. A cynosure in the play, the Cardinal's death in particular must be understood, as Foxe elaborates at length in his account, as sure sign of the "judgement of God upon those who persecuted the Duke" (3.715gloss). The Cardinal's immediate response to the news of Gloucester's death—"God's secret judgement: I did dream tonight/The Duke was dumb and could not speak a word" (3.2.31-32)—not only introduces and implants the idea of providential judgement; it is a blasphemous "in-joke" which seems to pull God's vengeance down upon the prelate. With breakneck immediacy, the Cardinal sickens to the point of speechlessness and then has to be helped off-stage by Somerset (3.2.185sd). Moments later, Vaux comes onstage to report that Beaufort is "at the point of death":

> For suddenly a grievous sickness took him
> That makes him gasp, and stare, and catch the air,
> Blaspheming God and cursing men on earth. (3.2.373-6)

Shakespeare completes the scene by having the Cardinal "discovered in his bed raving and staring as if he were mad"(3.3.0sd):

> If thou beest Death, I'll give thee England's treasure
> Enough to purchase such another island,

So thou wilt let me live and feel no pain. (3.3.2-4)

Failing to buy his way out of Hell, Winchester dies in a paroxysm of defensive pleadings, guilty admissions, and the phantasms of "black despair"(23):

Bring me unto my trial when you will.
Died he not in his bed? Where should he die?
Can I make men live whe'er they will or no?
O torture me no more, I will confess.
Alive again? Then show me where he is.
I'll give a thousand pound to look upon him.
He hath no eyes! The dust hath blinded them.
Comb down his hair—look, look, it stands upright,
Like lime-twigs set to catch my wingèd soul.
Give me some drink, and bid the apothecary
Bring the strong poison that I bought of him. (8-18)

While there are perhaps hints of a more sublime tragic vision here, this "bad death" comes right out of Foxe's argument about "condign punishment" for "bloody cruelty"(717):

> the Cardinal, who was the principal artificer and ringleader of all this mischief, was suffered of God no longer to live....What he himself spake on his death-bed, for example to others, I thought not best to pretermit; who, hearing that he should die, and that there was no remedy, murmured and grudged, wherefore he should die having so much riches, saying, That if the whole realm would save his life, he was able either by policy to get it, or by riches to buy it; adding and saying moreover, "Fie," quoth he, "will not death be hired? Will money do nothing? (3.716)

Foxe's perfunctory account of Winchester's providential death here clearly resonates with Shakespeare's memorable portrayal of the unregenerate Cardinal's deathbed murmuring and grudging, but the fully Foxean flavour of Shakespeare's staging emerges in comparison with Foxe's lengthy discussion of providential revenge, "The Severe Punishment of God upon the Persecutors of his People and Enemies of his Word...," a

sermon-like essay which functioned as a kind of conclusion to the Acts and Monuments as a whole. Here, a description of what Foxe calls Winchester's "stinking death" takes its place in a catalogue of "the dreadful taking away and murrain of so many persecuting bishops, so many bloody promoters and malicious adversaries...and without man's hand but only by the secret working's of God's just judgement"(8.667). Stretching over forty-five pages in the modern edition, Foxe's compendium of "providential joke[s], whereby God revenges the deaths of his Saints by inflicting on sinners and persecutors ends that mirror their own deeds"(Woolf, "Rhetoric of Martyrdom" 10), provides a more deeply resonant intertext for both the horrors of divine punishment and the pointed ironies in Shakespeare's staging. For instance, Foxe recounts the providential punishment of the Marian Bishop Morgan, who was,

> stricken by God's hand after a strange sort, that his meat would not go down, but rise and pick-up again, sometimes at his mouth, sometimes blown out of his nose, most horrible to behold; and so continued unto his death (8.629).

This gruesome tale, Foxe says, "brings me in remembrance of"

> Justice Morgan, who sat in the death of the Lady Jane [i.e. Grey] and not long after the same fell mad, and was bereft of his wits; and so died, having ever in his mouth, "Lady Jane, Lady Jane" (8.629).

Here madness replaces physical revenge as God's method and, in a fashion echoed by Shakespeare, Morgan's career as a persecutor is mirrored in the way he is "haunted" by his victim at the end. As Warren notes (3.3.16n), Winchester's terrified vision of Gloucester's limed hair recalls earlier images of snares and limed bushes, such as the plan to ensnare Gloucester through Eleanor and her warning that "impious Beaufort that false priest" has "limed bushes to betray thy wings"(2.4.45-6). Moreover, the arresting

impression created by having Beaufort "discovered" in the same fashion, and same bed, as the murdered Duke is an ironically theatrical flourish which is as much Foxe's as it is Shakespeare's.

Finally, what is distinctively Foxean about Shakespeare's staging is the way he emphasizes the speed of God's retribution for Gloucester's murder. While this unmistakable signifier of divine intervention is not unique to Foxe, he consistently stresses the immediacy of providential revenge: a "cruel chancellor" is "stricken with a sudden death" and we see "the sudden death of Berry, a commissary" (8.629)[22]. More relevantly, God's timing is also dramatized in Foxe's account of the death of Beaufort's namesake, the 16th-century Bishop of Winchester Stephen Gardiner, in a scene from God's theatre of judgement whose pointed ironies need little comment:

> The same day, when bishop Ridley and Master Latimer suffered at Oxford (being about the 19th day of October), there came into the house of Stephen Gardiner the old duke of Norfolk...The old aged duke, there waiting and tarrying for his dinner, the bishop, being not yet disposed to dine, deferred the time to three or four of the clock at afternoon. At length, about four of the clock, cometh his servant, posting in all possible speed from Oxford, bringing intelligence to the bishop what he had heard and seen: of whom the said bishop diligently inquiring the truth of the matter...that fire most certainly was set unto them, cometh out rejoicing to the duke, "Now," saith he, "let us go to dinner." Whereupon, they being set down, meat immediately was brought, and the bishop began merrily to eat. But what followed? The bloody tyrant had not eaten a few bits, but the sudden stroke of God's terrible hand fell upon him in such sort, as immediately he was taken from the table, and brought to his bed; where he continued the space of fifteen days in such intolerable anguish and torments, that all the meanwhile, during those fifteen days, he could not avoid, by urine or otherwise, anything that he received: wherein his body being miserably inflamed within, (who had inflamed so many good martyrs before), was brought to a wretched end (8.592-93).

Like Gardiner, a "spiritual" fellow-traveler who dies "stinkingly and unrepentantly" in his bed (8.293), Shakespeare's Bishop of Winchester "dies and makes no sign"(3.3.29), and

Henry's chorus-like commentary—"Ah, what a sign it is of evil life/ Where death's approach is seen so terrible"(3.3.5-6)—reproduces the point of Foxe's peroration on divine judgement:

> What else be all these, I say, but plain visible arguments, testimonies, and demonstrations even from heaven, against the pope, his murdering religion, and his bloody doctrine? For who can deny their doings not to be good, whose end is so evil? (8.667)

From the perspective of the Acts and Monuments then, a perspective which seems at this point indistinguishable from that of the play, Cardinal Beaufort's extraordinary providential demise confirms that he is a Persecutor, an Antichristian figure whose distinct historical identity underlies and defines the whole process against Humphrey as an apocalyptic tragedy.

*

Far beyond an interesting minor "source" for the Simpcox episode, Foxean history is central to the meaning of the first phase of 2HenryVI because it defines the nature of Humphrey's tragedy—we are, it seems fair to say, lost in the play without it. Shakespeare is, however, not merely redacting Foxe, and we need to pursue the Foxean intertext even further to gain a full sense of the way it contributes to Shakespeare's complex metatheatrical argument. In a way consistent with the second level of metatheatrical assertion discussed above, Shakespeare reproduces the providential structure of Foxean tragedy in order to produce a kind of scaffold upon which to explore, from a distinctively theatrical perspective, the reality of Antichristian politics which he found adumbrated in Foxe's book. Containing them within his own version of the paradigmatic "Theatre of God's Judgments," so to speak, Shakespeare lets loose his vice-like stage devils for the

first time in what amounts to a linked series of metatheatrical scenes of modern Antichristian enormity. While this is an admittedly fanciful-sounding conception, it is a natural extension of the idea that Shakespeare was trying to find a way to capture a complex historical reality—the lead-up to the horrors of the Wars of the Roses—in a way which demonstrated the legitimacy of the stage as a vehicle for serious history. Responding to Foxe's apocalyptic interpretation of the era with his own resonantly ironic stage metaphor, Shakespeare dramatizes the first phase of England's terrible decline into civil war by showing how the once stable political world, the commonwealth that Duke Humphrey is powerless to defend, is almost usurped and replaced by a circus of preposterously vice-like playing: Duke Humphrey is murdered by actors, but like Foxe's martyrs in Acts and Monuments, he triumphs in Shakespeare's theatre.

This metatheatrical theme is first sounded by York in the arrestingly vice-like soliloquy discussed earlier, and York's explicit role-playing is echoed in the following scene by Eleanor, whose theatrical exploits will, as Foxe says of the Roman theatre of persecution, turn "all things…bottom upwards":

> 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 tedious 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)

This speech leads directly to the demonic theatrics of the conjuring scene in 1.4, and from there to the "political theatre" of the Bury Parliament and Humphrey's murder, but I want

to look first at the Saunders Simpcox episode, a theatrical episode which Shakespeare derived directly from Acts and Monuments.

Staging this comic interlude as a lively "procession," replete with music, props, and the clownish antics of Simpcox, and presented directly to the King (2.1.65-7sd), Shakespeare transforms Foxe's ironically stately image of a fraudulent "miracle solemnly rung, and 'Te Deum' sung"(713), into a scene redolent of popular pageantry and stagecraft. While he is still presenting an image of "popish" error, Shakespeare seems deliberately to be invoking the familiar iconoclastic association between Catholic devotion, idolatry, and low mimetic theatre or "maumetry," in order to expose not Foxe's "crafty workings of false miracles in the clergy" (3.712), but rather the willful credulity of natural leaders, the King especially, who are deluded by such a craft-less theatrical stunt. Simpcox's story is an obvious hoax, and yet everyone in the kingdom—except Humphrey—seems determined to credit the fraudulent miracle. While the episode is lively and comic, it seems designed to contribute to, rather than alleviate, the Duke's tragic isolation. In this light, Shakespeare seems to contrast Simpcox's artless theatrical "miracle" with Duke Humphrey's artful attempt to create a kind of counter-spectacle which exposes not just Simpcox's fraudulent popery, but its more deadly aristocratic counterpart:

> Gloucester: Sayst thou me so? What colour is this cloak of?
> Simpcox: Red, master, red as blood.
> Gloucester: Why that's well said. What colour is my gown of?
> Simpcox: Black, forsooth, coal-black as jet (2.1.107-110).

Touching Beaufort's sumptuously red Cardinal's attire and then his own plain black robe, Humphrey's deftly staged-managed point here is not just about literal blindness; it is

about the relationship between magisterial blindness, illegitimate power, and bloodshed. And, like Simpcox's spectacle, this scene is aimed directly at the King. The terrible irony, however, is that whereas Humphrey's Balean exposure of popery is fully appreciable to Shakespeare and his audience, the Duke's intended audience in the play seems to miss the serious point entirely:

> King Henry: O God, seest thou this and bear'st so long?
> Queen Margaret: It made me laugh to see the villain run. (2.1.150-1)[23]

Rather than promoting a reforming zeal in the King—the only thing, presumably, which might save the country at this point—Humphrey's efforts appear to move him even further into his feckless pietism. What is worse, Queen Margaret gets a vicious "kick" out of Simpcox's punishment. Thus, while the scene enacts something like the triumph of Reformed theatricality over the absurd histrionics of popery, it does so in a way which suggests that, in the world that is emerging in the play, this is a pyrrhic victory at best. Despite Humphrey's efforts, another sort of player is, as Foxe would say, taking over the political stage. And, ominously, while Simpcox's clownish antics may be contained, bested even, York's "shadow", the "devil" Jack Cade, and the horrible battlefield comedians of 3HenryVI, loom.

The absurdly mendacious story of Simpcox's youthful accident—"Alas, good master, my wife desired some damsons, and made me climb, with danger of my life" (2.1.100-101)—palpably echoes the domestic conflict between Gloucester and Eleanor, with the "blind" Simpcox's uxoriously comic "fall" suggesting a precise antithesis to Humphrey's repudiation of his wife's ambitious pleading and, as well, to the tragic consequences of this active virtue which we see unfolding in the play. At the same time,

this comic striving after plums also mirrors the ambitious plotting of the cabal, effectively casting their vicious behaviour in the shadow of popish error and idolatry. Part of this complex mirroring, the metatheatrical element in the Simpcox episode is thematically linked with Shakespeare's more pronounced use of the stage metaphor in the conjuring scene in Act One. As with Simpcox's fraudulent miracle, Shakespeare purposely invokes a resonantly antitheatrical idea in this scene—the connection between the theater and the demonic practices of "priest craft" and popery—by portraying the raising of a demon by "Margery Jourdayne, a witch; Sir John Hum and John Southwell, two priests; and Roger Bolingbroke, a conjurer"(1.4.0sd), in a way which is virtually indistinguishable from a conjuring scene put on by a troop of mercenary actors employed by "the rich Cardinal" to "undermine" the Duchess and destroy the Duke (1.2.96-106).

As Warren notes, it is impossible to say from the text whether this demon raising—a "perfomance" which is staged, as the actor-conjurer Bolingbroke intones, for Eleanor to "behold and hear" (1.4.4)—is a "genuine" event or a "put-up job by a bunch of charlatans like the 'conjuror' Pinch in The Comedy of Errors" (1.4.0n). This puzzling conflation of actors and priests, and of real and theatrical demons, is, I think, Shakespeare's deliberate metatheatrical point. Asmodeus, the spectacular devil raised in this scene, is a stage devil, a symbol of satanic evil which resides not in the popish phantasm conjured by these would-be actors, but in the spirit of malevolent greed, envy, and ambition which is behind the elaborate theatrical "practice" perpetrated by the cabal. We are back, once again, in Shakespeare's version of Bale's iconoclastic theatre—a stage-within-the-stage upon which dressed up devils, vices, and priests engage in absurdly satanic ceremonies which, while clownish, are fully capable of destroying the

spiritual health of an entire nation. What Shakespeare has carefully constructed in this scene, in other words, is not an image of theatricality per se, of the power of theater and illusion, but rather a controlled image of bad actors acting badly which is seen through the dramatically ironic lens of Shakespeare's Foxean tragedy. Asmodeus is Hume's and Bolingbroke's stage devil, but it, and they, and their lurking patrons, are Shakespeare's. This would seem to be the point behind the series of clear allusions to Marlowe's Dr. Faustus and Tamburlaine which Shakespeare threads into the conjuring scene.[24] Although they are well-paid, these are not professional artists; they are "crafty knave[s]" whose demon-raising scene is a cheap rip-off, not to be confused with the morally and aesthetically superior works of a real artist like Marlowe—or Shakespeare(1.4.100).

Thus, while the theatrical special effects, the enigmatically "true" prophecies, and the conjurer's over-the-top fustian are effective in a crude sort of way—much like Richard of Gloucester's head-trick—the artistry is all Shakespeare's. Crucially, moreover, whereas Bolingbroke's and Sir John Hume's absurd stagecraft is designed to promote real satanic violence, murder, and sedition, Shakespeare's tragedy anatomizes and exposes the same phenomena in a seriously credible historical way: the demon Shakespeare conjures, in other words, is the terrifying spectacle of a society—represented here by people of all levels from the indigent old woman to the Duke of York—who have devoted themselves to a surrealistic theatricality whose immediate purpose is the destruction of Duke Humphrey.

And this distinctively theatrical image a chaotic subversiveness and spreading national apostasy is, as we have seen, exactly what Foxe taught his readers to look for in the violent history of the 15$^{th}$-century. Like the martyrdoms of Huss, Taylor, and Rennes,

Duke Humphrey's destruction at the hands of a villainous cabal of popish antagonists, a "practice" which goes unopposed by the impotently pious king, is centrally emblematic in Foxe's account of the "grievous and sundry persecutions raised up by Antichrist" in the "last times of the church" and of the "barbarous and foolish cruelty of such as at that time ruled and governed the church (3.580-1). "Barbarous and foolish cruelty": while this has of course not been emphasized by critics, Shakespeare's Hum is Sir John Hume, a real Roman Catholic priest who, in the play, steps forward to address the audience in the distinctive persona of the theatrical Vice:

> Hum must make merry with the Duchess' gold;
> Marry, and shall; but how now, Sir John Hum?
> Seal up your lips, and give no words but mum;
> This business asketh silent secrecy.
> ...for to be plain,
> They, knowing Dame Eleanor's aspiring humour
> Have hired me to undermine the Duchess,
> And buzz these conjurations in her brain.
> ...
> Well, so it stands; and thus I fear at last
> Hum's knavery will be the Duchess' wrack,
> And her attainture will be Humphrey's fall.
> Sort how it will, I shall have gold for all. (1.2.87-107)

By thus invoking the iconoclastic Reformed image of Roman Catholic priestcraft as a kind of viciously debased and fraudulent histrionics, Shakespeare clearly casts the forces working towards Humphrey's destruction in the light of "popery." Like York and Eleanor, Hume wants to play his part in the "pageant," and this all-encompassing metatheatrical idea is extended to include Cardinal Beaufort and the other conspirators when Salisbury sees them as a procession of vice-characters in a morality play: "Pride went before, Ambition follows him" (1.1.179). Looking forward, the explicit connection

made in these scenes between anarchic playing and popery foreshadows and underlines the implicit popery in cognate scenes such as Margaret's mock-crucifixion and Clifford's "penance." This is also true, as we will see, of Jack Cade's rebellion, perhaps the most frightening example of stage demonry in all of Elizabethan drama. Before turning to Cade, however, it is important to consider finally how these metadramatic scenes inform Shakespeare's portrayal of Humphrey's trial and death in Act Three.

*

Although it is not overtly metatheatrical in the way the Simpcox episode and the conjuration scene are, the Bury Parliament scene reflects the stage metaphor insofar as the sham solemnity of the proceedings and the transparently fraudulent nature of the charges against Humphrey create an atmosphere of grotesque surrealism, transforming the court into pure "political theatre." Humphrey sees this at the scene's climax when he prophetically denounces the cabal for having "laid [their] heads together" in "conventicles" in order to "take away [his] guiltless life" (3.1.166-7):

> I know their complot is to have my life,
> And if my death might make this island happy
> And prove the period of their tyranny,
> I would expend it with all willingness.
> But mine is made the prologue to their play,
> For thousands more that yet suspect no peril
> Will not conclude their plotted tragedy. (3.1.147-53)

For the most part, however, having set the stage with a rich medley of vice-like asides and metatheatrical scenes, Shakespeare can simply allow the mock-trial to unfold as a spectacle of preposterous injustice. Like the scene of Huss' mock-trial and murder, or indeed Foxe's description of the Bury Parliament itself—which he calls a "snare to catch

the innocent"(715gloss)—Shakespeare presents the English court as a grotesquely seriocomic slaughterhouse like the endless circus of persecutorial show trials described in Acts and Monuments.

Foxe does not, of course, hold a monopoly on the idea of a show trial or of political theatre; what is striking, however, is the way the rhetorically ironic patterning of Shakespeare's version of the trial invokes a distinctively Foxean kind of historical enormity. Margaret initiates the process, charging that Humphrey's arrogated "majesty" and his "rancourous mind" is a serious threat to the kingdom (3.1.6,24). Suffolk then argues that Humphrey "Did instigate the brainsick Duchess/ By wicked means to frame our sovereign's fall" (51-2), and Beaufort adds that "contrary to form of law" Humphrey has "devise[d] strange deaths for small offenses done" (58-9). York then charges Humphrey with having caused "revolt[s]" in the French towns (60-4), and, contributing a nice piece of sophistry, Buckingham adds:

> Tut, these are petty faults to faults unknown,
> Which time will bring to light in smooth Duke Humphrey. (64-5)

Henry attempts to assert himself—insisting that Humphrey is "as innocent" as the "sucking lamb or harmless dove" (69-71)—and this elicits a passionate response from the Queen:

> Ah, what's more dangerous than this fond affiance?
> Seems he a dove? His feathers are but borrowed,
> For he's disposèd as the hateful raven.
> Is he a lamb? His skin is surely lent him
> For he's inclined as is the ravenous wolf. (74-78)

When he finally arrives, Humphrey proves his Foxean virtue, so to speak, by calmly and masterfully reducing the case against him to tatters. This is what Foxe's heroes do when they come to trial. By the same token, failing utterly to "prove" anything against Humphrey, the cabalists resort, in Foxean fashion, to legalistic chop-logic and murder:

> Suffolk: My Lord, these faults are easy, quickly answerèd,
> But mightier crimes are laid unto your charge
> Whereof you cannot easily purge yourself.
> I do arrest you in his highness' name,
> And here commit you to my good lord Cardinal
> To keep you until your further time of trial. (3.1.133-38)

The charges are preposterously false and, as even the pious Henry can see, are clearly just a pretext for assassination: Humphrey is turned over to Beaufort, and he and his confederates will, swiftly and without compunction, kill him.[25] Viewed in light of the Foxean intertext, what is striking here is how the show trial seems to index a kind of historical surreality existing behind or beyond the rational politics of Machiavellian state/stage craft: the cabalists demonstrate no artful duplicity here, they wield no illusions. Rather, as Foxe says of the prosecutors of Thomas of Rennes, they seem bent upon displaying their viciousness, on making "mocking stocks of themselves in the eyes of God and men"—and Shakespeare's audience—by turning the scaffold of justice into a seriocomic pantomime.

That Shakespeare was attempting to capture Foxe's "marvellous" and "abominable" "madness and folly" in this trial scene comes into even sharper focus when we recognize how he carefully calibrates the charges leveled against Humphrey so that they precisely mirror the guilty attributes of the accusers themselves. It is Margaret who is the arrogant and dangerous upstart, and it is she who will, spectacularly, prove to be a

beast wrapped in human "skin." Suffolk and Beaufort have instigated the "brainsick" Duchess and are, as they speak, devising a "strange death" for Humphrey. York, for his part, foments the Cade revolt which almost destroys England, and, finally, with an ironic twist which is as funny as it is horrible, Buckingham playfully adds a "nothing" charge because he has, yet, not really done anything. While it is Shakespeare's invention, this carefully patterned dramatic irony—the cabalists reveal the profundity of their criminality by absurdly projecting it onto Humphrey—is mirrored virtually everywhere in Acts and Monuments. The central example of this is the analogously ironic claim that it is Roman Catholicism, not the Reformed Churches, which is the heretical innovation:

> Wherefore as it is false, that we have renounced the faith of our godfathers wherein we were baptized, so it is not true, that we are removed from the church of Rome; but rather we say...that the church of Rome hath utterly parted from the church of Rome. (1.10)

However a more arresting version of this ironic pattern, one which Shakespeare would have come across in reading Foxe's account of Humphrey's career, is contained in Foxe's impressive sermon on the Eucharist, another rhetorical set-piece included by Foxe in his account of the reign of Henry VI. Briefly, Foxe argues that the endless succession of counter-reformation heresy trials, predicated inevitably on the dogmatic assertion of the literal presence of Christ in the sacrament, reveal far more than theological error on the part of Catholic authorities. Focusing on images of blood and meat, Foxe contrasts the spiritual desires of true Christians, which he compares with natural bodily hunger and thirst, and the degraded spirituality of persecuting Catholic powers driven by a raging hunger to consume the body and blood of the martyrs. As they accuse innocent men and women of heresy, ensnaring them in a legalistic trap from which they cannot escape, the

authorities destroy themselves and their victims in a spirit of cannibalistic Antichristian apostasy:

> whereupon now is this great frowardness sprung up amongst Christians, that they, envying their own so great felicity, that they now convert and turn that into a snare of their own destruction, which is given us by the Lord to be our comfort and consolation...we destroy our brother, shed his blood whom the Lord redeemed with his own precious blood; and for none other occasion, but only for that which ought to teach us all kind of meekness and gentleness towards all men...How many, before this man...and how many since his death, have there been devoured and swallowed up by the bloody bishops! (3.728-29).

This rhetorical pattern, in which the Eucharistic theory defended by the authorities, because it is used as a pretext to stage heresy trials and commit quasi-judicial murders, proves its satanic provenance, underlies Foxe's tragic view of apocalyptic history. From the perspective of satanic apostasy, true Christian virtue can only be perceived as an enemy: it mirrors Antichrist's degraded nature and, hence, inevitably provokes a destructive hatred and hypocrisy determined to destroy and devour it.

This is, as I have been arguing, Foxe's interpretation of both the spiritual meaning of Antichrist and of the nature of political violence: he repeatedly dramatizes innocent men and women being singled out for persecution by antagonists who are prodigiously guilty of the "heresy" they claim, hypocritically, to be wiping out. Thus, the terrible irony in Shakespeare's scene is that Suffolk's accusatory logic is correct in its own satanic way: viewed from the topsy turvy perspective of such "spiritual" men and women, Humphrey's "mightier crimes" are his innocence, virtue, and reforming zeal, "faults" which cannot easily be "purged." Similarly, like its comic foreshadowing in the Simpcox episode—"Alas sir, we did it for pure need" (2.1.153)—Margaret's passionate urging that "the welfare of us all/ Hangs on the cutting short of that fraudful man"(3.1.81) is sincere and,

in a sense, true: it is the special pleading of a satanic personality driven to destroy not just the Good Duke, but "thousands more" thereafter.

Shakespeare's Gloucester dies offstage, but the playwright does not let the Good Duke go without first presenting an unforgettable image of his agonizing death-struggle:

> But see, his face is black and full of blood;
> His eyeballs further out than when he lived,
> Staring full ghastly like a strangled man;
> His hair upreared, his nostrils stretched with struggling,
> His hands abroad displayed, as one that grasped
> And tugged for life and was by strength subdued.
> Look on his sheets: his hair you see, is sticking;
> His well-proportioned beard made rough and rugged,
> Like to the summer's corn by tempest lodged.
> It cannot be but he was murdered here.
> The least of all these signs were probable. (3.2.168-78)[26]

This is, to say the least, not an image of a good death. Consequently, and notwithstanding the way that Shakespeare's God later uses Humphrey's horrifying visage to play a fatally providential joke on the Bishop of Winchester, it might be argued that, for all its proximity to Acts and Monuments, Shakespeare's portrayal of the Duke's terrible end extricates the play from the martyrologist's tragic paradigm. This would be wrong. Although Foxe does refer in a gloss to the "cruel death or martyrdom of the good duke," he does not try to cast Humphrey's death in the profoundly dignifying light of martyrdom:

> he was found dead in his bed, the 24th of February, and his body showed to the lords and commons, as though he had been taken naturally with some sudden disease. And although no wound in his body could be seen, yet to all indifferent persons it might well be judged that he died of no natural pang, but of some violent hand. Some suspect he was strangled; some that a whole spit was privily forced into his body; some affirm that he was stifled between two feather beds. (3.715)

Foxe not only does not surround the physical details of Humphrey's death with a martyr's aura, he does little to mitigate the implicit indignity of these reports. What Foxe does do, however, is to reiterate his theatrical theme. This is yet another barbarously cruel and foolish spectacle: barbarously cruel because of the violence done to Humphrey's body, and barbarously foolish because of the grotesque and utterly artless attempt to use Gloucester's corpse in a further bit of political theatre. This hoax is no less absurd than Simpcox's miracle.

Shakespeare sounds a similarly metatheatrical concluding note at the end of the first phase of 2HenryVI:

> Warwick: Who finds the heifer dead and bleeding fresh
> And sees fast by a butcher with an axe,
> But will suspect 'twas he that made the slaughter?
> Who finds the partridge in the puttock's nest,
> But may imagine how the bird was dead,
> Although the kite soar with unbloodied beak?
> Even so suspicious is this tragedy. (188-94)

Acting about as badly as would seem possible to do, Margaret responds with a series of rhetorical questions which are meant to be cleverly dissimulating but which, ironically, further illuminate the satanic enormity of such politic dissembling: "Are you the butcher, Suffolk? Where's your knife?/ Is Beaufort termed a kite? Where are his talons?"(95-96). Unwittingly, Margaret asks a burning question about the Cardinal which has, at least for Foxe's readers, already been answered by the Foxean intertext:

> I will not here speak of that which hath been constantly reported to me touching the monstrous making of this man and the misshapen fashion of his feet and toes, the nails whereof were said not to be like to other men's, but to crook downward, and to be sharp like the claws of ravening beasts (7.586).

*

Whereas Beaufort sneaks away towards inevitable madness and death, Suffolk protests that he "wear[s] no knife to slaughter men" (3.2.197). This is true: like York, Suffolk hires men like Cade and Dick the Butcher to do such lowbrow work for him. Thus far, we have looked very closely at the Bishop of Winchester's role in Shakespeare's historical anatomy of the lead up to the outbreak of civil war. The focus shifts now to that horrible butcher's knife and, along with it, to the Cade rebellion. In the second phase of the play, Shakespeare shifts from the aristocratic political theatre of the Duke's tragedy to the violence of popular rebellion, developing an even more horrifying image of metatheatrical enormity. As we have seen, for apocalyptic historians such as Tyndale, Bale, and Foxe, Antichrist is a "spiritual thing" whose nature is "to go out of the play for a season, and to disguise himself, and then to come in again with a new name and a new raiment." These 16th-century historians use this stage metaphor so frequently because it captures their belief that human history, especially the history of violence, social disintegration, and persecution, is suffused with apocalyptic spiritual significance. Like the highly orchestrated actions that take place on a theatrical stage, every "act and monument" of history, every person's role, is rife with providential significance. And, just as an attentive audience sees the playwright's significant design manifested in the actions he arranges on the stage, apocalyptic historians encourage readers to witness the providential significance of human history by interpreting it in light of a set of highly resonant apocalyptic metaphors. Thus, Foxe uses all of the resources of the early modern historian to delineate the material particulars of time, place, and person while showing, simultaneously, that a providential mystery is operating within all this discrete historical

particularity. Identifiable by the affinity between their actions and apocalyptic metaphors—wolves and sheep, lambs and butchers, persecutors and innocents—the participants in political history step forward, so to speak, to play highly charged roles in a recurring, but also dynamic and changing, apocalyptic drama. This apocalyptic stage metaphor—Antichrist is a recurring role, or constellation of roles, played throughout history by particular men and women in historically specific events and actions—is a remarkably accurate gloss on Shakespeare's staging as the scene in 2HenryVI shifts from Humphrey's tragedy to the seriocomic horrors of the Cade rebellion. Having been banished from the stage for a brief season, the spiritual thing animating the various stage devils of the first part of the play returns now in new raiment—the outrageous butcher of innocents—in the figure of Jack Cade and his bloody popular insurrection.

To say this is, in part, to acknowledge, along with most careful readers, that the Cade episode expressly "mirrors" the historical events represented elsewhere in the play. Cade is of course York's "double"—a particularly effective bit of metadramatic mirroring if the same actor plays both roles—but he also recalls Asmodeus, a gigantic stage devil blown up by the Barons and their priestly hirelings to undermine the nation and set the stage for their seizure of power. While this new stage devil is a bit of a joke, and is easily banished by the name of Henry V, he is also terribly real. Horribly reifying the image of political murder which emerges powerfully out of Duke Humphrey's tragedy, Cade recapitulates the politic "butchery" of the cabal, staging his own show trials, murdering innocents, and generally turning England into a bloody slaughter-house. At the same time, Cade's rebellion mirrors the comically popish theatrical antics of Simpcox and his wife, albeit in a spiritually hungry way suggestive of bloody cannibalism rather than a mere

desire for plums. And, finally, in his efforts to reform the commonwealth, Cade is both a travesty of Duke Humphrey's proto-Protesant reformism and, just as pointedly, a kind of mirror-image of the piously impotent histrionics of King Henry.

What all this suggestive mirroring suggests is that while Shakespeare is deeply interested, as a dramatist and as an historian, in the concrete particularities of Jack Cade and popular insurrection, he is, like Foxe, not simply a materialist. Shakespeare portrays class, and bitterly divisive class hatred, with a degree of realism unmatched on the Elizabethan stage, but he does so in way that suggests that what we would call fundamental class differences give way, ultimately, to spiritual sameness or identity. This extension or amplification of the spiritual significance of popular rebellion is a consequence of the episode's striking metatheatricality: the Antitchristian spirit embodied in Cade can be witnessed in the way he determinedly plays the role of a titanic butcher of humanity. Thus, whereas critics today tend to respond to Cade's complex plebeian theatricality by viewing him as a "deeply dialogized figure" rooted in an essentially plebeian, carnivalesque, identity (Knowles, 103), Shakespeare and his audience would have seen him as a deeply diabolized one, a figure from religious history whose distinctively plebeian identity is ultimately epiphenomenal. Cade is, in other words, a gigantic theatrical cypher: he is utterly real, but what is real about him lies beyond the mere chronicle figure of Jack Cade. Moreover, this reality is a "spiritual thing" which is manifested in history as destructive and divisive class hatred—Cade's folk hate the nobles and the nobles hate them—but it cannot be reduced to it. Drawing upon a series of historical images of popular rebellion, images which were, as Brents Stirling demonstrated some time ago, well-established in contemporary discourse as "mirrors" of

the worst kinds of religious error and apostasy, Shakespeare creates an arresting figure of plebeian enormity whose theatrical antics replicate the popish "political theatre" which was central to Humphrey's tragedy.[27] Cade is Cade, but he is also a "devil" because his onstage identity is a spiritual one which extends well beyond that of a particular mid-century rebellion. For all their exigent differences, Shakespeare's popular and aristocratic rebels are the same thing: they are Antichrists.

Neither the idea that the Cade episode is intensely metatheatrical nor the suggestion that Cade is, in some fundamental way, a religious figure, is new or even controversial. The novel claim that I am driving at here is that, by virtue of its peculiar mimetic complexity, of its over-determined metatheatrical mirroring, Shakespeare's portrayal of Cade's rebellion points to a level of historical reality which both informs divisive class-hatred, and yet goes beyond it to encompass the whole nation within an expressly popish satanic continuum. Cade and the cabalists are clearly affiliated as vices: viewed from the Foxean perspective which has (if I am right about Humphrey's tragedy) already been powerfully engaged in the play, this arresting ungrammaticality—how is Cade equal to the pious King?—is resolved, intertextually, in terms of Foxe's anatomy of the historical Antichrist. To show this, I want to focus in this section on three of the most distinctive emphases within Shakespeare's dramatization of the rebellion—Cade's megalomaniacal self-fashioning, the rebels' marked hatred of literacy, and the leitmotif of rebellion as "butchery." These are familiar features of the episode which have been thoroughly described by critics: what is striking to discover, however, is that these familiar seriocomic emphases speak the language of Foxean apocalyptic history as expressly as does Humphrey's tragedy.

Apart perhaps from the allusion to Ireland, a notorious breeding-ground of popery, there would at first glance appear to be little to link Cade with either Foxean history or popery. Yet, from the outset, Shakespeare does intimate that Cade's rebellion is a religious as well as political revolution, a kind of counter-reformation to go along with the killing of the lawyers. Cade's theocracy will be constructed, quite literally, out of the divided bodies of his victims:

> Bevis: I tell thee, Jack Cade the clothier means to dress the commonwealth, and turn it, and set a new nap on it.
> ...
> Holland: I see them! I see them! There's Best's son, the tanner of Wingham.
> Bevis: He shall have the skins of our enemies, to make dog's leather of.
> Holland: And Dick the butcher.
> Bevis: The sin is struck down like an ox, and iniquity's throat cut like a calf.
> Holland: And Smith the weaver.
> Bevis: Argo, their thread of life is spun.
> Holland: Come, come, let's fall in with them (4.2.4-25).

In an allusively dramatic gesture which, as Michael Hattaway notes, parodies both the historical Henry VI's coronation triumph and the miracle performed by Moses in Exodus, Cade strikes his staff on "London Stone," and orders that the "Pissing Conduit" run with "nothing but claret wine" (4.6.0-4n). Cade's self-identification with the real king and the biblical monarch further underscores his theocratic pretensions and deepens the irony that Cade, as a perverse reflection of Moses, the lawgiver, will be the source for all the laws of England. Indeed Cade goes one better, for whereas Moses received the laws from God, in Cade's "commonwealth" all "biting statutes" will issue directly from his "stinking" mouth (4.7.5-14). Cade's claim that he is "the besom that must sweep the court clean" (4.7.25) further illuminates his biblical self-fashioning, echoing the prophetic "besom of

destruction" in Isaiah, so that Cade identifies his own ascendancy with the millennial return of Christ himself.

The mangled biblical rhetoric used by Cade and his followers reflects the Vice's traditional misuse of serious language, and is, as Stirling argues, consistent with the satirical representation of Anabaptism in a wide array of Elizabethan writing. Moreover, like Bolingbroke and Hume, and later Clifford and the Yorkist nobles, Cade steps onto the stage of history, so to speak, by taking on the starring role in a kind of mock play, as a kind of tin-pot Marlovian over-reacher. All of these elements combine, to borrow Richard Wilson's apt phrase, to cast Cade as a "strident cartoon"(27), but one whose grotesque comedy is never far removed from the spectre of absolute religious tyranny, particularly the tyranny of popular charismatic figures such as John of Leiden. As Stirling puts it, while "jesting was present...during Shakespeare's time memory of the Anabaptists was kept alive with deadly seriousness" (107). However, while there is no doubt that Elizabethan audiences would have seen the spectre of the Munster rebellion in Cade, Anabaptism was not, by a long-shot, the only figure of seriocomic religious absolutism available to resonate in the minds of Shakespeare's audience—if they feared Anabaptism, they were horrified by Popery. The distinctive combination of cartoon-like clownishness and real horror which underlines Cade's role as a figure of religious charisma and power can be compared quite closely with the composite image of the Pope-as-Antichrist that emerges out of the pages of the Acts and Monuments.

Like Shakespeare's Cade, Foxe's image or anatomy of the papal Antichrist works by creating the continuous impression of a kind of absurdly over-reaching egotism which is at once ridiculous and terrifying. Although the impact of this impression cannot

adequately be paraphrased or quoted, it is strikingly encapsulated in Foxe's satirical dramatic monologue, "The Image of Antichrist, exalting himself in the Temple of God, above all that is named God" (4.145-64). This brilliant rhetorical set-piece is an extended exercise in what Foxe called "prosopoeia, or invented speech," in which the martyrologist takes on the voice of the papal Antichrist in order to reveal his true nature to readers. Beyond the antipodal nature of Foxe's satiric ventriloquism, the familiar dramatic irony which runs through the piece is that Antichrist intends to exalt himself as a paragon of spiritual greatness but is exposed to readers as an outrageously apostate windbag.[28] Moreover, although this monologue is by definition "invented," the speech is in fact constructed out of hundreds of quotations drawn by Foxe directly from various published papal sources, and strung together to create an impressively ridiculous oration in which the ventriloquized "voice" is Antichrist, but the statements themselves derive from the real comments of real historical Popes. Similarly, the language of Cade and the rebels in the play is largely made up of "quotations" from various rebels drawn by Shakespeare from the chronicles. And as Foxe does with the papal Antichrist, the effect Shakespeare aims to produce is that of a titanic ego "exalting itself" in a paroxysm of comically self-aggrandizing and hyperbolic boasting. At the heart of this rant in both cases is the assumption, the core of popish error and false-consciousness, that he is Christ on earth:

> [W]hereas all others are subjects, yea and emperors themselves ought to subdue their executions to me, only I am a subject to no creature, no not to myself, except I list...superior to all men, whom all persons ought to obey...whereas I began, so I conclude, commanding, declaring, and pronouncing, to stand upon necessity of salvation, for every human creature is subject to me (4.155-64ff).

Like Shakespeare's Richard III, Foxe's papal Antichrist is himself alone, and this ranting solipsism goes on for pages, focusing and epitomizing the pointed combination of self-delusion and self-dramatization which are at the heart of Foxe's image of apostate Antichristian power. Similarly combining the outrageous rhetoric of a series of historical rebels in one figure, Shakespeare constructs Cade as a generalized figure for popular rebellion which shares this same verbally excessive self-fashioning:

> Away with him, do as I command ye. The proudest peer in the realm shall not wear a head on his shoulders, unless he pay me a tribute; there shall not a maid be married, but she shall pay to me her maidenhead ere they have it; men shall hold of me in capite, and we charge and command that their wives be as free as heart can wish or tongue can tell (4.7.102-6).

Moreover, Foxe's rhetorical balancing of an exaggerated cartoon-like figure with real violence and horror, the reality of historical popes and their flesh-and-blood victims, shares a striking affinity with Shakespeare's representation of a "popular" rebellion in which "swords of lath" are used to commit acts of graphic violence. Like Cade's, the mock-heroic pretensions of Foxe's papal Antichrist render him as much a denizen of an absurdly declamatory theatre as a figure in serious history, and this is Foxe's sober, apocalyptically charged, point. The popes have usurped both political and religious authority, and now rely on outrageous acts of violence combined with equally outrageous boasts and threatenings, to maintain their position. Cade's edict—"and henceforth it shall be treason for any that calls me other than Lord Mortimer" (4.6.5-6)—followed as it is by the brutal slaying of a nameless soldier, mirrors Foxe's portrait of "popish rule" perfectly.

A second facet of Cade's rebellion linked intertextually with Foxe's Antichrist is the rebels' marked hatred of literacy. Although this aspect of the rebel program has

evoked a curious sympathy from modern literary critics, Shakespeare's point is to mirror Cade's mangled justification for his assault on literacy with the vicious special pleadings and misgovernment of the aristocratic cabal. That is, while it is true that "benefit of clergy" was notoriously open to abuse, Shakespeare's original audiences were presumably not so liberal-minded that they would fail to grasp that Cade could not possibly be a "victim" of it. Rather, the onus of Cade's "complaint"—yet another travesty of authentic Reformed speech—is that the licensed criminality of the prelates should be extended to everyone, or at least to all other illiterate criminals. Rather than complicating Shakespeare's castigatory perspective, Cade's argument is a trenchant glance at the quixotic policies of the counter-Reformation. Travestying both Protestant evangelicalism and its goal, an all-encompassing "priesthood" of all literate lay believers, Cade pictures a nation overrun with illiterate "priests" with himself as their omnipotent pope-king.

Cade's argument, in other words, is not an example of Shakespeare's radicalism: it is a parody of Humphrey's authentic reformism—Humphrey would agree that benefit of clergy is a problem—and a kind of mirror image of the King's impotent rule. Just as the killings of the Clerk of Chartham and Lord Say mirror the trial and murder of Humphrey, the rebels' "infantile hatred of literacy and law" (Wilson, 27) is a direct translation into the field of popular revolt of the Antichristian spirit which informs the attack on Gloucester. There is, Shakespeare is saying, nothing harmful about literacy; it is only from the apostate perspective of Cade and the rebels that it appears as a source of inhumane and illegitimate power—"Is not this a lamentable thing, that the skin of an innocent lamb should be made parchment, that parchment being scribbled o'er should undo a man?"(4.2.64-66).[29] And, although this is easily missed, Shakespeare pointedly

contrasts the rebels' hatred of literacy with the positive vision of popular literacy glimpsed very briefly in Act One, where the Petitioners attempt to present their carefully written "supplications in the quill" to Duke Humphrey (1.3.3). Appropriately enough, these supplications are intercepted by Suffolk and Margaret and, in a dramatic gesture mirrored in the rebels, are wrathfully torn to shreds by the Queen (1.3.34sd).

Given the importance of lay reading and teaching in reformed religious culture, it is not surprising that the theme of popular literacy is a dominant one in the Acts and Monuments, or that the attempt by various Antichristian powers to wipe out literacy is a key component in Foxe's anatomy. Reversing Cade's carnivalesque attack on literacy, in Christus Triumphans Foxe portrays festive misrule and lay literacy combining to ensure the eventual defeat of Antichrist and his cohorts:

> Pornapolis: They're all diligently reading scriptures—stonecutters, smiths, potters, everybody. And, what I think is bad, the dregs of the people are starting to be wise now. What's more, they're even weighing our traditions in the scales of the gospel.
> ...
> Anabasius [Messenger from Hell]: You've jumped from the frying pan into the fire!
> Pseudamnus[Antichrist;the Pope]: Why so?
> Anabasius: Because the world, long blinded, is now beginning to see. Men won't be led by the nose much longer. Everywhere they're being refined by letters and languages. Nothing is achieved by deception. Everywhere they're farting at your orders and shitting on your bulls. Your keys are worthless, and your thunder and triple crown are scorned...They say your pomp, extravagance, lust, savagery, doctrine, poisonings, crimes, trickeries and trumperies, and the tumult of your tragic life easily proves who you are: they firmly believe that you are the Antichrist (347, 351).

In Acts and Monuments this idea is reified, historically, by virtue of countless episodes in which some form of lay literacy leads to persecution. For example, in an episode very similar to Shakespeare's staging of the killing of the Clerk of Chartham, Foxe recounts

the story of a "godly book-seller with two bibles about his neck burnt in Avignon" (4.486gloss):

> In the same place, there was a foreign bookseller, who had set out for sale certain bibles in French and Latin, with divers other books; which when the prelates beheld, they were greatly moved thereat, and said unto him, "Darest thou be so hardy to set out such merchandise to sell here in this town? dost thou not know that such books are forbidden?"...Let him be taken," said he, "and examined what he is." And incontinently the book-seller was taken and carried into prison, and spitefully handled; for a company of knaves and ruffians, who waited on the prelates, began to cry out, "A Lutheran! A Lutheran!" "To the fire with him!" And one gave him a blow with his fist, another pulled him by the hair, and others by the beard, in such sort that the poor man was all imbrued with blood before he came to prison (4.485-6).

Foxe then describes the "trial"—which, like the show trial in the play, is a foregone conclusion—in which the bookseller courageously refuses to renounce his belief that bibles should be available in the "vulgar tongue" and is promptly sentenced to death. Similarly, Shakespeare's Clerk "confesses" to the charge of literacy— "Sir, I thank God, I have been so well brought up that I can write my name" (4.2.86-7)—and is immediately put to death by the rebels:

> All: He hath confessed: away with him! He's a villain and a traitor
> Cade: Away with him, I say! Hang him with his pen and inkhorn about his neck (4.2.88-90).

Shakespeare's emblematic image of summarily executed innocence combined with the perverse spectacle of a Vice-like satanic rage triumphing over literacy is precisely echoed in Foxe's account:

> Then the bishop of Aix and the other bishops began to rage, and gnash their teeth against the poor prisoner. "What need you," said they, "of any more examination? Let him be sent straight unto the fire, without any more words." A godly bookseller with two bibles about his neck burnt in Avignon [gloss].

> Hereupon he was immediately condemned to be burned, and the sentence was executed the very same day; and for a sign or a token of the cause of his condemnation, he carried two bibles hanging about his neck, the one before, the other behind him (4.484).

Although the verbal analogy is striking, there is, I think, no need to debate whether this Foxean episode material is a "source" for Shakespeare's staging. What it shows us, rather, is that from the point of view of mainstream English Protestantism, one of the distinguishing features of popery was its deeply rooted opposition to all forms of popular literacy. This unmistakably Antichristian attribute comes to the foreground in Foxe's celebrated set-piece "The Invention and Benefit of Printing," an ode-like celebration of printing which Foxe interpolated into his account of the reign of Henry VI:

> [I]n this very time so dangerous and desperate, where man's power could do no more, there the blessed wisdom and omnipotent power of the Lord began to work for his church; not with sword and target to subdue his exalted adversary, but with printing, writing , and reading: to convince darkness by light, error by truth, ignorance by learning. (3.719)

Just as the Bishop of Winchester and the aristocratic cabal feel that Gloucester must be killed, and just as Lady Simpox feels she will die without plums, Cade and the rebels instinctively see the literacy of the Clerk and Lord Saye as "monstrous." This is not because it is, but because literacy appears to Antichrist as an enemy that must be eradicated:

> Wherefore I suppose, that either the pope must abolish printing, or he must seek a new world to reign over: for else, as this world standeth, printing doubtless will abolish him...so that either the pope must abolish knowledge and printing, or printing at length will root him out. (3.720).

Like Foxe's papal Antichrist, Cade seeks to "reign over" a "new world" by abolishing literacy; Cade tries to create a demonically theocratic "oral culture" in which his "stinking mouth" will be the horrible source of all law and religion.[30]

*

Beyond Cade's demonically histrionic self-fashioning and his hatred of literacy, perhaps the most memorable aspect of Shakespeare's staging of the rebellion is the extremity of its violence. As noted earlier, Shakespeare's portrayal of the murder of Duke Humphrey generates, along with the Foxean imagery of wolves and sheep, lions and lambs, a more literalistic and artisanal conceit centered on the "butcher" and his "knife." In what is surely one of the sequence's most spectacular uses of imagistic argument, this image is realized onstage in Cade's attempt to transform England into a bloody butcher shop:

> Cade: Where's Dick, the butcher of Ashford?
> Dick: Here Sir.
> Cade: They fell before thee like sheep and oxen, thou behaved'st thyself as if thou hadst been in thine own slaughter-house; therefore thus will I reward thee: the Lent shall be as long again as it is; and thou shalt have a license to kill for a hundred lacking one.
> Dick: I desire no more (4.3.1-8).

As Richard Wilson suggests, potentially "festive images of meat and gluttony are literalized" in the figure of Dick the Butcher "as cannibalism" (30). However, where Wilson sees only class bias and anxiety (and where the Bakhtinian critics maintains an embarrassed silence), the Foxeian intertext defines the enormity of this butchery as an emblem of Antichristian persecution.

From this perspective, like the numerous images of the theatre and theatricality within the play, this butchery appears not as an image of popular politics per se, but as a degraded, apostate form of it. This is because Foxe repeatedly uses the same trope—butchery and the slaughterhouse—to characterize the efforts of the persecutors as a spectacularly perverse, cannibalistic labour. The language of butchery and the slaughterhouse is pervasive, for example, in Foxe's prefatory address "To the Persecutors....":

> [S]ee and behold, I beseech you, here in this story, the pitiful slaughter of your butchery! Behold your own handy work! consider the number, almost out of number, of so many silly and simple lambs of Christ, whose blood you have sought and sucked; whose lives you have vexed; whose bodies you have slain, racked, and tormented; some also you have cast on dunghills, to be devoured of fowls and dogs; without mercy, without measure, without all sense of humanity! See, I say, and behold, here present before your eyes, the heaps of slain bodies, of so many men and women, both old, young , children, infants, new born, married, unmarried, wives, widows, maids, blind men, lame men, whole men; of all sorts, of all ages, of all degrees; lords; knights, gentlemen, lawyers, merchants, archbishops, bishops, priests, ministers, deacons, laymen, artificers, yea, whole households and whole kindreds together; father, mother and, daughter; grandmother, mother, aunt, and child, etc.; whose wounds, yet bleeding before the face of God, cry vengeance! (1.xii).

The language of butchery is particularly focused, moreover, in Foxe's treatment of the notorious Marian Bishop of London, Edmund Bonner. Interestingly, "Bloody Bonner," as he is commonly referred to, is a major figure in Acts and Monuments who appears most often as the helper of Cardinal Beaufort's namesake, the Marian Bishop of Winchester, and is characterized as a brutal henchman whose role is similar to that played by Cade's lieutenant Dick the Butcher. In a letter to the Bishop quoted approvingly by Foxe, an anonymous woman refers to Bonner first as a "ravening wolf against the poor lambs of Christ" and then immediately after as:

> the common cut-throat and general slaughter-slave to all the bishops of England; and therefore it is wisdom for me and all other simple sheep of the Lord, to keep us out of your butchers' stall as long as we can; especially seeing that you have such store already, that you are not able to drink all of their blood, lest you should break your belly: and therefore let them lie still, and die for hunger...I hear say, my lord, that some of the butcherly curs came of late to my house to seek their prey, and that they go round about the city grinning and grudging belike (as David saith) that they have not meat enough: therefore, they have killed my poor brethren and sisters that have lain so long on the butcherly stall, and eaten them up (7.712).

The connection Foxe makes between persecution and butchery can also be seen in the account of an anonymous woman martyred in the reign of Henry VII:

> It happened in the mean time, that as the catholic executioners were busy in slaying this silly lamb at the town's side, a certain butcher was as busy within the town, slaying a bull; which bull he had fast bound in ropes, ready to knock him on his head. But the butcher (belike not so skilful in his art of killing beasts, as the papists be in murdering Christians) as he was lifting his axe to strike the bull, failed in his stroke, and smote a little too low, or else how he smote, I know not (4.128).

Foxe's pellucid gloss reads: "comparison between butchers and the pope's murdering ministers"(128gloss). And, finally, in what is perhaps the most chillingly memorable version of this leitmotif in the whole book, Foxe tells the horrific story of "Eighty-eight martyrs in one Day, with one butcherly knife, slain like sheep"(4.472):

> In Calabria, likewise, at the same time, suffered a blessed number of Christ's well-beloved saints, both old and young, put together in one house, to the number of eighty-eight persons; all which, one after another, were taken out of the house, and being so laid upon the butcher's stall, like the sheep in the shambles, with one bloody knife were all killed in order: a spectacle most tragical for all posterity to remember, and almost incredible to believe (4.472).

Foxe goes on to relate a vision of butchered humanity which is, like the Cade episode, unforgettable in its vertiginous enormity:

> And truly the manner of their putting to death was to be compared to the slaughter of calves and sheep; for they, being all thrust up in one house together, as in a sheep fold, the executioner cometh in, and amongst them taketh one, and blindfoldeth him with a muffler about his eyes, and so leadeth him forth to a larger place adjoining, where he commandeth him to kneel down; which being so done, he cutteth his throat, and leaving him half dead, and taking his butcher's knife and muffler all of gore blood, cometh again to the rest, and so leading one after another, he dispatched them all, to the number of eighty-eight...and so dispatching them all no otherwise than doth a butcher kill his calves and sheep (4.473).

Foxe's use of the language of butchery and cannibalism provides a powerful intertext for Shakespeare's staging of violence in the Cade rebellion. Foxe did not invent the idea of persecution as butchery, nor was he the only Elizabethan writer to use it. What he did, however, was to concentrate and expand upon it in the Acts and Monuments to create a resonantly apocalyptic historical image of a specific kind of Antichristian persecution. Especially insofar as Cade's butchery mirrors the political machinations of the popish cabal, Shakespeare echoes Foxe not just in his use of the idea, but in his emphatic use of it as a signifier of an enormity which goes beyond the quotidian. In terms of our stage metaphor, this kind of butchery is an apocalyptic role and, like Bloody Bonner, Cade and Dick play it with demonic abandon. Reveling in their butchery, Cade and his men are framed, ironically, in Shakespeare's apocalyptic Theatre of Enormity just as Foxe's cartoon Antichrist is framed by the martyrologist's irony.[31] Again the issue is not whether Shakespeare could have written the scene without Foxe, but rather whether, coming to Shakespeare's theater, readers of Foxe could have avoided seeing Cade's demonic pageant of "sin struck down like an ox" and "iniquity's throat cut like a calf" as a powerful image of Antichristian persecution.

Cade's megalomania, his hatred of literacy, and the leitmotif of butchery all provide intertextual links between Shakespeare's staging of popular rebellion and Foxean history. From the perspective of Acts and Monuments, the play points beyond class antagonism to reveal the figure of Antichrist in Cade and the rebels: for both Foxe and Shakespeare, in other words, the modern English guise of the ancient field of Golgotha is a giant carnivalesque butcher's shop in which innocents are slaughtered and devoured because they can read. The Cade episode is a "mirror-scene" in that it translates into popular terms the image of courtly "political theatre" and persecution developed in the first half of the play. However, as part of Shakespeare's investigation into the lead-up to the civil wars, the effect of this mirroring is both cumulative and prophetic: Cade's attempt to use rebellion to create his own demonic theocracy mirrors the machinations of Winchester and his spiritual cohorts, but, as a grotesque counter-reformation, it also expands and deepens the theme of national apostasy as a prelude to the battlefield antics of 3HenryVI.

*

In "Historical legacy and fiction: the poetical reinvention of King Richard III," Marie-Hélène Besnault and Michael Bitot survey the myriad ways that Shakespeare "poetically" reshaped his historiographical sources in Richard III, transforming "these sometimes crude sources into the complex, repulsive, and attractive, figure that is Richard III (108). What is invaluable about this essay is the extent to which it demonstrates that, rather than "demystifying" or "secularizing" his sources, Shakespeare's aimed to amplify, quite profoundly, what we would call the supernatural element in Richard's character. Taking a "sombre portrait of a tyrant whose very bodily appearance was a reflection of

the ugliness of his soul," and whose providential role was limited to that of a tool or scourge in God's providential plan, Shakespeare remade the chronicle tyrant into an arrestingly stylized and "larger than life demonic figure"(108). Judiciously allowing Shakespeare's dramaturgy to speak for itself, Besnault and Bitot demonstrate the extent to which Shakespeare was committed to capturing the terrifying reality of "a political monster whose deformity, a violation of God's perfection...invasively infects the land and its creatures:

> Richard's bloody career is marked by a metaphoric descent in the order of creation, a degeneration from tiger to hound, boar, toad, spider, and finally to monstrous cockatrice and foul lump of matter. The degenerating political bestiary, which symbolizes the beast becoming king, signifies that bestiality rules over England, that the land has surrendered to the forces of darkness and evil, with the creeping, venomous creatures as tokens of infernal areas of witchcraft...[and] the dark deeds perpetrated in cells, prisons, and the Tower. (111-12)

Focusing on the way the playwright combines his own distinctively dramatic language with "relics of religious medieval drama," Besnault and Bitot strike critical bedrock by demonstrating how Shakespeare went "further than the predetermined villain" he found in his sources, creating a figure of unparalleled "unnaturalness and enormity," a "degenerate monster" redolent not only of Satanic hypocrisy, violence, and cruelty, but also of "beastliness and filth...impurity and lechery." Shakespeare's Richard is, they conclude emphatically, "a loathsome symbol of savagery and demonic forces...a monstrous king whose lethal powers—almost universally recognizable—are embodied in teeth and venom, a compact of darkness and death"(108-112).

This figure of antichristian enormity, and not Rossiter's artful anti-hero, is Shakespeare's character: Richard is a horrifying and loathsome devil who embodies the

spiritual realities which, according to Shakespeare's reading of history, define the Wars of the Roses era. Remarkably, having worked so assiduously to establish that Richard is Shakespeare's "ultimate exemplum" of satanic "unnaturalness and enormity" (107-8), Besnault and Bitot then simply fall in with Rossiterian orthodoxy, arguing that by affiliating Richard with the theatrical Vice, Shakespeare turns his stage over to this egregious Devil. Richard's "brilliant performance" as Vice-king, we are told, creates "a complicity between actor and audience," so that "repulsion" gives way to "seduction" and "fascination," and "History" yields to "theatricality" (116). This familiar response to the metatheatrical element in the early chronicle plays is, I have been arguing, worse than inadequate. Even without Foxe, this ought to have been more apparent: while it is of course tempting to view Shakespeare as a radical genius, it is absurd to assume that Shakespeare would or could have confused his newfound mastery of historical dramaturgy with the degraded and destructive antics of this savagely loathsome 'boar.' Shakespeare, it needs to be said, was an Elizabethan intellectual who undoubtedly feared and hated the Devil as much as he loved the theatre. This is why his Richard is not a seductively artful roué—no more than Cardinal Beaufort is just a baron, Jack Cade a worker, or Margaret a shrew. Albeit translated into a humanist historiographical mode, these characters are stage devils and, fighting amongst themselves, they are our modern enemies.

As I have tried to show in this chapter, Shakespeare's Richard is the centerpiece in a complex but powerfully articulated metatheatrical anatomy of demonic power. Spiritually affiliated with a succession of butcherly avatars, Richard is the culminating character in a sustained theatrical investigation of the spiritual significance of the civil

war era as Shakespeare found it described by the chronicle historians. Taken together, the theatrical acts and monuments of the pernicious company of stage devils shown in these plays constitute Shakespeare's first great "crookèd figure": rather than just literal representations of a series of notoriously violent men and women from English history, these characters are part of resonantly metatheatrical structure, an expressive dramatic signifier whose cypher-like enormity leads the audience to look for its deeper, providential, meaning in the intertextual "great account" of history. While Foxe's book is of course not the only intertext which could be discussed in this respect, and while, moreover, Foxe's book no longer has anything like the intertextual purchase on the plays' metatheatrical irony that it once had, the consistency with which Shakespeare links histrionic violence with overt and subtle intimations of diabolism and popery points unerringly towards Foxe and his apocalyptic interpretation of the Wars of the Roses in Acts and Monuments. Strikingly, when viewed from this Foxean perspective, the effect of Shakespeare's dramaturgy would appear to have been precisely the reverse of the orthodox Rossiterian formula. That is, in actively tracing or witnessing the Foxean intertext—that horribly bloody-minded stage devil who keeps popping-up in new guises and acting very, very badly—in Shakespeare successive "scenes of death," an Elizabethan audience would have been able to experience mere fascination, perhaps even seduction, giving way to a profoundly serious wonder and spiritual repulsion. What Shakespeare gave them—or rather charged them to see—was the most brilliant mimesis of Satanic evil in the early modern canon. He enabled them to see, moreover, in a new "conceit" unique to the "only Shake-scene in a country," how the amusements of theatricality could be

made to yield the terrible pathos of History. This experience, for readers of Foxe at least, would have more than justified the price of admission.

---

[1] This chapter builds upon some of the comparisons between Foxe and Shakespeare which were originally set out in my 1999 McGill MA thesis.

[2] The frequency with which this conceit recurs in Walsham's *Providence in early modern England* testifies to the powerful linkage of theatricality with *both* diabolism and with apocalyptic revelation.

[3] Making a similar point, R. T. Kendall notes how Bale's effort to dramatize the "ineluctable conflict between the world of grace and the world of demonic self-sufficiency" is "concentrated" in the playwright's ironic treatment of the "demonic play of the Vices." Kendall goes on to argue that *Acts and Monuments* often seems to reproduce this fundamentally ironic perspective, in which the actions of Antichristian powers appear as a kind of grotesque theatrics which is contained by Foxe's providential frame (100-122). Kendall's discussion provides more-or-less the entire basis of Huston Diehl's discussion of the "Drama of Iconoclasm" in *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage* (9-39). See also Knott, 1993 *passim.*

[4] With characteristic clarity, J.P. Brockbank writes that "conventional heroic ideals cannot survive" Shakespeare's dramatization of civil war, "which turns on two blasphemies of chivalry—the killing of the Prince and the degradation of the mock-king" (61). While few critics would, I think, disagree that Shakespeare is deflating chivalric militarism, what needs to be clarified is the difference between Shakespeare's highly affective and resonantly biblical representations of war and the dispassionate analyses of politics and warfare typical of writers like Bacon and Hayward. And, while it shares affinities with "republican" historians' images of the horrors of civil war, Shakespeare's morally-charged analysis of civil war seems entirely remote from that Machiavellian mode of history which views war as a rational tool and which mines the past for 'politic' maxims of government for would-be tyrants. Shakespeare's history is apocalyptic: it uses pathos and graphic violence to produce a shockingly moving anatomy of the spiritual horrors of violent civil war. For discussions of "politic" history which illuminate, it seems to me, some of the real differences between Shakespeare theatre and the "politic" court historians, see Levy, 237-85 and Woolf 1990, 145-58. This is why Andrew Hadfield's recent attempt to read the HenryVI plays as republican history fails to convince: we are witnessing England's Golgotha, not "Shakespeare's *Pharsalia*" (see below page xx, nyy).

[5] Martin's reading of York is astute and informative, especially his addition of the civic pageantry element to York's "theatrical power." I would disagree, however, with the qualified term "near-heroic": Shakespeare reduces the scope of true heroic action in these

plays so that York's Christ-like pathos becomes its greatest possible exemplar. York is, to anticipate the argument of a later chapter, "near-heroic" compared to Henry V, but in this play that surprisingly pious warrior Prince is long gone.

[6] York is, Anne Righter argues, "not only the first of Shakespeare's Player Kings, but the one whose lineage is most ancient and, in its memory of a ritual past, most disturbing" (117). Like Righter, I think that the meaning of York's murder hinges on the way York's captors treat him as "Lord of Misrule." I disagree, however, with Righter's "ritual" reading: York does not "accept the part assigned him"; rather, he boldly refuses to play his part in the Queen's demonic pageant because he has found a better one. This is precisely why we need to see the enormity of Margaret's antics through the lens of a Foxean metadramatic irony: her theatrics fail because, as Righter puts it, York's *new* "rôle [is] a thing so poignant that his enemy Northumberland is actually moved to tears" (117-121).

[7] We will consider a very significant exception to this in chapter 6: Foxe's account of the parallel military exploits of Henry V and the Hussite hero John Zisca.

[8] In a recent article on the problem of interpolated stage directions in modern editions of Shakespeare, John Cox writes that

> The exchange between York and Richard seems to indicate that Richard is carrying Somerset's severed head. This is surely a prop, which Richard presumably addresses when he says, 'Speake thou for me', and which York also presumably mocks with macabre humour: "But is your Grace dead, my Lord of Somerset?" Does Richard also throw the head on the ground, as the editorial tradition suggests? If so, how does he shake the head four lines later ("Thus do I shake King *Henries* head")...if he does throw down the head, does he pick it up again to shake it? If so, why does he throw it in the first place? Or does *York* pick it up and shake it?... Rather than throw down Somerset's head, might not Richard equally plausibly hold up the head, perhaps even ghoulishly working its jaw, when he says "Speake thou for me"?(2004, 184)

What seems clear here is that we are witnessing a spectacle of diabolical clowning, not consummate acting.

[9] To be clear, I am not suggesting that Shakespeare had already conceived of Carlisle's vision at this point; rather, what I am suggesting is that in writing Carlisle's apocalyptic prophecy for *Richard II* Shakespeare was looking back at the "future" he had already portrayed in these earlier plays. Carlisle's vision, in other words, is the earliest, and the most informed, critical commentary on *2-3HenryVI* that we have, and it is certainly noteworthy that Shakespeare "reads" the plays as an image of modernity understood in explicitly apocalyptic spiritual terms.

[10] Critics who insist that York cannot be an allegorical Christ-figure because he is a realistic historical character miss Shakespeare's point: York is, quite precisely, playing the Man in a way which shows the material world suffused with spiritual energy. This is the opposite of demystification.

[11] I am slighting Henry's "fatal marriage" to Margaret here and also the relationship between Margaret and Suffolk: Shakespeare was deeply interested as a dramatist in the possibilities of a romantic triangle containing a couple of vicious lovers and a naive innocent (viz *MacBeth*), but what seems clear to me is how quickly and thoroughly this

history play becomes focused on the tragic confrontation between Humphrey and the Winchester-led cabal.

[12] For example, see Bullough 3: 32, 90. It is interesting to note, however, that Bullough's essay on "Historical Authorities Available to Shakespeare" (3:1-15) makes no mention of Foxe or *Acts and Monuments*

[13] Notwithstanding this criticism, I think *Shakespeare's Heroical Histories: HenryVI and its Literary Tradition* is an invaluable study. While Riggs' secularism leads him to occlude a great deal of Shakespeare's meaning, his focus on the classical humanist roots of Shakespeare's dramaturgy is cogent and illuminating because, unlike so many "radical" Shakespeareans, he portrays Shakespeare doing history in a recognizably, and recognizably serious, Elizabethan way.

[14] Developing Jones' idea, Roger Warren argues that Humphrey's tragedy is structured around the Duke's fatally passionate temper, and suggests that "like Leontes [Humphrey] is unable to control his passions even in public"(38). This is incorrect. The Duke controls his temper heroically in the play: he has, as Foxe says, a passionately "noble heart," and it is his enemies—and his wife—who are driven by pride, hate, malice, and envy. The parallel with *The Winter's Tale* is illuminating, but Warren has picked the wrong character: it is the dignified pathos of the godly Hermione, not the persecutorial rigor and jealousy of Leontes, that is prefigured in Humphrey's character. More generally speaking, the problem with Warren's reading is that he uses Aristotelian categories vaguely — hamartia as "tragic flaw—to analyze a tragedy which is *explicitly* Foxean not *vaguely* Aristotelian.

[15] As far as I have been able to ascertain, Foxe's narrative set-piece has not been noticed as a specific source for Shakespeare's portrayal of the "ancient grudge," even though Shakespeare appears to echo it directly in the Parliament scene. Foxe writes that Beaufort's "privy hatred (as sparkles under the embers) did still remain" (709) and Shakespeare that "Beaufort's red sparkling eyes blab his heart's malice" (3.1.154).

[16] Interestingly, just as in the play, in Foxe's account both Suffolk and Margaret play a major role in destroying Duke Humphrey, and Foxe carefully explains how each is subsequently visited by divine retribution. Interestingly, Foxe does not make any attempt to associate either figure with Catholicism. Like Shakespeare, evidently, Foxe recognizes that the Antichristian nature of these characters can be inferred from their actions.

[17] Interestingly, to anticipate somewhat the argument of the next two chapters of this thesis, where Foxe includes hints of a less perfect portrait, Shakespeare idealizes the Duke's character in order to heighten his Foxean tragic theme. For example Foxe complicates the tragic encomium quoted here by adding that Humphrey's fall might have been caused "by some other vice or trespass done (as seemeth most like truth) which God, as well in duke's houses correcteth, as in other inferior persons; especially where he loveth (714). If the play "complicates" Humphrey's character by exploring any such hidden "vice or trespass," I cannot see it.

[18] Foxe's account of Humphrey's career further explodes the notion of a fundamental clash—ideological, conceptual, or otherwise—between "political" and "providential" historical analysis and narration.

[19] The relationship between Foxe's and Shakespeare's portrayal of Eleanor Cobham has not been well-understood. Shakespeare confirms Foxe's claim that the charges against Eleanor stemmed from the plot to destroy Humphrey. And, where he departs from Foxe, he does so in a way which again deepens the Foxean tragic pattern of the action. That is, whereas Foxe concludes, rightly, that it is impossible to ascertain whether Eleanor was truly guilty of witchcraft and sedition (but believes that she was not), Shakespeare finds her guilty but uses her crimes to deepen the sense of "light" being enveloped by spiritual "smoke." Eleanor's righteous anger is clearly meant to be extenuated or justified to some extent by Margaret's contumelies, and it is this spark of spiritual nobility that is extinguished, tragically, when Eleanor falls into the demonic snare set for her by Winchester's cabal. Eleanor's fall thus subtly underscores the tragic theme even as her criminal involvement with seditious priests, demons and witchcraft is an unmistakably popish foil for Humphrey's character. The sublimity of Lady MacBeth may be on the horizon, but this should not distract us from the distinctively Foxean implications of Eleanor's character: as both victim and perpetrator, she is a facet of the composite image of a virulent and all-encompassing satanic apostasy which, Shakespeare and Foxe both argue, destroys the Duke.

