"A Monster Great Deformed": The Unruly Masculinity of Richard III

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IN RECENT YEARS, LARGELY DUE TO THE WORK OF FEMINIST CRITICS and queer theorists, the dynamics of gender in the early modern period have been subjected to a thorough re-evaluation. In general this body of work stands as a successful and convincing attempt to shift attention from the center to the margins and to validate the experiences, lives, and struggles of those who did not belong to the male elites that were theoretically and materially at the apex of early modern society. In this paper, rather than exploring possibilities at the margins, I wish to concentrate on incoherence at the center by examining some of the fault lines that existed in the practice and gender ideology of masculinity in early modern patriarchy. Sodomy may have been (and may still be) an "utterly confused category,"[1] but to a lesser degree all ideologies of gender are confused, in that they represent contingent responses to a host of social and cultural imperatives, many of which are conflicting or are themselves confused.

One of the greatest structural problems facing any patriarchal society is the control of the masculine aggressivity, violence, and self-assertion that constitute patriarchy's base. Although patriarchy depends on male homosocial ties and masculine aggressivity for its organization and enforcement, the masculine values inculcated by patriarchal societies can themselves pose a threat to patriarchal order.[2] In early modern London a considerable amount of official energy was devoted, with uneven results, to curbing unruly masculine aggression. Tensions raised by the war with Spain and by rapid population growth led to thirty-five outbreaks of disorder in the capital between 1581 and 1602. While most of these disturbances were

[1] This description of sodomy appears in Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1980), 101.

[2] See Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, sexuality and religion in early modern Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), esp. chaps. 5 ("Blood and codpieces: masculinity in the early modern German town" [107–24]) and 7 ("Drinking, whoring and gorging: brutish indiscipline and the formation of Protestant identity" [145–67]). In particular Roper addresses the custom of *Zutrinken*, or competitive drinking, a "cornerstone of artisan brotherhood" (152) which led inevitably to drunken disputes. She also explores the general disjunction between the cultural ideal of the *Hausvater* and the actuality (revealed in ordinances of discipline and court records) of "drunken, brutish, debauched masters" (154). She discusses the efforts to abolish the wearing of elaborate codpieces and generally stresses the need for patriarchal social structures to control not only the potentially unchaste bodies of women but also the "anarchic and undisciplined" bodies of men (117–20 and 153). On the opposition in early modern Italy between licit culture "focusing on marriage, family, and a morally ordered society" and the various illicit cultures (organized around such activities as adultery, whoring, and sodomy) associated with adolescent males, see Guido Ruggiero, "Marriage, love, sex, and Renaissance civic morality" in *Sexuality and Gender in Early Modern Europe: Institutions, texts, images*, James Grantham Turner, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993), 10–30, esp. 16.

described by contemporaries as riots of "apprentices," the disorderly crowds also included servants, masterless men, and discharged soldiers and sailors.[3] Although public order in London was generally under the jurisdiction of the City government, the crown was sufficiently fearful of civil unrest in the capital to interfere on many occasions in order to preserve the peace. After a particularly notorious assault by apprentices on Lincoln's Inn in 1590, Elizabeth issued a proclamation that enjoined all masters to keep their apprentices within their houses and imposed a nine o'clock curfew on all apprentices in the surrounding parishes.[4] Concerned about the frequency with which common people were carrying arms, especially pistols or "dagges," Elizabeth issued proclamations throughout her reign in an attempt to curb the practice.[5] The unauthorized carrying of pistols was said to lead to "disorders, insolencies, robberies, and murders," both in London and in the countryside. Also forbidden in these proclamations were the wearing of concealed firearms and "Shooting in any such small Pieces, within two myles of any house where her Maiestie shall reside."[6] While such ordinances, like those issued against vagrant soldiers,[7] were aimed primarily at curbing the violence of lower-class men, in 1613 James issued ordinances against duelling in an effort to end the "odious" practice of private quarrels to the death among young men of "worthie Families."[8]

[3] On riots and disorder in London and the social composition of the London "crowd," see Roger B. Manning, *Village Revolts: Social Protest and Popular Disturbances in England, 1509–1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 187–219, esp. 191–93. Manning claims that in the late sixteenth century London suffered an "epidemic of disorder" and calls the Apprentices' Insurrection of 29 June 1595 "perhaps the most dangerous urban uprising of the century" (200–201). Manning differentiates the riots in Elizabeth's reign from the later Shrove Tuesday riots (c. 1606–41) in which theaters and brothels were sacked by apprentices in a ritual of festive misrule (192). The earlier disturbances were aimed not at relatively marginal figures such as prostitutes and actors but at local officials, such upper-class institutions as the Inns of Court, and aliens, including foreign ambassadors. See also Ian W. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), 1–9 and 216; and Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574–1642*, 3d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992), 14–15. On the representation of unruly apprentices in contemporary literature, see Mark Thornton Burnett, "Apprentice Literature and the 'Crisis' of the 1590s," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 21 (1991): 27–38.

[4] See "By the Queene. Where the Queenes most Excellent Maiestie, being given to vnderstand of a very great outrage lately committed by some Apprentices . . . ," 24 September 1590 (STC 8196).

[5] See "By the Quene. Forasmvch as contrary to good order . . . ," 17 May 1559 (STC 7898); "By the Queene. A Proclamation prohibiting the vse and cariage of Dagges, Birding pieces, and other Gunnes, contrary to the Law," 21 December 1600 (STC 8276); "By the Queene. A Proclamation against the common vse of Dagges, Handgunnes, Harqvebuzes, Calliuers, and Cotes of Defence," 26 July 1579 (STC 8113); and "By the Queene. A Proclamation against the carriage of Dags . . . ," 2 December 1594 (STC 8240). Similar proclamations had been made in the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Mary.

[6] See the proclamations published on 21 December 1600 (STC 8276) and 26 July 1579 (STC 8113).

[7] See the proclamations of 13 November 1589 ("By the Queene. A Proclamation against vagarant Souldiers and others" [STC 8188]), 5 November 1591 ("By the Queene. The Queenes Maiesty vnderstanding of the common wandering abroad of a great multitude of her people . . ." [STC 8210]), and 28 February 1591 ("Wheras the Queenes Maiestie doth vnderstand, notwithstanding her late Proclamation concerning such persons as wander abroad . . ." [STC 8218]). On masterless men, see Manning, 157–86.

