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Two Tents on Bosworth Field: *Richard III*, V, iii, iv, v

Polonius, ever ready to expatiate upon the obvious, would inform us that the dramatic repertory has many different genres; it could encompass such hybrid modalities as the "tragic-comical-historical-pastoral." Tragedy and comedy had set up their classic polarity, but they were not turning out to be mutually exclusive, and the ever-widening middle ground offered room for multiform possibilities. The principal new mode devised by Elizabethans would be canonized — between the two old ones, and along with the playwright who had made it his very own — on the title page of the First Folio; *Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies*. Now history, in its generic sense, takes the form of story; the same word serves for both in Romance languages; and early English novels have been presented as "histories." Ordinarily it had been expected to narrate, rather than dramatize, what it attested to have actually taken place somewhere in the public domain. Tudor England had become history-conscious to an unprecedented degree. Its chroniclers evoked the past to sustain the present, to justify and glorify the regime, to consolidate a patriotic attitude within a nationalistic ideology. Among its increasingly eloquent means of expression, the drama was outstandingly in the ascendance, and dramatists were continually faced with the need for popular and spectacular material. Hence it seems inevitable that those two distinctive forms should have been temporarily conflated into the English history-play.

Temporarily, because its recorded subject-matter, while extensive, was not inexhaustible; nor would its plangent strains appeal so whole-heartedly to the more sophisticated playgoers of the Stuart period. With the upsurging decade launched by England's victory over Spain's Armada in 1588, every preceding epoch in the entire historical cycle, from the legendary Brut to the reigning Elizabeth, was exploited dramaturgically. Adaptation made for loose construction, since there was always so much to be crowded in: sprawling casts and episodic swerves, genealogical roll-calls and walk-on parts for famous figures who could not be left out. But the rules were stricter for controlling the interpretation of events, which would have been decimated

by censorship if it did not hew to an accepted political line. Accordingly, when Shakespeare undertook to consider politics in a deeper ethical perspective, he would turn back to ancient Rome and Plutarchan biography for *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*. It also happened that two of his major tragedies were drawn from the matter of Britain — circumstances treated in Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* — though *Macbeth* was distanced by its Scottish setting and *King Lear* was shrouded in a prehistoric aura. On the other hand both *Richard III* and *Richard II*, though they were listed and printed among the histories in the Folio, were likewise accorded the title of tragedies, centring as they did upon a royal protagonist in his wickedness or in his weakness.

The critical distinction that assigned them to the middle section lay in the fact that both were based upon strictly English subjects. Consequently they could be held up to the warrant proclaimed by the alternative title of *Henry VIII: All Is True*. Where tragedy had kept is captains and kings at some esthetic distance, history brought them home to their own citizenry, with a thrust that could chill as well as thrill. Its chronological framework was set by the reign of a given monarch; and if that had restricted him to a rather formalistic part in the background, then his play could not take much more shape than a loosely related series of military pageants and ceremonial episodes. But if he could be psychologized into the fullest characterization, for better or for worse, then the documentation could be unified into genuine drama. "True tragedy" must have sounded like something of a mongrel during the heyday of the chronicle play. But such was the designation of a crude script dealing with Richard III, which seems to have slightly predated Shakespeare's treatment. Its induction featured an allegorical dialogue between personifications of Poetry and of Truth itself, in which the latter promises: "Then will I add bodies to shadows." If there was a borderline, it could be crossed in either direction; truth could become the stuff of poetry, shadows — mere actors — could embody vital actualities, and history could point the way for tragedy.

During the first ten years of his literary career, which coincided so auspiciously with the Armada decade, Shakespeare's chief commitment was to dramatic history. His involvement with it did much to prepare the situation for his emergence as a tragic dramatist. The temporal span of those ten plays was predominantly the fifteenth century, if we allow for *King John* as a retrospective prologue and for the belated *Henry VIII* as a prospective epilogue. The sequence framed domestically by the Wars of the Roses and abroad by the Hundred Years' War comprised eight plays, which can be grouped into two tetralogies; the earlier group (*Henry VI*, *Parts One, Two, and Three*, and *Richard III*) dealt with more recent happenings than its artistically ripper sequel (*Richard II*, *Henry IV*, *Parts One and Two*, and *Henry*

V). Taken all together, they constitute what A. W. Schlegel, invoking still another genre, described as "a national epic." That category has since been distended by Hollywood; and yet the cinema, relying more upon direct action and less upon verbal rumination, would prove an apter medium than the stage for the presentation of history; witness Laurence Olivier's *Richard III* and *Henry V*, so much more successfully adapted than his cinematic *Hamlet*. The epic, celebrating primarily arms and the man, specialized in the narration of warfare. Dramatization would be more difficult; for its agon had to be mainly elocution, eked out with the stylized assistance of dramaturgic convention.

The novel, succeeding the epic, could adjust itself more sensitively to the increasing complications and devastations of war, both collective and personal. The Napoleonic experience would be narrated in their various ways by Stendhal, Hugo, Thackeray, and Tolstoy — whereas, if it was to be dramatized, it would call for the panoramic scale and the interplanetary outlook of Hardy's *Dynasts*. Individual combatants had stood out, more heroically than their regimented successors, from the armies of medieval days; but most of the Shakespearean battles had occurred when swords and arrows were yielding to guns and cannons; and for theatrical reasons he reverts, whenever he can do so, to single combat. The deployment of troops had to be symbolized by such economical devices as alarums, sound effects from a tolling bell in the open theater's turret, and excursions, parties of three sword-bearing extras (Ben Jonson) or maybe four or five (Shakespeare) rushing across the stage from both directions in the respective colors of York or of Lancaster. Christopher Marlowe had developed the strategem of letting grandiose oratory stand in for physical conflict, taunts and vaunts before and after the not too observable battle; and Shakespeare's warriors, including the younger Richard (as Gloucester), reecho the Marlovian phrase "to play the orator" (*3 HVI* III ii 188);¹ Jonson, dismissing the history play in the prologue to *Every Man in His Humour*, particularly disapproved of its "foot-and-half-foot words," echoing the dismissive example of Horace, "*sesquipedalia verba*."