[20] Although the saintly Lancastrian Henry King VI is of course not a figure of violent satanic enormity, his culpability is central to Shakespeare's account of Humphrey's tragedy and is, as Margaret's comments make clear, explicitly identified with his Catholic piety. Shakespeare's portrayal of Henry as a "popish" impotent who fails to protect Duke Humphrey fits the Foxean paradigm perfectly because, for Foxe, one of the definitive signs of modernity is the failure of Princes and Magistrates to stand up to the machinations of popish Antichrists like Winchester.

[21] Michael Hattaway, for example, argues that Shakespeare viewed all providential history as "comic and inadequate," but does not explain the Cardinal's demise, other than to note that people in the 19th-century found the scene very compelling (40-45). The most recent Arden editor, Ronald Knowles, urges, vaguely, that while these deaths *could* be seen as signs of providential agency, it is "by no means certain" that they are (44-5). Going beyond Hattaway's secularist fiats, Knowles aggressively promotes Rackin's idea that Shakespeare was subjecting Providence to a subversively skeptical "trial by combat" (41-64). What is ironic about Knowles' tendentious Introductory survey, however, is that it shows how, despite the enormous amount of critical energy which has been applied to the task, nothing has been said to dislodge Tillyard's argument about the ending of Duke Humphrey's tragedy:

> The judgement of God...is quick in striking two of Gloucester's murderers. Cardinal Beaufort dies in an agony of evil conscience, Suffolk is captured by a warship...and put to death after the ship's captain has recited a list of his crimes. (183)

The real question here is not whether Shakespeare dramatizes providence—he does—but what kind of criticism we want to do. Historiographically speaking, it makes no sense to deny that Shakespeare's play performs providential convictions. For a study of this dramatic fact based on a careful contextualizing of Shakespeare's staging, rather than anachronism and abstruse special pleading, see Claire Saunders' "'Dead in his Bed':

Shakespeare's Staging of the Death of the Duke of Gloucester in *2HenryVI.*" Strangely left out of Knowles' survey, Saunders' article underlines how, in Elizabethan performance, the linked scenes of Humphrey's corpse and Winchester's death expressly perform the providential conviction that "murder will not go unpunished"(30). I am adding a further element to Saunders' analysis by suggesting just how powerfully this staging would have been confirmed by the Foxean intertext.

[22] As Walsham discovers in her survey of providential revenge literature, in the eyes of some writers God clearly prefers his revenge served cold. The impression Foxe gives is that, when God strikes, he does so dramatically and with alacrity.

[23] Here again, Shakespeare subtly indexes the King's apostasy using a theatrical metaphor: just as the popish Simpcox is a clownish bad-actor, Henry's pious credulity makes him a poor "understander."

[24] These allusions are catalogued by Warren as part of a lively and convincing attack on Urkowitz' "two plays" hypothesis about *2HenryVI*, but are not factored into his analysis of the conjuring scene (82-3). Although it is possible, as Warren assumes, that Shakespeare's "full-scale conjuring episode" was designed simply "to exploit the popularity" of *Dr. Faustus* and *Tamburlaine*, I think Shakespeare was up to more than this. Shakespeare invokes Marlowe in order to distinguish between two kinds of theatre: good and bad. His point, in other words, is that the spectacles devised by the play's popish hacks and their evil-minded patrons are *not like* Marlowe's plays.

[25] Here again, Providential justice is not capricious but precisely mirrors the crime it redresses.

[26] Warwick's ostensibly choric role here further contributes to the metatheatrical *mis en scene.*

[27] Readers familiar with *Shakespeare and the Populace* (1949) will no doubt recall that that Stirling came to a very different conclusion, arguing that Shakespeare's portrayal of Cade was designed to expose or "mirror" not popery but rather Protestant nonconformity. Shakespeare's Cade, in Stirling's view, exemplifies "the associative process in which Anabaptist communism equals traditional English popular rebellion and both in turn equal contemporary religious nonconformity" (140). This is an extremely important argument about which three things need to be said. The first is that Stirling very effectively demonstrates (1) that an "associative process" linking Cade, other notorious plebeian English rebels such as Jack Straw, and the specter of Anabaptism, is at the heart of Shakespeare's version of the rebellion; (2) that Shakespeare's perspective on the rebellion is profoundly castigatory; and (3) that the most pressing topical context for this portrayal was the controversy over Church government. What Stirling shows, in other words, is that we cannot understand the artistry of the Cade episode until we recognize that, by staging Cade's rebellion in an obvious relation to both 1381 and to Anabaptism, Shakespeare was taking up a position in a hotly contested religious debate. The second point is that Stirling's firm belief in Shakespeare's essential Anglicanism led him to conclude his case before he had considered the significance of his evidence. Stirling argues that there was "an automatic linkage"(148) between Anabaptism, chronicle-based portrayals of popular rebellion, and conformist propaganda, but his evidence in fact shows that writers of various stripes viewed violent "popular" rebellion, often through the

lens of Anabaptism, as a fundamentally satanic activity, and that this "associative process" was adaptable to more than one, conservatively Bancroftian, position. What he fails to notice in particular is the extent to which the same combination of popular rebellion and Anabaptist apostasy could be used as a reflection not of the "Puritan left wing," but of a destructively mad Popery in government. In this view, the same "associative process" could well find a figuration of the repressive tactics of authorities whose actions embody the satanic antithesis of the true spirit of Reformed magistracy. Thus, where the anti-puritan Bishop Cooper can warn in 1589 that "Satan under pretenses seeketh to thrust the spirit of the Anabaptists into...this Church of England," in 1592 a group of Suffolk petitioners can urge the Queen's Council not to "allow the Papists their treacheries, subtleties, and heresies, not the Family of Love, an egg of the same nest, nor the Anabaptists nor Brownists, the overthrowers of church and commonweal." Similarly, in a subtle argument about the conformity between the English Church and Wycliff, Thomas James can contrast the reformer's ecclesiology with the apostate ideas of "the Anabaptists now, and [those] a certain Bald Priest in his time did hold...one John Ball, one of Bal's priests for ought I know, [who caused the rebellion] under the conduct of Wat Tyler and Jack Straw...which [was] pure Anabaptism"(112, 120, 142). While perhaps less obvious, this use of Anabaptism and popular revolt as a mirror for popery is hardly super-subtle: it hinges on the notion that popery is the consequence of the failure of secular and religious leaders adequately to participate in the reformation of society, or indeed their tendency actively to oppose that process. In the eyes of many, Bancroft was an agent of popery and, indeed, a kind of antichrist. The third point is that it is still entirely possible that the Cade episode works, in the "conservative" sense argued by Stirling, to expose and satirize the dangers of nonconformity. My argument is that this conclusion is not "automatic," but has to be determined by a close analysis of the scene as Shakespeare actually staged it. Moreover—and this relation is ignored by Stirling—what has to be taken into account the distinctively metatheatrical way Cade's antics mirror the explicitly popish malignity of the play's aristocratic rebels: taking advantage of the impotence of a "popish" monarch, a villainously Catholic cabal stage-manages the politic butchery of the reforming paragon, Duke Humphrey. If Cade "mirrors" such egregious popery within the play, it is likely that he mirrors it, in Lily Campbell's sense of the word, in contemporary religio-politics as well. The intertextual resonance linking Cade's style and Foxe's anatomy of Antichristian enormity further supports the idea that, contrary to Stirling, Shakespeare was on the "left" rather than the "right" in the debate over reform.

[28] Falstaff, it seems worth noting, would be an apt name for this ridiculously larger-than-life figure.

[29] From the retrospective point of view of a legal historian, as Tim Stretton has pointed out to me, it is possible to make sense of this charge; however, in the play it is sheer madness: it is the rebels who are treating men as if they were livestock, making "dog's leather" out of the skins of the perfectly innocent lambs who are their "enemies."

[30] Cade does not, of course, describe his own mouth as stinking, but we experience it as such thanks to the Weaver's caustic aside. What is particularly striking about this irony is the way Cade's men "fall in" with him even though they seem to know that he is a fraud. As a result, what we experience is an image not of innocence, and certainly not of an

authentic or valid political protest movement, but of a kind willful apostasy. "Stinking," it seems worth adding, is one of Foxe's favored epithets for Antichrist.

[31] It is interesting to note that for the infamous murders he committed at the battle of Wakefield, Clifford came to be known as "the butcher" (Knowles, 100).

## Chapter Five. Distinguishing Form in *Richard II*

> [The Historian] emploieth his time, wasteth his Oile, and macerates himselfe in the scrutinie of true Relations, by conferring Histories together, and with a judicious approbation, or electing power, extract[s] whatsoever may seeme most probable and authenticke....[Error occurs when] divers Authors were cited, and their several opinions marshalled in a row: but as in a battle, when the wings be broken, there insueth nought but universal confusion; so without reconcilement in the conclusion the historian leaves the Reader in suspense...because not directed by the Author.
>
> Richard Brathwaite

> Like perspectives, which, rightly gazed upon,
> Show nothing but confusion; eyed awry,
> Distinguish form.
>
> Bushy, *Richard II*

*

Post-Tillyardian criticism tends, I have been arguing, to find Shakespeare doing something that is, from the point of view of a coherently historiographical perspective, incredible: "radical Shakespeare," we are told, draws upon his chronicle sources for *facts*, but rejects or ignores them as sources of significant *meaning*. Thus far I have attempted to show that one of the most distinctive features of the early chronicle plays, Shakespeare's metatheatrical irony, does not in fact generate any such radical discontinuity between Shakespeare's art and Tudor historical thought. Rather, at least when read in light of *Acts and Monuments*, the histrionic villainy of characters such as Queen Margaret, Jack Cade, and Richard III links Shakespeare's portrayal of historical violence and Foxe's version of late-medieval history and, at the same time, helps Shakespeare to consolidate his claim that *his* theatre is a legitimate vehicle for the representation of serious Providential history. Thus, to use Lily Campbell's terms, in portraying the latter stages of the Wars of the Roses era as an exemplary instance of "the danger to a nation when civil discord and rebellion were allowed to raise their ugly heads"(70), Shakespeare engages with and draws upon *Acts and Monuments* in

order to invest his version of the conventional "pattern" with a distinctly Foxean, apocalyptic, significance, even as he asserts his stage's command of the idea that Antichrist is a bad actor.

Turning to *Richard II* in the next two chapters, I want to begin by recognizing that what is true of the first tetralogy is not necessarily true of the second. That is, especially due to influence of works such as Sigurd Burckhardt's *Shakespearean Meanings* (1968), it has become something of a critical commonplace to acknowledge that while Shakespeare may have been to some extent enthralled by orthodoxy in the early chronicle plays, the second tetralogy, by virtue of Shakespeare's more mature *complexity*, radically transcends these earlier commitments. C. G. Thayer, for example, writes that

> [i]n the first tetralogy, Shakespeare sticks generally to the official view of things, possibly because it was the most readily available, more likely because he had not yet sorted out all of his thoughts about the history of his country. I agree with Sigurd Burckhardt that it is salutary to 'unthink' the first tetralogy while studying the second....his words are, 'Let us suppose the loss of four extant plays—the first tetralogy.' Yes, indeed" (180).

While it perhaps frees the critic to pursue the "radicalism" of the later plays, such disintegrationist thinking, a version of the post-Tillyardian rejection of "organicism" of all kinds, fails to account for the continuities between the earlier and later history plays. Compare, for example, the much more critically sound view of F.W. Brownlow:

> The techniques [used by Shakespeare in *Richard II*] themselves come from *Henry VI*, and so does much of the characterization. The emblematic garden scene (3.4) looks back to the scene in the Temple Garden (*I HenryVI,* 2.4), as well as to the Battle of Towton (*II HenryVI*, 2.5). The treatment of Gaunt as a good old counsellor may owe something to Froissart or to the anonymous play of *Woodstock*, but it certainly owes a lot to Shakespeare's own Duke Humphrey in *II Henry VI*. The handling of King Henry VI, especially his meditation during the Battle of Towton and his last scene in the Tower, is the basis of much in *Richard II*. These older methods have taken a new life

> because the ceremonial style is far more now than a means to dramatic end. The ceremonial is inseparable from the play's theme, the "unkinging" of King Richard. (58)

In a word, the difference between Brownlow's acute observations and Thayer's tendentious way of *unthinking* about Shakespeare as a historian is *coherence*: as I argued in the Preface, a coherent historical approach to Shakespeare's history plays depends, ultimately, on some version of Lily Campbell's argument about Shakespeare's historiographical conformity with the Tudor pattern. And, while Shakespeare's marked development as a dramatic historian in *Richard II* must be recognized as part of this, there is nothing to be gained by assuming that the complexity of the later plays necessarily dissolves the link between Shakespeare's practice and Tudor historical thought. Beyond the way that it tends to consign the earlier plays to a kind of oblivion, the problem with this kind of thinking is that it leads to the invention of pseudo-categories—like Rackin's "anti-history"—which have no real purchase on the complexity which they set out to explain. This is because complexity, in *Richard II* and the other plays of the second tetralogy, is a property of Shakespeare's historical argument, not a stage beyond it. Curiously, moreover, whereas the source of Shakespeare's putative radicalism in criticism of *Richard III* has been located in the explicit *anti-realism* of Vice-like figures such as Richard III, in post-Tillyardian criticism of *Richard II* it is Shakespeare's brilliant characterological *realism* which supposedly elevates his dramaturgy beyond Tudor history writing.

Looking fairly critically at a single paradigmatic example of this version of radical Shakespeare, my aim in this brief chapter is to reopen the question of the function of complex characterization in *Richard II* by asking what brilliantly realized tragic characters like Gaunt, Richard, and the Queen are for, historiographically

speaking. In the next chapter I will attempt to answer this question by reconsidering the argument of *Richard II* as an image of nascent modernity in light of the Foxean intertext.

*

Following a familiar post-Tillyardian trajectory, the editor of the most recent Arden edition of *Richard II*, Charles Forker, defines Shakespeare's art of historical characterization in the play in terms of a notional complexity which is the antithesis of the Tudor historiographical "pattern" described by Lily Campbell. Where Campbell defined the Renaissance *ars historiae*, both in Shakespeare and in Tudor historical writing generally, in terms of the desire for interpretive clarity and for precision in the delineation of historical persons and events, on one hand, and the effort to situate those persons and events within a providentially "moral universe" on the other (70), Forker contends that Shakespeare's goal in representing historical figures in *Richard* II was to accomplish precisely the opposite. Shakespeare, he says, "contrives to promote ambiguous impressions of both antagonists throughout the drama and to manipulate audience responses in such a way as to keep approval and disapproval, or sympathy and alienation, in a more or less constant state of flux." This "complication of character adopted in *Richard II*," he concludes, "represents a new and subtler technique than anything observable in the earlier plays, especially the histories"(27).

A similar "structural ambiguity," Forker argues, anchors Shakespeare's "complex" design at the level of historical interpretation or significance: far from attempting to situate his characters in a moral universe, the playwright purposefully stages contradictory versions of history in order to "leave...equivocal issues unresolved" (27). By contrast, while Campbell concluded that aspects of

Shakespeare's political message in *Richard II* remain a "riddle" (212), the play's essentially conservative political "lesson"—or ideology—is unmistakably orthodox:

> Shakespeare reiterated the charges against Richard that had been so often laid at Queen Elizabeth's door. He adjudged Richard guilty of sinful folly, but Gaunt, and Richard himself, and all the sympathetic characters, insist that 'God's is the quarrel,' that a subject may not give sentence on his king. Furthermore, the picture of Henry IV at the end of the play as a king whose soul is full of woe is scarcely conducive to the encouragement of would-be usurpers. (211)

Urging that Campbell's reading "undoubtedly represents a gross oversimplification" (136), Forker argues that, rather than driving towards any such political moral or point, Shakespeare indifferently stages the ideological conflict between two "competing conceptions of monarchy," the medieval divine right absolutism made famous by E.H. Kantorowicz, and the progressive "constitutional view of monarchy," highlighted by Ernest Talbert in *The Problem of Order*. The goal of this "complex political vision," he argues, is to "complicate our response to the implicit opposition between absolutist and constitutional monarchy" (22).

While seductively familiar-sounding, Forker's reading is inadequate to the task of describing Shakespeare's complexity in *Richard II*, both at the level characterization and of the politico-historical interpretation that that characterization is designed to serve. With respect to the larger issue of the play's political ideology, Forker's ambiguity-driven reading combines a version of Rackin's "enacting tensions" argument with a suspect understanding of late-Elizabethan political history. And, like his model, Forker gets mired in the attempt to combine two fundamentally different ways of thinking about literary works historically: the idea that literary works *reflect* underlying historical realities, such as, for example, constitutional evolution, significant changes over the *longue durée* that are by definition only apparent from the

retrospective vantage point of the historian, on one hand, and the idea that literary works are the intentional *expressions* of historically specific persons operating within equally specific discursive formations, on the other. This inherently quixotic attempt to portray Shakespeare miraculously *reflecting upon* long-term historical processes which were, by definition, invisible to him, is compounded, in Forker's analysis, by the out of date historical perspectives applied by the critics themselves.[1]

That is, if it is fair to say, *pace* Forker, that the politics of Shakespeare's day can no longer be credibly discussed in Whig-historical terms as a sharply defined ideological struggle between conservative absolutism and progressive Parliamentary opposition, that no such opposition was in fact at the heart of Tudor-Stuart politics, then it is highly unlikely that Shakespeare's goal was to "stage" it, and it is pointless to define his complexity it terms of his ability to "complicate" it. What is more, the point would appear to be moot in any case, because even if Forker's thinking were more historically relevant, these supposedly competing ideological positions do not map on to the play's characters in anything like the way he suggests. Crucially, while Shakespeare's King Richard does use the language of divine kingship (he is a King, after all), and while his seizure of the Lancastrian patrimony is a striking tyranny, as a figure of royal Absolutism so called, Richard surely pales in comparison to the bloody tyrant Bolingbroke. It is Bolingbroke who is utterly fascinated with kingly power; who engages in various extralegal imprisonments, murders, and pardons; and who is quite willing, in Act Five, to be called "a god on earth"(5.3.132).[2] The difficulty of finding Forker's opposition reflected in the play's central characters becomes even more pronounced when we turn to the other characters: is Gaunt's stance absolutist or is he a Parliament-man? What about the Queen, Northumberland, the Gardener? Rather than "complicating" the opposition between absolutist and constitutional conceptions

of monarchy, Shakespeare's play is, unsurprisingly, simply not about these grossly oversimplified historical categories at all.

Moreover, and quite paradoxically, Forker's familiar claim is that Shakespeare's "radical" political strategy is rooted in his realistically ambiguous characterizations of historical persons, but it is difficult to see how the characters can stand for competing conceptions of monarchy in the allegorical fashion implied by Forker's analysis when they are so inscrutably complex, shifting, and unstable. That is, while Forker is on firmer ground in stressing the complex psychological realism of Shakespeare's characters, it is not at all clear that his parade of diffuse personalities substantially illuminates Shakespeare's practice in representing historical persons. Making a very similar argument, R. Morgan Griffen argues that "traditional interpretations" of the play "come from a desire to make [the] characters more stable than they are." This desire, he contends, has "blind[ed] readers to the play's intriguing contradictions" (26). But this cuts both ways: how unstable are these characters, really? A more pressing problem, it seems to me, is that the desire to make the characters more unstable than they are often blinds us to the fact that "contradictions" in Shakespearean characters are only "intriguing" because Shakespeare compels us to try to grasp his complex but clearly delineated meanings.

Much as in his reading of the play's politics, Forker's account of Shakespeare's "mixed effect" works by making imprecise generalizations about the characters and then discovering that these responses are inadequate. At best, this "bait and switch" technique produces a kind of factitious ambiguity where Shakespeare seems to be strategically delineating characters in the furtherance of a pointed historical interpretation. For instance, Bushy, Bagot and Green, we are told, "are meant to function chiefly as self-aggrandizing parasites and the givers of bad counsel

to a youthfully impressionable and emotionally unstable king...Yet, even here, there is a measure of ambiguity, for we never see the favorites behave treasonably" (47). This reading is, it seems to me, entirely beside Shakespeare's point. Rather, the complexity in Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard's notorious favourites is a result of the way Shakespeare makes it clear that, despite commonplace historiographical tradition, and despite what some other characters might claim, Richard's supporters are not "caterpillars" at all. And, rather than producing a kind of pointless aporia, this dramatic *fact* has an important clarifying effect on our response to the play's central characters and it contributes, similarly, to the political point of the play as a whole.

Shakespeare does not, as Forker's reading implies, fail in his attempt to use Bushy, Bagot, and Green to "soften and explain, if not wholly excuse, the King's most egregious tyrannies"(47); he boldly redraws these conventional characters in order to argue that Richard's culpability *cannot be explained by his susceptibility to flattery.* Shakespeare is not trying to confuse us; he is attempting to make us think more deeply about the nature of an epoch-changing royal tragedy. Richard's friends are not commonplace flatterers, and so his real culpability must lie elsewhere: Shakespeare's design is to provoke playgoers to look for a deeper, more satisfactory, explanation of Richard's fall than "caterpillars." Similarly, and this is also surely one of the play's most deliberate effects, the striking and unlooked-for clarity of Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard's loyal friends also brilliantly exposes the enormity of Bolingbroke's actions. It deepens, for example, our sense of wonder at Bolingbroke's grotesquely false claim that the favorites are guilty of separating Richard from his Queen, and it points unmistakably to the fact that, when Bolingbroke executes Bushy and Green, he is guilty not only of usurping Richard's authority, but of murdering innocents. What appears *almost* unfathomable, in other words, is not Bolingbroke's

complexly realistic and round personality, but the distinctive historical enormity this "vile politician" represents.

*

I have taken the time in this brief chapter to scrutinize Forker's reading of *Richard II* because, just as it is crucial to rescue Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard III and the Wars of the Roses from the clutches of Rossiter's dialectic, it is necessary, in turning to the second tetralogy, to disentangle the idea of Shakespeare's maturation as a historical dramatist from a regnant conception of the playwright as a purveyor of ambiguity or aporia. Notably, as I did earlier, Forker claims Norman Rabkin for an ally, arguing that "from Rabkin's point of view the ambivalences of the play are not only vital to its structure but lie also at the heart of its tragedy" (50). This is partially correct, but what Forker ignores is Rabkin's crucial qualification about "fundamental ambiguity" in the history plays:

> if what happens in *Henry V* is a version of the fundamental ambiguity that many critics have found at the center of Shakespeare's vision...such ambiguity is not a theme or even the most important fact in many plays in which it figures...one cannot say that it is what they are 'about,' and readings of Shakespearean plays as communicating only ambiguity are as arid as readings in which the plays are seen to be about appearance and reality." (61)

Rabkin is right: as Richard Brathwaite's remarkably relevant comments from *The Schollers Medley* make clear, the idea that Shakespeare's development as a historical dramatist inevitably led to a kind of nebulous indifference about historical characters and events, and to the pursuit of ambiguity for its own sake, simply will not suffice if we care at all about the historical argument of the plays. Strikingly, the rhetorical impact that Forker identifies as Shakespeare's fundamental achievement—he "leaves the Reader in suspense"—the Renaissance historian and playwright Brathwaite considers a complete failure. Leaving Forker behind, what I want to stress is that it is

precisely because *Richard II* and the later history plays are such accomplished works of theatrical history that we need to emphasize the exact opposite assumption. As Campbell urged, like Michael Drayton, Samuel Daniel, and William Baldwin, Shakespeare combined his artistic and historical abilities in order to create "poetical mirrors" based on distinctively Tudor historiographical "patterns." Consequently, in order to appreciate Shakespeare's more mature history plays, we need to consider Shakespeare's development in terms of his deeper involvement with a specifically Tudor kind of history-making, and to consider how Shakespeare's complexity at the level of tragic characterization contributed to—rather than confounded—the basic motives of the chronicle play genre.

*Richard II* is a highly accomplished and extremely complex chronicle play; Shakespeare's point, however, as both Bushy and Brathwaite urge, is not to leave us mired in "confusion," ambiguity, or uncertainty. Instead, by presenting audiences with historical characters who are both compellingly realized *and* enigmatic, Shakespeare invites playgoers to discover secure moral and political historical standpoints from which to interpret the actions and judge the actors. Just as Bushy's perspective painting allows the active viewer to "distinguish form" in its apparent confusion, Shakespeare's play rewards the interpreter with a sense of wonder at the profound historical significance of the play's central action—the tragic fall of Richard II. As Bushy says—and his critical insight is surely as unlooked-for in a "caterpillar" as is his assiduous concern for the emotional well-being of the Queen—what is required in *Richard II* is a vantage point, and in the following chapter I will extend my reading of the Foxean intertext by suggesting that *Acts and Monuments* is precisely that: an intertextual vantage point which enables playgoers to "distinguish form" in *Richard II* by viewing the play through the lens of Foxe's image of apocalyptic modernity.

Something like Brathwaite's ideal historian, Shakespeare scrutinizes conventional explanations of the conflict between Richard and Bolingbroke, and of the significance of Richard's fall. And, in complicating conventional explanations of the key players, and of the larger significance of the play's central action, Shakespeare invites and allows playgoers to reinterpret this crucial historical episode in light of Foxe's own reconceptualization of the Tudor Myth. Most importantly, what I will attempt to illuminate here is a facet of the play which confirms the venerable impression that *Richard II* is ultimately about the epochal transformation of the past into the present, that in moving from Richard to Bolinbroke we are in effect moving from a historically significant *then* to a radically differentiated *now*. What is entirely different here, however, is that the time-frame in which this crucial epideictic and forensic contrast is seen is Foxean apocalyptic time, rather than Whig political history, Hegelian dialectic, or the dissolution of Feudalism by the forces of material modernity.

While the idea that in *Richard II* Shakespeare was portraying the origins of his and Foxe's modernity—not ours—is my most significant claim, the main focus in the next chapter will be on two of the play's central characters—Richard and John of Gaunt. These characters are brilliantly scrutable ciphers whose complexity invites and rewards interpretation. The relevance of *Acts and Monuments* in this respect is its capacity to canalize or solidify the identity of these characters, in performance, generating a deeper sense of their reality as historical persons and their significance as representative figures in Shakespeare's historical argument. Although it is somewhat artificial to do so, I will mostly leave Bolingbroke out in order to focus here on the way the Foxean intertext helps to consolidate Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard as a tragic failure, a figure of royal apostasy whose enigmatic culpability resonates powerfully with Foxe's apocalyptic conception of England's "fall" into "modern"

politics. I will begin, however, by arguing that from the same intertextual vantage point, John of Gaunt's supposedly *unhistorical* character reveals a substantially new dimension, a theatrical identity which anchors the play's historical argument and functions as the lynch-pin in Shakespeare's imaginative response to Foxe and to the epochal reign of Richard II.

My goal, then, is to demonstrate how *Richard II* engages the Foxean intertext, and how that intertext consolidates a very particular reading of the play's main action. Moreover, as in the previous chapters, I also want to stress that this intertextuality articulates Shakespeare's autonomy as a literary artist and an intellectual as much as it does his dependence upon historiographical authority. In *Richard II*, it is the energy of theatrical *tragedy*, rather than Vice-like comedy, which provides the basis of Shakespeare's difference. By dramatizing Richard's failure as a tragedy, Shakespeare uses the stage to confirm Foxe's argument about the *magnitude* of Richard's fall, but, at the same time, he makes an assertion about the durability of royalty which is captured by the theater, but is somehow eclipsed in Foxe's pessimistic historical philosophy. Later, I will explore how this difference of historiographical opinion becomes a major source of historiographical energy behind Shakespeare's portrayal of Henry V and the era of Lancastrian rule in the *Henriad*.

---

[1] In addition to Whig historiography in general, Forker's reading appears to be based heavily on the thesis of Ernst Kantorowicz's 1957 study, *The King's Two Bodies.* As David Norbrook points out, despite having been recommended by Foucault, this book cannot be taken as a reliable guide to 16th-century political theory (Norbrook, 121-2).
[2] Reading against the grain of Shakespeare's characterization of Bolingbroke as a usurping tyrant and a political disaster, C.G. Thayer portrays the Lancastrians as positive exemplars of Republican political virtue and finds, moreover, Shakespeare to be in sympathy with the most extreme anti-monarchical views of the day. While unconvincing, Thayer's thesis is at least a plausible and conceptually meaningful way of trying to understand Shakespeare's politics. At the risk of broaching the "riddle" of

the play's politics, it seems to me likely that, in the wake of the Essex revolt, the Elizabethan authorities absolved the play because they could see how strongly it undermined the language of "caterpillars" and "flatterers" as a pretext for political violence. Leeds Barroll's suggestion that the Essex conspirators *mistook* the play for a republican manifesto is, I think, by far and away the most compelling interpretation of this remarkable incident. While this thesis is not about Shakespeare's political thought *per se*, I will be showing how Shakespeare's profound commitment to the idea of a providentially supported monarch is illuminated by the Foxean intertext.

## Chapter Six. Richard II, John of Gaunt and the Time of Prophecy and Apostasy

> For the Grace of God is a blessed Alcumist, where it toucheth it makes good and religious. Richard Sibbes

> The old John of Gaunt is a model of chivalrous honour: he stands there like a pillar of the olden time which he has outlived. His son, Henry IV, was altogether unlike him: *his* character is admirably sustained throughout the three pieces in which he appears. We see in it that mixture of hardness, moderation, and prudence, which, in fact, enabled him to secure the possession of the throne which he had violently usurped; but without openness, without true cordiality, and incapable of noble ebullitions.... A. W. Schlegel

> God yet again will raise up Godly teachers who, being fervent in the spirit of Elias, shall disclose and refute the errors of Antichrist and Antichrist himself, openly to the world. John Foxe

> Methinks I am a prophet new inspired
> Shakespeare's John of Gaunt

*

Because Shakespeare is a genius, Schlegel says, his characters are like poetic thunderbolts, "living pictures" that "make an impression on the imagination which can never be effaced" (109). These impressions, according to Schlegel, are doubly significant: we are struck by the rich individuality of the characters themselves and, at the same time, we recognize them as parts of the rational structure or argument of the play.[1] Shakespeare's John of Gaunt seems to fit this description perfectly. Gaunt's outstanding nobility is a distinctive feature of this remarkably sentient, passionate—and old—man. At the same time, Shakespeare makes seemingly inevitable contrasts between "time-honored Lancaster" and other, less exalted, characters in the play, contrasts which appear be at the heart of the play's historical argument: *Gaunt* was then, Shakespeare seems to be saying, and these other men, denizens of the new world coming into view in the play, are *now*. Gaunt's eloquent nobility is thus a complex but powerfully realized dramatic and historical *fact*, so that it would be a solecism to see him as a fop, a selfish dupe, or an evil counselor, or to say, for that matter, that we

cannot *really* know him or anything else about the historical realities adumbrated through him in the play. And yet, to a degree which a critic like Schlegel likely never considered, the forceful presence of Gaunt's character, and the significance of those crucial relationships in which he is engaged, are also inchoate in the sense that they are, finally, generated intertextually, through the application of defining assumptions about what Shakespeare is doing in the play, and about what nobility, old age, and eloquence are all about, that are in a sense external to the play. To use Shakespeare's terms, in other words, even Gaunt has to be decked-out with "thought," and doing so inevitably involves playgoers in that deliberate perspective-taking which, I have been arguing, designedly governs our response to Shakespeare's meaning in the play as a whole.

John Baxter's analysis of Gaunt as a tragic figure is a classic version of this phenomenon. Although his "something curious" in the passage below is less forthrightly judgmental than Schlegel's age of iron imagery, what is remarkable, first of all, is the continuity between Baxter's impression of the dramatic function of Gaunt's eloquence and Schlegel's:

> As he does for the character of John of Gaunt, Shakespeare bestows on Bolingbroke a mastery of style ranging from eloquent to plain speech. Something curious happens, however, in Bolingbroke's speeches, and neither his plainness nor his eloquence has the resonance that characterizes Gaunt. (106)

Coming to Gaunt's great "scept'red isle" speech, Baxter writes that while Gaunt "seem[s] to promise vatic afflatus"(63), unlike Shakespeare's Cassandra, or perhaps Peter the Hermit in *King John*, Gaunt comes across here less as a prophet-figure than as an embodiment of the resigned grandeur which is the *sine qua non* of Shakespeare's great tragic figures. Thus, for Baxter, what is essential is the way Gaunt foreshadows Shakespeare's development as a tragedian and, more

immediately, the way he sets a standard of tragic eloquence within the play, one which the play's main characters, Richard and Bolingbroke, fail to meet.

While recognizing that this is just one small segment of a wide ranging reading of the character and his role in the play, I want to emphasize the exact element Baxter downplays in his interpretation: the association, or rather non-association, between eloquence, dissent, and prophecy. Baxter is of course right to say that Gaunt's "noble ebullitions" are not informed by an ecstatic or "vatic" irrationality—Gaunt may be literally carried-off at the end of his speech, but he does not get completely carried away during it. Nonetheless, precisely because he focuses on Gaunt thinking, feeling, and speaking, on the way Gaunt's character combines reason, passion, and forceful eloquence in an inimitably Shakespearean fashion, it is remarkable that Baxter seems willing to elide to some extent the very thing Gaunt *says* he is *thinking* and *feeling*:

> Methinks I am a prophet new inspired,
> And thus expiring do foretell of him[.] (2.1.31-2)

To dismiss Gaunt's explicit self-identification with "vatic" or prophetic inspiration seems reasonable, but it also appears to run the risk, as Baxter complains of the errant Richard, of neglecting "the spiritual and moral authority that infuses almost every word [spoken] by John of Gaunt" (105). Baxter avoids this censure, in my view, because unlike Richard—and many of the play's modern critics—he listens very carefully to what Gaunt is saying.[2] Moreover, Baxter's reading is assertively perspectival: he amplifies the idea that Gaunt is a better man than both Richard and Bolingbroke on critical grounds which are appropriate to the play, fixing Gaunt's character in terms of an historically relevant humanist conception of nobility in a man, a compelling model of tragic mimesis and, as well, a coherent conception of

Shakespeare's development as a poet. But, as suggested earlier, Baxter also *brings to the play* the idea that prophecy, insofar as it implies the absence of control, of irrationality, and of furor, is incommensurate with Gaunt's tragic elevation and *gravitas*. As discussed in the previous chapter, this perspective-taking assumption helps Baxter to distinguish Gaunt's form, but with a caveat: the promise of prophecy remains unfulfilled.

Now it would perhaps be cleverly *au courant* to argue from this that Shakespeare's complexity deconstructs any attempt to fix Gaunt's essential identity, and perhaps even to hold up the specter of a mad, starving, prophetic, and hence potentially subversive, Gaunt as the Repressed Other in Baxter's robustly humanist thinking. Leaving such antics aside, however, what I would like to note is the way that, for me, Baxter's discriminating reading helps to brings into focus a very different way of responding to Gaunt's character and his function in the play. Starting with the same dramatic fact—that Gaunt's eloquent dissent is a moral and spiritual yardstick in terms of which other characters are measured—I would suggest that the prophetic Gaunt marginalized in Baxter's *tragic* reading might be a decisive vantage-point for understanding *Richard II* as a *historical* play about the reign of Richard II. The necessity of grasping the point of Gaunt's forceful rhetoric is built into the structure of the play's historical argument, as well as its tragic design, and, as we will see in a moment, the implications of Shakespeare's portrayal of the historical Gaunt as a figure of prophetic eloquence become even more weighty once we begin to make some sense of the fact that Shakespeare's primary historical source does not even portray Gaunt as a particularly good man, let alone as an exemplary figure of inspired prophetic speech.

Shakespeare's *revision* of John of Gaunt's reputation is a central feature of *Richard II*, and until we grasp the point of that revision we cannot grasp the play's overall historical argument. By making righteous prophecy a *potentially* key element in Gaunt's character, Shakespeare engages his audience in the task of defining, intertextually, exactly how prophecy relates to the dramatic fact that old Lancaster is "honoured" by "time." Shakespeare's aim, it seems to me, is to amplify the play's felonies into *enormities*, breathing new life into the Tudor story of Richard's reign by discovering on stage the spiritual realities underlying the political crimes and errors which were central to it. Shakespeare found these religio-historical realities in Foxe, which is to say that *he* found them *as a playwright* by subjecting them to a kind of theatrical reality check. Responding to Foxe, Shakespeare dramatizes history in *Richard II* by staging a series of highly-charged confrontations in which prophetic speech contributes to the creation of an atmosphere fraught with implications of deeper, more profound and far-reaching implications. In so doing, he extends the conventional account beyond the merely political culpability of the monarch and/or the usurper to encompass an exploration of the religious historical significance of an entire era. As the play's best critics have consistently recognized, while Shakespeare's thinking in *Richard II* seems to owe little of significance to the propagandistic "Tudor Myth," he does seem determined to chart the transition between the "olden times" of Gaunt and the hard and violent new world which is somehow inaugurated with Richard's fall and the rise of Bolingbroke. However, while this transitional theme is unmistakably central to the play's historical argument, playgoers are confronted with the interpretive difficulty of discovering the precise relationship between prophetic insight and denunciation and the political events represented in the play. What Shakespeare urges playgoers to discover, that is, are the crucial spiritual and historical

realities looming behind a whole series of prophetic moments, including Gaunt's "new inspired" prophecy in Act Two, and, correspondingly, behind the inexplicably vicious and callous responses which bold speakers such as Gaunt seem to provoke.

Shakespeare's characters and their function within the play's historical design are revealed in these prophetic collisions, as Schlegel might say, in an indelible flash. Shakespeare works, however, by combining his bold strokes with complex uncertainty or, in Riffaterrean terms, ungrammaticality: Richard has somehow "sold out" the nation, but the conventional explanations behind Gaunt's "pelting farm" imagery seem inadequate to explain what we see Richard doing in the play, and with our sense of Richard as a tragic protagonist, just as they are incommensurate with the profound religious aura of Gaunt's dissent. What is the essence of Gaunt's visionary denunciation, and why, now, does Richard fail to hear, and indeed crassly abuse him? What is the object of the Queen's woeful prognostications, and why does Carlisle suddenly see "Golgotha" as he is dragged off to prison? What is it that Mowbray suddenly "knows" about Bolingbroke just before he is banished? For readers of *Acts and Monuments*, Shakespeare's enigmatic portrayal of a "newly inspired" prophetic voice in Ricardian England colliding with emergent monarchical tyranny would have functioned as a strikingly resonant intertextual "signpost," because a virtually identical crisis lies at the heart of Foxe's reinterpretation of this era. Like Shakespeare, Foxe portrays Richard's reign as a pivotal era of devastating national decline and royal apostasy and, as well, as an age of newly inspired prophecy. And, like Shakespeare, Foxe centers his account on the link between the heroic memory of the Duke of Lancaster and the discovery of this prophetic eloquence and dissent. From this Foxean intertextual perspective, the key to the play's historical argument is the connection, drawn by Shakespeare when we are intently focused on his every

word, between Gaunt's ebullient prophetic voice and the historical enormity which is discovered in the various responses to it in the play. "You know me," Shakespeare's Gaunt says to his Elizabethan audiences, "as soon as you recognize me as a figure of prophecy in the modern world."

*

This a novel claim, not only because the role of religious prophecy in *Richard II* has often been downplayed, but because, as readers familiar with the critical history of *Richard II* will have noted, it is generally accepted that the "historical" Duke of Lancaster is not even in the play.[3] Thus, dilating upon a critical commonplace, Charles Forker remarks that the "*historical* Duke of Lancaster" was a "dubious character—ambitious, contentious and, in the eyes of some writers at least, autocratic, feared and hated by the nobility and commons alike" (175 n3, my emphasis):

> Shakespeare's deliberate idealization of Gaunt, a powerful means of exposing Richard's self-destructiveness, constitutes a bold reconceptualization of the *historical* Duke, who, even in the earlier pages of Holinshed, emerges as an arrogant, quarrelsome, ambitious, devious and self-aggrandizing noble, who was accused of plotting to 'destroie the king, and to usurpe the crowne' and who inspired much popular enmity. (128-9)

Although he makes a vital point—that Shakespeare's Gaunt is a deliberate reconceptualization designed to expose Richard's self-destructiveness—the problem with this argument is that it is precipitous and historiographically naive. Shakespeare stakes his historical claim in *Richard II* by invoking, from the first line, a version of the reign of Richard in which time honours John of Gaunt. This historical perspective is not found in *Holinshed's Chronicles*, but it does not follow that Shakespeare's version is therefore unhistorical.[4] Rather, Shakespeare's bold reconceptualization of Gaunt needs to be considered in light of Foxe's own authoritative revision of the Duke's historical reputation in *Acts and Monuments*. As we will see in detail, Foxe

anticipates Shakespeare in representing Gaunt as an aging make-peace who is both passionately aristocratic and an outstandingly principled defender of England. More crucially, Foxe's Gaunt is a tragic figure in whom a combination of weary senescence and "new inspir'd" prophecy are vital elements in the historian's attempt to expose the deeper providential meaning of Richard's tragedy and its relationship to the larger course of apocalyptic time.

First alluding to Gaunt in his detailed account of the reign of Edward III, Foxe relates how, after a providentially supported victory over the French in 1340, Edward was rewarded by the birth, at Ghent, of a son "whose name was John, and commonly called John of Gaunt...and Duke of Lancaster"(2.677). While Foxe occasionally recounts details with no apparent connection to the narrative, this is not the case here. John of Gaunt plays a central role in Foxe's account of the reigns of Edward III and Richard II, and is, as well, one of several figures Foxe uses to challenge historiographical tradition. As discussed above in Chapter One, one of Foxe's major contributions to Protestant historical thought was to identify the last years of Edward III's reign—from about 1360—as the period in which the stirrings of the third and final stage in apocalyptic history could first be detected in England.[5] It was not, as we have seen, difficult for Foxe to detect the spirit of Antichrist in the bloody period of the Wars of the Roses, and of course the terrible Henrician reaction and the enormities of Marian government pretty much spoke for themselves. The late-14$^{th}$-century, however, the pivotal time of the "unloosing of Satan," was not an era of terrible bloodshed or religious persecution in England, and consequently Foxe needed a different way to demonstrate that a fundamental change had taken place at this time. Foxe accomplished this by detailing the spectacular emergence in England and Europe of a vigorous new voice of dissenting prophecy and, simultaneously, of a new

spirit of reactionary repression on the part of the secular and religious authorities. Thus, rather than by martyrdom *per se*, the apocalyptic loosing out of Satan is first exposed in *Acts and Monuments* by a kind of pre-eruption of newly inspired prophetic dissent: "Thus to begin with the year of our Lord 1360…we are now come," Foxe says, "to the time wherein the Lord, after a long darkness, beginnith some reformation in his church, by the diligent industry of his faithful and learned servants" (2.727).

Although this theme has been overshadowed in Foxe scholarship by the idea that Foxe wanted to portray an *unbroken* historical continuity between the later Reformation era and apostolic Christianity, the dramatic explosion of prophetic activity in the late 14th-century is an unmistakable part of Foxe's narrative. In his prefatory "Address to the True and Faithful Congregation of Christ's Universal Church," Foxe presents a vivid, by-the-skin-of-our-teeth version of this millennial story. Faltering since the end of the Roman persecutions, the True Church managed to hold its own, particularly in England, Foxe says, "in some mean state of the truth and verity," until finally,

> all together was turned upside down, all order broken, discipline dissolved, true doctrine defaced, Christian faith extinguished; instead whereof was set up preaching of men's decrees, dreams and idle traditions. And whereas before, truth was free to be disputed amongst learned men, now liberty was turned into law, argument into authority. Whatsoever the bishop of Rome denounced, that stood for an oracle of all men to be received without opposition or contradiction; whatsoever was contrary *ipso facto* it was heresy, to be punished with faggot and flaming fire. Then began the sincere faith of this English church which held out so long, begin to quail. Then was the clear sunshine of God's word overshadowed with mists and darkness, appearing like sackcloth to the people…in these miserable days, as the true church began now to shrink and keep in for fear, so up start[ed] a new sort of players to furnish the stage—as school doctors, canonists and four orders of friars….
> (1.xxi)

Foxe's image of change is complex, if not exactly contradictory: on one hand, he pictures a steady decline leading to a kind of spiritual vacuum, wherein the shrinking or waning of virtuous government creates an occasion which is seized upon by the

forces (more of Foxe's bad actors) of Antichristian misrule. At the same time, what stirs up these reactionary forces is the bold and open dissent of prophets who "from time to time...not only showed secret good affection to sincere doctrine, but also stood in open defense of truth against the disordered church of Rome"(xxi). Thus, rather than with the clear antimonies of the stake, modernity begins in *Acts and Monuments* with a complex prelude involving the tragic eclipse of godly authority and the heroic detection and declaration of Antichrist by a chorus of "writers and preachers" who "never bowed their knees to Baal":

> What a multitude of faithful witnesses here cometh in the time of Wycliff, as Ocliff [i.e. Hoccleve], Wycliff; William Thorpe, White, Purvey, Pateshul, Pain, Gower, Chaucer, Gascoin, William Swinderby, Walter Brute, Roger Dexter, William Sautry, about the year 1401; John Badby, A.D. 1410; Nicholas Tailer, Richard Wagstaff...[omitting several more names]...an anchoress called Matilda, in the city of Leicester; Lord Cobham; sir Roger Acton, knight; John Beverly, preacher, John Huss, Jerome of Prague, a schoolmaster...with whom I might adjoin Laurentius Valla, and Joannes Picus, the learned Earl of Mirandula. But why do I stand upon recital of names, which are almost infinite? (xxii-iii)

Evidently, many of these figures are neither martyrs nor "prophets" in the modern sense; however, for Foxe this "catalogue" of "valiant" men and women who, "with like zeal and strength of God's word, and also with like danger of their lives, gave the like resistance against the enemy of Christ's religion" (2.727) by boldly speaking out against Antichristian tyranny, represents the authentic voice of the newly inspired "spirit of Elias" which is one of the defining spirits of emergent apocalyptic modernity.[6]

While John of Gaunt is not on Foxe's list, with this image of a prophetic movement firmly in view, Foxe's interest in revising the received image of John of Gaunt becomes easily appreciable: the overwhelming fact that distinguished Gaunt for Foxe was that he was a patron of numerous of the English worthies on Foxe's list and

the "special maintainer" (2.797) of John Wycliff, by far and away the greatest of the newly inspired English prophets of this era. Anchoring his reading of Gaunt on the fact that he was a champion of the Gospellers, Foxe explicitly highlights the controversy surrounding Gaunt's historical reputation and, rather than whitewashing it, convincingly argues that the unattractive figure modern critics regularly refer to as the "historical" Gaunt was in fact the slanderous by-product of the real Duke's protracted and ultimately unsuccessful struggle to preserve England from the vitiating forces of papal tyranny in the waning years of Edward III and under Richard II. Doing exactly what Professor Rackin says "official" historians never did, Foxe insists that Lancaster's reputation is an ideological construct: there are two Gaunts, the true one which Foxe has painstakingly sifted out of the hostile historical record in *Acts and Monuments*, and the false one, the effluent of a malignant "popish" mendacity which is the opposite of the "spirit of Elias," and which had, Foxe says, been unwittingly reproduced by historians such as Hall and Holinshed. It is only with *Acts and Monuments*, in other words, that the truly historical Gaunt's memory is reclaimed from "the slanderous pen of Polydore" and his monastic sources, properly witnessed and honored by time (2.799*gloss).* [7]

Continuing with Edward III's struggles against France and the papacy, Foxe recounts the military exploits of Gaunt's predecessor peer, Henry Duke of Lancaster, a mirror of valiant nobility who, during the course of subduing "twenty-five townships unto the king," so "courteously and liberally he dealt with his soldiers, that it was a joy to them and a preferment to fight underneath him. His manner was, in winning any town, little or nothing to reserve to himself, but to sparse [sic] the whole spoil to his soldiers..."(2.692). Given Foxe's disavowal of stories about "the strategems of valiant captains" (1. xxv), this would seem to be another odd digression,

but his method here is again deliberate and effective. Lancaster's idealized courtesy, particularly his liberal indifference to wealth, contrasts strikingly with the papacy and its agents and contributes to the construction of a romantic image of Godly, if not exactly Protestant, Edwardian government:

> at the winning of the town of Bergerac, where he [the Duke of Lancaster] had granted to every soldier for his booty the house, with all the implements therein...to one named Reh fell a certain house with the implements thereof, wherein were contained the mint and money coined for that country, to the value of great substance; which when this soldier had found...he came to the earl, declaring to him the treasure, to know what was his pleasure therein. To whom the earl answered, that the house was his and anything he found therein. Afterward the soldier, finding a whole mint of pure silver ready coined, signified the same to the earl, forsomuch as he thought such treasure to be too great for his portion; to whom the earl again answering declared, that he had once given him the whole house, and that he had once given he would not call back again, as children use to play, and therefore bade him to enjoy that which was granted him, and if the money were thrice as much, it should be his own. Which story, whether it were true or otherwise in those days, I have not to affirm. But certes, if in these our covetous wretched days now present any author should report the like act to be practiced, I would hardly believe it to be true. (2.692-3)

By contrast, to cite one of countless possible examples, just prior to this story Foxe introduces readers to Pope John XXII, "a Cistercian monk, who sat in that papacy eighteen years. He was stout and inflexible, and given so much to the heaping up of riches, that he proclaimed them heretics who taught that Christ and his apostles had no possessions of their own in this world" (2.660).

Although it is perhaps hard to do, it is important to look beyond Foxe's sectarianism here to see the complexity, and the dramatic potential, of his argument. Foxe is evoking an historical contrast between a more salutary "then," associated with the possibility of virtuous rule under Edward III, and the "wretched" now, in which a leader such as Lancaster—and the fabulous riches that are associated with his government—would seem to be an impossible fiction. What is unmistakable, as well, is that Foxe wants to center this nostalgic opposition of godly liberality and avaricious

misgovernment on the name "Duke of Lancaster." This is perhaps an odd-sounding claim, but it reflects the fact that Foxe—like Edmund Spenser and Shakespeare's "Gaunt" himself—considers coincidences of names and titles to be spiritually significant historical data: Foxe includes this romantic account of the previous Duke of Lancaster in part in order to attach a specifically Godly romantic aura to the name of John of Gaunt. Interestingly, Foxe's gloss on this episode reads "the liberal heart and *constant voice* of a worthy captain" (693, my emphasis), an epithet which seems to extend the episode in the direction of the recrudescent spirit of prophecy outlined earlier.[8]

Finally, even as he is drawing upon this romantic episode to construct an image of godly government, Foxe is also using it to call attention to the problem of credulity and the difficulty of historical truth. "Whether it were true or otherwise…I have not to affirm": as he does throughout *Acts and Monuments*, Foxe highlights his own critical engagement with his sources, reminding readers that his work involves a massive revision of received historical tradition, much of which has, he hammers home time and again, been shaped by the bias and credulity of "story-writers…of whom the most part have been either monks or clients to the See of Rome" (1.xviii). Foxe's own revisionism then, his use of Lancaster's virtue to declare the evils of the present and his sifting of the evidence, is itself layered into the image of an emergent prophetic voice which is central to his reading of late-medieval England. By the same token, the slander of John of Gaunt by "Polydore" and the monastic chroniclers is a spiritual precursor to the Smithfield fires.

This is a crucial point for understanding the Foxean intertext in Shakespeare's portrayal of Gaunt: Foxe works hard in this earlier part of *Acts and Monuments* to generate a corollary archetype or image of Christian dissent and Antichristian reaction

to go along with the martyr-figure whose Christ-like passion will dominate his narrative later on. This prophetic figure's voice includes not just Foxe's own boldly humanist historical revisionism, but also, ultimately, all of the different styles of rhetorical agency and bold public speaking which are exemplified in the list of "faithful witnesses" quoted from above. While the heroes of *Acts and Monuments* are often regarded as reformed versions of the Catholic saints of the *Golden Legend*, Foxe's image of prophecy—with men such as Chaucer, Petrarch, Pico della Mirandola, and Valla as examples—is also a brilliantly humanist rhetorical inversion of the Catholic stereotype of the heretical preacher or Lollard outcast. Turning the *mala fama* of the heretic which he found in his official sources on its head, Foxe effectively ennobled the figure of the subversive or outcast prophet by associating it with the entire spectrum of humanist assertions about the dignity of bold speech and public oratory. While this conception of the prophet is still an emphatically spiritual one based, to use Baxter's term, on the idea of a divine afflatus, and while it is still firmly linked with extraordinary foresight and prognostication, the intellectually disreputable, heterodox, and socially disruptive implications of prophetic dissent are replaced, quite precisely, by resonantly noble "ebullitions," an image of moderation, reason, and restrained but irrepressibly passionate eloquence.

Moreover, and here we start to get a glimpse of Foxe's real genius for historical argument, rather than simply dispensing with the false (i.e. Catholic) image of the heretic, Foxe strategically retains this harsh, castigatory perspective as a way of dramatizing and exposing the apostate spirituality of the repressive authorities: this godly eloquence, Foxe says, echoing one of the central metaphors from Revelations, "appeared like sackcloth" to political and ecclesiastical authorities who had become mired in apostasy, error, and Antichristian hatred. As the absurd rigor of Pope

Clement illustrates, from the topsy turvy purview of apostasy, the dignity of the prophet's poverty looks like disgraceful indigence, his or her percipience looks like lunacy, and his or her courageous and eloquent rebukes are experienced and responded to as unbearable impudence. Finally, as readers familiar with the jousting imagery of the "Ballad" of Anne Askew will recognize, and as the paladin-like figure of Henry Duke of Lancaster discussed earlier testifies, in addition to emphasizing their wonderful eloquence, Foxe also tries to capture the real spiritual virtue of his prophet-figures by comparing them, metaphorically, with the heroes of Romance. Wycliff, Foxe relates, "was accustomed in [his] preaching to go barefoot, and in simple russet gowns"; however, while this poverty is woefully misconstrued by the catholic historian Polydore Vergil as a disgraceful failure to attain to the "higher honours and dignities of the church"(2.799), Foxe reveals the spiritual richness and nobility behind the sackcloth:

> this is out of all doubt, that at what time all the world was in most desperate and vile estate...this man stepped forth like a valiant champion, unto whom may justly be applied which is spoken in the book called Ecclesiasticus, of one Simon, son of Onias: 'Even as the morning star being in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon being full in her course, and as the bright beams of the sun; so doth he shine and glister in the temple and church of God'. (2.792)

Although Foxe does not, as noted above, explicitly place Gaunt in this elite group, a further instance of the associative logic linking the name of Gaunt with Foxe's image of inspired prophecy and dissent is a series of eye-catching references to a continental writer named John de Janduno of Ghent. Here again Foxe seizes upon the coincidental similarity between the names in order to invest Gaunt's name with a particular spiritual significance, only this time the association with the image of the prophet is more palpable. Describing the various writers who defended the martyr Emperor Louis in his struggles against Pope Clement VI—writers such as Dante

whose dissent and the retributions occasioned by it are, Foxe argues, the first evidence of Antichrist's millennial unbinding—Foxe singles-out this other John of Gaunt/Ghent even though he knows very little about him:

> In the same part of the [Pope's] condemnation, at the same time, was also Johannes de Janduno of Ghent…which Johannes wrote much upon Aristotle and Averroes, which is yet remaining and valued; and no doubt he wrote also works of divinity, and that they were excellent, but it is not unlike that these works have been abolished. (2.705)

This brief note encapsulates the central thrust of Foxe's account of late medieval history: an "excellent" man—whose name happens to be "Gaunt"—is raised up by God, "steps forth" to oppose either the papacy, or "popish" tyranny, and is attacked, condemned, and consigned to ignominy in the official record.

This John de Ghent comes up in various places in the ensuing narrative, resonating, each time, with John of Gaunt. For example, having moved on to the reign of Richard, Foxe notes how Pope Gregory XI "taking his time, after the death of King Edward," seized the occasion of Edward's passing to send a "wild bull" to the governors of Oxford University, "rebuking them sharply, imperiously, and like a Pope, for suffering so long the doctrine of John Wycliff to take root, and not plucking it up with the crooked sickle of their Catholic doctrine" (3.5). Typically, rather than simply characterizing the Pope negatively, Foxe reprints the "mad bull" so that readers will be able to see for themselves—as, Foxe says with typical emphasis, "on a stage"—how "then began the Pharisees again to swarm and gather together, with marvelous tragedies striving against the light of the gospel, which began to shine abroad"(3.4). Through "negligence and sloth," the Pope angrily complains, Oxford has let

> the cockle to spring amongst the pure wheat in the field of your glorious university… and (what is worse) to grow up; and…take no means…for rooting out of the same;… John Wycliff… hath gone to such a pitch of

> detestable folly, that he feareth not to teach, and publicly preach, or rather to vomit out of the filthy dungeon of his breast, certain erroneous and false propositions and conclusions, savouring of heretical pravity, tending to weaken and overthrow the status of the whole church, and even the secular government. Some of these, with a change only in certain of the terms, seem to be identical with the perverse opinions of...John de Ghent of cursed memory, whose book was reprobated and condemned by our predecessor of happy memory, John XXII. These opinions, I say, he is circulating in the realm of England, so glorious for power and abundance of wealth, but still more for the shining purity of its faith, and wont to produce men illustrious for their clear and sound knowledge of the scriptures, ripe in gravity of manners, conspicuous for devotion, and bold defenders of the catholic faith...for which if not at once checked, yea, plucked up by the roots, it would be too late to apply a remedy when it had infected multitudes.... (3.5-6)[9]

Foxe wants his readers to grasp the Antichristian essence of the Pope's "mad" and "imperious" rebuke, which, because it champions book-burning, and leads to a call for Wycliffe's imprisonment and outright murder, appears as satanic hypocrisy, a parody of true Christian prophecy, which also aims to correct and chastise, but in a way antithetical to the Pope's raging *libido dominandi*. With superb irony, Foxe implies that while Gregory sees everything from the "disordered," upside-down perspective of popery, the Pope's georgic argument is also fundamentally correct. England *is*—or perhaps more accurately, will be—renowned for its shining exemplars of true piety, like Wycliff, and for its bold and illustrious defenders of the faith, like King Edward and John of Gaunt. It is, as well, a garden which needs to be protected: protected *from* popery and the kind of vicious pruning the modern Popes have devised to destroy commonwealths like England and not from the preachers of the good news of Scripture. It is in this carnivalesque mirror that we are to read the Pope's reference to the "cursed memory" of John de Ghent, "whom they," Foxe says, "by a slanderous title and name, do call heretics, and we truly, contrariwise, most blessed martyrs" (3.9). Again, the ironic historical trope connecting Gaunt with his prophetic namesake

is unmistakable: rescued from the "cursed memory" of popish error, both men are, finally, being honored by time.

This image of "new inspired" prophecy, and the hints which link Gaunt with it, set the stage, so to speak, for Foxe's lively revision of John of Gaunt's career as a leading figure under Edward III and Richard II. Deploying the same basic strategy he used to reform the idea of the heretical prophet, Foxe repudiated the received image of Lancaster by reinterpreting his contentious career as evidence of his heroic efforts to uphold and extend the Edwardian standard of godly government into the reign of Richard. This standard is succinctly expressed by Foxe in his concluding eulogy on Edward III:

> after he had reigned fifty-one years; a prince not more aged in years than renowned for many singular and heroical virtues, but principally noted and lauded for his singular meekness and clemency towards his subjects and inferiors, ruling them without all rigour or austere severity. Among other noble and royal ornaments of his nature, worthily and copiously set forth of many, thus he is described of some, which may be briefly suffice for the comprehension of all the rest: 'to the orphans he was as a father, compatient to the afflicted, mourning with the miserable, relieving the oppressed, and to all them that wanted, an helper in time of need' & etc.

Foxe quotes these saccharine-sounding epithets in order confirm the positive appraisal of the King; at the same time, however, he rounds on his sources as a way of dramatizing the difference between his vigorous, independent-minded pursuit of historical truth—his ability to get to the bottom of things—and the uncritical purview of his sources:

> But, chiefly, above all other things, in this prince, in my mind, to be commemorated is this, that he, above all other kings of this realm, unto the time of King Henry VIII., was the greatest bridler of the pope's usurped power, and outrageous oppression: during all the time of which king, not only the pope could he not greatly prevail in this realm, but also John Wycliff was maintained with favour and aid sufficient. (2.806)

It is the reality of Edward's opposition to popery, Foxe implies, which underlies the romantic image of Edward and makes it historically credible. Similarly, "this Duke of Lancaster," Foxe writes, "had in his heart of long time conceived a certain displeasure against the popish clergy" although it is not exactly clear whether this was, he says, "for corrupt and impure doctrine, joined with like abominable excess of life" or some "other cause"(2.798). Foxe's point here is that, whereas Edward III was of course praised to the skies by the monastic chroniclers—who, like Shakespeare's Bolingbroke, are as proficient at flattery as they are at slander—Gaunt, exactly like Wycliff and John de Ghent, was the target of a series of attacks aimed not only at discrediting his efforts as a counselor but at robbing him of his nobility entirely.

For instance, having already apprised readers of the providential facts of Gaunt's birth, Foxe presents them with the following image of popish slander:

> The bishop of Winchester...was reported to affirm, that the aforesaid John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, was not the son of king Edward, nor of the queen; who, being in travail at Gaunt, had no son, as he said, but a daughter, which, the same time, by lying upon of the mother in the bed, was then smothered. Whereupon the queen, fearing the king's displeasure, caused a certain man-child...to be conveyed [i.e. stolen], and brought unto her...and so she brought up the child whom she bare not, who is now called duke of Lancaster. And this, said the bishop, did the queen tell him, lying in extremity on her death bed, under seal of confession; charging him if the said duke should ever aspire to get the crown...he should manifest it to the world, that the said duke of Lancaster was no part of the king's blood, but a false heir of the king. This slanderous report of the wicked bishop, as it savoureth of a contumelious lie, so seemeth it to proceed of a subtle zeal towards the pope's religion, meaning falsehood: for the aforesaid duke, by favoring of Wycliff, declared himself to be a professed enemy against the pope's profession; which thing was then not unknown, neither unmarked of the prelates and bishops then in England. (2. 798)

"This slanderous villany of the bishop's being blazed abroad, and coming to the Duke's ear," Foxe continues, "he, therewith being not a little discontented, as no marvel was, sought again by what means he could, to be revenged of the bishop"(798). Precisely because Foxe openly allows that Gaunt's pious motives were

intermixed with, and perhaps even overshadowed by, issues of personal and familial honor, the fact that Gaunt's "revenge" takes the form not of some bloody extra-legal retribution, but of unselfish service to the state, and a defense of true religion, comes across as a more strikingly convincing image of heroism:

> the Duke, having now all the government of the realm, under the king his father, in his own hands, so pursued the bishop of Winchester, that by act of Parliament he was deprived and contemned of all his temporal goods; which goods were assigned to prince Richard, of Bourdeaux, the next inheritor of the crown after the king; and, furthermore, he inhibited the said bishop from approaching nearer the court than twenty miles. (2.798)

As several of these passages suggest, while the doctrinal collision between the Gospellers and the ecclesiastical authorities is Foxe's paramount concern, a basic corollary theme is the legitimate defense of England's wealth at home from the "usurped power" and "insatiable avarice" of the Roman church and its followers. For example, with the romantic picture of the liberal Duke of Lancaster and the unbelievable "riches" associated with him, Foxe juxtaposes a satirical description of the "very liberal and bountiful" Pope Clement VI, "enriching and heaping [his followers] with goods and possessions not of his own"(2.688). He follows this with a letter sent to the same Pope by the English parliament containing an impassioned denunciation of the "sad consequences" for England of the Pope's demonic liberality:

> we...have thought meet to signify unto your holiness that—in consequence of divers reservations, provisions, and collations granted by your predecessors of Rome, and by yourself, most holy father! in your own time...unto divers persons, not merely strangers and foreigners, but some of them even our enemies, having no knowledge of the language and conditions of those of whom they ought to have the government and cure—besides other sad consequences hereof, the souls of the parishioners are in peril, the service of God is destroyed, alms-giving is restrained, and hospitality perished, the churches with their appurtenances decayed, charity withdrawn, the honest persons of the realm unadvanced, the cure and government of souls neglected, the devotion of the people restrained, many poor scholars unadvanced, and the treasure of the realm carried away, and all this against the intent of the founders. (2. 688-9)

Marshaling page after page of like examples of papal avarice and inspired resistance to it—a category which can even include the eloquence of Parliament—Foxe creates a powerful image linking the re-emergence of Antichristian power with the economic collapse of once-rich monarchies.[10] He describes, for example, "the ruin of the German empire" under Emperor Charles:

> This Charles thus ambitiously aspiring to the imperial seat contrary to the minds of the states and peers of the empire, as he did wickedly and unlawfully come by it, so was he by his [i.e. the Pope's] ambitious guiding, the first and principal means of the utter ruin of that monarchy...so that the empire being disfurnished and left desolate, and the emperors left weakened thereby, they have never been able sufficiently since to defend themselves, nor yet resist the Turk, or other foreign enemies. (2.664)

The "first cause" of this exemplary story of the selling out of an empire is, for Foxe, unmistakable: "of this a great part, as ye have heard, may be imputed unto the Popes" (664). However, while Foxe writes in a brilliantly Machiavellian idiom, the point of his demonstration is to provide a spiritual anatomy of modern politics—especially English politics. At his best, Edward embodies Foxe's ideal image of the godly Prince, robustly—but not tyrannously—protecting and nourishing the common weal against the vitiating rapacity of Rome:

> As touching these reservations, provisions, and collations...wherewith the Pope vexed this realm of England...the king, by the consent of the lords and commons, in the twenty-fifth year of his reign enacted, that a statute made...[by] his grandfather Edward I, but not put in execution, should be revived; wherein was made an Act against the ravenous pillage of the pope through the same provisions, reservations, and collations, &c.; by the which provisions the state of the realm decreased more and more, the king's royalty and prerogative were greatly obscured and diminished, innumerable treasures of the realm transported, aliens and strangers placed in the best and fattest bishoprics, abbeys, and benefices within the realm, and such...as partly have been touched before. (2.776-7)

However, while he lauds Edward's efforts, Foxe presents them against the backdrop of an apocalyptic time scheme which makes such royal shepherding and gardening an increasingly impossible task:

> concerning the letters and writings of this King [i.e. Edward III], with such other domestic matters, perturbations, and troubles, passing between him and the pope, taken out of the public records of the realm; whereby I thought to give the reader to understand the horrible abuses, the intolerable pride, and the insatiable avarice of that bishop, more like a proud Lucifer than a pastor of the church of Christ, in abusing the king, and oppressing his subjects with exactations unmeasurable; and not only exercising his tyranny, in this realm, but raging also against other princes, both far and near, amongst whom neither spared he the emperor himself. (2.704)

Although this is difficult to capture even with copious quotations, the effect Foxe achieves in his narrative is to adumbrate an avarice so capacious and irresistible that it amounts to a mystery which can only be understood in apocalyptic terms: resistance is hardly futile, in Foxe's view, but at the same time the epochal change consequent upon the millennial "loosing out" of Antichrist onto the world is impossible to ignore. Fighting a rearguard action against his own advancing age *and* against the inexorable march of apocalyptic history, Foxe's Edward III simply runs out of time. He burns out and, more importantly for our purposes, in light of the terrible inevitability of Antichrist's renewed power, Foxe's account of the Duke of Lancaster's career takes on a similarly pessimistic tone of tragic failure.

Coming to the last years of Edward's reign, Foxe recounts how, because the king was "stricken with great age," the government of the realm was left more or less entirely to Gaunt, who tried to continue Edward's policy of vigorous good government. Gaunt is as a result drawn into a series of debilitating conflicts with the forces of misrule which were capitalizing on the King's weakness in order to divest England of its wealth and to root out its renascent apostolic inheritance as well. We see Gaunt, for example, spearheading the establishment of a governing council in

Parliament, protecting the senescent king from the influence of a "wicked harlot," continuing Edward's policy of limiting the growth of clerical "liberties" and, most importantly, vigorously protecting Wycliff and other promoters of the Gospels from clerical persecution. Naturally, these efforts make Gaunt a target, and Foxe describes the various conflicts between the Duke and the clerical establishment and, on occasion, the citizens of London who are easily stirred-up to violence by Gaunt's enemies (2.796-806). However, when Foxe moves on to the reign of Richard II, his image of a vigorous and contentious Duke engaging, like Shakespeare's Duke Humphrey, in public brawls and scolding matches with leading clergymen and their followers, is replaced by an aged and retiring figure associated with peace making. The next to last substantial glimpse we get of Gaunt charts this change graphically. Noting that his mind was full of "grief and displeasure" at all the "malicious slanders...contumelies and injuries" which he had suffered, Foxe relates how, under Richard, the Duke was finally able to get his "revenge," this time on the Londoners:

> the Londoners were compelled to this at length, by the common assent, and public charges of the city to make a great taper of wax, which, with the Duke's arms set upon it, should be brought with solemn procession to the church of St. Paul, there to burn continually before Our Lady; and, at last, how the said duke and the Londoners were reconciled together, in the beginning of the reign of the new king, with the kiss of peace; and how the same reconcilement was publicly announced in the church of Westminster, and what joy was in the city thereof....(2.804)

While Foxe invokes an unreformed religious environment, this seeming conclusion to Gaunt's tumultuous career is clearly meant as an image of godly government continuous with that of Edward III; similarly, once again there is a clear irony in the fact that Gaunt's "revenge" takes the form of a pious reconciliation with the citizens, one which Foxe wants readers to read as the opposite of the bloodthirsty violence stirred-up by Gaunt's enemies against him. While hardly an angel, Foxe's aging

aristocrat is an island of duty and responsibility, and piety and legality, in a society increasingly driven to madness and rage.

I refer to this passage as a seeming conclusion, however, because Foxe's account of Gaunt's career does not end with this consolatory triumph, but rather with despair and failure. Coming to the year 1382, Foxe recounts how two evangelical scholars—Nicholas Hereford and Philip Reppyngton—who were being menaced by the ecclesiastical authorities "fled to the Duke of Lancaster for succour and help":

> but the bishop's aiders were at hand (as it were serpents lying in wait), to bite Christ by the heel; whether for fear or what cause else, I cannot say, [or] overcome by the bishop's adherents, in the end he forsook his poor and miserable clients. Who being put back from him, they were sent unto the censure of the archbishop, as the proverb saith—from the hall to the kitchen. (3.31)

Although he invests it with a touch of proverbial humour, this moment is a dismal turning point in Foxe's narrative. Not only is the old Duke's inability to maintain his heroic defense of the evangelicals a depressing culmination, it is immediately followed in Foxe's narrative by the "fall," so to speak, of King Richard himself. As will be discussed more fully below, Foxe's account of Richard's career hinges on his claim that the King started out in the footsteps of Edward and Gaunt in being "no great disfavourer of the way and doctrine of Wycliff" (3.3); Gaunt's failure, however—if succumbing to the inevitably vitiating forces of "time" and "the times" can be called failure—precipitates a greater fall on the part of the young king. Richard now not only stops acting as a protector, but becomes a "private" participant in the attack on the Gospellers by sponsoring "private statute[s]" and "unjust laws" aimed at suppressing them:

> Where note, gentle reader, for thy better understanding, the practice of the Romish prelates in seeking the king's help to further their bloody purposes against the good saints of God; which king being but young and under years of ripe judgement, partly induced or rather seduced…partly, also, either for fear

> of the bishops (for kings cannot always do in their realms what they will), or else, perhaps, enticed by some hope of subsidy to be gathered by the clergy, was contented to adjoin his private assent, such as it was, to the setting down of an ordinance, which was indeed the very first law that is to be found made against religion and the professors thereof... (3.37)

Although Foxe cannot dramatize this moment as forcefully as Shakespeare is able to on the stage—which limitation is in a sense a part of the argument of the play—his apocalyptic historical point is unmistakable: the decline or eclipse of Gaunt creates a spiritual vacancy which Richard's real enemies seize upon as an occasion to destroy him and into which the King, tragically, falls.