[8] "A Pvblication of his Ma^{ties} Edict, and severe Censvre against Priuate Combats and Combatants," 1613 (STC 8498); "By the King. A Proclamation against priuate Challenges and

To focus on patriarchy's inability to control the masculine aggressivity it fosters is not to claim that unruly men are the primary victims of patriarchy but rather to point out an important structural incoherence in any society organized around the supremacy of aggressive masculinity. As Norbert Elias and others have argued, the transition of the male elite from a warrior to a court culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was marked by an increasing sublimation of affect and the gradual appearance of "pacified social spaces . . . normally free from acts of violence."[9] Manuals of aristocratic conduct such as Castiglione's enormously popular *Book of the Courtier* are largely devoted to negotiating the gap between ideologies of masculinity based on physical force and the novel social situation of the Renaissance court, in which graceful dancing and measured speech were as crucial to a successful courtier as fencing and riding.[10]

While the evolution in manners which Elias describes is an enormously complex process whose implementation is always contested and never completed, in late sixteenth-century England anxieties about unruly masculine aggression were exacerbated by the contemporary political situation. The monarch, who ought to incarnate patriarchy symbolically in the body politic of the kingship, was not a man but a woman, Elizabeth I, whose body natural was feminine and who was incapable of producing a male heir because of her advanced age. Worse, from 1588 to Elizabeth's death in 1603, England was at war with Spain, and thus for fifteen years the national conduct of the most masculine of pursuits, warfare, was in the hands of an elderly woman. That Elizabeth proved herself an able if reluctant leader of a nation at war did not diminish anxieties about her gender or about the uncertain succession. And while in retrospect the 1588 defeat of the Spanish Armada marked the high point of the conflict, this was certainly not apparent at the time: 1589 saw the launching of an English fleet against Spain, and in both 1596 and 1597 Spain launched against England armadas as large as the one of 1588. On land the war was fought by English troops in France, the Low Countries, and Ireland.[11]

While the queen and her more seasoned councillors prudently saw the war with Spain as a calamity to be borne as well as could be, many of her male courtiers—the earl of Essex chief among them—were eager to prove themselves warriors and saw the conflict not as a potential national disaster but as an unprecedented opportunity for individual initiative and personal glory.[12] Lacking the resources to prosecute the war with a national army and navy, Elizabeth was forced to rely on private initiatives, led by courtiers

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Combats: With Articles annexed . . . ," 18 November 1613 (may not have been promulgated until 4 February 1614 [STC 8497]).

[9] Norbert Elias, *State Formation and Civilization,* Vol. 2 of *The Civilizing Process*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, 2 vols. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 235.

[10] See Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. Sir Thomas Hoby (London, 1561).

[11] The most recent study of the war between England and Spain is Wallace T. MacCaffrey, *Elizabeth I: War and Politics 1588–1603* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1992). See also G. R. Elton, *England under the Tudors* (London: Methuen, 1974), 376–84; and John Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 1988), 331–51.

[12] On Essex's early career, see MacCaffrey, 453–94; on Essex's ambitions for personal glory and their exacerbation of his conflict with the Cecil faction in the Privy Council, see esp. 476–78. On Essex's participation in the Portuguese expedition of 1589, against the will of the queen, see MacCaffrey, 462–64; and Elton, 378.

and financed by joint-stock companies, to launch attacks on Spanish interests.[13] The English response to the Spanish threat was thus characterized by tensions between the female monarch and powerful, ambitious, and semi-independent male subjects.

The Elizabethan public stage reacted quickly to the war with Spain and the various enthusiasms and anxieties it provoked. The vogue for English history plays is almost exactly contemporaneous with the war. There were history plays in England both before 1588 (such as Bale's *Kynge Johan*, Norton and Sackville's *Gorboduc*, and Thomas Preston's *Cambises*) and after 1603 (Ford's *Perkin Warbeck*, among others); but as a genre on the popular stage, the English history play flourished after the success of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* (1587–88). Following Elizabeth's death and the end of the war in 1603, there was a "rapid decline" in both the quality and quantity of history plays.[14] In the early 1590s, arguably the most influential writer of history plays was the young William Shakespeare, whose first four histories—the three parts of *Henry VI* and *Richard III*—had proved enormously popular.[15] While these plays dealt with English wars of the fifteenth century, they also addressed concerns and anxieties provoked by the contemporary war with Spain: they focus on the dangers of feminine rule, the problem of an uncertain succession to the crown, the threat of foreign invaders, and the excesses of unruly or self-serving captains.

During the war itself—and in historical studies long afterwards—the tensions within the English ruling class between a queen "parsimoniously" waging a defensive war and dashing young captains advocating an invasion of Spain were often read in terms of conventional gender ideology—an indecisive, cautious, weak (and old) woman is set against active, bold, strong (and young) men.[16] It is not surprising, therefore, that Shakespeare's first tetralogy consistently reads the political struggles for the English crown in terms of gender. As studies of the first tetralogy by Leah S. Marcus and Phyllis Rackin make clear, political disorder in the *Henry VI* plays stems largely from feminine misrule.[17] Over the course of the three *Henry VI*

[13] On the financial limitations of the English war effort, see MacCaffrey, 59–69.

[14] Irving Ribner, *The English History Play in the age of Shakespeare* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1957), 266. Ribner provides an extensive survey of the genre, though he does not relate the popularity of the history play to the war with Spain.

[15] The popularity of the *Henry VI* plays can be judged in part by the contemporary allusions made to them. In *Piers Pennilesse* (1592), Thomas Nashe defends the English theater by using the example of Talbot—in all probability a reference to *1 Henry VI* (*The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. Ronald B. McKerrow, 5 vols. [London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1904–10], 1:212). Robert Greene paraphrases *3 Henry VI*, 1.4.137, in his famous attack on Shakespeare as having a "Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde" (*Greenes Groats-Worth of witte* . . . [London, 1592], F1^{v}). The popularity of *Richard III* is demonstrated by the six quarto editions published between 1597 and 1622. Even after publication of the 1623 Folio, two more quartos of *Richard III* were published (1629, 1634). On the publication history of *Richard III*, see Antony Hammond, ed., *King Richard III*, Arden edition (London and New York: Methuen, 1981), 1.

[16] On the view held by historians such as E. P. Cheyney and J. Corbett that Elizabeth was "constitutionally incapable of conducting a war" and which accuses her of "indecision, procrastination, variability of mind, and cheeseparing parsimony," see Elton, 358–59, esp. 358. Though Elton defends Elizabeth's conduct of the war, he does not address the way in which all the faults of which she is accused fit neatly into conventional notions about the failings of women in positions of leadership.

[17] See Leah S. Marcus, *Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Reading and Its Discontents* (Berkeley: U of

plays, effeminate rulers and mannish women destabilize the traditional patriarchal power structure and gender hierarchy of England, leaving the realm in chaos. Marcus, for example, gives an extended reading of the relation in *1 Henry VI* between Joan La Pucelle and Elizabeth, arguing that Shakespeare's staging of Joan addresses various anxieties about Elizabeth's role as a military leader in the war with Spain.[18]

Far less attention, however, has been paid to the workings of gender in *Richard III*, the concluding play of the tetralogy. Here masculine aggression runs rampant in the figure of Richard, who refuses to subordinate himself to traditional patriarchal power structures and lines of succession. In contrast to the feminine and effeminized disorder staged in the *Henry VI* plays, a specifically masculine disorder plagues the kingdom in *Richard III* until proper patriarchal proportion is reintroduced with the accession of the earl of Richmond as Henry VII. In what follows I will argue that Shakespeare's characterization of Richard III functions as both a critique and an ambivalent celebration of excessive and unruly masculinity and, in so doing, highlights the incoherence of masculinity as a concept in early modern English culture.

