

WOODSTOCK: STUDY OF AN
ELIZABETHAN HISTORY PLAY

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**Woodstock: Study of an
Elizabethan History Play**

by

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**A thesis submitted in partial
fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts**

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ABSTRACT

Woodstock scholarship is, in its present state, unsystematic. The most substantial recent work, a forty years old and however admirable are the qualities of A.P. Rossiter's edition, its pronouncements cannot now be considered as conclusive. Newer scholarship modifies or extends many of the older views. Yet because this scholarship consists of individual pieces or notes scattered throughout four decades of journals, Rossiter's edition remains, for most scholars, the undoubted authority. The lack of comprehensive up-to-date scholarship cannot but be prejudicial to a true consideration of the worth of the play.

This thesis attempts to gather and examine all existing scholarship on Woodstock and augment it with original work. For convenience, the thesis is divided into two sections. The first deals with the most common topics of concern for scholars, most of these being peripheral to an examination of the intrinsic merits of the play. The topics consist of the dating, historical sources and literary relationships of the play. The second part examines the internal workings of Woodstock, centering around its political designs. The politics of Woodstock is its most important aspect and this section details the Morality influences on the play, the political shapings of the imagery, and the significance of the political stand of Woodstock.

Woodstock deserves greater attention than it has received.

It is a play of artistic integrity and has important connections with Shakespeare and the development of the Elizabethan history play. Its neglect is due rather to circumstance than ~~any~~ artistic weaknesses. This thesis, at least in part, rectifies the imbalance between critical study and the merits of the play.

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

Study of Woodstock is handicapped by circumstances: the play is anonymous, thereby lacking the context even a minor name would furnish it; it is missing its conclusion, though the sum lost probably is only a few lines; it is over-shadowed by Shakespeare's Richard II, so that Woodstock is considered primarily as a footnote to that famous play; it became known to the scholarly world too late to have acquired its own scholarly pedigree, and thus its merits and claims were met with suspicion and hostility. The early negative criticism of the play no doubt discouraged other possible scholarly investigators; yet even after a more favourable opinion became the norm, few commentators have cared to exert themselves beyond reiteration of the established critical commonplaces. Most critics have depended on the two successive authorities for their pronouncements on Woodstock, first Wolfgang Keller and then A.P. Rossiter.

Although the play does get relatively frequent and occasionally original attention, little sustained work on Woodstock has been done beyond the investigation of its relationship to Richard II. Besides the two editors already mentioned, Frederick Boas and Wilhelmina Frijlinck are the next major contributors, while important, but undeveloped criticism is to be found in the work of Wolfgang Clemen and

Marie Axton, plus a few others.¹ The desultory appearance of fresh scholarship, the neglect of collation of the currently available material and the reliance on A.P. Rossiter who, at least on some points, is out-dated, have undermined the critical position of the play.

This thesis will attempt to systematize the work already done on Woodstock, to supplement it with my own, and to propose the necessary conclusions. The first half will deal with the most important and recurring issues that concern Woodstock scholarship: its sources, its dependants and its data. The second half will investigate the political nature of the play. This is the dominant aspect of the play, but a comprehensive study of it has not yet been undertaken. In this study, the Morality influence on Woodstock, the political significance of the imagery and the relevance of the political ideas of the play are examined. Although the sections on imagery and the Morality influence are partly involved with literary aspects of Woodstock, this thesis concentrates on topics other than the purely literary. Therefore I preface the main body of the study with some remarks on the general qualities of the play.

¹Specific contributions will be mentioned when the topics concerned are discussed. Fred Benjamin Millett is not included among the major contributors to study of Woodstock. His dissertation, though ostensibly on the play, diverges too often to be useful, and, while helpful because of its review of pre-1930 Woodstock scholarship, makes no advance itself.

Critical commentary on the integral artistic merit of Woodstock is scarce. Scholarly judgement is usually restricted to a short dismissal or brief commendation. The unity and the poetry of the play have attracted some attention, but only when compared with the dearth of attention relating to any other aspect. The earliest commentaries were usually negative. Millett claims that probably no one except the author ever regarded Woodstock as a good play.² Though the play did have its early supporters, Millett's attitude is typical of many of the original critics. However, the general critical stock of Woodstock has risen since Millett's study, owing to the work of Rossiter and changing critical conceptions.

The modern attitude towards the language of Woodstock is the most important illustration of altered critical taste. The poetry of the play was at first described as pedestrian or was severely denigrated. A.H. Bullen sarcastically claims the speech of Edward III's ghost as "worthy of Robert Greene", and concludes his quotation of passages from Woodstock with "I will not inflict more of this stuff on the reader."³ Millett describes the verse as being "imaginatively... utterly mediocre" and as "not distinguished enough to afford any but the most uncritical any artistic pleasure."⁴ Ribner,

²Fred Benjamin Millett, "The Date and Literary Relations of Woodstock", Diss. University of Chicago 1931, p. 10.