Shakespeare, however, in full control of his medium, offered a frank apoplegia for the obvious disparities between an actual display of monarchic grandeur and "this cockpit," "this unworthy scaffold," "this wooden O." The Chorus of his climactic and most epic history, *Henry V*, calls upon the playgoer to transcend such limitations by taking the word for the deed, by equating rhetorical declamation with martial prowess. Setting the scene as it shifts from England to France and filling in the action as it leaps from

1 All citations and quotations from Shakespeare's plays come from *The Riverside Shakespeare*. G. Blakemore Evans, ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

court to battlefield, the choric interlocutor invites us to suspend our disbeliefs and to lend our imaginations. The physical imperfections of a performance can, and should, all be pieced together and redeemed in the mind's ear and eye. Not that Shakespeare asks us to idealize the portraiture in his gallery of kings. The only one who qualifies as a hero on the epic plane is Henry V, whose triumphal career would be prematurely cut off, and who had charmed us more in his wayward youth as Prince Hal. To commemorate the triumphs of his line, as Shakespeare did in the second tetralogy, was to compliment the regnant house of Tudor, which claimed the throne by collateral descent from the house of Lancaster. The decline of that family under the lengthy and disastrous kingship of Henry VI, together with the violent interventions and transitory enthronements of the Yorkist faction, had previously furnished themes for the first tetralogy.

Shakespeare's histories were bound to reflect an accumulation of narrative sources, as retold by Holinshed: the official Latin of Polydore Vergil, the Tudor apologetics of Edward Hall, the fragmentary but corrosive *Life of Richard III* by Sir Thomas More. These set forth a Lancastrian party-line, which would be challenged in later centuries; Horace Walpole would raise *Historic Doubts*, transferring the malevolence from Richard to his enemies; and today there are professed Richardians who would exculpate — nay, venerate — him as a martyr to adverse propaganda. Without sharing their devotion, we might well concede that the legend, by the time it reached Shakespeare, had transformed a man into a monster. This by no means diminished his histrionic potentialities. Villanies were as apposite as heroics to the rough dialectic of the history-plays, and no one could pose more suggestively for the very model of an arch-villain. Fabulous deformities had clustered around his physique from his traumatic birth; the crooked back, the withered arm, the limping gait, the motivation of an ugly cripple seeking revenge upon the hale and the handsome — even the heraldic boar that could be reviled as a hog. His notoriety as "a deep dissembler, not of affection only, but of religion," would be attested by Milton, among others. Shakespeare's Richard, publicly pretending to be "a plain man," has secretly vowed to exhibit more shapes than the mythical Proteus (I iii 51). Taking a cynical pride in deception, he covers up by quoting scripture:

And thus I clothe my naked villany
With odd old ends stol'n forth of holy writ,
And seem a saint, when most I play the devil. (I iii 335-7)

Of course he overshoots the saintly mark. Lessing would write him off as unabashedly diabolical, contrasted with the fairer-spoken devilry of Edmund in *King Lear*. Yet every villain, in being himself while seeming to be a more decent human being, is cast in a dual role. It is not for nothing that

hypocrisy has its metaphor in playacting, that *hypokrites* was the Greek term for actor. Shakespeare's earliest and most overt malefactor, Aaron the Moor in *Titus Andronicus*, has a face as black as his soul. But the dark-skinned Othello, Moor of Venice, moving through an atmosphere of greater tragic complexity, has a noble heart, and is tricked into wrongdoing by that villainous comrade who figures as "honest, honest Iago." Malice is never wholly unmitigated in Shakespeare; usually it is motivated by grievance of some sort; and even that remorseless hatemonger, Aaron, discloses a tender feeling for the mulatto baby he has sired. The energetic zest of Richard's malefactions, the "habitual jocularity" that endeared him to Charles Lamb, could be all too easily flattened out into caricature. He could be the archetypal Wicked Uncle, licensing the blithe brutalities of Mr. Punch or Mr. Quilp, not to mention the off-hand decapitations of Lewis Carroll's Red Queen. Yet those "odd old ends" of traditional piety, though they are quoted only to be flouted, still convey their moral implications. God is invoked a hundred times in this play.

Macbeth would not be a hypocrite by nature; his temperament is more active than reflective; and, when he soliloquizes, it is in order to bring out the compunctious resistance of his thoughts to his deeds. Though Richard harbors no such innate compunctions, his congenital duplicity — as well as the playwright's obligation to keep us informed about his plans — makes him a past master of the stage-villain's twin verbal conventions, the soliloquy and the aside. Rich in both ranging monologues and cracking one-liners, onstage two-thirds of the time, his is the second largest Shakespearean part; Hamlet has 1507 lines to Richard's 1145, and *Richard III* is the play next longest to *Hamlet*. Although many of Shakespeare's plays stand much higher in the critical reckoning, few of them have had so very popular a stage-history. It was the first (1750), and for many years the most frequent, to be performed in the United States. Could it have been that so dire a depiction of monarchy held a particular fascination for republican audiences? It was equally prominent in the British repertory, and its quartos were more reprinted than *Hamlet*'s. Reaction had been registered from the outset through allusion. Contemporary anecdotes recall that Richard III was popularly identified with his originating performer, Richard Burbage. A Cambridge satire mouthed the opening speech as a shibboleth of the London theater. All the attestations of the play's success bear witness to its unbridled theatricality.