As the conflict between York and Lancaster progresses in the *Henry VI* plays, the patriarchal system itself seems to be in a state of collapse. Traditional gender values are inverted: it is a time of "perpetual shame," in which one finds "Women and children of so high a courage / And warriors faint!" (*3HVI*, 5.4.50–51).[19] The usurping power of strong, "mannish" women, such as Queen Margaret and Joan La Pucelle, has its corollary in the effeminate weakness of the English male elite, a weakness especially evident in the two rival monarchs, Henry VI and Edward IV. In the gender economy of early modern England, there is room for only one master: if women are mannish, men will necessarily become effeminate, and vice versa.

The reciprocal relationship between mannish women and effeminate men in the gender economy of early modern England is perhaps most clearly set forth in the pamphlet controversy over gender slippage which flared in the early 1620s. The *Haec-Vir* tract of 1620 concludes by blaming the mannishness of women on male effeminacy:

> Now since[,] . . . by the Lawes of Nature, by the rules of Religion, and the Customes of all ciuill Nations, it is necessary there be a distinct and speciall difference betweene Man and Woman, both in their habit and behauiours: what could we poore weake women doe lesse (being farre too weake by force to fetch backe those spoiles you haue vniustly taken from vs) then to gather vp those garments you haue proudly cast away, and therewith to cloath both our bodies and our mindes . . . ?[20]

The rhetoric of this passage is designed to downplay women's power by claiming that women assume authority only when men relinquish it, but in

California P, 1988), 67–96; Phyllis Rackin, *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1990), 148–58.

[18] See Marcus, 51–105.

[19] Quotations of Shakespeare's plays in this essay follow *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington, 4th ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).

[20] *Haec-Vir: Or The Womanish-Man* (London, 1620), C2^{v}.

Shakespeare's first tetralogy mannish women are presented as active. Joan and Margaret are not "poore weake women." If effeminate men can produce mannish women, mannish women can produce effeminate men. Though the Yorkists attempt to blame the collapse of traditional gender order on Margaret, the plays make it clear that both of the male rulers themselves bear a burden of responsibility for the gender confusion and social disorder that plague the realm. For in quite different ways, but to much the same effect, both Henry VI and Edward IV are intolerably effeminate.

Henry VI's coming to the throne as an infant is a cause for great concern among his councillors (*1HVI*, 1.1.35–43; 4.1.192). Beyond the practical dangers of having a child monarch—conflict among the regents, uncertainty concerning the succession, and a general division of authority—a boy-king is also dangerously gendered. In early modern England aristocratic boys were not separated from their sisters and given distinctively masculine attire until the "breeching age" of six or seven years. Before that age upper-class male children were attended almost exclusively by women and were not differentiated by dress from girls. They participated in "the common gender of childhood," a gender marked as universally female and subordinate.[21] Coming to the throne when he is "but nine months old" (*3HVI*, 1.1.112), Henry VI becomes king before becoming masculine. Given a hierarchy of gender which sees ability to rule as a fundamentally masculine attribute, this situation is dangerously unstable.

In crucial ways Henry VI's developmental transformation from effeminate boy to masculine adult is never made, and this masculine weakness provides a domestic corollary to the external feminine threat posed to English patriarchy by the Amazonian foreigners Joan and Margaret.[22] The king's lack of manly resolve as a betrayal of patriarchal order is most clearly revealed when he gives away his heirs' rights to the crown, disinheriting his own son in order to placate the duke of York (*3HVI*, 1.1.170–80). Henry's failure to assert not only his own prerogative but also the rights of his male children leads one of his most ardent supporters, the hypermasculine Lord Clifford, to argue at length that the king is unnatural (*3HVI*, 2.2.9–42).

If Henry is utterly ineffective in asserting his rights through diplomacy, he is even less potent in war. King Henry is the very embodiment of "effeminate peace" (*1HVI*, 5.4.107), and Margaret and Clifford refuse even to let him on the battlefield with his own troops. "The Queen hath best success when you are absent," Clifford tells the king (*3HVI*, 2.2.74). Worse, Henry's effeminacy is potentially infectious. Margaret warns him that his "soft courage makes [his] followers faint" (*3HVI*, 2.2.57); and when captured by Warwick, his very presence as a captive is a liability: Warwick laments that "the coldness of the King" has "robbed my soldiers of their

[21] See Stephen Orgel, "Nobody's Perfect: Or, Why Did the English Stage Take Boys for Women?" *South Atlantic Quarterly* 88 (1989): 7–29, esp. 10–11; and Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 409–10.

[22] In Margaret and Joan femininity is allied with foreignness, but native Englishwomen, too, are seen in these plays as unruly and disorderly. Duchess Eleanor, wife of Humphrey of Gloucester, employs the witch Margery Jourdan in an attempt to further her plots against Margaret (*2HVI*, 1.4). On the links between foreignness and effeminacy in the first tetralogy, see Marcus, 76–78.

heated spleen" (*3HVI*, 2.1.122, 124). Since heat was characteristic of masculinity, cold of femininity, Henry's effeminate coldness chills the entire army.[23]

While Edward IV, who seizes the throne from Henry, seems the antithesis of his predecessor, he proves an equally effeminate ruler. In early modern England a man could show himself effeminate by being too devoted to women as well as by acting like a woman.[24] While Henry remains a perpetual child, tenderhearted, weak, asexual, and innocent,[25] Edward's effeminacy is manifested in his excessive sexual attraction to women. As his brother Richard pointedly reminds him, "You love the breeder better than the male" (*3HVI*, 2.1.42). The final cycle of disorder in the *Henry VI* plays is set in motion by Edward's impetuous marriage to Elizabeth Grey (*3HVI*, 3.2), which humiliates the powerful earl of Warwick (sent to the French court to negotiate a more prudent marriage) and alienates Edward's brother Clarence (who had hoped to marry Lady Grey himself). "In your bride," Richard warns Edward, "you bury brotherhood" (*3HVI*, 4.1.55). Although Edward eventually manages to regain Clarence's allegiance, defeat Warwick, and secure his hold on the crown, there are strong suggestions that he is finally undone by effeminate weakness. In *Richard III* Lord Hastings reports that Edward's doctors fear for his life because he is "sickly, weak, and melancholy" (all signs of effeminate weakness of spirit). Richard, always critical of his brother's inordinate affections, replies that the king has "overmuch consumed his royal person" and coyly asks whether Edward is still in bed (*RIII*, 1.1.135–42). Thus, although their weakness is figured in vastly different ways, both Edward and Henry blast their reigns with effeminate marriages. And destabilizing effeminacy afflicts not only Henry VI and Edward IV but many in the male ruling class, from Henry's regent, Gloucester, who has a proud wife (*1HVI*, 1.1.39), to the unfortunate Lord Hastings, whose corruption is publicly blamed on his affections for Mistress Shore (*RIII*, 3.5.31, 48–51).