*

Readers will, I hope, have already noted some strikingly obvious similarities between the character Shakespeare supposedly invented for *Richard II* and Foxe's revised historical portrait of John of Gaunt—both are very noble, very peaceable, and very old, men, whose "time," so to speak, was the heroic era of Edward III. What is just as evident, though, is that Shakespeare's Gaunt is independent of Foxe's in a number of ways. Shakespeare does not explicitly associate his time-honoured Gaunt with the defense of late-medieval Lollardy, nor does he show Gaunt in a struggle with Catholic priests or the papacy: John Wycliff and Pope Gregory are not hiding in the play and, unlike the Duke of Gloucester of *2HenryVI*, Gaunt is not provided with an explicitly Catholic clerical nemesis. To acknowledge such differences is, I would argue, simply to recognize that Foxe is not Shakespeare's primary source for the play. Beyond that, it goes without question that Shakespeare had the ability to draw upon Foxean history without simply or slavishly redacting it: the subtlety of Shakespeare's intertextuality should not disqualify Foxe as part of the play's provenance, nor should it be allowed to occlude the extent to which Foxe is significantly involved in Shakespeare's portrayal of the Duke. Demonstrating his commitment to the truth of

Foxean history, Shakespeare contributed his voice to the refurbishing of Gaunt's reputation. Although not as explicit as "Oldcastle died a martyr," Shakespeare's stance on Gaunt could hardly be more unequivocal. While retelling the events of Richard's reign as he found them in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, Shakespeare complicates and deepens his version of the story by adding Foxe's perspective on Gaunt to it. In doing so, Shakespeare not only bears witness to the veracity of Foxe's claims about Gaunt's nobility, but also acknowledges the veracity of Foxe's emblematic depictions of modern history as the tragic collision between inspired eloquence, driven to speak out publicly against tyranny, and a corrupt authority which can only see that virtue as "sackcloth."

From what might be called the play's resonantly Foxean first line—Richard addresses the Duke as "old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster"—Shakespeare works very deliberately to infuse Gaunt's character with an aura of spiritual nobility and with a distinctively Foxean and Reformed religious charisma. Early in scene one, for example, Shakespeare embellishes Holinshed's report of Mowbray's words in order to add an element of piety to Mowbray's character and, at the same time, to present Gaunt as an arresting figure in whom venerability and aristocratic grandeur are combined with a rich undercurrent of spiritual eminence:

> For you, my noble Lord of Lancaster;
> The honorable father of my foe,
> Once did I lay an ambush for your life—
> A trespass that doth vex my grieved soul;
> But ere I last received the sacrament
> I did confess it and exactly begged
> Your grace's pardon, and hoped I had it. (1.1.133-40)[11]

Like Foxe, Shakespeare uses this detail to create an image of Gaunt as an old man who has been the target of murderous plots, but who has opted for reconciliation rather than revenge. And, in a way similar to Foxe's account of Gaunt's ceremonious

"revenge" on the Londoners, Shakespeare subtly differentiates, in this image of pre-Reformation Catholicism, between a positive spiritual bond which is created by the actions of pious and repentant men, on one hand, and the efficacy of sacramental rituals such as confession to a priest, on the other. Having reconciled their enmity in the past, Mowbray and Gaunt emerge as men who are cut from the same spiritual cloth, even as they are being rendered enemies again by Bolingbroke's divisive accusations. Shakespeare deftly creates the impression that a spiritual dichotomy—something like the "old" desire for peace versus the "new," or perhaps resurgent, desire for revenge—runs counter to the battle-lines that we see materializing in the play.[12]

My focus in this chapter is on Gaunt and Richard, but it is important to note that Shakespeare is laying the groundwork for his larger portrayal of Bolingbroke as a figure of explicitly popish enormity here by casting him as the embodiment of an explosively divisive force which the society over which men such as Gaunt, Mowbray, and Richard currently preside will not be able to contain or control. While he will not always be such a dynamo—he rots to death before our eyes in *1-2HenryIV*—at this point Bolingbroke is a ball of chaotic and divisive energy. He is, as well, a striking villain: Mowbray's allusion to the moral chasm separating his "foe" and his foe's "honorable father" is not just a counter-attack, it is a penetrating spiritual insight which confirms the emblematic sense that we are watching the potential for pious reconciliation and truth which existed in the past, and is embodied in Gaunt, being shattered by the "recreant" (i.e. apostate) dissembling and bloody-mindedness of Bolingbroke in the present. Just as he will later divide King Richard from his wife, his crown, and his life, and a host of bodies from their heads, Bolingbroke is aggressively dividing the peace which had been forged between Mowbray and Gaunt.

Playgoers are of course naturally interested in knowing where the young King stands in all this, but to look only for signs of nascent absolutism—or some other putative royal fatal flaw—is to neglect Shakespeare's deliberate emphasis on the moral contrast between Bolingbroke and the other men involved in the controversy.

Shakespeare's use of the language of priestly confession is a case in point. In his first lines in the play, Gaunt responds to Richard's query about his son's potential for "inveterate malice" with the pointed qualification, "As near as I could sift him on that argument" (1.1.12-14). Although he is Bolingbroke's father and an authority in the realm, Gaunt pointedly reminds the King, he neither can nor will force a confession from him—he has not, to borrow a striking phrase used later in the play by the Queen, been in his son's heart. Consequently, Gaunt does not rule out the possibility that his son is, in fact, driven by an ominously "inveterate malice." Seemingly following Gaunt's lead, Richard also recognizes the limits to which authority can legitimately force the conscience or delve into a person's private thoughts:

> We were not born to sue but to command;
> Which since *we cannot do* to make you friends
> Be ready as your lives shall answer it. (1.1.196-98, my emphasis)[13]

These are normative expressions of Elizabethan political ethics, and Shakespeare includes them presumably in order to put both Gaunt and Richard squarely on the "right" side of this key question.[14] By contrast, a defining moment in the early part of the play comes when Bolingbroke's astonishing attempt to play the role of priestly confessor collides with Mowbray's fully righteous anger:

> Norfolk, so far as to mine enemy:
> By this time, had the King permitted us,
> One of our souls had wandered in the air,
> Banished this frail sepulchre of our flesh,
> As now our flesh is banished from the land.

> Confess thy treasons ere thou fly the realm.
> Since thou hast far to go, bear not along
> The clogging burden of a guilty soul. (1.3.193-200)

Not only is this spiritually ignorant—Mowbray has just taught us that sins continue to "vex" the "grieved soul" long after sacramental confession—but, in the fading light of the authentic reconciliation between Mowbray and Gaunt, it is a truly grotesque impiety. Bolinbroke's concern for Mowbray's soul is patently hypocritical and, while his pretensions are limitless, no one on stage could be less suited to the role of spiritual physician than this rancorous man who has just "disgraced, impeached, and baffled" Mowbray with his accusations, "pierc[ing] him to the soul with Slander's venomed spear/ The which no balm can cure"(170-72).[15]

This reading will seem unlikely to readers who find Bolingbroke's character admirable (or perhaps merely "complicated"), as it will to those who hold that Bolingbroke's passionate anger is intended to represent the ethos of a fundamentally decent feudal order that is being displaced by King Richard's more novel—and dangerous—absolutism. While the precise nature of this novelty is debatable, it seems evident that it is Bolingbroke who represents the new, and, whatever that is, it is far from noble. What Bolingbroke's slanderously poisonous charges do sound like, quite precisely, is the spirit of malicious slander which, for Foxe and his readers, was embodied in men like the Bishop of Winchester, who tars John of Gaunt with the brush of illegitimacy, viciously and absurdly accusing him of being a changeling—a "wild" charge which Bolingbroke, famously, will later attach to his own son. Similarly, Bolingbroke is also like the monastic chroniclers who, Foxe urges, repeatedly slandered Gaunt, Wycliff, and innumerable other decent and pious men and women, and who flattered King Edward even as they were trying to undermine his authority. And, as in Foxe's ironic treatment of Pope Gregory's attack on Wycliff,

and as in Shakespeare's portrayal of the trial of Duke Humphrey in *2HenryVI*, what is perhaps most striking about Bolingbroke's absurd charges is the dramatically ironic way in which they are self-incriminating: whereas Bolingbroke falsely accuses Mowbray of robbing "eight thousand nobles"(1.1.88) from the King, we know that Bolingbroke is about to steal the entire realm.[16]

If Mowbray is telling the truth—and Shakespeare seems determined to make us feel that he is—then Bolingbroke really is a "foul…liar" and a false flatterer, both of which are, as Mowbray urges, things that "God and good men" should "hate"(114). Moreover, like the "motiveless malignity" of an Iago or Don John, Bolingbroke's false charges appear to be fueled not by the kind noble and reputably righteous anger we will see in John of Gaunt, but rather by a kind of instinctive and implacable hatred of nobility in others. Strikingly, when he later gets his hands on Aumerle, whom Shakespeare appears to have understood as Woodstock's actual killer, Bolingbroke "forgives" him for what look like purely political reasons. Thus, while they are both "wrath-kindled gentlemen," Mowbray's implacability in defense of his honour seems rational, and he makes a compelling case for it, whereas Bolingbroke's thinking suggests a kind of anarchic madness—he is willing to kill, or even be killed, in support of charges which he must know are false—and the wildness of his position is increased by such things as his repeated insistence that Mowbray is a coward, and by his bizarrely irreligious idea that to seek peace in his "father's sight" would be a "deep sin"(187).

Much more importantly for my purposes, however, is the way that the combination of Bolingbroke's outrageous slander and his pseudo-religious pretensions, which culminate in his attempt to shrive Mowbray in public, precipitate the play's first outbreak of impassioned prophetic speech:

> No Bolingbroke, if ever I were a traitor,
> My name be blotted from the book of life,
> And I from heaven banished as from hence!
> But what thou art, God thou and I do know;
> And all too soon, I fear, the King shall rue.
> Farewell, my liege. Now no way can I stray;
> Save back to England, all the world's my way. *Exit* (1.3.201-207)

That Shakespeare has Mowbray quote the Book of Revelations here, from the prophet's castigatory letter to the corrupt church in Sardis—"He that overcometh shall be thus clothed in white array, and I will not blot his name out of the Book of Life" (3.5)—is surely not accidental: the spiritual difference between the two antagonists could hardly be greater. In response to the multiple Enormities of Bolingbroke's "poison," Mowbray does in fact learn a new language: he is transformed into a figure of substantial prophetic speech reminiscent of the exiled biblical prophet whose repeated charge is "I know your works." And, while Mowbray is deeply embittered by his experience—he is the proud Duke of Norfolk and not an angel—there is nonetheless a note of triumph in his Foxean suggestion that apparent or worldly dishonour will, ultimately, be transformed in the light of apocalyptic realities. Finally, to recover the full impact of the play's opening collision, it is important to note the oddly abbreviated feeling about Mowbray's prophetic charge—he "knows" what Bolingbroke is, but he does not effectively articulate it for us, or for Richard. This lacuna is, I would argue, a strategic syllepsis: it is designed to further provoke playgoers to consider the nature of this "recreant villain" more deeply. As we will see, it also foreshadows Gaunt's more spectacularly unheard prophecy in Act Two.

*

While it goes without saying that the play's opening trial scenes are open to a variety of interpretations, what I hope readers will recognize is the way that Shakespeare's staging of this fraught political imbroglio seems designed to resonate

with Foxe's interpretation of the spiritual crisis of the late medieval period. Understood from this perspective, what is mimetically "complex" here is not the moral distinction between Gaunt and Mowbray, on one hand, and Bolingbroke, which is as black and white as snowy linen and "pitch" (1.1.109), but the deftness with which Shakespeare is able to weave Foxean apocalyptic implications into the historical matter found in his source without, at the same time, allowing his historiographical autonomy to be eclipsed by Foxe's authoritative voice. Like Foxe, Shakespeare appears to be staging a tragic confrontation between exemplary figures of a "past" and a "present" which are as much spiritual categories as they are temporal ones. Consistent with Foxe's apocalyptic vision, in this new world the good guys inevitably lose, even though they do triumph, morally speaking, over their antagonists. Shakespeare does not dramatize this conflict in terms of a simplistic and anachronistic opposition between Protestant and Catholic—everyone in the play is ostensibly Catholic—but then, as we have seen, neither does Foxe. Rather, Shakespeare follows Foxe's lead by portraying the dispute between Mowbray and Bolingbroke as a collision between a waning godly polity which, while still unreformed in a purely doctrinal sense, nonetheless desires and is to some extent capable of Christian peace and reconciliation, and a waxing new order which is characterized by a potent combination of malicious and chaotic divisiveness, mendacity, megalomania, and bloodthirstiness.

By deploying intimations of biblical prophecy on one hand, and priestly confession used as a divisive political tool on the other, Shakespeare also seems to be following Foxe in inviting his audience to discover in this collision between old and new unmistakable evidence of the rise of the "devilish government" associated in *Acts and Monuments* with reactionary Roman Catholicism. Such an argument would have

rung true with readers of *Acts and Monuments* because, as I have noted, Foxe made no bones about the fact that Henry Bolingbroke was a persecuting "popish" tyrant and the first of England's modern Antichristian kings. At the very least, Shakespeare dramatizes the sudden emergence of a prophet whose nobility is revealed when he is slandered and banished, and whose inspired rebuke foreshadows Gaunt's "newly inspired" prophecy in Act Two.

Before he presents Gaunt in this decisively Foxean perspective, however, Shakespeare dramatizes a second, parallel accusation or trial scene, involving Gaunt and the Duchess of Gloucester. Whereas scene one contains just a glimpse of Gaunt's character, the next scene substantially contributes to the Duke's Foxean identity. Reacting to the spectre of Shakespeare as a Tudor propagandist, post-Tillyardian critics have found little to admire in Gaunt's seemingly uninspired and politically conservative providential homiletics in this scene. Read from the perspective of *Acts and Monuments*, however, Gaunt's response to the Duchess appears in a much more impressive light; her imprecations, correspondingly, are cast in a much worse one. In fact, coming hard on the heels of Mowbray's Romantic-sounding image of "slander's venom'd spear," this scene is informed by one of Foxe's most compelling and interesting historical metaphors: the idea that in combining non-violence with bold and forceful eloquent dissent, the prophets and martyrs are transfigured versions of the heroic knights of Romance. As we saw earlier, Foxe implies that it is legitimate to include romantic stories about Edward III, or the exploits of Henry, Duke of Lancaster, because, while dubious, these stories reflect actual spiritual-historical realities. Such men, Foxe says, could hardly exist in modern times, and so the Romance mode is historiographically appropriate; by the same token, Anne Askew's

trials are a chivalric combat to the death because she is, typologically speaking, literally fighting a dragon.

With this Foxean Romance trope in mind, so to speak, it is worth revisiting the idea that Shakespeare was unable to satisfy the expectation of a chivalric trial by combat which he raised in the opening scenes of the play. While it is true that a fatal joust between Bolingbroke and Mowbray never occurred, and so could not be dramatized, it is possible to view this brief scene as the play's transfigured trial by combat, one in which Gaunt triumphs by overcoming the "times" and the demands of "blood," and by speaking out eloquently and vanquishing the impious imprecations of the Duchess. For Foxe, the historical Duke's repudiation of extra-legal violence—he turned revenge into reconciliation—was a central component of his heroic identity, as was his ability to engage the corrupt clergy in verbal contests himself and, more importantly, his guardianship of evangelical preachers such as Wycliff. Shakespeare is clearly using this scene to develop his version of Gaunt along these Foxean lines. As we saw earlier, Foxe illustrates in detail the various crimes that were committed against the Duke of Lancaster, both by the clergy and by the commons, and in doing so gives his readers a clear sense both of the compelling motive Gaunt had for seeking violent revenge, and of the heroic way he—much like the stoic Duke Humphrey—was ultimately able to overcome these desires. Although he is ignored by the Duchess, Shakespeare's Gaunt seems to be making exactly the same point:

> Alas, the part I had in Woodstock's blood
> Doth more solicit me than your exclaims
> To stir against the butchers of his life. (1.2.1-3)

There is, it seems to me, nothing bloodless, passive, or merely orthodox about Gaunt's strenuous efforts to maintain his moral compass in a corrupt world here; or in his struggle to master his own powerful inclinations in the face of the degraded

urgings of bloody-minded kin like the Duchess; or, finally, in the restrained but forceful way in which he responds to his desperate "sister." Although the Duchess's attack on Gaunt is grossly unfair, instead of lashing back at her, the Duke holds his rhetorical arsenal in check in a manner which would be well suited to a chivalrous knight, and certainly would not be out of place in a prose Romance. Gaunt is not, however, simply silent: throughout this scene he responds to the Duchess in language which, while perhaps blandly homiletic, nevertheless suggests a remarkable struggle for rhetorical mastery, a struggle within himself and, just as exigently, against her ostensibly more passionate and persuasive voice.

The Duke wants to communicate with the Duchess; he looks for understanding from her, and he too is angry and wants revenge. At the same time, he is determined to control his own passions, to correct her in her errors and, just as conscientiously, to avoid stirring her up any more than she already is. It is against the backdrop of Gaunt's struggles with the conflicts between various public and private desires and duties—a world of emotional and ethical difficulty which the furious and self-involved Duchess ignores completely—that Gaunt's Foxean-sounding phrase "the butchers of his life" is such an arresting epithet. Perfectly embodying the Erasmian notion that terseness is a kind of *copia*, Gaunt's few words here both say it all and are all that can be said. Gaunt pointedly exposes the dangers of single-minded revenge, retrospectively undermining Bolingbroke's charge against Mowbray, who cannot be made to fit the image of a group of bloodthirsty butchers. And, by speaking in a restrained way quite distinct from her chaotic and solipsistic ragings, Gaunt is trying to show the Duchess that he too is profoundly aware of, and deeply compelled to strike back against, a looming villainy that is *somehow* emanating from the crown. At the same time, he makes it perfectly clear that to kill the King would be to commit an

unspeakable crime, *and* that it would not cure the problem. What is being dramatized here, in other words, is not impotence or passivity, but a manfully heroic eloquence anchored in a hard won, and hard to hold on to, apprehension of political and providential realities. Here, Shakespeare seems to be saying along with Foxe, is a man.

This scene is also a trial by combat between true and false religion, and, as in scene one, Shakespeare infuses the action with intimations of an underlying spiritual devolution in the times. Gaunt feels everything, but he is not, to use one of Foxe's favorite terms, "incontinent": he refuses to luxuriate in his passions or to allow them to drive him into illegality or impiety. By contrast, the Duchess's "exclaims" are suggestive of an entirely opposed spirituality, one which "goes with the flow" by twisting righteous anger into the desire for revenge, bloodlust, and pseudo-sacred duty. Strikingly, the Duchess's castigatory voice also resonates with the Book of Revelations. Her repetition of "seven sons…seven vials of sacred blood…seven branches" (1.2.11-14) sounds apocalyptic, echoing the multiple sevens (spirits, churches, stars, lampstands, seals, etc.) of John's vision. And, when the she urges Gaunt to act swiftly to save his own life—"though thou livest and breathest / Yet thou art slain" (24-25)—the Duchess appears to be misquoting the same rebuking epistle later echoed by Mowbray: "you have the name of being alive," John the prophet wrote, but "you are dead. Awake, and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death" (3.2). I say the Duchess is misquoting scripture because, while her righteous outrage is impressive in its own peculiar way, her attempt to teach Gaunt a lesson in religious duty is as morally repugnant as is Bolingbroke's attempt to make Mowbray confess. And, just as Bolingbroke's attempt to play the priest is blasted by Mowbray's

superior prophetic denunciation, the Duchess is defeated by Gaunt's rock-like homiletic power and consistency.

While she is perhaps a more immediately striking figure of inspired eloquence than Gaunt is, and while her pathos is more overtly present to the audience, the Duchess's baroquely blood-drenched and flawed argument is an Enormity that is spiritually and rhetorically akin to her nephew's rancorous slander. Like Bolingbroke, she gives herself over to a passionate raging which is an antithesis to Gaunt's moral clarity, restraint, and dignity; and, like Bolingbroke, she attacks and slanders a good man for a "crime" of which she is in fact manifestly guilty—despair. Devoted to bloody revenge and a kind of chop-logical Machiavellian casuistry, the Duchess's "inspired" speech is literally anti-christian, a parody of the denunciatory prophetic clarity Mowbray achieves in the subsequent scene. While the Duchess is of course like Gaunt in being old, the irony here is that the spirit which briefly animates her is decidedly more like the one which motivates her stout young nephew. And, whereas both she and Mowbray are exiles, there is no triumph for her: the Duchess is defeated by Gaunt's constancy and retreats from the field of spiritual combat, so to speak, into a self-banishment which is redolent of the religious error—despair—of which she has accused Gaunt:

> Alack, and what shall good old York there see
> But empty lodgings and unfurnished walls,
> Unpeopled offices, untrodden stones?
> And what hear there for welcome but my groans?
> Therefore commend me; let him not come there
> To seek out sorrow that dwells everywhere.
> Desolate, desolate, will I hence and die! (67-73)[17]

The Duchess's pathos is moving, to be sure, but what is strikingly Foxean about the way Shakespeare dramatizes her dismal prophecy is its dramatic historical irony: like Foxe's Pope Gregory XI, the Duchess "sees" the writing on the wall, but she utterly

fails to comprehend that it is her raging spirit, and not Gaunt's patience, that is behind England's looming "sorrow." Strikingly, combining despair with rebellion, and her own grievances with God's wishes, the Duchess also sounds very much like the Jesuit controversialist Robert Persons (a.k.a the lachrymose-sounding Doleman), who discredited himself and his cause in the eyes of English Protestants and Catholics not only by slandering leading Protestant nobles such as the Earl of Leicester, but also by arguing, as the Duchess tries and fails to do here, that the deposition and murder of King Richard is a divinely sanctioned action.[18]

We perhaps do not need Foxe to see the tortured state of the Duchess's mind, or to feel that she is misjudging Gaunt and wrong about revenge; Foxe does, however, very clearly illuminate the essence of this scene. Very generally, the rhetorical situation outlined above matches countless scenes in *Acts and Monuments* in which the overheated persuasions of bloody-minded and spiritually erroneous counselors like the Duchess are rendered impotent by the plain-speaking constancy of the godly. Rather than "slander's venom'd spear," the Duchess has ruined herself on a moral and rhetorical weapon which is more like the one carried by Spenser's Britomart or, as we will see in a moment, the ghostly staff of the godly Bishop of Lincoln. And, as Foxe often does, Shakespeare invokes sympathy for the disconsolate apostate even as he firmly repudiates her error. Somewhat more specifically, the following passage from Foxe's prefatory essay, "The Utility of this Story," captures something of the enormity of the Duchess's thinking as it would have appeared to readers of *Acts and Monuments*. Whereas she accuses Gaunt of "cold cowardice," charges him with "teaching stern Murder how to butcher," and insists that his "patience" is a kind of ignoble "despair" (29-34), Foxe argues that men like John of Gaunt are in fact,

> examples of great profit...in whose lives and deaths appear...manifest declarations of God's divine working; whiles in such sharpness of torments we

> behold in them strength so constant above man's reach, such readiness to answer, such patience in imprisonment, such godliness in forgiving, such cheerfulness and courage in suffering; besides the manifold sense and feeling of the Holy Ghost, which they in their lives so plentifully tasted....

The first martyrs, Foxe continues, "did water with their blood the truth that was newly springing up"; the heroes of modern history, he says "with like courage again, like old beaten soldiers...win the field in the rearward of the battle." Although their virtue is hard to see, Foxe says, such men and women,

> declare to the world what true Christian fortitude is, and what is the right way to conquer...For doubtless such as these are more worthy of honour than a hundred Alexanders, Hectors, Scipios, and warlike Julies. And though the world judgeth preposterously of things, yet with God, the true Judge, certes such are most reputed in deed, not that kill one another with a weapon, but they who, rather being killed in God's cause, do retain an invincible constancy against the threats of tyrants, and violence of tormentors. Such as these are the true conquerors of the world, by whom we learn true manhood...with this valiantness did that most mild lamb, and invincible Lion of the tribe of Judah first of all go before us. Of whose unspeakable fortitude we hear this prophetical admiration: "Who is this," saith he, "which walketh so in the multitude of his strength?" forsooth, the high Son of the high God, once conquered of the world, and yet conquering the world after the manner he was conquered. (1. xxv-xxvi)

As Patrick Collinson has argued in describing Foxe as "the English Plutarch," an important aspect of Foxe's popular authority was the shaping influence his narratives had on the development of exemplary biography as a literary form in Protestant England. Collinson argues that *Acts and Monuments* set the pattern for "spiritual biography" by establishing an authoritative paradigm for representing the "living effigies" of the evangelical movement. Literary counterparts of the influence exerted by charismatic evangelicals like Martin Bucer, a man whose direct personal influence epitomized the notion that reform was "caught rather than taught," Foxe's narratives captured this living example in writing for the benefit of a later and wider audience. For "three generations," Collinson argues, "the Bible and Foxe between them entirely

satisfied the demand for edifying biographical history (*Godly People* 499-517). Because Foxe's "living effigies" are rooted in "the moral framework of Plutarch and the general currency of classical ethics in their Aristotelian formulation," Collinson concludes, the ethics of Foxe's biographical paradigm can be described as "the ethics of Aristotle transposed" (511).

Although this might seem counterintuitive—"What," Collinson asks, could be "more certain to smother the Aristotelian mean than the smoky fires of Smithfield? What could be more extreme and in an inverted sense more violent than to offer one's body to be burned?"—what Collinson demonstrates is that the characteristic virtue exemplified in story after story in Foxe is a Protestantized "classical *apatheia*." In life, Foxe's heroes exemplify "dispassionate moderation," are "temperate in speech," and are "given to no extremes of behavior, even in their utter extremity":

> [t]he Martyrs are even physically appealing, thanks no doubt to a sensibly moderate diet. Hugh Latimer in his worn-out clothes and halting gait is affectionately drawn as a decent old man who knows how to take care of himself....Once in the flames there were further opportunities for the display of a kind of heroic indifference. Bishop Hooper washed his hands in the fire as though it had been in cold water. Rogers was 'nothing moved' by the sorrowful sight of his wife and eleven children: that is to say, nothing moved from his purpose. Bishop Ferrar said that if he were seen once to stir in the pains of burning no more credit should be given to his doctrine. 'And as he said that, so right well he performed the same; for so patiently he stood, that he never moved.' But this was not the unnatural *apatheia* of stoicism for which Plutarch found that he had no use. The Marian martyrs felt pain but were not overcome or deterred by it. Theirs was a true Aristotelian courage, midway between cowardice and temerity.... (512-13)

While it would be perhaps gratuitous to say that Latimer is "gaunt," there can be little doubt that this distinctively Foxeian *apatheia* significantly clarifies Shakespeare's portrayal of Gaunt's heroism in this scene, a scene which is, in fact, a kind of mini spiritual biography of Gaunt. What Collinson neglects, however, is the dramatic way that Foxe's narratives stage the inevitable collisions between such virtuous Christian

men and women and their tormentors, equally paradigmatic men and women whose Antichristian enormity is a parody of godly *apatheia* characterized by passionate exorbitance, distemper in speech, and extremes of behaviour. He also overlooks the way that Foxe sets these paradigmatic collisions in specific historical contexts governed by his highly developed apocalyptic scheme. Thus, while Foxe's Gaunt embodies this exemplary godly spirit, Foxe's readers do not expect him to go to the flames, because that came later in England; nor, by the same token, do they look for him to be doctrinally Protestant. What his readers do expect, however, is an "old beaten soldier," a representative of the old world of relative peace and prosperity, fighting an essentially hopeless rearguard action against the incursion of an increasingly Antichristian modernity—he can still win a personal battle, but as a shepherd of the nation, he will inevitably lose the war.

And this is more or less exactly what Shakespeare gives his audience. The Duchess's attempt to convert Gaunt to what she calls "the best way" (1.2.36) of violent revenge is "preposterous" not just because she slanders Gaunt's nobility and manhood, failing to hear him when he reminds her that he feels the urge for revenge even more deeply than she does, but because she is devoid of any understanding of what true Christian nobility and heroism—the true best way—is. Articulating a kind of manic pseudo-apocalyptic furor, the Duchess embodies the spiritual incontinence and apostasy, the living death of religious error, which she thinks she "sees" in Gaunt. Although she is hardly a persecuting modern tyrant herself, she is closely related to Bolingbroke, who is, and whose rise to power we have already begun to witness in the play. And, as in Foxe's examples of the collision between pious stalwarts like Wycliff and worldly authorities increasingly in the grip of Antichristian error, the Duchess's angry attack on Gaunt is a mirror of the modern "times" which are shown to be

emerging in the play. From this perspective, it is the Duchess, not Gaunt, who is orthodox, insofar as she gives in to the violent tenor of the times; while quiet, Gaunt demonstrates a spiritual activism which is the antithesis of her impotent raging. By dramatizing the degree to which, seen from the Duchess's topsy turvy perspective, Gaunt's patience looks like sackcloth, Shakespeare's echoes Foxe in portraying "old" Gaunt as a "stand-out" who in fact "glisters" like a "champion" precisely because he tries, "valiantly," to keep the inevitable at bay.

While it is unorthodox to do so, viewing the play's second scene as a kind of transfigured trial by combat further illuminates the way Shakespeare works to infuse Gaunt with a specifically Foxean religious historical significance. Like Foxe's heroes, Gaunt is tormented and traduced, but, in demonstrating that he possesses a kind of "invincible constancy," he exemplifies the idea of "compatient" government that existed, according to Foxe, in the "olden days" of English glory, a kind of golden nobility that was possible during the millennial binding-up of Satan. Like the other Duke of Lancaster's incredibly liberal largesse, Gaunt's militancy here seems like something out of a Romance. At the same time, as a valiant champion of sorts, the eloquently non-violent way Gaunt rebukes and defeats the Duchess connects him with the exemplary prophet-knights who are the modern extensions, so to speak, of the heroes of chivalry. While Gaunt says nothing that appears especially inspired or prophetic in resisting the Duchess's appeals, his homilies are, I think, meant to signify a kind of pious eloquence or copia that outshines the exorbitant pseudo-religious speech of the Duchess, just as the brilliance of Wycliff, in Foxe, contrasts with the Pope's "wild bulls," momentarily piercing through the deepening darkness of the "times." Because the Duchess is herself so evidently a figure of religious apostasy and error, and indeed attempts to convert Gaunt to her religion, her accusations function

with a precise Foxean irony to establish Gaunt not only as a paragon of true, rather than false Christianity, but of true Christian eloquence. Shakespeare is not obvious, but in staging Gaunt's triumph in this scene he begins to extend or intensify his portrayal of Gaunt beyond noble lay piety into the realm of inspired prophecy itself. Shakespeare is also foreshadowing the play's major tragic *hamartia*: as in Revelations, the Duchess has eyes and ears, but she does see or hear Gaunt or the message contained in his prophetic eloquence.

*

As Peter Ure insisted in his classic discussion of the sources of *Richard II*, Shakespeare did not need a historical source in order to invent a venerably stoic and noble counselor. He did not, by the same token, need Foxe to write the brilliant poetry delivered by Gaunt in the famous "scepter'd isle" episode. The fact, however, is that Shakespeare did not invent the John of Gaunt that we see in the play. His source was the extended portrayal of Gaunt in *Acts and Monuments*, and there can be little doubt not only that Foxe provided Shakespeare with a compelling and authoritative historical pretext for his robust revision of the Duke's historical character, but also, intertextually speaking, that Foxe's history would have functioned as a kind of lens through which Elizabethan playgoers would have read Shakespeare's characterization. Shakespeare followed Foxe by using the play's opening scenes to set the stage, so to speak, for Gaunt's prophet "ebullitions" in Act Two, and it is in this famous encounter that Shakespeare engages the Foxean intertext most directly. Setting aside the particular fact that Foxe's Gaunt was the protector of prophets, but not a prophet himself, Shakespeare seizes upon the heart of Foxe's matter by combining the tragic figure of a declining aristocrat with Foxe's crucial image of a newly inspired prophetic movement. Critics have very thoroughly investigated the

diversely belletristic literary provenance of Gaunt's dying words in Act Two, and Baxter in particular has demonstrated the extent to which Gaunt's words constitute "a *tour de force* of the eloquent style"(64). What we can add is that, in light of Foxe's revised image of the "modern" prophet, a rhetorical performance of this sort is precisely what readers of *Acts and Monuments* would have expected a newly inspired prophet to deliver.

That is, while there is of course nothing in any of Foxe's documents to match the actual brilliance of Shakespeare's poetry, the dramatic fact of Gaunt's sudden emergence as a man capable of such surpassing eloquence can be directly inferred from Foxe's image of prophetic dissent as a catalogue of oratorical styles that includes everything from Petrarchan lyricism to the notorious plain style of the Lollards, from Dante to Chaucer, and from the polemical sermons of Wycliff to the mystical prognostications of St. Bridget. To give a specific example of this combination of prophecy, dissent, and capacious eloquence, after Wycliff, one of Foxe's most celebrated English prophet figures is Robert Grosthead (or Grosseteste), Bishop of Lincoln. What is crucial for Foxe is that, like Shakespeare's Gaunt, "after great labours and travails of life," Grosthead literally expended his life rebuking error:

> [he was] an open reprover of the pope and of the king, a rebuker of the prelates, a corrector of the monks, a director of the priests, an instructor to the clerks, a fautor of scholars, a preacher to the people, a persecutor of the incontinent, a diligent searcher of the Scriptures, a mall to the Romans, and a contemner of their doings. (2.524)

However, underlying all this rebuking and contemning is a more mellifluous rhetorical identity. Grosthead was, Foxe reports,

> a man famously learned, as that time served, in the three tongues, both Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, also in all liberal sciences…a man of excellent wisdom, of profound doctrine, and an example of all virtue…he being a master of arts, [Grosthead] wrote first a commentary on the latter books of Aristotle; also he

> wrote tractations concerning the spheres, and the art of computations, and...diverse books concerning philosophy. (2.523)

Repeatedly in his long survey of late-medieval dissent, Foxe reiterates this basic epideictic theme: contrary to the image of the rudely maundering heretic, the godly prophets were in fact among Europe's most distinguished masters of eloquence.

Thus, from the perspective of *Acts and Monuments*, Gaunt promises prophecy and then manifestly delivers. Moreover, while Gaunt's rebukes are ostensibly aimed at Richard's political felonies, Gaunt explicitly identifies himself as a prophet whose dying words are an inspired prognostication:

> Me thinks I am a prophet new inspired,
> And thus, expiring, do foretell of him.

What follows, as Baxter says, is great poetry, but what is also evident is that Shakespeare's progressive intensification of Gaunt's religious identity is distinctively Foxean: having started out as a noble counselor with an aura of piety, Gaunt now graduates from taciturn homilist to the more voluble role of prophet. There is a kind of furor here, and we see it, so to speak, in York's concern that Gaunt might fatally "vex" himself by expending his breath upon Richard. Much more crucially, the divine afflatus informing Gaunt's new role is reflected, ironically, in Richard's corrosive and spiritually short-sighted belief that Gaunt has lost his wits. Moreover, like the earlier outbursts of Mowbray and the Duchess, Gaunt's prophecy contains unmistakable intimations of the Book of Revelations. Echoing the biblical prophet John, Gaunt plays throughout this episode on the paradoxical relationship between worldly and spiritual wealth and poverty, and spiritual life and death. Picking up the Duchess's ultimately self-incriminating charge of despair, Gaunt archly puns on his name in order to associate his age and frailty, which are signs of a lack of worldly vitality and

power, with the grave, but then rounds on the King by applying the same prophetic script—"you have the name of being alive, and you are dead"—to Richard's failure to grasp or acknowledge his true *gravitas*:

> *Richard.* Should dying men flatter with those that live?
> *Gaunt.* No, no, men living flatter those that die.
> *Richard.* Thou, now a-dying, sayest thou flatterest me.
> *Gaunt.* O no, thou diest, thou I the sicker be. (2.1. 88-91)

Strikingly, mere flattery, or the problem of flatterers at court, is clearly not the issue here, but is being alluded to by Gaunt in order to shadow a much more profound spiritual crisis. Gaunt and Richard both know, as should we, that Richard is far too perspicuous and adept a ruler to be lead astray by mere caterpillars—creatures with whom, in any case, all Princes at all times have to contend. Rather, Gaunt uses flattery as a metaphor for the royal folly that is at the heart of his "newly inspired" apocalyptic detection of an apparently vital, but spiritually dead King, and of an idealized, once fabulously prosperous, England transformed into an utterly vitiated and impoverished wasteland.

Similarly, while Gaunt's charges can be related to the various misdemeanors attached to Richard in the official record, what is striking about Gaunt's rebuke is that, while the murder of Woodstock is certainly serious, we never see Richard commit anything remotely resembling the realm-shattering crimes invoked by Gaunt's prophetic vision. Like the seizure of the Lancastrian patrimony, Richard's crimes appear to be in the future, and, even with respect to the murder, Gaunt's language seems to point to something entirely in excess of what we know about Richard. Whereas the assumption has been that Richard was somehow *behind* the murder, Gaunt accuses him of having "drunkenly caroused" on Woodstock's "blood" (2.1.126-27). Even more enigmatically resonant, because unfinished, is Gaunt's

> Landlord of England art thou now, not King.
> Thy state of law is bondslave to the law,
> And thou – (112-14)

Critics who have looked outside of the play for a solution to this crux are on the right track, but the answer does not lie in some other political error which Shakespeare neglected to carry over from his sources.[19] Rather, Shakespeare uses this arresting dramatic moment—just as he earlier canceled the trial by combat between Bolingbroke and Mowbray, Richard "cuts off" the prophecy just as Gaunt is on the verge of saying exactly what Richard *is*—in order to create a powerfully focused interpretive crux: *what does Gaunt see*? To appropriate Eliot's famous idea, the point of Shakespeare's deliberate ambiguity here is not that Gaunt's anger lacks an "objective correlative," but rather that the correlative of the tryanny Gaunt is trying to denounce is itself not objective—it is nascent, not quite visible, and, most importantly, it is only appreciable to spiritually attuned eyes and ears that Richard, for all his intelligence and acumen, utterly lacks. Just as exigently, however, it is a message which Gaunt, for all his eloquence, fails effectively to articulate. Tragically, just as he will later arrive a day late to save his kingdom, Richard arrives a moment too late to see and hear Gaunt's vision. And, perhaps having spent more than he could afford on the Duchess, Old Gaunt is for once tragically incontinent: he fails to hold his tongue until the King is there to hear him.

Like Gaunt's unlooked for eloquence itself, the contents of Gaunt's vision and the cosmically ironic way Shakespeare makes it into a tragic turning point, come into clearer historical focus in light of the broad strokes of Foxe's account of late-medieval history. As I outlined earlier in this chapter, the image of economic ruin on a national scale, which Gaunt perfectly captures in his vision of a "demi-paradise" reduced to a "tenement or a pelting farm," combined with the specter of the shameful submission

of national autonomy and power—Gaunt's "England that was wont to conquer others/Hath made a shameful conquest of itself"—was the continual theme of all of Foxe's dissenting prophets, especially Wycliff, who insisted on the Prince's role as protector of the realm's political and ecclesiastical autonomy, as well as its wealth, from the greed of the papal Antichrist. However, while such dissenters were emboldened and illuminated by divine inspiration, and, like the Parliament men quoted earlier, quite expert in their arguments about political and economic realities, Foxe's larger claim in *Acts and Monuments* is that the spiritual realities underlying all of this late-medieval prophecy were but dimly glimpsed, only becoming fully visible in the light of the later persecutions and, perhaps as importantly, from retrospective point of view of Foxe's own Reformed historiographical and exegetical science. Even the "opinions and assertions" of Wycliff, the "morning star" of the Reformation, Foxe says, contain "blemishes"(2.791), and the great tragedy of English history is that, beginning with Richard II, the Kings stopped listening to men like Wycliff and started persecuting them:

> [T]hus it may appear how kings and princes have been blinded and abused by the false prelates of the church, insomuch as they have been their slaves and butchers, to slay Christ's poor innocent members. See, therefore, what danger it is for princes not to have knowledge and understanding, themselves, but to be led by other men's eyes, and especially trusting to such guides, who, through hypocrisy, both deceive them [i.e. Princes], and through cruelty, devour the people (3.229)

While Foxe does not claim anything like superiority over heroic forerunners such as Wycliff, what he demonstrates is that it is only by meticulously sifting the evidence of late-medieval history in light of apocalyptic exegetical verities that it is possible fully to detect and proclaim the epochal spiritual shift which is behind the fall of imperial Princes, men like the German emperor Charles and English kings like Richard and his successors, who became "slaves and butchers" to Antichrist. What is

more, as we will see in a moment, even the unmistakable evidence marshaled in *Acts and Monuments*, Foxe complains, is likely to fall on deaf ears. Hence, while the horrors of Antichristian government are angrily and eloquently denounced by the swelling chorus of prophets as a shameful political and economic self-conquest, this eloquent denunciation of royal and national apostasy takes on, from Foxe's perspective, a kind of terrible irony: while it epitomizes God-given eloquence and heroic political endeavor, prophecy is a kind of tragic waste of breathe.

Interestingly, the idea that Gaunt's eloquence would have sounded like Foxean prophecy in the ears of Shakespeare's contemporaries is suggestively confirmed by a rather bad poem, the "Speciall note of England" with which Timothy Bright, compiler of the first substantial abridgment of Foxe, concluded the prefatory section in his 1598 version of *Acts and Monuments*:

> England, the first kingdom that universalie embraced the Gospel.
> Constantine, the first Christian emperor (who utterly destroyed the idolatrie of the Gentiles, and planted the Gospel through the world) an Englishman.
> John Wycliff, that first manifestly discovered the Pope, and mainteyned open disputation against him, an Englishman.
> The most noble Prince, king Henrie viii. The first king that renounced the Pope.
> The worthie Prince, king Edward vi. The first king, that utterlie abolished all popish superstition.
> Her most Royall Majestie, our most gracious Soveraigne, the verie Maul of the Pope, and a mother of Christian Princes: whome the Almighty long preserve over us.
> Englande, the first that embraced the Gospel: the only establisher of it throughout the world: and the first reformed. (qtd. in Nussbaum, 138-9)

As Foxe scholar Damian Nussbaum notes, Bright's list of "pithy declarations" reads like "the Protestant equivalent of Shakespeare's speech in praise of England as a 'scepter'd isle...other Eden, demy paradise...blessed plot'—and indeed was roughly contemporaneous with it" (139). What needs to be corrected in this otherwise apt analogy is that while the words and images are inimitably Shakespeare's, the speech is John of Gaunt's, and, perhaps more importantly, far from *praising* England,

Shakespeare's Gaunt is *protesting*, prophetically denouncing "England" and her King for having shamefully dispossessed himself of his fabulous imperial inheritance in order to become a butcher, a slave, and a mere "landlord."[20] What Bright attempts to capture in a condensed form in his poem is the positive, highly idealized, side of Foxe's image of England's spiritual distinctiveness, and Nussbaum is correct, I think, to infer that Shakespeare was doing something quite similar in having Gaunt paint his glowing image of what England used to be. What is entirely different, though, is that whereas Bright's poem argues that this English glory is an extant, present, reality, Shakespeare's prophetic Gaunt locates it in an almost mythical past, comparing Richard's England to a "pelting farm," and reducing the monarchy to bondslavery in comparison with the vanished greatness of Edward III and other "*royal* kings"(51, my emphasis).

On first glance, this comparison might suggest a familiar argument, with Foxe/Bright in the role of official historian articulating a naively triumphant nationalism and the playwright articulating a countervailing radical irony. However, as Naussbaum demonstrates, Bright's abridgment was part of a struggle between the forces of reform and reaction in the English church over the possession, so to speak, of the meaning of *Acts and Monuments*, and that what Bright's edition aimed to suppress was in fact the radical potential of Foxe's reformism, to transpose, in fact, Foxe's castigatory apocalyptic pessimism into "a rosy picture" of England "headed to the gold medal table for religious devotion and faithfulness to God"(139). Rather than a "Protestantized" version of Shakespeare's speech, the "Speciall Note" seems more like a tendentious and partial version of the Foxean voice of prophecy that Shakespeare dramatized more accurately and fully in John of Gaunt's dying words. Although Bright may have felt he was getting Foxe right, his optimistic conformism

was as profoundly unlike Foxe's real view of English modernity as Gaunt's prophecy is consistent with it. Like Gaunt, Foxe contrasts the then and the now of apocalyptic time as it relates to all aspects of human life. The modern world, for Foxe, is ruled by Antichrist, so while there are occasional bright spots at the top—the separation from Rome under Henry VIII, the brief rule of Edward VI, Elizabeth's miraculous survival under Mary—the "godly Emperor" in Foxe is a nostalgic figure that is firmly located in the pre-modern past. In the tragic romance of modernity, on the other hand, a world in which the difference between legitimate Prince and bloodthirsty apostate tyrant is increasingly hard to maintain, the true aristocrat is a "gaunt" denouncer of injustice who, in the preposterous judgement of the world, looks like a lunatic.

Like all great writers, Foxe has a distinctive voice which, when his works are read intensively, becomes familiar to the point of being unmistakable. This voice is impossible to capture in a few quotations, and is lost in paraphrase, but the following passages, extracted from a passionate oratorical set piece which Foxe delivers at a climactic point in his chapter on Richard II, illustrates something of the affinity I am suggesting links Foxe's eloquently pessimistic view of modern England and Gaunt's prophetic denunciations. Concluding his account of Wycliff's career by flashing forward to the grotesquely posthumous exhumation and burning of Wycliff's bones, and exasperated by the Enormity of the scene he has just illustrated, Foxe stops his narrative, he says,

> somewhat to expostulate with the cruelty of the world; forsomuch as all mankind, having put apart all humanity, have so far degenerated even unto the iron age, or rather unto a brutal cruelty, that never, as I think, since the beginning of the world, was Plautus' proverb more verified, 'one man is a wolf unto another;' but amongst all the wolves, they are the most cruel which are clothed in lambs' skins, which also do most profess peace....now I know not by what means, [true piety] amongst Christians, is grown into extreme tyranny. Albeit that a small portion of this incommodity or evil do fall upon those, who, for the love of Christ, do suffer violence. For whereas all others are dead, they only do verily live again who die in Christ...for howsoever the

> judgments of men do esteem it, there is no truer life than that which is laid up for Christ as a gage.... But this glory doth not yet appear unto our human senses, which are overwhelmed with the filth of the world...suffer me a little by your license, gentle reader, to talk with these cruel blood-suckers; whereby they, being admonished, may repent, or if they will not, that they may behold, to their great shame and rebuke, whether they will or no, their wicked cruelty and great slaughters, laid before them, as it were, on a stage. Surely it was a worthy saying of a jester, who was but a profane man, 'that it is as unseemly for a prince to abound in tyranny, as for a physician to have many corpses'....But forasmuch as in this extreme cruelty of the world, when all charity is waxed so cold, I am not ignorant how small credit these things shall find at many men's hands, like as also other counsels of moderations before mine have been neglected: wherefore it should be the best for me to leave these kind of men to their own will, rather than to sing unto such as are deaf, and so to lose both time and labour. (3.98-105)

Assuming that Shakespeare and his playgoers knew the sound of Foxe's voice, such somber and disconsolately prophetic utterances—which are echoed by Gaunt's similarly trenchant jesting, his same apocalyptic contrast between life and death, and his use of "iron age" mythology, and which address, as Gaunt does, a historically "present" moment that includes both the Ricardian era and the now of Shakespeare's Elizabethan audience—must have been a crucial intertext for Gaunt's onstage presence. As I see it, the issue is not simply whether we can prove that Foxe is a source, but rather whether it is possible to believe that Shakespeare produced such a strikingly Foxean character coincidentally or accidentally, and whether the Foxean element in Shakespeare's staging could have gone unnoticed by Shakespeare's audiences.

*

Thus far in this chapter, I have been attempting to link Shakespeare's and Foxe's portrayals of Gaunt at the level of verbal parallels and in terms of the shared historiographical thinking implicit in them. While such links are important, to be truly significant, dramatic intertexts must be manifestly theatrical as well. That is, they cannot be lost on an audience, but must constitute a part of the play's impact in

performance, of an audience's experience of the play. The potential for such a theatrical impact can be seen in the way Shakespeare's builds the whole first part of the play around old Gaunt's extended and memorably theatrical dying speech, and in the way he then extends that powerful moment through repetition to become an emblem for the play's historical argument as a whole. Rather than a diabolically seriocomic theatre, the world of *Richard II* is a time of prophecy in which that Enormity is first glimpsed by heroic figures like Gaunt.

To see how clearly Shakespeare was engaging the Foxean intertext theatrically, we need to consider the way Foxe also stages a series of similarly dramatic swan songs for his prophets. Although Foxe's Gaunt is not granted any such ennobling parting histrionics, the next most historiographically relevant example in *Acts and Monuments*, old John Wycliff, is. Paradigmatically, having detailed Wycliff's many heroic collisions with corrupt authority, Foxe emphasizes the providence which "so long preserved" Wycliff, "in such rages of so many enemies from all their hands, even to his old age," and then presents readers with an image of Wycliff "quietly departing this mortal life" at his home in Lutterworth (3.53). Wycliff does not make his offstage quietus, however, until after he has made a much more dramatic parting speech:

> when as Wycliff was lying very sick at London, certain friars came unto him to counsel him; and when they had babbled much unto him, as touching the catholic church, and of the acknowledging of his errors, and of the bishop of Rome; Wycliff, being moved with the foolishness and absurdity of their talk, with a stout stomach, setting himself upright in his bed, repeated this saying out of the Psalms, [cxviii.17], 'I shall not die, but I shall live, and declare the works of the Lord'. (3.20)

"The which thing," Foxe argues, in a thoughtful reflection which seems almost designed for Shakespeare's Gaunt, "if it be so true, as it is reported of some, it doth

declare and show a great fervency and desire of the spirit in that man, passing and above the common state of our human nature and infirmity"(3.20).

This is a resonant dramatic parallel, but it pales in comparison with the last moments of Grosthead, our paradigmatic exemplar of castigatory prophetic eloquence. As in the case of Wycliff, Grosthead's final collision with authority begins with an "unreasonable" letter from the Pope, in which Innocent IV outlines the papal doctrine of "non obstante or "Notwithstanding," a precept which would have given the papacy free reign to override all existing English laws and customs, and with the dissenting Bishop's brilliantly composed response to it . "There is," Foxe says, again echoing Revelations,

> no man who hath any eyes to see, but may easily understand in reading this letter of the pope, how unreasonable his request is, how impudently he commandeth, how proudly he threateneth, how wickedly he oppresseth and racketh the church of God...to raven up the church[sic] goods; so it is no great marvel, if this godly bishop, Robert Grosthead, was offended therewith; who in my mind, deserveth a double commendation, not only that he so wisely did discern error from sincerity and truth, but also that he was so hardy and constant to stand to the defence thereof.... (2.525-6)

Leaving aside what is a truly breathtaking example of power-mongering on the part of the pontiff, and a correspondingly fluent remonstrance by his bishop, both of which are printed in full by Foxe, what is more immediately relevant is the dramatic aftermath of Grosthead's rebuttal:

> when [Grosthead's] epistle came to the knowledge of the pope, he, fuming and fretting in anger and a proud mind, saying, 'What frantic old dotard is this, who so boldly and rashly judgeth my doings? By St. Peter and St. Paul, were it not for our innate generosity and good nature, I would throw him into such confusion, as should make him a bye-word, an astonishment, an example, and a prodigy to all the world. For is not the King of England our vassal? Nay, more, our manciple (to use the very words of mine author) who only needs a nod from us, to imprison him and put him into utter disgrace?

Richard's furiously querying response to Gaunt's rebuke, coming at the dramatic moment when he decisively cuts off Gaunt's prophecy, is a model of theatrical intertextuality:

> ...A lunatic lean-witted fool,
> Presuming on an ague's privilege,
> Darest with thy frozen admonition
> Make pale our cheek, chasing the royal blood
> With fury from his native residence.
> Now, by my seat's right royal majesty,
> Wert thou not brother to great Edward's son,
> This tongue that runs so roundly in thy head
> Should run thy head from thy unreverent shoulders. (2.1.115-23)

From Foxe's masterfully Shakespearean handling of dramatic irony—it is the Pope who is a "bye-word" and a "prodigy," just as it is Richard who is about to talk his own head off—to his flagrant image of the English king as the pope's murderous "vassal," Foxe's mini-drama is a striking pretext for the collision between Richard and Gaunt, and the connection becomes even clearer in light of the climactic episode in Foxe's playlet:

> Not long after this...this reverend and godly Robert...lying at his manor place at Buckden, fell grievously sick. Whereupon, he sent for a certain friar of the Preaching order, named Master John of St. Giles, a man expert and cunning both in physic and divinity, partly to receive of him some comfort, and partly to confer with him in spiritual matters. One day, the bishop...did grievously rebuke and reprehend his [i.e. Master John's] fellows...that, whereas their orders were planted in wilful poverty, viz. poverty of spirit, on purpose that they might with the more freedom carp at and reprove the vices of the mighty, and not flatter or spare them, but severely censure and gravely reprehend the same; the said friars, contrary to their profession, did not boldly cry out and inveigh against the abuses of their superiors and men of power, nor did they detect or uncover their faults and weaknesses....After this, because the nights were getting longer, and that the bishop felt his weakness and infirmity to grow upon him...he willed certain of his clergy to be called to him, thereby to be refreshed with some conference or communication. Unto whom the bishop, mourning and lamenting for the loss of souls through the avarice of the pope's court, sighing, said on this wise...certain aphorisms. (2.528-29)

What follows in Foxe's account is a list of sixteen aphorisms, delivered by Grosthead from his deathbed, all of which deal in one way or another, with the "wicked" spirit of "non obstante":

> 3. The pope is not ashamed impudently to disannul…privileges granted by the holy Roman pontiffs, his predecessors; which is not done without their manifest injury and prejudice, for in so doing he doth reject and destroy that which so many great and holy men had builded before. And what a contemner, then, must he be of the saints! But he that contemneth shall justly be contemned, according to the saying of Isaiah, 'Woe to he who despiseth, shalt not thou thyself be despised?' Who, in time to come, will respect privileges of his granting?

We will return to the content of this familiar sounding apothegm in a moment, but for now note that not even this impressive rhetorical performance exhausts Grosthead's fading breath:

> And when this godly bishop had thus expressed his detestation of such practices, and of many other enormities which prevailed in the court of Rome; as, all kinds of avarice, usury, simony, and extortion, all kinds of filthiness, fleshly lust, gluttony, and sumptuous apparel; insomuch that the proverb concerning the said court is truly justified—
>
> Ejus avaritiae totus non sufficit orbis
> Ejus luxuriae meretrix non sufficit omnis
> [All the world cannot suffice, their greedy covetous mind,
> Nor all the drabs and naughty packs, their filthy lusting kind]—
>
> afterwards he went about further to prosecute, how the aforesaid court, opening its jaws so wide, that the floods of Jordan might run into its mouth, aspired to usurp the goods of them that had died intestate, and legacies bequeathed without due form of law; and how, in order that they might practice this with the greater freedom, they would associate the king as sharer and partaker with them in their rapine. 'Neither,' said he, 'would the church ever be delivered from this Egyptian servitude, but with the edge of a bloody sword. 'Albeit,' saith he, 'these be but as yet but light matters; yet, shortly, within the next three years, more grievous things shall come to pass.' At the end of this his prophetic speech, which he scarcely could utter for sighing, sobbing, and weeping, his tongue faltered, and his breath began to fail, and so, the organ of his voice being stopped, he made an end both of his speech and life. (531-32, my emphases)

There are some interesting verbal parallels linking Richard's mysterious enormity with the popish courtliness decried by Grosthead, especially the emphasis on stolen

inheritances, but what is more significant finally is the extent to which this whole astonishing episode of death-bed oratory seems to function as a kind of histrionic palimpsest for Shakespeare's Gaunt. Foxe is of course not the only early modern writer to represent scenes of death-bed oratory, but with tales like this he made this scene paradigmatically Protestant in the eyes of his readers. The point is not merely that both venerably pious and angry old men declaim against villainy with their dying breaths, but that Grosthead's dramatic emergence as a powerful prophetic voice in response to enormity—he becomes increasingly outrageous without ever losing his dignity—is exactly paralleled in Shakespeare's progressive intensification of Gaunt's prophetic character. Simply put, if we add Wycliff's similar swan song and a host of other parallel accounts which can be found in *Acts and Monuments*, it becomes impossible to watch Gaunt's extended death-bed rebuke without seeing and hearing Foxe's "newly inspired" prophets behind him.

And, for all *his* remarkable eloquence, Grosthead's rebukes also fall on deaf ears—or at least they seem to. As he is carried off-stage, Shakespeare's Gaunt concludes with a prophecy which is as much threat as it is promise:

> Live in thy shame, but die not shame with thee!
> These words hereafter thy tormentors be.
> Convey me to my bed, then to my grave.
> Love they to live that love and honour have. (2.1.135-8)

Even the idea that Gaunt's words will torment Richard after Gaunt is dead is matched in the otherworldly denouement of Foxe's story. Unbelievably, Grosthead is still not finished speaking:

> Innocent…being passing angry…willed to have the bones of this bishop cast out of the church, and, to bring him into disgrace with the people, that he should be counted an ethnic, a rebel, and a disobedient person, throughout the whole world; and thereupon caused he a letter to that effect to be written and transmitted to the king of England, knowing that the king of England would gladly serve him therein, to have the spoil of the bishop and of his church. But,

> in the night following, the said bishop appeared to him…and approaching him as he lay restless on his bed spake to him with a severe countenance, stern look, and terrible voice, at the same time striking him a blow on the side with the point of his pastoral staff, and thus said, 'Sinibald, thou most wretched pope…I wrote unto thee in the spirit of humility and love, that thou shouldst correct thy manifold errors; but thou, with a proud eye and disdainful heart, hast despised my wholesome admonitions. Woe to thee that despisest, shalt not thee also be despised?…The pope, afterwards, directeth his journey to Naples, although sorely pained in his side, like a man sick of a pleurisy, or rather smitten with a spear…[where he died]. 'For Robert of Lincoln,' saith the story, 'did not spare Sinibald of Genoa; who, for that he would not hear the other's gentle reproofs when he was alive, did feel his stripes when he was dead, so that he never after that enjoyed one good day or night'. (2.533)

Like Pope Innocent's, Richard's ears are not "undeafed" by Gaunt's "death's sad tale," any more than they were by his "life's counsel," but it almost goes without saying that whereas Richard concludes this scene in the expectation of a "merry" night, he is afflicted for the rest of the play by a kind of deathlike spiritual pleurisy. There is no dream scene in *Richard II*, but we can certainly imagine the king tormented by Gaunt's dying words. "Think I am dead," Richard says to the Queen, perhaps recalling the scene of Gaunt's last words, "and that even here thou takest,/ As from my death-bed, thy last living leave" (5.1.38-39).

Finally, in order fully to grasp the extent to which Shakespeare's play engages with Foxe in performance, we need to note the way that Shakespeare dramatizes not just the emergence of one solitary prophet figure and his memorable swan song, but a whole series of prophetic emergences, so that the entire action of the play can be seen to function as an emblematic portrayal of the Ricardian era as a time of prophecy, defining it, much as Foxe does, in terms of the repeated collisions between a looming cloud of spiritual darkness and decay, on one hand, and the sparks of a kind of tragically imperfect prophetic illumination on the other. We have already looked at two of these parallel prophet figures, Mowbray and the Duchess; to this list we can quickly add the half-baked, but not entirely unimpressive dissent of York, whose

impassioned rejoinder to Richard at the end of this scene reads very much like Bishop Grosthead's aphorism about "non obstante":

> Seek you to seize and gripe into your hands
> The royalties and rights of banished Hereford?
> ...
> Take Hereford's rights away, and take from Time
> His charters and his customary rights;
> Let not tomorrow then ensue today;
> Be not thyself; for how art thou a king
> But by fair sequence and succession?
> ...
> I'll not be by the while. My liege farewell.
> What will ensue hereof there's none can tell;
> But by bad courses may be understood
> That their events can never fall out good. *Exit.* (2.1.195-214)

More impressive are the doubly prophetic prognostications uttered by the unnamed Welsh Captain in Act Two, scene four:

> The bay trees in our country are all withered,
> And meteors fright the fixed stars of heaven;
> The pale-faced moon looks bloody on the earth,
> And lean-looked prophets whisper fearful change;
> Rich men look sad, and ruffians dance and leap—
> The one in fear to lose what they enjoy,
> The other to enjoy by rage and war.
> These signs forerun the death or fall of kings. (2.4.9-15)

While this speech is crucial to the plot in that it helps to explain the rapid dispersal of Richard's army, Shakespeare also uses this moment to create the image of an entire landscape of ominous signs and "gaunt" prophets such as the Duke of Lancaster. It is, moreover, not accidental that the Captain's image of "dancing ruffians" enjoying the spoils of their "rage and war" is followed immediately by the return of King Bolingbroke.

This image of a nation peopled by prophetic doomsayers is confirmed in the figure of Carlisle, who famously envisions England transformed into a "field of Golgotha and dead men's skulls"(4.1.144). As mentioned above, Carlisle's prophecy

is a retrospective key to the argument of the first tetralogy as a whole in that it accurately foresees England's descent into civil chaos, a national scandal likened spiritually to the murder of Christ by the Jews and the Romans, and which Shakespeare had already portrayed in the first tetralogy. In Shakespeare's earlier apocalyptic theatre, playgoers witnessed the descent of the English aristocracy into a kind of demonic playing which resonated quite powerfully with the vision of Antichristian government captured in *Acts and Monuments*. Watching *Richard II*, these multiple correspondences confirm and consolidate both our sense of Carlisle's prophetic insight—we *know* this is going to happen—and our appreciation of the scope and power of Shakespeare's historiography—here is a man who sees the big picture. What Carlisle's impressive prophecy also does, I would argue, is to retrospectively confirm and deepen the perspicuity and the heroism of the play's other prophetic seers. To be alive at all in Richard's England, the point seems to be, is to be awake to the signs of a looming catastrophe; to be spiritually honorable, however, is to be like Wycliff, Grosthead, Gaunt, Mowbray, and Carlisle: able to discern truth from error, and willing boldly to denounce it, regardless of the seemingly inevitable consequences. What is important here, in other words, is the dramatic way that Carlisle, like Gaunt, "steps forth" as a newly inspired prophet, and, just as importantly, the way the new "government" responds to him.

While this is often overlooked, Carlisle has two long speeches in this scene, both of which are consistent with his role as a representative of religion, but which seem designed to suggest that Carlisle undergoes something like a conversion or reformation prior to his prophetic moment. In the first speech, Carlisle renders an enthusiastic description of Mowbray's career as a crusader, fighting, he says,

> For Jesu Christ in glorious Christian field,
> Streaming the ensign of the Christian cross

Against black Pagans, Turks, and Saracens; (4.1.93-95)

By bringing in this reference to the Crusades, Shakespeare wants us to recognize that, at this point, Carlisle is being a dutiful son of a specifically unreformed Roman Church. As we will see later, following Foxe, Shakespeare brilliantly capitalizes on the religio-historical irony associated with crusaders and would-be crusaders in his portrayal of King Bolingbroke, but the point to notice here is the extent to which Carlisle is, from the perspective of *Acts and Monuments* and English Calvinism generally, promulgating a double falsehood. Mowbray did not go on a glorious crusade, he was banished in ignominy, and there is, moreover, nothing gloriously Christian about the crusades, a series of pointless and grotesquely unheroic wars which had, Foxe argues repeatedly, been fought not under the "colours" of "captain Christ," but under the bloody banner of the papal Antichrist. Spiritually speaking, Carlisle is floating downstream here, which, as G.K. Chesterton said, any dead thing can do. Carlisle begins to stir, however, when he hears Bolingbroke's unbearably saccharine and hypocritical reply to his speech: "Sweet peace conduct his sweet soul to the bosom/ Of good old Abraham!"(4.1.103-4), and he is shocked into a new spiritual wakefulness by the even more alarming impiety that follows: "In God's name, I'll ascend the regal throne" (113). This dramatic prelude sets the stage, it seems to me, for the very different religious attitude that informs Carlisle's prophecy.

Strikingly, Carlisle begins by divesting himself of any special status as a prince of the church:

> Worst in this royal presence may I speak,
> Yet best beseeming me to speak the truth (4.1.114-5)

Carlisle makes it explicit that he is no longer speaking as a bishop, but as an individual "subject" whose prophetic authority derives solely from the fact that he has

been "stirr'd up by God" in order "boldly" to denounce Bolingbroke "for my king"(133-4). This could happen to any subject, any man or woman, and it confers a spiritual *gravitas* that owes nothing to the Crusading Church of his previous speech. While such intimations can easily pass undetected, the sectarian implications of this contrast are, I think, quite clear: in stepping forward as a prophet, Carlisle is transformed from a clerical spokesman for Catholic error to a dissident prophet of proto-Protestant truth. And, not surprisingly from the Foxean perspective, his reward is to be immediately arrested and made a prisoner of the Abbot of Westminster. With an almost perfectly Foxean dramatic irony, Northumberland's haughtily sarcastic comment—"Well have you argued, sir, and for your pains/ Of capital treason we arrest you here" (150-1)—encapsulates the onus of this scene. Carlisle has, indeed, argued well, although this eloquence is lost on Bolingbroke and his treasonous crew. And, whereas Carlisle's arrest clearly gives Northumberland a sense of superiority, it is Carlisle who is elevated in the eyes of the audience, whereas Bolingbroke and his callous usurping henchman are being discredited even as they are seizing worldly power.

Finally, while they are perhaps less immediately recognizable as such, the Queen and the Gardener are prophet figures who, like Gaunt and the Duchess, engage in a kind of spiritual trial or contest. Like Gaunt's, the Gardener's message is ostensibly secular or political, but with a deeply religious undertone which also engages Foxe's image of prophecy. As Peter Ure helpfully details, the allegorical garden had long been used as a trope to detect and denounce spiritual corruption in the church, and, on the basis of resonant intertexts such as Henry Brinklow's evangelical satire, *The Complaint of Roderick Mors*, it might well have been

associated by Shakespeare's audience with a specifically proto-Protestant kind of dissent:

> the kyngs grace began wel to wede the garden of Ingland, but yet he left stonding (the more pytye!) the most fowlest and stynkyng wedys, which had most nede to be pluckyd up by the rootys; that is to say, the pricking thistels and styngyng nettels; which, styll stondyng, what helpyth the desposyng of the pety membres of the Pope, and to leave his whole body behynd, which be the pompos bisshops... (qtd. in Ure, lii).

Moreover, *Acts and Monuments* contains a wealth of similar material which would connect the Gardener's georgic ethos with godly prophecy. For instance, for the pivotal year of 1360, Foxe interpolates an entire "olde Booke intituled, the Ploughman's Prayer," which was, he says, "written as it seemeth in about Wycliffe's time"(2.728).[21] Spoken by an unnamed ploughman, this exercise in archaic and homely spiritual complaint literature contributes another distinctive type of eloquence to Foxe's composite image of the voice of late-medieval prophecy: it is the plain-speaking, rustic counterpart, so to speak, to Petrarch's verse and Wycliff's scholarship.

However, while Shakespeare's Gardener may sound like such godly ploughmen, he articulates a very different spiritual message. Roderick Mors' point is not that Henry VIII did not lop-off enough heads, but rather that spiritual gardening cannot be done with a sword, and Foxe's ploughman makes the same point:

> Lord thou gave us a sword to fighten against our enemis for our country, that was thine holy teaching, and christen mens law. But lord thy sword is put in a shethe and in priestes ward, they have forsaken the fighting that thou taughtest. For as they seyn it is against their order to ben men of armes in thy battail, for it is unseemlich, as they seyn, that thy vicar in earth, other his priests shulden suffer of other men. And therefore gif any man smyte him, other any of his clerkes, he ne taketh it not in patience, but anon he smiteth with his sword of cursing, and afterward with his bodilich sword, he doth them to death. O lord me thinketh that this is a fighting against kinde, and much against thy teaching....A lord! Whether thou ordeynest an order of fighters to turn men to the beliefe? Other ordeinest that knights should swearen to fight for thy wordes? [Gloss: faith commeth not by outward force]. (2.739)

Thus, while he sounds prophetical in the Protestant georgic mode, the Gardener's doctrine is actually its complete antithesis. All affronts, he argues, in a way that sounds as stoutly Antichristian as Pope Gregory's "wild bull," must be countered with imprisonment and execution:

> Go bind thou up young dangling apricocks,
> Which, like unruly children, make their sire
> Stoop with oppression of their prodigal weight.
> ...
> Go thou, and, like an executioner,
> Cut off the heads of too fast growing sprays
> That look too lofty in our commonwealth.
> All must be even in our government.
> You thus employed, I will go root away
> The noisome weeds, which without profit suck
> The soil's fertility from wholesome flowers. (3.4.29-39)

The Gardener's anger is not unreasonable, and he is far from being a figure of unmitigated or uncomplicated enormity. Like Gaunt, he sees a ruined demi-paradise, and he is moved to denounce it in his own eloquent way. However, his solution, and the benighted spirituality behind it, is closer to the parodic or demonic georgic which, as we saw earlier, is used by Foxe to expose the bloody-minded error of false-shepherds like Pope Gregory. Moreover, the Gardener's bloody-minded ethic is too closely associated with the political program—or rather pogrom—instituted by Bolingbroke to be seen as anything other than a kind of time-serving villainy: kill Bushy, Bagot, and Green and anyone else who appears "unruly," and then justify it using the language of gardening or any other rationale that comes to hand.