Its main attraction was the protean scope of its leading role, whose continual challenge was taken up by a majestic succession of star actors. Richard's exaggerations were maximized in the stridently reductive adaptation by Colley Cibber, the vehicle of David Garrick's début, which held the stage — eclipsing Shakespeare's original version — throughout the

eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth. Viewing Charles Kean's performance, according to Coleridge, was "like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning." After the sublimity of classical drama, in Victor Hugo's terms, Shakespeare has infused a romantic strain of grotesquerie; and none of his grotesques could out-Herod Richard. The intrinsic duality of the part was redoubled by its alternation of actor's masks. He can "counterfeit the deep tragedian," when occasions arise, even better than his stage-manager, the Duke of Buckingham (III v 5). But Richard names his most congenial mask when, caught in an equivocation, he likens himself to "the formal Vice, Iniquity," mischief-maker and commentator in the moralities, sardonic as well as demonic, who relishes the fun while he lures the sinners to the everlasting bonfire (III i 82). "Earth gapes, hell burns, fiends roar, saints pray," and other metaphorical omens foretell the revenges that moral outrage has been storing up (IV iv 75). His ironic perception of himself is notably vice-like when he plays — not once but twice — the "jolly thriving wooer," courting in each case a woman doubly bereft by his murders (IV iii 43).

Richard as the deep tragedian had an academic prototype in the Senecan tyrant of a Latin tragedy, *Ricardus Tertius* by Thomas Legge. Closer to Shakespeare's point were those tragedies in the medieval vein — monologues narrating the falls of princes or the exemplary fates of other worthies humbled by the vagaries of Lady Fortune — which had been collected, augmented, and widely circulated in *A Mirror for Magistrates*. Ten of these poetic complaints were grounded on characters, starting with Buckingham and including himself, who would be involved in Richard's career. In transposing them to the theater, and adjusting them to the broader perspectives of the Renaissance, Shakespeare was influenced by the current impact of his most brilliant rival, Marlowe. Marlowe's rhetoric, with overwhelming bravura, pitted will against fortune and stressed the self-made rise that led toward a fall. Where he was temperamentally an outdoorer, Shakespeare outdid him; Machiavelli makes a personal appearance as prologue to *The Jew of Malta*, but Richard undertakes to give him lessons, "to set the murtherous Machevil to school" (3HV I iii 193). Except for *Edward II*, which may show some reciprocal Shakespearean influence, Marlovian tragedy tends toward monodrama, dominated by its driving protagonists. Its dramatic action is initiated, characteristically, by the self-exploratory exposition of Barabas the Jew or Doctor Faustus. Shakespeare had learned that lesson when he provided Richard with his opening soliloquy, sketching the exposition through its interconnected antitheses: summer/winter, peace/war, proportion/deformity, sunlight/shadow, lover/villain.

The introductory trope is a pun; "this son of York" is Richard's newly crowned brother, the philandering Edward IV; and the shining sun has been

emblematic of kingship from the Pharaohs to Louis XIV, *le Roi soleil* (I i 2). As the invidious comparison develops, the image of lengthening shadow becomes an emblem for Richard. This neatly balanced speech is essentially a recapitulation of the earlier monologue — Shakespeare's longest — wherein the young Richard Crookback emerges from the prior trilogy as Duke of Gloucester, bugbear, potential usurper, ultimate Yorkist, and heaviest of theatrical heavies;

Then since the earth affords no joy to me
But to command, to check, to o'erbear such
As are of better person than myself,
I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown. (3HV I iii 165-8)

Here the tone, the resolve, and the key-word strike us as distinctly Marlovian. So does the rhetorical figure, *epiphora*: "crown" is repeated at the end of three subsequent lines and resounds again in the terminal couplet. To compare the two monologues is to realize that *Richard III* has become more typically Shakespearean in its succinct formulation, its structural equilibrium, and its psychological modality. The mature Richard confidently establishes himself in the sequel: "I am determined to prove a villain..." (I i 30). Then, having brazenly wooed and won the Lancastrian widow, and having exchanged insults with two queens, he steps aside for an interlude that facilitates his ascent and portends his downfall. The tragic spokesman here is the Duke of Clarence, the brother who stands between Richard and the dying King, consequently imprisoned in the Tower of London and about to be assassinated. Clarence's recital begins with the archaic verb for reporting a dream: "Methoughts..." (I iv 9). His report to the Keeper parallels the general "Induction" of Thomas Sackville to the *Mirror for Magistrates*: the fearful sensations of drowning after a shove from Richard, leading into a journey through the underworld, where he encounters the reproachful shades of those whom he has injured. His own murder, that fatal submersion in a butt of malmsey, is volubly but inadequately resisted by the Second Murderer, tardily troubled with "certain dregs of conscience" (I iv 121f.).

Clarence's dream was not mentioned in the accounts of the chronicles. Shakespeare seems to have introduced it as a point of departure for the portentous configuration of dreamwork that runs through the play. It foreshadows, and is complemented by, the most notorious of the Tower murders, that of Richard's two nephews, Edward's heirs. These episodes are linked through the survival of Clarence's son and daughter, another pair of stage children whose innocent precocity puts to shame the worldly corruption of their conniving elders. But the horrific misdeed is itself glossed over, perhaps because infanticide had so long been the best known charge in Richard's criminal record, and its pathos had so frequently been exploited.