Two parallel scenes in the *Henry VI* plays provide an index to the progressive decay of patriarchal order in the course of the tetralogy. In *1 Henry VI*, as Rackin suggests, the crisis of the patriarchy is clearly evident in the heroic deaths of Talbot and his only son, each of whom refuses to leave the line of battle while the other remains in danger (*1HVI*, 4.5–4.7). By making the slain young Talbot his father's only son (even though the historical Talbot had several children), Shakespeare rewrites history so that Talbot's line dies out, thus stressing the self-destructive tendencies within a

[23] On the notion that women were colder than men in humoral theory, see Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980), 30 and 33–35.

[24] On the dynamics of effeminacy in early modern England, and its associations with both boyishness and uxoriousness, see Valerie Traub, *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of sexuality in Shakespearean drama* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 134–36.

[25] I do not mean by this description to conflate early modern representations of childhood with later notions that children are essentially "innocent" and asexual. My point is that young children, while they might enjoy sexual stimulation and be aware of adult sexual practices, were not as strongly differentiated by gender as were adolescents and adults; nor were prepubescent children directly involved in the economy of reproduction which was so crucial to discourses of both gender and sexuality in early modern Europe.

patriarchal ethic that prizes the preservation of family honor above the lives of individual family members.[26]

As exemplary subjects of the patriarchy, Talbot and his son embody an idealized system of orderly masculine bonds—not only within generations of their own family but also in their comradeship with members of other great families such as Salisbury and Bedford. The strength of this masculine warrior society comes precisely from its cohesion as a community. Deprived of his companions and troops in his confrontation with the French countess of Auvergne, Talbot appears puny, misshapen, and insignificant: "a child, a silly dwarf! . . . [a] weak and writhled shrimp" (*1HVI*, 2.3.22–23). It is Talbot's comrades who make him a great and mighty man: "These are his substance, sinews, arms, and strength" (*1HVI*, 2.3.64). The death of Talbot and the extinction of his line come to represent the decline of the male bonds, both lateral and hierarchical, that constitute English strength. Even the most renowned English warrior clan is powerless to stem the tide of chaos overwhelming England's ruling classes. And, as David Riggs observes, no other characters in the first tetralogy emulate Talbot's example.[27]

If, at the beginning of the tetralogy, patriarchy is revealed as dysfunctional and incapable of passing its values to future generations, by 2.5 of *3 Henry VI* the basic structures of patriarchy are shattered: no longer do fathers and sons share the same ideals and fight side by side; instead the hapless king witnesses the horrible spectacle of fathers killing sons and sons killing fathers. Aristocratic masculine aggressivity—which is presented as doomed, if admirably heroic, in the case of Talbot and his son—has degenerated utterly. In the absence of strong masculine royal authority, English manhood, unruled and untamed, turns to devour itself. It is this unregulated, destructive masculine force that is personified in the twisted and deformed body of Richard III.

Though it is clearly a continuation of the historical narrative of the *Henry VI* plays and was included among the histories in the First Folio, on all its quarto and Folio title pages *Richard III* is, like Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, identified as a tragedy.[28] The play's generic classification is not without significance for its treatment of gender. As Catherine Belsey, Bruce R. Smith, and others have argued, tragedy is a genre that, perhaps more than any other in early modern England, is gendered male.[29] Thus it is signif-

[26] See Rackin, 155.

[27] See David Riggs, *Shakespeare's Heroical Histories:* Henry VI *and Its Literary Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1971), 149.

[28] For the quarto and Folio title pages, see Kristian Smidt's parallel edition of the texts, *The Tragedy of King Richard the Third: Parallel Texts of the First Quarto and the First Folio with Variants of the Early Quartos* (New York: Humanities Press, 1969), 28–29. In *Palladis Tamia* (London, 1598) Francis Meres lists *Richard III* (as well as three other history plays: *Richard II*, *King John*, and *Henry IV*) among Shakespeare's tragedies (Oo2^{r}). On the relations between Shakespeare's Richard, Marlowe's Tamburlaine, and other similar figures in contemporary English drama, see Riggs, 62–92. On the conventional view of Richard and Tamburlaine as scourges, see Hammond, ed., 103.

[29] Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and difference in Renaissance drama* (London and New York: Methuen, 1985); and Bruce R. Smith, "Making a difference: Male/male 'desire' in tragedy, comedy, and tragi-comedy" in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, Susan Zimmerman, ed. (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 127–49. Smith examines the opposition in early modern English culture between English/masculine tragedy and Italian/feminine comedy and explores the effect of this opposition on the representation of homo-

icant that the shift from history to tragedy in the first tetralogy comes at the point where masculine aggression, not feminine assertiveness, becomes the focus of the drama. Like Tamburlaine, Richard is consistently characterized in strongly masculine terms, and his hypermasculinity is closely tied to his aggressive pursuit of power over effeminate pleasure. In the great soliloquy in *3 Henry VI* in which he first articulates his "soul's desire" for the crown, Richard firmly rejects the possibility of finding "heaven in a lady's lap" and decides instead that for him "this earth affords no joy . . . / But to command, to check, to o'erbear" (*3HVI*, 3.2.128, 148, 165–66). In the famous opening of *Richard III*, Richard forcefully expresses his disgust with "idle pleasures" in a speech that, in its reiterated movement from "stern alarums" to "merry meetings," from "dreadful marches" to "delightful measures," from violence to pleasure, and from rage to joy, provides an anatomy of effeminization (*RIII*, 1.1.131, 7–8).[30]

Though Richard and Tamburlaine's love of war might seem to us monstrous in itself, their sentiments were shared by many Englishmen at the time the plays were first performed. In his famous antitheatrical tract *The Schoole of Abuse* Stephen Gosson attacks the effeminate corruption of English manhood in terms much the same as those Richard uses: he laments the decline of the "olde discipline of Englande" and complains that "our wreastling at armes, is turned to wallowyng in Ladies laps."[31] Similar opinions are voiced in Phillip Stubbes's *Anatomie of Abuses* as well as in Sir Thomas Hoby's popular translation of Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*.[32]

Just as the dissolution of patriarchal order grows progressively worse in the course of the tetralogy, so Richard grows progressively more monstrous. Though he is born deformed and much is made of his unnatural birth, Richard is not, when he first appears, as monstrous as he will later become. In *2 Henry VI* Richard is a minor character; and while he baits Clifford and

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erotic desire. He argues that "the homoerotic difference in comedy is gender; in tragedy it is power status. . . . romantic comedy turns on gender difference that ends in likeness; tragedy, on gender likeness that ends in difference" (141). See also Linda Bamber, *Comic Women, Tragic Men: A Study of Gender and Genre in Shakespeare* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1982), who argues that tragedy is a masculine genre, comedy a feminine one. Bamber is critiqued by Jonathan Goldberg, "Shakespearean inscriptions: The voicing of power" in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman, eds. (New York and London: Methuen, 1985), 116–37; and also by Dympna Callaghan, *Woman and Gender in Renaissance Tragedy: A Study of* King Lear, Othello, The Duchess of Malfi *and* The White Devil (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1989), 37–41.