While this response is not widely shared by modern critics of the play, something of the "chilling, even horrifying" quality of the Gardener's world-view has been noted by F.W. Brownlow:

> He knows the necessities of government. The imperative mood comes naturally to him, and he speaks without pity or conscience of beheading and maiming the plants in his care. In his condemnation of Richard there is neither mercy nor sympathy....Many have interpreted the garden scene as an allegorical model of a well-governed country, pointing a moral and setting a standard by which Richard is condemned, Bolingbroke excused. But this geometrical garden is a dream of legal perfection, and before we decide to dream it, we should know that in the garden we would be the plants, not the gardener.... The Gardener, despite his rustic calm, represents the savagery of the Old Law...his orders for binding, cutting off, wounding, and lopping tell what is necessary if nature is to be governed in a graceless world. (75)

This is astute, but what I would add is that rather than the "old law"—which was at least reciprocally savage—the Gardener is a spokesman and prophet for the new dispensation coming into view in the play; the Gardener is a denizen of Gaunt's pelting farm, not his vanished demi paradise, and that the words Foxe and his contemporaries most often used to describe his graceless form of government were Antichrist and popery.

The Queen sees this gracelessness, or something like it, in the Gardener, and this elusive spiritual insight lies behind her feeling of being "pressed to death through want of speaking" when she comes face to face with him (3.4.72). Shakespeare is aiming to produce a more divided response in his audience with this confrontation than he was in the clash between Gaunt and the Duchess, but its antimonies are nonetheless palpable. Like a prophet, the Queen is compelled to speak out, but her rectitude is tinged with a somewhat alienating, one might say puritanical, rigour, and with an air of snobbery that is off-putting. However, rather than simply generating ambiguity for its own sake, Shakespeare seems to be trying to get the Queen's character just right—like Cordelia and Paulina, godly people can be a little hard to take at times, and the thing about prophets is that they say things we do not like to hear. Shakespeare would also appear to be giving his audience a chance to discover for themselves the spiritual verities behind the complex surface of things. Ultimately,

it is the Gardener's ruthlessness which makes him appear a "wretch" to the Queen, and not his dirty fingers, and if this is difficult to see, this only serves to deepen our sense of her distinctive spiritual discernment.

Moreover, given that the Queen has already been ranked with the play's other figures of compelling prophetic insight, this outcome is not surprising:

> Yet again, methinks,
> Some unborn sorrow, ripe in Fortune's womb,
> Is coming towards me, and my inward soul
> With nothing trembles. At something it grieves
> More than with parting from my lord the King. (2.1.9-13)

Few minor characters in the history plays are as richly significant as this remarkable woman, just as few women in these plays are so remarkable. For instance, in addition to creating the impression of a King who used to be better than he is now—a technique more famously employed in *Othello* and *Hamlet*—Shakespeare's portrayal of a strong romantic relationship between Richard and the Queen also helps to complicate historiographical convention. Whereas claims about Richard's addiction to "caterpillars" typically invoked both homosexuality and pusillanimity, Shakespeare shows a man who is both deeply in love with his wife and, yet, not so uxorious that he is unwilling to go to war in Ireland.[22] Consequently, the Queen's allusion to pregnancy is not only a rich source of pathos, it underscores the radical destructiveness of Bolingbroke's divisive usurpation even as it is inadvertently prophetic: these robust young people will not be allowed to have children, and this is surely part of the Queen's and the nation's invisible sorrow.

Another notable aspect of the Queen's character is the extent to which Shakespeare combined the historical Queen Isabel with Richard's first wife, Anne of Bohemia, thereby associating the Queen's nobility, along with the marriage that is destroyed by Bolingbroke, with a woman Foxe's readers well knew as a champion of

reformed piety and evangelicalism. Foxe portrays Anne as a "godly lady" who, like Gaunt, helped to foster the spread of the vernacular Gospels in England; even more importantly, Foxe credits Anne with having been the conduit for the spread of Wycliff's doctrine into Bohemia, which for Foxe amounted to nothing less than the beginning of the Reformation itself (3.202-3). From the perspective of *Acts and Monuments*, therefore, all of the Queen's volubly prophetic insights and denunciations in the play—from her woeful prognostications, to her stinging rebuke of the Gardener, to her attempt to rally her husband to some kind of resistance—would have been suffused with intimations of this important figure of proto-evangelical piety. Moreover, in what looks like a huge leap forward in the representation of "wailing queens," Shakespeare uses the Queen's sadness to evoke a distinctively heartfelt, emotional, and feminine apprehension of the same nascent, indistinctly seen, spiritual realities which are being detected by men like Gaunt, Mowbray, and Carlisle.

At once both similar to and distinct from the raging despair of the Duchess, the Queen's distinctive heaviness and her somewhat bristly piety adds another authoritative register to the play's cast of prophetic seers, and, at the same time, considerably deepens and complicates the pall of futurity which hangs over the whole play. As we have seen, Foxe stressed that, in the time of Wycliff, "the whole state and condition, not only of worldly things, but also of religion…was so depraved and corrupted so that, like the disease named lethargy amongst the physicians, even so the state of religion…was past all man's help and remedy"(2.792). Although it might sound gratuitous to say so, the Queen's "sad majesty" seems like a perfect mirror for this providential reality. The point is not that she succumbs to lethargy, but rather that she suffers it heroically, and in doing so, apprehends and denounces its elusive cause. In Act Five, Richard presents the Queen with a "depressed" image of a happy catholic

future reminiscent, in some ways, to King Lear's fantasy of life in prison with Cordelia:

> ...Hie thee to France,
> And cloister thee in some religious house.
> Our holy lives must win a new world's crown,
> Which our profane hours have here thrown down

To the Queen, however, this is royal apostasy, not piety or consolation, and she denounces this imagined future in a castigatory voice which is as much a prophet's as it is a wife's:

> What, is my Richard both in shape and mind
> Transformed and weakened? Hath Bolingbroke
> Deposed thine intellect? Has he been in thy heart? (5.1.26-8)

*

Insisting, incorrectly, that Shakespeare's character is entirely unrelated to the "historical" Duke of Lancaster of his chronicle sources, modern critics have seized upon Gaunt as a glowing example of the playwright's imaginative independence and inventiveness, and, just as consistently, have tried to disassociate Shakespeare's "radical" thinking from Gaunt's putatively orthodox ethos. Looking at Gaunt as a tragically embattled figure of eloquent prophetic dissent, Elizabethan readers of *Acts and Monuments* would likely have been impressed, instead, by the religious depth and seriousness of Gaunt's personality and, as well, by Shakespeare's robust engagement with Foxean history in bringing this Foxean hero to life. We are still talking, as Forker puts it, about the "artistic magnitude of Shakespeare's additions" (134), but in a way that recognizes both the manifest connections between Shakespeare's Gaunt and Foxe's, and, more generally, the fact that the "artistry" of the Shakespearean chronicle play was inseparable from the "history": Shakespeare did not invent Gaunt, he rediscovered him, historically, on the stage. Moreover, the value of recognizing

Shakespeare's Foxean perspective on Gaunt is that, as I argued earlier, it allows us to grasp even more clearly, and with a more robustly historiographical understanding, Schlegel's and Baxter's notion that Gaunt functions as a kind of yardstick or stable perspective from which to assess Shakespeare's treatment of other characters not only in *Richard II*, but in the Wars of the Roses sequence as a whole. Gaunt's tragic greatness is a distinctively Foxean category, and so fully to appreciate Gaunt is also to notice that, in the case of Bolingbroke, the nut has fallen rather far from the noble Lancastrian tree: Shakespeare's Bolingbroke is, in fact, a figure of explicitly popish Enormity. This strong impression adds ironic clarity to Shakespeare's subsequent treatment of Bolingbroke's own remarkable scion, a paradoxically disreputable paladin who famously succeeds exactly where Bolingbroke fails: Hal is not like his father. And Falstaff, of course, is Gaunt's religious-historical antithesis. However, before taking up the complex relationship between the treatment of the (in)famous Lancastrian Henry V in Foxe and Shakespeare, I want to conclude this chapter by considering how the Foxean intertext sheds new light on Shakespeare's tragico-historical portrayal of King Richard as a figure of royal Enormity.

As we have seen, for Foxe the epochal shift in the spiritual state of worldly affairs attendant upon the loosing out of Satan defined the period just prior to and including Richard's reign as tragic. Rather than providential *causes*, as in Hall, the fractious politics of Richard's reign, his deposition and murder, and the rise of Bolingbroke, are all viewed by Foxe as *symptoms* of a deeper spiritual change which marks the origins of modernity. Things are literally going to Hell, and Richard's "troubled times" are a transitional period between the millennial era of somnolent peace epitomized by the golden rule of Edward III, and "these latter and perilous dayes" which are set forth in detail in the pages of *Acts and Monuments*. Just as he

adapted the well-established horrors of the Wars of the Roses era to detect Antichrist in that part of English history, Foxe found in the familiar story of Richard's disastrous reign a metonymy for this transitional theme. Tersely, but with real argumentative clarity, Foxe pictures Richard as a man who started out well but then, tragically, went bad. Foxe's Richard is unequivocally a tyrant, but he is a complexly transitional one. While the English crown falls with Richard into modernity, the nature of Richard's culpability is a hard to detect, almost private, fall, and England only descends into overt and truly bloody tyranny under his successor.

In light of Shakespeare's Foxean revision of Gaunt's character, and the theme of "newly inspired" prophetic dissent in the play as a whole, it is not difficult to see how thoroughly Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard's disastrous career engages with Foxe's account of the last Plantagenet. Like Foxe, Shakespeare complicates historiographical convention in a way which suggests that, while Richard's well-known felonies are exigent, his inability to hold onto his throne lies in a deeper, more substantial, royal miscarriage. Similarly, Shakespeare's intimations of a more mysterious, and more crucial, culpability in the King contributes to the powerful sense that something deeper, and more profoundly historical than a political coup is happening in the play. As in Foxe, and as each of the play's prophet figures sees, the downward transformation or deposition of Richard's royal mind and heart seem to constitute the prodigious "birth" of a dismal futurity which is identified as a fall from a demi-paradise and a return to Golgotha. This is a version of tragic magnitude, but it is also a historical argument about the significance of a particular king.

Coming to 1399, and the conclusion of his account of Richard II's reign, Foxe writes that,

> in that year happened the strange and also the lamentable deposing of this king...from his kingly sceptre: strange, for that the like hath not often been seen

> in seats royal: lamentable, for that it cannot but be grievous to any good man's heart, to see him either so to deserve, if he were rightly deposed, or if he were unjustly deprived, to see the kingly title there not able to hold its right, where, by force, it is compelled to give place to might. (3.216)

Foxe observes that "many and sundry defects in that king may appear in stories, to the number of thirty three articles alleged, or forced rather against him." The substance of these accusations, Foxe says, cannot be reasonably denied, but what is questionable is whether these misdemeanors alone could be the real cause of Richard's fall: "it may be thought" he says, sounding breezily Machiavellian, "perhaps the causes not to be so rare, or so material in a prince; who either could, or else would have served"(216). Just as Edward's heroic resistance to Popery is the real story behind his greatness, Foxe argues that the underlying cause of Richard's fall was a corresponding apostasy on the young King's part. Richard would have been preserved as King, Foxe says, "had he not given over to serve the Lord and his word, choosing rather to serve the humour of the pope and bloody prelates, than to further the lord's proceedings in preaching of his word." Foxe expands upon this lesson in providential political realities with an impressive mini-sermon which sums up Richard's "tragical story":

> What were the conditions and properties of this king, partly before hath been touched; in whom, as some good virtues may be noted, so also some vices may seem to be mixed withal, but especially this, that he, *starting out in the steps of his progenitors, ceased to take part with them who took part with the gospel.* Whereupon it so fell, not by the blind wheel of fortune, but by the secret hand of Him who directeth all estates, that, as he first began to forsake the maintaining of the gospel of God, so the Lord began to forsake him: and where the protection of God beginneth to fail him, who God once giveth over to man's punishment, there can be no lack of causes to be charged withal. So that to me, considering the whole life and trade of this prince, among all other causes alleged in stories against him, none seemeth to be of more weight to us, or more hurtful to him, than this forsaking of the Lord and his word.... And then, as I said, how can enemies lack, where God standeth not to befriend? Or what cause can be so little, which is not able enough to cast down, where the Lord's arm is shortened to sustain? Wherefore, it is a point of principal wisdom in a prince, not to forget, that as he standeth always in need of God's helping hand, so always he have the discipline and fear of Him before his eyes....(216-17; my emphases)

While it might seem remote from the play at first glance, a close reading of Foxe's providential interpretation of Richard's fall shows that it is a strikingly condign gloss on *Richard II*. Precisely as Foxe says, Shakespeare's Richard starts well, not only by administering justice with a view to peace and reconciliation, but by respecting and heeding Gaunt's noble sagacity. And, in virtually the same moment that he inexplicably turns on Gaunt, Richard begins to be unkinged, divested of all worldly power by a relentless cosmic irony that, because it appears to owe nothing to any other pressing failure in Richard, or, for that matter, to any skill or virtue in Bolingbroke, seems designed to reflect something like Foxe's providentially "shortened" arm of God. That is, Shakespeare seems determined to engage in a kind of ironic historical revisionism which works in a fashion similar to Foxe's: as suggested earlier, the king's susceptibility to flattery is part of the historical record, but Shakespeare goes well out of his way to show that mere flattery did not cause Richard's fall. Similarly, while Richard does employ blank charters, and while Gaunt's "emerald isle" speech alludes to economic misprision, Shakespeare seems to be gesturing towards a deeper, more profound Enormity. Even the force of Richard's seizure of the Lancastrian estates is blunted by the fact that Richard uses the money for soldiers' coats and not sumptuous apparel, and, by the fact that as a rebel and oathbreaker, Bolingbroke has forfeited any real claim to his father's land. Finally, Shakespeare undermines the weight of the infamous thirty-three articles by not forcing Richard to "ravel out" his "weaved-up follies" onstage and, much more emphatically than Foxe does, by forcefully dramatizing them as part of a cruel public relations campaign waged by Richard's enemies.

That there is a gap between the familiar charges leveled against Richard in the sources, and what we actually see in the play, is a critical commonplace; rather than historiographical indifference or carelessness on Shakespeare's part, it is, I think, better understood as a kind of strategic ambiguity analogous to Foxe's argument. If it is not this, Shakespeare says, it must be something else, and what this crucial something else is is supplied by the Foxean intertext: the absence of the providential support which makes political success possible. Without it, as Richard sees in one of his great moments of tragic recognition, the most powerful king can be felled by a pin.

A blunt but valid objection to this argument would be that the play does not appear to contain any scene to match Foxe's emphasis on Richard's "forsaking of the Lord and his word," and that if Shakespeare had wanted to evoke Foxe's argument in any particular way, he would have included an apostasy scene in which Richard explicitly "ceased to take part with them who took part with the gospel." Making some allowance for Shakespeare's subtlety, and for the interpretive skills of his audience, I have tried to show that this is pretty much exactly what Shakespeare did portray in the collision between Richard and Gaunt in Act Two. If Gaunt is a prophet, then Richard's *hamartia* here, as in Foxe's reading of Richard's tragedy, is not some notional absolutism, but rather the paradigmatically Foxean error of forsaking the living Word by blindly denouncing it as the "frozen admonition" of a "lunatic lean-witted fool"(2.1.115-7). By implication, Shakespeare's Richard joins Foxe's Richard among the swelling ranks of apostate late-medieval Princes which, according to Foxe's scheme, defines one half of the dialectic of modernity, just as Gaunt's bold eloquence defines the other. It is of course conventional to note that Richard fails to heed Gaunt's message, but what is often missed is the enormity of Richard's crass

abuse of this loyal old man and, moreover, the way he seems to *revel* in the idea of his death. This strikingly unkingly behaviour is, it seems to me, meant to be understood more as a religious error than a political one. Like Foxe, Shakespeare works hard to suggest that there is a deeper, more mysterious, causality behind Richard's fall, and he exposes this underlying cause not in Richard's infamous policies, but in his shockingly unlooked-for attitude towards Gaunt at the end of Act One:

> Now put it, God, in the physician's mind
> To help him to his grave immediately!
> The lining of his coffers shall make coats
> To deck our soldiers for these Irish wars.
> Come, gentlemen, let's go visit him.
> Pray God we may make haste and come too late! (1.4.59-64)

Ironically—that is, in the cosmic sense defined by Foxe and other providential writers—Richard's horrible prayer is heard and answered: he not only arrives too late to hear the whole of Gaunt's edifying vision, but, in a spirit of corrosive haste, he ruthlessly cuts off Gaunt's admonishments, just as the Gardener cuts off those unruly sprays, and just as the "crooked sickle of Catholic doctrine"(3.5), Foxe says, excises the voice of true Christian eloquence.

Interestingly, Shakespeare's use of a private setting to show us our first glimpse of Richard's corruption at the end of Act One mirrors to some extent Foxe's own efforts to trace the roots of Richard's fall to the precise moment in time in which Richard's crucial reversal took place. As noted earlier, in Foxe the disconsolate conclusion to Gaunt's career is immediately followed by the discovery of the young king "contented to adjoin his *private* assent, such as it was, to the setting down of an ordinance which was indeed the very first law that it is to be made against religion and the professors thereof"(3.37; my emphasis). It is a small, "private" action, one which is almost invisible even to the assiduous historian, but it is monumentally

significant for the future: Richard's private assent was, Foxe argues, "the principal ground whereupon proceeded all the persecution of that time" (3. 38).

By stressing Richard's haste at this pivotal point in his tragic career, Shakespeare connects the King's striking impiety with the larger theme of time in the play. As I have argued at various points, one thing the Foxean intertext seems to bring into focus quite clearly is the way the various characters' relationship with time places them on the spectrum of exemplary virtue or vice. Simply put, the play's virtuous characters all have a prophetic sense of a dark futurity and, rather than going along with this dismal progress, they try to stand out against the flow of time by denouncing it. The villains, by contrast, seem not only to embrace the present, but are in a hurry to get to the future. Bolingbroke's timing is, of course, famous—in the theatre he manages to reduce ten years of banishment to a few moments offstage. And, while Richard's timing is as notoriously bad as Bolingbroke's is good, at the moment in which Richard decisively repudiates Gaunt, he seems to be very much on the same side of the spiritual divide between past and present as his opponent. Shakespeare repeatedly alludes to Revelations in the play because, as in *Acts and Monuments*, it is the biblical text which most clearly defines the enormity behind Richard's fall: he has eyes and ears, but he is blind and does not hear—he thinks he is alive, but he is dead. Again, something like a clear recognition of this would seem to be the onus of Richard's brilliantly gnomic "time" speech in Act Five, in which spiritual deafness is equated with a strikingly literal image of a "time server":

> But for the concord of my state and time
> [I] Had not an ear to hear my true time broke.
> I wasted time, and now doth Time waste me;
> For now hath Time made me his numb'ring clock. (5.5.47-50)

Richard's angry sense that his "time /Runs posting on in Bolingbroke's proud joy"(59), suggests a kind of conversion on Richard's part to the side of old virtue, even if, like all attempts to thwart the inevitable, it is to no avail: the "all-hating" modern world looms.

*

To this point I have been attempting to show how the Foxean intertext seems capable of focusing or canalizing a strong reading of Shakespeare's John of Gaunt, both as a particular man and as a representative figure in Shakespeare's historical argument. Gaunt is a prophet-figure, and, even though he fails, tragically, to ward-off the national apostasy he sees in Richard, it is as a prophetic speaker that he is honoured by time, if not by the King, in the play. Shakespeare starts with Gaunt and, having put this prophetic character firmly in place, so to speak, *Acts and Monuments* also seems to provide an intertextual solution to the enigmatically tragic nature of Richard's fall. As with Hamlet's sparrow, there is a special providence in Richard's spectacular fall from grace and power which, while designedly hard to detect, and not what it would seem, at first glance, to be, is revealed in light of the apocalyptic significance of Richard's harsh deafness to the voice of Truth. Thus Shakespeare's enigmatic portrayal of the tragic collision between these two important historical figures, and the series of parallel collisions which surround, deepen, and extend it, *coalesces* in light of Foxe's argument about the Ricardian era in *Acts and Monuments* into a robust historical portrayal of the end of one spiritual era, the "time" of noble men like Gaunt, and the origins of a "new world" in which men of a very different stamp and cloth must, as Fitzwater seems willing to accept, fight to "thrive"(4.1.78). Like the play's good guys, we are made to see this looming futurity coming into view, and the Foxean intertext helps to sharpen and clarify that insight. What is more, the

mirror-like recognition that the "pelting farm" and the "field of Golgotha" extends beyond England's impending 15th-century of civil chaos to encompass the "now" of the audience is perhaps the play's most characteristic and powerful historiographical effect: *that* was then, Shakespeare says, remembering the demi-paradise and the tragic apostasy of the last Plantagenet, which is why *this* is now.

Having said all that about the impact of the Foxean intertext in *Richard II*, I want to conclude this chapter by noting that there is one important sense in which *Acts and Monuments* does not seem to "distinguish form" in Richard's case. Much as the attractive *comic* energy which Shakespeare attaches to Jack Cade or Richard of Gloucester seems to function as a claim on Shakespeare's part about the peculiar or particular capacity of the theatre to anatomize Enormity, about the theatre's autonomy, the combination of pathos and insight which Shakespeare attributes to the fallen king in *Richard II* works, it seems to me, as a fairly pointed *theatrical* counter-argument to the more deeply pessimistic political implications of Foxe's apocalyptic providentialism.[23] Getting to what a modern commentator would call the root causes of Richard's fall, Foxe detects a withdrawal of providential support so complete that Richard is left with virtually no resources. What is more, Foxe extends this argument into the immediate future of the English crown. As we will see, because they engage in the persecution of the godly, the later Lancastrians are for Foxe irredeemable tyrants, antichristian bondslaves and butchers whose popish enormities are both contemptible and terrifying. Shakespeare was deeply interested in this providential argument, and he follows Foxe by portraying Richard as a man who is ostensibly armed to rule, but who proves to be a private villain and is swiftly and mercilessly bereft of any chance of surviving. Richard is succeeded by Bolingbroke, a man who seems, damningly, perfectly suited to rule in this new, iron-age, antichristian world.

And, whereas it is widely assumed that Shakespeare was using his tragedy to engage in a "radical" theatrical "probing not merely of divine right as a concept, but of the unstable personality of a king who puts his whole trust in theoretical protections" (Forker, 1), it should be clear that Shakespeare's Richard's problem is quite precisely that he does not put his faith in God: rejecting the prophetic old Gaunt, he opts for war, money, men, and haste; while he is talking about angels on his return to England, he is thinking about Welsh soldiers and Bolingbroke's impossibly swift consolidation of power. Surely what we see in Richard's woeful apprehensions is a man who, albeit due to a devastatingly painful succession of good reasons, now *cannot flatter* himself into thinking that divine intervention is going to save him. Richard feels like a man abandoned by God not because he is lost in an absolutist fantasy, but because that is precisely and irredeemably what he is.

As Providential history, this fact is damning: Richard has drastically forsaken the spiritual connection which makes all positive political action viable, and, with a theatrical effectiveness which might well be likened to a thunderbolt, Shakespeare dramatizes the providential consequences for the man and the nation of this devastating royal folly. However, it matters a great deal that this *recognition* takes place within the context of a theatrical tragedy, so that, in effect, Shakespeare's exposure of Richard's apostasy becomes an ennobling instance of tragic *anagnorisis*. The swiftly falling Richard of the second part of the play is not whining, he is knowingly suffering, and by dramatizing the fallout of Richard's demise in such a movingly poetic, *pathos*-laden way, Shakespeare seems to be asserting that his theatre has discovered something indelible about Richard's royal personality which is not found in Foxe's records, and which even the implacable hand of providence cannot fully erase. Richard is a disaster, Shakespeare seems to be saying, but his ineradicable

royalty is nonetheless as much a part of the veritable historical record as is the King's notorious failure to rule and John of Gaunt's nobility.

This is a curious claim, but to illustrate the contrast between Shakespeare's tragic argument and the Foxean intertext which informs it I want to look briefly at one of the most strikingly rhetorical sections in Foxe's account of Richard's reign. Directly following, as we have noted, his account of Gaunt's senescence, and having discovered Richard's realm-shattering apostasy in the evidence of his private support for the suppression of the Gospellers, Foxe reprints a pair of damning letters from the King to the universities and a "cruel letter" from Archbishop Arundel to the King urging him to use his power to "bridle and pluck back" the evangelical movement (3.48). Foxe does not have the King's response; instead he presents the reader with an invented speech glossed as "prosopopoeia. what the king might have answered again"(3.48*gloss*). In this set piece, Foxe imagines Richard boldly and majestically rounding on the Archbishop in a fashion clearly meant to embody the ideal Godly Prince:

> Wherefore, forasmuch as you, in your letters, do excite and sharpen the severe discipline of our secular sword against one Nicholas Herford...and yet showing...no certain cause what you have to charge him withal: we, therefore, following the example of Alexander the Great, or rather the rule of equity, in opening our ears indifferently, to hear as well the one part as the other, do assign to him, when he may be found, and to you, when ye shall be called, a term to appear before us: to the intent that the controversy between you and him, standing upon points of religion, being tried by the true touchstone of God's holy word, due correction indifferently may be ministered according as the offence shall be found. In the mean time, this we cannot but something marvel at in your said letters. First, to see you men of the church and angels of peace, to be so desirous of blood. Secondly, to consider you so fierce in the prosecuting the breach of your own law, and yet so cold in pursuing the express law of God and his commandments. Thirdly, to behold the unstable doubleness in your proceedings, who, pretending in your public sentence to become entreaters for them to us, in the bowels of Jesus Christ, that we will withdraw from them the rigor of our severity, yet, in your letters, you be they who most set us on. (3.48)

From our survey of Foxe's claims about the rise of prophesy in Ricardian England, we can see clearly that this invented speech is intended to exemplify what Foxe calls the "spirit of Elias," the bold and eloquent denunciation of bloodthirsty antichristian hatred and hypocrisy. The irony implicit in Foxe's invention is also unmistakable. While it is typically taken by renaissance historians to mean a speech *in character*, more technically speaking, the rhetorical figure of prosopopoeia is a form of metaphorical personification in which "an inanimate object is represented as having human attributes...and made to speak as if it were human"(Lanham 123-4), and the point of Foxe's deliberate solecism—this pretend speech is purposely *out of character* for the apostate Monarch, one which Foxe makes clear he did not in reality give—is to define Richard as inanimate, perhaps even less than fully human. Moreover, and more importantly, by implication Foxe banishes the vision of Richard as an ideal monarch who, by combining the spirit of Elias with worldly power, rules with equanimity and justice, to the realm of fantasy and nostalgia.

Readers will I hope have noticed Foxe's arresting imaginary royal comparison with Alexander the Great, or Big; more important, though, is the striking parallel between the scene Foxe imagines here, or rather says is imaginary, and the one Shakespeare literally brings to life on the stage. Simply put, Arundel and his clerical brethren are acting very much in the spirit of Bolinbroke and his men, and Richard is acting very much like himself, or at least that royal self which we glimpse at the beginning of the play. Although it is eclipsed, this royal personality is kept alive, so to speak, in the loyalty of major stand-outs like Carlisle and the Queen, by foils such as the Groom and Richard's musician, that "strange brooch in this all-hating world." It is, as well, ironically mirrored in the mounting power and villainy of Richard's antagonist, and, most importantly, it is manifested in the correspondingly progressive

illumination of Richard's tragic character. Richard is, again, a royal disaster, but he is not inanimate and never anything but fully human. Shakespeare does not, as I have been suggesting, merely redact Foxe; rather, he finds much in Foxe which is both historically and dramatically true. Gaunt's nobility is a case in point. Here, however, whereas Shakespeare acknowledges and wants to draw upon the terrible weight of Foxe's castigatory historical voice, and of his interpretation of apocalyptic modernity, what he does not validate or verify is the pessimistic finality of Foxe's judgement. Pointedly, Shakespeare uses Bolingbroke's surprisingly poetic vision not to override, but to complicate and mitigate, the absoluteness of Foxe's banishment of true royalty:

> See, see, King Richard doth himself appear,
> As doth the blushing discontented sun
> From out the fiery portal of the east,
> When he perceives the envious clouds are bent
> To dim his glory and to stain the track
> Of his bright passage to the Occident. (3.3.62-67)

This difference is expanded in the subsequent plays of the *Henriad* as Shakespeare dramatically reconceptualizes Bolingbroke's villiany, transforming it into something more complicated, false hope. More importantly for our purposes, however, is that we will see this blushing discontented sun shining again: in Shakespeare's spectacular rediscovery of the true Christian heroism of Henry V in *1-2HenryIV* and *HenryV*.

---

[1] Although his "gush" can be off-putting, Schlegel's insights into the structural relationship between characterization and rational or organic form are essential. Dramatic characters are, as Schlegel put it, neither "individuals" nor "species," they are both: creatures whose individuality is produced or constructed within a complex structure made up of the playwright's argument and its informing intertexts.

[2] The commonplace notion that Gaunt represents a repressive and unimaginative Tudor orthodoxy, along with the idea that he is merely complacent or passively obedience in the face of tyranny, fails, I would argue, to measure either Gaunt's argument or his onstage presence. Interestingly, this is the Duchess's view and she clearly is not listening. What we see here is not an impotent religious conformity, but rather the tragic eclipse of the possibility of combining righteous anger with legitimate dissent. The Duchess contributes to this "fall" by contributing to a new world in which vicious slander is regarded as truth and anything other than bloody

revenge is seen as ignoble cowardice. While it is hardly surprising that Gaunt's virtue is opaque to "radical" post-Tillyardians, even critics who have stressed the religious element in Shakespeare seem to have trouble attending to Gaunt's argument. F.W. Brownlow, for example, who is in my view one of the play's most perceptive commentators, argues that in refusing the Duchess's call for active revenge, Gaunt "choos[es] to rest his belief in the efficacy of the sacrament of anointing"(67). Gaunt's belief is, however, hardly so passive or so Roman Catholic. Gaunt refers to Richard as "annointed in *His sight*," rather than in a visible, human, ceremony; more importantly, what Gaunt relies upon, if that is the right word, is not the prophylactic power of sacramental oil, but God's providential revenge. *Implicitly*, however, Gaunt combines his unwavering belief in that providential agency with a robust sense of the righteousness of prophetic counsel and rebuke *versus* extra-legal violence. Gaunt's religio-political ethos is as unmistakably Reformed—it is exactly Foxe's, for instance—as the Duchess's blood-drenched but impotent fury is palpably Catholic.

[3] The classic discussion of the provenance of Shakespeare's Gaunt is in Peter Ure's essay on the sources of *Richard II* from his 1961 Arden edition of the play (xxxiv-xl). Conducting what can only be called a pretend search for the historiographical sources of Gaunt, one which was clearly designed to discredit the idea that Shakespeare derived Gaunt's character from chronicle sources, Ure begins by asking "where did Shakespeare get this *utterly unhistorical* Duke of Lancaster?"[xxxiv, my emphasis]), and concludes by proclaiming that Shakespeare *invented* Gaunt. To borrow some terms from Leeds Barroll's brilliant anatomy of orthodoxy in *Richard II* criticism, reading Ure's argument in retrospect one can see the emergence here of a "locus" which has determined the way subsequent critics have looked at Gaunt, and a dense crust of critical "amber" ossifying around Shakespeare's character (94-96) In fact, Gaunt is one of Shakespeare's most historiographically rooted characters, and in refusing to countenance the possibility that "time-honored" Gaunt was designed to reflect popular and authoritative historical beliefs, Ure occludes much of what would have made the character significant to Shakespeare and to his original audiences. Moreover, by *pretending* to have discovered that there are no sources for Shakespeare's portrayal of Gaunt, Ure's essay has fostered and sustained not only the erroneous belief that Gaunt is unhistorical—a position which the most recent Arden editor, Charles Forker, fifty years later, simply repeats—but also the false impression that the important historiographical sources and intertexts for *Richard II* have been rigorously surveyed. The effect of Ure's essay is thus to confirm the "radical" Shakespearean notion that the artistry of a play like *Richard II* must start with a refusal of chronicle history.

[4] The tacit thinking here—that we know what rich and powerful Dukes are *really* like—is only slightly less illuminating than the assumption that either Shakespeare or his audience would have conflated the opinions of "Holinshed" with history *tout court*, or would have considered any significant departure from Holinshed as necessarily *unhistorical*. *Pace* Ure, Shakespeare's departure form his primary source is an indication of his profound historiographical engagement, not its opposite.

[5] The precise time of the epochal unbinding, according to one of Foxe's arguments in *Acts and Monuments*, was 1294, or roughly a millennium after the cease of persecution in the early church. It is, however, around the mid-14$^{th}$-century that Foxe finds he is able to detect, historically, the signs of Antichristian renewal. These dates are hard to pin down because, like other apocalyptic commentators of his era, Foxe avoided precise dates and because the changes which his own exegesis underwent

over time are ramified into the text of *Acts and Monuments* itself. The general picture of a mid 14th-century crisis, starting slightly later in England, is nonetheless quite clear and consistent.

[6] Foxe does not, it should be noted, consistently or expressly designate these dissidents as "prophets." His preferred term is "witness," but, as the epithet "spirit of Elias" suggests, what Foxe wants to show is how the unloosing of Satan is accompanied by a movement of "new inspired" prophecy. For the exact wording and spelling of this crucial image, see 1570 ed. Book Five, page 419 and 1583 ed. Book Five, page 518. Notably, Foxe's spelling is "Helias," not "Elias": small differences like this make correlating the Victorian edition with the OUP digital version very difficult.

[7] To be clear, I am not claiming that Foxe's version of the Duke's character is true, just that Shakespeare clearly took it to be so. My argument, remember, is that we should start by allowing that Shakespeare got history *wrong*. That said, Foxe is not a liar, and it is worth noting that the predominance of biased monastic sources in Ricardian history is a vexing historiographical problem which, as Foxe very effectively argues, makes all claims about the "real" Duke of Lancaster inherently problematic. Critics who insist on the absolute difference between the "real historical" Gaunt and Shakespeare's character have, quite literally, no idea what they are talking about.

[8] If I appear to be stretching Foxe's meaning at points in this analysis, this is not, it seems worth noting, because I am foisting something onto his text: what I am trying to highlight, rather, is a dramatic theme which is continuously latent in it. What is explicit, I would argue moreover, is that Foxe's emergent prophetic spirit repeatedly manifests itself in this section of *Acts and Monuments* in the form of acts of inspired dissenting eloquence strikingly like Shakespeare's Gaunt's.

[9] Readers will note the similarities between this passage and the language of gardening and English glory in *Richard II*. This resonance is important, and I will revisit it briefly later on, but my chief concern here is to highlight how Foxe further implicates the name of John of Gaunt within his developing image of the recrudescence of modern prophetic dissent.

[10] Shakespeare's play might seem to be receding from view here, but I will encourage readers to bear with me as I try to create a full picture of the Foxean intertext at work in Shakespeare's theatrical revision of Gaunt's tragic character.

[11] As Forker notes, Mowbray's exact words according to Holinshed were: "Marie true it is, that once I laid an ambush to have slain the duke of Lancaster…but neverthelesse he hath pardoned me thereof, and there was good peace made betwixt us, for which I yeeld him hartie thankes. This is that which I have to answer." However, where Forker sees Shakespeare quoting Holinshed "almost verbatim," it seems to me that he adds the religious language, the impression of singularity created by having Mowbray address Gaunt directly, and, crucially, the pointed characterological contrast between Gaunt and his son (1.1.137-41*n*).

[12] While this is a widely understood feature of early modern religio-political debates, it is worthwhile to recall here that, from the Protestant point of view, the Reformed religion was the older, more authentic version of Christianity, whereas "Popery" tended to be viewed as a set of perniciously divisive doctrinal innovations promulgated by an upstart, usurping, and Antichristian, church government. From this side of the confessional divide, Popery signified the worst kinds of novelty: *viz* Edmund in *King Lear*.

[13] For an illuminating discussion of the way a dramatization of the *illegitimate* use of royal power to delve into and force the conscience was revised, along boldly anti-Bancroftian lines, by Shakespeare in creating Act One of *King John,* see Donna Hamilton's chapter on "*King* John, the Church Courts, and the Law. Hamilton (1992), 30-58. The engaged Protestant Shakespeare Hamilton finds revising King John's image in her book is very much the same playwright I find revising Gaunt in this chapter.

[14] The commonly held view, shared by Forker, that the play is a kind of anatomy of absolutism is difficult to square with Richard's recognition of the limits of royal power here, and with Shakespeare's clear suggestion that the King is, at this point at least, working in conjunction with his best counselors for what looks like the common good. If this is an image of absolutism, it is an astonishingly poorly orchestrated one by a playwright working, supposedly, at the height of his powers. Rather, much as he did in *King John*, Shakespeare starts *Richard II* by portraying a king operating according to normative standards of royal justice, not tyranny. As Peter Ure argued, to attempt to discover the roots of some royal pathology in these scenes is to miss Shakespeare's intended "larger theatrical effect," which was to present a startling contrast between Richard's initial "majesty" and the "sudden lapse" of 1.4 and 2.1 (lxii-iv). As we will see in a moment, this theatrical broadstroke reflects Foxe's interpretation of Richard as a King who "started out well." For a fascinating discussion of the relationship between Shakespeare's revised trial scene in *King John* and forward Protestant political ethics, see Hamilton's "*King John*, the Church Courts, and the Law." Hamilton is one of the few modern critics who has charted the positive affiliations linking Shakespeare and "puritans" so-called, and in a way which is informed by recent historical scholarship on Protestant culture.

[15] The seemingly inevitable association between poison and popery in Tudor Stuart political discourse is discussed by Alastair Bellany in *The Politics of Scandal in Early Modern England*. Bellany cites Bacon's charge that poison is "an Italian crime, fit for the court of Rome," and Coke's suggestion that it is a "popish trick," to demonstrate the extent to which the practice of poisoning was linked in the contemporary "semiotics of poison" to "the master sin of popery" (144-148). Beyond potentially illuminating the implicit connection between Bolingbroke and popery in *Richard II*, Bellany's discussion of the ubiquity of anti-popery in the semiotics of court scandal offers Shakespeare scholars a striking new gloss on the representation of court scandal in the theatre: we may not be able to ascertain with certainty whether or not Shakespeare was speaking the language of anti-popery in "poison" plays like *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*, but the assumption that he was too "generous," "universal," or "radical," to perform such beliefs needs, I think, serious scrutiny.

[16] Revealingly, Bolingbroke's language also seems to embody the malignant "popish" spirit that, according to Philip Sidney, is behind the malicious "vomit" that Elizabethan malcontents like the Jesuit Robert Parsons used to attack Princes by traducing noble counselors such as Robert Dudley. Just as Bolingbroke wildly claims that all "treasons...in this land/ Fetch from false Mowbray their first head and spring"(1.1.95-7), in *Leicester's Commonwealth*, perhaps the most notorious "popish" slander of the Shakespearean age, Parsons compared Leicester to Mowbray and insisted that all of the discontent surrounding Elizabeth throughout her reign could be traced to "this man." Leicester, Parsons claimed, was a thief and a murderer who had vitiated the realm "as never before him, either Gaveston or Spenser, or Vere, or Mowbray, or anie other mischievious Tyraunte, that abused moste his Princes favour

within our Realm of England"(qtd in Campbell, 174). Critics have long detected Parson's subversively Catholic voice in *Richard II*, but what has not been adequately acknowledged is the way Shakespeare uses it here to cast Bolingbroke in the shadow of a specifically Jesuitical kind of rhetoric. In his seminal study of 1874, "The Politics of Shakespeare's Historical Plays," Richard Simpson, a converted Roman Catholic priest, surveyed the Catholic "opposition literature" of the period in order to demonstrate that *Richard II* was a vehicle for Shakespeare's recusant sympathies and heterodox political views (in Forker 1998, 240-46). Although this argument continues to be revisited by modern critics—for instance C.G. Thayer, David Norbrook, Cyndia Susan Clegg, and, most recently, Tom McAlindon—its weakness was exposed fully by Campbell when she introduced us to the rich vein of *counter*-subversive writings by zealous Protestants such as Sidney. I cannot, unfortunately, make this case fully in this thesis, but one of the most compelling lights the Foxean intertext sheds on the second tetralogy is Bolingbroke's role as a complex, but nonetheless unmistakable, figure of modern "popish" tyranny and enormity.

[17] Readers who detect a similarity between Shakespeare's moving image of the Duchess's exanimate castle and the "bare ruined choirs" of Sonnet 73 are probably right. What the Duchess feels but doesn't see is the dismal future of her hopeless "religion." Like Gaunt's, Shakespeare's sympathy for the Duchess's pathos heightens and clarifies, rather than undermines, his unflinching exposure of her apostate spirituality. While she is Gaunt's brother's wife, the old man she is truly affiliated with in the second tetralogy is Gaunt's spiritual opposite, Falstaff.

[18] On Parson's reputation, see especially Woolf 1990, 38-42.

[19] Rossiter's claim that this "hopelessly obscure" passage could only be rescued by the audience's recollection of a specific scene in *Woodstock* is discussed by Forker. Oddly, Forker's response to this truly ambiguous charge is to insist, for a change, that Gaunt's unambiguous meaning is "sufficiently clear": Gaunt is, he avers, simply bemoaning the fact that Richard is no longer absolutely free to ignore the law, and thus has become a "bondslave" to it (2.1.114*n*)!

[20] Foxe, it is worth recalling, charges that the Imperial and Ecclesiastic powers had reduced themselves, in murdering Huss, to a disgraceful "rabble" of "barbers."

[21] This interpolated "booke," which covers roughly 20 pages in the modern edition, is a fascinating document which has, to my knowledge, received no critical attention. What is striking, for my purposes, is Foxe's sense of the distinctive spiritual virtue of a certain kind of "oldness and age":

> This book, as it was faithfully set forth by William Tindal, so I have truly distributed the same abroad to the reader's hands; neither changing any thing of the matter, nor altering many words of the phrase thereof. Although the oldness and age of his speech and terms be almost grown now out of use, yet I thought it best...to reserve it from oblivion, as also in his own language to go abroad, for the more credit and testimony of the true antiquity of the same... (2.728).

[22] Hotspur, by contrast, like the French nobles in *Henry V* is too deeply in love with his horse to lie down with his wife, Lady Percy.

[23] It is important to note, however, that the one outstanding instance of the kind of comic metatheatrical irony which we looked at in the earlier plays in *Richard II* comes during the ridiculous pleading-for-Aumerle scenes in Act Five, precisely at the moment when the usurper tries to rule. As Bolinbroke himself recognizes, "Our scene is alter'd from a serious thing / And now changed to "The Beggar and the King."(5.3.79-80). This allusion creates a serio-comic image of the modern English

court cognate with Gaunt's "pelting farm," and part of the trenchant joke is that Bolingbroke, having staked his honour on bringing the murderer of Woodstock to justice, viciously lets the murderer go merely to consolidate his rule. And if, as most annotators have surmised, the allusion here is to "King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid," then Shakespeare also clearly affiliates Bolinbroke *qua* new King with the monstrous stage devil Falstaff in his moment of triumph: *Falstaff*: O base Assyrian knight what is thy news? / Let king Cophetua know the truth thereof. (*2HenryIV* 5.3.101-2).

**Chapter Seven.**
**Blessed Alchemy: Enormity, Grace and the Prodigal Prince Myth in the *Henriad***

> For the Grace of God is a blessed Alcumist, where it toucheth it makes good and religious.
>
> Richard Sibbes

> The ignoble does indeed touch, but it does not contaminate him.... King Henry the Fifth is manifestly Shakespeare's favorite hero in English history ...[yet] however much Shakespeare celebrates the French conquest of Henry, still he has not omitted to hint, after his way, the secret springs of this undertaking. Henry was in want of a foreign war to secure himself on the throne; the clergy also wished to keep him employed abroad, and made an offer of rich contributions to prevent the passing of a law which would have deprived them of half of their revenues. His learned bishops consequently are as ready to prove to him his indisputable right to the conquest of France, as he is to allow his conscience to be tranquillized by them....After his renowned battles, Henry wished to secure his conquests by marriage to a French princess; all that has reference to this is intended for irony in the play.
>
> A.W. Schlegel

> He is a genuinely holy man and it seemed to me ridiculous to play him as some 1-D Machiavell.
>
> Kenneth Branagh

*

Shakespeare's *Henriad*, the closely linked trilogy of plays that concludes the "second tetralogy" of late-medieval English history plays, confronts modern critics with two fundamental interpretive problems. The first is how to reconcile Shakespeare's apparently negative or ironic portrayal of the pious warrior-king Henry V with his ostensibly epic historical design, and the second is how to understand the function of major characters such as Falstaff, Bolingbroke, and the Rebels within this at once epic and historical argument. These problems are related—so that the characterization of Falstaff and company must be understood both in relation to the central figure and as integral components of the sequence's epic and historical design—and both need to be considered in light of Shakespeare's engagement with

*Acts and Monuments*. Henry V, Falstaff, and the other major characters are figures of what I have been calling Foxean enormity: they are deliberately enigmatic or "ungrammatical" characters around whom, by virtue of an intertextual engagement with Foxean history, Shakespeare's exploration of the emergence of modernity coalesces. However, while Shakespeare uses these characters to figure the enormity of apocalyptic modernity, he also presents them as complexly antithetical "double men," and the dramatic idea at the heart of his epic is that they are spiritual opposites. Revealed to be monstrously devoid of Grace, Falstaff, Bolingbroke, and the Rebels represent the False Hope of Antichristian apostasy, and, like the doomed French in *Henry V*, they are a walking-dead embodiment of the exanimate and disconsolate spiritual existence that goes along with it. By contrast, Shakespeare's Henry V is touched, on the battlefield and in the theatre, by that transformative power the Godly preacher Richard Sibbes calls blessed alchemy.

Failing to grasp the crucial role that the Foxean intertext plays in the *Henriad*, modern criticism has misunderstood Shakespeare's interpretation of Lancastrian history in it. This misunderstanding has been canonized in a set of regnant assumptions about the sequence's major characters. Focusing on Henry V, I will attempt in this chapter to challenge the ubiquitous notion that the Elizabethan chronicles presented Shakespeare with a dull and homogeneously "orthodox" image of Henry V, and thus that the complex ironies which distinguish his portrayal of the warrior king must be radically unrelated to chronicle history. Reading Foxe dispels this biased and reductive view of the chronicles and opens up a new and historiographically meaningful perspective on Shakespeare's irony. Due to Foxe's revision of Lancastrian history in *Acts and Monuments*, the Elizabethan reputation of the pious warrior king of historical tradition was, as it is in the play sequence,

threatened by clouds of infamy. This was because Foxe had recast Henry's *Catholic* piety as an indelible mark of Antichristian villainy and exposed the Prodigal Prince legend as a piece of mendacious "popish" propaganda. Rather than the *bona fama* of Agincourt, Foxe urged, Henry must be remembered in light of the *mala fama* of his popish super-serviceability and of the murder of Sir John Oldcastle and other martyrs. Although Shakespeare's portrayal of Henry V cannot be reduced to Foxe's, it is incomprehensible, historiographically speaking, without reference to Foxe's revisionism. Henry V does have an ironic and chilling "dark side," but this is not because of some singularly iconoclastic Shakespearean radicalism; it is because the playwright had immersed himself in the chronicle histories of Henry's reign and was trying to represent the Truth he had discovered there. This meant acknowledging the force of Foxean history and, at the same time, reclaiming the Prodigal Prince legend for Protestantism in the theatre.

Turning very briefly to Falstaff and the other major characters I will conclude this consideration of Enormity in the *Henriad* by arguing against the now firmly entrenched belief that, because of some natural antipathy for "puritans," Shakespeare created Falstaff in order to thumb his nose at Foxe's Protestant readership by traducing the memory of the martyr-hero Sir John Oldcastle.[1] Shakespeare was a serious Protestant dramatist, not a crypto-Catholic vandal, and it is wrong to assume that he fashioned this complex satirico-historical character merely to scandalize his co-religionists.[2] Shakespeare's Jack Falstaff *is* John Oldcastle, and Shakespeare could hardly have devised a more striking symbol of his imaginative autonomy from Foxean history. Recognizing this autonomy is, however, an interpretive starting point rather than a conclusion. The real critical challenge is to accommodate this notorious identity with Shakespeare's insistence that "Oldcastle died martyr [sic], and this is not

the man" (*2HenryIV,* Epilogue, 31). What is crucial, moreover, is to explain the function of this other complexly double man within Shakespeare's epic historical argument. This historiographical function has, it seems to me, gone missing in criticism of Falstaff and the other foil characters.

Falstaff and the "Falstaffian spirit" are central to the sequence's design; however, notwithstanding one of the great shibboleths of modern Shakespeare criticism, this presence has nothing to do with the playwright's radically Comic Vision. Like precursor characters such as Richard III and Jack Cade, Falstaff is not designed to undermine or offset serious history with carnivalesque laughter, and he is anything but a salutary and uplifting embodiment of life-as-it-really-is. As Dover Wilson almost saw, before he too abandoned Shakespeare's character to Romantic enthusiasm, "Falstaff *is* 'a devil...in the likeness of an old man'," and has to be understood from the point of view of an audience who had not "ceased to understand...the spirit of the Great Enemy"(139-40). Although he now performs this function brilliantly, Shakespeare's Falstaff was not designed to liberate us or the plays from Shakespeare's Protestantism, but rather to add religious historical depth and seriousness to the sequence by acting as a locus for Foxean intertextuality. By continuously recalling the martyr Sir John Oldcastle, but in the paradoxically double and antithetical form of a monstrously apostate stage devil, Falstaff's primary role is to help consolidate, as a foil, the complex historical and theatrical identity of the central character. A grotesque parody of one of its most notable and most spiritually noble victims, Shakespeare's Falstaff embodies the resurgent Antichristian modernity which Shakespeare is chronicling in the plays. Antithetically mirroring what might be called Henry V's miraculously redeemed duplicity, Falstaff helps us to see what Henry is and what he is not. Falstaff is, moreover, not the *singular* embodiment of the

plays' seriocomic *spirit*; rather, he is the counterpart to the more realistically depicted, but similarly devilish, major characters such as Bolingbroke and the Rebels. Embodying False Hope, these characters are English Monsters, fellow-travelers on the pilgrimage to the new Golgotha, and spiritual foils for the Hope that is at the heart of Shakespeare's epic portrayal of Henry V. To see these English Monsters, however, which is what Shakespeare enjoins us to do, we have to begin by taking a fresh look at Shakespeare's "favorite hero" through the lens of Foxean history.

*

While the character of Henry V has of course disappointed many critics, from Schlegel to Branagh, Shakespeare's best interpreters have discovered a brilliantly complex *heroic* portrait of King Henry V at the heart of the *Henriad*. And, as Tom McAlindon points out, recognizing the enigmatic heroism of Shakespeare's central character has long gone hand-in-hand with noting how Shakespeare works at the level of dramatic structure to create a "complex unity based on ironic contrasts and parallels" which is "if not relativistic, at least extremely complex"(18). However, in contrast with such successful *critical* encounters with the *Henriad*, the modern *historiography* of the sequence looks more like a series of failures. Like the French at Agincourt, Shakespeare's modern historiographers start out by making bold claims about the connections between the *Henriad* and Elizabethan historical thought and writing, only to find themselves defeated by a character who seems beyond the grasp of mere historiographical analysis. It is thus not surprising to find Gary Taylor, another of Henry's best modern interpreters, urging that we abandon the chronicles altogether. Apart from "satisfying an idle biographical curiosity," and occasionally "elucidating otherwise puzzling phrases," Taylor argues, there is nothing substantial to be learned from the comparative historiographical approach: "resemblances to the

chronicles establish Shakespeare's use of them," Taylor argues, "but, as always, his departures from his sources most illuminate his intentions"(31).

Yet another version of the idea that, *qua* artist, Shakespeare was somehow fundamentally uninterested in Elizabethan chronicle history, Taylor's is a precipitous response to the problem of exploring the historiographical artistry of the *Henriad*. Highlighting Shakespeare's remarkable ability to wed "high literary culture and popular dramatic cliché," Taylor does a superb job of illustrating the epic orientation of Shakespeare's "artistic ambition" in relation to Chapman's *Seven Books of the Illiads of Homer* (55). However, Taylor's inference that the *Henriad* "owes nothing to the chronicles" because it is an epic is impossible to credit (55). Like the metatheatrical diabolism of the first tetralogy, and like Richard II's tragic rejection of John of Gaunt, the complex artistry of Shakespeare's heroic portrayal of Henry V is as much a reflection of his commitment to history as it is an expression of his epical ambitions and his theatrical genius. These *motives* are inseparable. While it is true, as Taylor urges, that we will not discover the meaning of Henry V in *Holinshed's Chronicles*, it is no less the case that serious Elizabethan historiographical motives define Shakespeare's intentions throughout the *Henriad*. And, if the affiliation between art and history in the plays has proven elusive, this is not because of some essential poverty of the chronicles, but rather because we have not read Shakespeare's historical intertexts as widely, or as wisely, as the plays demand. Indeed, since we have not even begun to examine the relationship between the *Henriad* and *Acts and Monuments*, the Elizabethan chronicle with which the sequence is perhaps most deeply concerned, we can hardly claim to have exhausted Shakespeare's engagement with the chronicles in it. Leaving out a crucial piece of the historiographical puzzle—Foxe's apocalyptic reading of Lancastrian history—we have in fact failed to see not

only *why* Shakespeare needed such complexity to capture the historical truth of Henry's character and reign, but indeed, *what*, in a very large and significant sense, the *Henriad* is about.

Like the benighted and apostate late-medieval world discovered by Foxe in *Acts and Monuments*, the England represented by Shakespeare in the second tetralogy is a diseased spiritual landscape which, having been *dis*-graced by King Richard's tragic apostasy, is on its way to becoming the horrific modern Golgotha portrayed in *1-3HenryVI* and *Richard III*. Emblematic of the "loosing out of Satan" which, from the Foxean point of view, defines modernity itself, this spiritually charged landscape is traversed, to use Henry V's compelling epithet, by a host of strikingly enigmatic and strikingly diabolic "English monsters"(*HenryV*, 2.2.82). Standing at the center of this ubiquitous and seemingly incurable "rheumatic" disease (2.3.34-5)—or rather *roaming* over it like a horribly all-consuming cannibalistic sow—are Sir John Falstaff, Shakespeare's fictional reification of the monstrous late-medieval apostasy anatomized by Foxe in *Acts and Monuments*, and King Bolingbroke, Shakespeare's version of the notorious Catholic tyrant. Although he is by far the most enormous, Falstaff is just one of the sequence's resonant figures of Enormity. A fictional embodiment of apostasy and popery, Falstaff is, *ne plus ultra*, a grotesque parody of the spiritual virtues of John of Gaunt—and of the martyr-hero Sir John Oldcastle—and a gigantic mirror whose seriocomic enormity indexes, counterpoints, and enhances the more subtle enormities of the plays' other miscreants. And, just as the voices of prophecy in *Richard II* "predict" plays that have already been staged, the *Henriad* looks forward, chronologically and thematically, to the historical *mis en scene* of the first tetralogy. Thus, insofar as both characters are cast as highly theatrical stage devils, Falstaff is explicitly linked with the "later" historical figures

such as Cade and Richard III. Falstaff's topsy turvy dreams of wealth and power are like Cade's, and the image of the Fat Knight desperately crying for his horse at Gads Hill is an unmistakably comic echo of the tragic conclusion to *Richard III*. More subtly, Falstaff and Richard III are also linked by Shakespeare under the spiritual sign of the monstrous Pig. Falstaff is an "old boar" feeding at the "old frank" and "a sow that hath o'er whelmed all her litter but one"(*2Henry IV*, 2.2.138-9; 1.2.10-11), and Richard is a "wretched, bloody and usurping boar," a monstrous "foul swine" who "makes his trough" in the "embowelled bosoms" of England (*Richard III*, 5.2.7-11).

This spectre of swinishly diabolical enormity is not accidental: Falstaff and Richard are spiritual brethren, Vice-like bad actors who, descanting on their own deformities, are spectacular embodiments of the modern world which they want to usurp and overrule. What needs to be recognized, however, is Shakespeare's suggestion—in the form of Fluellen's arresting comparison between Henry and "Alexander the Big/Pig" (4.7.15-18)—that Henry V might be a third member of this unholy brotherhood. Although Fluellen's slippery comparison is not typically linked with Richard III and Falstaff, it has long been regarded as a key index to Shakespeare's ironic portrayal of Henry V. While he must, as hero, embody and exhibit epic virtues and values, the greatness of Shakespeare's warrior king always seems to be on the verge of turning into its opposite: is he Big or is he a Pig? Henry V is no scenically strutting stage devil, and he is not monstrously fat or deformed; however, by virtue of his own actions and as a result of his apparent affiliations with Falstaff, Bolingbroke, and the Rebels, his epic greatness seems continuously on the verge of evanescing into an extraordinary royal Enormity.

Thus, as Richard Hillman argues in an ingenious intertextual study of the *Henriad's* links with contemporary writings on Turkish history, Henry's attempt to

define himself as "not Amurath" inevitably invokes precisely the spectre of Antichristian, as well as un-English, enormity he is attempting to banish (*Intertextuality* 26-57). And, as Taylor urges, Shakespeare's character is inescapably a figure of greatness and yet "repels us precisely because of [his] sober, premeditated coldness." The aloof Prince Hal of *1HenryIV* is, Taylor says, the same man who "kills" Falstaff and who mercilessly slaughters the French at Agincourt (32-33). Taylor fully grasps that the *Henriad* is profoundly critical of Henry and, at the same time, designed to assert Henry's monumental heroism, but he loses his grip on Shakespeare's argument when he urges that "coldbloodedness is Henry's personal—and decisive—contribution to the victory"(32). Rather, Henry's personal *contribution* to the victory is his prayer on the eve of Agincourt. This extended moment, not Henry's coronation, is Shakespeare's transfigured version of the king's legendary "sudden conversion" and it is the moral climax of what might be called the sequence's secret history.

As strange and un-Shakespearean as this argument might seem, what the play says is that Henry's cheerful optimism, his brilliant battlefield oratory, and the dauntlessly coldblooded *superbia* which he displays in winning the battle are all providential fruits of that pious ordinance. Although Henry and Sir Thomas Erpingham are like Agamemmnon and Nestor, Chapman's *Homer* cannot fully account for the epic argument of the sequence because what Shakespeare discovers in the unmistakably Protestantized battlefield reformation of the king is a version of what William Haller calls the "Puritan saga of the spiritual life" (*Rise* 142). Henry's regenerative prayer, symbolized by his decision to put on the livery of the godly Sir Thomas Erpingham, is, I will argue here, the key to Shakespeare's Reformed revision of the Henry-as-Prodigal-Son trope. In perfect Protestant fashion, Shakespeare argues

that true repentance and prayer, not policy or pragmatism, and certainly not devotion to the Catholic Church, makes Henry a "new man," potentially redeeming the decision to go to war, potentially redressing the murder of Falstaff, and, most importantly, potentially redeeming the time by reversing the realm shattering apostasy of King Richard. Thus, to use Taylor's terms, the achievement Shakespeare portrays is Henry's—he manages not to get slaughtered on his pointless crusade—but the *will* that he celebrates is God's.[3] And, finally, it seems to me that the creative energy Shakespeare applied to proving Henry's greatness can only be understood in terms of the energy that Foxe had applied to deny it. Shakespeare is neither recycling orthodoxy nor merely subverting it; he is rediscovering a profound providential Truth.

Rather than fundamentally *ahistorical*—a product of art rather than history—Shakespeare's enigmatically double-faced portrayal of Henry V is in fact a direct result of his imaginative historiographical engagement with Foxean history. Albeit in the more realistic mode of *Richard II*, and with the superaddition of a centrally epic historical action—Henry's victory at Agincourt—the *Henriad* is like the earlier Wars of the Roses sequence in that it presents audiences with a series of representative figures of spiritual enormity. Accumulating extraordinary significance within the play world itself, and hence resonating with Foxean history beyond it, this diabolical pageant informs and consolidates the religious historical significance of Shakespeare's portrayal of late-medieval history. Emphatically presented, over the course of the *Henriad*, as a figure of redeemed, or at least potentially redeemed, duplicity, Shakespeare's Henry V *is and is not* one of these figures. This is, as I said, an unfamiliar way of reading Shakespeare's *Henriad*, historiographically or otherwise. My goal here once again is to try to extricate the *Henriad* from a conventional way of thinking which, I believe, fails to illuminate the historical artistry

of this remarkable sequence of plays. At the same time, I want to set out a new, historiographically coherent, interpretive framework by reanimating the *Henriad*'s most crucial historiographical question: why write a heroic trilogy about a hero whose greatness is so clouded in cultivated obscurity and whose *wonderfully* famous victories are so hard to celebrate?

*

In an important passage on *Henry V* from *Shakespeare's "Histories"*, Lily Campbell concluded that:

> The historical mirrors that Shakespeare held up to England before he wrote of Henry V were mirrors in which the Elizabethans could see their own national problems being acted out on the stage before them, and in which they could witness the eternal justice of God in the affairs of the body politic. They showed the conflicts of the age which engendered the state, threatening its peace and security. But in *Henry V* the English are mirrored triumphant in a righteous cause, achieving victory through the blessing of God. A mood of exaltation pervades the play. Henry V stands as the ideal hero in contrast with the troubled John, the deposed Richard, the rebel Henry IV; for the traditional conception of Henry was of a hero-king, and about this dominant figure Shakespeare chose to fashion a hero-play. The theme of the play is war, and the progress of the warrior-hero is the progress of the play. Thus the play becomes in form and content epic. (255)

There is a great deal of historiographical insight here—the idea of the plays as mirrors, the underlying image of an embattled modernity coming into view, the network of parallels and contrasts between Henry and his predecessors, and the emphasis on God's providence in warfare—but Campbell's epic reading of *Henry V* at best sheds a kind of procrustean half-light on Shakespeare's argument. Forcing the play into conformity with what she believes was an inescapable Elizabethan orthodoxy, Campbell fractures *Henry V* apart from *1-2Henry IV* and largely suppresses the expressive ironies of the later play. *Henry V* is, as Campbell argues, a "hero-play." It is pervaded with a mood of heroism and exaltation, Henry does triumph in a miraculously providential victory, and, ultimately, Shakespeare's goal is

to present Henry and that victory in the light of what renaissance historians called *fama bona.* However, as Schlegel recognized, *Henry V* is not a "stand alone" epic, and it is very ironic. From Eastcheap to Shrewsbury, English court to Agincourt, Shakespeare complicates his epic material in the *Henriad* by counter-pointing Henry's "progress" with decidedly *unepical* insinuations of recidivism, criminality, and defeat, and by producing an overall argument characterized by a seemingly *unepical* irony and ambiguity.[4] The critical question is *why*—why *didn't* Shakespeare fashion a straightforwardly heroic play about his "favorite hero"? Campbell not only fails to provide an answer to this fundamental historiographical question, she does not even raise it.

Campbell's failure to acknowledge what Schlegel calls the "secret springs" of Henry's "enterprise" could hardly be more notorious. However, if her reading fails to measure up to the complexity of Shakespeare's argument, the same can be said of the "radical" historiographical account which has taken its place in subsequent post-Tillyardian thought. Repudiating, as I have argued, anything like a coherent historiographical approach to the plays, recent criticism of *Henry V* has come to rest on the paradoxical idea that the *Henriad* was subversively both *antiheroic* and *antihistorical.* In this view, to use James N. Loehlin's terms, the heroic or epic drama described by Campbell is merely the "official play" of *Henry V*, "the story told by the chorus...of one of England's greatest military triumphs, [of] a young and valiant king leading a badly outnumbered army to victory over the French at Agincourt." Shakespeare's *real* play, however, is "secret history," a radically and subversively anti-historical and anti-heroic play which "undermines the Chorus's account with scenes of betrayal, loss, and cruelty," revealing a "world of ruthless expediency...[in which] friends and enemies alike are sacrificed to the bloody demands of conquest."

Shakespeare's secret history, he continues, exposes how, in reality, Henry "wins a battle by cold-bloodedly slaughtering enemy prisoners...[and] marries the enemy princess in order to secure his spoils"(1-2).

While Shakespeare's more recent historiographers evidently march to the beat of a different drummer, they would appear to have been even more thoroughly routed by Shakespeare's favorite hero than Campbell. That is, as McAlindon demonstrates in his brilliant defense of Shakespeare's character, and as Kenneth Branagh has demonstrated on stage and screen, the poverty of this version of "radical" Shakespeare lies in its failure to see Shakespeare's Prince Hal/Henry V as anything other than a despicable "princely hypocrite" and a "1-D Machiavell":

> From George Bernard Shaw and A.C. Bradley at the turn of the nineteenth-century to new historicists such as Phyllis Rackin and David Kastan, the Prince's negative characteristics, virtually all of them symptomatic of an essential fraudulence, have been itemized and analyzed with ever increasing refinement and severity. It is almost as if the combined revulsion of liberal, republican, and left-wing sensibilities against aristocratic pretension in particular and bourgeois politics in general, latterly assisted by the postmodernist flair for radical demystification, has found expression in this area of critical commentary. (123)

Anatomized by McAlindon as an irrelevant exercise in academic scape-goating—and by Branagh as bad theatre—the now orthodox anti-heroic reading of the Henry plays also exemplifies "radical" criticism's reliance upon merely tendentious inversions of the "old historicist" positions it wants to repudiate.[5]

With this clash of extreme positions we appear to have gotten precisely nowhere—or at least no further than Schlegel's claim that Shakespeare's historical argument was heroic and dramatic, and that it involved a lot of irony. Whether ignoring Shakespeare's complex ironies altogether, or mystifying them beyond any coherent recognition, modern historiographers have consistently failed to explain why, as part of an essentially heroic historical interpretation of Henry V's reign,

Shakespeare so thoroughly complicates our response to the pious young prince's transformation into triumphant hero-king. Since these positions are extreme, common sense (and perhaps Aristotle) would suggest that the truth might lie somewhere in the excluded middle. That is, if we stop looking for the Ideal Paladin and the Hypocritical Tyrant, we will perhaps find Shakespeare portraying the career of an important English king in concert with the intelligent, perspicacious, and realistic appraisals he found in major sources such as *Holinshed's Chronicles*. By the same token, we will likely also find that the complex structural ironies of the *Henriad* are Shakespeare's attempt to translate the historiographical complexities that he found in his chronicles into effectively realistic historical drama.

This is Tom McAlindon's argument and it is very persuasive.[6] Taking dead aim at the familiar New Historicist claim that "all Shakespeare criticism prior to about 1980 is 'monological'" (18), McAlindon insists many critics have capably described the complexities of the Henry plays and put that complexity into a coherent historiographical perspective. McAlindon cites in particular the work of A.R. Humphreys, who in his 1960s New Arden editions of *1-2HenryIV* attempted to combine historiographical analysis and close reading by relating Shakespeare's "elaborate system" of "perpetual counter-pointing" to the specific historical culture within which the plays were originally conceived and produced. In Humphreys' view, McAlindon argues, Shakespeare is neither a naïve propagandist nor a vandal; rather, his "dramatic ambiguity" is the rational response of an engaged historical dramatist to the "deep sense of the ambiguities" of medieval history that was "part of the Elizabethan context of knowledge and must be taken into account by historically informed criticism" (20-21). Developing Humphreys' argument by focusing even more closely on the way Shakespeare's plays reflect and amplify the basically

positive—but also realistic, hesitant, and at times even critical—estimation of Henry V that he found in *Holinshed's Chronicles*, McAlindon concludes that Shakespeare's Hal "is like Holinshed's prince" in that the variously negative elements in Shakespeare's portrayal are not indicators of some subversively anti-heroic and anti-historical agenda, but rather a "meta-dramatic projection of uncertainties and untruths within the given playworld which reflect Shakespeare's fidelity to the historical record"(126-7).

Historiographically speaking, this argument represents a major step forward from the impasse outlined above. Attempting to make sense of Shakespeare's thought in a way that does justice to his historiographical sophistication without rendering it absurdly "radical," McAlindon leaves behind those old and new historiographers who reduce Henry to one side or the other of Shakespeare's complex equation. However, in so doing, McAlindon threatens to exclude both sides by reducing Henry to a figure who is merely credible and realistic. That is, while McAlindon wants us to see Prince Hal as a paragon of virtue, the figure he describes seems miles apart from the vertiginously ironic Big/Pig Shakespeare actually created. In part this is because, like Campbell and Humphreys—but unlike Schlegel and Taylor—McAlindon severs the Prince of *1-2HenryIV* from warrior king of *Henry V*, and this critical disintegration allows for an overly sanguine version of Shakespeare's character. Arguing that the "horrors of war" depicted in *Henry V* should not be allowed "retrospectively and adversely" to affect our understanding of Shakespeare's king (176), McAlindon discovers an "essentially positive and heroic" interpretation of Prince Hal which is incommensurate with the theatrical impact of Shakespeare's bifurcated vision of providential triumph and the unspeakably brutal and ultimately pointless slaughters of the warrior-king's French "crusade."

What has still not been accounted for, in other words, is how a coherent historiographical motive led to Shakespeare's brilliantly Janus-faced king and to the dichotomous clash between a pervasive mood of providential exaltation and a profoundly un-epical "secret history" which is at the heart of the *Henriad.* While it is, as we saw earlier, tempting to infer from this that there must be something fundamentally extra-historical and theatrical about the *Henriad*, something which is irreducible to mere history, I would urge instead that we go back unto the breach, only this time armed with the idea that the apparent failure of the chronicle accounts substantially to illuminate Shakespeare's complex argument is more a product of the misleading way that we have reconstructed Shakespeare's historiographical context than it is a reflection of the poverty of Elizabethan historical culture. McAlindon is right, in other words, to insist upon Shakespeare's "fidelity to the historical record," and to argue that Shakespeare's complex reading of Henry's character and reign is a reflection of correspondingly deep ambiguities in the "Elizabethan context of knowledge." It does not follow, however, nor is it in fact the case, that these complications are going to be immediately discoverable in Shakespeare's primary "source." We will not find Shakespeare's dichotomous titan in *Holinshed's Chronicles*—or in the pre-packaged catalogues of source snippets supplied by editors such as Humphreys and Taylor—because that is not where Shakespeare found him. We need to look elsewhere and, just as importantly, to pursue Shakespeare's relationship with the chronicle accounts of Henry's reign in light of his carefully articulated intertextual signals.

*

These intertextual signals point to *Acts and Monuments* because the first thing to be discovered upon actually reading Foxe's long and involved narrative of

Lancastrian history is that we have all along been mistaking the "secret" history of Henry V for the "official" one. That is, what all of the readings of the *Henriad* surveyed above to some extent share is the assumption that the Elizabethan chronicles present Henry's character and reign in a uniformly positive and heroic light, and hence that Shakespeare's challenge was to make art out of a kind of artless and undifferentiated propaganda. However, while Shakespeare asserts that Henry's greatness is a historical reality, that it is part of the "great account" alluded to by the Prologue in *HenryV* (1.0.17), he stages Henry's career against the backdrop of an epideictic crisis: how to capture Henry's greatness *despite* the profoundly negative estimation of the king which history seems to demand. There is pitch, as Falstaff says, and it defiles, and Shakespeare's point seems to be that, much like the "blushing discontented *sun*" witnessed by Bolingbroke in *Richard II*, Henry V's *bona fama* has to be disentangled from enveloping and enshrouding clouds of *infamy*. This historiographical problem is clearly adumbrated in the Gads Hill episode in *IHenryIV*, where Falstaff's attempt to make heroic history out of his disgraceful exploits renders fairly explicit Shakespeare's awareness of the problem of honestly capturing King Henry's true greatness. Shakespeare *contrasts* Falstaff's "proven" cowardice at Gads Hill with Henry's courage at Agincourt, but he also *compares* the Gads Hill robbery with Henry's military exploits in order to expose the French campaign as a brutally pointless adventure—in both cases the "winnings" have to be given back—and a potentially realm shattering felony. Similarly, the stage-devilish divisiveness of Falstaff's band of thieves is paralleled, as A. R. Humphreys notes, with "the rebels' incohesion at Shrewsbury" (*1HenryIV*, xxvi), and with the not-so-brotherly fractiousness of Henry's eponymous "band of brothers" revealed in *Henry V*.