³A.H. Bullen, Collection of Old English Plays (London, 1883) II, Appendix I, as quoted in Millett, p. 16.

⁴Millett, p. 16.

less harsh, merely deems the poetry as "far from the worst of his age" though it "only infrequently, rises above the pedestrian."⁵ Technically, however, the critics agree that the poetry sufficed. Although too dependent on rhyme, the author demonstrates, especially for his time, a great "variety of blank verse",⁶ and Millett admits that "the pentameter is handled with some skill: it usually escapes rigidity and monotony."⁷ What the early critics condemned was the lack of beauty and "poetry" in the lines which are qualities that admittedly are not to be found. The poetry of Woodstock will never please an anthologist; there are no passages of that Elizabethan splendor which even the minor poets attempted and occasionally attained. Yet the author should not have been judged by such a standard; he does not fail in attempting this style of poetry, for he does not attempt it.

The author eschews the "artfulness" that Woodstock condemns in the courtier's euphemistic speech. Both the poetry and prose are naturalistic in tone. Rossiter wonders how writing as "low-pitched" could have been judged to be derivative of Marlowe.⁸ The language of Woodstock has the virtues of simplicity and clarity, eminently appropriate to

⁵Irving Ribner, The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1965), p. 142.

⁶Bullen, quoted in Millett, p. 16.

⁷Millett, p. 11.

⁸A. R. Rossiter, Woodstock: A Moral History (London: Chatto and Windus, 1946), p. 64.

a play celebrating a plain-speaking hero. There are no involved conceits, the metaphors are direct and the classical allusions are few and discreet. The directness of the style is typified by the reiteration of certain labelling words, for instance, "plain" for Woodstock, "good" and "virtuous" for Queen Anne, and "wanton" for the favourites, rather than attempting to find appropriate synonyms. The strength of the language is its vigor, a quality that is consistently noticed by critics. It is essentially dramatic language; and as critics came to appreciate the theatrical dimensions of dramatic works, the critical estimation of the language of Woodstock increased. This vitality had early been recognized, but had always been set against lack of poetic beauty.

The new responsiveness is best represented by Wolfgang Clemen's short examination of the language of Woodstock, the only commentary on this topic extending beyond a few sentences. Like others, he praises the "throbbing vitality and richness" of the diction.⁹ He sees the naturalness of the language as descending from the native theatrical tradition, though Woodstock attains a much greater artistic success than the chronicle plays that preceded it. Rhetorical passages are reserved to underscore the intensity of particular emotions, but the underlying tone of the play is "that of normal intercourse, a surprisingly natural, unforced conversational

⁹Wolfgang Clemen, English Tragedy Before Shakespeare Trans. T.S. Dorsch (London: Methuen, 1955), p. 207.

tone, in varying degrees common to all the characters."¹⁰ Rather than considering this as detrimental, Clemen deems this "new and easy manner" as responsible for creating the "impression of spontaneity and capable of infinite modulation."¹¹ In this respect, Clemen notes, the language of Woodstock anticipates "the style of Shakespeare."¹²

Another feature of Woodstock which is advanced for its time is its unity. In an era when loose structure typified the average drama, Woodstock is remarkably constructed. The play, as Rossiter asserts, is "mainly planned... in determinate parts," but there is no sense of an episodic string.¹³ Each scene is fully developed and there is a definite succession: the opening scene prepares for the wedding, the wedding for parliament, parliament for Plashy, etc. Unity is further strengthened by the integration of the comic elements into the main plot. Instead of the distractions of a clown whose connection with the serious matters is often nebulous, Nimble's antics have direct and important effects. Nimble's excursion into Dunstable, for instance, is not merely funny, but is the most explicit illustration of the persecution resulting from Richard's abandonment of his duties, the horror of the situation being reflected by the tone of black

¹⁰Clemen, p. 209.

¹¹Clemen, p. 210.

¹²Clemen, p. 210.