Holinshed gives a detailed account at first hand *coram populo*. But Shakespeare hands the confession on to Tyrrel, the hired assassin, who has hired two other assassins to do the dirty work off-stage. His brief, albeit sympathetic, announcement derives from theirs at second hand; and they in turn have been reluctant killers, whose mission has been penitently salted "with conscience and remorse" (III iii 20). This is a far cry from Richard — Lord Protector forsooth! The fate of the youthful princes hangs, like a suspenseful cloud, over the municipal scenes aloft that Buckingham has been staging in the city. There, while he is manipulating the Mayor and the Citizens, Richard feigns diffidence, and has to be coaxed away from his prayers and his spiritual advisers to assume the pomp of majesty.

The decisive business of the histories — civic, conspiratorial, military — falls within the unrelenting conflicts of man's world. Yet Richard has a surprising way with women, as he demonstrates in his hectic courtship of Lady Anne, an episode of Shakespeare's own invention. Clearly he enjoys "this keen encounter of our wits," welcomes further bouts of ungallant repartee, and inexorably manages to get in the last stichomythic word (I i 115). As the roll of his victims continues to swell, their wives and mothers form a mourning chorus, antiphonally lamenting husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers. *Ubi sunt*...? Edward's widowed queen, joined by Richard's mother, the dowager Duchess of York, asks the aged virago, widowed queen of Henry VI ("she-wolf of France," 3*HVI* I iii 111), to lead the litany:

O thou well skill'd in curses, stay awhile
And teach me how to curse mine enemies! (V iv 116)

Gradually their imprecations and denunciations give way to prophecies and forewarnings; these feminine retreats, in the battle of the sexes, prefigure Richard's defeat in the masculine battle that lies ahead. The emotional contrariety heightens the formal agon, structuring the antagonistic positions into what M.C. Bradbrook would term "Shakespeare's most patterned play." Its overarching pattern can be traced by two complementary principles, which Wolfgang Clemen stresses in his discerning commentary: contrast and symmetry. These had been crudely outlined in the morality play, where good and evil stood in Manichaean opposition, and nearly every part was offset by its adverse counterpart. An underlying dualism fits in with all the double-talk and the duplicitous gestures of Richard's villany. If at heart he remains single-minded, like Marlowe's immoralists, his immorality will be counterbalanced by an enlarging frame of social reference. Setting the one-sidedness of strong characters into relief, Shakespeare surpasses Marlowe by reanimating our sympathies for the other side.

Though the other side has been vocal in its sorrows, it must undergo the conventional wait until the fifth act for its forcible retaliation and official

vindication. The future Henry VII, at this stage Earl of Richmond, inheritor of the Lancastrians and founder of the Tudor dynasty, has meanwhile been waiting in the wings. His claim to the throne has been validated by a laying on of hands, when he was saluted in his youth as "England's hope" by the moribund Henry VI (3*HVI* IV vi 68). Richmond is not a colorful deuteragonist, but we may have had too much color with Richard; it is enough for his foil to be sober, sincere, conscientious, genuinely religious, and finally triumphant. Heralded by conflicting reports, his entrance in the second scene of Act V is preceded by Buckingham's farewell: a repentance worthy of the *Mirror for Magistrates*, ominously dated on All Souls Day, his "body's doomsday," when the dead return to remind us of our own sins (V i 12). As the most confidential of Richard's retainers, Buckingham has been personally responsible — up until the moment he balked at infantile regicide — for the previous beheadings. "Off with his head!" Richard's peremptory command, which has become a *mot de caractère*, is uttered with slight variation thrice, and would be echoed into a virtual refrain by Cibber's travesty (III i 193; iv 76; V iii 344). It would be hard to think of another dramatic interjection which, in four monosyllables, could occasion such a Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt*.

We have already arrived at the long concluding scene, for the Folio indicates no breaks after "*Scena Secunda*"; nor do the quartos, though they supply a somewhat more satisfactory text for the last 357 lines of the play. At all events, the scenic designations would not have meant much for Elizabethan staging, where *exeunt omnes* took the place of a curtain. Where the announced locality was a battlefield ("even here in Bosworth field," V iii 1), uniformed actors walking on and off created a *liaison des scènes*. Scenes ii, iii, and iv — the last 429 lines — flow into one another continuously, and build up into a culminating set-piece. The dénouement is always a compensation for the suspense, and both should be intensive at this juncture, catastrophic in the broadest meaning of the old theatrical term. The running title from the Folio appeals to built-up expectations: *The Life and Death of Richard the Third*. So does the balanced emphasis of the full title: *The Tragedy of Richard the Third: with the Landing of Earle Richmond, and the Battell at Bosworth Field*. That historic field, within Shakespeare's playhouse, had to be a wooden platform less than sixteen yards square; and his whole troupe, with some doubling, could do no more than suggest those clashing armies. But it is suggestion that actors work with, after all, as the Chorus in *Henry V* declares, when pleading with his hearers for their imaginative collaboration.