These are familiar observations, and I have hardly scratched the surface of the remarkably dense structure of ironic parallels which, as all close readers of the sequence soon discover, is one of the *Henriad*'s most ostensible characterological strategies. But this is precisely my point: there is nothing subversive or secretive about Shakespeare's examination of Henry's dark side in the *Henriad*. It is, rather, perfectly obvious that one of Shakespeare's basic motives in the plays is to exhibit the infamous aspects of Henry's character through ironic counter-pointing. This continuous exposure of Henry's *mala fama* is, however, part of a larger attempt to capture Henry's epic greatness on stage, and so the plays' complex epideictic perspective cannot be construed either as a repudiation of heroic historiography—it is hardly that—or as a mere redaction of a well-established pro-Henry orthodoxy—it can hardly be that either. Rather, the ironic perspective of the *Henriad* is the product of Shakespeare's imaginative response to an authoritative understanding of late-medieval history within which Henry's reputation was already seriously threatened by clouds of ignominy. This makes sense because the late-Elizabethan "official story" of Lancastrian rule was dominated by a collision between two histories of Henry's reign—one Catholic and one Protestant—which threatened to prove that Henry was, in fact, a complete villain.

At the heart of the older, Catholic version, which originated with monastic chronicles such as Thomas Walshingham's *Historia Anglicana* (1418), and was amplified and circulated in a host of medieval and Tudor chronicles, was the providential story of Prince Henry's sudden and miraculous reformation upon assuming the crown. "[A]s sonne as he was crouned enoynted and sacred anone sodenly he was chaunged in to a new man" writes an anonymous medieval chronicler, and this idea is echoed and amplified in Titus Livius' *Vita Henrici Quinti* (1437;

trans. 1513), and *Fabyan's Chronicle* (1516). "Sodenlie," Fabyan writes, Henry "became a newe man," and Livius, emphasizing the power of the sacrament of penance, adds that after his father's death Henry "called to himself a vertuous Monke of holie conuersacion, to whom he confessed himselfe of all offences, trespasses and insolencies of times past....in all things at that time he reformed and amended his life and manners."[7] As Paul Strohm details, the myth of Henry's miraculous conversion at his accession from youthful profligate, implicated in everything from rowdiness and thievery to sedition and the spectre of Lollardy, to super-pious royal champion of the Catholic church, was designed by clerical writers to confer spiritual legitimacy on the Lancastrian monarchy and, more importantly, on the Church and its vigorous campaign against Reform. This spiritual legitimacy was in turn linked with, and derived a kind of divine imprimatur from, Henry's miraculous providential victories in France. To be truly effective, Strohm argues, the myth required a symbolic embodiment of both the enormity of the young Prince's debauchery and of the righteousness of his regeneration. This crucial role fell to Sir John Oldcastle, who was transformed by "a cluster of fifteenth-century ecclesiastics, chroniclers, and early biographers" into Prince Hal's "boon companion," a factitious *monster* of irredeemable heresy, sedition, and personal ingratitude and disloyalty (134).

Far more imaginary than real, this fictional Oldcastle was "fueled," as Strohm puts it,

> by a surplus of oppositional energy that would seem to threaten the king, but which, if brought under control, may be converted into a heightened affirmation of the true king's value.... [The myth] achieves this control (and ultimate affirmation) by installing opposition in the larger framework of God's probation or "approval" of his elect....In short, no worry: the issue of this contest is never in doubt (and it proceeds under the most serene sponsorship). Proven, the king will be found unalloyed, just as Oldcastle will be found counterfeit, a bad penny. But this passage of proof will redound all the more to Henry's credit, the gravity of his false friend's treachery having been established. (135-6)

Although it was originally designed to extol Henry's virtues and sanctify his church-sanctioned exploits, and while it may well have been, as Strohm says, one of the Lancastrian regime's "major imaginative accomplishments"(133), by Shakespeare's time the story of the "prodigal" Prince Hal's miraculous return to the embrace of Mother Church, and his vanquishing of the monster Oldcastle, had been rendered virtually unusable by the Reformation—at least in the ideologically imaginary sense outlined by Strohm. Shakespeare was confronted with two striking manifestations of this historiographical reality in *Holinshed's Chronicles* and the anonymous play *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, which have long been recognized as the two primary sources for the *Henriad*.

Although Strohm does not acknowledge this, the Protestant compilers of *Holinshed* seem to have been quite capable of grasping the ideological function of the original "wild Prince Hal" legend. Assiduously downplaying the story of Henry's youthful profligacy, they insist that Prince Hal's behaviour was "not offensive," and that, in fact, Hal's legendary wildness was the invention of interfering "pickthanks" who were determined to sow division between Hal and his unfortunately over-credulous father, King Henry IV (qtd. Humphreys 178-9). Highlighting Prince Hal's wounded responses to the slanders that had been leveled against him, and steadily insisting that the prodigal Prince legend is false, *Holinshed's Chronicles* deftly traverses the traditional account in a way which redeems Hal's reputation from the old charges—the young Prince was a normal youth acting in a perfectly normal youthful fashion—without crediting the Catholic clergy in any way. What is more, the authors strongly hint that, contrary to "the report of some writers," Prince Hal's early associates were not the outrageous heretics and subversive criminals of

historiographic tradition, but rather men of "the prudent sort," with whom Hal "opened unto himself a redie passage of good liking." Hence, the intimation is, the legend's clerical promoters are one and the same as the division-sowing "pickthanks" who invented the stories of Hal's wild behaviour in the first place.

Secondly, in a striking contrast with the deflationary realism of *Holinshed's Chronicles*, the anonymous play *Famous Victories* makes Prince Hal's youthful profligacy and sudden conversion a dramatic centerpiece, but it does so in a way that also renders the story devoid of any substantial religious historical meaning: the myth becomes a kind of theatrical nonsense. The first half of the play gives full rein to Hal's legendary wildness, portraying him as an outrageously coarse young Prince who, devoted to a life of crime amongst a "vilde and Reprobate company," schemes with Sir John Oldcastle or "Jockey" about the "mery world" over which he will rule upon the death of Henry IV. The play then represents, in the midst of an ambiguously real or pretend assassination attempt, the Prince's lachrymose sudden conversion, a bizarrely melodramatic climax apparently derived from *Holinshed's* account of Prince Hal's elaborate demonstration of loyalty just prior to the king's death. Conflating *Holinshed's* account with Catholic myth, the play's version of Hal's sudden conversion ends with the Prince's announcing that "no doubt but this day,/ Even this day, I am borne new againe" (6.150-1).

Thus, the familiar idea that the "Wild Prince" materials were a lively historical theme which "converge[d] from many directions," and which Shakespeare found ripe to be used "in Holinshed or the original *Famous Victories* or both" (Humphreys xxx-xxxi), is quite misleading. Rather, what Shakespeare learned from *Holinshed's Chronicles* is that the story was a popish fraud which no serious Protestant would credit, and one which no longer worked as a way of demonstrating Henry's claim to

historical fame. *Holinshed's Chronicles* does aim to portray Henry positively, and this is precisely why its Protestant authors pointedly de-emphasize Henry's legendarily miraculous conversion to Catholic piety. What is more, in the theatre Shakespeare learned that the legend had become, at best, a theme for non-serious dramatic fare such as *Famous Victories*. The anonymous playwrights use it, but in a knock-about fashion that, notwithstanding the play's merits as a kind of Elizabethan entertainment, does not commemorate Henry's kingship in a meaningful or cogently historical way. These were important lessons, but Shakespeare would have been fully aware that he was dealing with a defunct paradigm in any case because, long before *Holinshed's Chronicles* and *Famous Victories*, Foxe had exploded the memory of Henry's spectacular piety and providentially sanctified military exploits by transforming the *myth* of Henry's sudden conversion to Christian kingship into a dismally true *history* of royal enormity.

Although it has hardly been recognized as such by modern scholars, Foxe's account of the character and reign of Henry V is a masterpiece of humanist historical forensics, and one of the great triumphs of Protestant historical scholarship. Through a combination of suggestive innuendo, ironic parallelism, and a robustly Valla-esque revisionism, Foxe demolishes Henry's pre-Reformation reputation as a hero of militant Christianity and recasts him as an epitome of modern, Antichristian, kingship. Whereas Walshingham had reported that it snowed on Henry's April coronation day, an occurrence which the Catholic chronicler interprets as a providential symbol of Hope—just as Winter is followed by Spring, he avers, Henry on his accession day was radically transformed into a new man (Strohm, 139)—under the gloss "great tempest at the coronation," Foxe writes that Henry's coronation day was "an exceeding stormy day, and so tempestuous, that many did wonder at the

portent thereof"(3.319). The significance of this portentous tempest is immediately defined by Foxe using a pointed juxtaposition of, on one hand, a carnivalesque depiction of Henry's first parliament and, on the other, an image of the escalating persecutions of the Godly by "Thomas Arundel, the archbishop of Canterbury (as fierce ever was Pharaoh, Antiochus, Herod, or Caiaphas)"(3.321). "And this," Foxe writes, concluding his preamble to Henry's reign with biting irony, "was the first year of King Henry V, whom they had made fit for their hand"(3.321).

Whereas *Holinshed's Chronicles* deftly circumvents it, Foxe boldly exposes the Lancastrian legend and its Catholic authors, urging his readers to see a monstrous combination of carnivalesque riot and cold-blooded murder behind the mythic image of a Reformed Catholic polity inaugurated, as Walshingham had claimed, by Henry's miraculously newfound "honesty, modesty, and *gravitas*"(Strohm, 139). Just as he does in discovering the eloquence of prophetic dissent, Foxe does not simply dispense with historical error in Henry's case, he holds up that error itself as a damning object of contemplation, effectively reversing and re-deploying the legendary story to expose the Antichristian spirit at work in the power-mongering mythmakers of Lancastrian England. Focusing on the disgraceful exploits of the tyrant and, as well, on the mendacity of the Catholic promoters of the legend that was built around him, Foxe thus creates a kind of double image of Henry's reign. The thrust of this revisionist argument is encapsulated in Foxe's ironic reversal of Walshingham's optimistic seasonal symbolism: Henry V *was*, he says, a source of hope, but for apostate clergymen such as Walshingham, "babbling Sir Johns" who hoped that his ruthless and unwavering patronage of the Church would provide them "a world somewhat to their minds"(338, 341). In Foxe's iconoclastic historical retrospective, this Hope is revealed as a kind of diabolic False Hope, and, far from initiating a bright new era of

Christian governance, Foxe portrays Henry's coronation as the dismally tempestuous *continuation* of the bloody carnival inaugurated by Henry IV, a diabolical *deformation* presided over by yet another slavish Lancastrian King who "in his life, and in all his doings, was so devout and serviceable to the pope and his chaplains, that he was called of many the 'prince of priests'"(3.579).

Since Henry's coronation ceremony could not be portrayed as a spectacle of "riot" and debauchery, Foxe makes his point by starting his account of the reign with a satirical description of the "duplex festum" or "double feast" inaugurated by the clergy to commemorate it:

> At that time Thomas Arundel, the archbishop of Canterbury, collected in Paul's church at London a universal synod of all the bishops and clergy of England. In that synod, among other weighty matters and ponderous, it was determined, that the day of St. George, and also of St. Dunstan, should be a double feast, called Duplex Festum, in holy kitchen—in holy church, I would say.(3:19)

While he is perhaps no Rabelais, Foxe goes on to create a satirically copious image of Catholic ceremonialism and festivity underscored with the specter of a malignantly appetitive and chaotically popish division and duplicity:

> And because the order and manner of those Pope-holy feasts, either yet is not sufficiently known to some rude and gross capacities, or may peradventure grow out of use, and to be strange and unknown to our posterity hereafter: Therefore to give a little memorandum thereof (by the way for erudition of times hereafter to come) touching this mystical science of the Pope's deep and secret divinity, here is to be noted, that the feasts of the Pope's holy mother Catholic church be divided in sundry members. Like as a plentiful root in a fruitful field riseth up and burgeneth into manifold arms, and the arms again do multiply into divers and sundry branches, out of the which, moreover, although no fruit do come, yet both leaves and flowers do bud and blossom in most copious wise, right beautiful to behold: Even so this 'Festum,' containing a large matter of great variety of dayes and feasts, groweth in it self and multiplieth, being thus divided: first into Festum duplex, and into Festum simplex, that is into feast double, and to feast simple. Againe, this Festum duplex brancheth four-fold-wise, to wit, into 'Festum principal duplex,' into 'Majus duplex,' into 'Minus duplex,' and 'Inferius duplex,' that is, into 'principal double,' into 'greater double,' into 'lesser double,' and into 'inferior' or 'lower double.' Unto these several sorts of feasts what days were

> peculiarly assigned, it were to long to recite....these two feasts, to wit, 'Principal duplex,' and 'Majus duplex,' did differ and were known from all other by four notes: by service in the kitchen, and by service in the Church, which were both double: by ringing in the steeple, which was with double peal: by copes in the quire, and by thurifying or censing the altars: for in these two principal and greater double feasts, the seventh, eighth and ninth lesson must be read with silken copes.... And thus much by occasion for Popish feasts, not that I doe so much deride them, as I lament, that so much and manifest idolatry in them is committed to the great dishonor of our Lord our God, which is only to be honoured. (3.319-20)

In Foxe's hands, to borrow Falstaff's strikingly apposite terminology, Walshingham's *gravitas* becomes a kind of unholy popish *gravy*. Starting with this Menippean portrait of Lancastrian religious ceremonialism, Foxe subverts the entire mythographic basis of Henry's Catholic *bona fama*: far from being governed by a piously sober, reformed Prodigal, Henry's court takes popish festivity to a new level. Combining this satiric argument with a more straightforward marshaling of historical evidence, Foxe completely undermines the myth of Henry's spiritual fall and pious regeneration by demonstrating that Prince Henry never was anything but a dutiful son of the church. Drawing upon both the Pauline "new man" and the Prodigal Son story, the traditional myth hinges on the idea of the young Prince's turn away from and return to "the Father." Cutting the heart out of the myth, and exposing it as a popish fiction, Foxe insists upon the continuity of sincere Catholic piety and reactionary policy linking Henry and his father Bolingbroke. As in *Holinshed's Chronicles*, Foxe banishes the stories of Hal's wild youth; however, where the chronicle praises Hal by deflating his legendary addiction to "riot" and replacing it with assertions of quotidian normalcy, Foxe conflates profligacy and riot with extraordinary Catholic piety and ceremonialism in order to generate his own spiritually-charged theme of "like Father like Son." Utterly subverting the idea that Henry V's supposedly miraculous "sudden conversion" could be a *corrective* to Lancastrian usurpation and tyranny, Foxe turns

the myth on its head, re-deploying it to generate an equally charged, but much more historically true-seeming, image of un-kingly tyranny and popish super-serviceability.

Thoroughly redefining the image of Henry V's reign as a new era of pious sobriety and justice, Foxe recasts Henry's Catholic piety in the light of a carnivalesque "pope-holy" doubleness, exposing Henry, his court, and the long succession of his clerical promoters and chroniclers in the light of a preposterously "duplex" and sinister popish "riot."[8] McAlindon grasps Foxe's satirico-historical argument exactly if inadvertently when he notes, in his discussion of "royal duplicity" in *1-2HenryIV*, that this kind of doubleness "tends to spill over into a confusing multiplicity" which, unlike Bakhtin's delightfully *fruitful* cornucopia, "is evil and is associated with rebellion, error, duplicity, confusion, darkness, and devilry...with falsehood, error and darkness"(97-98).[9] And, in the terms of Strohm's analysis, it is clear that in supplanting a salubrious image of the reformed prodigal with this chaotically spreading darkness, Foxe is quite consciously transferring the locus of darkly chaotic—and also *fruitless*—"oppositional energy" from Oldcastle and the Lollards to Henry and his apologists. England is menaced by a kind of wildly spreading weed, but its source is the Church and the Crown, which are cast not in the light of spiritual Reform and legitimate succession, but rather in the shadow of the usurpation of politics and religion by a seriocomically alien ceremonialism symptomatic of an apocalyptically modern and blood-thirstily "Herodian" cruelty which, in Lancastrian history, passes from one English Harry to the next.

Moving beyond the English setting in the chronicles, Foxe uses carnivalesque satire to further undermine the Prodigal Prince legend by linking Henry's court with the disgraceful antics of apostate powers in the larger world of 15th-century Europe. Thus, where the "festum duplex" immediately precedes the persecution of Oldcastle

in English history, the following comic narrative comes directly after it, and the contiguous martyrdoms of Huss and Jerome of Prague, in Foxe's interpolated history of the Council of Constance:

> In the mean time it happened, that during this council of Constance, after the deposing of pope John, and spoiling of his goods, which came to seventy-five thousand pounds of gold and silver...pope Martin, on the day of St. Martin, was elected; concerning whose election great preparation was made before the council, so that besides the cardinals, six other bishops of every nation should enter into the conclave, who there together should be kept with thin diet, till they had founded a pope. (3.546-7)

Once again emphasizing the popish habit of making a mockery of Saints' days, a satirical point which is crucially important for Shakespeare's portrait of Henry V, Foxe reduces papal history here to an image of absurdly rich men routinely despoiling each other of their ill-gotten riches, and transforms the seriousness and ceremonial dignity of the Papal Conclave into a topsy turvy Bellygod. Ridiculing the prelates' Latin, and suggesting that they are ruled more by their stomachs (and perhaps their bladders), than their consciences, Foxe relates how

> At last, when they were together agreed upon this man, they, not tarrying for the opening of the door, like madmen, for haste brast open a hole in the wall, crying out "Habemus papam Martinum," "We have a Martin Pope." The emperor hearing thereof, with the like haste came apace, and, falling down, kissed the new pope's feet. Then went they all to the church together, and sang Te Deum. The next day following, this Martin was made priest, who before was but a cardinal-deacon, and the next day after was consecrate bishop, and sang his first mass; whereat were present one hundred and forty mitred bishops. After this, the next morrow, the new holy pope ordained a general procession, where a certain clerk was appointed to stand with flax and hemp; who setting the flax on fire thus said, "Ecce, Pater sancte! Sic transit gloria mundi." i.e. "Behold holy Father! Thus fadeth the transitory glory of this world! Which done, that day week the holy father was brought up unto a scaffold twenty feet high, saith the story (I will not say to a high mountain, where was offered to him all the glory of the world &c.) there to be crowned for a triple king. This done, the same day after dinner the new-crowned pope was brought with great triumph through the midst of the city of Constance, where all the bishops and abbots followed with their mitres. The pope's horse was all trapped with red scarlet down to the ground. The cardinal's horses were all in white silk; the emperor on the right side, and a prince elector on the

> left (playing both the pope's footmen), went on foot, leading the pope's horse by the bridle. (3.547)

"As this pageant thus with the great giant proceeded," Foxe concludes, using images of popular festivity to make his apocalyptic argument, it came to the "marketplace, where the Jews, according to the manner, offered to him their law and ceremonies; which the pope receiving, cast behind him saying, "Recedant vetera, nova sunt omnia." I.e. "Let old things pass, all things be made new &c. This was A.D. 1417" (3.547). Presiding over his own version of the duplex festum, replete with its own fraudulent "nova sunt omnia" theme, Foxe's sincerely Catholic Henry takes his place in this apocalyptic "pageant" of Popish "riot" and apostasy.

Making a similar challenge to Catholic historiographical tradition, Foxe subverts Henry's other major claim to fame by dismissing his status as a providentially sanctified warrior king. Mordantly acknowledging Henry's "worthy prowess" and "great victories gotten in France," Foxe quickly adds that he does not have the "vacant leisure" to "intermeddle with [such] matters profane"(3.319). However, by thus deflating and de-sanctifying Henry's "profane" exploits, Foxe is "intermeddling" decisively, reducing Henry's famous victories to pointless and spiritually insignificant ephemera. Moreover, in a stroke of trenchant ironic parallelism, Foxe's presents Henry's exploits as a kind of second-rate antithesis of the Christian heroism exemplified by the Bohemians in their providential victories over the forces of Rome and the Emperor. Having announced that he has no time for the famous victories of Henry V, Foxe interrupts his account of Henry's reign to narrate in great detail the military exploits of the Bohemian generals John Zisca and Procopius Magnus in the Hussite Wars. Although he hardly revels in the violence he describes, Foxe lavishly details the efforts of the Bohemian insurgents, and praises in

particular their godly champions. Rather than rushing to kiss the Pope's feet, the Bohemian warriors were "inflamed" by the "inward zeal of Christ's word" and by the "dishonour" the Papacy had inflicted upon "the kingdom of Bohemia," and went to war against apparently insurmountable forces of the Papacy and the Empire (3.548-9).

Ostensibly "intermeddling" in military history now, Foxe details the various crusades against the Hussites, describing both the brilliant strategies employed by Zisca to defeat overwhelming numbers of enemies and the chaotic and cowardly exploits of the papal and imperial forces that were repeatedly routed by the Bohemians. In recounting a seemingly endless series of impossible victories, Foxe emphasizes not only the extent to which the rag-tag Hussites were outnumbered by their enemies, but also the terrible conditions which they endured, and, in particular, the blind general Zisca's remarkable ability to engender a warlike zeal and godly discipline among his often fractious Taborite armies. Foxe puts on the mantle of military historian to make two basic points. The first is that, no matter how degraded they appeared to be in the eyes of their enemies, and indeed in the eyes of the authors of Foxe's chronicle sources, it was the half-starved and poorly equipped Taborites, a peasant army inflamed with the holy spirit and fighting with God's grace behind them, who were the true spiritual champions and "valiant victors in arms" (574) of 15$^{th}$-century history. By contrast, no matter how resplendently chivalrous and noble they appeared to be, when confronted by these godly champions, the papal and imperial crusaders were exposed as undisciplined cowards and villains who, rather than fighting nobly, consistently ran away and committed terrible atrocities. Foxe's second point, which he heavily underscores in the final pages of his account of Henry V's reign, is that the dismal truth about the famous Lancastrian fighter is revealed in

light of the true Christian militancy of the Bohemians. "The people came in great number," Foxe writes, under the gloss "Procopius famous among the Germans,":

> to see the coming of this valiant and famous people; other some gathered together in great number into the streets where they should pass through. The matrons, maids, and children, filled the windows and houses to behold and see, and to marvel at their strange kind of apparel and stout courageous countenances; saying, that it was not untrue which was reported of them. But all fixed their eyes on Procopius, saying, "This is he who hath overthrown the papists in so many battles, who hath subverted so many towns, and slain so many men, whom both his enemies, and also his own soldiers, do fear and reverence;" also, that he was a bold, valiant, and invincible captain, who could not be overcome with no terror, labour, or travail. (577)

By contrast, Foxe makes Henry's antithetical status clear by concluding, under the gloss "Death of Henry V., called Prince of Priests for favoring the pope," that

> In the mean season, while the Bohemians were thus in long conflicts with Sigismund the emperor and the pope, fighting for their religion, unto whom, notwithstanding all of the fulness of the pope's power was bent against them, God, of his goodness, had given such noble victories, as is above-expressed, and ever did prosper them so long as they could agree among themselves; —as these things, I say, were doing in Bohemia, king Henry V., fighting likewise in France, albeit for no like matter of religion, fell sick at Bois de Vincennes and died, after he had reigned nine years, four months, and odd days, from his coronation. This king, in his life, and in all his doings, was so devout and serviceable to the pope and his chaplains, that he was called of many 'the Prince of Priests:' who left behind him a son being yet an infant, nine months and fifteen days of age, whome he had by Queen Katherine…the name of which Prince, succeeding after his father, was Henry VI, who was left under the government and protection of his uncle, named Humphrey, duke of Gloucester. (579)

Emphatically denied any trace of the lustrous spiritual aura that surrounds the Bohemian champions, Foxe's Henry V dies ingloriously of disease—which is itself often a loaded spiritual signifier in Foxe's providential world—while fighting for a comparatively worthless, and ultimately feckless, cause in France. By contrast, "for more credit," he says, Foxe includes a report of Zisca's remarkable dying oration and, as well, reprints Zisca's self-penned epitaph:

> It is to be reported, that when he was demanded, being sick, in what place he would be buried; he commanded the skin to be pulled off from his dead carcase, and the flesh be cast unto the fowls and beasts, and that a drum should be made of his skin, which they should then use in their battles: affirming, that as soon their enemies should hear the sound of that drum, they would not abide, but take their flight. The Taborites, despising all other images, yet set up the picture of Zisca over the gates of the city [gloss: the words of Zisca at his death].
> *The Epitaph of John Zisca, the Valiant Captain of the Bohemians* [title].
> I, John Zisca, not inferior to an emperor or captain in warlike policy, a severe punisher of the pride and avarice of the clergy, and defender of my country, do lie here. That which Appius Claudius, by giving good counsel, and M. Furius Camillus, by valiantness, did for the Romans, the same I, being blind, have done for my Bohemians. I never slacked opportunity of battle, neither did fortune at any time fail me. I, being blind, did foresee all opportunity of well ordering or doing my business. Eleven times, in joining battle, I went victor out of the field. I seemed to have worthily defended the cause of the miserable and hungry against the delicate, fat, and gluttonous priests, and for that cause to have received help at the hands of God. If their envy had not let it, without doubt I had deserved to be numbered amongst the most famous men. Notwithstanding my bones lie here in this hallowed place, even in despite of the pope. (556-67)

With unmistakable historical irony, Foxe uses the true Christian *superbia* of the peasant-hero Zisca to expose Henry V's more "famous" exploits as a sham, and this ironic parallel forcefully underscores the exposure of Henry's legendary piety as ignominious apostasy. Unlike Henry V, Foxe insists, the true Christian warrior-king creates hallowed ground outside of the Popish church and leaves a powerful heroic memory—like Zisca's drum—by fighting *with* God against the "fat, and gluttonous priests." He does not rush to kiss the Pope's boots and he certainly does not follow him into viciously inglorious wars against fellow Christians.

As devastating as they are, these assaults on the twin pillars of Henry's reputation are really just the backdrop for Foxe's epideictic centerpiece: the true history of Henry's relations with Sir John Oldcastle. While it has, again, rarely been credited as such, Foxe's treatment of the Oldcastle legend is a masterpiece in the art of revisionist historiographical rhetoric. Reclaiming the historical Lord Cobham from

Catholic mythography and for Protestant martyrology, Foxe goes back to the sources for Henry's reign and meticulously demolishes the Oldcastle legend. Just as the real John of Gaunt is a figure of true nobility, the real John Oldcastle, Foxe argues, was never Henry's close intimate, and hence was not guilty of any personal treachery or disloyalty, nor indeed was he ever implicated in dangerous heresy, sedition, or rebellion. Rather, just as Shakespeare's Prince Hal exposes Falstaff's outrageous lies with "a plain tale"(*1HenryIV*, 2.4.248), Foxe convincingly portrays Oldcastle as a loyal soldier who, because of his resolute anti-papal stance and his active support for evangelical preaching, fell victim to religious persecution and died as the direct result of King Henry's active support for the Church's bloody anti-Lollard policies. Again, systematically obliterating the linchpin of the traditional story, Foxe demonstrates that Oldcastle's supposed armed rebellion—which, as we saw earlier, was portrayed as an exemplary act of sedition and personal disloyalty to Henry and which confirmed both the seriousness of Henry's profligacy and the righteousness of his harsh repudiation of his evil "friends"—was a complete fiction invented by Oldcastle's clerical enemies to legitimize a religiously motivated judicial murder. Moreover, whereas the myth turns, as Strohm details, on the idea that the King generously "invested considerable personal time in conversation aimed at Oldcastle's successful reintroduction to the path of truth (136)," and hence on Oldcastle's diabolical ingratitude and treachery, Foxe presents readers with the compellingly revised image of an intimate interview with an unrelenting tyrant followed by a disgracefully cruel royal sell-out.

Thus, as Foxe tells the story, the chaotic synod assembled for Henry's coronation determines to renew its vigorous attacks on the Lollards and their patrons, "among whom this noble knight, sir John Oldcastle, the lord Cobham, was

complained of…to be the chief principal" (321-2). Under the gloss "A spiritual practice," Foxe writes that:

> In the end it was concluded among them, that, without any further delay, process should be awarded against him, as against a most pernicious heretic. Some of their fellowship who were of more crafty experience than the others thought it best not to have the matter so rashly handled, but by some preparation made thereunto beforehand: considering the said Lord Cobham was a man of great birth, and in favour at that time with the king, their counsel was to know the king's mind, to save all things upright. This counsel was well accepted, and thereupon the archbishop…went straightways unto the king…and there laid forth most grievous complaints against the said lord Cobham, to his great infamy and blemish: being a man right Godly. (3.322)

Under the glosses "The King speaketh for him" and "His gentle promise," Foxe goes on to write that

> The King gently heard those blood-thirsty prelates, and far otherwise than became his princely dignity: notwithstanding requiring…that in respect of his noble stock and knighthood, they should yet deal favourably with him; and…if it were possible, without all rigour or extreme handling, reduce him again to the church's unity. He promised them also, that in case they were contented to take some deliberation, he himself would seriously commune the matter with him. (322)

Although he mentions that Oldcastle was "in favour at that time" with the King, Foxe's point is not that the two men were intimate friends. Rather, the personal intimacy Foxe presents is entirely the product of the King's supposedly "gentle promise" to help Oldcastle by reconciling him with his persecutors. It is this promise, and not a longstanding friendship, which is violated in the climactic meeting between the King and Oldcastle:

> [Gloss: The king's admonishment to Lord Cobham] Anon after, the king sent for the lord Cobham, and as soon as he was come, he called him *secretly*, admonishing him *betwixt him and him*, to submit himself to his holy mother the church, and, as an obedient child, to acknowledge himself culpable. [Gloss: his answer unto the King] Unto whom the Christian knight made this answer: 'You, most worthy prince," saith he, "I am always prompt and willing to obey, forasmuch as I know you to be a Christian king, and the appointed minister of God, bearing the sword of punishment of evil doers, and for the safeguard of them that be virtuous. Unto you, next my eternal God, owe I my

> whole obedience, and submit thereunto, as I have done ever, all that I have, either of fortune or nature, ready at all times to fulfil whatsoever ye shall in the Lord command me. But, as touching the pope and his spirituality, I owe them neither suit nor service, forasmuch as I know him, by the Scriptures, to be the great Antichrist, the son of perdition, the open adversary of God, and the abomination standing in the holy place." [Gloss: Lord Cobham forsaken by the King] When the King had heard this, with such like sentences more, he would no longer talk with him, but left him so utterly. And as the Archbishop resorted him again unto him for an answer, he gave him his full authority to cite him, examine him, and punish him, according to their devilish decrees, which they called 'The Laws of Holy Church.'"(3.322-23; my emphases)

Making his true loyalty, and his inability to recant his beliefs, perfectly clear to the young king, Oldcastle presents Henry with a written defense of his beliefs, but "the King would in no case receive it, but commanded it to be delivered unto them that should be his judges" (326). In their second and final intimate meeting, Oldcastle presents his case to Henry "with all reverence":

> wherewith the king was then much more displeased than afore, and said angrily to him, that he should not pursue his appeal; but rather he should tarry in hold till such time as it were of the pope allowed. And then, would he or nild he, the archbishop should be his judge. [Gloss: Cobham would not obey the beast] Thus there was nothing allowed that the good lord Cobham had lawfully afore required: but, forasmuch as he would not be sworn in all things to submit himself to the church, and so take what penance the archbishop would enjoin him, he was arrested again at the king's commandment, and so led forth to the Tower of London, to keep his day (so it was then spoken), that the archbishop had appointed him afore in the king's chamber. (326)

At the risk of giving too much credit to the veracity of Foxe's version of the events, the rhetorical force of Foxe's revision of the traditional narrative is hard to resist: Foxe's story sounds like the truth. As we noted, Henry's intercession on Oldcastle's behalf was traditionally cast as an outgrowth of longstanding personal intimacy with the Lollard Knight and, as well, as an extraordinary instance of royal largess and Princely pastoral care. By the same token, Oldcastle's obdurate refusal to be counseled by the king was seen as a sign of the heretic's extraordinary ingratitude and "oppositional energy." Foxe holds this reading up as a possibility, in the form of

Henry's "gentle promise," but, combining highly credible factual reporting with subtle innuendo and effective use of invented speech, Foxe creates a powerful sense of historical truth by exposing Henry as a graceless tyrant and a royal hypocrite. Although he pretends to bring Oldcastle under the aegis of his personal protection, Foxe's Henry is anything but Oldcastle's friend; rather than protecting him, the intimacy of Henry's hypocritical "gentle promise" robs Oldcastle of due recourse to the law. Like the crafty prelates, and in a similar spirit of pope-holy devotion and tyrannical egotism, Foxe's Henry "practices" on Oldcastle in order to promote himself as a figure of Catholic piety. There is a collision of extraordinary spirits here but, as in countless other stories of persecution in Foxe, this collision occurs when the King's "wolvish offer of gentleness" (3.335) runs into the indomitable "Christian stomach and manhood" (325) of the godly martyr, and results in the destructive fury of the "Beast." Pretending to be his royal friend, Foxe's Antichristian Henry in fact hates Oldcastle and is implacable in destroying him. Moreover, where Foxe's crafty prelates are somewhat comically Machiavellian in their scheming, Henry's chilling duplicity seems to go much deeper. Like the prelates, he wants to be seen as a pious defender of the faith, but his "spiritual practice" is a piece of hypocrisy so effective that he seems to believe it himself.

Finally, it is important to note that in the traditional narrative Henry's and Oldcastle's mythic identities are confirmed by the ensuing events: rejecting the proffered mercy and friendship of his former "friend," Oldcastle proves the scale of his diabolism by leading a revolt against the king. It is only *after* this monstrously personal and political treachery that Henry, justly and without taint, exposes Oldcastle to the full rigors of the law. The truth, according to Foxe, is entirely different. Oldcastle is "a lamb amongst wolves" and, since the total submission Henry demands

is impossible for him to perform, his death is assured from the outset (329).[10] The factitious story of Oldcastle's rebellion—which never occurred, according to Foxe's brilliant demonstration—is an example not of Oldcastle's diabolic treachery, but of "the usual practices of Satan, the old enemy" and a "common, and as one would say, quotidian, fever among Christ's children, to be vexed with false accusations and cruel slanders."(356)

Not surprisingly, in exposing the true spiritual polarities at work in the Oldcastle story Foxe links Henry's *disgraceful* patronage of the prelates with his *inglorious* French campaign. The clergy, Foxe argues, inflamed the King against the Reformers by presenting him with an absurdly "grievous complaint":

> in every quarter of the realm, by reason of Wycliff's opinions, and the said Lord Cobham, were wonderful contentions, rumours, tumults, uproars, confederations, dissensions, divisions, differences, discords, harms, slanders, schisms, sects, seditions, perturbations, perils, unlawful assemblies, variances, strifes, fightings, rebellious rufflings, and daily insurrections...The christian faith was ruinously decayed. God's service was laughed to scorn. The spiritual jurisdiction, authority, honour, power, policy, laws, rites, ceremonies, curses, keys, censures, and canonical sanctions...were all had in utter contempt, so that all, in a manner, was come to naught. (3.340)

Responding to this "clamour of the papists" (340gloss), which is of course not an image of Lollardry, but rather a reflection of the riotously deformed spirituality of the prelates themselves, Henry calls a Parliament where, as both his father and Richard II had been, he is confronted by a Commons determined to curb the clergy's "continual wasting of the temporalities" (341). Again, making the relationship between Henry's character and the true spirit of Reform clear, Foxe writes that the Parliament

> was then workmanly defeated by another proper practice of theirs [i.e. the prelates]: they put the king in remembrance to claim his right in France, and granted him thereunto a disme, with other great subsidy of money. Thus were Christ's people betrayed in every way, and their lives bought and sold by these cruel thieves. For, in the said parliament, the King made this most blasphemous and cruel act, to be as a law forever: [gloss: A cruel Act of king Henry V for religion] That whatsoever they were that should read the

> scriptures in their mother tongue (which was then called Wycliff's learning), they should forfeit land cattle, body, life, and goods, from their heirs forever, and so be condemned for heretics to God, enemies of the crown, and most arrant traitors to the land. [gloss: Christ hath less favour than thieves] Besides this, it was enacted, that never a sanctuary , nor privileged ground within the realm, should hold them, though they were still permitted both to thieves and murderers. [gloss: never a tyrant more cruel] And if, in any case they would not give over, or were, after their pardon, relapsed, they should suffer death in two manner of kinds: that is; they should first be hanged for treason against the King, and then be burned for heresy against God: and yet neither of them committed...Anon after, was it proclaimed throughout the realm, and then had the bishops, priests, monks, and friars, a world somewhat to their minds. For then were many taken in diverse quarters and suffered most cruel death. (341)[11]

This "sore persecution in England for religion," and the indelible stain of Henry V's royal sponsorship of it, is captured in one of the most unforgettable and truly damning of Foxe's famous woodcuts, which shows Henry presiding over a seemingly endless massacre of innocents (see illustration 1)

To use Shakespeare's own terms, Foxe's narrative of the reign of Henry V demonstrates not just that Oldcastle died a martyr, but that, in light of Henry's cold-blooded response to Oldcastle's plight, and his patronage of bloodthirsty prelates such as Arundel, it is the Lancastrian monarch, not his loyal subject, who is the diabolical "English monster." Centering his account of Henry's reign on the narrative of Oldcastle's persecution, and interweaving it with satirical images of the Duplex Festum and the horrible antics of "great giants" like Pope Martin, with the martyrdoms of Huss and Jerome of Prague, and with the astonishing heroics of Zisca and the Bohemians, Foxe transforms Henry from a miraculously reformed Prodigal Son into a "slave and butcher" ruling over a "Council of Caiaphas" and a "rabble of Antichrists"(329). And, at the same time as he elevates Henry, if that is the right word, to the apocalyptic status of the persecuting Emperors of the early church and the infamously apostate Kings and Emperors who had made a blood-bath of

contemporary Europe, Foxe argues that under Henry's Antichristian rule the locus of real spirituality and regeneration was translated to rough and unfamiliar places. Rather than in the sacraments and ceremonies of the established church, and under the protection of a Christian king, the spirit lives in Lancastrian England outside, where

> the heretics and Lollards of Wickliffe's opinion were suffered to preach abroad...to gather conventicles unto them, to keep schools in men's houses, to make books, compile treatises, and write ballads, to teach privately in angles and corners, as in woods, fields, meadows, pastures, groves, and in caves of the ground. (340-1)

*

The "official" history of Henry V's reign encountered by Shakespeare was anything but the monochromatic dullness imagined by scholars. Something like his godly champion Zisca, Foxe had met the myth of Henry's extraordinary piety head on and, triumphing over the authorities of chronicle tradition, had recast the legend to reveal a modern Antichrist, a popish and tyrannical Harry who really is a kind of English Amurath. Following in his father's graceless footsteps, Foxe's pious Henry presides over an ostensibly dignified, but in fact chaotically apostate, court, takes a leading role in the murder of Oldcastle, sells out the nation to bloody-minded and power-hungry bishops bent on stifling the Reformation in its infancy, and, for all his "worthy prowess," dies miserably in a worthless cause. "Turk Gregory," as Falstaff says in one of the sequence's numerous verbal echoes of Foxean history, "never did such deeds" (*1HenryIV*. 5.2.45-6).[12] It is no wonder, then, that the Protestant compilers of *Holinshed's Chronicles* studiously disavow the legend, or that *Famous Victories*, written for a predominantly Protestant audience, renders it nonsensical. Assuming that he was not oblivious of his own historiographical milieu, Shakespeare could not have read the Prodigal Prince legend as an established theme ripe for serious dramatic treatment or, by the same token, as an establishment icon ripe for theatrical subversion. Rather, it is Foxe's revisionist portrait that must have seemed

very much like the "official" religious-historical story of Henry's V reign. And, while Shakespeare's response is uniquely his own, like *Holinshed's Chronicles* and *Famous Victories*, Shakespeare's epic portrayal of Henry V was shaped by Foxe's exposure of Henry's infamous impiety. Shakespeare read Foxe carefully and was impressed by the ecclesiastical historian's revision of Lancastrian history. In writing the *Henriad*, Shakespeare translated that reading and those impressions into his complex portrayal of Henry's character and reign.

The reason, in other words, for looking so closely at the specifics of Foxe's revision of Henry's reputation is that the ironic reflections on Henry's character that make up Shakespeare's "secret" history in the *Henriad* correspond very closely with the structure of revisionist irony used by Foxe to discredit the king in *Acts and Monuments*. Thus, to use the terms of Shakespeare's solar leitmotif, if Henry V is a figure of "sunlike majesty," Foxean history is the cloud that seems to strangle him. Shakespeare follows Foxe in using a combination of forceful demonstration and ironic innuendo to undermine Henry's reputation for piety and military heroism and, at the same time, to situate the creation of that fraudulent reputation itself within the context of a pervasively mendacious and hypocritically popish image-making.

As noted above, for instance, in paralleling Henry's exploits with those of Falstaff and the Rebels, Shakespeare threatens to reduce Henry from glorious royal crusader to a mere patron of thieves. Shakespeare's graphic portrayal of the slaughter of the French prisoners at Agincourt—which, as Taylor argues, outstrips the chronicles in that it actually stages the killings—threatens not just to expose Henry's legendary victory as an atrocious spectacle of butchery, but also the making of the legend itself as a piece of hypocritical royal propaganda. If, as Taylor avers, Henry wins *solely* because of the slaughter of the helpless prisoners, then his providential

broadcasts after the battle must be seen as a mendacious impiety—the kind of thing, in fact, we would expect from Bolingbroke. Although Shakespeare does not present audiences with *another* Zisca to expose Henry's ignominy, these powerful ironies clearly resonate with Foxe's denunciation of the atrocities committed by popish "crusaders" and, more generally, with his image of modern Antichristian violence. Shakespeare, Taylor says, "could hardly have failed to realize how strongly audiences would respond to the cold-blooded atrocity he calls them to witness"(32), and "witness" is exactly the right word. Shakespeare's Henry is, or rather threatens to be, a titanic royal thief and butcher, and for readers of *Acts and Monuments*, witnessing Shakespeare's depiction of Henry's exploits must have involved remembering Foxe's account of the king.

Even more so, Shakespeare could not have failed to predict his audience's response to his exposure of the clerical machinations behind the war itself. Invoking Foxe's version of the story, Shakespeare presents Henry as a piously Catholic defender of the Church who, in going to war in France, sells out the Reformation to a cadre of corrupt and bloody-minded churchmen.[13] These Bishops—thieves and butchers, according to Foxe—are "great oney'ers" who "prey on" rather than "pray for" "their saint, the commonwealth" (*1HenryIV*. 2.2.76-81), and Shakespeare's Henry makes himself, as Foxe says, "fit for their hand." Similarly, Shakespeare follows Foxe in disproving the legend of Prince Hal's profligacy and miraculous conversion to Catholic piety. Thus, while J.H Walter is right that the conversation between the two bishops at the beginning of *Henry V* "establishes economically" the idea of Henry's "religious conversion"(159), he fails to note that it does so in the context of multiple historical ironies designed to discredit the bishops and their myth-making. Despite their *ecclesiastic* rank, these men are hardly *spiritual* authorities.

They do not even seem to believe in God, who is, presumably, "the means/ How things are perfected" (1.1.68-9), and they do not, in fact, believe that Henry has undergone a religious conversion. Canterbury offers an enthusiastically baroque estimation of Henry's spiritual transformation, but he is willingly corrected by Ely, who—like will to like—has noted, and appreciates, Hal's practiced craftiness.

Rather than a straightforward index to Hal's conversion, Shakespeare uses this crucial expository scene to remind audiences that Hal has not, in fact, undergone a religious transformation. And, with penetratingly Foxean historiographical irony, he uses it as well to chronicle the origins of the fraudulent conversion myth itself. Although they are too worldly to believe in it themselves, the prelates will, we know, canonize the Bishop's baroque fantasy as part of their counter-reformation campaign and Henry's self-promotion. Far from merely recycling the legend in more secular terms, Shakespeare follows Foxe closely in exposing Henry's miraculous conversion as a popish practice and supplanting the image of a sudden spiritual transformation with an unsettlingly ironic image of consistency. As countless critics have noted, Hal's arresting soliloquy—"I know you all, and will awhile uphold/ The unyok'd humour of your idleness" (*1HenryIV*, 1.2.190-91)—exposes Hal's striking lack of fellow-feeling for his "friends" and, as well, his deliberate and consciously propagandistic manipulation of the Prodigal story. However, in a sharp contrast with *Holinshed's Chronicles*, there is clearly nothing "natural" about the young Prince's behaviour. Rather, one kind of "riot" seems to give way to a deeper, more profound kind of profligacy here, one which is equated, paradoxically, with Hal's crafty sobriety itself.

In other words, to recall both Riffaterre and Shakespeare's Prologue, in presenting audiences with such a darkly enigmatic hero, Shakespeare creates what is

perhaps his most famously *ungrammatical* image of enormity.[14] Like Richard II, Shakespeare's Henry is a compellingly scrutable "cipher," and Shakespeare enlists the capacity of his audience to consider that Hal's "fault" is not some quotidian or natural debauchery, but is rather rooted in and synonymous with the combination of his extraordinarily immovable piety and his false and manipulative intimacy with his "boon companions." As Dover Wilson put it, Shakespeare marks Hal with "the stigma, not of having yielded to the tempter, but of disentangling himself, in the end, from his toils" (139). This is exactly right: rather than investing Hal with the spiritually positive aura of the Prodigal Son, Shakespeare's theatrical exposure of Hal's secret piety and sobriety seems to invert the myth and implicate Prince Hal in precisely the kind of spiritual "riot" imagined by Foxe. Like Foxe's prelates, Hal is an expert in "beforehand preparations." Indeed, in emphasizing Henry's double-dealing with his friend Falstaff, Shakespeare so effectively associates Hal with a distinctively "crafty" kind of Machiavellian image-making that many readers have been unable to see him as anything other than a pseudo-pious "Princely hypocrite." And, of course, we recall Hal's father's similarly pretentious and self-serving friendship with the northern nobles. By the same token, in a further reflection of Foxe's "like father like son" theme, Shakespeare transforms Hotspur into a kind of "sibling rival" for the Prince in order, ironically, to prove that Hal is anything but a "changeling".

Although the theatrical effect of his irony is as hard to paraphrase as it is palpable, Shakespeare's objective in *1-2HenryIV* seems to be to invoke the traditionally Catholic image of Prince Hal as a figure of extraordinary piety and an agent of spiritual change, a figure of Hope who can restore and redeem a degraded, divided, and disease-ridden nation, but to do so in the context of a Protestant dramatic irony that seems to suggest just the opposite. Like Foxe's prelates, the archbishops in

*Henry V* are enthusiastic about their prospects under the newly "reformed" king because, like them, he combines a sober religious seriousness with a Machiavellian determination to wield power effectively. Hal is, Shakespeare seems to say, the true spiritual son of his father Bolingbroke, and as such he can hardly be the *cure* for England's spiritual illness when his titanic duplicity is, in fact, a fundamental *cause* of the malaise. Thus, at what is supposed to be his finest moment, Shakespeare's Henry V seems to step forward not as a Godly Prince, but as Foxe's despicable Prince of Priests. Henry promises in *2HenryIV* that he will put himself under the tutelage of the Lord Chief Justice—an old and "gaunt" figure of reformed piety—but in the highly stage-managed counsel scene at the beginning of *Henry V* the Lord Chief Justice is nowhere to be seen. Rather, in what is surely his most damning recidivism, Henry places himself entirely in the hands of the corrupt and warmongering archbishops. Rendered here in seriously historical, rather than seriocomically Eastcheap terms, these are the "Ephesians of the old church," and Henry's court is the "old frank" where they "feed" (*2HenryIV*.146-7, 150).[15] Newly invested in his father's "robe pontifical" (*1HenryIV*. 3.2.56), Henry pontificates on the value of "frank and uncurbèd plainness" but allows his conscience, as Schlegel puts it, to be tranquillized by the abstruse and obfuscatory rhetoric of the Bishop's "Salic Law" speech. And, at exactly the point where we might wonder about the absence of the plain-speaking Chief Justice—who, we might also recall, *refused* to make warmongering an excuse to abrogate morality and *refused* to give Falstaff money for his credit-seeking military exploits—Shakespeare gives us the chilling image of "our wretches fettered in our prisons"(1.2.243-4).

One English Harry succeeds another in the *Henriad*, and the more the lachrymose tyrant Bolingbroke weeps about Hal's failure to follow his precedent, the

more we are forced to recognize that Hal is his father's son. The impact of this "stigma"—there is no better word for it—cannot be underestimated. Henry is a figure of Hope: the problem is that, precisely like Foxe's Antichristian king, it is the demonic aspirations of men like the Bishops that he seems to promise to fulfill. However paraphrased, these darkly ironic perspectives on the king generate a compelling intertextual link with *Acts and Monuments*. Resonating with Foxe's exposure of Henry's cold-blooded hypocrisy, his captious dismissal of Henry's military exploits, and his redefinition of Catholic piety as "riot," Shakespeare's ironies underscore the sequence's intertextual connection with Foxean history: Shakespeare's portrayal of the killing of Falstaff as an unforgivable treachery on the part not of the hapless old subject but of the tyrannous young king. Thus, while it has long been recognized that, in placing so much narrative and thematic emphasis on Hal's repudiation of Falstaff/Oldcastle, Shakespeare invites a comparison with this famous episode from *Acts and Monuments* [16], what needs to be acknowledged is that, by continuously infusing his dramatization of the story with damning intimations of the Prince's cold-blooded piety, his Machiavellian image-manipulation, and his secret animosity towards his "friend," Shakespeare is importing the entire weight of Foxe's castigatory revisionism into the *Henriad* as well.

For example, the fact that Prince Hal metaphorically "kills" Falstaff is infamous, but what has been less-well documented is that, with similar malice and foresight, Hal seems to revel in the killing of Falstaff's body as well. We learn in the Gads Hill episode in *1Henry IV* that walking is potentially fatal to the Fat Knight, and so while the theft of Falstaff's horse during the robbery is perhaps harmless, when the "stony-hearted villain" (2.2.26) in turn sends Falstaff walking to Shrewsbury, he is consciously sentencing him to death: "I'll procure this fat rogue a charge of foot, and I

know his death will be a march of twelve score" (1.2.545-7). Hal's claim proves to be literally true: Falstaff enters *2HenryIV* "halt[ing]" or limping with a pox, or gout, or both afflicting his "great toe"(1.2.245), and while Falstaff typically drowns out his own pained sense of affliction with Vice-like nonsense, it is clear to the audience that Hal's commission is killing more than Falstaff's feet. Portraying the Fat Knight's offstage death in *Henry V*, Shakespeare uses the Hostess's comments to connect Falstaff's dismal end with the "stony hearted villain" who has caused it:

> So 'a bade me lay more clothes on his feet. I put my hand into the bed and felt them, and they were as cold as any stone; then I felt to his knees, and so up'ard and up'ard, and all was as cold as any stone. (2.3.22-26)

With friends like Prince Henry, Shakespeare intimates, Falstaff hardly needs enemies.

Registering the difference between Falstaff and Oldcastle is, as I have stressed, crucial to grasping Shakespeare's argument, but there can be no question that the Foxean intertext is present throughout Shakespeare's portrayal of Falstaff's dismal history. Infamously, in a spirit of self-aggrandizing hypocrisy and deeply-seated Antichristian hatred, Foxe's Henry V sets himself up as Oldcastle's royal protector and confessor and, when Oldcastle cannot satisfy his impossible demands, destroys him by "forsaking" him "utterly." In a sense, this is exactly what happens in the play. Setting himself up as Falstaff's friend and spiritual physician, Shakespeare's Hal attempts to make a name for himself by forsaking Falstaff utterly in a public rejection which, as surely as walking to Shrewsbury has killed his body, will kill Falstaff's "heart" (*Henry V*. 2.1.88). And, just as Oldcastle's persecutors know that he cannot recant—this is what makes them false wolves and not true shepherds—we all know, Henry *ne plus ultra*, that Falstaff cannot "leave gormandizing"(*2HenryIV*. 5.5.53). No matter how correct it is, the King's ostensibly proffered pastoral care—"fall to thy prayers…Make less thy body (hence) and more thy Grace" (5.5.47, 52)—is, in reality,

a death sentence, one which Henry has been determined to pass from the beginning. Even Shallow is deep enough to grasp this: Henry's "color"—that is, pretense, but also "collar" and "choler"—is a practice designed for Falstaff to "die in"(5.5.87).

While there can be little doubt that Shakespeare is invoking Foxe's account of the Oldcastle story, the suggestion that he is deliberately infusing Henry's character with intimations of Foxean enormity is underscored by verbal parallels linking the plays with *Acts and Monuments*. As noted earlier, for instance, Foxe describes Oldcastle's death as an example of the horrible "practices of Satan, the old enemy" and a "common, and as one would say, quotidian, fever among Christ's children, to be vexed with false accusations and cruel slanders" (356). Reporting on the same event, Shakespeare's Hostess describes Falstaff as "so shak'd of a burning *quotidian tertian*, that it is most lamentable to behold" (2.1.119-20, my emphasis). And, as David Kastan notes, Shakespeare "uncannily recirculates" Foxe's depiction of Oldcastle's actual martyrdom throughout, so that there is, he says, something "grotesquely appropriate" about Hal's suggestion that "Falstaff sweats to death," given that Oldcastle "did virtually sweat to death, being hanged in chains and burned"(53, 62). Kastan is right, but it is Hal, not Shakespeare, who is guilty of grotesque mockery:

> *Prince*. Got with much ease. Now merrily to horse.
> The thieves are all scattered, and possess'd with fear
> So strongly that they dare not meet each other;
> Each takes his fellow for an officer.
> Away, good Ned, Falstaff sweats to death,
> And lards the lean earth as he walks along.
> Were it not for laughing, I should pity him
> *Poins*. How the fat rogue roar'd! *Exeunt* (*1HenryIV*. 2.2.104-110)

Shakespeare's language recalls Foxe's woodcut image of Oldcastle's death, which, in addition to inviting the reader to imagine Oldcastle's dying expostulations, actually shows the martyr's suspended body melting into the intense flames, and links

Falstaff's fatal pilgrimage—he sweats as he walks—with burning in *Acts and Monuments* (see illustrations 2 and 3). Moreover, in highlighting the emotional basis of Hal's cruel joke—he laughs where he should pity—Shakespeare recalls Foxe's commentary on those onlookers, also pictured in the woodcut, who, instead of "showing great dolour" at the spectacle of Oldcastle's burning, mock and curse him "for that he departed not in obedience of their pope." "This terrible kind of death, with gallows, chains, and fire," Foxe writes, appeareth not very precious in the eyes of men that be carnal, no more than did the death of Christ, when he was hanged among thieves"(3.542). From Gadshill's comic reference to the "fat pair of gallows" that will be required to kill Falstaff, "no starveling" (*1HenryIV.* 2.2.67-69), to Hal's strikingly "carnal" depiction of Falstaff as a "roasted Maningtree ox with the pudding in his belly"(*1HenryIV.* 2.4. 452-53), Shakespeare continuously invokes the "new set of gallows" which was, Foxe reports, set up so that Lollards could be "hanged, and burned hanging"(541). As has long been recognized, Shakespeare's Henry continuously imagines Falstaff's death in the language and imagery of carnivalesque feasting; what has not been recognized, however, is that it is Foxe's ungodly popish carnality, the madness of the Festum Duplex, that is being invoked, not Bakhtin. This is not comic history: Shakespeare pictures Prince Hal presiding over a festival of cannibalistic human butchery in order to underscore the spiritual reality behind Hal's legendary addiction to "riot."

*

While the reception history of the *Henriad* proves that we do not need Foxe to be appalled by Shakespeare's favorite hero, there can be little doubt about the effect of the Foxean intertext on Elizabethan audiences who had, as the Chorus puts it, "read the story" (*Henry V.* 5.0.1). The question here is not whether Foxe was a source, but

how reading Foxean history contributes to our understanding of Shakespeare's ability to produce historical meaning in the theatre. With Foxe's devastating anatomy of Henry V in view, we can begin to see not just how thoroughly *historical* Shakespeare's irony is, but how it generates a distinctively Foxean image of the king and of the modern world that is coming into being around him.[17] Filling a void which Shakespeare criticism did not know existed, Foxe's apocalyptic anatomy of Henry V is thus a kind of historiographical missing link tying Shakespeare's ironic portrayal of Henry to chronicle history. Foxe not only authorizes Shakespeare's unsettling portrait as true history, he does so in a way which consolidates the plays' seemingly subversive and a-historical ironies in the direction of an appreciable apocalyptic historical perspective. Although he makes his case subtly, using a combination of plain statement and innuendo, Foxe's indictment of Henry as a persecuting modern tyrant could hardly be clearer: these are the "latter days" and Henry is the model of a modern, Antichristian, tyrant. Stigmatizing Henry with a similarly subtle but forceful irony, Shakespeare brings that horrifying image to life on the stage.

Shakespeare's Henry V is, however, not Tamburlaine, and Shakespeare did not conceive of his favourite hero as a titanic enemy of God, nor did he design the *Henriad* to present audiences with a disconsolate anatomy of a modern Antichristian tyrant. Shakespeare found more in Foxe's account of Lancastrian history than popish ignominy, and, while the Foxean intertext is a powerfully negative presence in the sequence, its role extends beyond helping Shakespeare to expose Henry V's dark side. In fact, it is not until we recognize the extent to which Shakespeare drew upon Foxean history to *recover* Henry's status as "a genuinely holy man" that his theatrical interpretation of Henry as a figure of enormity is fully appreciable. The *Henriad* is epic history, and, in the substantial sense of the word as it was defined in practice by

Schlegel, Shakespeare must have spent a great deal of time *thinking* about the competing histories of Henry V's reign, thinking about the truth behind Henry's reputation as a "mirror of all Christian Kings," and thinking about his theatre's capacity to represent that complex greatness truthfully on stage. Thinking about Henry as a historical king and as a potential embodiment of epic historical theatre, Shakespeare evidently concluded that neither the Catholic legend nor Foxe's iconoclastic inversion of it captured the real essence or magnitude of Henry's spiritually heroic character.

Where *Holinshed's Chronicles* had responded to the problem of reclaiming Henry's reputation by scaling him down to a realistic middle ground between Paladin and Tyrant, and where the hero of *Famous Victories* was nonsensically schizophrenic, Shakespeare appears to have concluded that the clash between Catholic and Protestant historical images of the king could be effectively used in the theatre in order to recuperate the real truth of Henry's legendary heroism for Protestantism. Strategically deploying the Foxean intertext in conjunction with the theatre's unique capacity to present *as real* characters who are complexly multiple, contradictory, and radically mutable, Shakespeare counters Foxe's withering irony by demonstrating that Henry was, in fact, a kind of English Zisca. In a way which is again consistent with his solar leitmotif, Shakespeare *transforms* Henry in his "theatre of Enormity" from the disgracefully popish crusader Foxe had exposed in *Acts and Monuments* into something like the exemplary figure of militant Protestant piety which Foxe insists he absolutely was not.

That is, using the full arsenal of intertextual characterological strategies he had mastered in writing the first tetralogy and *Richard II*, Shakespeare creates a kind of dialogical counterpoint to his own Foxean exposure of the king, revitalizing the

Prodigal Prince legend by rediscovering Henry's miraculous regeneration, his extraordinary piety, and his providentially sanctioned military heroism, at Agincourt. Shakespeare follows Foxe in portraying Henry V as a dismal figure of apostasy and tyranny, but, using the theatre's unique capacity to present characters from multiple perspectives, and to present "true things by what their mock'ries be"( 4.0.54), Shakespeare turns the tables on Foxe by rediscovering Henry's historical identity as a spiritually heroic warrior king in the light of Foxe's own apocalyptic Protestant history. Theatrically and historiographically speaking, in other words, behind Shakespeare's strikingly Janus-faced portrait of the king is the paradoxical but nonetheless forceful assertion that Henry both *is and is not* the modern popish tyrant exposed by Foxe in *Acts and Monuments*. Where Foxe had refashioned Henry V into a figure of enormity, and had held him up as a pessimistic mirror of the truth about supposedly Christian rulers in the present, Shakespeare wielded Lancastrian history as a more flexible mirror for late 16th-century England. Reclaiming the essentials of the Catholic myth—the unlooked for providential reformation of a degenerate king leads to a miraculous victory in war—Shakespeare argues that, just as God had *preserved* Henry as a symbol and source of Hope—as opposed to False Hope—for an apostate 15th-century nation, so too Henry's heroic memory, if properly and effectively witnessed, could function as a locus of hope for a similarly reprobate and sinful Protestant England. Such a man could not, of course, alter the inevitable decline into modernity. However, assuming his willingness to set aside the "old man" and put on the livery of the godly, he could be the surprising vehicle through whom God might "grace this latter age with noble deeds"(*1HenryIV* 5.1.92)

Of course, Shakespeare attaches this image of a potentially redemptive grace and nobility not to Prince Hal/ Henry V, but to his crestfallen enemy Hotspur, just as

it is Falstaff, not Henry V, who is "Turk Gregory" and Bolingbroke, presumably, who is "Old Double." This is typical: as noted earlier, Shakespeare's portrayal of Henry V is distinguished by the over-determined way that he elides, compares, and contrasts Henry's character and actions with the foil-like characters Falstaff, Bolingbroke, and the Rebels. In Riffaterrean terms, this mirroring or ironic doubling is one of the sequence's most emphatic ungrammaticalities in the sense that it strains the realistic surface of the plays and creates a kind of interpretive crux or crisis for playgoers. Indeed, Shakespeare's contrapuntal mirroring is so relentless that it seems impossible to focus on any of Henry's peculiar or particular character traits without conjuring up parallel—and invariably debased—versions of those traits in his various "doubles." In *Henry V*, for example, we watch both Henry and the cowardly turncoat Pistol struggling to speak French, while the French warriors, including Henry's obnoxious "double" the Dauphin, speak English. Continuously raising a spectre of ungrammatical enormity, this irony complicates our response to Henry's heroism: How is it that Henry is like Pistol, or *his* double, Falstaff, or the Dauphin? Who said "*Owy, cupple gorge, permafoy*"? Watching the *Henriad* is like entering a dizzyingly complex hall of mirrors, and, if I am right about the sequence's epic design, Shakespeare's Protestant reclamation of Henry's status as spiritual hero must hinge on the mirror-like relationship between Henry and his foil-like doubles. As I will discuss more fully in the next chapter, this is precisely what happens. In a way that substantiates Shakespeare's Foxean irony, Henry's disturbing affiliations with a series of explicitly popish figures of enormity are the clouds that threaten to strangle him. At the same time, however, and in a way consistent with Shakespeare's countervailingly optimistic solar leitmotif, Hal's spiritual *difference* from them enables Shakespeare to *dramatize* Henry V's sun-like reformation at Agincourt.

What I am attempting to acknowledge here is that, broadly speaking, the whole structure of contrapuntal irony which characterizes the *Henriad* is an *historical* metaphor which points to Foxean history. As in the Duplex Festum and the image of apostasy latent in the "clamour of the papists" discussed above, Foxe's apocalyptic anatomy of the "latter days" is a massive exemplification of the resurgent historical conflict between godly unity and Satantic popish *duplicity*—Una, for readers of Spenser, and Duessa. Especially insofar as he is reflected in his egregious doubles, Shakespeare's Henry threatens to emerge onstage as a kind of ultimate royal embodiment of this satanic duplicity, as a modern English Amurath/not-Amurath. This "warlike Harry" surprises us, however, when, stepping forward "like himself" at Agincourt, he emerges not as yet another popish crusader in the Foxean sense, but, like an English Zisca, as a figure of godly unity and true Christian militancy.

*

As outlined earlier, in the traditional Prodigal Prince legend Henry V undergoes a miraculously sudden religious conversion at his coronation and under the spiritual auspices of the prelacy. Returning to his father/mother the church, Henry becomes a Prince of Priests, and this new identity is confirmed by his gloriously providential crusade in France. There is a pretend reformation in *1-2HenryIV*, and we are allowed to glimpse this fraudulent myth itself coming into being in *Henry V*, but this miraculous *Catholic* regeneration of the new King is not what happens in the *Henriad*. Hal's repudiation of Falstaff is anything but unlooked-for, and it is redolent of anything but spiritual rebirth and renewal. Similarly, in the crucial opening scenes of *Henry V*, Shakespeare seems determined to portray Henry's war as a corrupt popish adventure. However, while Shakespeare follows Foxe in using irony to undermine the legend, he also appropriates one of Foxe's most effective rhetorical strategies by

*preserving* the myth itself and re-deploying it in order to discover the preservation/rebirth and recovery of the true Christian spirit *elsewhere*. There is a godly Prodigal Prince in the play, and Shakespeare could hardly be clearer about where, and under whose spiritual auspices, his miraculous conversion occurs. Adapting the Prodigal Prince myth's spiritual loci for Protestant purposes, Shakespeare reclaims the idea of a sudden and miraculous royal regeneration by moving it away from the resplendent English court, and out of the hands of the scheming prelates, and relocating it onto the battlefield. By making the abject Henry's remarkable moonlight conventicle on the eve of Agincourt, rather than priestly sacraments and ceremony, the *surprising* linchpin of his spiritual transformation and the key to his *astonishing* providential victory, Shakespeare restores and revitalizes the myth by dramatizing—and Protestantizing—the providential image of a newly sanctified warrior king. While Shakespeare never allows his negative perspectives on the king to disappear—Henry is always a dutiful son of the Church—he insists nevertheless that Henry was—like Zisca—indelibly marked as the unlooked-for beneficiary of the regenerative power of Grace.

How can Henry be like Zisca? As we have seen, Foxe's digression on Zisca and the Hussite wars generates a surprising, for Foxe, image of the true Christian warrior as a warrior. And, in a devastatingly ironic parallel, Foxe insists that Henry V is an irredeemably "profane" example of a popish crusader and the complete spiritual antithesis of the true Christian chivalry exemplified by Zisca and his followers. Setting aside his usual insistence upon the pacifism of the godly in the face of Antichristian aggression and persecution, Foxe commends the extreme violence committed by the Hussites by presenting them as paradoxically invincible and ruthless, but also martyr-like, underdogs, and by continuously contrasting the

surprising unity, courage, and military discipline of Zisca's peasant army with the equally startling spiritual divisiveness, cowardice, and villainy of the marauding papal "crusaders." Thus, while he is totally partisan, Foxe does not make his case by "whitewashing" the Taborites, who, as the image of Zisca's drum suggests, remain frighteningly barbaric, or by covering-up the fact that, just like his enemies, Zisca engages in a "warlike policy" of wholesale slaughter and destruction. Rather, Foxe presents readers with a bifurcated or dichotomous image of modern siege warfare in which everything depends on the providential imprimatur: by stressing the seeming impossibility of the Taborites' invincibility, by contrasting their similarly unlooked-for unity with the degraded and chaotic behaviour of the knightly crusaders, and by insisting that Hussite violence is always honourably defensive—and indeed in defense of honour—Foxe discovers a kind of surprising Lollard-like chivalry hidden in the horrible details of modern seige warfare.

This is divine alchemy, but it works in two ways: the apparent chivalry of the papal crusaders is revealed as slavishly popish butchery whereas, although they fight with wagons and pitchforks rather than warhorses in mercilessly slaughtering their aristocratic foes, the men and women of Zisca's peasant army are revealed as the true chivalric defenders of Christendom. Foxe's account is not a source for the details of Shakespeare's depiction of Henry's campaign, nor is Shakespeare's character somehow meant to be an allegorical representation of the Bohemian general. Nevertheless, a full appreciation of the artistry of the *Henriad* depends upon recognizing—in that intertextual "quick forge and working house of thought"(*Henry V.* 5.0.24) described by the Chorus—the way Shakespeare evokes Foxe's castigatory perspective on the king while, simultaneously, imbuing Henry and his band of brothers with the aura of providential spiritual legitimacy and power that Foxe had

denied Henry and had attributed to Zisca and the Bohemians. Like Foxe's Taborites, Henry and his forces are ennobled by being made abject and by winning an incredibly providential *defensive* victory in the midst of what has seemed like a dishonorably aggressive imperialistic "crusade." Transforming the unimaginably resplendent—and faintly absurd—image of Henry's "fleet majestical" into the palpably real and truly impressive group of "vile and ragged foils" who, desperately trying to get home, emerge victorious at Agincourt, Shakespeare allows his audience to witness an English version of the spiritual "marvel" witnessed by the German citizens who thronged to see the invincibly rag-tag peasant army of Zisca and Procopius in procession:

> Behold, the English beach
> Pales in the flood with men, maids, wives, and boys,
> Whose shouts and claps out-voice the deep mouthed sea,
> Which like a mighty whiffler 'fore the King
> Seems to prepare his way. So let him land,
> And solemnly see him set on to London.
> So swift a pace has thought that even now
> You may imagine him upon Blackheath;
> Where that his lords desire him to have borne
> His bruised helmet and his bended sword
> Before him through the city. He forbids it,
> Being free from vainness and self-glorious pride;
> Giving full trophy, signal, and ostent,
> Quite from himself to God. (5.0.9-22)

Shakespeare's audience did not, of course, need Foxe to imagine the triumphant procession of a humbly pious warrior. Shakespeare does not pretend that Henry literally converted to Protestantism nor, as in *King John*, does he emphasize the Catholicism of the French as such.[18] This would be nonsensical, not surprising or wonderful. What he does do, however, is urge his audience to think about Henry's triumph "solemnly," "prompting" them, as the Chorus puts it, to see Henry's

transfigured theatrical identity in terms of the antithetical spiritual categories which inform Foxe's account of the Hussite wars.