¹³Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 37.

humour. Even the courtier's extravagant speech, apparently primarily a satiric piece, affirms the decay at court. The skill with which the comic is blended with the serious suggests to Rossiter "that frightening inclusiveness of the Elizabethan which attains its full scope only in Shakespeare."¹⁴

Unity is also internally created by the devices of contrast and symmetry. The characters are arranged into two symmetrical groups, one evil and one virtuous, each character having his counterpart in the opposing arrangement. The action of one character will reflect upon his counterpart, implying an opposite moral action. Each action, therefore, is connected to the whole. In addition, some actions are directly paralleled, such as the restraint by Tresilian and Woodstock of their respective partners from taking an impolitic decision. In these cases, the earlier incident is echoed in the later, thereby linking two separate sections of the play.¹⁵ However, unity is primarily achieved by undiluted concentration on the theme of Richard's downfall. Nothing in Woodstock is extraneous to this concept. Political significance charges the characters, the language, the imagery and the comedy. The moral is the *raison d'être* of the entire play and every element serves to elucidate that moral.

¹⁴Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 37.

¹⁵This theme is explained in greater detail in the Morality chapter.

Though Woodstock is a political drama, it is not dry as a tract. It is ironic to write of the theatrical excellence of a work unproduced in over three hundred and fifty years, but Woodstock seems eminently one of the "most stageworthy of Elizabethan history plays, and... merit[s] revival in the theatre."¹⁶ The spiritedness and intelligence of the language is one great asset. The comedy, with its black overtones, is essentially modern in spirit. The effectiveness of the scenes is self-evident: the startlingly abrupt opening, the conflict at the wedding reception, the clownish vitality of the Dunstable residents, the capture of Gloster, his murder and the final battle. The incidents listed here are supplemented by the theatrically impressive use of costume, both fantastic and staid, the appearance of a horse on stage, the utilization of a masque, the visitations of ghosts, and the already mentioned battle scene. The variety is not excessive and is well incorporated into the complete structure. Finally, the characters, though not of Shakespearean force, have an interest and integrity which sustain the play and give it truly human depth.

Woodstock is an interesting piece which deserves more attention. Even its possible importance in the development of the Elizabethan drama has not provoked much scholarly activity, even from those who regard it highly. The following

¹⁶William Armstrong, ed., Elizabethan History Plays (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. xiv.

pages attempt to rectify a portion of the neglect the play has endured.

TEXTUAL HISTORY

1. Thomas of Woodstock survives in only one original text, that of a theatrical prompt-copy. It is the eighth in a collection of plays known as the Egerton MS.1994, which was donated to Dulwich College during the seventeenth-century by actor William Cartwright and purchased in 1865 by the British Museum. The play occupies folios 161 to 185 of the manuscript and is without a final page. The manuscript is untitled, but is now generally referred to as Thomas of Woodstock - a name first used by Felix E. Schelling in 1902 in The English Chronicle Play - or, more simply, as Woodstock.

2. Woodstock was first printed in 1870 by Halliwell-Phillipps in a private edition of eleven copies. Halliwell called the work "A Tragedy of King Richard the Second, concluding with the murder of the Duke of Gloucester at Calais. A composition anterior to Shakespeare's tragedy on the same reign." This is an original-spelling edition that excludes marginalia in hands other than the scribe's and is without a critical introduction. According to Wilhelmina Frijlinck, the "text is far from accurate."¹

3. The play was next edited by Wolfgang Keller in 1899 for Shakespeare Jahrbuch, vol. xxxv. Like his English predecessor, Keller retained the original spelling, but, unlike Halliwell, repunctuated the text, adding the missing

¹Wilhelmina Frijlinck, ed., The First Part of the Reign of King Richard the Second or Thomas of Woodstock (Oxford: Malone Society Reprints, 1929), p. xxx.

↑

marginalia and a critical introduction. He referred to the play as: "Richard II. Erster Teil. Ein Drama aus-Shakespeare's Zeit." This edition is also inaccurate, for Keller follows the 1870 edition closely and repeats most of Halliwell's mistakes while making a number of his own.

In 1900, the Journal of Germanic Philology, vol. iii, included an article by F.I. Carpenter called "Notes on the anonymous Richard II," listing his corrections to Keller's edition. He corrects some mistakes, but retains those common to both Halliwell and Keller, occasionally mis-emending Keller's correct reading.

4. In 1929, the play was issued as a Malone Society Reprint, edited by Wilhelmina P. Frijlinck. The play is entitled The First Part of the Reign of King Richard the Second; or, Thomas of Woodstock, a diplomatic compromise between the name used by E.K. Chambers in The Elizabethan Stage and the other used by Boas.² This edition is an accurate reconstruction of the original manuscript and supersedes the earlier defective editions. The introduction includes detailed technical matter, including descriptions of the eleven inks and nine hands involved in the manuscript. Frijlinck also collates her edition with the earlier two and includes textual readings by Halliwell, Keller and Carpenter.