Given such collaboration, Shakespeare's histories could function more effectively in a formalized arena — with an open stage, side entries, central balcony, and an all-but-surrounding audience — than against the changing

pictorial scenery of more modern theatres. These spatial arrangements almost seem laid out to correspond with the symmetries and contrasts of *Richard III* — or rather, to put it more broadly, the dramatic habitat seems to have conditioned the interplay of its inhabitants, as they move from posturing tableaux to dynamic clashes. The spectacle could be ordered diagrammatically, with the opposing parties on opposite sides, as the issues converge in a vibrant climax. The rebel forces, by the Duke of Norfolk's estimate, number six or seven thousand soldiers; the royal army "trebles that account," by Richard's claim, though the defection of Lord Stanley's troops will reduce the odds (11). Historians would considerably enlarge the numbers for both camps, while augmenting the underdog's proportion. These rival hosts, presumably miles apart, are now to be exhibited simultaneously, each encampment represented by its commander's tent, stage left at war with stage right. The tents should not be imaginary but portable properties, carried in and pitched to set the scene (though this stage business is referred to only in Richard's dialogue). Standing there, so near to and yet so far from one another, they hark back to the multiple stages of medieval drama, where the pilgrimage of life proceeded from one symbolic mansion to another.

"Here will I lie tonight —" says Richard, while his tent is going up. "But where to-morrow?" (6f). Businesslike, he shrugs off the uncertainty: "For, lords, to-morrow is a busy day" (18). Rallying one of them on his sad expression, Richard leads them out to survey the terrain. Thereupon Richmond enters to set up his headquarters, charging his officers with fuller preliminary instructions, and undertaking to draw up a "form and model" for the next day's campaign (24). His first remark, which sees promise in the golden sunset, takes up the solar theme that has been associated with kingship, and initiates the sequence of incidental remarks that will tell the hours from eve to morn: "nine o'clock" (47), "dead midnight" (180), cock-crow (209f.), "the stroke of four" (235), "*The clock striketh*" (275f.). Just as theatrical space can be foreshortened, so theatrical time can be compressed. It ran out through the course of a valedictory monologue, during the last hour of Doctor Faustus. Acted in broad daylight, Elizabethan plays utilized allusions to convey a nocturnal effect. Benighted images cluster about Richard, as he perpetrates his deeds of darkness. "Subjects follow him," the Queen has mourned, "To his new kingdom of ne'er-changing night" (II ii 46). And he himself threatens the Stanleys with a fall "Into the blind cave of eternal night" (V iii 62). Clarence has indeed been sent there; his premonitory vision had transported him "Unto the kingdom of perpetual night" (I iv 47). Endless night means death.

After the withdrawal of the Tudor staff into Richmond's tent, the Yorkist leaders reenter their locale. It is supper-time, but Richard is not hungry;

conscious of being less alert or cheerful than usual, he calls for a bowl of wine, together with ink and paper. Crisply he gives messages for his allies and orders for early rising to his most trusted followers, Catesby and Ratcliffe. He is concerned that his helmet, armor, and weapons be ready, and especially his favorite horse: "Saddle white Surrey for the field tomorrow" (64). Left alone on his pallet, he falls asleep at once. The switch to Richmond's quarters brings in his stepfather, Stanley, grimly arrested between loyalty to his stepson and fear for his own son, whom Richard has taken hostage. When Stanley notes a further passage of time, his anxieties are figuratively linked with Richard's night and his hopes with Richmond's dawn: "The silent hours steal on, / And flaky darkness breaks within the east" (86). After the mixed emotions of this leave-taking, Richmond bids goodnight to his aides: "I'll strive with troubled thoughts to take a nap" (104). Yet, before he goes to sleep, he confirms the recurrent contrast with Richard by kneeling and saying his prayers. In commending his soul to heaven, he envisions himself as God's captain and his army as an instrument of divine retribution — "ministers of chastisement" delegated to crush "the usurping helmets" of their adversaries (112f.).

What happens for the next sixty lines, while the antagonists and their assembled cohorts sleep, is Shakespeare's apocalyptic showpiece (117-76). Richard's sleepless queen has spoken of his insomnia, to which he was being awakened by "timorous dreams" (IV i 84). These were attributed to the ever-increasing burden of his guilt by the moralizing historians, who took note of the peculiarly sinister dream that had agitated him at Bosworth Field. It was a "strange vision," according to Hall, beset with "diverse ymages like terrible develles" — and therefore not unlike the images to which Richard himself is compared. Apart from those not unfamiliar devils, the "many dreadfull and busy Imaginations" remain unspecified, leaving Shakespeare to fill in the horrors. This he accomplished by recreating a mirror, not of magistrates brought low by fortune, but of those who had been victimized by the malignity of Richard's ambitions. Successively their ghosts now cross the stage, each of them appearing first to him and then to Richmond, both asleep. There are eleven in all, presenting themselves in chronological order, beginning with two shades who met their deaths in 3 *Henry VI*, the crown prince Edward and the titular monarch himself. Then we hear from Clarence, from the three courtiers who tried to save the doomed princes, and from the two princes in person. After them comes Hastings, the accomplice who hesitated, and after him one woman, Lady Anne. And finally, ironically, Buckingham, victim of the train of conspiracy he had fostered.