As we have seen, in addition to contrasting the true Godly and false Popish warrior, Foxe presents his readers with two images of a triumphal pageant. One is disgracefully popish and ungodly, and it is the one that the French King hopes for when he imagines "spit[ting] and void[ing] his "rheum" into Henry's face and dragging him "in a captive chariot into Roan"(3.6.52-3). The other kind, while ostensibly lowly and degraded, is suffused with the martyr-like humility of the true Christian warrior and the gracefulness of the Holy Spirit. Although Shakespeare's on-stage procession after the battle of Agincourt is, like Pope Martin's pageant, accompanied by a Catholic "Te Deum," it has no spiritual affinities whatsoever with the images of Catholicism we have seen thus far in the *Henriad.* Although he dies yearning for crusading glory, the piously Catholic Bolingbroke would be entirely out of place here, and so would Henry's scheming Archbishops, because "besmirch'd" as he is "[w]ith rainy marching in the painful field" (4.3.110-11) the triumphant Henry V is, in effect, no longer a member of their church. Transformed by divine alchemy, he embodies the miraculously "glittering reformation" of the degraded Lancastrian spirituality those figures represent.

This resonance between Foxe's image of the victorious Taborites and the theatrical presence of Shakespeare's victorious "band of brothers" exemplifies Shakespeare's use of the Foxean intertext to simultaneously becloud and recuperate Henry's image as pious warrior king in *Henry V.* Henry's victory hinges, as discussed above, on his cold-blooded massacre of defenseless prisoners—in other words precisely the kind of thing Foxe's readers might expect from a crusading modern tyrant—and in this Foxean light Henry's claim to have won "without stratagem" and

by God's "arm alone" (4.8.107-8) appears as pure pseudo-Christian hypocrisy. And yet, what is also undeniable, I think, is the aura of authentic, and authentically Protestant, spiritual righteousness which suffuses Shakespeare's presentation of Henry in and after his triumph. "Like father like son" here gives way to a sense of Henry as so utterly unlike his hypocritically crusading dad that he seems in fact to be a "changeling." Or, to use the terms which I used earlier to describe the transformation of York in *3HenryVI*, Henry has a new *role* to play, which is something like the English Zisca. Thus, much as Foxe's Oldcastle can be found haunting Shakespeare's depiction of Prince Hal and Falstaff, intimations of Foxe's Zisca can be found throughout Shakespeare's account of the French campaign. Moreover, once we see Henry "like himself" at Agincourt, we are forced, retrospectively, to reconsider our estimation of his earlier career, and what is particularly interesting is that the Foxean intertext emerges or is engaged precisely at those points where Shakespeare's ostensibly heroic representation of the king's exploits is most perplexed by intimations of Enormity.

For example, Foxe's arresting story of Zisca's drum—a rather extreme instance of renaissance self-fashioning not discussed by Professor Greenblatt—is echoed in the surprisingly barbaric language Henry employs in his angry response to the ransom offer in Act Four. Suing for peace, Mountjoy piously imagines the impending death of the wretched English soldiers, with their "poor bodies…ly[ing] and fester[ing]" in the field (4.4.88-89) in humane and soteriologically credible terms as something entirely to be avoided. Henry, however, follows Zisca in affirming the paradoxical superiority of treating one's corpse like carrion:

> Bid them achieve me, and then sell my bones.
> Good God, why should they mock poor fellows thus?
> The man that once did sell the lion's skin
> While the beast lived, was killed with hunting him.

A many of our bodies shall no doubt
Find native graves; upon the which, I trust,
Shall witness live in brass of this day's work.
And those that leave their valiant bones in France,
Dying like men, though buried in your dunghills,
They shall be fam'd; for there the sun shall greet them,
And draw their honours reeking up to heaven,
Leaving their earthly parts to choke your clime,
The smell whereof shall breed a plague in France.
Mark then abounding valor in our English:
That being dead, like to the bullet's crasing,
Break out into a second course of mischief,
Killing in relapse of mortality. (4.3.92-107)

In addition to the important question of what Henry means by "mock"—Mountjoy does not appear to be mocking anyone here—our response to Henry's vaunting courage is complicated, as I noted above, by the apparently damning parallel Shakespeare invokes between Henry's carelessness and Falstaff's cavalier treatment of his men as canon-fodder in *1HenryIV*. Falstaff's surprisingly apocalyptic depiction of his men as "slaves as ragged as Lazarus in the painted cloth" and the report of the "mad fellow" who sees them as an army of walking corpses (*1HenryIV* 4.2.11-48) returns here in an enigmatically compelling way—why is Henry like Falstaff?—which energizes Henry's speech by disturbing any easy or conventional acceptance of Henry's vaunting. We should catch, moreover, an echo of Henry's disturbing carnality discussed earlier: is this a king or a mad butcher? To stop there, however, as modern critics so often do, is to miss the point of Shakespeare's irony. Henry recalls Falstaff, but with a powerful sense of difference: Henry offers *himself* up to slaughter, and he prays, desperately, for the bodies and souls of his men. With his withering glance at Catholic relic-mongering, Henry's vaunt echoes not the corrosive and cowardly materialism of Falstaff's famous battlefield "catechism"—"honor is a mere scutcheon"(*1HenryIV* 5.1.140-1)—but rather the Lollard-like materialism of Zisca. Like Zisca, Henry *refuses* to confuse carnal and spiritual categories; his courage,

which is, again, totally unFalstaffian, is grounded in his unwavering assurance that *God* will safeguard the heroic memory of him and his men in their ostensibly ignoble ends.[19]

At the same time, what is perhaps most striking about Henry's speech here is the way he exalts what might seem like ignoble or infamous battlefield tactics by confusing or eliding them with the highest spiritual ends, but does so in a way which seems to embody the exact opposite of the Falstaffian spirit. For example, whereas Falstaff's half-naked scarecrows "find linen enough on every hedge"(*1HenryIV* 4.2.47-8), Henry boasts that he and his filthy and "slovenry" men will either gain "fresher robes"—that is, martyrs' robes in heaven—or they will steal the "gay new coats"(114-18) off the dead French soldiers. More overtly shocking, of course, is Henry's suggestion that the rotting corpses of his men will, by virtue of the same providence that transports their souls to heaven, be turned into a kind of early modern chemical weapon. Disturbingly impious at first glance, Henry's images of "working-day" warfare reveal a very different aspect when reflected in Foxe's account of the Hussite wars. Foxe repeatedly notes that the impoverished Hussites armed and clothed themselves by despoiling the papal crusaders, and, in one of his account's most horrible episodes, he describes in detail how Zisca once used rotting corpses as artillery:

> The seige continued six months, and the assault never ceased day and night. Five great slings threw continually great stones over the walls, and about two thousand vessels, tubs, or baskets, filled with dead carcasses and other excrements, were cast in amongst those who were beseiged; which thing did infect them with stench, that their teeth did either fall out or were all loose. (3.554)

Foxe is perfectly aware of the grossly unchivalrous nature of this "warlike policy of Zisca" (554gloss). He includes it, in fact, to make his larger case about providential

warfare: in God's causes it is the divine will that makes both right and might and, in order to witness such things properly, we have to look at them with spiritual, rather than carnal, eyes. However, rather than simply spelling this out, Foxe gives his readers the opportunity to make this spiritual discovery for themselves by carefully seeding this image of a battlefield atrocity with a series of prior references to the imprisonment and maltreatment of Huss and Jerome at the Counsel of Constance. Violating the promise of safe-conduct which had been granted to him, Huss' enemies imprison him in

> the house of the precentor of the church of Constance, where he was kept prisoner by the space of eight days; from thence he was carried unto the Jacobites, hard by the river Rhine, and was shut up in the prison of the abbey, which was hard by the bogardes. [gloss: Imprisonment and sickness of John Huss] After he had been enclosed there a certain time, he fell sore sick of an ague, by means of the stench of the place, and became so weak that they despaired of his life....[John Huss waxeth faint and weary] Thus they were all so grievous and troublesome unto him that he waxed faint and weary, for he had passed all the night before without sleep, through the pain of his teeth. (3. 436, 482)[20]

Although this kind of providential thinking is hard for modern readers to appreciate, for Foxe the parallel between the fetor which afflicts Huss' teeth in prison and the noxious stench which infects the teeth of Zisca's besieged victims is a credible sign of divine judgment and an example of cosmic irony which justifies the viciousness of Zisca's strategy in light of the prior mistreatment of Huss. In addition to a strikingly literal example of "a tooth for a tooth," what Foxe wants readers to see here is how the extreme degradation inflicted by Zisca on his besieged foes is justified, in the providential sense of the term, on several levels. Transforming ignominious strategy into a powerful image of providential "just deserts," Foxe tacitly interprets Zisca's corrosive and pestilent artillery as a literal embodiment of the divisive popish doctrine which has infected Christendom and, at the same time,

represents Zisca's strategy as a reflection of the leitmotif of Antichristian spirituality as cannibalistic human butchery. Thus, with his distinctively grim providential irony, Foxe's God employs Zisca's army in order to serve his beleaguered and presumably famished opponents a grotesque meal of human flesh even as he makes it impossible for them to eat it. Similarly, and most importantly for our purposes, what is crucial for Foxe is the way that Zisca's brutal military stratagems are as a whole justified—made "good and religious" in Sibbes' terms—when viewed in light of the spirit of Antichristian mockery and derision that Foxe has already exposed in his account of Huss and Jerome's treatment at the hands of the Counsel of Constance. As we will see, Foxe's papal crusaders are not just defeated by the Hussites, they are thoroughly degraded by them, so that, with characteristic providential symmetry, the Antichristian desire to scandalize Huss and Jerome is revisited on their antagonists, only this time with the awesome and irresistible power of God.

Although the real prominence of this theme in Foxe's account is impossible to capture in paraphrase, the ceremonial degradation of the martyr Huss discussed earlier is the climax of an extended narrative which hammers incessantly on the way the spirit of Antichrist is revealed in the continuous way Huss and Jerome are "laughed…to scorn"(470), "mocked and derided"(455), and subjected to the "slanderous reproach and defamation"(512) at the hands of their popish tormentors.[21] Foxe's detailed and repetitive account of the debates surrounding the condemnations of Huss and Jerome might seem to be devoid of dramatic interest—indeed almost unreadably dull to anyone other than a particular kind of theologian. However, by continuously alluding to the scornful and derisive laughter of Huss' tormentors, and moreover by contrasting that spirit of vicious mockery with the sober but movingly cheerful godliness of Huss and Jerome, Foxe effectively *dramatizes* the events by

portraying them as a clash between spiritually symbolic *characters*. And, by centering his account on this symbolic characterization, Foxe also effectively transforms the abstract and wide-ranging theological debate into one enormous "mockery" of God, an extraordinary outrageous violation of God's honour which is the direct cause, so to speak, of the Providential "counter-mock" wherein the flower of Catholic chivalry is degraded and destroyed at the hands of Zisca's peasant army.

As noted above, Foxe portrays Zisca's insurgency as an essentially chivalric defense of the national honour of Bohemia. Immediately after the killing of Huss and Jerome (and Oldcastle), Foxe writes, there "stepped forth a certain noble man named Zisca...who, from his youth upward, was brought up in the king's court, and had lost one of his eyes in battle, where he had valiantly borne himself." "This man," Foxe writes, was "sore aggrieved for the death of John Huss and Jerome of Prague" and determined to "revenge the injuries the council had done greatly to the dishonour of the kingdom of Bohemia" (549). However, rather than the chivalric trial by combat which Foxe's language might lead us to expect, Foxe presents an image of a kind of butchery in which Zisca and his forces, using any means possible, slaughter their foes like cattle. Descending upon the "complices and adherents" of the Counsel, Zisca

> gathered together a number of men of war, and subverted the monasteries and idolatrous temples, pulling down and breaking in pieces the images and idols, driving away the priests and monks, who, he said, were kept up in their cloisters, like swine in their sties, to be fatted. (549)

As Foxe portrays it, Zisca's violence goes beyond this iconclastic destruction and the murder of these seemingly marginally guilty priests to include the slaughter of anyone who opposes him and in what seem like acts of impious violence:

> he went into Austi, a town situate upon the river Lauschnitz, out of which town Procopius and Ulricius, two brethren papists, had cast out many protestants. This town Zisca took by force of arms *the first night of Lent*, rased it, and set it on fire. He took also the castle of Litius, which was a mile off,

> whither Ulricius was fled, and put Ulricius and all his family to the sword, saving one only. (550; my emphasis)

Not only does Foxe's Zisca murder innocent women and children, he compounds this unchivalrous "policy" by using women as soldiers.

> While these things were doing, Zisca, having quitted Pilsen according to the treaty, was twice assaulted by his enemies, but through his tactics came off victor. The places where they fought were rough and unknown; his enemies were on horseback, and his own men on foot, neither could there be any battle fought but on foot. [gloss: The policy of Zisca] Whereupon, when his enemies were alighted from their horses, Zisca commanded the women who customably followed the host to cast their handkerchiefs upon the ground, wherein the horseman being entangled by their spurs, were slain before they could disentangle their feet. (550)

While it would be easy enough to mine these passages for ideological contradictions lurking in Foxe's text, what I would stress instead is his mastery over apparently intractable materials. Foxe knows how frightening and alien Zisca will appear in the eyes of his readers, and he knows what is at stake in representing the slaughter of aristocrats at the hands an army of bloody peasants. Portraying a providential backlash *which is supposed to be horrible and frightening*, Foxe boldly uses paradox—Zisca's barbaric chivalry—to make his providential argument more forcefully. God's awful might and majesty is amplified precisely because the Taborite leader is such an unlikely Paladin. God can do anything, and his judgments are beyond question. What is more, by virtue of his careful manipulation of exact providential symmetries—that is, by portraying Zisca's bloody fury as a consequence of the sins of the imperial and papal authorities—Foxe absolves his hero of any real infamy by translating all of it onto the backs of his overweening victims. Zisca's barbaric "policy" is a reflection of the true spiritual state of his false-knightly opponents, and so while the Taborites man the machinery, it is their enemies who bury themselves in poisonous offal; the Hussite men and women cut the throats of the

fallen horsemen, but only because these false knights have gotten caught on their own spurs. And, in a concluding echo of the degradation and murder of Huss, the crusading warrior-priest Cardinal Julian is "at last slain in war, and being spoiled of all his attire, [is] left naked in the field"(3.701). As this last image suggests, the chivalric idea behind Foxe's military narrative is not trial by combat—Huss has already won in that arena—but rather the providential exposure of an entire culture of false knights whose mockery of divine honour is not so much in question as it is due for exposure and punishment.[22]

While it might seem remote from Shakespeare's portrayal of Henry's French campaign, Foxe's account of the Hussite wars is a crucial intertextual lens which allows playgoers to see Henry solemnly, so to speak, and to understand what is at stake in the redemption of Shakespeare's unredeemable hero. For example, Henry's seemingly incongruous reference to Mountjoy's "mock," noted earlier, is not in fact incongruous because the idea of mockery and its awful providential consequences is a leitmotif which runs through Shakespeare's portrayal of the French campaign. Crucially, Shakespeare uses Henry's angry response to the Dauphin's derisive "gift" of tennis balls in Act One to disentangle Henry's motivation for going to war from his own "tranquillized" conscience and from the schemes of the corrupt clergymen:

> We are glad the Dolphin is so pleasant with us,
> His present and your pains we thank you for.
> When we have matched our rackets to these balls,
> We will in France, by God's grace, play a set
> Shall strike his father's crown into the hazard....
>
> But tell the Dolphin I will keep my state,
> Be like a king, and show my sail of greatness
> When I do rouse me in my throne of France.
> For that I have laid by my majesty,
> And plodded like a man for working days;
> But I will rise there with so full a glory
> That I will dazzle all the eyes of France,
> Yea, and strike the Dolphin blind to look on us.

> And tell the pleasant Prince this mock of his
> Hath turn'd his balls to gun-stones, and his soul
> Shall stand sore charged for the wasteful vengeance
> That shall fly with them; for many a thousand widows
> Shall this his mock mock out of their dear husbands;
> Mock mothers from their sons, mock castles down;
> And some are yet ungotten and unborn
> That shall have cause to curse the Dolphin's scorn.
> But all this lies within the will of God,
> To whom I do appeal, and in whose name
> Tell you the Dolphin I am coming on
> To venge me as I may, and to put forth
> My rightful hand in a well-hallowed cause.
> So get you hence in peace; and tell the Dolphin
> His jest will savor but of a shallow wit,
> When thousands weep more than did laugh at it. (1.2.259-63; 273-296)

The power of this rousing speech in the theatre is not in question, but what needs to be underlined is that the real theatrical *tour de force* here is the way that Shakespeare effectively dispels the spectral cloud of popish illegitimacy which he has attached to Henry's crusade by, paradoxically, intimating that Henry's real motivation is the aristocratic urge to seek revenge for a slight to his personal honour.[23] This is difficult to paraphrase, but if we read it in terms of normative Tudor political ethics—in which code, as Henry himself makes clear, warmongering for personal reasons would constitute a major sin—the tennis ball episode should further *erode* our sense of the righteousness of Henry's cause. The effect is precisely the opposite, however, because, in presenting it in such strikingly hyperbolic terms, Shakespeare transforms Henry's aristocratic impulse towards personal vengeance into something like an image of the awesome retributive justice of God. Albeit fleetingly, what we see here is a Hotspur-like modern aristocratic *hauteur* transfigured by the conjunction of Henry's royal will with the Will of God. Simultaneously, Henry's very familiar and very unsettling sense of *certainty*—

> I will redeem all this on Percy's head,
> And in the closing of some glorious day

> Be bold to tell you I am your son,
> When I will wear a garment all of blood,
> And stain my favours in a bloody mask
> Which washed away shall scour my shame with it (*1HenryIV*. 3.2.132-7)—

returns here, only now it seems to adumbrate a renascent sense of total *assurance* about himself as the vehicle of God's punitive power, a punitive power which is energized, so to speak, by the despicable ignobility of "all prais'd knights" and "child[ren] of honour and renown"(139-40) like Hotspur and the Dolphin. Henry is both shamed and angered by the derisive mocking of the Dauphin, but what he and we feel surging in him is the power of Divine Retribution. Having discredited Henry's French campaign in its Catholic aspect, Shakespeare justifies it by casting it in the light of a spiritually chivalric defense of honour. War is God's beadle, Henry says, and just as in Foxe's account of Zisca's triumphs, one of the things that is powerfully punished in Henry's crusade is the spirit of derisive and impious mockery that suffuses the play.

Mocking God by deriding his agents, Foxe's crusaders literally mock their castles down and slit their own throats. This providential motif is fundamental to the intertextual link with Foxean history, a dramatic effect which hinges on our ability to recognize how Shakespeare's boldly drawn contrast between the spiritually ennobling abjectification of the English and the disgraceful pseudo-chivalric elevation of the French evokes the spiritual categories of Foxe's account of the popish "crusade" against the Bohemians. While the idea that the victorious English forces were desperately outnumbered at Agincourt was a given, the extent to which Shakespeare contrasts the state of the "poor condemned English" and the "confident and overlusty French" (4.0. 22,18) is too full of wonder, of Bishop's "sense of sense as veiled or layered in too much possibility" to be taken as a straightforward or "realistic"

depiction of this historiographical donnée. What Shakespeare does, in fact, is to organize his source materials in a way which suggestively recreates the dichotomous spiritual realities underlying Foxe's account of the Hussite wars. As noted earlier, the central emphasis in Foxe's account is the astonishing contrast between the abject but invincible Bohemians and the paradoxically impotent puissance of the papal crusaders. After the death of Zisca, Foxe writes,

> there was great fear, sorrow, and lamentation in their [the Hussite's] army, the soldiers accusing fortune which gave over such an invincible captain to be overcome with death [gloss: The army of Zisca divided]...whereupon they, choosing out certain to serve the wars, named themselves 'Orphans'.... And albeit that oftentimes there was dissension among them, yet whensoever any foreign power came towards them, they joined their powers together in one camp, and defended themselves. They seldom went into any fenced towns, except it were to buy necessaries, but lived with their wives and children in their camps and tents. (3:572-3)

Against this fearful and divided congeries of vagabond-like "orphans," Foxe pits an absurdly supernumerary army of papal crusaders, a force which seems to consist entirely of secular and ecclesiastic princes mounted on warhorses:

> Then Pope Martin, perceiving the gospel to increase daily more and more, sent the Cardinal of Winchester, an Englishman, born of a noble house, into Germany, to move them unto war against Bohemians; whereunto the emperor also did assist him. There were three armies provided. In the first army were the Dukes of Saxony, and the Hanseatic towns. The second army, which was gathered of the Franconians, was under the conduct of the marquis of Brandenburg. The third army was led by Otho, archbishop of Treves, whom the Rhenates, the Bavarians, and the Imperial cities of Suabia followed....[gloss: The number of the pope's army against the Bohemians] In this expedition were Albert and Christopher of Bavaria, and Frederick, the Duke of Saxony; John and Albert, princes of Brandedburg, and Eichstat; also the knights of Suabia, whom they called the knights companion of St. George; and the magistrates of the imperial cities; the Archbishops of Mentz, Treves, and Cologne sent their aids, and with them the chief men of their provinces. It is said that the number of their horsemen was above forty thousand; but their footmen were not full so many, for the Germans, for the most part, do use to fight their battles on horseback. (574-4)

Demonstrating his mastery of ironic historical narrative, Foxe amplifies the contrast between the seemingly irresistible worldly power of these noble crusaders and the corresponding weakness of the lowly Taborites in order to demonstrate the true spiritual reality—and the real asymmetry in power relations—behind the conflict. When confronted by these fearful and divided, but divinely elected, "orphans," it is the crusading knights who are exposed as miscreants and cowardly villains and who are mercilessly slaughtered.

Thus, under the telling gloss "God rescueth his people newly converted," Foxe describes how:

> these armies entering into Bohemia in three several parts...joined together and pitched before Meiss. This town a certain learned and eloquent protestant...the night before had won from the papists; wherefore the army was determined first to recover that city before they would go any further. But when news came to the host, how the protestants had gathered an army, and were coming at all speed towards them; they fled before they saw their enemies, and went unto Tachau leaving behind their warlike engines, with a great prey. [Gloss: The pope's army flieth] The cardinal was not yet come unto the camp, but meeting them in their flight...he marvelled at the cowardly flight of so many noble and valiant men, desiring them that they would turn again unto their enemies who, he said, were far weaker then [sic] they. [Gloss: like captain like soldiers] Which thing when he had long travailed about in vain, he was fain to be a companion with them in their flight. They were scarcely entered the wood, when the Bohemians, coming upon them, set upon their rearward. Then was their flight much more disordered and fearful than before, neither did they leave flying, before the Bohemians left following. (574)

This scene, in which the crusaders are literally baffled as their impressive *chevalrie* evaporates into cowardly riot and disorder, happens again and again in Foxe's account. Under the gloss "God striketh fear into the pope's army," Foxe writes that

> In the mean season there fell such a marvellous sudden fear amongst the papists throughout the whole camp, that they began most shamefully to run away before any enemy appeared in sight. The cardinal Julian, marvelling at this most sudden fear, and what should move such a great army to flee, went about unto the captains exhorting them to put on armour, to order their battel, and courageously to abide their enemies...'How ignominious a thing it is,' saith he, 'for the Germans to fly in battle, whose courage and valiantness all the world doth extol. It were much better to die, than to give place to any enemies before

> they are seen; for they can by no means live in safety within the walls, who give place unto their enemy in the field; for it is the weapon that defendeth a man and not walls; and except they would even presently defend their liberty with the sword, they should shortly perish, or be in bondage more miserable than any death. [gloss: The Cardinal's army run away for fear] But this exhortation was all in vain, for fear had overcome the sense of shame; for the ensigns were snatched up, and, as though there had been no captain in the host, every man ran headlong away. No man regarded any commandment, neither once took his leave of his comrade, but, casting away their armour, with speedy flight they ran away, as though their enemy had been at their backs...Thus the protestants, by the fear of their enemies made more bold and courageous, pursued them through the woods and had a great prey and spoil of them. (576)

Like Falstaff, Foxe's popish crusaders are "cowards on instinct," but their sudden and inexplicably total loss of courage and military discipline is also an unmistakably providential "marvel": it is the precise antithesis of the providential unity, courage, and military discipline demonstrated in battle by the Taborites, and the spiritual opposite of the aura of righteous holiness which surrounds them in triumph.

However, while Foxe casts the crusaders as a sort of cowardly providential fools—and, as food for worms—they are anything but harmlessly foolish or comic. Rather, insisting on the difference between two spiritually antithetical types of modern violence, Foxe contrasts the righteous slaughter committed by the Hussites with the battlefield atrocities committed by the fleeing papal armies. "After this," Foxe writes,

> the Cardinal entered into Bohemia with a huge army, and destroyed many of the protestants' towns, killing men, women, and children, sparing neither old nor young; notwithstanding, this his tyranny was exercised in the uttermost borders of Bohemia, for his captains feared to enter far into the land. (575)

Similarly, Foxe describes how Albert, Prince of Austria

> when he understood how the cardinal was fled, he left off his purpose, and returned through Moravia, which was not yet subject unto him, and destroyed above five hundred towns with fire and sword, took many of their cities by force, and spoiled them, committing great murder and slaughter. (576)

Like Zisca, the papal crusaders "commit great murder and slaughter," but the nature of that violence is, at least according Foxe, totally different. To use Shakespeare's terms, whereas Zisca is God's "beadle," and executes God's "vengeance" in a spirit of godly righteousness, the papal crusaders are despicable "lofty runaways," whose lack of grace is revealed in their characteristically cowardly, chaotic, and vicious acts.

These dichotomies are perhaps easily deconstructed; however, if our goal is to understand why Shakespeare found Foxean history so intellectually and artistically engaging, it is more illuminating to note how effectively Foxe *constructs* them in order to transform the realities of modern siege warfare into a persuasively symbolic providential narrative. "The Bohemians," Foxe concludes, "were strong enough against all their enemies, till at length, through discord...taking sides one against the other, they made their enemies strong, and enfeebled themselves." What has to be noted, Foxe reiterates, is that

> in their own defence, and in the quarrel of John Huss and Jerome of Prague, provoked by their catholic adversaries to war, fighting under Zisca their captain, had eleven battles with the pope's side and ever went away victors...pope Martin V., sending for the bishop of Winchester, then Cardinal, had levied three main armies, intending to overrun all the Bohemians; one army of the Saxons under the prince elector; the second of the Francones, under the marquis of Brandenburg; the third of Rhenates, Bavarians, and Switzers, under Otho, archbishop of Treves. With these, Sigismund also, the emperor, and cardinal Julian, the pope's legate (who was at last slain in war, and being spoiled of all his attire, was left naked in the field), joined with all their force; who, joining together five times (saith the story), with five sundry battles, assailed and invaded the Bohemians; at every such battle, five times the said adversaries, stricken and daunted with a sudden fear, ran away out of the field, leaving their tents with all their implements and furniture behind them; whereby it may appear that holy angels do fight for them who embrace the sincere doctrine of Christ's gospel. Thus the Bohemians, through the mighty protection of Almighty God, continued a long time invincible, during all the life of Zisca, and also of Procopious, till, at length, through discord growing between them and their captains...they were subdued unto their enemies. (3.701)

Exemplified here by the parallel between Foxe's emphasis on the five-to-one odds faced by the Taborites and the "fearful odds" faced by the English at Agincourt—

"There's *five to one*; besides, they all are fresh"(4.3.4-5)—Shakespeare's portrayal of Henry's French campaign is pervaded with a sense of the spiritual sameness connecting Henry with the newly emergent Protestant militancy which Foxe adumbrates in the Zisca and the Hussites. "There is figures in all things," Fluellen says, and this is more than a mere case of "salmons in both." Although he uses the word "Fortune" to mean Providence, Shakespeare's Chorus ends the play on virtually the same note as Foxe:

> Small time; but in that small most greatly lived
> This star of England. Fortune made his sword;
> By which the world's best garden he achieved,
> And of it left his son imperial lord.
> Henry the Sixt, in infant bands crown'd King
> Of France and England, did this king succeed;
> Whose state so many had the managing,
> That they lost France, and made his England bleed; (Epi. 5-12)

More importantly, Shakespeare's staging of Henry's French campaign seems designed continuously to reveal Foxe's providential contrast between the divine aegis under which the Hussites fight and the vitiated spirituality of his doomed Crusaders.

Henry's Zisca-like reply to Mountjoy is one example of this, and the primary locus for Shakespeare's portrayal of the providential realities behind the French campaign is in Henry and his men. Literally reborn on the battlefield, Henry prays to the "God of battles" to "steel [his] soldiers' hearts" (4.1.281), and this is precisely what God does. As we have seen in *Richard II*, however, providence has two hands, and Shakespeare follows Foxe in showing how the same providence that *steels* the hearts of Henry and his men also *steals* the hearts of the French warriors, robbing them of their "mettle" (3.5.15, 29) and turning them into a cadre of ridiculously aristocratic "mockeries" of Henry's heroic band of brothers.

Far from simply reproducing popular stereotypes about the French, Shakespeare's captiously mock-epic portrayal of the French nobles is a lucid dramatic signifier of the same providential reality which Foxe describes in his account of the anti-Hussite crusades: in the crucible of battle, God transforms the French aristocracy into an absurdly chaotic rabble of cowardly villains. For example, the scene of the French King's rousing speech is pure bathos:

> Up, princes, and, with spirit of honour edged
> More sharper than your swords, hie to the field!
> Charles Delabreth, high Constable of France,
> You dukes of Orleance, Bourbon, and of Berri,
> Alanson, Brabant, Bar, and Burgundy,
> Jacques Chatillion, Rambures, Vaudemont,
> Beaumont, Grandpre, Roussi, and Falconbridge,
> [Foix], Lestrake, Bouciqault, and Charolois;
> High dukes, great princes, barons, lords, and [knights],
> For your great seats now quit you of great shames,
> Bar Harry England, that sweeps through our land
> With pennons painted in the blood of Harflew.
> Rush on his host, as doth the melted snow
> Upon the valleys whose low vassal seat
> The Alps doth spit and void his rheum upon.
> Go down upon him, you have power enough,
> And in a captive chariot into Roan
> Bring him our prisoner. (3.5.38-54)

This speech does not, as the Constable asserts, become "the great" (54). As in Foxe, the enumeration of the French titles simply underscores the scale of the English victory which we know will take place. Moved by the King's impressive list of names, the Constable confidently asserts that Henry, "when he shall see our army," will "drop his heart into the sink of fear" (58-9), but this is of course not what happens. Like Foxe's fearful crusaders, who run away even before they confront the Hussites, the super-aristocratic French are already in the process of being transformed into cowardly villains. The King is afraid and he insists that the Dauphin avoid the fighting just as, strikingly, the French do not show up for the battle of Harfleur.

Moreover, in the French King's bathetic image of spitting "rheum" (and there is that pun again) in the face of a defenseless "vassal," *honour* seems to be giving way here to a coarse mocking spirit, a degraded pseudo-aristocratic *hauteur*. This transformation becomes even more palpable in scene seven, where, in contrast with the sober theological conventicle taking place in the English camp, and also with Henry's progressively deepening sense of acting in the sight of God—"Yet forgive me God, / That I do brag thus" (3.6.150-51)—the French engage in an unselfconscious display of grotesque and impious mockery. Where Henry is being born again, and discovering what it means to be a Christian King, the French nobles reveal a debased, almost bestial, spirit of derisive impiety.[24] Besotted with whores and horses, these doomed false-knights are, like Falstaff, a parody of authentic *chevalrie*. Shakespeare is making a scapegoat here, but he is doing more than patronizing the anti-French prejudices of his audience. In dramatizing the degradation of French nobles before our eyes and in the crucible of modern warfare, Shakespeare is creating a mirror in which we are to see the antithetical spiritual transformation of Henry and his band of brothers. "*Le chien est retourné à son propre vomissement, et la truie lavée au bourbier*"(3.7.64-5): Shakespeare could hardly be clearer. The biblical image of the dog returning to its vomit, and of the washed pig wallowing again in the mire, is the precise spiritual antithesis of the Prodigal Son, an image of unregenerate apostasy as opposed to the inevitability of Election symbolized by the reformed Prodigal's return to the father. Associating this spiritually apostate filthiness with the worldly power, seriocomic blood-thirstiness, and arrogance of the French, Shakespeare reclaims the Prodigal Prince myth by casting Henry, now, in the role of redeemed Prodigal whose spiritual elevation is symbolized by his humility, his abjection, and, as in Foxe's account of Zisca, his absolute invincibility in battle.

This providential argument comes fully into view, it seems to me, in the speeches of the Constable and Grandpré in Act Four. Creating a kind of double perspective on the impending battle, Shakespeare shows us—or rather asks us to imagine—both the spectacularly debilitated physical state of the English forces and the corresponding spiritual degradation of their would-be slaughterers:

> Do but behold yon poor starved band,
> And your fair show shall suck away their souls,
> Leaving them but the shales and husks of men.
> There is not work enough for for all our hands,
> Scarce blood enough in all their sickly veins
> To give each naked curtal-axe a stain,
> That our French gallants shall to-day draw out,
> And sheathe for lack of sport. Let us but blow on them,
> The vapour of our valour will o'erturn them.
> 'Tis positive against all exceptions, lords,
> That our superfluous lackeys and our peasants,
> Who in unnecessary action swarm
> About our squares of battle, were enough
> To purge this field of such a hilding foe;
> ...
> For our approach shall so much dare the field,
> That England shall couch down in fear, and yield. (4.2.16-29; 36-37)

Shakespeare's dramatic irony of course hinges on our knowledge that it is the French whose "valour" will turn out to be a "vapour." Like Foxe's, Shakespeare's *cosmic* irony hinges on our recognition that it is providence which causes this to happen. The Constable's image of an army of peasants purging the field in a kind of bloody harvest prefigures the fate of the French forces, many of whom will be mercilessly slaughtered after they have yielded to foes they view as insignificant peasants and beggars. In evoking the scene of an impossibly aristocratic army—even conscripted regulars are "superfluous"—being slaughtered by an invincible rabble, Shakespeare transforms the epic clash between "two mighty monarchies" into something very much like Foxe's Hussite wars. The spiritual dimension adumbrated by Shakespeare's language becomes even more apparent when the Constable is seconded by Grandpré:

> Why do you stay so long, my lords of France?
> Yond island carrions, desperate of their bones,
> Ill-favouredly become the morning field.
> Their ragged curtains poorly are let loose,
> And our air shakes them passing scornfully.
> Big Mars seems bankrout in their beggar'd host,
> And faintly through a rusty beaver peeps.
> The horsemen sit like fixed candlesticks,
> With torch-staves in their hand; and their poor jades
> Lob down their heads, dropping the hides and hips,
> The gum down-roping from their pale-dead eyes,
> And in their pale dull mouths the [gimmal'd] bit
> Lies foul with chaw'd-grass, still and motionless;
> And their executors, the knavish crows,
> Fly oe'r them all, impatient for their hour.
> Description cannot suit itself to words
> To demonstrate the life of such a battle,
> In life so liveless as it shows itself. (4.2.38-55)

The abject state of the English, Grandpré says, is so remarkable that it beggars description: they are not merely peasants and lackeys, but a sort of walking dead. Beyond the stereotype of the arrogant Frenchman, Shakespeare is conjuring here something like a Foxean revelation of the paradoxical hopelessness of worldly powers who set out to traduce the honour of God. It is the French, and not Henry's forces, who are about to become "desperate of their bones":

> For many of our Princes (woe the while!)
> Lie drowned and soaked in mercenary blood;
> So do our vulgar drench their peasant limbs
> In blood of princes, and [their] wounded steeds
> Fret fetlock deep in gore, and with wild rage
> Yerk out their armed heels at their dead masters,
> Killing them twice. O, give us leave, great King,
> To view the field in safety, and dispose
> Of their dead bodies. (4.7.72-83)

In the eyes of an apostate knight errant like Grandpré, "Big Mars" appears "bankrout" because, like an apocalyptic image from Dürer, Shakespeare's "warlike Harry" has assumed "the port of Mars," with "famine, sword, and fire" waiting "for employment" at his command (1.0.5-8). Here again Shakespeare invokes, in a way

which mixes awe with triumph and horror, Foxe's valorization of an army of supernaturally invincible peasants slaughtering an army of "princes" as a way of illustrating what modern warfare is like when God unleashes his power in the form of a royal "beadle." Just as Henry predicted in his speech on mockery, Grandpré is "dazzled" and "blinded" by Henry's appearance, and what he fails to see is that the English king's ineffable abjection is a reflection of his own disgraceful, and hence utterly doomed, chivalry. Grandpré sees an army of dead men and horses on the stage because he and the French are already dead. As in Foxe's account, this spiritual reality is made manifest in the chaos to which the French forces are reduced immediately upon encountering Henry's men. Confronted by Pistol, the mettle of the aptly named *Monsier le Fer/Seigneur Dew* evaporates in front of our eyes in an instant, and this comic surrender is repeated and amplified in the brief but crucial scene (4.7) which shows the collapse of the French army. Like Foxe's Cardinal Winchester, the Dolphin tries desperately to rally his troops but, as in Foxe's account, the French are simply incapable of courage or discipline. Rather, in a parody of the heroic efforts of the English at Harfleur—"Shame and eternal shame!/Let us die! In once more! Back again"(4.5.10-11)—the French forces regroup, so to speak, into a disordered "throng" which, in a paradoxical attempt to avert "Reproach and everlasting shame" (4.5.4), ensures its place in the history of infamy by slaughtering the defenseless boys as it flees the battle (4.7.6).

Foxe is not Shakespeare's source for this atrocity, which he found detailed in *Holinshed's Chronicles*, but Foxe's repeated emphasis on the virtually identical actions of the papal crusaders helps us to see the providential realities Shakespeare is trying to capture. Typically, Shakespeare's staging of Enormity here points beyond his source's realistic appraisal of the French troops' motivation—"either upon a

covetous meaning to gaine by the spoil, or by a desire to be revenged," *Holinshed* reports, some of the fleeing French cavalry "spoiled the hails, robbed the tents, brake up chests, and carried away caskets, and slue such as they found to make any resistance"(Bullough 4.397)—and replaces these mundane speculations with an image of Disorder in which the French passionately abandon themselves to a diabolically chaotic and nihilistic riot:

> *Constable:* Disorder, that hath spoil'd us, friend us now!
> Let us on heaps go and offer up our lives.
> *Orleans*: We are enow yet living in the field
> To smother up the English in our throngs,
> If any order might be thought on.
> *Bourbon*: The Devil take order now! I'll to the throng:
> Let life be short, else shame will be too long! (4.4.17-23)

We have heard this kind of battlefield apostrophe before, for instance, in Jack Cade's "we [are] in order when we are most out of order"(*2HenryVI* 4.2.189-90) speech or, more closely, in the passionate outburst of the rebel lord Northumberland in *2HenryIV*—

> Let Heaven kiss earth! Now let not Nature's hand
> Keep this wild flood confin'd! Let order die!
> And let this world no longer be a stage
> To feed contention in a ling'ring act,
> But let the spirit of the first-born Cain
> Reign in all bosoms, that each heart being set
> On bloody courses, the rude scene may end,
> And darkness be the burier of the dead! (1.1.153-160)—

and so it is clear that what Shakespeare is revealing here is not some notional Gallicism, but rather the diabolic spiritual affinity, that familiarly riotous and histrionic "spirit" of Cain, which links these figures together under the sign of Antichristian modernity.

Strikingly, these spiritual themes come together in the Boy's final comments on Pistol:

> I did never know so full a voice issue from so empty a heart; but the saying is true, "The empty vessel makes the greatest sound." Bardolph and Nym had ten times more valour than this roaring devil i'th'old play, that every one may pare his nails with a wooden dagger, and they are both hang'd and so would this be, if he durst steal anything adventurously. I must stay with the lackeys with the luggage of our camp. The French might have a good prey of us, if he knew of it, for there is none to guard it but boys. (4.4.67-77)

Although this has not been noted, Shakespeare's point here is surely that the French find out about this "good prey" from Pistol, who has already been exposed in an apparent attempt to flee to the French side—"*Qui vous là*"(4.1.35)—and who revels in the idea of a throat-slitting bloodbath: "I will fetch thy rim out at thy throat/In drops of crimson blood"(4.4. 14-15)..."*Owy, cupple gorge, perma foy*" (37)..."As I suck blood, I will some mercy show"(64). Taking us "back" to the spectacularly providential *mise en scene* of the Wars of the Roses plays, Shakespeare once again forces us to reflect upon the historical realities inherent in the metatheatrical image of a clownish stage devil who is capable of shockingly real enormities. Here, however, what has to be grasped is that, much as Foxe does with Zisca's horrible artillery, Shakespeare presents us with two seemingly equivalent but spiritually antithetical images of throat-cutting. That Shakespeare intends some kind of emblematic contrast at the end of Act Four, scene six is hard to avoid: on one side of the stage we witness Henry's men killing their prisoners and, on the other, Pistol as he "*Coup[s] la gorge*" of "Seigneur Dieu." The question is what this highly suggestive action is, finally, meant to suggest.

The killing of the French prisoners is clearly a decisive moment in Shakespeare's portrayal of Henry V. Choosing to leave out the other, less fraught, military tactics that Henry actually employed at Agincourt, Shakespeare centers his account of Henry's victory on a chilling act of asymmetrical violence which would seem to be irredeemably vicious. Or, to put it differently, Henry wins by engaging in

the kind of slaughter that thrills Dick the Butcher, and, as the debate between Fluellen and Gower about Henry's status makes clear, Shakespeare wants his audience to grapple with the fact that Henry's action, like the killing of the defenseless boys by the French, is "expressly against the law of arms…[and] as arrant a piece of knavery…as can be offert." "In your conscience, now," Fluellen demands, and his resonant question surely points to Henry more than the French and encompasses the audience as well as Gower, "is it not?"(4.7.1-4). Moreover, as Gary Taylor emphasizes, Shakespeare further darkens Henry's character at this moment by recalling how the cold-blooded Henry had "turn'd away the fat knight" because he was "full of jests, and gipes, and knaveries, and mocks" (47-9). This is the moment of truth, and it is in this horrific slaughter, far more perhaps than in the battle with Hotspur at Shrewsbury, that Henry's prophetic image of himself wearing "a garment all of blood," staining his "favors in a bloody mask" and yet somehow being "scour[ed] of all [his] shame" is reified on stage.

In making the killing of the prisoners such a dramatic cynosure, Shakespeare makes it easy for us to see the blood and the shame, and indeed the potentially diabolic nature of Henry's disturbingly cold-blooded zeal. What he makes it harder to see, and thus more dramatic when we do see it, is how that blood and shame can in fact be scoured away. As hard as it is to do so, it is at this point that we have to see the action in terms of the *historiographical* leitmotif of a sun-like majesty breaking through clouds of infamy. Shakespeare has made it clear that his epic historical intention is to recuperate Henry's reputation, and, just as Foxe emphasized Zisca's occasionally barbaric "warlike policy," in order more fully to capture his essential godliness, Shakespeare shows his mastery of providential history here by *potentially* equating Henry with Pistol, and thus *potentially* reducing him to the pseudo-

chivalrous, blood-sucking, seriocomic villain that, according to Foxe, history proved him to be, and then scouring this bloody and shameful mask away by making it impossible for us to accept this identification. Henry orders the wholesale massacre of the French prisoners, but he is not a stage devil and he does not revel, as Pistol does, in the blood of his victims. Indeed, Shakespeare carefully accentuates Henry's *dispassionate* attitude at this decisive moment by showing, just prior, how he has been moved to tears by Exeter's pathetically moving account of the deaths of the Duke of York and the Earl of Suffolk. We have seen this hardness before—Henry is, as Taylor urges, the same man who killed Falstaff—but what we see now is not a stony-hearted or heartless villain, but a man who has been graced, for the occasion, with a heart of steel.

Thus, Shakespeare's purpose in intimating that Henry is like Pistol, like the French, and like Foxe's disgraceful Henry V, is to expose more effectively the absolute difference between Henry and his villainous opposites. Branagh is right about Henry because what we see emerging from the clouds of infamy—and from behind that bloody mask—is a stainless and miraculously uncorruptible King whose unflinching and pitiless "mettle" has been transfigured before our eyes in the light of Providential justification. Henry did not learn this at Eastcheap—he prays to the "God of battles" to steel his men's hearts, and to take away, for a moment, their sense of "reckoning," and this is precisely what we see happening in this crucial action. Just as Henry's righteous assurance worked in the "gun stones" speech to disentangle his decision to go to war from the specter of popery and sinfulness, here Shakespeare turns Henry into a man of steel who, like Zisca, embodies the unquestionable righteousness of God's judgments. "*Coupe la gorge*": war is still hell in *Henry V*, but it is also God's beadle. Like Foxe's modern crusaders, Henry's enemies slit their own

throats at Agincourt, and it is their souls, not Henry's, that will "stand sore charged for the wasteful vengeance" he wreaks on them (1.2.282-3). God justifies Henry's actions, absolutely, not because he or they are good. Rather, both he and they are made "good and religious," as the godly preacher Sibbes says, because God chooses to justify them. The theatrical magic that brings this astonishing apotheosis to life on the stage is Shakespeare's, but the real alchemy behind it is God's.

*

*Le chien est retourné à son propre vomissement, et la truie lavée au bourbier*: although he continuously threatens to be, Shakespeare's Henry V is not a washed pig and the enormities of Agincourt are not his disgraceful *bourbier*. Rather, Henry is a Prodigal Son and, in dramatizing his providential victory at Agincourt, Shakespeare reclaims the traditional myth as a symbol of Hope for his English Protestant audiences. Making Henry into a sort of English Zisca, Shakespeare applies the grim providential logic of Foxe's anatomy of modern siege warfare to prove Henry's essentially God-given righteousness. As unpalatable as this might seem, Henry's decisively cold-blooded killing of the French prisoners is a sign of Grace and proof positive that, contrary to Foxe's dismal assessment of Lancastrian history, righteousness still resides in the English Crown. Although he never attains it himself, this is the sun-like majesty Bolingbroke glimpses at Barloughly castle in *Richard II*, and it is this enduring providential support which makes Henry "England's Hope." For Foxe, the Hussites' miraculous victories demonstrate God's approval of Protestant dissent—reclaiming his "Orphans," God renders Zisca's armies invincible while simultaneously baffling the papal crusaders sent to destroy them. The story helps him, moreover, to prove his thesis about the historic continuity of the true church: here, before Luther, is a godly nation which emerges victorious out of the

crucible of Antichristian persecution. These themes—unity, perseverance, and triumph—are, for Foxe, uncharacteristically optimistic in a worldly sense—the good guys not only win, they survive, and even gain a measure of honorable revenge over their tormentors. By the same token, Foxe's emphatic contrast between Zisca's triumphs and the speciously famous victories of Henry V articulate his deep sense of pessimism about England, and in particular about the spiritual potential of the modern English nobility and crown. Thriving *elsewhere*, but driven utterly underground in England, Foxe's true church finds credible protectors in Bohemia, and in godly warrior-princes like Zisca and Procopius who can, for a time, unify the fractious Protestants and defend them from the murderous hatred of Antichrist. Lancastrian England, by contrast, gets Bolingbroke, Henry V, and the carnivalesque human barbecue of the Duplex Festum.

Whereas Foxe insists that the Lancastrian monarchs can only serve as mirrors of "the barbarous and foolish cruelty of such as at that time ruled and governed" (3.581), in revitalizing the Prodigal Prince myth Shakespeare challenges Foxe's pessimism in the theatre by presenting Henry's miraculous transformation into a Zisca-like godly warrior hero. What is more, in translating Henry's apotheosis from the debased English court to the battlefield, Shakespeare boldy re-appropriates Foxe's providential interpretation of Hussite military success and, at the same time, confirms Foxe's claim that the locus for spiritual rebirth was not, as Falstaff believes, the inside of an English church, but rather "abroad" in "angles and corners, as in woods, fields, meadows, pastures, groves, and in caves of the ground" (340). Shakespeare thus resists or qualifies Foxe's wholesale devaluation of the late-medieval crown by insisting—just as Foxe had done with Zisca—that Henry is a hopeful sign of divine approbation and grace in an English warrior king. Furthermore, while Shakespeare

could not, as I noted earlier, portray Henry as anything other than the pious Catholic that he was, he nevertheless tries to substantiate his Protestantized version of the Prodigal legend by interpolating aspects of Foxe's portrayal of the godly Bohemians into the play. Thus, in addition to portraying the enormities of Agincourt as a providentially righteous bloodbath, Shakespeare invests Henry and his followers on the eve of the battle with intimations of that authentically godly spiritual life which, according to Foxe, survived only in Lollards, Bohemians, and other "heretics." Demonstrating his stage's autonomy and historiographical legitimacy, rather than its anomic "radicalism," Shakespeare draws upon the Foxean intertext to fashion the Catholic warrior king into a surprising mirror of the modern Godly Prince.

For example, as noted earlier, Foxe emphasizes the way that, under the auspices of the Duplex Festum, the celebration of Saints' Days had become a kind of diabolically impious spectacle. As a rejoinder to the charge that Foxe had himself made a mockery of the traditional calendar, this polemical theme goes well beyond Foxe's account of 15th-century history, but in the immediate context of the anti-Hussite crusade, Foxe uses this satirical theme to create a clearly dichotomous contrast between godly and ungodly ceremonialism. Thus, directly after his account of Pope Martin's ridiculous St. Martin's day pageant, Foxe writes how the Bohemians, "whom the inward zeal of Christ's word had before inflamed" and "whom their bloody tyranny had before provoked so unjustly":

> partly for the love of John Huss and Jerome their countrymen, partly for the hatred of their malignant papistry, assembling together, first agreed to celebrate a solemn memorial of the death of John Huss and Jerome, decreeing the same to be holden and celebrated yearly; and afterwards, by means of their friends they obtained certain churches of the king, wherein they might freely preach and minister the sacraments unto the congregation. [gloss: a yearly memorial of John Huss and Jerome kept among the Bohemians] (3.548)

In addition to destroying the popish crusaders on the battlefield, Foxe's warlike Bohemians are pictured here restoring a kind of ceremonial dignity to the celebration of Saints' Days. Foxe is not describing the birth of Protestantism, which novelty he would of course deny, but rather the scouring away of degraded popish ceremony by a group of godly warriors intent upon restoring and defending the authentic spirit of godly sacramentalism and the true ceremonialism of the primitive church. This is a continuous emphasis in Foxe's account: the correlative, so to speak, of the Hussites' incredible military prowess and discipline is the orderliness, solemnity, and simplicity of their worship. Coming hard on the heels of Henry's spectacular soliloquy on the vanity of "idol" and "thrice-gorgeous ceremony" (4.1. 240, 266), of his recognition of the limits of sacraments performed by "sad and solemn priests" (301), and, moreover, of the execution of Bardolph for Church-robbery and breach of discipline, Henry's arresting Saint Crispin's day speech recapitulates Foxe's image of the rebirth of Protestant ceremonialism. "It is manifest," Foxe writes,

> what estimation in times past was attributed to martyrs, with what gratulation, rejoicing, mirth, and common joy, the afflictions of those godly, dying in Christ's quarrel, were sometimes received and solemnized; and that not without good reasonable cause. For the Church did well consider how much she was beholden to their benefits, by whose deaths she understood her treasures to increase. [Gloss: Comparison between martyrs of the primitive church and of the later church] Now then if martyrs are to be compared with martyrs, I see no reason why the martyrs of our time deserve any less commendation than the others in the primitive church, which assuredly are inferior unto them in no point of praise....(1. xxvi).

Notably, Henry does not invoke the intercession of the martyred saints, he argues that he and his men will be remembered and celebrated as martyr-heroes:

> We few, we happy few, we band of brothers.
> For he today that sheds his blood with me
> Shall be my brother; be he never so vile,
> This day shall gentle his condition.
> And gentlemen in England now abed
> Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,

> And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
> That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day. (4.3.60-67)

As Zisca does in his Epitaph—and as Foxe does throughout *Acts and Monuments*—Henry insists on the historical reality of "parallel lives": Henry and his men are, or will be, "gentle[d]" like the martyred cobblers Saints Crispin and Crispianus. What needs to be emphasized, I would argue, is the way that this motif becomes explicitly Foxean as it moves from Fluellen's comic classicism to Henry's more profound image of a transhistorical fellowship with primitive martyrs like Crispin and Crispianus. While Henry is speaking like a late-medieval Catholic, Shakespeare's image of "flowing cups" and solemn remembrance is not an image of a Catholic Saints' Day—nor, certainly, is it an image of an arid and joyless "puritanism" or of the inebriation and self-induced amnesia of Eastcheap. Rather, much as in Foxe's account of the solemn memorials inaugurated by the Bohemian warriors, Henry's speech suggests the rebirth, on the battlefield, of something like an authentically Protestant spiritual discipline, a godly order which is symbolized by the "yearly…vigil feast" celebrating the heroic sacrifice of an elect fellowship of modern heroes, an ostensibly "vile" but spiritually ennobled fellowship of modern martyr-warriors.

Quite strikingly, moreover, Henry's prophetic image of what looks like the Reformation in England is preceded by Shakespeare's portrayal of a palpably "born again" English King:

> 'Tis good for men to love their present pains
> Upon example; so the spirit is eased;
> And when the mind is quick'ned, out of doubt,
> The organs, though defunct and dead before,
> Break up their drowsy grave, and newly move
> With casted slough and fresh legerity. (4.1.18-23)

Henry's battlefield rebirth, and the remarkable colloquy with Sir Thomas Erpingham in which it occurs, is a major climax in *Henry V*, and indeed, in the whole of the second Tetralogy. Shakespeare is not trying to claim that Henry V literally converted to Protestantism, or that he was a Lollard, which would make no sense historically speaking. Rather, he portrays Henry as a man who is *experiencing* a kind of religious conversion, who is being remade into *himself* by virtue of God's election and grace, and this conversion is, from the point of view of the audience, manifestly marked as godly in a specifically Protestant sense. This is why, as Gary Taylor *almost* concludes in a lengthy note, Henry's subsequent prayer to the "God of battles" is so manifestly informed by the Reformed doctrine of the absolute worthlessness of specifically Catholic penitential works:

> Not today, O Lord,
> Oh not today, think not upon the fault
> My father made in compassing the crown.
> I Richard's body have interrèd new,
> And on it have bestowed more contrite tears
> Than from it issued forcèd drops of blood.
> Five hundred poor I have in yearly pay,
> Who twice a day their wither'd hands hold up
> Toward heaven, to pardon blood; and I have built
> Two chauntries, where the sad and solemn priests
> Sing still for Richard's soul. More will I do;
> Though all that I can do is nothing worth,
> Since that my penitence comes after all,
> Imploring pardon. (4.1.292-305)[25]

Deliberately darkening Henry's character here by recalling the events surrounding the death of Richard II, Shakespeare pointedly emphasizes the specifically Catholic piety of the guilty Lancastrian usurpers. However, as in the Saint Crispin's Day speech, Shakespeare creates a powerfully Protestant counter image of authentic royal piety here by discovering a level of transfigured Godliness within or underlying Henry's historically Catholic devotion. The crucial distinction Shakespeare makes here is

between "Henry's despair" and his "humility bordering on despair" (300-01). What we are watching is a conversion in which Henry's "despair" about his inherited guilt, and the utter inefficacy of specifically Catholic penitential works to remove it, is replaced by the gift of an excruciating humility and a sense of total assurance about God's power to justify the sinner: "more will I do."

To be clear, Shakespeare is not fashioning a theological allegory; he is representing spiritual and historical realities defined by the normative assumptions of his own Calvinistic worldview: Henry's repentance is impressively True because it is not False—meaning Catholic—and, by the same token, his sense of absolute assurance is an example of True Hope because it is the antithesis of the False Hope embodied in the worthless sacraments of the Church. Creating a powerful parallel of the steel heart Henry is given by God to wield in battle, and also a perfect mirror opposite of the obnoxiously and fatally impious False Hope which God gives to the French at precisely the same moment, Shakespeare presents Henry on the eve of Agincourt as the unlikely beneficiary of a decisively providential gift: an excruciatingly painful sense of his own guilt and the requisite humility needed to make that guilt the conduit for God's redemptive spirit. Again, Shakespeare's God of battles does not give Henry the victory *because* he prays effectively beforehand; rather, Henry prays in such a perfect Protestant fashion because—unlike incapacitated supplicants such as Faustus or King Claudius—God has given him the grace to do so.

The ability to pray well is a spiritual gift and a kind of eloquence, and like Zisca, Henry writes his own epitaph on the battlefield. Insofar as it mirrors Foxe's enrolling of Zisca and his followers in the ranks of modern martyr-heroes, Henry's Saint Crispin's day speech is a Foxean appropriation of the Saints' Day motif. In highlighting Zisca's literacy and his bold and surprising eloquence, Foxe again

suggestively aligns his hero with that voice of prophecy which was, as we have seen, central to Foxe's anatomy of modernity.[26] As both Foxe and Shakespeare were no doubt well aware, there are numerous epical precedents for effective battlefield oratory; nonetheless, viewed as an attribute of a kind of English Zisca, Henry's rhetorical power can be seen as a providential gift analogous to the steel-hearted courage which enables him to defeat the French in battle. And Henry's eloquence does find a notable parallel in Foxe's account of how, in the "noble victory" which is the climax of his own military career, Zisca uses oratory to unify and embolden his soldiers for battle. Noting that there were "great tumults" in the Hussite ranks, how the soldiers openly challenged the rationality and the morality of Zisca's final campaign against the city of Prague, and how "this talk came unto the ear of Zisca," Foxe pictures Zisca "calling together his army, standing upon a wine cask to be heard" and delivering the following "notable oration to his Soldiers":

> Brethren! be ye not aggrieved against me, neither accuse him who hath sought your health and safeguard. The victories which ye have obtained under my conduct are yet fresh in memory, neither have I brought you at any time unto any place, from whence you have not come victors. You are become famous and rich, and I for your sake, have lost my sight....But, because ye shall accuse me no more, I give you free liberty to do what you will....Look, which ever part you will incline unto, Zisca will be your aid and helper. (3.555-6)[27]

Although it is of course no match for Shakespeare's, the onus of Zisca's oratory is exactly the same as Henry's:

> ...he which hath no stomach to this fight,
> Let him depart, his passport shall be made,
> And crowns for convoy put into his purse.
> We would not die in that man's company
> That fears his fellowship to die with us. (4.3.35-9)

And it has the same impact on his men—the incorrigible Nym, Bardolph, and Pistol excluded, of course:

> [Gloss: The hearts of the soldiers altered by the oration of Zisca] When he had spoken these words, the soldiers' minds were changed, and wholly determined to make war, so that they ran, by-and-by, to take up their armour and weapons, to run unto the walls, to provoke their enemies, to fight for the gates of the city. (556)

Foxe and Shakespeare are working in the same tradition of epic historical prosopoeia, but what is striking here is the way that in both cases what is successfully engaged and overcome by inspired battlefield oratory is not some voiceless cowardice, but legitimate and vocable dissent. Zisca's army is, by definition, made up of dissenters, and, not surprisingly, Foxe continuously valorizes the bold speech of the Hussites, even though it is, by nature, divisive: "And albeit that oftentimes there was dissention between them," Foxe writes, "yet whensoever any foreign power came towards them, they joined their powers together in one camp, and defended themselves" (573). Thus, when he climbs up onto his wine cask, Zisca does not abuse or berate his fractious followers, nor does he bewitch them with false rhetoric; rather, he engages them, respectfully, as fellow Christians and spiritual brothers, if not as equals, and persuades them to choose to follow him. Likewise, Zisca's troops are not, as Fluellen says of Bardolph, Pistol, and Nym, "dogs" and "cullions" who have to be beaten "up to the breach" (3.2.20), they are men who, following their consciences, choose to join together to fight for Zisca's cause. Although it is routinely read as ironically subversive or undermining, Shakespeare's representation of the battlefield colloquy between Henry and the dissenting soldiers Bates, Court, and Williams is, I think, better understood as another example of the way Shakespeare generates a kind of Zisca-like stage presence for Henry in the scenes immediately prior to the battle. Like Foxe, Shakespeare uses the soldiers' dissent, ultimately, to ennoble his hero, and it is worth recalling that, like their Hussite counterparts, Bates, Court, and Williams utterly rout their enemies.

Furthermore, while it is true that the soldiers' complaints darken Henry's exploits by calling attention to the consequences of war for common soldiers, what we are also meant to see in this surprising moonlight conventicle is the transformation of Henry's earlier Eastcheap slumming into an image of positive spiritual communion between the King and his subjects. Rather than mocking and deriding them in the stage-devilish fashion of the French camp, or "practicing" on them to amuse himself or make himself look good, the disguised Henry articulates a real pastoral concern for the souls of his men. And, like his prayers and public speeches, Henry's arguments in this arresting scene both manifest a perfectly Protestant grasp of spiritual realities and adumbrate the emergence of a distinctively Protestant lay religion:

> Therefore should every soldier do as every sick man in his bed, wash every mote out of his conscience; and dying so, death is to him advantage; or not dying, the time was blessedly lost wherein such preparation was gain'd; and in him that escapes, it were not a sin to think that making god so free an offer, He let him outlive that day to see his greatness and to teach others how they should prepare. (4.1.178-85)

What is particularly striking here, moreover, is the way that—especially compared with Bolingbroke's court or Foxe's Lancastrian England—in Henry's camp conscientious men such as these can express their dissent openly, aggressively even, without being attacked as subversives. As it is among Foxe's Hussites, dissent is the norm in Henry's camp and, while this situation is fraught with tension, this same tension becomes, when put to the test, a source of real strength: "I do not desire he should answer for me," Bates announces, "and yet I determine to fight lustily for him"(188-9). Practically speaking, it must be the case that the English win in part because of the dichotomous difference between their conscientious determination to fight lustily and the degraded and cowardly lusts of the French. Read through the lens

of Foxean military history, this historical reality—dissent and division turns into a kind of invincible godly unity—is also an unmistakably providential one.

Whether they are addressed to his men or to himself—"I and my bosom must debate awhile" (4.1.31)—the rhetorical gifts Henry exercises on the battlefield are like the steely determination he shows in massacring his foes. They are, that is, parallel instances of the providential graces which underline Henry's apotheosis as warrior hero. As suggested, our discovery of these spiritual graces helps to mitigate some of the harsh severity of Shakespeare's providential argument. A further example of this is Henry's battlefield discovery of what might be called true godly cheerfulness. As noted earlier, in the contrapuntal world of the *Henriad*, Falstaff's exploits at Gad's Hill in *1HenryIV* foreshadow the true heroism demonstrated by Henry's band of brothers at Agincourt. Within this broad stroke of contrapuntal irony, Falstaff's allusion to John of Gaunt—"I am not John of Gaunt, your grandfather, but yet no coward, Hal"(2.2.67-8)—counterpoints the King's encounter, on the eve of Agincourt, with a yet another old and white-haired knight, Sir John Erpingham. Like Falstaff, Erpingham has a knack for comic wordplay—he lies, he says, like a king—but, like Gaunt, Erpingham speaks in a contrary spiritual register. Shakespeare's John of Gaunt is, as we have seen, a figure of godly spiritual virtue designed to be seen through the lens of Foxean history. "Sir John Paunch," as Hal calls him on what might be called the Eve of Gads Hill, is evidently his spiritual opposite, and the same relationship would seem to apply with Old Sir Thomas Erpingham. That is, in what is surely a crucial mirroring of Falstaff's low-spirited jokes—and of the derisive and impiously mocking spirit of the French—Erpingham's unsolicited affirmation that "the Lord in Heaven" will indeed "bless" this "noble Harry" momentarily dispels the gloom of Agincourt, transforming it in the light of a sanguine spiritual humour and

optimism that is as astonishing as it is unlooked-for. "God-a-mercy, old heart, thou speak'st cheerfully"(4.1.34), Henry says, and the unpracticed fullness of his response reflects the way that, rather than dragging the King down, as Falstaff's "jests, and gipes, and knaveries, and mocks" invariably do, Erpingham's cheerful words provide a moving accompaniment to the experience of "casted slough and fresh legerity" Henry is experiencing at this moment.

What I am arguing, in other words, is that Hal's encounter with Erpingham is the culmination of the Falstaff plot in the *Henriad*. In this movingly aleatory moment, the oppressive and melancholy humour of False Hope gives way to the true joyfulness of regenerate Faith, and the visual metaphor accompanying this subtle but forceful climax—Henry puts on Erpingham's livery—is surely a key to Shakespeare's reclamation of the Prodigal Prince myth.[28] Remarkably, or so it seems to me, in all the voluminous commentary on the "comic genius" of these plays what has gone unnoticed is that Hal's first moment of true comic relief in the *Henriad* comes here, when he is farthest away from the dispiriting ministry of Falstaff. We will return to this point in the following chapter, but what I want to point out here is that, while this image of godly joyfulness is not matched by Foxe's Zisca *per se*, the remarkable good humour of the martyrs is a leitmotif that runs throughout *Acts and Monuments*. For example, the heroic constancy of John Huss is, as we saw earlier, manifested in the way he laughs and smiles at his tormentors, and this joyful sobriety is matched in his counterpart, Jerome of Prague, whose singing prior to and during his martyrdom is one of the most powerful examples of a providential gift in Foxe's book. Mirror-like antitheses of each other, Falstaff and Erpingham are perhaps like good and bad angels in Hal's royal psychomachia, but what is surely in play at this key moment is the idea

that, in embracing Erpingham and putting on his livery, rather than Falstaff's, the Prodigal Hal is returning to, and being *happily* welcomed into, his Father's house.

Shakespeare's Henry V is supposed to be a "mirror of all Christian kings" (2.0.6) and, in watching his progress to Agincourt, we have had numerous indications that, like his father, he is a pious Catholic.[29] It is thus perhaps not surprising, or particularly Protestant or Foxean, that he finds a moment to pray on the eve of his big battle. What I have been attempting to highlight, however, is the way Shakespeare revitalizes the providential myth of a miraculous and surprising royal *conversion* by infusing Henry's enigmatic personality with an aura of authentic—Zisca-like—Godliness. Shakespeare's Henry is not the schizophrenic monarch of *Famous Victories*, and watching his remarkable self-discovery on the battlefield is not like experiencing a complete *deus ex machina*. It does, however, involve witnessing a miracle: we watch as Henry's impressive, but also profoundly enigmatic and disturbing, personal virtues are transfigured before our eyes in the light of divine grace. In *Richard II*, we watched in horror as young King Richard viciously rejected Old John of Gaunt, and we saw something similar in Henry's coldblooded rejection of the Fat Knight. What we see here, however, is the possible reversal of these disgraceful acts. It is this *potential* which is reborn in Shakespeare's portrayal of Henry's victory at Agincourt, and it is this Hope—England's Hope—which Shakespeare wants to hold up as a mirror for his own contemporary England.

*

Afterword: See, See King *Henry V* doth himself appear!

That Shakespeare's Henry V is a paradoxically Janus-faced character is a critical commonplace; what needs to be stressed is that Shakespeare's complexity is as fundamentally historical as it is theatrical. Shakespeare's Henry V is no mere

redaction of orthodox Tudor propaganda, but by the same token he did not create his enigmatic hero merely to fashion a giant rhetorical paradox, or to reflect upon the sublime complexities of "life," or, for that matter, to mount some vaguely deconstructive "trial by combat" between competing modes of history. Shakespeare's irony is not self-regarding and, while he recuperates a segment of Catholic historical tradition in the face of Foxe's relentlessly Protestant iconoclasm, Shakespeare's argument is itself characterized by a thorough-going Protestantism. Similarly, while Shakespeare's image of Lancastrian politics may be termed "Machiavellian," his irony has little to do with the displacement of Providential thinking by "modern" skepticism and secular thinking: Henry V's character threatens to embody the emergence of a baleful modernity not because, like us, Shakespeare is modern or postmodern, but because, like Foxe, he looked at late medieval history through the lens of apocalypse. As we have seen, Foxe's exegesis and his research left him with few doubts about what master modern "Christian" kings usually served, English ones perhaps especially, and none whatsoever about the status of the first two Lancastrians. While he is anything but naïve or Polyannaish in doing so, Shakespeare challenges Foxe by asserting that Henry V is a legitimate mirror of Hope for Protestants and a source of both deep apprehension and real assurance about the English crown. Thus, rather than subversively crypto-Catholic, Shakespeare's disagreement with Foxe in the *Henriad* is an argument between committed Protestants about the historical significance of a notoriously Catholic monarch. What is more, while Shakespeare's heroic interpretation of Henry is, as Campbell argued, a kind of historiographical mirror, if it is propaganda, it is propaganda primarily for the theatre, as a place where authentic historical truth can be discovered, and for faith in the limitless and inscrutable power of God. God alone justifies the battlefield enormities of Agincourt,

but they are still enormities, and so Shakespeare's epic sequence is not propaganda for Lancastrian or Tudor imperialism, and certainly not for the late-medieval church which sanctified it.

Like Foxe's Zisca, Henry is a conduit for God's power, and he triumphs by making apparently impossible things happen to his enemies on the battlefield. Quite rightly, Hotspur, Scroop, and the French are *astonished* to find themselves defeated by Henry, just as, no doubt, Foxe's Cardinal Julian is astonished to find himself dying naked in the field. In the theatre, Henry triumphs by combining his disturbing assurance about the righteousness of his actions, and his frightening willingness to act, decisively, in the light of that assurance, with intimations of godly piety, eloquence, joy, and self-sacrifice. The astonishment felt by Henry's victims is the source of our wonder and the essence of Henry's complex heroic identity. The sequence's central and definitively epic action, Henry's spectacular reformation on the eve of Agincourt, is both the key to his miraculous victory over the French and the dramatic *fact* that dispels the clouds of ignominy that threaten to strangle him. As Schlegel grasped, "the ignoble does indeed touch, but it does not contaminate him": everything in these plays is designed to argue, along with Foxe and official Reformation history, that Henry was a willing participant in the enormities of his age, spiritual crimes which, like the killing of Oldcastle, far outstrip the mere invented follies of Catholic tradition. However, Shakespeare incorporates Foxe's image of the modern warrior-hero in order to assert, dramatically, that while Henry *ought to have been* contaminated by this "vile participation," he was not. Like an eagle coming out of water, or like the sun emerging from behind clouds—but not at all like the specious hero of Catholic tradition—Henry's heroism is an extraordinary providential

phenomenon witnessed by Shakespeare's audience in Shakespeare's Theatre of Enormity. It is also a wonderful surprise:

> All furnish'd, all in arms;
> All plum'd like estridges, that with the wind
> Bated like eagles having lately bath'd,
> Glittering in golden coats like images,
> As full of spirit as the month of May,
> And gorgeous as the sun at midsummer,
> Wanton as youthful goats, wild as young bulls.
> I saw young Harry with his beaver on,
> His cushes on his thighs, gallantly arm'd,
> Rise from the ground like a feathered Mercury,
> And vaulted with such ease into his seat
> As if an angel [dropp'd] down from the clouds
> To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus,
> And witch the world with noble horsemanship. (*1HenryIV*. 4.1.97-110)

As has long been noted, Vernon's image of Henry's "glittering reformation" alludes to the *Faerie Queene*, so that, as Dover Wilson puts it, in turning "for inspiration to Spenser's description of the Red Cross Knight rising lusty as an eagle from the Well of Life," Shakespeare creates "a vision of chivalry in its perfection" and "in evoking this vision he had specially in mind the notion of regeneration"(146-7). What I hope to have demonstrated in this chapter is that Vernon's *apocalyptic* image of a spiritually regenerate chivalry can only be grasped in terms of Shakespeare's Foxean contrast between the ungodly, spiritually "defunct and dead" *chevalrie* of the French—who falsely hope that their doomed jades are fiery Pegasuses—and the grace-filled rebirth Henry experiences on the eve of Agincourt. The glittering figure of chivalric perfection glimpsed in Vernon's description may not look much like Foxe's peasant warrior Zisca, nor, indeed, like the poor and defenseless martyrs whose true godly chivalry Zisca is meant to embody in soldierly form. Nor, by the same token, does Vernon's ideal knight seem to forshadow Henry's slaughter of the French prisoners, his battlefield oratory, or all that painful spiritual

argument and self-examination that takes place in the English camp on the eve of Agincourt. Nevertheless, the grim reality of modern siege warfare is the historical reality to which Vernon's chivalric language refers, and, in recognizing this we can see how far Shakespeare, like Foxe, had come to see chivalry in the disgraceful modern world as a *spiritual* commodity which had become radically alienated from its usual—English and aristocratic—exemplars. At the same time, in insisting that, despite appearances, King Henry V is an exemplary figure of Christian chivalry, Shakespeare refused to allow the chivalric ideal to be completely disassociated from the actual late-medieval crown. Henry V was a brutal popish king, but, as Shakespeare portrays them, his Famous Victories externalize the truth of the Prodigal Prince myth: Henry redeems the time by reversing, albeit only for a moment, the royal and national apostasy inaugurated by King Richard. Placing Henry in a Foxean perspective, Shakespeare emphasized the ignoble side of Henry's character because it had become an inescapable part of England's spiritual history. Shakespeare did not, however, cast Henry as "1-D Machiavell," because to do so would have been to deny the *whole* truth of a providential story which, when combined with the insights of heroic theatre, demanded otherwise.