Phyllis Rackin has argued that tragedies, unlike histories, were perceived as effeminating because they caused men to weep ("Engendering the Tragic Audience: The Case of *Richard III*," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 26 [Spring 1993]: 47–65, esp. 47–50). As I argue below, weeping was not always considered unmanly in early modern culture; it was often seen as an appropriate response to a great man's fall. Rackin's own reading of *Richard III* stresses Richard's "solitary [masculine] individualism" as a tragic hero (62).

[30] This speech echoes Tamburlaine's disgust at his sons' amorous weakness; see Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great*, Part II, ed. J. S. Cunningham (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1981), 1.3.21–32.

[31] Stephen Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse* (London, 1579), B8^{r-v}.

[32] See Phillip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses* (London, 1583); Stubbes contends that effeminacy can be caused by soft and luxurious clothing and argues that music will transnature a young man "into a womã, or worse" (C[1]^{v}–C2^{r}, O5). On Castiglione and fears of effeminacy in early modern Europe, see Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1990), 125–26. See also Patricia Parker, "Gender Ideology, Gender Change: The Case of Marie Germain," *Critical Inquiry* 19 (1993): 337–64.

slays Somerset in battle (*2HVI*, 5.1.151–56; 5.2.66–71), he shows none of his later cunning or ruthless lust for mastery. In the tragedy that bears his name, Richard is eager only to increase and consolidate his personal power at any cost; but in the early scenes of *3 Henry VI*, Richard is clearly shown to be capable of affection and deeply devoted to his father. Rhapsodizing on his father's bravery in battle, he exclaims, "Methinks 'tis prize enough to be his son" (*3HVI*, 2.1.20), and although this outburst could not provide a greater contrast to the Richard who later claims his only "heaven [is] to dream upon the crown" (*3HVI*, 3.2.168), there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of his remark. Richard's devotion to his father marks him as an orderly subject of the patriarchy and as a member of a masculine community, linked by bonds of loyalty to both his father and his brothers.

The death of Richard's father at the hands of Margaret and Clifford is the occasion for a complete transformation in Shakespeare's representation of Richard. York's death comes to serve as an emblem for his son Richard's alienation from the patriarchal masculine community, and the change in Richard's social position is manifested by a precise physical change. If Warwick's army is chilled by Henry's effeminate coldness, here Richard is overcome with surfeit of masculine heat which makes it physically impossible for him to weep. This shift in Richard's humoral makeup is described in remarkable detail:

> I cannot weep, for all my body's moisture
> Scarce serves to quench my furnace-burning heart;
> Nor can my tongue unload my heart's great burden,
> For selfsame wind that I should speak withal
> Is kindling coals that fires all my breast,
> And burns me up with flames that tears would quench.
> To weep is to make less the depth of grief.
> Tears, then, for babes; blows and revenge for me!
> (*3HVI*, 2.1.79–86)

This moment is crucial enough in Richard's development as a character for Shakespeare to recall it in detail in *Richard III*: Richard tells Anne that when his father died, though "all the standers-by had wet their cheeks / Like trees bedashed with rain—in that sad time / My manly eyes did scorn an humble tear" (*RIII*, 1.2.165–67).[33]

In the humoral physiology of the early modern period, the human body was conceived as a "semipermeable, irrigated container" of fungible liquids—blood, sperm, bile, phlegm, tears, sweat.[34] As John Donne asserted in a Lenten sermon of 1623, "every man is but a spunge, and but a spunge filled with teares."[35] To be healthy, the fragile balance of liquid humors in the body had to be carefully maintained according to an economy of heat and cold which differed for men and women: men ought ideally to be relatively hot and dry, women to be moist and cold. In figuring his heart as a fiery furnace, Richard clearly describes the processes by which his meta-

[33] This passage occurs only in the Folio text of the play; see Hammond, ed., 333.

[34] Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1993), 8.

[35] John Donne, *The Sermons of John Donne*, ed. George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson, 10 vols. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1959), 4:337. See also Paster, 8–9.

bolic equilibrium is being thrown out of balance. An excess of masculine heat is parching his body: he is drying up. His inability to cry prevents his body from maintaining a healthy humoral balance.

Although throughout *Richard III* weeping is seen as characteristic of women, children, and effeminate lovers (e.g., 1.2.157–58; 2.2; 4.4.201–2), it is important to realize that weeping as such was not uniformly conceived of as unmanly in early modern culture. Just as in the patriarchal cultures of antiquity, men were traditionally permitted, even expected, to weep on just the occasion when Richard proves unable to—the death of a comrade in battle.[36] Thus Richard's own father weeps for the death of his youngest son, crying, "These tears are my sweet Rutland's obsequies, / And every drop cries vengeance for his death" (*3HVI*, 1.4.147–48). York's reading of his own tears as a sign of vengeance demonstrates that the dichotomy between weeping and manliness, between mourning and vengeance, is not a cultural imperative but rather a paradigm that Richard chooses to adopt.[37]

After his father's death Richard's physical abnormality—his monstrosity—obtains inwardly as well as outwardly: his humoral imbalance, his excessive heat, is just as monstrous as his crooked back and withered arm. His physical monstrosity manifests itself as social monstrosity. While York lives, Richard's devotion to his father marks him as an orderly subject of the patriarchy; though he (and his family) are in rebellion against the monarch, Richard accepts patriarchy as such. His loyalty is to the father of his family rather than to King Henry, who has failed so singularly as father of the country. But Richard's inability to mourn York's death marks a perverse turning away from patriarchal principles.[38] Left without a father to subordinate himself to, Richard fights for himself alone. As he proudly declares after killing Henry VI,

> I have no brother, I am like no brother;
> And this word "love," which graybeards call divine,
> Be resident in men like one another
> And not in me. I am myself alone.
> (*3HVI*, 5.6.80–83)

[36] In the *Iliad* weeping at such moments is common: Patroclus weeps at the misfortune of the Achaians at the very moment he makes the heroic plea to be allowed to fight in Achilles's armor (Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. A. T. Murray, Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols. [London: William Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1934], Bk. 16, ll. 1–45). Achilles mocks his friend's tears at first, but he later weeps bitterly at Patroclus's death (Bk. 18, ll. 1–75). And when old Priam weeps for Hector, Achilles joins him in tears, thinking of the death of his own father (Bk. 24, ll. 507–12). Aeneas, in Book 2 of the *Aeneid*, is also reduced to tears. While the occasions on which men might honorably cry have always been relatively limited in Western cultures, Anne Vincent-Buffault argues in her study of weeping in eighteenth-century France that it was not until the later nineteenth century that European men were expected never to cry for any reason (*The History of Tears: Sensibility and Sentimentality in France* [London: Macmillan, 1991], 241–47).

[37] York is not the only warrior who weeps openly and unashamedly in the tetralogy: "rough Northumberland" weeps at the sight of York's torments (*3HVI*, 1.4.27, 150–51, 169–71); and Warwick admits that when he heard of York's death, he "drowned these news in tears" (*3HVI*, 2.1.104).