There are eight visitations, six of them passing one by one, with Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan coming on as a trio, soon shadowed by the princelings,

paired forever and speaking in unison. In the Elizabethan staging, each of the visitants would have entered at one side-door, addressed the slumbering king in malediction, stalked across to the other door in tense pantomime, and made an exit after blessing the dormant adversary. Later productions utilized trap-doors, through which the apparitions could rise and sink; since this could put some strain upon squeaking machinery, they also cut down on the number of ghostly reappearances. Later audiences, at all events, would not expect so itemized a rehearsal of the case against Richard. Eerie music accompanied the mute crossing-over from one tent to the other: Edwin Booth's prompt-book specifies drum-rolls, trumpet-calls, and tremolo orchestration. The spectral speeches are brief and, except for a word of self-identification, almost liturgically repetitive. Prince Edward's opening, "Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow!" is twice reechoed (118, 131, 139), while the consistent byword of admonition to Richard — echoing the valadiction of Faustus — is "Despair and die!" (120, 126, 135, 140, 143, 149, 158). The antithetical watchword for Richmond is "Live and flourish!" (130, 138, 143). These dead Yorkists vie with one another in their well-wishing approbation for this ascendant "offspring of the house of Lancaster" (136). The session is rounded out by the final speaker, Buckingham, who delivers the closing couplets. To Richard:

Dream on, dream on, of bloody deeds and death;
Fainting, despair; despairing, yield thy breath. (171f.)

And then, to Richmond, with the tragic paradigm:

God and good angels fight on Richmond's side,
And Richard falls in height of all his pride. (175f.)

What is the psychic status of the supernatural pageantry that we have just witnessed — or, to look at it in a more psychological light, the vision that we have been watching vicariously through the minds of tomorrow's opponents? Shakespeare employs his ghosts theatrically as the expressionistic manifestations of subjective mental states, like Macbeth's "dagger of the mind." Banquo's ghost is not objectively visible to anyone else, nor can the shade of Hamlet's father be seen by Gertrude. But *Richard III* does not ask us to believe in such phantoms, even as supernatural hypotheses, since they are merely dreamed about, though the phantasmagoria is divided between the two opposed dreamers. Human experience is richly intertwined with the process of dreaming for Shakespeare; drama is "a dream of passion" for Hamlet; and life itself is "such stuff as dreams are made on" for Prospero. It glides through *The Tempest* "as in a dream"; romance thrives upon that dreamlike reluctance to distinguish between sleeping and waking; and

comedy can readily turn into *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Tragedy, somewhat more superstitiously, looks upon nightmares as portents, warning signals emanating from fate or providence. Romeo's foreboding is dismissed by Mercutio, who blames it upon the "vain fantasy" of Queen Mab, and reduces pleasurable dreams to exercises in wish-fulfillment. This is an anticipation of Freudian analysis; but Freud would likewise interpret darker dreams as expressions of anxiety; and Romeo and Mercutio both suffer for disregarding an omen.

Similarly Julius Caesar, ignoring his wife's premonitions and accepting a misinterpreted augury, goes forth to his assassination. Thus in *Richard III*, when Stanley, by dreaming of a rampant boar, is forewarned to seek safety, Hastings refuses "to trust the mock'ry of unquiet slumbers," and pays the price for doubting with his head (III ii 27). Shakespearean history operates through a network of cosmic design, to which we are alerted not only by backward glances but by predictions and oracles of the future. Richard apprehends such disclosures well enough to abuse them, skeptically laying his plots with "inductions dangerous ... drunken prophecies, libels, and dreams" (I i 12f.). *Dream*, the word itself with its cognates, is enunciated twenty-five times — surprisingly more than in any of Shakespeare's other plays, where dreams are very frequently recounted but seldom acted out. The ghosts that haunt the masque-like slumbers of Posthumus, in *Cymbeline*, present another exception, which had its precursor in *Richard III*. That earlier and earthier presentation had gone beyond its narrative source by resurrecting the murdered *dramatis personae*, as well as by extending the dreamwork to Richmond. Hall had even voiced some doubt as to whether Richard was asleep at that hour: "I thynke this was no dreame, but a punccion and pricke of hys synfull conscience." But Shakespeare's stage direction is unambiguous: "*He starteth up out of a dream.*" And Richard's spontaneous reaction, still between sleeping and waking, yet presaging his imminent catastrophe, is to cry:

Give me another horse! Bind up my wounds!
Have mercy, Jesu! Soft, I did not dream. (V iii 177)

His combative impulse is aroused, but with the apprehension of being injured and the reversion of invoking Christ. Now fully awakened, Richard brushes his somnolent fancies aside, though he will end the soliloquy by returning — with the formulaic "methought" — to those souls who visited his tent and threatened forthcoming vengeance (204ff.). The workings of conscience, admitted for the first time, are rejected as symptoms of cowardice. Yet at this dead midnight "the lights burn blue" — a sign of ghostly phenomena — while Richard stands trembling in an uncharacteristic cold sweat (180). Can he be himself? Then who is he? He has fulfilled the

overpowering commitment to egoism that he announced in 3 *Henry VI*: "I am myself alone" (V vi 83). Self-interrogation, probing deeper than before, now brings home his self-wrought isolation and its ensuing desolation for all those around him: "Richard loves Richard, that is, I am I" (V iii 183). Arguing with himself, he oscillates between self-love and self-hatred, between villany and revenge. A new note of ambivalence is sounded; though he sticks to his own selfish side, he recognizes the moral alteration. Conscience arises to the surface again, and with it the realization of homecoming sins that exclaim: "Guilty! guilty!" (199). Confession drags him toward those depths of despair envisaged by his accusers. He is badly shaken when interrupted by Ratcliffe's arrival to wake him, and to deflect him from his "fearful dream" to the confrontation that lies before him (212).