Thus, to return to John F. Danby's surprisingly apt reading of the *Henriad*, Foxe's portrayal of Zisca can be described "a bold attempt to enlist the machiavel"—and I would add the similarly opprobrious figures of the foreigner, the heretic, and the barbarian warrior—"in the ranks of virtue"(90). Foxe's account of the military victories of Zisca and the Bohemians is a striking piece of Elizabethan historical writing—and a vital intertext for the *Henriad*—because it makes a compelling contribution to Foxe's bold revision of the character and reign of Henry V, and because in it Foxe creates a resonantly double image of true and false chivalry in the

"modern" world. Setting aside his most consistent characterological trope—the pacific and Christ-like *pathos* of the martyr—Foxe creates a remarkable model of the "modern" warrior hero by eliding the passive heroism of the martyrs with epic values, such as effective battlefield oratory and righteous anger, with Machiavellian virtues such as the use of bloody-minded and remorseless "policy" or "strategy," and, indeed, with the appallingly destructive nature of siege warfare. When viewed, as Foxe puts it, with "carnal eyes," Zisca is a figure of Enormity: a brutally cold-blooded and calculating heretic who embraces modern warfare in order to massacre the flowers of European chivalry. However, while terrible to behold, when viewed with spiritually attuned eyesight, Foxe's Zisca emerges as an embodiment of true godly *virtù* in the modern world, and as the spiritual antithesis, and nemesis, of the resplendently pseudo-Christian "crusaders" who deride, and try to destroy, him. Like the modern martyrs, whose own poverty, ill-repute, and lack of worldly status functions as a kind of foil for their true greatness, Foxe's Zisca is an unlikely paladin who is elected by God to emerge from obscurity, and indeed from his own seemingly coarse and barbaric nature, to become an exemplar of Providential grace. However, rather than playing the role of Christ-like victim in the theatre of Antichristian persecution, this figure of regenerate godly chivalry steps forward in the role of Providential Scourge who uses siege warfare to mock the impious God-mockers of late-medieval Europe out of their castles. Danby is of course not talking about Foxe or Zisca: he is describing Shakespeare's Henry V. With Prince Hal, Danby argues, "the figure of the machiavel undergoes…a most surprising development. The full machiavel strategy is retained, but it is machiavellism turned inside out. Hal is a sheep in wolf's clothing, a machiavel of goodness"(89).

While Danby's claim that Hal's "virtue wilts when it is made the object of Machiavellian strategy"(90) is true neither of Shakespeare's pious man of steel in the theatre nor of Foxe's godly barbarian in *Acts and Monuments*, the extent to which his propitiously Foxean language fits both Henry and Zisca underscores the idea that Shakespeare's enigmatically double-sided characterization of Henry V is clarified, and rendered more substantially historical, when viewed through the lens of Foxean history. In the dichotomously apocalyptic modern world defined by Foxe a sheep in wolf's (or lion's or tiger's) clothing is exactly what the modern *warrior* hero must be:

> In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
> As modest stillness and humility;
> But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
> Then imitate the action of the tiger;
> Stiffen the sinews, [conjure] up the blood,
> Discard fair nature with hard-favor'd rage;
> Then lend the eye a terrible aspect;
> Let it pry through the portage of the head
> Like the brass cannon;...
> Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide,
> Hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit
> To his full height. (3.1.3-16)

This is a familiar speech, and it is surprising to find it speaking a new language. Nonetheless, if we can now see the "terrible aspect" of Foxe's one-eyed general Zisca lurking behind Shakespeare's fiercely monocular image of "hard favor'd rage," this is because, having Foxe's exemplary image of the godly warrior in mind, so to speak, we are finally in a position to see that Henry is describing what it feels like to be transformed, spiritually, by divine alchemy, into a Zisca-like Machiavel of goodness.

*

There are, as Fluellen says, "figures in all things," and Shakespeare is nothing if not "resonant." Nonetheless, it seems to me that the connection between Shakespeare's enigmatic portrayal of Henry V as a figure of transfigured royal

enormity and Foxe's revision of Lancastrian history must be more than a merely adventitious case of "salmons in both." In a sense, Shakespeare's *tour de force* characterization of Henry V is *unimaginable* without Foxe's book, and this is why modern criticism has failed so consistently in its efforts to correlate the historical argument behind Shakespeare's favourite hero with the artistry he used to bring him to life on stage. The rhetorical energy and sophistication Shakespeare applies to the task of recuperating Henry V's reputation as a pious warrior hero in the theatre, and, as well, the specific ways that he digests and translates his historiographical materials in order to fashion his enigmatically godly hero, can only be understood as a response to Foxe's revision of Lancastrian history. This is saying quite a lot, but it is only half of the argument that I want to make about the function of the Foxean intertext in the *Henriad*. Shakespeare was deeply interested in the character of the famous/infamous hero of Agincourt, but Henry V is not the only major historical character in the sequence, and, what is more, as with Jack Cade, John of Gaunt, and Richard II, Shakespeare's Henry V is part and parcel of a larger historical argument about late-medieval England's "fall" into modernity. Reading Henry's character through the lens of Foxean history allows us, I have argued, to move beyond a sterile opposition between "orthodox" and "radical" readings of Henry's character which either fail to register his striking theatrical presence or mystify that wondrous presence beyond literary historiographical recognition. It allows us, moreover, to situate Shakespeare's complex characterological design within a meaningful historiographical context: Shakespeare's discovery of apocalyptic modernity. The same lens helps, finally, to make some historiographical sense of Henry V's remarkable trio of antagonists: Falstaff, Bolingbroke, and the Rebels.

[1] I have had to condense the argument of what was originally a lengthy concluding chapter on Falstaff, Bolingbroke, and the Rebels into a very brief one. Although my readers may be justifiably relieved to hear this, this creates a large and unfortunate lacuna in my argument because in many ways these figures are Shakespeare's most interesting, and most misunderstood, figures of Foxean enormity and modernity. My goal in this thesis is, however, to introduce, not to exhaust, the energies of the Foxean intertext.

[2] Some Elizabethan playgoers evidently leapt to this precipitous conclusion, but they were mistaken and it seems to me the last thing we should be doing is blindly following them. Revitalized by Gary Taylor's infamous take on the name "Oldcastle," and buttressed by Bakhtinian theory, the attempt to portray Falstaff as "stage Puritan" caricature of Oldcastle has become something of a mini-industry of late. Not to put too fine a point on it, the problem with the "stage puritan" thesis is that it is obviously wrong: Falstaff is a religious figure—he is a false shepherd and a bellygod—but this hardly makes him a figure of *Protestant* dissent. See note 7 below, and Gary Taylor's article "The Fortunes of Falstaff," Poole, 16-44, Strohm, 138-42, and Kastan 2002, 51-62.

[3] Taylor's metaphorical linking of the "will" of the conquering hero with the "Will" of the theatrical genius is, I think, brilliant. While my reading of Shakespeare's epic historical argument is very different from Taylor's, it does support his insights about the relationship between King and playwright. After all, as Sidney, Spenser and Milton testify, the Renaissance idea of heroic poesy was predicated not, as Taylor seems to say, on "human greatness" alone (72), but rather on the redeemed or resurrected wit of the poet working in concert with divine will.

[4] My point here is not that the presence of skepticism, ambivalence, or other forms of complexity in epic literature inevitably "fissures" or deconstructs the work's supposed ideological agenda. Although familiar, this simplistic way of thinking is of little value because, as Heather O'Donoghue points out in a discussion of *Beowulf*, it is "characteristic of epic poetry that it explores and questions at the same time as it values and celebrates" (vii). What I am suggesting is that Shakespeare goes a step further by casting Henry in the light of potentially real infamy or *mala fama*. Thus, where the *Beowulf* poet questions, O'Donoghue says, whether his hero might have been "*foolhardy* in the way he took on the dragon," and explores the validity of an "heroic ideal" whose "finest *achievements* are swiftly eclipsed by warfare, death, and darkness" (vii, my emphasis), Shakespeare raises the possibility that Henry might actually *be the dragon*, that his wars were not achievements in any sense, but rather the positively immoral, even evil, exploits of yet another diabolical Big Pig.

[5] This "radical" reading of the *Henriad* is embodied in the English Shakespeare Company's notorious/celebrated version of the *Henriad* produced by Michael Bogdanov in the 1980's. Consider, for example, Scott MacMillan's description of the climax of *1Henry IV* as staged in 1986:

> when it came to single combat at the Battle of Shrewsbury, Hotspur had the fight won. Pennington played the only Hal who actually lost the single combat. Hotspur was stronger and more of a fighter. He knocked the sword and shield out of Hal's hands and forced him to his knees. It was all over for the Prince of Wales, who was cowering and praying to some unknown deity, waiting for the fatal blow to strike from behind. He was saved by his opponent's chivalry—Hotspur would not kill an unarmed man. There was no trace of Merry-England nostalgia about this chivalry. It was a code of honour long past its prime and

> vulnerable to the political manipulations of the rebel leaders.... Now with Hal down and helpless in the single combat, chivalry intervened as a piece of stupidity. Hotspur bent over to slide Hal's sword back to him, and within an instant Hal was driving that sword into him from behind.... That oddly private part of the battlefield where Shakespeare sets the single combat *could now be understood.* Virtually no one sees the single combat in which Hal thinks to emerge a hero. The unseen theatrical performance is superfluous, as Falstaff knows...and as John Woodvine [Falstaff] stole the corpse away then returned with it in the next scene when an audience was available...one realized that Hal—*having rubbed out the system of chivalry in killing Hotspur—was now being outdone by the system that has taken over in modern politics*, the system of theatrical publicity. (McMillan, 120-21, my emphasis)

As James N. Leohlin notes approvingly, the insights of "radical" Shakespeare criticism are also reflected in Bogdanov's response to critics who complain that Shakespeare's portrayal of Prince Hal/ Henry V is supposed to be "essentially positive":

> People like that don't read the play...they don't understand it, they don't know what Pistol, Nym, and Bardolph stand for. They don't understand that there isn't a scene in *Henry V* about the battle of Agincourt. The only scene there is is of Pistol kicking the shit out of some poor Frenchman...that's the battle of Agincourt: it's an Englishman, a liar, a cheapskate, a thief, a murderer, a lout, a bully kicking a wounded Frenchman in the gut. That's Agincourt. (Loehlin, 120)

Like the academic radicalism which informs it, and to which it evidently caters, Bogdanov's iconoclasm captures a part of Shakespeare's argument about Henry, but only by obscuring much more than it illuminates. The real value of Bogdanov's work, critically speaking, lies in the extent to which it demonstrates that, when translated onto the modern stage, "radical" criticism produces a brand of theatrical spectacle which, whatever its merits as iconoclastic agitprop, is profoundly unrelated to Shakespeare's heroic drama. What is noteworthy, moreover, is how Shakespeare's clear focus on the emergence of a kind of modernity manages to shine through despite Bogdanov's far-fetched conception of the plays.

[6] I have paused over McAlindon's arguments because, while I have some major disagreements with him, I think his book is one of the most important literary-historiographical studies of the Henry IV plays to date, especially insofar as he shows a way beyond the stale antimonies of critical orthodoxy. In disagreeing with him, what I want to emphasize is that *Holinshed's Chronicles* cannot account for Shakespeare's complex historical argument to the extent that McAlindon argues it does.

[7] Medieval commentaries on Henry's miraculous conversion are quoted and discussed by Paul Strohm in *Theory and the Premodern Text* (132-48). What Strohm adds to the well-known chronicle "background" to Shakespeare's Henry is an illuminating account of the ideological context and purpose behind the creation of the original Henry V—Oldcastle story. However, perhaps overly impressed with the forensic powers of "theory," Strohm underestimates Elizabethan Protestant writers' awareness of what Henry's clerical propagandists were up to. In particular, Strohm says virtually nothing about Foxe's brilliant *deconstruction* of the "miraculous conversion" myth and his point by point repudiation of the Lancastrian construction of Oldcastle's identity. With respect to Shakespeare, Strohm's claim that the playwright "seems not

formally to have consulted"(132) the various accounts of Henry's reign is a *non sequiter*, and his assertion that Shakespeare reproduces the traditional myth in secular terms, a mere "policy matter" as he puts it (146), fails to account for: (1) the playwright's historiographical awareness; (2) the scope of his deliberate revision of Catholic mythography; and (3) the *religious* charisma of Shakespeare's hero. Moreover, given that neither Foxe nor the large majority of his admirers, a group which included Shakespeare, were antagonists of the theatre, Strohm's vague suggestion that Shakespeare was attempting to "affront" the "Puritan" "antitheatricalist party" by denigrating Sir John Oldcastle would seem to have no real purchase on Shakespeare's Fat Knight.

[8] The connection between popery and outrageous falsehood comes to a head in Foxe's account of Oldcastle in the figure of Nicholas Harspfield/Alanus Copus, the Jesuit controversialist who was the target of Foxe's lengthy "Defence of the Lord Cobham"(3.348-402). As I plan to argue in a subsequent work, the intertextual presence of the spectacularly mendacious voice of Alanus Copus—a diabolically carnivalesque character Foxe refers to, strikingly, as a "wild Irishman, lately crept out of St. Patrick's purgatory" [*viz* Cade] and as an "Ephesian carver" who worships in "magna Diana Ephesiorum" [*viz* Falstaff] (3.349)—plays a crucial role in distinguishing between Oldcastle and Falstaff. Like Falstaff's, Copus' outrageous voice is the spiritual antithesis of the "spirit of Elias."

[9] Very effectively in my view, McAlindon glosses Shakespeare's portrayal of Bolingbroke and Prince John in *1-2HenryIV* with the Christian Pythagorean symbolism of the *Faerie Queene* as a way of highlighting the thematic contrast between Truth and Duplicity in *1-2Henry IV*. Remarkably, however, McAlindon fails to acknowledge that, for Spenser, the monstrous duplicity of characters like Duessa is an image of Roman Catholicism. If, as McAlindon argues, the "world of Shakespeare's Old Double" is "not so far" removed from the symbolic landscape of the *Faerie Queene* (98), this is surely because, like Spenser, Shakespeare is a Protestant writer who portrays an *apocalyptic* image of England almost entirely eclipsed by Antichristian apostasy.

[10] The parallel with King Lear's disastrous "love test" is very noteworthy here.

[11] Noting the resonance between Foxe's and Shakespeare's use of the term "practice," John Baxter asks whether Shakespeare might "have learned from Foxe something of its latent dramatic energy?" (Private communication) Although I am arguing that Foxe's account of the reign of Henry V was a direct source and influence in the *Henriad*, my answer more generally speaking would be to say that what Shakespeare gleaned from Foxe was not so much the dramatic potential of such practices *per se*, but rather a sense of how such dramatic scenes were part of, and could function as, serious history in the theatre.

[12] As noted earlier, Foxe's carnivalesque image of Lancastrian modernity seems to be reflected in the transformation of the English court under Bolingbroke in Act Five of *Richard II*.

[13] While the term "Reformation" might seem anachronistic in this context, like Foxe—and like Shakespeare—I think it is not unreasonable to view the Lollard movement as the beginning of the English Reformation.

[14] For a very different reading of Henry as an "ungrammatical" figure, see Hillman.

[15] Famously, in his film version of *Henry V* Laurence Olivier "presents the two bishops as comically incompetent actors" (Leohlin, 31).

[16] See above note 2.

[17] Again, in asserting that *Acts and Monuments* is an *intertext*, I am not disqualifying Foxe's book as a *source* in the traditional sense. The two categories are independent, but not mutually exclusive. Shakespeare evidently read *Acts and Monuments*, and Foxe's account of Henry V's reign is a source for the sequence. However, rather than producing a highly circumscribed account of the plays' chrysalis-like origins, I am trying to apply a more inclusive intertextual approach to understanding how the plays function as literary history in performance. As Shakespeare's Chorus insists, intertextuality is something that happens in the theatre, not prior to it.

[18] This is a large caveat, but it is worth recalling how emphatically Shakespeare does connect the French nobility with apostasy and popery in the "future"—i.e. in *1HenryVI*—through the devilishly popish figure of Joan of Arc (see Leitch, 2000). Notwithstanding the absence of explicit Catholic symbolism—like King Richard the French put their faith in numbers and horses—the dichotomous contrast between Henry's band of brothers and the battlefield antics of the obnoxious French soldiers marks the latter as figures of modern apostasy or popery.

[19] Falstaff, in contrast, thinks that no one is watching him when he stabs Percy's dead body. Although Shakespeare's Henry does not have himself skinned and made into a drum, we should recall how his name fulfills a very drum-like function in defeating the Irish rebel Cade, a figure of popish enormity, in *2HenryVI*. "The name of Henry the Fift," Cade complains, *as he flees the battle*, "leaves me desolate" (*2HenryVI* 4.8.55-7). And, whether the Chorus is referring to Essex or Blount, Shakespeare's much-discussed topical allusion to "the general of our Gracious Empress" in Act Five (5.0.30) associates Henry's valour, again, with an essentially defensive victory of militant Protestantism over the forces of popish "Rebellion" in Ireland (31). It is perhaps worth noting as well, in the contrapuntal hall of mirrors which is the *Henriad*, Falstaff's resonantly scene-ending couplet: "Rare words!, brave world! Hostess my breakfast come! / O, I could wish this tavern were my drum"(*1HenryIV* 3.3.205-6): does Shakespeare's grotesque mock-Taborite Turk Gregory beat his distended stomach at this point?

[20] The image of churches and other places of spiritual cure being transformed into prisons and places of punishment and disease is one of several major motifs in *Acts and Monuments*. This recurrent theme underscores Foxe's image of historical modernity and—as I argue in an as yet unpublished paper—is central to Shakespeare's *historical* image of modern England, the England of Tom O'Bedlam, in *King Lear*.

[21] For more examples of the same image see 3.463, 464, 465, 470, 472, 482, 510, 512, 514, 515, and 525. Like the paper crown used to mock Huss, this derisive Antichristian laughter is ultimately Christological, a mirror of what Foxe calls the "inestimable ignominy of his [Christ's] passion" and an exemplary instance of the "mockery and slander of the world" (3. 511). It is worth noting how—failing to get Bakhtin's point—much recent criticism seems to have forgotten that not all laughter—plebeian or otherwise—can be construed as positively "carnivalesque." This is perhaps especially true in the context of a Reformation culture which, as Stuart Clark demonstrates, relentlessly conceptualized spiritual phenomena in terms of a dichotomous opposition between true godly kinds and their false, popish, opposites. There is nothing funny, subversive, or radically aleatory about this derisive mocking because—especially in comparison with the buoyant jocularity of Jerome of Prague singing on his way to the stake—it is the joyless and envy-and hate-filled popish opposite of true godly cheerfulness.

[22] As this brief synopsis suggests, Foxe comes very close here to advocating class warfare, but he also mitigates this potentially leveling theme by infusing Zisca and his warriors with intimations of true nobility. Spiritually speaking, the aristocrats are still punishing the rabble here, even though Foxe's anatomy is a powerful indictment of the ruling class. As such, Foxe's account is a striking example of the ideological scope and flexibility of Tudor historical thought which "radical" criticism typically does not acknowledge.

[23] Shakespeare's point is surely not that Hal has somehow learned to be a Good King by playing tennis. Rather, what Shakespeare is intimating here is that the epic warrior-hero Henry is going to become is a totally transfigured version of his earlier, prodigal, self . As he so often does in the *Henriad*, Shakespeare is prompting his audience to see his novel argument: Henry V does not "rouse" himself in his "throne" at his coronation, he does this in France, on the battlefield, by becoming the vehicle for acts of God's extraordinary vengeance.

[24] We are, I think, meant to sense an affiliation between these French aristocrats and Hotspur and the other rebels on this score.

[25] Defending his emendation of "all" in Henry's "Since that my Penitence comes after all" to "ill," Taylor cites Luther and Hooker to highlight the expressly Reformed nature of Henry's prayer. However, failing to notice Shakespeare's tacit anti-Catholicism and to distinguish between "Henry's despair" and his "humility bordering on despair," Taylor does not grasp that what we are watching is a conversion in which despair about the merits of specifically Catholic penitential works is replaced by the gift of an excruciating humility and a sense of total assurance about God's power to justify the sinner.

[26] As in the example of Henry Duke of Lancaster discussed earlier.

[27] Set apart by the use of different font and a separate heading, this set-piece is, like Zisca's epitaph, an eye-catching climax to the story of the Bohemian warrior hero.

[28] It may well be Shakespeare's great answer to *Dr. Faustus* as well.

[29] While the trajectory of my argument in this section might appear to contradict the claim that Shakespeare's Henry in effect remains Catholic, what needs to be remembered is that, for Foxe and his contemporaries, Protestantism and Catholicism were not two religions, but True and False versions of the same Catholic faith. Foxe's book thus portrays an unbroken succession of true Christians, not of Protestants *per se*. Thus, while Wycliffe and the Lollards are, for Foxe, doctrinally Protestant, men such as Petrarch, Dante, John of Gaunt, and Bishop Grosthead are true Christians even though they are also pious Roman Catholics. That said, one of the distinguishing features of Foxean modernity—as the hapless Duke of York discovers in *Richard II*—is that the antimony between these spiritual sides becomes more and more pronounced and unbridgeable. Shakespeare can present the Catholic Lancastrian King as an optimistic "mirror" of the more modern Godly Prince, but this does not mean that this avatar could himself be a *Roman* Catholic.

**Chapter Eight.**
**"See You...These English Monsters?" Enormity as False Hope in the *Henriad***

> See you, my princes and my noble peers,
> These English monsters?...
> 'Tis so strange
> That though the truth of it stands off as gross
> As black on white, my eye will scarcely see it.
>
> *Henry V*, 2.2.83-104

> Hell itself does not contain greater monsters of iniquity than you and I might become. Within the magazine of our hearts there is power enough to destroy us in an instant, if omnipotent grace did not prevent.
>
> Charles Spurgeon

> But should we feel the plays in this puritan-critical way? Surely not.... To Shakespeare, the usurper, the rebel, the intriguer, the credulous wizard, the toper, and the rest are not parts of a disintegrated vulpine world. They combine in a totality which affirms the worth, the wealth, of living.... The play is about adventure—the adventure of conflict, the adventure of Bohemianism. It is consequently also about danger—the danger of defeat, the danger of retribution. And it is consequently about courage—the courage of self-assertion, the courage of disreputability.... The greatness of the *HenryIV*s lies in their not taking a disapproving view.
>
> A.R. Humphreys

*

Reading Shakespeare's portrayal of Henry V in light of Foxe's revision of Lancastrian history allows us, I have argued, to begin to appreciate how Shakespeare, breathing new life into the figure of the Prodigal Prince, created a masterpiece of Protestant historical drama by critically engaging Foxe's apocalyptic pessimism about English government and political action in the modern world. In a way closely related to its failure to attend to the religious historical dimension of Shakespeare's hero, the critical habit of thought I have labeled "radical Shakespeare" has also dominated criticism of the *Henriad*'s other major antagonists—Bolingbroke, the Rebels, and Falstaff—in a way that militates against a coherently historiographical understanding of these characters as well.[1] To hazard a rather large generalization, the errors here are

the assumption, explicit in A.R. Humphreys' rejection of what he calls John Danby's "puritan critical" reading of the sequence, that Shakespeare's genius was too radical to entail the disapproval of great characters like Bolingbroke, Hotspur, and Falstaff, and its corollary: that it is somehow up to *these* characters, and not the sequence's hero, to redeem the dismal modern times that are represented in the play. What is more, in reading these characters through the lens of Shakespeare's notional radicalism, modern criticism has not only recast them in ways that are remote from Shakespeare's original design, it has further obscured Shakespeare's argument by placing them, so to speak, in what look like completely different history plays.

Thus, looking at Bolingbroke, we have tended to see Shakespeare as a radically "politic" historian who, working in the light of a brilliant new Machiavellian realism, eschews vapid moral abstraction and embraces the necessities which were behind the Lancastrians' successful consolidation of political power. Shakespeare may not exactly like Bolingbroke, the argument goes, but because he too is a soberly tough-minded realist, he admires and celebrates the usurper for the way he boldly exercises his *virtú* in the secular modern world.[2] The problem with this familiar reading, however, is that it seems to owe almost nothing to Shakespeare's actual characterization of Henry IV: Shakespeare is not Bacon, and Bolingbroke is not Machiavelli's Prince. He achieves nothing in the plays, and Shakespeare's withering providential irony makes a kind of sober mockery of Bolingbroke's Machiavellian striving.[3] What I want to stress, moreover, is that in turning to Hotspur and the Rebels, we see Shakespeare working in an almost antithetical light: Shakespeare reviles the "vile politician" Bolingbroke and his son Prince John for using policy to defeat the Percy rebellion, and this is because he is a romantic historian who, deeply sympathetic with English recusancy and other lost causes, wants to chart the tragic

eclipse of a golden feudalism, an age of honour and chivalric manhood which is epitomized by the proto-tragic hero Hotspur.[4] This is another very familiar perspective, but it seems fair to say that authentic chivalric manhood and nobility are no more embodied in Shakespeare's doomed crackpot Henry Percy and his rebellious comrades than a robust Republican *virtù* resides in the whinging and feckless tyrant Bolingbroke.[5]

And, as if the figure of Shakespeare as Romantic Machiavellian were not schizophrenically far-fetched enough, when we look at Falstaff we see Shakespeare in yet another historiographical light: this time as the author of a kind of radical "comic" history, or anti-history, in which the serious claims of both politic and tragic history dissolve in paroxysms of subversive, carnivalesque laughter. Again, for all that modern critics have insisted on it, this theory-driven conception of Falstaff has little to do with the viciously diseased and virulently place-seeking stage devil Shakespeare invented to take the place of John Oldcastle in *1-2HenryIV*. And, the larger problem, again, with each of these *ersatz* conceptions is not just that they do not fit the characters, but that they are incommensurate with one another. This confusion is not a demonstration of the radical openness and elasticity of Shakespeare's imagination, nor is it an example of his "radical" refusal to pass judgment. Rather, it is a kind of *illogical* outcome of the failure to recognize the spiritual dimension of Henry V's heroism in the *Henriad*, and a spectacular instance of the incoherence of "radical" Shakespeare.

If they are patently not redemptive figures that "affirm the worth, the wealth, of living," what then are Bolingbroke, the Rebels, and Falstaff? Situating these characters within Shakespeare's providential theatre of Enormity, and in relation to the sequence's epic historical action—and within the same play—I would argue that

these characters are designed to function as spiritual historical foils for the regeneration which, in Shakespeare's Protestantized version of the Prodigal Prince myth, defines the heroism of the central character. Henry and his antagonists are all, as Danby pointed out long ago, representative "New Men," but the Riffaterrean ungrammaticality at the heart of Shakespeare's portrayal of Henry V—he is, Danby says, a "hero-villain"(75)—can be resolved in Shakespeare's considered response to Foxean history: the providential fact is that Henry both *is and is not* the figure of royal enormity Foxe presented to Elizabethan readers of *Acts and Monuments*. Albeit in reverse, what is true about Henry V is also true of his antagonists: Falstaff *is and is not* John Oldcastle. As we have seen, Shakespeare's Henry V is an enigmatic double man who is deeply implicated in the "riot" of apocalyptic modernity but who, by virtue of Grace, remains miraculously uncontaminated by it. As John Danby succinctly put it, Shakespeare's "twofold" perspective on Henry V demands a correspondingly "twofold attitude" to Bolingbroke, the Rebels, and Falstaff. Breaking through clouds of historiographical infamy, the sun-like majesty of Henry V is a Protestantized image of a potently graceful, and potentially redemptive, spiritual virtue and heroic piety. Like Henry, but antithetically hopeless, impious, and utterly disgraceful, Bolingbroke, the Rebels, and Falstaff are enigmatic figures of Enormity that, mirroring each other, the central character, and the real world in which Shakespeare's original audience lived, embody the historical modernity that is emerging in the play. They are what the great Calvinist theologian Charles Spurgeon calls "monsters of iniquity," and they are *foils*: whereas Prince Hal *promises* the kind of Antichristian tyranny Foxe identifies with kingship in the apostate modern world, but delivers instead an example of heroic Godly piety and a potentially redemptive providential memory, these characters *promise* potent virtues—ways of combating,

resisting, or at least mitigating the horrors of modernity—but are revealed instead to be unregenerate and ungodly figures of False Hope.

Following Foxe's lead, Shakespeare portrays Lancastrian England as a time of deepening national crisis moving towards the apocalyptic meltdown of the Wars of the Roses. As we have seen, this dismal futurity is glimpsed by John of Gaunt, Carlisle, and the other prophet figures in *Richard II*, and it is realized in *2-3HenryVI* when characters such as Queen Margaret and Richard III turn England into a diabolical theatre and a "field of Golgotha." Thus, Bolingbroke's vision, near the end of *2HenryIV*, of England transformed into a "wilderness again / Peopled with wolves," and in which "the wild dog/ Shall flesh his tooth on every innocent" (*2HenryIV* 4.5.129-37), is an example of dramatic irony not because Bolingbroke is wrong—this is precisely where we are going—but because he is so self-deluded about *his* role in it. Bolingbroke's vision is yet another apocalyptic image of modernity, of what Foxe calls "these latter and perilous days," but the irony here is that the lupine world Bolingbroke imagines himself battling against is epitomized by the way he spends his reign devoutly—with what he calls sovereign "care"(4.5.134)—killing off the English nobility. "Long it were" Foxe says, transposing a familiar Tudor historical theme into the key of apocalyptic history, to "recite the blood of all such nobles and others which was spilled in the reign of this king," a reign full of "trouble, blood and misery"(3.229).

The *Henriad* is also, as we have noted, a kind of vertiginous hall of mirrors. The reason why Pistol speaks French, why Hotspur and the Dauphin are in love with, and put all their faith in, their horses, and why Henry's French campaign seems uncannily like the challenges he confronts in *1-2HenryIV*, is that the spiritually degraded *Gallicisme* of *Henry V* embodies the Antichristian modernity that is the

central theme of Shakespeare's late-medieval history as a whole. Thus, the hapless, seriocomic depravity of the French is not designed to reify some villainous non-English other, but to serve as a foil for Henry's invincibly Zisca-like chivalry and as an index to a much more fundamental conflict. While French stage devils are the main antagonists in *Henry V*, and while Shakespeare's Harry is an emphatically English hero, the central conflict of the sequence as a whole is between *spiritual*, rather than *national*, "mighty monarchies." Harry wins because he is blessed and incorruptible, not because he is English, and the parade of astonishing characters that he describes, in an arresting epiphany, as "English monsters" are the spiritual brethren of the doomed French, just as Erpingham and the other members of Henry's elect fellowship are brothers to the French martyrs Crispin and Crispianus. And it is, as I said, Henry's job, not Falstaff's, to redeem the time in the *Henriad*: these characters do not function as counterweights to the plays' vision of a debased and dismal modernity; they are, as Danby puts it, "allotropic forms" of that modern Elizabethan waste land.

They are, in fact, "English Monsters": as if the surprisingly unstainable virtue of the Prodigal had been, as Danby says, "turned inside out," the extraordinary enormity embodied by these strange and monstrous English characters is, as Henry V puts it, "as gross / As black on white," but it is at the same time hard to see.[6] This is not because Shakespeare lacks judgment, or because his conception is somehow confused; it is because he wants us, like Prince Hal, to have to work to understand it: these are complex creatures, but their complexity is designed to enhance their function as figures of unregenerate False Hope, not to undermine it. That Hal's antagonists in *1-2HenryIV* are linked in quasi-allegorical fashion under the sign of False Hope should be fairly obvious: just as the French plan to make a meal of Henry in *Henry V*, Bolingbroke dreams of expiating his guilt chasing pagans on a crusade,

the Rebel motto is "Esperance ma comfort," and the plot of *1-2HenryIV* is centered on Falstaff—whose name clearly means False Hope—and his deluded hopes for a life of power, credit, and ease under the new king. What needs to be added is how this False Hope comes into focus as a version of the monstrous enormity which Foxe identifies with the apostate modern world. In this brief final chapter, I will try to demonstrate this with one resonant example of the Foxean intertext at work in the plays

*

As part of his extended anatomy of the rise of anti-Christian misgovernment in Lancastrian England, Foxe presents readers with the full text of ten accusatory articles against Henry IV that were compiled and circulated in 1405, "fastened," Foxe says, "upon the doors of the churches and monasteries, to be read by all men in English" (3.230). Clearly, Foxe includes this text in order to present readers with a vivid image of Bolingbroke's "horrible crimes and great enormities" (230), and, as well, to illustrate the nature and scope of the opposition to the Lancastrians which developed before and after Shrewsbury. Much as Shakespeare does in *1-2Henry IV*, Foxe characterizes the Percy rebellion in a way which thoroughly discredits both sides: Foxe is portraying a profound shift in the state of human affairs, and a general apostasy, and so he casts tyranny and rebellion as two sides of the same divisively chaotic, popish, coin. As such, Foxe's entire narrative of the rebellion is a fascinating intertext for Shakespeare's famously ambivalent representation of the anti-Lancastrian rebellion. Indeed, Foxe's catalogue of Bolingbroke's crimes—perjury, treason, illegal expropriations, extra-judicial murder, and, of course, regicide—contained in the articles, and also Foxe's own ironic use of them as an image of both anti-Christian tyranny and of rebellion turning "insurrection to religion," functions as fairly straightforward gloss on Shakespeare's own version of the events.

I want to focus, however, on the seventh of the ten articles reprinted by Foxe because it resonates, I think, with Shakespeare's history in a more strikingly singular way. Under the rubric of "tyranny," the bill charges that

> amongst all others of the nobility, these first he put to death; the earl of Salisbury, the earl of Huntingdon, the earl of Gloucester, the lord Roger Clarendon, the King's brother, with diverse other knights and esquires; and afterwards, the lord Thomas Percy, earl of Worcester, and the lord Henry Percy, son and heir to the earl of Northumberland; which lord Henry he not only slew, but to the uttermost of his power again and again he caused him to be slain. For after that he was put to death, and delivered to the lord of Furnile (sic) to be buried, who committed his body to holy sepulture, with as much honour as might be, commending his soul to Almighty God with the suffrages of the blessed mass and other prayers, the said lord Henry, most like a cruel beast still thirsting for his blood, caused his body to be exhumed and brought forth again, and to be reposed between two mill-stones in the town of Shrewsbury, there to be kept with armed men; and afterwards to be beheaded and quartered, commanding his head and quarters to be carried into divers cities of the kingdom: wherefore, for so detestable a fact, never heard of in any age before, we [i.e. the Rebel leaders] pronounce him...excommunicate. (3.232-33)

This image of Bolingbroke ruthlessly "weeding" the realm of opponents is a familiar one—this is precisely the Bolingbroke Shakespeare shows coming to power in *Richard II*—but the much more scandalous image of the desecration of Hotspur's body seems to have nothing to do with Shakespeare's play: Hal, not Henry IV, kills Hotspur, and he treats the fallen rebel with a moving gracefulness. By the same token, far from madly raging at a corpse, Bolingbroke is shown at the end of *1HenryIV* calmly meting out justice and prudently preparing to meet the next waves of the rebellion.

And yet there can, I think, be little doubt that the notorious act witnessed by Foxe here does get into the play. Transformed by Shakespeare's imaginative dramaturgy, Bolingbroke's "detestable fact" is displaced onto the battlefield anti-heroics of the rebel leader Douglas, and, more emphatically, onto the ghoulish antics of Falstaff captured in the penultimate scene of *1HenryIV*.[7] Having defeated Hotspur

in single combat, Prince Hal in effect takes the part of Foxe's Lord Furnival, quite precisely "committing" Percy's body to the earth and "commending" his soul to heaven "with as much honour as might be":

> This earth that bears [thee] dead
> Bears not alive so stout a gentleman.
> If thou wert sensible of courtesy,
> I should not make so dear a show of zeal;
> But let my favors hide thy mangled face,
> And even in thy behalf I'll thank myself
> For doing thee these fair rites of tenderness.
> Adieu! And take thy praise with thee to heaven!
> Thy ignominy sleep with thee in the grave,
> But not remembered in thy epitaph! (5.4.93-101)

However, just as Foxe's Bolingbroke desecrates Percy's corpse in a (now) familiar act of spectacularly histrionic anti-Christian rage, Shakespeare's Falstaff attempts to aggrandize himself as the killer of Percy and to be compared, as he puts it with perfectly self-incriminating dramatic irony, with "Turk Gregory" (5.2.45), by destroying Hal's gracious "rites of tenderness," rites which take place, it seems worth repeating, outside of both the established church and the auspices of priestcraft. Albeit in Vice-like clownish form, Falstaff mirrors the historical Bolingbroke exposed in Foxe's text by uncovering (exhuming) Hotspur's body, hacking at it with his dagger, dragging this "luggage" around the stage, and, finally, by using it in a bizarre and degraded attempt at self-promotion.

Moreover, if Falstaff's comic version of Henry's atrocity—"the strangest tale that ever I heard" committed by the "strangest fellow" (5.4.154-5)—seems devoid of the supramundane fury we saw in Clifford and Richard III, of that characteristically anti-Christian urge to kill one's victims over and over again, this element of Bolingbroke's tyranny recorded by Foxe resurfaces in the rebel juggernaut, Douglas. Although he does not desecrate any corpses, he does spend his day, if not his energy,

killing and re-killing counterfeit versions of the King, the last of which, ironically, is Falstaff himself. And, although he turns out, like Foxe's papal crusaders and Shakespeare's French, to be a viciously "lofty runaway," the fury of the "vile Scot" Douglas at Shrewsbury is also terrifyingly real.

Douglas' fury recalls, in fact, the powerful image of Welsh "butchery" with which the play began:

> the noble Mortimer
> Against the irregular and wild Glendower,
> Was by the rude hands of that Welshman taken,
> A thousand of his people butchered,
> Upon whose dead corpse there was such misuse,
> Such beastly shameless transformation,
> By those Welshwomen done as may not be
> Without much shame retold or spoken of. (1.1.38-46)[8]

Strikingly, Shakespeare's sense of the connection between these two chronicled episodes of battlefield desecration is suggested by the way the details of the "shameless transformation" of the English soldiers contained in *Holinshed's Chronicles*, details which the reticent Earl of Westmorland both alludes to and suppresses in Act One, resurface in Hal's odd and arresting reference to the dead Hotspur's "mangled face" (5.4. 95). Why is Hotspur's face mangled? Because Holinshed reports that the Welsh women "cut off their privities, and put one part into the mouth of every dead man, in such sort that the cullions hoong downe to their chins, they did cut off their noses and thrust them into their tailes as they laie on the ground *mangled and defaced*" (3.528, my emphasis). Exemplifying the exact antithesis of the demonic spirit of these Welsh women—and of Foxe's Bolingbroke—Hal graciously attempts to cover Hotspur's shame with his impromptu "rites of tenderness" and Falstaff, by contrast, comically embodies that diabolism by disgracefully re-exposing Percy's buried "ignominy."[9]

*

Shakespeare exploded onto the Elizabethan literary scene and established himself as the pre-eminent historical dramatist of the horrors of "civil butchery" with powerful scenes of battlefield enormity such as Queen Margaret's mock-crucifixion of the Duke of York in *3HenryVI*. Having read Foxe's account, Shakespeare might well have concluded his first play about the embattled reign of "King Bolingbroke" with a scene of satanic enormity such as the one pictured by Foxe. Indeed, an alternative version of *1HenryVI*, in which an apoplectic Bolingbroke has his horrible way with Hotspur's body is not that difficult to imagine—think of the blinding of Gloucester in *King Lear*. That he did not do so was perhaps because, like the "honest chronicler" Griffith in *Henry VIII*, and like Prince Hal, Shakespeare appreciated that "[m]en's evil manners live in brass, their virtues/ We write in water"(4.2.45-6). More importantly though, I think that the complex intertextual engagement with Foxe sketched out here helps to show how the entire epideictic structure of the last three plays of the second tetralogy emerge out of Shakespeare's progressively critical engagement with Foxean history. As I argued earlier, in returning to the remoter Ricardian origins of the Wars of the Roses era, Shakespeare continued to invest his argument with Foxean apocalyptic meaning by staging Richard's tragedy as a kind of royal apostasy, but he did so in a way which attempted to recuperate, against the grain of Foxe's pessimism, a sense that a spark of grace still remained in the English crown. For all his Machiavellian *virtu* Bolingbroke cannot steal it, but Hal, despite his reprobate nature and his manifest demerits, inherits it at Shrewsbury and, even more magnificently, at Agincourt. Thus, whereas Foxe's political theme is the utter eclipse of royalty under the Lancastrian monarchs, who are in Foxe's eyes little more than bloody-minded Antichristian butchers, Shakespeare was determined to tell the *whole*

truth about the Lancastrian era, a truth which is as much embodied by the "invented" story of Hal's chivalry at Shrewsbury, and the fact of God's providential favour shown to Hal in France, as it is in three foil-like personifications of enormity touched upon above: the rebel, the fat knight, and the corrupt king. Shakespeare acknowledges Foxe's devastating portrait of the two Henries—hence the inclusion of Bolingbroke's Shrewsbury atrocity—but insists that, for a few golden moments at least, the younger Henry really was "England's hope": the possibility of a providentially grace*full* monarch and a shining exemplar of that Christian warrior-heroism which Foxe vigorously denies in the case of the Lancastrian kings.

From this perspective, Shakespeare's complex transfiguration of the notorious desecration of Hotspur's corpse makes perfect dramatic sense. Rather than focusing on Bolingbroke's singular enormity, as Foxe does by reprinting the articles against him, Shakespeare distributes the spectre of enormity across the whole of the late-medieval historical landscape, so that each of the "sides" in the conflict represent apostasy in a more subtly shaded way. That is, rather than the almost cartoon-like stage villains which Shakespeare created in the first tetralogy, Shakespeare creates in the second tetralogy a series of more complexly realistic characters who represent, in an almost allegorical fashion, False Hope. This False Hope is an enormity, but it is one which seems ripe for redemption.

Parachuted into the play from a Reformed morality play tradition in which Vices and stage devils were already thoroughly linked with popery, Falstaff's gigantic presence works, antithetically, to confirm the *Protestantized* godliness of Hal's assurance and to cast the potentially transformative, visionary aspirations of Bolingbroke and Hotspur into a pseudo-carnivalesque popish distopia. Where Bolingbroke dreams of a crusade, and Hotspur of stealing honour from the moon,

Falstaff dreams of a demonically topsy-turvy kingdom in which there is nothing but nighttime, drunkenness and a gallows:

> Marry, then, sweet wag, when thou art king, let not us that are squires of the night's body be call'd thieves of the day's beauty. Let us be Diana's foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon, and let men say we be men of good government, being govern'd, as the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we steal. (*1HenryIV*, 1.2.23-29).

Looking at passages like this one, modern critics have seen Falstaff as an anodyne to morality, to "old father antic the law," and even history itself, but in doing so they have ignored both the plot and the intimations of real diabolism Shakespeare weaves into Falstaff's benighted fantasy. Shakespeare's point, exposed by Hal's relentless refusal to be contaminated by Falstaff's specious charms, is that what thrills Falstaff is not a vision of other peoples' freedom, but rather the prospect of being absolute judge and executioner. Falstaff will be a "brave judge," and a "rare hangman" because this role, in fact, "jumps" with his devilish "humour." Rather than a figure of comic "life," Falstaff is a fundamentally joy*less* dead man walking: his wit is a desperate "Lincolnshire bagpipe" which cannot dispel his profound melancholy. And, just as ostensibly as the pseudo-king Bolingbroke, Falstaff rots away before our eyes as he huffs and puffs his way towards his miserable end in the stews. Like his royal double, Falstaff dies "babb[ling] of green fields" on which, unregenerate *monster* that he is, his horribly diseased feet will never walk.

Thus, what looks like a merry Rabelasian hero in the Land of Cockaine gives way, dramatically, to an adumbration of the nightmare kingdom of Jack Cade and Dick the Butcher and to a horrifying image of the life-in-death of spiritually exanimate flesh. This is why it is not Rabelais who provides the most condign gloss on Falstaff, but the Godly moralist Thomas Sheafe:

> There are many that in the former part of their life, have wasted their rationall powers, in lewdness, or at lest in idle extravagant courses. These are not OLD MEN rightly so-called: nor (indeed) men at all: but...evill beasts and sow bellies, such, having lived in pleasures, were dead while they lived: their Sun gone downe at noone...their old age is past, before it comes. (qtd in Shephard, 43)

Sheafe's sermon anatomizes Falstaff because Shakespeare's perspective on these English monsters is, pace *Humphreys*, quite precisely a puritan critical one: both men and stage devils, these characters embody the enormity of False Hope, a kind of vacuous spiritual emptiness which, functioning as a foil for Henry's God-given assurance, piety, and valour, helps Shakespeare to reflect and supplement Foxe's idea of late-medieval England's Antichristian apostasy. And, inescapably it seems to me, in creating this elaborately wrought structure of spiritual antithesis—England's true Hope is haunted by a trio of false, satanic opposites—Shakespeare promotes, as Jeffrey Knapp might say, the cause of true religion, of Protestantism, by relentlessly connecting False Hope with late-medieval Catholicism, with popery and apostasy. Whereas the spiritual nature of diabolically popish figures such as Cardinal Beaufort could hardly have been overlooked by Shakespeare's original audiences, Bolingbroke, Falstaff, and the Rebels are, by design, potentially misleading. Bolingbroke would not be Bolingbroke if his appallingly bloody minded "care," and his dream of exculpating his sins by committing even more murders abroad, were not at least potentially impressive. Hotspur's manly chivalry, similarly, is potentially value-laden. His dynamic presence does seem to ennoble the Rebels' cause, but he ends *infamously*, like Herod in *Acts* (12:20), as food for worms—and by being dragged offstage by an ignominious stage devil. And Falstaff, who has his charms too, seems to be a satirical lampoon of the pious warrior and protomartyr Sir John Oldcastle. We are not, however, meant to be taken in by these false seemings—no more than we root for

Pistol or the French at Agincourt. Just as the plot of the *Henriad* builds unerringly towards the glorification of Henry's victory at Agincourt *despite* the continuous revelation of the warrior's "dark side," Shakespeare's characterization of these English monsters is designed to expose the astonishing spiritual bankruptcy which lies beneath their variously hopeful exteriors.

The collision between "England's Hope" and these antithetical False Hope figures is at the heart of Shakespeare argument about the meaning and significance of what we call late-medieval or early modern English history. The *Henriad* is a demanding work of historical drama designed to capture the Providential truths of history. Shakespeare provokes forensic and moral discernment, not aporia. He does this by presenting audiences with interpretive difficulties which are meant to be solved, as the Chorus in *Henry V* puts it, in the "quick forge and working-house of thought"(5.0. 23). Along with the problem of grasping the enigmatic heroism of the hero in relation to the providential certainties of Agincourt, the chief interpretive difficulty generated by the *Henriad* is the problem of making sense of the plays' foils. Bolingbroke, the Rebels, and Falstaff are English monsters whose graceless existence is a theatrical wonder which serves as a foil for the Grace extended to Henry by God. In a precise inversion of the formula detected by Schlegel, what Shakespeare manages to do with these characters is to "touch" them, in the theatre, with a kind of potential, even as he exposes them as unredeemed and unredeemable. They are, to use Spurgeon's epithet, "monsters of iniquity": they embody the central Christian belief, one which was of course particularly vital in Shakespeare's Calvinistic Protestantism, that no matter how *seemingly* propitious, all human virtues and aspirations are utterly vicious in the absence of Grace. However, rather than parts of a theological allegory, these embodied vices are characters in a history play: they represent a particular

historical crisis in Lancastrian England viewed through the lens of Calvinist historiography, of Foxe. Like the more ostensibly "preposterous" villains of the earlier chronicle plays, Bolingbroke, Falstaff, and the Rebels represent the Antichristian enormity which defines the era in which they live. However—and this is crucial to their function as foils for the hero—just as the histrionics of a bad actor like Richard III does not contaminate theatricality *tout court*, and just as King Richard's tragic apostasy does not vitiate royalty itself, these characters do not so much negate the virtues they represent as embody them in explicitly and hopelessly degraded forms. *Their* dreams end in disgrace, but their virtues—political *virtù* and prudence, chivalric striving after honour, comic laughter, and, above all, hope—are redeemed by Henry's unpromised reformation.

*

A.R. Humphreys was right to assert that the *Henriad* is about the adventure of Bohemianism, but in rejecting the puritan critical view he, along with modern criticism in general, consigned Shakespeare's carefully crafted English Monsters to a kind of oblivion. As thrilling as this prospect is to moderns, respectable English professors perhaps especially, Shakespeare's Henry does not triumph in the theatre by embracing disreputability: a very different kind of Bohemian, he repudiates and traverses it with grace and an iron will. Like the biblical Prodigal Son as interpreted by Tudor Protestants, and like Foxe's martyrs, Shakespeare's Henry is continuously menaced by the vitiating forces of the world, the flesh, and the devil; however, armed with the impenetrable armor of election, he remains fundamentally uncontaminated, if not unsullied, by them. The *Henriad* is about the adventure of Bohemianism, in other words, not because Shakespeare's "wise inclusive vision" anticipates the pieties of New Criticism, or New Historicism, but because its hero is like Foxe's godly

champion Zisca and because its antagonists embody the Enormities of the modern world which, in Shakespeare's theatre of wonders, never manage to prevail.

---

[1] Again, the importance of grasping Shakespeare's conception of John of Gaunt cannot be overstated: Shakespeare manifestly presents Falstaff as the parodic spiritual opposite of Gaunt, and this antithetical relationship determines the relationship between Falstaff and Oldcastle and makes perfectly clear that Sir John Sack and Sugar is a Popish, not a Protestant, belly god. For a further discussion of this problem, see Poole (2000) and my review: *Dalhousie Review* 80.3 (2000): 431-433.

[2] Calvin Graham Thayer's *Shakespearean Politics: Government and Misgovernment in the Great Histories* presents a robustly Republican version of this argument.

[3] I say *sober* mockery because, while Bolingbroke is manifestly a target of Shakespeare's irony, the quality of this exposure is more in the realm of religious seriousness rather than satiric laughter.

[4] The transformation, on the modern stage, of Shakespeare's bloody-minded rebel into a romantic leading man can be traced in Scott McMillan's stage history of *1HenryIV*.

[5] In this view, Jon Finch's much maligned, but in fact brilliantly conceived and self-effacing portrayal of Bolingbroke as a grating, diseased tyrant in the BBC Shakespeare is as true to Shakespeare's character as Olivier's famous transformation of Hotspur into a Romantic leading role is false.

[6] I have had to leave this discussion aside, but what is striking about the Scrope episode in *Henry V* is the way it retrospectively defines the entire Percy rebellion in the sequence by associating it with the machinations of malignant popish clerics, and by investing Scrope, Hal's treacherous bosom companion, with all of those diabolical "oppositional energies" which were, as we have seen, traditionally attached to the Lollard Knight Oldcastle. Moreover, while the scene exemplifies the irresistibly destructive power of God's scourge, it also adumbrates his redemptive power as well: Henry crushes the would-be assassins like bugs, but he also *delivers* them with a sermon which, apparently, offers them the possibility of salvation.

[7] Falstaff's "carnivalesque" intimacy with the audience does not render him (and us) beyond moral and ethical responsibility and judgment here. In fact, Shakespeare's Falstaff fails to notice that the audience is watching him as he desecrates Hotspur's corpse: "Nothing confutes me but eyes," he says obliviously, "and nobody sees me" (1.4.126-7). Emphatically, Shakespeare positions his audience here not as partners with Falstaff in some aleatory comic transcendence, but rather as witnesses to a grotesque and degraded spectacle of graceless enormity.

[8] Once again, in the plays' hall of mirrors, this "Welsh butchery" is the ungodly, Antichristian, and hope*less* opposite of the godly Welsh heroics Shakespeare discovers at Agincourt in *Henry V*. It is also reminiscent, antithetically speaking, of the heroics of the Taborite women chronicled by Foxe in his account of Zisca.

[9] Also anticipating Agincourt, Hal's "rites of tenderness" are an example of a lay religiosity unauthorized by the established church and which take place "in the fields." Falstaff's hostility to Hal's implicitly Protestant sacramentalism speaks volumes for his role as Hal's diabolic antagonist.

**Chapter Nine. Conclusion.**
**Pleasing the Wiser Sort: Shakespeare and the Marketplace for Protestant Historical Culture.**

> ...but his Lucrece, and his tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke, have it in them to please the wiser sort.
>
> Gabriel Harvey, 1598

> That's the way with lexicons. They build walls around meanings and provide small gardens where it is possible to potter about without much fear of contradiction. The garden...is well constructed, its walls apparently sturdy enough to keep out marauders. It seems to promise the stability in meaning that scholars often desire. But look a little bit more closely and you can see the walls crumble. There are spots where it is easy to sneak in.
>
> The *Keywords* Collective, 3

> Let me embrace thee, good old chronicle,
> That hast so long walk'd hand in hand with time.
>
> Shakespeare

> It was clearly the preferred form for narrative of all kinds, the form readers expected and enjoyed. It was an aesthetic fact of medieval life, symptomatic of a profound difference in taste and not a failure of mind....Since we can no longer experience their enjoyment directly, perhaps we should learn to measure their pleasure by our annoyance.
>
> Nancy Partner

> The blazing distinction of its author's genius and character has made it difficult for later generations to understand clearly how intimately and completely he was related to his own time.
>
> William Haller

> Dans sa structure profonde, la mentalité des hommes le plus éclairés de la fin du XVIe siècle, du debut an XVIIe siècle, ait différé, et radicalement, de la mentalité des hommes le plus éclairés de notre temps.
>
> Lucien Fèbvre

What we are seeing here, then, are a number of openings and potential points of contact between perfect Protestantism and attitudes and beliefs circulating among the people. This material enables us to argue that even hot Protestantism may well have been less novel, less strange and off-putting, even to popular audiences, than it has been fashionable of late to assume....if Protestantism was not as strange, as alien, to popular religious expectations and beliefs as we have been led of late to believe, then it is altogether more plausible to argue that at least some aspects of the protestant case might have struck a chord with the people.

Peter Lake

What then was Shakespeare's Theatre of Enormity? How did it work and what was it for? What did it have "in it," as Gabriel Harvey put it in 1598, "to please the wiser sort"? (Chambers, 56). In this thesis I have argued that if we want to answer this question in a meaningfully historiographical way, we will have to begin by setting aside an ingrained critical habit of thought I have called "radical Shakespeare." From Rossiter to Rackin, the idea of Shakespeare's radicalism has provided Shakespeare scholars with a richly satisfying *lexicon* for explaining and celebrating the artistry of the English chronicle plays; however, like the walled garden described by the *Keywords* collective, this lexicon appears, on close inspection, to be a crumbling edifice rife with gaping lacunae. Following Sidney's famous argument, critics have asserted the primacy of the artistic over the historical in Shakespeare. However, where Sidney rested his case on the debatable but coherent idea that poetry is superior to history because it is a more rhetorically effective kind of exemplary moral discourse, a "more doctrinable" kind of history as he put it (107), modern critics have insisted upon the radical discontinuity separating Shakespearean drama and Tudor-Stuart history writing. And in so doing we have tried to insist, perhaps paradoxically, on the superiority of both Shakespeare's *constructive* genius over the paratactic non-structure of the chronicles, while celebrating, at the same time, his singular *deconstructive* irony, complexity, and ambiguity, and the supposedly non-didactic and even amoral, nature of the plays, over the supposedly rigid and doctrinaire dogmatism of early modern historical writing. Thus, where Fritz Levy argued that the chronicles were an "ideal source for the playwrights" because they contained copious raw material but "no conception of history," and left "the construction...the ordering of events...to others"(183-4), A.P. Rossiter insisted that

Tudor historical thought was too "rigid," "black-and-white," "doctrinaire" and "narrowly moral" for "Shakespeare's mind." While the playwright might have used contemporary historical thought "as a FRAME," Rossiter trumpeted, "he had to undermine it, to qualify it with equivocations: to vex its applications with sly or subtle ambiguities" (59). I am arguing exactly the opposite: Shakespeare's equivocations, his subtle and often ambiguous figures of enormity, do not undermine or vex history, they consolidate it, taking him and his audiences deeper into, rather than out of, the world of serious providential historical assertion.

It is of course easy to see how the valorization of aesthetic structure and aesthetic ambiguity—the twin pillars of 20th-century poetics—has combined with the secularizing, evolutionary narratives of Whig-Liberal tradition to create a satisfying, but nonetheless misleading, explanatory lexicon or paradigm: because they are "poetic," Shakespeare's plays inevitably transformed the *artless* chaos and/or the didactic, religiopolitically conservative, material of the chronicles into something fundamentally different, transforming history into *drama* in a radical aesthetic sphere which, miraculously, Shakespeare ushered into existence. What is becoming increasingly clear, I would argue moreover, is how little of substance the putatively *historicized* (in)versions of this same radical thesis by more recent New Historicist scholars has added to our understanding of these plays. Ironically, in professing Shakespeare's radicalism, post-Tillyardian criticism has effectively banished the feature of Shakespeare's historical art which perhaps most clearly or *radically* differentiates it from the work of his theatrical contemporaries: his profound intellectual and imaginative engagement with the providential history writing of his era. It is as a historical dramatist that Shakespeare has no rivals. There are other

masterpieces of historical drama in this era, Marlowe's *Edward II*, for example, but, to use the language of *Troilus and Cressida*, no professional dramatist embraced the good old chronicles as enthusiastically, as intelligently, and with as thorough and profound a commitment to the kind of history-making found in them as Shakespeare did; certainly none walked hand in hand with them for as long.

However, if it is perhaps easy to anatomize the interpretive follies of Radical Shakespeare, what is, I think, much more difficult to grasp is that there are other, more credible and more satisfying ways of contextualizing Shakespeare's history plays. More than anything else, it seems to me, *this* is the failure of post-Tillyardian criticism: the failure to acknowledge that it is possible to move beyond the precincts of Tillyard's famous thesis while still engaging in a robustly historiographical and critically nuanced study of the intertextual relations between Shakespeare's plays and the authoritative chronicles of his day. Attempting to do just this, I have looked at Shakespeare's discovery of modernity through the intertextual prism of Foxe's apocalyptic history. From this novel literary-historiographical perspective, Shakespeare's discovery of modernity re-emerges as an object of critical scrutiny, and an artistic achievement worth celebrating, marked by the literary complexity and the religious-historical seriousness which are authentically and inalienably Shakespeare's. Focusing on the way Shakespeare's art of characterization functions as an organic component of his overall historical argument, I have argued that, from Cade to Falstaff, Shakespeare presents audiences with a spectacular parade of English monsters, characters who are, as John Danby saw, "allotropic forms" of modernity. When viewed from the perspective of Foxe's apocalyptic history, these seriocomically stage devilish "New Men" embody the truly

Antichristian Enormity which, according to Foxe, is the presiding spirit of these "perilous latter days." Shakespeare's Henry V is also a figure of Enormity, but, uniquely, in putting aside the corrupt old man and donning the godly livery of the Prodigal Warrior Prince, he comes to embody or mirror, *contra* Foxe, the spiritual antithesis of Antichristian Enormity: the Reformed Godly Prince.

I have argued, moreover, that in witnessing Shakespeare's figures of Enormity in this Foxean and apocalyptic aspect, Shakespeare's original audiences were also encouraged to recognize the distinctive literariness and autonomy, and hence the historiographical legitimacy, of Shakespeare's theatre itself. Shakespeare's history plays did not create a radically aestheticized and secularized cultural space apart from the dominant religious historical culture of Tudor-Stuart England, but they did carve out a space of historiographical legitimacy within that hegemonic culture for the professional stage and its practitioners. Drawing on the intertextual theories of Riffaterre, and on Shakespeare's own comments on his historical practice, I have defined Enormity as a species of self-reflexive and dynamically allusive theatrical wonder. This wonder, I have suggested, is designed to provoke a distinctively literary semiosis, one which involves the generation, and the successful resolution, of interpretive crises or "ungrammaticalities," and which leads, ultimately, to a distinctively literary and indeed theatrical sense of historical truth.

Entering Shakespeare's Theatre of Enormity, original audiences were not time-warped to the point where they could see the origins of historical modernity the way we do, nor were they subjected to some anomic and vertiginously subversive radical anti-history. Rather, Shakespeare's patrons knew full well that Shakespeare's drama was a

godly enterprise, designed, as Harvey says, "to please the wiser sort." What they paid for, and were treated to, were a series of what Nancy Partner has felicitously termed "serious entertainments": wonder-filled performances of religious-historical conviction commensurate with the leading providential history writing of the day. Thus, to quote Prince Hamlet, Shakespeare's exemplary figure of the godly theatre enthusiast once more, these plays are "abstract and brief chronicles" of the "time," of modernity, and much of their force and energy *qua* history comes as a result of a complexly productive relationship of dependence and autonomy *vis-à-vis* the authoritative historical record. The "blazing" puritan genius that William Haller was extolling in *The Rise of Puritanism* was of course Milton's, not Shakespeare's, and the masterpiece of godly poetics he was celebrating was *Paradise Lost*, not Shakespeare's serial representation of the origins of modernity in the English chronicle plays. I hope, nonetheless, that my efforts in tracing the Foxean intertext have made Shakespeare's intimate engagement with the historical writing of his own time somewhat clearer.

*

While an allusion to William Haller, a great Miltonist and the first modern historian of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, makes for a resonant conclusion to my intertextual reading of Foxean Enormity in the English chronicle plays, I began this thesis by suggesting that stepping outside of the narrow confines of the "radical Shakespeare" lexicon not only helps us to see Shakespeare's artistry in a clearer, more coherent way, but also that it is good a way of joining in—and perhaps of contributing to—a much more vital and current discussion about early modern religious culture. It is a fine thing to find one's conclusions echoed in the works of past greats like Haller, Tillyard, or Campbell,

but good Shakespeare scholarship begins, it seems to me, with a desire to speak not with the dead, in a cloister, but with living scholars whose new research and new perspectives help us better to understand Shakespeare in a vital and contemporary way. What I would like to do in closing, therefore, is very briefly to situate the close readings I have attempted here within the context of some recent scholarship on early modern religious culture, and in particular on the phenomenon Daniel Woolf has described as the social circulation of the past.

First and foremost, it should be clear by now that my analysis of Shakespeare's Theatre of Enormity, and in particular my attempt to represent Shakespeare as an apocalyptic historian committed to a providential, and indeed explicitly Calvinistic, world view, shares little common ground with critics like Jeffrey Knapp who, while participating in the ongoing "religious turn" in early modern theatre studies, are determined to talk about Shakespeare's religiosity in terms of the traditional idea of a stark antipathy between the culture of puritans and preachers and theatre people. Just as evidently, my readings have even less in common with critics, Stephen Greenblatt *ne plus ultra*, who view Shakespeare's artistry as a kind of imaginative crypto-Catholic resistance or recusancy.[1] As well, my attempt to reconstruct the apocalyptic argument of Shakespeare's plays would seem to have little in common with the paradigmatically New Historicist attempt to force a confession out of the literary text, to make it say what it does not believe and does not know about itself. This is because, as Elizabeth Hanson points out, such theory-driven attempts to pressure the text into revealing its "complicity," and to expose the extent to which it is "powerfully, revealingly out of control"(267), are antithetical to the attempt "respectfully" to reconstruct the religious

convictions that the text, and its author, are trying to perform. Especially when it comes to religion, Hanson notes with unusual clarity and candour, such deconstructive criticism is very often simply "deaf to the meanings that Shakespeare may have been consciously trying to produce" (271).[2]

However, if I have little to add to these familiar conversations, the kind of reading I have been attempting here dovetails, quite productively, I think, with the work of cultural historians who have been assiduously mapping what Peter Lake calls the "openings and potential points of contact between perfect Protestantism and attitudes and beliefs circulating among the people" (*Antichrist's*, 315). This large and diverse historical enterprise would include theatre historians like Jack Heller, Paul White, Julia Gaspar, and Margot Heinemann mentioned in the introduction, but more centrally it includes the work of historians of early modern religious culture such as Patrick Collinson, Nicholas Tyacke, Margaret Spufford, Robert Scribner, Tessa Watt, Kenneth Fincham, Judith Maltby, Lori Anne Ferrell, Alexandra Walsham, and Darren Oldridge.[3] What these historians all share to some extent is an opposition to the view, counter-argued by 17th-century historians such as George Bernard and Kevin Sharpe, on one hand, and "revisionist" Tudor historians such as Eamon Duffy and Christopher Haigh, on the other, that zealous Protestant or "Puritan" culture was "antithetical to the religious needs and expectations of a still largely 'catholic' 'people'," and thus "doomed" to be "incapable of cultivating a following amongst 'the people'"(Lake, *Boxmaker's*, 13-14).[4] As noted earlier, in challenging the conventional image of Godly culture as a "doctrinally off-putting, culturally anorexic, and socially resistible" ideology, and pursuing, instead, "Calvinism's attractive packaging" (Ferrell, 4-5), these historians have provided a rich

new picture of one of the fundamental contexts for understanding both Shakespeare's religious-historical seriousness and his popularity: the marketplace for inexpensive "godly" literature.[5] If Jeffrey Knapp's reference to Shakespearean drama as a "godly enterprise" makes sense, it is largely because these historians have made sense of it.

Interestingly, however, while the work of Ferrell and the other historians I have mentioned has done much to undermine the notion of a binary opposition between "popular" and "godly" culture generally speaking, these historians have steered well clear of the theatre, and consequently have done little to challenge one of this binary model's most familiar versions: the notion of a culture "war" between puritans and the stage.[6] Tessa Watt, for instance, surveys the myriad ways that "cheap print" functioned as a medium for the dissemination of Protestantism, but does not consider the stage or theatre-going as a potential example of inexpensive godly culture. This is despite the fact that some of her authors, Dekker for instance, were also theatre professionals, and that many of her consumers of cheap godly culture were no doubt also patrons of the stage. Similarly, while Alexandra Walsham has catalogued the remarkable extent to which zealous Protestant preachers and providential writers viewed the world as an apocalyptic "theatre of God's judgment," she makes virtually no attempt to view the actual theatre as a place where the discourse of Protestant providentialism flourished. And, in a fascinating discussion of "Puritanism and Popular Culture," Darren Oldridge focuses on "the capacity of radical Protestantism to 'mutate' into different forms" which were capable of "meet[ing] the needs of people no otherwise attracted to the message of zealous pastors," but he does not consider the professional theatre as a locus for such mutations (83-84). To give one more example, this strong tendency to ignore the theatre as a potential "point of

contact" between godly and popular culture is particularly evident in the following passage from the Introduction to a recent study of the *Uses of Script and Print, 1300-1700*, edited by Walsham and Julia Crick. Challenging the "enduring" identification of print with Protestantism and orality with reactionary Catholicism or Recusancy, Crick and Walsham argue that "recent research has done much to complicate" this polarized way of thinking. We are now, they urge,

> more aware of the vital role which the spoken word played in diffusing Reformation ideas, in the guise of informal discussion, reading aloud of pamphlets and tracts, singing of ballads and psalms, catechizing, and, above all, preaching. Evidence is emerging, too, of the way that Protestantism eventually engendered a kind of folklore of its own, a body of providential anecdotes, martyrological stories, and legends of the reformers which, when in turn recorded in writing and print, bore the tell-tale marks of oral transmission. (24)

Again, in this swelling chorus of godly popular culture located, so to speak, at the intersection of speech and print, the historians' silence on the role of theatre in the creation of a distinctively Protestant culture is, it seems fair to say, deafening.[7]

There are no doubt myriad reasons why these cultural historians have chosen not to delve into theatre history, and my point is not to criticize; rather, what I would like to do simply is to add my reading of the Foxean intertext in Shakespeare to what is, I think, one of the most interesting debates and discussions in early modern studies today. Notwithstanding the objections of naysayers like Sharpe, there was a popular godly culture in Tudor Stuart England, and in London perhaps especially, and few questions would appear to be more historically exigent and interesting than the manner in which it came in to being. To use Oldridge's terms, in tracing the Foxean intertext in these plays, what we have also been witnessing, so to speak, is Shakespeare participating in the

making of a godly popular culture by taking some fairly hot Protestant ideas from Foxe and transforming them, on the stage, into a kind of history that was "usable" by a wider, more popular audience. We can see this in the way Shakespeare uses histrionic stage devils like Jack Cade and Richard III to cast the Wars of the Roses as an apocalyptic image of England as a modern Golgotha; in the way he recreates Foxe's tendentiously godly image of John of Gaunt in order to present Richard's *hamartia* as an implicitly popish royal apostasy and to chart England's tragic fall into modernity; and, finally, in the way he brilliantly deploys Foxe's striking revisions of Lancastrian history in order to redress the legendary figure of the Prodigal Warrior prince in the puritanical uniform, so to speak, of the elect Godly Prince.[8]

Especially in light of the longstanding assumption of a kind of natural antipathy between players and puritans, Shakespeare's history plays offer a remarkable example not only of Oldridge's argument about the *mutability* of Puritan cultural forms, but also of the argument about the ubiquity of points of contact between godly and popular culture more generally. Moreover, it is precisely because Shakespeare is one of Lucien Fèbvre's "hommes les plus éclaires," and not a less-celebrated individual like Dekker or Lake's Stephen Denison, that the discovery that his plays are in fact richly nuanced points of contact between the godly and popular spheres is so vital.[9] That is, while it can hardly be claimed that Shakespeare's role in the formation of Protestant culture is somehow larger or more important than that of a Dekker or Denison, if we can justifiably enrol Shakespeare in the ranks of the producers of godly historical culture—rather than imagining him as one of its most brilliantly "radical" antagonists—then we have, I think, added considerable credibility to the notion of Calvinism's "attractive packaging."[10] By

the same token, reading Shakespeare in this way deals a powerful blow to the dismissive and nugatory image of godly culture as a kind of cultural anorexia.