[38] Janet Adelman also sees the death of Richard's father as crucial to his later development, though she reads his reaction in a different register than I do. Adelman argues that York's death "deprive[s] Richard of his father's protection and thrust[s] him back toward his mother"; his hatred of the maternal body leads in this reading to his isolation from his brothers (*Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays*, Hamlet *to* The Tempest [New York and London: Routledge, 1992], 3–4, esp. 3).

Richard believes his deformity sets him apart from others, but instead it is his aggressively masculine singularity that constitutes his monstrosity. His ambition, his prowess as a warrior, his viciousness, his cruel intelligence—the same masculine qualities that made him an asset to the Yorkists as a group—become monstrous when cut loose from the structure of bonds between male warriors which constitutes English ruling-class society. The alienation of Richard's masculinity from the patriarchal order that ought to channel its energies gives his physical deformity significance; indeed it is only after his father's death that he begins to lament his condition and to devise various explanations and genealogies for it (*3HVI*, 3.2.146–95; 5.6.68–83).

From the death of York onward, much is made in the tetralogy of Richard's deformity and his monstrous birth: he was a premature child, "an indigested and deformèd lump," born with teeth "to signify [he came] . . . to bite the world." His birth was heralded by horrid omens, and his "mother felt more than a mother's pain" (*3HVI*, 5.6.51, 54, 49). In early modern England the birth of a deformed child was inevitably seen as portentous,[39] and in Richard's case his deformed body figures his masculinity as both perverse and dangerous for the nation. Some indication of the degree of cultural fascination with monstrous births in the late sixteenth century can be seen in such texts as Stephen Batman's lengthy tract titled *The Doome warning all men to the Iudgemente*, a compendium of "all the straunge Prodigies" and "secrete figures of Reuelations" from the time of Adam and Eve to the day the book was published.[40] Batman casts all human history as a chronicle of reiterated warning, in which every so-called aberration of nature—from rhinoceroses to stillbirths, from floods to dreams (including Richard's dream of "deformed Images" on the evening of the battle at Bosworth[41])—is a divine portent filled with inescapable and terrifying significance.

As contemporary broadside ballads about deformed infants and animals can attest, deformity is invariably read as a warning against sin—sins often understood as erotic in origin and national in scope. For example, a 1568 broadside setting forth "The forme and shape of a monstrous Child, / born at Maydstone in Kent" is subtitled "A warnyng to England." The broadside reads each deformity of a male infant's body as representing a specific corruption of the English nation: a disfigured mouth indicates filthy speech;

[39] On birth defects as a sign of divine judgment, see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Scribners, 1971), 89–96; and Linda Charnes, *Notorious Identity: Materializing the Subject in Shakespeare* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1993), 22–24. In addition to those cited in subsequent notes, broadside ballads announcing and interpreting the birth of deformed children or animals in the late sixteenth century include "The true description of a monsterous Chylde, borne in the Ile of Wight . . ." (London, 1564 [STC 1422]) and "The shape of ii. mõsters, MDlxii" (London, 1562 [STC 11485]), reprinted in *Black-Letter Ballads and Broadsides* (London: Joseph Lilly, 1870), 63–66 and 45–48.

[40] Stephen Batman, *The Doome warning all men to the Iudgemente* (London, 1581).

[41] Of Richard's dream, Batman writes: ". . . the night before the Battayle that was fought at *Bosworth* in *Leicestershire* the 22. of August, in his sleepe he had a fearefull dreame, wherein to him it seemed that he saw deformed Images like terrible Devils, which pulled and haled him, not suffering him to take any rest, which strange vision greatly apalled his former courage: notwithstanding his hope of victorie, he was slaine as a rebell and caried to *Leicester* like a hogge" (281).

a hand with no fingers indicates idleness; and so on. The last part of the malformed body to be thus anatomized is "the hinder part," which "shew vs playne, / Our close and hidden vice."[42] While the erotic overtones of this secret vice are clear enough, neither the prose description of the baby nor the accompanying woodcut mention or show any deformity of the boy's "hinder part." It is as if even "normal" genitals constituted a deformity, a sign of sinfulness and the Fall.

Often a deformed or "monstrous" child was read as a sign that its parents' sexual union had been sinful.[43] As another broadside announcing a monstrous male child conceived out of wedlock puts it, "nature iust enuyed /Her gyft to hym, and cropd wyth mayming knyfe / His limmes, to wreake her spyte on parentes sinne."[44] In the French surgeon Ambroise Paré's 1573 treatise *On Monsters and Marvels*, monstrous births are frequently attributed to aberrant or unnatural erotic practices, such as having intercourse during menstruation. The imagination of women during sex could result in monstrosity: a white woman thinking of a "Moor" could give birth to a dark-skinned child. And if a pregnant woman sat in an "indecent posture," she could deform the fetus she carried.[45]

In broadside ballads the specific nature of a child's deformities is often read as a sign of England's sexual sins. A 1566 broadside that describes "two monsterous children," a boy and a girl, "having both their belies fast ioyned together, and imbracyng one an other with their armes," interprets their "imbracyng" as a warning against the nation's "secret sinnes." The sheet goes on to compare the twins to the "monstrous" races rumored to inhabit "Affrique land" and argues that because England has embraced the "mischeefs great" of foreign and savage lands, the deformities common to such regions are now found in England itself.[46] Another sheet from the same year describes a girl born with rufflike folds of skin on her neck, a deformity that is—predictably—construed as a warning against women's rich and erotically enticing apparel:

> Deformed are the things we were,
> Deformed is our hart;
> The Lord is wroth with all this geere,—
> Repent for fere of smarte! . . .

[42] "The forme and shape of a monstrous Child, borne at Maydstone . . . " (London, 1568 [STC 17194]), reprinted in *Black-Letter Ballads and Broadsides*, 194–97.

[43] On the relation of the circumstances of conception to birth defects in early modern thought, see Paster, 168–72.

[44] "The true report of the forme and shape of a monstrous Childe borne at Muche Horkesleye . . ." (London, 1562 [STC 12207]), reprinted in *Black-Letter Ballads and Broadsides*, 27–30. In this case the fact that the parents married before the child came to term has no mitigating quality on their implied guilt. That both parents are alleged to have had healthy children through previous marriages suggests that it was their union, not either person taken individually, that was wicked. See also "The true fourme and shape of a monsterous chyld, whiche was borne in Stony Stratforde" (London, 1565 [STC 7565]).

[45] See Ambroise Paré, *On Monsters and Marvels*, trans. Janis L. Pallister (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1982), 3–5 and 38–42, esp. 4.

[46] "The true description of two monsterous children, laufully begotten betwene George Steuens and Margerie his wyfe . . ." (London, 1566 [STC 17803]), reprinted in *Black-Letter Ballads and Broadsides*, 217–20.