When the focus shifts to Richmond's unhurried arousal from "the sweetest sleep... / That ever enter'd in a drowsy head," there is a difference in tempo as well as in tone (227f.). The compound "Methought," when it is he who employs it, can summon up the "fairest-boding dreams"; and hence, he tells his attending lords, his "soul is very jocund" (230, 232). When they tell him that it is four o'clock in the morning, he springs into action, arming himself and addressing a formal "*oration to his soldiers*," so entitled in the text. This, with some trimming and shaping, broadly matches the argument of the chronicled address. Richmond's troops are conceived as God's agents, backed by "The prayers of holy saints and wronged souls" (241). Richard, "A bloody tyrant and a homicide," is doubly damned as "God's enemy" (246, 252f.). The distich,

If you do sweat to put a tyrant down,
You sleep in peace, the tyrant being slain,

introduces a drastic series of four more conditional clauses, each followed by a line predicating the happy outcome (255f.). If — and the air is still full of uncertainty — these conditions are met, then your country will reward you, then your wives will be there to welcome you home, then your children will extend your families, and finally every one of you will share my victory. The peroration, with a spoken cue for drum and trumpets, is a battle-cry in the name of God and Saint George. But both commanders would naturally advance their respective claims by invoking England's spiritual patron, and Richard will sharpen his invocation by alluding to the knightly champion's monstrous opposition: "the spleen of fiery dragons" (350). If he has a tutelary saint, it must be the Apostle Paul, whom he regularly calls upon, originally while interrupting the funeral procession of Henry VI, whose corpse was being transported from Saint Paul's Cathedral (I ii 36, 41; iii 45; III iv 76; V iii 216). If Richard has any scriptural affinity, it is with that apostle before his conversion, the unregenerate Saul, who "made havoc of

the church, entering into every house and, haling men and women, committed them to prison" (*Acts* viii 3).

With the departure of Richmond's battalions, leaving the last words before the battle to be uttered in Richard's camp, Shakespeare reversed the sequence of the historical narrators, for whom the ascendancy of Richmond would be the climax. But Richard is more than ever the dramatic protagonist, if not the culture hero, and his edifying downfall must make full amends for his terrifying climb to power. His uneasy mood is further dampened by the bleakness of the day: "The sky doth frown and lower upon our army" (282). However, that is just another omen to be dismissed; the sun that beams on royalty is neutralized today; and ambiguous clouds will darken the same battleground for both Richmond and himself. Snapping his lieutenants to attention, Richard lays out his plan of campaign: "Come, bustle, bustle! Caparison my horse!" (289). Norfolk's supportive arrival is not as reassuring as it might have been, since he has just picked up an anonymous screeed predicting defeat. Richard, having fought off "babbling dreams," and rejected conscience as "but a word that cowards use," is ready to dismiss such discouragements (308f.). His oration is much less dignified than Richmond's. It snarls with vituperation against "vagabonds, rascals, and runaways ... scum..." (316f.). Richmond, put down without being named, is "a paltry fellow,...A milkop" (323, 325). Richard's uncertain *if* leads into a desperate predicate:

If we be conquered, let men conquer us,
And not these bastards Britains, whom our fathers
Have in their own land beaten, bobb'd, and thump'd.... (333ff.)

Hastings had been denounced and condemned for questioning his master's word with a conditional clause: "Talk'st thou to me of 'ifs'?" (III iv 75). The crudity of Richard's language now lays bare its ineffectuality; the failure of eloquence coincides with the decline of authority. Harsh commands are quickened by the sound of the enemy's drums, as a messenger brings in the news of Stanley's pivotal defection. And this time Richard's standard reprisal, "Off with his son George's head!" has to be postponed and will never happen (V iii 344).

Though "Scene IV" is an editorial demarcation, it seems evident that this long-drawn-out night, with its sessions of introspection and retrospection, is over at last; that tents have been struck, preparations bustled, and the full stage cleared for the Battle of Bosworth Field. Nearly all of the fighting, except for a short but crucial pantomime, will take place offstage and be verbally relayed. The alarm-bell clangs; the York and Tudor excursions rush back and forth on their choreographic sorties; and one breathless lull amid the Yorkist ranks is animated by thirteen lines of dialogue. Catesby calls

upon Norfolk to come to the rescue of Richard, whose horse has been shot out from under him. The dismounted King has been braving all dangers afoot, seeking out his opposite number and slaying several warriors dressed in Richmond's uniform — a confusing tactic also practised by Shakespeare's Henry IV. Enter Richard himself at this turning point, ready to stake his life on one final cast of the dice and repeating that hollow ejaculation for which he will always be remembered: "A horse, a horse! my kingdom for a horse!" (iv 7, 13). Having lost his equestrian seating, he will be losing his throne. History would inform us that his plea could not have been granted; so would the conditions of Shakespeare's stage; for living steeds were not among its physical resources. Again we must heed the Chorus of *Henry V*, teaching the spectators how to observe the conventions:

Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them
Printing their proud hoofs i' th' receiving earth.

Given this conspicuous limitation, plus the equine presence so ubiquitous in Shakespeare's chivalric material, he handled the problem with a special ingenuity. Not only are those unseen horses conjured up by talkative messengers and others reporting, but characters talk much about mounting or dismounting when they make their exits and their entrances. The joke that runs through *I Henry IV* is based on forcing the "uncolled" Falstaff — that habitual "horseback-breaker" — to walk through his highway robbery at Gadshill. Shakespeare made a comparable virtue of the same theatrical necessity when he dramatized Richard's proverbial horselessness. He had cleared the way with the King's announcement that the advance guard would consist "equally of horse and foot" (iii 294). In practice it is the infantry who are visible, and the cavalry whom we hear about. Later, more extravagant, and more literal-minded productions would sometimes make use of animal acts. Richard's plight was celebrated at Astley's Victorian hippodrome by covering the stage with dead or dying horses. The versions of Booth and Sir Henry Irving, sharply focussed upon the star, omitted the concluding scene. But the unhorsed Richard must ultimately encounter the veritable Richmond, and they must mime their hand-to-hand combat on foot. Shakespeare provides no eulogy nor epitaph of any kind for the vanquished Richmond simply announces: "The day is over, the bloody dog is dead" (v 2). And the mediating Stanley, having plucked the crown from the usurper's corpse, places it upon the victor's brow.