*

> I have never heard his like! He has cut his hayre too. He is so well given, and has such good gifts! Hee can tell you almost all the stories of the *Book of Martyrs*. (*Eastward Ho!* 5.2.55-57)

It is one thing to claim that Shakespeare contributed to the formation of a distinctively godly popular culture by making Foxean history more "usable," but what is it exactly that playgoers used this "mutated" history for? While I have used terms such as "witness" and "participation" fairly frequently in this thesis, when I argue that Shakespeare invited his audiences to witness Foxean spiritual realities on the stage, and that he and they were thus participating in the formation of a distinctive religious culture, I am not suggesting, in the vaguely Geertzian, pseudo-anthropological way preferred by many New Historicist critics, that Shakespeare's stage amounted to some kind of displaced or transfigured *ritual*.[11] When they paid to enter Shakespeare's Theatre of Enormity, playgoers were not participating, in some strangely unconscious way, in a quasi-religious ritual; rather, they were consciously choosing to participate in a cultural market place in which theatrical performances of convictions, like Tessa Watts' godly ballads and Peter Lake's pious murder pamphlets, were regarded, albeit not always by everyone or to the same extent, as legitimately godly commodities, a market place for spiritual goods in which the majority of the producers and the consumers had a substantial investment, so to speak, in Reformed religiosity. In arguing that Shakespeare's theatre was thus a "godly enterprise," what I would like to suggest is that tracing the Foxean intertext in Shakespeare provides a

remarkable example of the phenomenon Daniel Woolf is attempting to get at when he argues that a distinctively early modern historical culture was emerging in Tudor Stuart England by virtue of the "social circulation" of historical knowledge.

The notion of a distinct historical culture, Woolf explains, is "a convenient shorthand for the perceptual and cognitive web of relations between past, present, and future" which are specific to the "time and circumstances" of any given society:

> A historical culture gives rise to, nurtures, and is itself ultimately influenced by the formal historical writing of an era, but also manifests itself in other ways...[and it] consists of habits of thought, languages, and media of communication, and patterns of social convention that embrace elite and popular, narrative and non-narrative modes of discourse. It is expressed both in texts and in commonplace forms of behaviour....The defining characteristics of a historical culture are subject to material, social, and circumstantial forces that, as much as the traditionally studied intellectual influences, conditioned the way in which the mind thinks, reads, writes, and speaks of the past. Above all, the notions of the past developed within any historical culture are not simply abstract ideas, recorded for the benefit of subsequent generations (and early third millennium cultural historians). Rather they are part of the mental world and verbal specie of the society that uses them, passing among contemporaries through speech, writing, and other means of communication. This motion or process of exchange of elements of a historical culture may be called for its convenience its 'social circulation.' (*Social Circulation* 9-10)

If I understand Woolf's argument correctly, in addition to the agency of authors who, like Shakespeare and John Foxe, assembled their historical representations out of a socially diverse array of cultural materials, and who, in turn, addressed their representations to socially diverse audiences, a further, fundamental, requirement for the formation of this distinctive historical culture, one which enables its characteristic forms of historical knowing to circulate socially, is the existence of a substantial body of analogously syncretistic or agglomerative readers. This is why Woolf has worked so assiduously in his recent books to discover, catalogue and analyze the material evidence—in diaries,

marginalia, and other written remnants—of the mental habits of early modern readers of history.

Sometimes more explicitly than others, my argument in this thesis hinges on the existence of something like the exact same kind of readership: I have been doing the work of tracing the Foxean intertext in the plays, but in doing so I have been assuming that a similar kind of active reading would have been part of the way the plays would have been experienced by a substantial part of the audience—readers of *Acts and Monuments*. Therefore—and assuming, of course, that what I have been calling Shakespeare's discovery of modernity was not simply lost on his contemporaries—the presence of the Foxean intertext in the plays might to some extent confirm, or at least be inter-illuminated by, Woolf's argument about early modern readers.

The Jailer's enthusiastic account of the conversion of the roguish Francis in Jonson's *Eastward Ho!* goes right to the heart of this contention. While this satirical characterization is used very differently in the play—to fool the warden and drive a temporary satirical wedge between "godly" and "theatre" people—I want to employ Francis' *adopted* persona as a figure for my notionally Foxean reader/playgoer.[12] Looking at aspects of the mental habits of early modern readers gleaned from Woolf's research supports the idea of a hypothetical playgoer whose characteristic approach to "reading history" was shaped by *Acts and Monuments* and who applied this historiographical reading style in the theatre. There were such men and women in the audience, and considering the ways these real-life Francis figures would have, as Woolf puts it, "understood and made use of" (*Reading History*, 79) the images of historical enormity they encountered in Shakespeare's plays adds presumptive historical weight to the

comparative readings which I have presented in this thesis. While I do not, of course, have any of the kinds of material evidence Woolf is exploring, any real evidence in the form of actual responses of a specific persons or groups of people to Shakespeare's plays, what I do hope to have shown is that if what I have called the Foxean intertext was in fact rhetorically available in Shakespeare's plays, if the plays represented the past in a recognizably Foxean way, Woolf's archival work has brought to light a constituency of contemporary readers who would have been perfectly situated to seize upon it.

Despite the Jailer's disclaimer—"I have never heard his like"—the kind of historical consciousness which is being lampooned here was a contemporary reality: many people did read Foxe intensively, with a view to memorizing episodes which they deemed important, and such reading and memorizing were widely considered to be a mark of distinction. And, while this distinctive feature of Protestant intellectual life is being burlesqued here, we should not infer that it was, or was necessarily regarded as, a practice peculiar to a religious minority remote from the theatre. Rather, many of the same playgoers who laughed at the anti-puritan jibes of a Nashe or Jonson were themselves ardent and avid readers of *Acts and Monuments*. What is more, far from dismissing Foxean readers, the popularity of the Foxean History play in general suggests that chronicle playwrights embraced the historical consciousness that reading Foxe helped to stimulate and foster as a resource fundamental to their profession. Rather than broadcasting alien dogma to uninterested playgoers, Foxean playwrights were in the business of creating "serious entertainments" that were, at least in part, occasions for playgoers to exercise and apply the knowledge of history they had gleaned from Foxe in order to make history out of the actions and personages represented on stage.[13]

Thus, the Jailer's belief that Francis has memorized most of Foxe's stories is not *entirely* foolish: there were contemporary readers who read Foxe with the kind of intensity which would enable such a feat. As Patrick Collinson points out, "Nicholas Ferrar of Little Gidding had a chapter [of *Acts and Monuments*] read in his model household every Sunday evening, and so perhaps did most of his contemporaries of a strongly religious disposition." Similarly, the "eminent Christian" Ignatius Jordan had, according to his biographer Samuel Clarke, read the entire Bible "above twenty times over" and *Acts and Monuments* "seven times over." Such examples imply, Collinson suggests, "a daily and nightly reading from these two sacred books"("Truth and Legend", 151). Another assiduous or "thorough" reader of Foxe, and of history in general, was the 17th-century puritan William Dowsing. Dowsing's library, Woolf reports, "included an extensive section of historical titles—Plutarch, Livy, Josephus, Bacon's *Henry VII,* Hayward's *Edward VI* and three separate editions of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments.*" This three to one ratio is suggestive, but it is Dowsing's annotations which are particularly striking: Dowsing had, Woolf suggests, "a compulsion to gloss various of his books thickly *with references to John Foxe*" (*Reading History*, 92-93; my emphasis). What Woolf reveals, in other words, is that while Dowsing was *reading* his Livy, or a contemporary "politic" historian such as Hayward, he was continuously *thinking* in terms of *Acts and Monuments*, relating the events narrated on the page in front of him to the patterns and claims of a Foxean pretext that was, physically and mentally, never far away.

Extreme examples of intensive Foxean reading and application such as these are by definition atypical, and, especially in light of the fact that these readers were what we would call zealous puritans, there would seem little to connect such ultra-pious readers

with the reception of chronicle plays in the theatre. However, the fact that professional playwrights drew so heavily on Foxe for their plays indicates that the readerly habits of a Jordan or a Dowsing exemplify a kind of readerly historiographical impulse which was in fact quite widespread. Similarly, while Woolf would not consider Dowsing a typical reader in any sense, he does present Dowsing's copious applications of Foxe to the other histories that he read as an illustrative example of the active, constructive interpretive agency that was a definitive characteristic of early modern historical reading practice as a whole. Dowsing is a "compelling example," Woolf argues, "of the tendency of readers not simply to absorb their texts but to emend and interpret them by addition or correction"; there is, he argues, "compelling evidence that early modern readers were not passive receptacles but rather active directors of a dialogue involving both the text at hand and the many other authors to which it could be related" (*Social Circulation,* 90).

If this sounds like the Chorus in *Henry V* urging each playgoer to "eche [i.e. eke] out our performance with your mind" and in the "quick forge and working-house of thought" (2.0.35, 5.0.23), it is because the historian Woolf and the playwright Shakespeare are thinking about the same society of historical readers. Just as Dowsing rigorously applied his prior and ongoing reading of *Acts and Monuments* to Bacon and Plutarch, readers in general considered historical representations not as self-enclosed or completed carriers of truth about the past, but as "invitations," as Woolf puts it, "to bring their own textual 'guests' to the table"(90). What is striking is how consistently, for men and women much closer to the people for whom Shakespeare and the other playwrights were dramatizing English history, the most important and most "time honoured" intertextual guest was John Foxe.

For example, John Gibbon, a 17th-century herald, has left evidence of his reading in a copy of Stow's *Survey of London* (1598). Throughout the margins of the book, Woolf reports, "we can observe Gibbon making sense of what he read by turning it into his own prose and by connecting it with what he knew independently…on voyages through other texts"(88). One such voyage was clearly through *Acts and Monuments*: when reading Stow's description of Aldgate Ward, Gibbon proudly noted that he had "observed the arms" of Sir John Oldcastle there (88).[14] Other anonymous readers, Woolf shows, left marginal recollections of *Acts and Monuments* in works of history such as a world chronology by Christopher Helwig and Thomas Uvedale's *Memoirs of Philip de Comines* (90n26). While these are slight traces to be sure, what these examples suggest, Woolf urges, is "the degree to which ordinary readers, who might themselves have only a passing interest in a subject would make similar notes" (97). A nice example of this is found in a common-place book in which, among "several jokes and epigrams," an extract from Guicciardini on Cesare Borgia leads the author to "reflect," as Woolf puts it, on the ubiquitously Foxean theme of the connection between popery and bastardy: "He was base sonne to Rhoderick Borgia otherwise called Pope Alexander the sixth. This Alexander was the first of the popes that openly owned his bastards" (97-98).[15]

An even more illuminating example uncovered by Woolf is that of John Ward, an amateur physician and vicar from Shakespeare's Stratford-Upon-Avon. Ward's diary, a miscellany of "proverbs, recipes, medical notes, and astrological comments" also contains "abundant references to historical episodes about which he had read, episodes which took his pen in surprising directions"(108). Considering Ward's notes as an attempt to construct a "usable past" for himself, Woolf describes the way Ward "regularly blended

the serious with the trivial, and conflated written sources with 'facts' that he had heard casually." This conflating "embraced biblical, classical, medieval, and modern history, the low and the humorous as well as the high matters of state and war to which historians were supposed to confine themselves"(109). Although Woolf does not make this point, Ward's historical reading embodies—quite precisely it seems to me—the kind of enthusiastic historical consciousness towards which renaissance chronicle plays were addressed. That is, along with the other readers I am surveying here, in a very real sense Ward is the implied audience of the history plays, a man (or woman) who could "get" the historiographical point of plays as diverse as *Richard III, Coriolanus*, and *Henry VIII*, and one who was, more specifically, capable of witnessing the significance of Shakespeare's distinctive portrayals of characters like Cardinal Winchester and Duke Humphrey, Gaunt and Richard II, Falstaff and Henry V.

Moreover, like the Shakespeare cherished by modern critics, Ward is keenly skeptical about the limits of historical knowledge: "Good schollars" he writes, "seldome take things uppon trust," and he lauds historians who give "noble exhortations to trial of what wee receive for truth"; however, no proto-Derridean, Ward combines his skepticism with a "faith in the existence of certain indisputable, irreducible historical facts": 'Believing is but opinion, if the evidence be but probable, but if it bee such that cannot be questioned, then it is as certaine that there is a great towne called Constantinople, than that there is one called London; wee as little doubt that Queen Elizabeth once reigned, as that King Charles now reigns'(108). More importantly for my purposes, the reading habits reflected in Ward's diary suggest that he viewed Foxe in particular as a source for such solid, unquestionable truths. Where he was usually quite capricious—"playing with

the past" in Woolf's terms—Ward changed gears when he read Foxe, reading intensively and systematically, in something like the "thorough" fashion of an Ignatious Jordan, Ferrar, or Dowsing. Woolf's remarkable description of how Ward read his Foxe is worth quoting in full:

> Ward's paging through Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* certainly occurred in at least one patch of several consecutive readings as he pillaged the *Acts and Monuments* for materials on English secular and religious history. In this case, Ward uncharacteristically read the book in chronological order. Blips of episodes from Foxe, and Foxe's sources, are sprinkled about, commencing with the heading 'ex. lib: martyr: begins with the apostolic martyrs; 6-8 list of the successive persecutions." Foxe's comparison of himself with Livy is repeated in Ward's notes, and Ward largely adopts Foxe's periodization of church history into ages or periods in organizing his remarks. Arrival at the section of Foxe's text dealing with William the Conqueror creates a space in the notebook for a host of facts peripherally related to that King. "King William the Conqueror died about the same time as did pope Hildebrand or Gregory the 7$^{th}$ the great sorcerer. It is reported of William the Conqueror that he left but one bishop that was in before the land and that was Wolstan Bishop of Worcester. Ward's shadowing of the text in his recording of it includes not only the chronology, but Foxe's own comparisons, for instance the martyrologist's use of the quasi-miraculous survival of Huldrich Zwingli's heart after his body had been burnt to foreshadow a similar occurrence in the case of Archbishop Cranmer. "Zwinglius slain amongst the citizens the Zuirickmen the enemies burn his bodie: his friends came the next day to see whether any part of him was remaining, where they found his heart in the ashes whole and unburnt, as is allso credibly reported of the heart of Cranmer." Even the banderoles on Foxe's woodcuts, with their terse, godly declarations uttered amidst the flames, were transferred holus-bolus into Ward's notes. "Mr. Rogers the first martyr in queen maries days...mr Saunders took up the stake and kissed It saying welcome the cross of X [Christ]: welcome everlasting life." And where Foxe resorts to dramatic dialogues in representing scenes between persecutors and martyrs, Ward follows suit. (112)

While the notes from Foxe "end abruptly, as Ward slides into a series of remarks on Roman history from a variety of authors," the shaping influence of his reading of *Acts and Monuments* is highlighted in the way he represents this further reading to himself in his notes.

For example, recounting the story of the rape and execution of Sejanus' daughter, a story which, Woolf notes, Ward "was almost certainly reading in Tacitus," Ward edits the story so that the actual rape is left out: "There was a daughter of Sejanus so young, and of so little understanding, that she cried out what have I done, whither will they lead me? If I may be forgiven I will doe noe more: there needs nothing but a rod to correct me"(112n90). By preserving the girl's virginity, and by emphasizing her innocence and obedience, Ward seems in effect to be seeing the events more in Foxean, martyrological terms, than in strictly Tacitean ones. Or, more accurately, Ward seems to be re-reading Tacitus in light of his own grasp of the Foxean intertext, responding to this account of persecution by imaginatively enrolling the actors in his own personal *Acts and Monuments*.

While I have given only a taste of it here, the evidence of actual historical reading uncovered by Woolf in diaries and book margins provides invaluable insight into the mainstream historical culture upon which the chronicle play genre as a whole depended. What I hope to have at least suggested is the extent to which my Foxean intertextual readings compare with the portrait of the historical culture of early modern England Woolf presents. My reconstruction of Shakespeare's Foxean Theatre of Enormity makes sense, in other words, because Woolf has discovered the audience it was framed to be witnessed by. If we cannot quite imagine a Puritan like William Dowsing at a play, it seems fair to say that, without men like Ward—the early modern version of a history buff—there would not have been any history plays at all. And, as an assiduous and actively constructive reader, Ward would have been more than capable of seeing the images of enormity and modernity I have presented here. Although the evidence is

sketchy, and while it certainly points in the direction of other kinds of historiographical intertextuality, there is little room for doubt that the historical thinking of avid readers such as Ward was mirrored in innumerable readers, as Woolf puts it, "further down the social ladder" (101). While they likely had not memorized all of *Acts and Monuments*, these real-life Francis figures were readers such as William Stout, a Lancaster ironmonger who, Woolf reports, "passed his days reading the Bible together with Echard's *History of England,* and Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*," or "the Elizabethan gentleman John Newdigate [who] read Foxe to find examples of the evils of drunkenness" or Roger Lowe and James Woods, two reasonably pious Lancashire men whom Woolf has discovered spending a day reading the *Acts and Monuments* "while nursing a hangover from having been 'a little merry the other day'"(101).

Moreover, while many people read Foxe, godly popular culture was, as we have noted, an *oral* culture, and the prevalence of Foxean history within mainstream historical consciousness was based as much on hearing as it was on reading. Nicholas Ferrar read a segment of *Acts and Monuments* aloud to his household each week, which small audience would have included not just family members but a whole retinue of servants, friends, and relatives—some of whom, like the godly tipplers mentioned above, might have had one foot in both godly and popular spheres. And, more importantly, this scene of Foxean reading was replicated not just in other godly households, but on a massive scale by the use of Foxe by Elizabethan and Jacobean preachers. As Woolf points out, preachers "frequently made use of historical examples, and many parishioners undoubtedly acquired their first and perhaps only awareness of an extended past through listening to the episodes from biblical and classical history that enlivened the Sunday sermon"(83).

While the preachers could draw on a wide array of sources for historical anecdotes, "the Book of Martyrs [was] the most common historical item in...church collections up to the seventeenth century"(190). Whether they read him on their own or had him read to them, saw his famous woodcuts at a book stall or adorning someone's wall, or heard the stories emanating from the pulpit, Shakespeare's playgoers, like the members of Ignatius Jordan's household and like the fictional Francis, were steeped in a Foxean view of history to which they were exposed on an almost daily basis. That Foxe had a massive influence on the way Tudor-Stuart men and women viewed the past is of course not news; the importance of the evidence surveyed by Woolf is that it presents us with flesh and blood examples of Foxe's influence and, at the same time, illuminates a number of specific mental habits engendered and fostered by Foxe's book which rendered that influence immediately relevant to the reception and making of historical drama. What I would add is that—again assuming Shakespeare knew what he was doing—the depth and sophistication of the social circulation of Foxean history charted by Woolf is reflected in the construction of Shakespeare's history plays.

Finally, I have argued that the word that perhaps best describes the kind of reader that was shaped by *Acts and Monuments* is "witness": Foxe's goal was to encourage a particularly intense and engaged readerly disposition towards images of enormity, horror, and a certain kind of spiritualized pathos. This is not ritual, but a way of thinking historically about the apocalyptic horrors of modernity. Promoting that active style of historical reading which was characteristic of early modern historical reading generally, Foxe promoted a specific kind of historiographical cross reading that was fertilized or engendered by graphically moving images of enormity, and which was characterized by a

response to these images which was as much affective as it was cognitive. Witnessing, as Foxe repeatedly urges in *Acts and Monuments*, is done with the mind and the heart.[16] Thus, a joking allusion to Cesare Borgia leads a contemporary reader to meditate on the horrors of Foxe's image of the papal Antichrist; in Ward's diary, an episode from Tacitus is translated into a pathos-laden martyrological mini-drama. And, as Woolf points out, whereas typically humanist "injunctions to read the past for examples and cautionary tales" might "seem a bit cold and impersonal," what his evidence reveals is that "the emotive as well as the intellectual experience" was important to readers. This seems to be especially true of readers of Foxe, for whom the act of reading or witnessing history involved being powerfully affected by the pathos of the martyrs and near martyrs. Woolf writes:

> The reactions of Mary Rich, countess of Warwick, for instance, demonstrate that the unnamed 'histories' she read as a duty to her husband in the 1660s had little impact on her. In contrast, when reading Foxe, privately and with others, she 'found my heart mightily affected with ye great courage w[hi]ch those blessed martyrs suffered' (104)

As anyone who has read Foxe's will agree, and as I hope the few examples I am able to allude to in this thesis will at least partially illuminate, it is not hard to see Rich's reading style, which focused on the particular historiographical significance of moments of extreme pathos, was both shaped by, and would in turn have been powerfully gratified by reading *Acts and Monuments*. What needs to be added is simply that Rich's desire for highly charged moments of pathos would have been transportable, would have shaped her response to other experiences with historical representation.

What is distinctive about Rich's emphasis on pathos is that it exemplifies a particular version of an early modern historical reading style which could just as easily be called Foxean as Shakespearean. Thus Sarah Savage, an early eighteenth-century reader, asks in her diary: "What does it avail to hear, & read, & approve the lives of holy men, if I be not in some measure provoked thereby to imitation?"(104-5) Brief as it, Savage's comment offers a striking example of the degree to which a kind of Foxean *ars historica* had become a fundamental feature of the popular historical imagination. Exemplifying a "pattern of reading for incident, example, and analogy" which, Woolf argues, involved looking for the successive repetition of highly charged emblematic moments more than "an intricate Thucydean masterpiece of connected historical story-telling"(106-7), and combining this emblematic purview with the desire to be emotionally and spiritually moved by the exploits of pious sufferers and their monstrous antagonists, as much as by the successes of clever politicians or chivalric warriors, Savage wants to be "provoked...to imitation." And, although it is true that for some very radical readers "imitation" in this context took the form of martyrdom-seeking, much more central to Foxe's impact at the level of mainstream culture is the way he inculcated a desire in his readers to imitate—through active historical reading and listening—the original witnesses to martyrdom described in *Acts and Monuments*. And it is precisely this witnessing, more than anything else, that Prince Hamlet wants from Ophelia and his mother, and which is captured in that famous image of Enormity from Shakespeare's chronicle plays in performance from Nashe's *Pierce Penilesse* (1592):

> How it would have joied braue Talbot (the terror of the French) to thinke that after he had lyne two hundred years in his Tombe, hee should triumphe againe on the stage, and have his bones newe embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators

> at least, (at seuerall times) who in the Tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding. (qtd. in Blakemore Evans, 1837)

*

Because he recognized the dramatic power of Foxe's apocalyptic paradigm; because he was aware that the bulk of his audience considered Foxe, as Patrick Collinson says, "virtually beyond criticism in the fidelity of his record"("Truth and Legend" 154); and, last but not least, because he found Foxe's apocalyptic conception of human history compelling himself, Shakespeare fashioned his history plays so that they could be read *as history* by playgoers whose sense of the past was, like his, indelibly shaped by *Acts and Monuments*. There are, it seems to me, two ways of understanding and appreciating Shakespeare, and the fundamental difference between them has less to do with methodology than it does with critical desire. Like Shakespeare's Venetians, some critics are unembarrassed by debt and desire to expand the purview of Shakespeare's plays to include all sorts of previously unrecognized textual relations. Lily Campbell was like this, and so, albeit differently, was Tillyard. More like Polonius, other critics want to limit Shakespeare's textual affiliations—his debts—to as narrow a canon of sources as is possible. Although it tends to advertise itself differently, this impulse is a definitive feature of "Radical Shakespeare." From Polonius' point of view, most intertextual claimants will fail to prove that Shakespeare owes them anything; from the other side, such refusals will inevitably seem to have missed the point that Shakespeare is enriched, like Bassanio, by the size of his debts and the wealth of his creditors. By inviting Foxe back to the Shakespearean historiographical table, I have made my own critical desires perfectly clear. I have also shown, I hope, that John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* really is

a key intertext for Shakespeare's history, so that our understanding of Shakespeare's art of history is impoverished by our failure to credit his debt to Foxe. If I am right, reading the English chronicle plays in light of Foxean ideas about enormity and modernity will help to illuminate the distinctive genius of Shakespeare's historical dramaturgy even as it helps us to situate that achievement within the market for popular Protestantism that was taking shape during the period when Shakespeare flourished.

---

[1] Although the proponents of the crypto-Catholic thesis tend to have better academic credentials, this notorious argument has little more credibility than the so called "mystery" surrounding the authorship of Shakespeare's plays. That is, it is a 19th-century cultural fantasy which has been kept alive by modern critics whose credulity with respect to the threads of "evidence" of Shakespeare's crypto-Catholicism tends to be matched only by their absolute skepticism concerning the overwhelming evidence that Shakespeare was a robustly Protestant playwright. Notably, E.A.J. Honigmann, the most substantial scholar of Shakespeare's crypto-Catholic "lost years," was forced to conclude that, as a chronicle playwright, Shakespeare's "anti-papal rhetoric fires on all cylinders [and] with astonishing fury" (119).

[2] Hanson's comments are taken from a review of *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England* edited by Deborah Shuger and Claire McEachern. Hanson is not deaf, and she is, moreover, thinking very clearly about the "problem which religion poses for current Renaissance criticism":

> Early modern cultural studies, whose practices and insights are supposed to be operating in these essays, evolved not only from Marxism...but from the Foucauldian construction of the subject as an epiphenomenon of discourse and power and from Derridean ideas of textuality. The theoretical underpinnings of cultural studies...are poststructuralist, attentive to the illusoriness of the subject's autonomy, the play of desire in language, the instability and bad faith of binary oppositions. There is, of course, a privileged content to cultural studies; politics (power) and sexuality (desire) sometimes appear to be all that the cultural studies model recognizes as culture. But power and desire are not only privileged categories of experience in cultural studies, they are also the solvents that act on the firm categories of earlier historicisms. If religion has not been recognized by cultural studies, at least beyond the point where it can be transposed into sexuality or politics, it is not only because its practitioners have weak radar for the spiritual. Rather, it is because, as an alien system of conscious knowledge, Renaissance religion seems to force us in directions antithetical to poststructuralism, to reconstruct rather than deconstruct, to pay careful attention to individual distinctions that are now epistemically meaningless.... [The] appearance in these essays of categories such as the author, the history of an idea, and the valuing of

> "coherence," bespeaks the usefulness of these habits of thought for the task of respectfully piecing together the complex intellectual and emotional edifice that was Renaissance religion. But the reflexive nature of these resurrections, the failure to acknowledge the powerful critique to which these categories have been subjected, also attests to the difficulties of thinking like a poststructuralist while thinking *about* religion. (272)

I have quoted Hanson at length because I think she makes a crucial heuristic point. Simply put, if the goal is to discover Shakespeare's deeply felt and deeply thought religious convictions, and to reconstruct the dramaturgical strategies that he used to perform them in his plays, the typical assumptions of postmodern cultural studies, of New Historicism, are of little use.

[3] This is by no means meant as a complete historiographical survey; it is, rather, a list of the historians whose work I have read and appreciated while working on this thesis.

[4] Balanced overviews of this critical debate can be found in the introductory sections of Fincham, Walsham (1999), Lake (2001 and 2002), and Oldridge.

[5] In a recent article on "The audience as patron: *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*," Alexander Leggatt writes about *Mankind* that:

> The ostensible purpose of *Mankind*, announced in the speeches of Mercy, is to edify the audience and help them towards salvation. But the Vices bring out the play's other purpose, to make money for the acting company, and with characteristic subversiveness they reveal that what the audience *really wants* is not edification but entertaining devilry (295, *my emphases*).

While it is, I would urge, absolutely crucial to follow Leggatt in maintaining a clear sense of the real differences between entertainments, on one hand, and rituals, sacraments, and other forms of religious orthopraxis on the other, the rigid dichotomy underlying his argument here, the idea that the theatre in effect stopped being an authentically or seriously religious experience once it became a market commodity, is, I think, inimical to a real understanding of why Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences found Shakespeare so seriously entertaining. Ironically, it could be argued that it is precisely because the hotly "puritanical" notion that authentic religious phenomena can have no truck whatsoever with the marketplace was not fully integrated into mainstream English Calvinism that a godly popular culture was able to come into being.

[6] Peter Lake's *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* is a large, and mostly disappointing, exception. Lake applies his encyclopedic grasp of recent historical scholarship on early modern religion to demonstrate that the godly culture of Stuart London was a primary context for the popular stage. However, while he argues against any "simple polarity" between popular appeal, the profit motive, and religious sincerity, Lake assumes that "the denizens of Grub street and the popular stage" were a "faction" which, by virtue of some kind of natural bent, was impervious to Protestant zeal. Lake argues, for instance, that while Dekker "might ape and echo the tone and content of many a Paul's Cross sermon," the fundamentally "jokey" and "vertiginous" nature of his texts contrasts starkly with the "moral seriousness" of such sermons. To explain this, Lake argues that "professional writers, hacks and playwrights, desperate to turn an honest penny could combine such impulses

[i.e., jokey and vertiginous Grub Street ones] with relatively stable, even rather hot protestant, politico-religious positions," and concludes that for such writers,

> the 'sincerity' or otherwise of the authors or producers is neither knowable nor the point. Rather, what is central...are the ways in which the workings of the market and attendant religio-political circumstance interacted to produce inherently mixed genres and forms that synthesized, in a number of different and sometimes apparently unlikely combinations, both the festive and the serious, the titillating and the edifying, the tragic and the comic, the elite and the popular, and how elements from the cultural and discursive repertoire of contemporary hot Protestantism were integrated into...the resulting mélanges.... (321-2, *n*8)

This is seductively smart-sounding stuff; however, while Lake provides an invaluable picture of the fluid religio-cultural context of Dekker's work, he fails to make sense because he leaves out the most important part—the author. In *The Dragon and the Dove*—a study Lake cites somewhat wantonly to support his reading of Dekker—Julia Gaspar effectively argues that the commonplace image of Dekker as an opportunist who aped religious discourse for money, and for whom the question of 'sincerity' is irrelevant, is in fact utterly inadequate. *Pace* Lake, Gaspar demonstrates that Dekker's religious seriousness is not only "knowable," but that it is a central and unavoidable fact about his plays. The critic's task, according to Gaspar, is to try to understand how the apparently amoral or non-serious elements in Dekker contributed to a profoundly moral vision, not to use them as an excuse to ignore Dekker's sincerity. Jack Heller has made virtually the same case for Middleton in *Penitent Brothellers*, and the same case, I would argue, needs to be made for Shakespeare. I would point out, moreover, that John Foxe was the most famous "denizen of Grub Street."

[7] Crick and Walsham also highlight, it should be noted, the various ways in which English Recusancy was a vigorous print culture.

[8] Although I have not quite made this case here, we can also see this process of mutation taking place in the way Shakespeare transforms the traditional locus of John Oldcastle's monstrous treachery and apostasy into the degenerate and doomed stage devil Falstaff, a figure of hopeless Popery not hopeful Protestantism.

[9] The French historian Lucian Fèbvre is quoted by Fussner (*Tudor History*, 135).

[10] To be clear, I am distinguishing here between Shakespeare's singular importance *to us*, and his role in a cultural development that was taking place *circa* 1580-1630. Contrary to much New Historicist assertion, Shakespeare's central place in the modern literary canon does not simply translate, in a sort of one to one ratio, into a central or epochal role in historical processes like the consolidation of Protestant culture. I am interested in exploring, historically, Shakespeare's actual role in this process, not in creating pseudo-historical legends.

[11] Like watching someone look through the wrong end of a telescope, reading the pseudo-anthropological "thick description" popularized by critics such as Greenblatt and Montrose reveals, I would argue, more about the suspect training of its practitioners than it does about the texts/culture they study. With respect to early modern religious culture in particular, the problem with the implicit association between authentic religious practice and *ritual* behaviour (again typically defined in the vaguest of interdisciplinary

terms) is that it overlooks the cognitive element in religious practice, and thus, by design, occludes the positive relationship between literary forms like the theatre and Protestantism. Huston Diehl, for example, bases her entire book on what she thinks is Foxe's influence on stage practices, but in doing so fails to notice that *Acts and Monuments* is a *chronicle history* and that the playwrights who responded to Foxe on the stage did so in the form of *chronicle drama. Pace* Diehl, Prince Hamlet's *The Mousetrap* is not a displaced sacramental ritual, it is a (Protestant and prophetic) history play.

[12] As readers familiar with his *Intertextuality and Romance in Renaissance Drama* will have noted, my thinking about this notional reader/playgoer here and throughout this thesis has been shaped by Richard Hillman's fascinating discussion of what he calls the "hypothetical reader/auditor," a figure Hillman describes as the "site of intertextual receptivity" and the "ultimate source of the 'centring' power apparently exercised by the focused text itself" (1-25). At the same time, the difference between Hillman's thinking and mine should be readily apparent. For Hillman—it seems to me—this notional playgoer is a kind of embodied abstraction which authorizes his robustly poststructuralist enthusiasm for untrammeled intertextual reading and which embodies his sense of the historical reality of intertextuality itself. This is why Hillman refers to his notional reader as a "fictional construct" which is at once "incomplete, contingent, and ephemeral" and "impossibly comprehensive, 'conscious' of an entire agglomeration of texts within a certain cultural range, even if the component texts themselves remain beyond the reach of any plausible individual—including an author" (8). While I use a perhaps similarly *notional* reader figure to license my interpretations, what I hope is behind my readings, by contrast, are *plausible*, flesh and blood readers like the ones discovered by Woolf and other historians in the archives.

[13] To introduce a further conversation which I hope to take up in future research, this is a striking example of the problem with the current attempt to imbed Shakespeare's historico-political thought within a "republic" of early modern readers and writers. That is, it seems to me that while the classicism and republicanism of writers like Hayward and his readership is a crucial context for understanding Shakespeare's politics, we will misunderstand Shakespeare's thought if we do not recognize the remarkable extent to which—as in the case of Dowsing—the embrace of classical "secular" republicanism by contemporary readers and writers was refracted through the overlapping prisms of Protestant providentialism, apocalypticism, antipopery, and Calvinist theology. See especially Andrew Hadfield, *Shakespeare and Republicanism* (Cambridge UP, 2005).

[14] It is easy to imagine Gibbon as one of those contemporaries who was scandalized by the mistaken belief that Shakespeare created Falstaff in order to mock and slander Oldcastle. When he insisted, publicly, that "Oldcastle died [a] martyr, and this is not the man" (2HenryIV, Epilogue 32), Shakespeare was talking to Gibbon and other readers like him.

[15] Playgoers would, I think, readily have made a similar figure of popery out of the diabolically pagan bastard Edmund in *King Lear.*

[16] I owe this point to Professor William Slights, who recently asked members of my department to provide examples of heart imagery from the Renaissance. As John Ward

witnessed in his diary, Popish Enormity consumes the heart with killing fire, whereas the lachrymose witnessing of the suffering of the martyrs is a way of spiritually rekindling it.

## Works Cited


Aebischer, Pascale. *Shakespeare's Violated Bodies.* New York: Cambridge UP, 2004.

Allen, Graham. *Intertextuality*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.

Anderson, Judith H. *Biographical Truth: the Representation of Historical Persons in Tudor-Stuart Writing*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1984.

Ardolino, Frank. *Apocalypse & Armada in Kyd's Spanish Tragedy*. Kirksville: Northeast Missouri State UP, 1995.

Aston, Margaret. "Richard II and the Wars of the Roses." *The Reign of Richard II: Essays in Honour of May McKisack.* Ed. F.R.H. DuBoulay and Caroline M. Barron. London: Athlone Press, 1971. 280-317

Barroll, LeEd. "A New History for Shakespeare and His Time." *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's Richard II.* Ed. Kirby Farrell. New York: G. K. Hall & Co., 1999. 93-120.

Bauckham, Richard. *Tudor Apocalypse*. Oxford: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1978.

Baxter, John. *Shakespeare's Poetic Styles: Verse into Drama.* 1980. London; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2005.

Bellany, Alastair. *The Politics of Court Scandal in Early Modern England: News Culture and the Overbury Affair, 1603-1666*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2002.

Bernard, G. W. "The Church of England, c.1529-c.1642." *History* 75 (1990): 183-206.

Besnault, Marie-Hélène and Michel Bitot. "Historical Legacy and Fiction: the Poetical Reinvention of King Richard III." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays.* Ed. Michael Hattaway. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. 106-125.

Bishop, T.G. *Shakespeare and the Theatre of Wonder*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.

Branagh, Kenneth. *William Shakespeare's Henry V: A Screen Adaptation.* New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997.

Brathwaite, Richard. *The Scollers Medley: Or an Intermixt Discourse upon Historicall and Poeticall Relations*. London, 1614. [STC (2nd ed.) / 3583].

Brockbank, J. P. "The Frame of Disorder—*Henry VI*." *Shakespeare the Histories. A Collection of Critical Essays.* Ed. Eugene Waith. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965. 55-65.

Brownlow, F.W. "R*ichard II* and the Testing of Legitimacy." *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's Richard II.* Ed. Kirby Farrell. New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1999. 58-80.

Bryant, J.A. Jr.. *Hippolyta's View. Some Christian Aspects of Shakespeare's Plays.* Lexington: U Kentucky P, 1961.

Bullough, Geoffrey. *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* 8 vols. London: Routledge and Paul, 1957-1975.

Burckhardt, Sigurd. *Shakespearean Meanings*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1968.

Butler, Martin. *Theatre and Crisis, 1632-1642*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984.

Campbell, Lily B. *Shakespeare's 'Histories': Mirrors of Elizabethan Policy*. 1947. San Marino: Huntington Library, 1958.

Cavell, Stanley. *Disowning Knowledge in Six Plays of Shakespeare.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.

Chambers, E.K. et al.. *The Shakspere Allusion-Book: A Collection of Allusions to Shakspere from 1591-1700.* vol. 1. London: Oxford UP, 1923.

Christianson, Paul. *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War.* Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1978.

Clegg, Cyndia Susan. "'By the choise an inuitation of al the realme': *Richard II* and Elizabethan Press Censorship." *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's Richard II.* Ed Kirby Farrell. New York: G.K.Hall&Co., 1999. 135-153.

Cogswell, Fred, Richard Cust and Peter Lake. "Revisionism and its Legacies: the Work of Conrad Russell." *Politics, Religion, and Popularity in Early Modern England. Essays in Honour of Conrad Russell.* Ed. Fred Cogswell, Richard Cust, and Peter Lake. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. 1-17.

Collinson, Patrick. *The Religion of Protestants: the Church in English Society, 1559-1625.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982.

---. " 'A Magazine of Religious Patterns': An Erasmian Topic Transposed in English Protestantism." *Godly People. Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism.* London: Hambleton Press, 1983.

---. *The Birthpangs of Protestant England. Religious and Cultural Change in theSixteenth- and Seventeenth Centuries.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988.

---. "Truth and Legend: The Veracity of John Foxe's Book of Martyrs." *Elizabethan Essays.* London: Hambleton Press, 1994. 151-178.

---. "The English Nation and National Sentiment in the Prophetic Mode." *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England.* Ed. Claire McEachern and Debora K. Shuger. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997.

Cohen, Derek. *Shakespeare's Culture of Violence.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

Cox, John D. *Shakespeare and the Dramaturgy of Power.* Princeton: Princeton UP, 1989.

---. *The Devil and the Sacred in English Drama, 1350-1642.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000.

---. "Introduction." *King Henry VI, Part Three.* Ed. John Cox and Eric Rasmussen. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2001.

---. "Editing Stage Directions in Early Dramatic Texts." *Textual Performances. The Modern Reproduction of Shakespeare's Drama.* Ed. Lukas Erne and Margaret Jane Kidnie. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 178-193.

Crockett, Bryan. *The Play of Paradox: Stage and Sermon in Renaissance England.* Philadelphia: U Pennsylvania P, 1996.

Cushman, L.W. *The Devil and the Vice in the English Dramatic Literature Before Shakespeare.* Göttingen: Max Niemeyer, 1900.

Danby, John F. *Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature: A Study of King Lear.* London: Faber & Faber, 1949.

Davies, Horton. *Worship and Theology in England.* 2 vols. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970, 1975.

Diehl, Huston. *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage: Protestantism and Popular Theater in Early Modern England.* Ithaca and New York: Cornell UP, 1997.

Doolin-Spikes, Judith. "The Jacobean History Play and the Myth of the Elect Nation." *Renaissance Drama* 8 (1977): 117-149.

Dover Wilson, John. "Falstaff and the Prince." *Shakespeare the Histories. A Collection of Critical Essays.* Ed. Eugene M. Waith. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965. 132-151.

Downame, John. *The Christian warfare against the Deuill world and flesh wherein is described their nature, the maner of their fight and meanes to obtaine victorye*. London, 1634. [STC (2nd ed.) / 7137].

Duffy, Eamon. *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c.1400-c.1580*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1992.

Emmerson, Kenneth Richard. *Antichrist in the Middle Ages. A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1981.

Evans, G. Blakemore, ed. *The Riverside Shakespeare*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974.

Facey, Jane. "John Foxe and the Defense of the Elizabethan Church." *Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth Century England*. Ed. Peter Lake and Maria Dowling. London: Croon Helm, 1987. 162-192.

Fairfield, Leslie P. *John Bale, Mythmaker for the English Reformation*. West Lafayette: Purdue UP, 1976.

Farrell, Kirby, ed. *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's Richard II*. New York: G.K. Hall&Co., 1999.

Ferrell, Lori Ann. *Government by Polemic: James I, the King's Preachers, and the Rhetorics of Conformity, 1603-1625*. Stanford, Stanford UP, 1998.

---. "Transfiguring Theology: William Perkins and Calvinist Aesthetics." *John Foxe and his World*. Ed. Christopher Highly and John King. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002. 160-182.

Fincham, Kenneth ed. *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642*. London: Macmillan, 1993.

Foakes, R.A. *Shakespeare & Violence*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge UP, 2003.

Forker, Charles R. ed. *Shakespeare: The Critical Tradition. Richard II*. London: Athlone Press, 1998.

--- ed. *Richard II*. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2002.

Foxe, John. *Two Latin Comedies by John Foxe the Martyrologist: Titus et Gesippus and Christus Triumphans*. Ed. And trans. John Hazel Smith. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1973.

---. *Acts and Monuments [...]*. Ed. Stephen Reed Cattley, Josiah Pratt, and George Townshend. 8 vols. London, 1837-49. Rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1965.

---. *Acts and Monuments [...] . The Variorum Edition*. [online]. (hriOnline, Sheffield 2004). Available from: http://www.hrionline.shef.ac.uk/foxe/.

Fussner, F. Smith. *The Historical Revolution: English Historical Writing and Thought, 1580-1642*. London: Hambleton, 1962.

---. *Tudor History and the Historians*. New York: Basic Books, 1970.

Goldberg, Jonathan. *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne, and Their Contemporaries*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1983.

Gaspar, Julia. *The Dragon and the Dove: The Plays of Thomas Dekker*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

Grady, Hugh, ed. *Shakespeare and Modernity: Early Modern to Millennium*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.

Graham, Kenneth E. *The Performance of Conviction: Plainness and Rhetoric in the Early English Renaissance*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994

Green, Ian M. *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England*. Toronto: OUP, 2000.

Griffen, R. Morgan. "The Critical History of *Richard II*." *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's Richard II*. Ed. Kirby Farrell. New York: G.K. Hall&Co., 1999. 23-40.

Haigh, Christopher. *English Reformations. Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors*. New York; Toronto: Oxford UP, 1993.

Haller, William. *The Rise of Puritanism*. New York: Columbia UP, 1938.

---. *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation*. London: Cape, 1963.

Hamilton, Donna. *Shakespeare and the Politics of Protestant England*. Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1992.

Hammond, Anthony. "Introduction." *The Arden Shakespeare: King Richard III*. London: and New York: Methuen, 1981. 1-119.

Hanson, Elizabeth. Rev. of *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England*. Ed. Claire McEachern and Debora Shuger. *Shakespeare Studies* 27 (1999): 266-74.

Hattaway, Michael. "Introduction." *1-3HenryVI*. The New Cambridge Shakespeare: 3 vols. New York: Cambridge UP, 1990-93.

---. *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002.

Heinemann, Margot. *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980.

Helgerson, Richard. *Forms of Nationhood. The Elizabethan Writing of England*. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1992.

Heller, Herbert Jack . *Penitent Brothellers. Grace, Sexuality, and Genre in Thomas Middleton's City Comedies*. Newark: U Delaware P; London: Associated University Presses, 2000.

Highley, Christopher and John N. King, Eds. *John Foxe and his World*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002.

Hill, Christopher. *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England*. London: Oxford UP, 1971.

Hillman, Richard W. *Intertextuality and Romance in Renaissance Drama: The Staging of Nostalgia*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.

Hodgdon, Barbara. *Shakespeare in Performance: Henry IV, Part Two*. Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 1993.

Holderness, Graham. *Shakespeare Recycled: The Making of Historical Drama*. Hempstead: Harvester, 1992.

Honigmann, E.A. J.. *Shakespeare: the 'Lost' Years*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1985.

Humphreys, A.R., ed. "Introduction." *The Second Part of King Henry IV*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1966.

Jones, Emrys. *The Origins of Shakespeare*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.

Jonson, Ben (Chapman and Marston). *Eastward Ho!. Ben Jonson*. Ed. C.H. Herford and Percy Simpson. 9 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932. vol. 4: 489-619.

Jowett, John. "Introduction." *The Tragedy of Richard III*. New York: Oxford UP, 2000.

Kamps, Ivo. "Historiography and Legitimation in *Henry VIII*." *College English* 58 (1994): 192-213.

---. *Historiography and Ideology in Stuart Drama*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996.

Kastan, David Scott. "Proud Majesty Made a Subject: Shakespeare and the Spectacle of Rule." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 37.4 (1986): 459-475.

---. "Introduction." *King Henry IV Part 1*. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2002.

Kelly, Faye L. *Prayer in Sixteenth-Century England.* Gainesville: U Florida P, 1966.
Kelly, Henry A. *Divine Providence in the England of Shakespeare's Histories.* Cambridge Mass: Harvard UP, 1970.
Kemp, Anthony. *The Estrangement of the Past. A Study in the Origins of Modern Historical Consciousness.* New York: Oxford UP, 1991.
Kendall, Gillian Murray, ed. *Shakespearean Power and Punishment. A Volume of Essays.* Cranbury NJ: Associated UP, 1998.
Kendall, Ritchie D. *The Drama of Dissent. The Radical Poetics of Nonconformity, 1380-1590.* Chapel Hill and London: U North Carolina P, 1986.
Keywords Collective, The. "Introduction." *English Studies in Canada* 30.4. 1-4.
King, John N. *English Reformation Literature. The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition.* Princeton: Princeton UP, 1982.
---. "Henry VIII as David: The King's Image in Reformation Politics." *Rethinking the Henrician Era. Essays on Early Tudor Texts and Contexts.* Ed. Peter C. Herman. Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1994.
---. *Spenser's Poetry and the Reformation Tradition.* Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990.
---. *Tudor Royal Iconography: Literature and Art in an Age of Religious Crisis.* Princeton: Princeton UP, 1989.
Knapp, Jeffrey. "Preachers and Players in Shakespeare's England." *Representations* 44 (1993): 29-59.
---. *Shakespeare's Tribe: Church, Nation, and Theater in Renaissance England.* Chicago: U Chicago P, 2002.
Knott, John R. *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563-1694.* New York:
Cambridge UP, 1993.
---. "John Foxe and the Joy of Suffering." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 27 (1996): 721-734.
Knowles, Ronald. "Introduction." *King Henry VI.* London: Arden Shakespeare, 1999.
Lake, Peter. *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan church.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982.
---. *The Boxmaker's Revenge: 'Orthodoxy', 'Heterodoxy' and the Politics of the Parish in Early Stuart London.* Stanford: Stanford UP, 2001.
Lake, Peter and Michael C. Questier. *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England.* New Haven: Yale UP, 2002.
Lamont, William. *Godly Rule: Politics and Religion, 1603-1660.* London: Macmillan, 1969.
---. *Godly Rule. Politics and Religion 1603-1660.* London: Macmillan, 1969.
Lander, Jesse. "Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*: Printing and Popularizing the *Acts & Monuments*." *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England.* Ed. Claire McEachern and Debora K. Shuger. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 1997. 69-92.
Lanham. Richard A. *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms* 2nd ed. Berkeley: U California P, 1991.
Leggatt, Alexander. *Shakespeare's Political Drama. The History Plays and the Roman Plays.* London and New York: Routledge, 1988.
---. "The Audience as Patron: *The Knight of the Burning Pestle.*" *Shakespeare and Theatrical Patronage in Early Modern England.* Ed. Paul W. White and Suzanne R. Westfall. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. 295-315.

Leitch, Rory. "'Deuilish Government': Shakespeare's Joan of Arc and the Idea of Antichrist." *Journal of Religion and Culture 14* (2000): 71-100.

---. Rev. of *Radical Religion from Shakespeare to Milton: Figures of Nonconformity in Early Modern England.* Kristen Poole. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. *Dalhousie Review* 80.3 (2000): 431-433.

Leohlin, James N. *Shakespeare in Performance Henry V.* Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 1996.

Levin, Richard. *New Readings vs. Old Plays: Recent Trends in the Reinterpretation of English Renaissance Drama.* Chicago:U Chicago P, 1979.

Levy, F. J. *Tudor Historical Thought.* San Marino: Huntington Library, 1967.

Loades, David, ed. *John Foxe and the English Reformation.* Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997.

Lock, Julian. "'How Many Tericios Has the Pope?' The Spanish War and the Sublimation of Elizabethan Anti-Popery." *History* 81 (1996): 197-214.

Lull, Janis. "Introduction." *King Richard III.* New York: Cambridge UP, 1999.

Macek, Ellen. "The Emergence of a Feminine Spirituality in the *Book of Martyrs*." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 19 (1988): 63-81.

Maclean, Hugh ed. *Edmund Spenser's Poetry.* New York: Norton & Company, 1968.

Mallette, Richard. *Spenser and the Discourses of Reformation England.* Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1997.

Maltby, Judith. *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England.* New York: Cambridge UP, 1998.

Martin, Randall. "Introduction." *Shakespeare's Henry VI, Part Three.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Massingham, Hugh. "John Foxe." *The Great Tudors.* Ed. Katherine Garvine. London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1935.

McAlindon, Tom. *Shakespeare's Tudor History. A Study of Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2.* Ashgate: Aldershot, 2001.

McEachern, Claire and Debora K. Shuger, eds. *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997.

McMillin, Scott. *Shakespeare in Performance: Henry IV, Part One.* Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 1991.

Milton, Anthony. *Catholic and Reformed. The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought 1600-1640.* Cambridge UP, 1994.

Neill, Michael. *Putting History to the Question. Power, Politics, and Society in English Renaissance Drama.* New York: Columbia UP, 2000.

New, J.F.H. *Anglican and Puritan: The Basis of Their Opposition, 1558-1640.* London: Adam & Charles Black, 1964.

Norbrook, David. "'A Liberal Tongue': Language and Rebellion in *Richard II.* *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's Richard II.* Ed. Kirby Farrell. New York: G.K. Hall&Co., 1999. 121-134.

Nussbaum, Damian. "Appropriating Martyrdom: Fears of Renewed Persecution and the 1632 Edition of *Acts and Monuments*." *John Foxe and the English Reformation.* Ed. David Loades. Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997. 144-178.

O'Donoghue, Heather, ed. *Beowulf: The Fight at Finnsburh.* Trans. Kevin Crossly-Holland. New York: Oxford UP, 1996.

Oldridge, Darren. *Religion and Society in Early Stuart England.* Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998.

Olsen, Norskov V. *John Foxe and the Elizabethan Church*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1973.
Orgel, Stephen. *The Authentic Shakespeare and Other Problems of the Early Modern Stage*. New York and London: Routledge, 2002.
Ornstein, Robert. *A Kingdom for a Stage. The Achievement of Shakespeare's History Plays*. Cambridge Mass: Harvard UP, 1972.
Partner, Nancy F. *Serious Entertainments: The Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England*. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1977.
Patterson, Annabel. *Reading Holinshed's Chronicles*. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1994.
Pecora, Vincent P. "The Limits of Local Knowledge." *The New Historicism*. Ed. H. Aram Veeser. New York: Routledge, 1989. 243-276.
Pocock, John. "England." *National Consciousness, History, and Political Culture in Early Modern Europe*. Ed. Orest Ranum. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1984. 98-117.
---. "Texts as Events: Reflections on the History of Political Thought." *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England*. Ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker. Berkeley: U California P, 1987.
Poole, Kristen. *Radical Religion from Shakespeare to Milton: Figures of Nonconformity in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000.
Pugliatti, Paola. *Shakespeare the Historian*. New York: St Martin's Press, 1996.
---. "Shakespeare's Historicism: Visions and Revisions." *Shakespeare and the Twentieth Century*. Ed. Jonathan Bate, Jill Levenson, and Dieter Miehl. Newark NJ: U Delaware P; London: Associated UP, 1998. 336-49.
Ure, Peter. "Introduction." *King Richard II*. London: Arden Shakespeare, 1956.
Rabkin, Norman. *Shakespeare and the Problem of Meaning*. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1981.
Rackin, Phyllis. "Patriarchal History and Female Subversion in *King John*." *King John New Perspectives*. Ed. Deborah T. Curren-Aquino. Newark NJ: U Delaware P, 1989. 76-90.
---. *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990.
Ribner, Irving. *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957.
Riffaterre, Michael. *The Semiotics of Poetry*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1978.
---. *Fictional Truth*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1989.
---. "Compulsory Reader Response: The Intertextual Drive." *Intertextuality: Theories and Practices*. Ed. Michael Worton and Judith Stills. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1990. 56-78.
Righter, Anne. *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1962.
Riggs, David. *Shakespeare's Heroical Histories: HenryVI and its Literary Tradition*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1971.
Robinson, Marsha S. *Writing the Reformation: Actes and Monuments and the Jacobean History Play*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002.
Rossiter, A.P. *Angel With Horns: And Other Shakespeare Lectures*. London: Longmans, 1961.
Sanders, Wilbur. *The Dramatist and the Received Idea: Studies in the Plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1968.
Saunders, Claire. "'Dead in his Bed': Shakespeare's Staging of the Death of the Duke of Gloucester in *2HenryVI*." *Review of English Studies* 36 (1985): 9-34.

Schlegel, August Wilhelm. *Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* (1846). Ed. A.J.W. Morrison. Trans. Rev. John Black. Rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1973.

Scribner, Robert. *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation*. New York: Oxford UP, 1994.

Sharp, Kevin. *Politics and Ideas in Early Stuart England: Essays and Studies*. New York: Pinter, 1989.

---. *The Personal Rrule of Charles I.* New Haven: Yale UP, 1992.

Shepard, Alexandra. *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England.* Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2003.

Shuger, Debora. *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance.* Berkeley: U California P, 1990.

---. "Subversive Fathers and Suffering Subjects: Shakespeare and Christianity." *Religion, Literature, and Politics in Post-Reformation England, 1540-1688.* Ed. Donna B. Hamilton and Richard Streier. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996. 46-69.

Sidney, Philip. *The Defence of Poesy. English Literary Criticism: The Renaissance.* Ed. O.B. Hardison. London: Owen, 1968.

Spivack, Bernard. *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil: The History of a Metaphor in Relation to his Major Villains*. New York: Columbia UP, 1958.

Spufford, Margaret. *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England.* Athens Ga.: U Georgia P, 1982.

Stirling, Brents. *The Populace in Shakespeare*. New York: Columbia UP, 1949.

Strohm, Paul. *Theory and the Premodern Text.* Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2000.

Taylor, Gary. "The Fortunes of Oldcastle." *Shakespeare Survey 38* (1985): 85-100.

---. ed. *Henry V.* Oxford Shakespeare. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982.

Taylor, Michael. *Shakespeare Criticism in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001.

Thayer, Calvin Graham. *Shakespearean Politics: Government and Misgovernment in the Great Histories*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio UP, 1983.

Thomas, Keith. *Religion and the Decline of Magic. Studies in Popular beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England.* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971

Tillyard, E.M.W. *The Elizabethan World Picture*. London: Chatto, 1943.

---. *Shakespeare's History Plays*. London: Chatto, 1944

Tyacke, Nicholas. *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism, c. 1590-1640.* New York: Oxford UP, 1987.

Tyndale, William. *Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions to Different Portions of the Holy Scriptures*. Ed. Rev. Henry Walter. Cambridge: Parker Society; Cambridge UP, 1848.

Ure, Peter. "Introduction." *King Richard II.* London: Arden Shakespeare, 1961.

Waith, Eugene M., ed. *Shakespeare the Histories. A Collection of Critical Essays.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965.

Walsham, Alexandra. *Providence in Early Modern England*. New York: Oxford UP, 1999.

---. "Introduction: Script, print, and history." *The Uses of Script and Print, 1300—1700.* Alexandra Walsham and Julia Crick. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 1-28.

Warren, Roger, ed. *Shakespeare's Henry VI part two*. New York: Oxford UP, 2002.

Abstract: *Shakespeare, Foxe and the Idea of Enormity in the English Chronicle Plays.*

In this thesis I explore the relationship between Shakespeare's English chronicle plays and John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. I argue that a series of extraordinary figures of "Enormity" in these plays links Shakespeare's interpretation of late-medieval English history with Foxe's apocalyptic interpretation of the same historical period. I find that there is a substantially positive and productive *intertextual* affiliation between Foxe's analysis of the origins of modernity, a period he defines as a culminating historical era of Antichristian Enormity, and Shakespeare's depictions of the tragic beginnings of modernity in Ricardian England, and of the transformation of that England into a modern "Golgotha" in the Lancastrian plays. Read from this novel historiographical and intertextual perspective, familiar characters such as Jack Cade, Henry V, and Falstaff step forward in a new light as stage-devilish emblems of the spiritual Enormity at the heart of apocalyptic modernity. Shakespeare's engagement with the Foxean intertext was thus a fundamental component of his art of history and one of the ways his stage functioned as a medium for the circulation of a distinctly Protestant historical culture.

Although the idea of Shakespeare as discoverer of historical modernity is venerable, my argument about Enormity and the Foxean intertext is unprecedented. Against the now orthodox assumption that Shakespeare's plays were radically antithetical to the motives of Tudor chronicle history, I argue that the relationship between Art and History in these plays is "organic" rather than "dialectical." Setting aside the post-Tillyardian obsession with the playwright's putative radicalism, a fascination which has so thoroughly occluded Shakespeare's actual historical thought that the idea of a coherent historiographical approach to the plays no longer applies, I attempt to place Shakespeare's "Theatre of Enormity" in a meaningful historiographical perspective by asking *whose* idea of modernity it is that we see coming into view in these plays. Whereas Foxe's book, along with Protestant Providentialism generally, has been dismissed as an example of a benighted kind of history "radical" Shakespeare did not do, this thesis is the first study of the positive literary relationship between Shakespeare and Foxe. This study recognizes that, prior to Shakespeare, Foxe altered the Tudor historiographical landscape by redefining the Wars of the Roses era as the beginning of English modernity, and it argues that Foxe's apocalyptic interpretation of modernity was a compelling and authoritative part of Shakespeare's historical culture. It shows, in a series of close readings of particular characters, how Foxe's robust conception of historical modernity shaped Shakespeare's representation of England's late-medieval past.

Acknowledgments

According to Foxe's apocalyptic worldview, the True Church is distinguished by its abjection: brutalized, impoverished and exiled, Foxe's heroes wander a desolate spiritual landscape overruled by cruel false shepherds and tyrannical persecutors whose sole aim seems to be to make the already incredible sufferings of Foxe's champions even worse. At the same time, Foxe's embattled protagonists are empowered and uplifted by Grace and emboldened by the "spirit of Elias" as they make their dissenting way towards the stake and their paradoxical victory over Antichrist in martyrdom. At the risk of suggesting a truly preposterous comparison, completing this thesis has also been no cake-walk, and I would like briefly to acknowledge the support and guidance of some truly spirited individuals without whom this project would have been impossible for me to complete. First and foremost, by taking on this project when it must have looked like a lost cause, and by applying a truly remarkable mixture of editorial rigour and restraint, my supervisor Dr. John Baxter has allowed me to make the case I wanted to make. The interpretive excesses and errors in this thesis are of course entirely mine, but if I have erred at all fruitfully here it is because Dr. Baxter has empowered and emboldened me to do so. Secondly, while this thesis might, at points, still look something like a precinct of the Wood of Error, it is immeasurably more accurate and error-free than it might have been due to the heroic scrutiny of the members of my supervisory committee—Dr. William Barker, Dr. Krista Kesselring, and Dr. Judith Thompson—and my external examiner, Dr. Richard Hillman. Thirdly, the timely interventions of Dr. Bruce Greenfield were crucial in helping to keep this thesis alive in a dark time, and I would also like to acknowledge the support of Dr. Kenneth Graham, whose unlooked-for invitation to the 2005 Waterloo Elizabethan Theatre conference was uplifting for me in ways he will never know. Finally, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Tim Stretton and all of the other members of the Medieval and Early Modern history reading group: conversing with these brilliant—and remarkably patient—scholars over the past seven years has taught me that I am not a historian, but that I might become a better critic by listening to the kinds of things historians say.

This thesis has been generously supported by grants from the Dalhousie Faculty of Graduate Studies, the Killam Foundation, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Watt, Tessa. *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640.* New York: Cambridge UP, 1991.

Weimann, Robert. *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978.

Weyer, Johan. *De Praestigiis Daemonum.[Witches, Devils, and Doctors in the Renaissance].* Trans. John Shea. Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1991.

White, Helen C. *Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs.* Madison: U Wisconsin P, 1967.

White, Paul Whitfield. *Theatre and Reformation. Protestantism, Patronage, and Playing in Tudor England.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993.

White, Peter. "The *Via Media* in the Early Stuart Church." *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642.* Ed. Kenneth Fincham. Houndsmills, Hampshire: Macmillan, 2003. 211-230.

Wilson, Richard. "A Mingled Yarn: Shakespeare and the Cloth Workers." *Will Power: Essays on Shakespearean Authority.* Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1993. 23-46.

Wooden, Warren W. *John Foxe.* Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1983.

Woolf, Daniel R. "Genre into Artifact: The Decline of the English Chronicle in the Sixteenth-Century." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 19 (1988): 321-354.

---. *The Idea of History in Early Stuart England. Erudition, Ideology, and the 'Light of Truth' from the Accession of James I to the Civil War.* Toronto: U Toronto P, 1990.

---. "The Rhetoric of Martyrdom: Generic Contradiction and Narrative Strategy in John Foxe's Acts&Monuments." *The Rhetorics of Life Writing in the Later Renaissance.* Ed. D.R. Woolf and T.F. Mayer. Ann Arbor: U Michigan P, 1994. 243-282.

---. "Little Crosby and the Horizons of Early Modern Historical Culture." *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain. History, Rhetoric, and Fiction, 1500-1800.* Ed. Donald R. Kelly and David Harris Sacks. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997. 93-132.

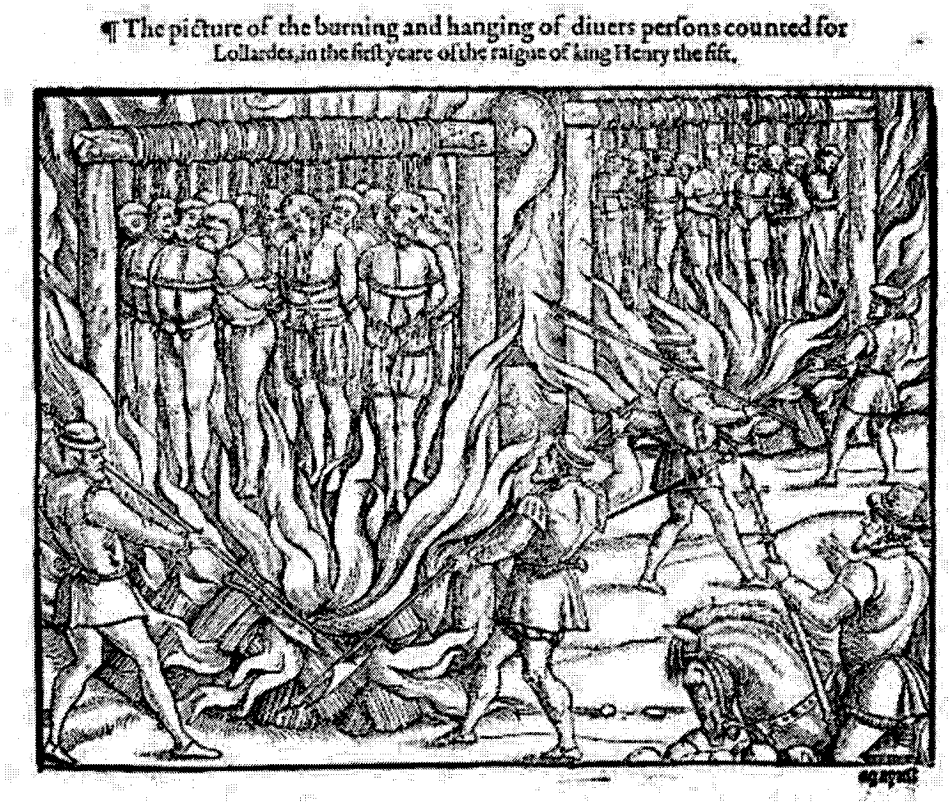
---. *Reading History in Early Modern England.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000.

---. *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture 1500-1730.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003.

Worton, Michael and Judith Still, eds. *Intertextuality: Theories and Practices.* Manchester: Manchester UP, 1990.

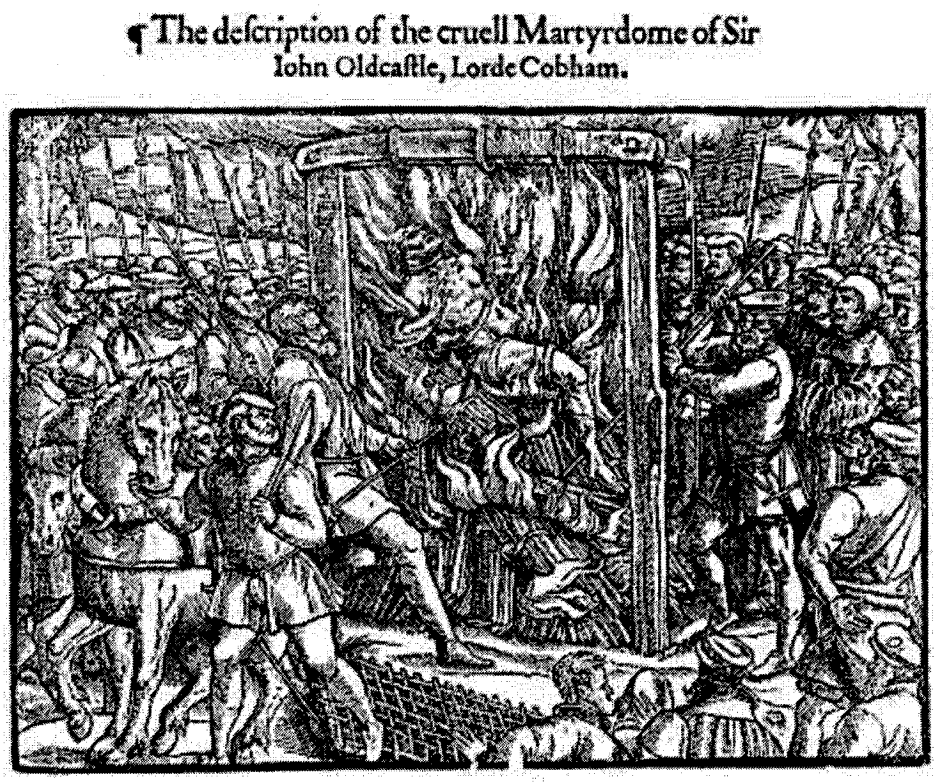
Yates, Frances A. *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975.

# Illustration 1



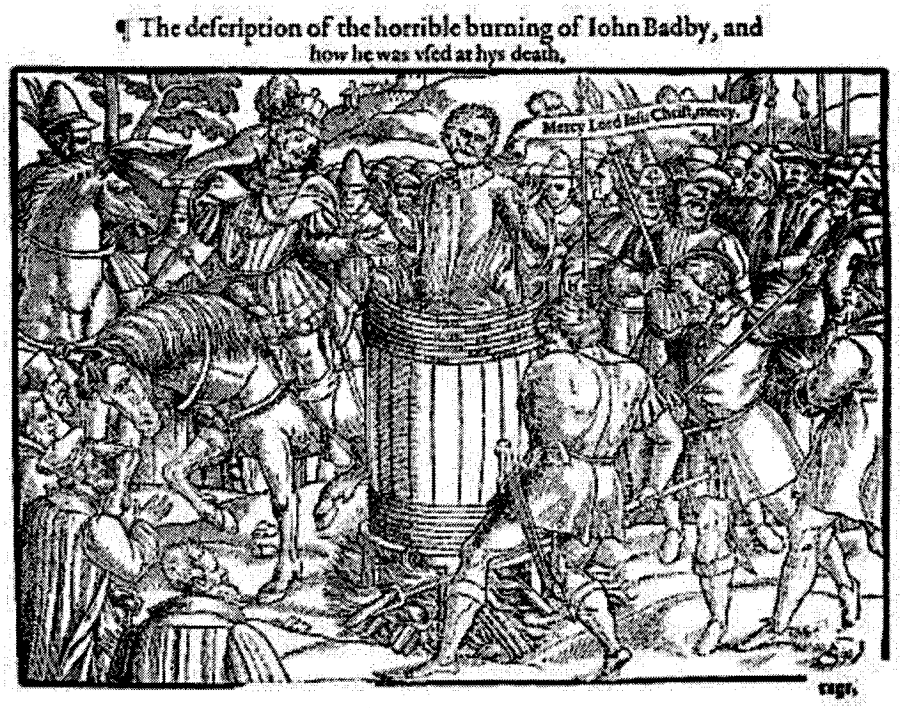

From *Acts and Monuments* 1583 edition (volume one, page 587).

# Illustration 2




From *Acts and Monuments* 1583 ed. (volume 1, page 643).

# Illustration 3




From *Acts and Monuments* 1583 edition (vol. 1, page 522). In this image, as the accompanying text makes clear, the royal figure presiding over the martyrdom of John Badby is Prince Hal. Here especially Foxe's "Duplex Festum" takes the form of a diabolical human barbecue.