> And thou, O England, whose womankinde
> In ruffes doo walke to oft,
> Parswade them stil to bere in minde
> This Childe with ruffes so soft.[47]

The tendency to conflate eroticism and deformity is conveyed especially graphically in an anonymous erotic poem circulated in manuscript in England in the early seventeenth century, in which the male lover's penis is described as

> A monster great deformed, that had on[e] eye
> Was full of hayre and had a naked head
> most strongly vayn'd, and the top, being redd
> hee draweth forth, and In on[e of]'s handes
> (Apt for the sport) hee shaking of it stande[s].[48]

Here the indisputable sign of masculine gender, the organ whose possession grants authority to rule, is seen as a deformed monster that can be mastered only with great effort.

In their writings on deformity, both Michel de Montaigne and Francis Bacon relate physical malformation to excesses and deficiencies in erotic ability. Montaigne speculates that

> *'He knowes not the perfect pleasure of* Venus, *that hath not laine with a limping Woman.'* . . . and it is as well spoken of men as of women: For the Queene of the Amazons answered the Scithian, that wooed her to loves-embracements . . . . *The crooked man doth it best.*

Physical deformity was also thought to cause a shift in the erotic economy of the body. Montaigne asserts that the disabled of both sexes have superior sexual abilities and enlarged genitals:

> ancient Philosophy . . . saith, that the legs and thighs of the crooked-backt or halting-lame, by reason of their imperfection, not receiving the nourishment, due unto them, it followeth that the Genitall parts, that are above them, are more full, better nourished and more vigorous. Or else, that such a defect hindring other exercise, such as are therewith possessed, do lesse waste their strength and consume their vertue, and so much the stronger and fuller, they come to *Venus* sports.

For those skeptical of such theoretical speculations, Montaigne offers a more practical explanation of the phenomenon:

> I would have saide, that the loose or disjoynted motion of a limping or crooke-backt Woman, might adde some new kinde of pleasure unto that businesse or sweet sinne.[49]

[47] "The true Discripcion of a Childe with Ruffes, borne in the parish of Micheham in the countie of Surrey" (London, 1566 [STC 1033]), reprinted in *Black-Letter Ballads and Broadsides*, 243–46.

[48] Ashmole MS 38 is a large collection of miscellaneous English poetry, compiled in the early years of the seventeenth century by one Nicholas Burge, who in 1661 (according to two letters to Ashmole [Ashmole MS 1131]) was one of the Poor Knights of Windsor. The poem, entitled "Ex Ausanio Gallo Cento," is dated 5 February 1627 and appears on page 149.

[49] Michel de Montaigne, "Of the Lame or Crippel" in *The Essayes of Michael Lord of Montaigne. Translated by John Florio* (1603), ed. Israel Gollancz, 6 vols. (London: J. M. Dent, 1897), 6:147–65, esp. 161–62.

Where Montaigne sees "crooked men" as sexual athletes, for Bacon physical deformity is a sign of perverse desire. In his essay "Of Deformity," Bacon claims scriptural authority for the notion that deformed persons are "*void of natural affection*,"[50] a phrase that appears twice in the Pauline epistles in the King James Bible, though in neither case does it refer to the physically deformed. In 2 Timothy, those "without natural affection" are characterized as "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." In Romans, Paul is more specific: the phrase refers to those "men [who], leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly"[51]—or, in the parlance of the early modern period, sodomites. Through these explicit Pauline references, Bacon draws attention to the sexualized nature of deformity—a person who is physically deformed may also be erotically perverse.

Bacon also contends that, if the genitals do not function properly, erotic energy will circulate in other channels, and he cites eunuchs as an example of how "deformity is an advantage to rising [in social standing]."[52] That which is unable to raise itself physically may rise socially instead. Clearly this is the social dynamic of Richard's deformity. Given the fungibility of all body fluids in humoral physiology, perhaps Richard's semen has dried up along with his tears. Certainly, despite his concern to buttress his rule with dynastic marriages, he gives no thought to progeny. A phallic "monster great deformed," perpetually engaged in erecting himself, he is, as many commentators have noted, utterly barren, able to destroy and corrupt but not to create. Thus, detached from patriarchal economies of reproduction, the very phallic power on which patriarchal order depends becomes monstrously destructive.

It is in this context that one must read the frequently reiterated trope of Richard as a wild boar (*RIII*, 3.2.11, 28–33, 72–73; 4.5.1–3; 5.3.156). While a white boar was historically Richard III's heraldic emblem, the image of a "bloody, and usurping boar," who rampages through "summer fields and fruitful vines" and "makes his trough" in the "emboweled bosoms" of his innocent foes (*RIII*, 5.2.7–10) cannot but recall Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, in which a youthful and effeminate Adonis flees an aggressive Venus only to be gored to death by a monstrous boar who is the very embodiment of bestial masculinity. As Peter Stallybrass and Allon White suggest, the boar, and indeed the pig in general, is a creature who occupies a special place in the symbolic topography of early modern European culture. Kept in the home and fed on scraps, an animal whose pink skin "disturbingly resemble[s] the flesh of European babies," the pig was a "creature of the threshold" which "overlapped with, and confusingly debased, human habitat and diet alike. Its mode of life was not different from, but alarmingly imbricated with, the forms of life which betokened civility."[53]

[50] Francis Bacon, "Of Deformity" (1625) in *The Essays or Counsels, Civil and Moral of Francis Bacon*, ed. Samuel Harvey Reynolds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), 308–13, esp. 308.

[51] *The Holy Bible*, Authorized King James Version (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1970), 2 Timothy 3:3–4 and Romans 1:27.

[52] Bacon, 309.

[53] Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1986), 47.

Curiously, those ballads on prodigious births which do not describe human babies tend to describe pigs. A broadside of 1570, for example, entitled "A meruaylous straunge deformed Swyne," makes an explicit link between deformity, swinishness, and treason:

> Judge ye againe that hate your prince,
> And seeke the realme to spoyle,
> What monstrous Swine you proue at length,
> For all your couert coyle.[54]

In a similar register Margaret calls Shakespeare's Richard an "abortive, rooting hog" (*RIII*, 1.3.228), and Batman describes Richard's corpse after Bosworth as "caried to *Leicester* like a hogge." What more appropriate emblem for crooked Richard, the "indigested and deformèd lump," alienated from civilized society?

The social disruptiveness of Richard's aggressive masculinity is reflected in his utter contempt for women. Hatred, scorn, and fear of the feminine are fundamental to his character and go far beyond the violent hatred of the maternal which Janet Adelman has rightly seen as crucial to his self-fashioning.[55] Elizabeth of York is a "relenting fool, and shallow, changing woman" (*RIII*, 4.4.431); Margaret, a "withered hag" (*RIII*, 1.3.215). Clarence's imprisonment is blamed on the "mighty gossips in our monarchy" (*RIII*, 1.1.83), and Richard, when not blaming his mother for it, attributes his own deformity to female witches (*RIII*, 3.4.68–72). Feeling himself incapable of loving women, Richard endorses a (demonstrably false) opposition between effeminate love and masculine conquest and makes his "heaven to dream upon the crown."