The aftermath is so conformably official that we can understand its being cut; yet it was needed, especially when these matters were still topical, to steer the argument toward a dialectical resolution. Richmond, now Henry VII, must authoritatively and generously take charge, confirming young Stanley's deliverance, inquiring about the slain nobles, promising pardon for

his repentant foes, and reviewing the condition of England. Favored by God's blessing, his marriage to the late King Edward's daughter "will unite the White Rose and the Red," assuring a peaceful dynastic succession "with smiling plenty, and fair prosperous days!" (19, 35). Anxious reminiscences of treason are counteracted by the hopeful prospects ahead. Father and son will no longer shed one another's blood — as they have done so allegorically in *3 Henry VI*. And, with this declaration from the new King Henry, baronial strife has run its course; the Tudor epoch has dawned. Closing couplets pronounce a benediction:

Now civil wounds are stopp'd, peace lives again;
That she may long live here, God say amen! (40f.)

Justice, both retributive and poetic, has been affirmed, though not until the negation of humane values has done its worst. And yet "the worst is not," we may go on to learn from *King Lear*, "So long as we can say 'This is the worst.'" History, in its darker aspects, can fascinate us with the evil that men do, with machination and manipulation. Such behavior provokes countervailing activities which are also humanly contrived; but Richmond's part is that of a revenger, the predestined agent of a higher eventuality, whether contingent or providential; and that is why his agonistic interaction with Richard partakes of melodrama, if not of a *deus ex machina*. In tragedy, although various strings may be pulled by an Edmund or an Iago, the fundamental predicaments seem to be moulded at least as much by cosmic circumstance as by human initiative.

Pity has been less prevalent than terror in *Richard III*, despite the grieving queens — though it might have worked out otherwise, if we had been allowed to witness the child-murders more directly. As a rule the pity ends by purging the fear, by exorcising our terrors. Tragedy has had a mandate to probe the inner nature of guilt, to examine the cross-purposes that account for suffering; whereas melodrama, calculating those evils from outside, has a knack for piling them up, with sabre-rattlings, shock tactics, and terroristic menaces. That may interpose a touch of sado-masochism in the relations between the spectator and the dramatist; but drama is privileged to celebrate the exceptions, the sensations, the extremities; and who could be more exceptional than Richard, the "cadodemon"? what could be more sensational than his demonic trajectory? and what extreme could go beyond the pandemonium that he brought about? (1 iii 143). Old Queen Margaret voices its self-conscious theatricalism, when she speaks of "this frantic play" (IV iv 68). Insofar as it takes leave of an old order, now fallen into cataclysmic disorder, it might be viewed as Shakespeare's *Götterdämmerung*. Certainly it is his major contribution to that development of our own problematic

century which Antonin Artaud would style "the Theater of Cruelty." And it is not hard to appreciate the comment of Bertolt Brecht, whose own work was bringing drama and epic together again, when he singled out the scene at Bosworth Field: "A theater full of alienation-effects!"

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"As They Did in the Golden World": Romantic Rapture and Semantic Rupture in *As You Like It*

As You Like It is a play full of irreverent literary allusions, many of them overt, some of them less certain and to be dug out with philological or archaeological patience.¹ One of the more hidden, and certainly one of the more irreverent, of these possible references is to be found in the servant Adam's warning to Orlando just before they set out for the forest of Arden: "this night," he means / To burn the *lodging* where you used to lie" (2.3.22-3). Adam's use of the term "lodging" at this point in the play may be more than a casual instance of banal dramatic topology. *As You Like It*, as is well known, is the comedy in which Shakespeare is most consistently and substantially indebted to a narrative source, the prose romance *Rosalynde*, and Adam's lexical choice might be seen as an acknowledgement of sorts of this debt to the author of the source text, Thomas Lodge Esquire (2.158-256).² Indeed, "lodging" is exactly, in a sense, what Shakespeare does in

1 An earlier version of this paper was read at the conference *Shakespeare: la nostalgia dell'essere*, Taormina, August 1984, and published in the conference proceedings. References to *As You Like It* are to the Arden edition. In *Shakespeare's Universe of Discourse* I have argued that discourse is central to Shakespearean comedy as it is in Elizabethan culture, that it is both a privileged semiotic means and a direct dramatic and comic topic. Language, for the Elizabethans, becomes a primary channel and primary target for enthusiasms, suspicions, wars and the dramatic and theatrical potential of words themselves. In Shakespeare's comedies (as in those of Lyly and Jonson) we can observe the identity of verbal form with the dramatic concerns of the play (2). The relation between narrative and drama, which is expressed in discourse, plays with these implications and also implies the relation between the dramatic and theatrical texts, written and performed texts, that I discussed in *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* and in *Shakespeare's Universe of Discourse* (33-34).

2 As I say in *Shakespeare's Universe of Discourse*, the drama, as Aristotle states, creates its fictional world by the direct representation of events "within" the dramatic world (*mimesis*) and not by narration from "without" (*diagnosis*). Narrative information is normally provided to the audience through the interactions of the persons who comprise the fictional world. The dramatic world defines itself as it proceeds, which represents the particular reflexivity of dramatic discourse. This kind of discourse has to convey expository content regarding the