5. The first and definitive modern-spelling edition

²Frijlinck, p. v.

was issued in 1946 by A.P. Rossiter under the title of Woodstock: A Moral History. This edition's aims were:

To provide a modernized text, in current spelling, with punctuation which follows the original as closely as is compatible with a minimum amount of queerness: to record all emendations and alteration of the lay-out of lines in Text Notes, which provide a connection with the actual MS.; and to supply editorial notes on explanations, sources and the like, apart from the detailed business of technical scholarship.³

Rossiter accomplished his aims admirably, though many of his observations are derivative. Much of Rossiter's work is a synthesis or reiteration of earlier criticism, particularly Keller's, whose efforts are now generally credited to Rossiter. Yet Rossiter deserves his reputation as the modern authority on Woodstock because of his thoroughness in assimilating existing information and his elaboration of mere hints previously adumbrated concerning the Morality and Marlovian influences. His edition is the most complete work on Woodstock.

6. William A. Armstrong issued another modern-spelling edition of Woodstock in 1965. The play was included along with four others in Elizabethan History Plays. Succinct commentary on Woodstock is included within a short general introduction. The text is based upon the 1929 Malone Society

³Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 171.

reprint with "a more modern system of punctuation than" Rossiter.⁴

7. Another modern-spelling edition was issued in 1965 in Six Early Plays Related to the Shakespeare Canon, edited by E.F. Everitt and R.L. Armstrong. The two pages of badly-written introductory notes attempt to force the play into the Shakespeare Canon. Everitt, however, does make a good suggestion: that of recommending Rossiter's edition.

8. The latest edition of Thomas of Woodstock was completed in 1977 by George Parfitt and Simon Shepherd. This obscure work is part of Nottingham Drama Texts and issued by the University of Nottingham Press. However, beyond a citation in the British National Bibliography of 1978 and the assurance of two eye-witnesses of its existence, I know nothing about this edition.

⁴Armstrong, Elizabethan History Plays, p. xv.

THE DATING OF WOODSTOCK

The question of dating Woodstock is, next to the Shakespearean connection, the favourite concern of commentators. Most, impressed by its relationship with Richard II, have offered the guess of 1591-1594. Others, more doubtful, cavil at Shakespeare's being in debt to an unknown. While they often admit the possibility of an early date, these skeptics generally prefer one subsequent to the composition of Richard II. The Jacobean characteristics of the manuscript and the lack of outside corroborating data to confirm any date makes the problem more difficult. The only possible external reference to Woodstock that has been suggested is contained in Ben Jonson's The Devil is an Ass:¹

... Spencer, I thinke the younger,
Had his last honour thence. But he was but Earle.
Fitzdottrel: I know not that sir. But Thomas of Woodstock
I'm sure was Duke, and he was made away
At Calice, As Duke Humphrey was at Bury:
And Richard the Third, you know what end he came to.
Meercraft: My M'faith you are cunning in the Chronicle,
sir.
Fitzdottrel: No, I confesse I ha't from the play-
bookes,
And I thinke they are more authentique.

(II.1.)

This quotation admits the chance that there was once a printed copy of Woodstock, necessarily earlier than Jonson's play of 1616. Beyond this slim possibility, the only other evidence for dating comes from the manuscript itself.

¹Bertram Lloyd, "Jonson and Thomas of Woodstock," Times Literary Supplement, 17 July 1924, p. 449.

The watermarks and hand-writing would support a claim for around 1590 to a generation later.² The rules between speeches are short, as in later prompt-books, unlike the longer rules in earlier Elizabethan ones. William J. Lawrence suggests that the use of "anticipatory property warnings" indicates that the prompt-book at least must be dated from "early Caroline days" and that the stage direction (IV.ii. 100) "Florish cornetts" fixes the date at 1619 when these instruments became popular in the theatre.³ Dover Wilson answers this observation by pointing out that Frijlinck discovered "that the hand which wrote this direction is different from that of the main body of the manuscript, is evidently concerned with a revival of the play, and is identical with the one found in another playbook about 1600," that of the stage-manager of the play Charlemagne.⁴ Another hand that added the marginal notation "Musicke" at 2117 and substituted the actor's name "Toby" for "ser" is to be found in the manuscript The Launching of the Mary, written

²Frijlinck, p. vii.

³William J. Lawrence, Pre-Restoration Stage Studies (Cambridge: Howard University Press, 1927), p. 402; William J. Lawrence, Shakespeare's Workshop (Oxford, 1928; rpt. New York: Haskell House, 1966), p. 73.

⁴John Dover Wilson, ed., Richard II, by William Shakespeare (1939; rpt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 1x.