In his relentless pursuit of power, however, not even so great a misogynist as Richard can afford to ignore women. For in a patriarchal society in which property and social status are passed from father to son, women are crucial to male power.[56] The importance of women's reproductive labor in the perpetuation of the patriarchal order is reflected in the fact that for many of Shakespeare's kings, courtship is a crucial act, which, as much as any other, defines the nature and legitimacy of their rule. As Jean Howard notes, in the second tetralogy the performative nature of courtship is stressed to an extent not evident in the earlier sequence of plays. Howard contrasts Hal's wooing of Katherine with the marriage of Richmond and Elizabeth which concludes the first tetralogy and argues that, because theirs is a strictly dynastic marriage and not an affective one, no wooing scene need be staged.[57] But while both Richmond and Elizabeth are securely positioned in the patriarchal order, Richard is alienated from it; so for him performative courtship is crucial.[58] As he himself puts it when planning his second

[54] "A meruaylous straunge deformed Swyne" (London, 1570 [STC 19071]), reprinted in *Black-Letter Ballads and Broadsides*, 186–90.

[55] See Adelman, 2–4.

[56] See Lisa Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (Sussex: Harvester Press; Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble, 1983), 68–102; and Rackin, *Stages*, 158–64.

[57] See Jean E. Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 149.

[58] Performance in *Richard III* is demonized in a way that it is not in the second tetralogy. Whereas in the figure of Richard performance is *merely* deceit, much of the second tetralogy

marriage, "I must be married to my brother's daughter, / Or else my kingdom stands on brittle glass" (*RIII*, 4.2.60–61). Whereas his effeminate brother Edward put lust before policy in his ill-considered marriage to Elizabeth, Richard's wooing, both of Anne (*RIII*, 1.2) and of Elizabeth's daughter (*RIII*, 4.4), is an act of pure *Realpolitik*, in which he is motivated neither by lust nor affection: he will wed Anne, he says, "not all so much for love / As for another secret close intent / By marrying her which I must reach unto" (*RIII*, 1.1.157–59).

Richard endeavors to triumph over the discourses of erotic pleasure by subordinating them entirely to his desire for power. In his incredible seduction of Lady Anne, he skillfully employs the language of affection, sexual desire, and physical obsession (a language he despises as an indication of effeminate weakness) to achieve specific political ends.[59] By offering Anne his sword, he stages a calculated (and illusory) gender reversal, offering her an opportunity to exercise phallic power which he assumes in advance she will be incapable of accepting. Anne succumbs because she allows her political quarrel with Richard to be expressed in a discourse of erotic seduction which, while it gives her the illusion of power over her helpless "effeminate" suitor, actually constructs her as feminine and passive, Richard as masculine and active. As Linda Charnes suggests, once Anne has accepted the gender binaries inherent in Richard's conventional discourse of seduction, her failure to accept the role of masculine avenger which Richard mockingly offers her leaves her with no recourse but submission.[60] Faced with an opponent less willing to reconfigure the political as the erotic, Richard's gambit would have a vastly different outcome: a woman less willing to submit to conventional gender hierarchies (Margaret, say) would certainly plunge the sword through Richard's heart. Indeed, one of Richard's greatest errors is to assume that all women conform to gender stereo-

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can be read as an attempt to recuperate performativity in the person of Hal; see Howard, 151–52.

[59] Rebecca W. Bushnell reads Richard's self-representation as an object of desire as effeminizing, but in doing so, she confuses a false image of passivity (which Richard cynically manipulates in the pursuit of power, not erotic pleasure) for Richard's own gender position; see *Tragedies of Tyrants: Political Thought and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1990), 123. Richard may present himself as Anne's victim, but he never really places himself in her power. It is his Machiavellian manipulation of erotic discourse, rather than his putative position in it, which constitutes the source of his power in the scene.

[60] In the most compelling reading of Anne's seduction in recent years, Charnes contends that Richard woos Anne through the dead and effeminized body of Henry VI, whose wounds, bleeding afresh at Richard's presence, are linked metaphorically to Anne's own open, desiring female body; Anne's very disgust for Richard is so powerful as to constitute a perverse attraction (see 33–51). In the course of the confrontation between Richard and Anne, Henry's penetrated body (which Charnes convincingly links to the wounded body of Christ in late-medieval Corpus Christi traditions) "is translated from a political-theological sacrifice into a sexual one" (45). Charnes argues that by engaging in erotic discourse with Anne, Richard reintegrates himself in the social world from which he has hitherto been alienated by his physical deformity, and she compares Richard's feigned renunciation of the masculine role in his courtship to the "suspension of sheer phallic prerogative" which characterizes the space of the erotic in Shakespeare's comedies (40 and 46).

While I am not always convinced by Charnes's larger argument that Richard as a character is in a constant dialogue with his "notorious identity" as one of the most famous villains of Tudor historiography, I find her reading of Anne's seduction compelling, and it has greatly influenced my own thinking about the scene.

types to the same extent as Anne. Richard always reads gender in essentialist terms, and thus, although his seduction of Lady Anne is successful, he elsewhere underestimates his female opponents.[61]

Richard III, of course, ends with the re-establishment of balanced patriarchal order in the figure of Richmond. It is made clear at every point that Richmond—unlike Richard—sees society in terms of broad kinship networks. He calls his captains "fellows in arms, and my most loving friends" (*RIII*, 5.2.1) and pointedly refers to his stepfather and ally in Richard's camp as "our father Stanley" (*RIII*, 5.2.5). His social vision includes the feminine in subordinate roles; he rules women but does not reject or despise them. He respects his mother as well as his father (*RIII*, 5.3.80–82). Where Richard in his final address to his troops sees women as valuable property to be kept out of the enemy's hands ("Shall these enjoy our lands? Lie with our wives? / Ravish our daughters?" [*RIII*, 5.3.336–37]), Richmond offers a vision of a stable world held together in the present and the future by familial bonds of masculine duty and feminine and filial loyalty:

> If you do fight in safeguard of your wives,
> Your wives shall welcome home the conquerors;
> If you do free your children from the sword,
> Your children's children quits it in your age.
> (*RIII*, 5.3.259–62)

Richmond's moderate views may reinscribe comforting traditional hierarchies, but as every reader or viewer of the play knows, he is a flat, unmemorable character, far less vivid and compelling than the unruly monster killed on Bosworth Field. If early modern English drama from *Tamburlaine* to *Hamlet* and *Coriolanus* constructs the narrative of independent masculine aggression as a tragedy, in which an unruly, singular, yet compelling protagonist is inevitably destroyed by larger social forces, the flatness and unbelievability of Richmond suggest that on a larger cultural level the problems of unruly masculinity did not admit of easy resolution. The gap between courtly and warrior ideals resisted any simple gesture toward closure. Monstrous Richard can—indeed must—be killed, but his death is figured as a tragic loss, and no convincing successor can be imagined.

[61] For example, before his first confrontation with Margaret's forces in *3 Henry VI*, Richard sneers, "A woman's general. What should we fear" (*3HVI*, 1.2.68). That Margaret trounces Richard's troops in the following battle teaches him nothing. His certainty that Elizabeth of York is a "relenting fool, and shallow, changing woman" is similarly overconfident, in that it is far from clear she is sincere in her coerced agreement to let Richard marry her daughter.