1632. This hand is connected with that of the stage-manager of Charlemagne and they both may have used the same ink.⁵

A third hand can be more confidently identified as that of the censor, George Buc. The manuscript contains pencil markings and deletions of words similar to Buc's in three other plays in the Egerton MS. Buc became Master of the Revels in 1603, so that if his markings are coincident with the script, then the manuscript is of a Jacobean origin. The nature of the deletions, including that of "Superior lord of Scotland" and of the word "cuss" as a reference to King Richard, which would be offensive to James I, indicates, says Boas, "that the play dates from after the union of the English and Scottish crowns."⁶ These markings do seem to be coincident with the first production of the play because the substitution for "cuss": "my leege" is in a hand connected with the play early on, possibly "the prompter at the original production."⁷ Frijlinck counters her own suggestion, however, by saying that this hand may not have made the substitution and that Buc may have "worked on the play for a revival; or, alternatively, that Tilney [Buc's predecessor] used a lead pencil much in the same manner some years earlier than Buc."⁸

⁵Frijlinck, p. xv.

⁶Frederick Boas, Shakespeare and the Universities (Oxford, 1923; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1971), p. 165.

⁷Frijlinck, p. xvi.

⁸Frijlinck, p. xxi.

Boas also proposes that the names of actors "Toby", "George" and "G()ad" inserted in the margin of the manuscript stand for Edward Tobbye, George Stutfield and Henry Gradell, who flourished during the third and fourth decades of the seventeenth century.⁹ Chambers, Frijlinck and Gerald Eardes Bentley have all pointed out the haphazardness of these assignments; there are a number of Georges, Toby may be a Christian or a surname, and G()ad is written in such a manner that the missing letter or letters cannot be "r". The names are, in any case, not from the original production, but evidences of a revival or possibly two separate revivals of the play.

Boas furthers his argument by adding that of the fifteen plays in the Egerton MS., only one other, Edmund Ironside, is thought to be earlier than the seventeenth century. He also senses that some passages in Woodstock "have the ring of Jacobean rather than Elizabethan blank verse."¹⁰ Boas's intuition received additional, but limited support years later. J.C. Maxwell in 1976 reports that "some years ago, Mr. John Wells... wrote an Oxford B.Litt. dissertation" showing that Woodstock used couplets at the end of scenes (with the exception of II.iii) after the Jacobean fashion.

⁹Boas, Shakespeare, pp. 104, 165.

¹⁰Boas, Shakespeare, p. 163.

He admits that this fact and other slight points raised are "by no means conclusive."¹¹

In 1964 A.C. Partridge devoted a chapter to Woodstock in his book Orthography in Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama. He agreed with the by-then generally accepted view that the play was originally written ca. 1591-1594, but concluded that the manuscript was early Jacobean. He based this conclusion on three points: "(1) the high incidence of later contracted forms such as th'are for they are... (2) the sophisticated use of elision, particularly of the Jonsonian type... (3) the occurrence of the combined contraction shall (shall we)."¹² These practices are typical of Jacobean scripting, but uncommon or unknown in Elizabethan. A 1983 article by D.J. Lake, though less detailed than Partridge's and apparently innocent of the 1964 study, confirms the earlier findings. He cites the use of "I'm," "f'ith," and "a'th," all of which "are at least extremely rare before 1600."¹³ He also cites the oath "'sfoot," which is expressed fourteen times in the play, but has never been found earlier than 1600, and most commonly 1600-1610. Partridge does not believe that the play was transcribed during the second

¹¹J.C. Maxwell, "Doubts on the Date of Woodstock" Notes and Queries, 23 (1976), p. 154.

¹²A.C. Partridge, Orthography in Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), p. 35.

¹³D.J. Lake, "Three Seventeenth-Century Revisions: Thomas of Woodstock, The Jew of Malta and Faustus B" Notes and Queries, 30 (1983), p. 137.

decade of the seventeenth century because the full word 'them' was employed at the end of weak or feminine lines, whereas the contraction "'em" or "um" would surely have been used if the manuscript was transcribed at the time. He believes that the extant version of Woodstock was prepared "not earlier than about 1607."¹⁴

The evidence indicates that the manuscript of Woodstock is Jacobean, probably dating from the first decade of the seventeenth century. The findings still indicate, however, an Elizabethan origin for the play itself. The considerable amount of rhyme and "the somewhat monotonous end-stopt verse" are "in favour of an early date."¹⁵ Partridge believes that the manuscript is one updated from an Elizabethan source.

"The irregularity of the spelling and orthography of contraction compels the conclusion that the extant manuscript of Woodstock is a good example of stratification.... The naive and idiosyncratic elements appear to be the author's. As there is in dramatic works a progressive increase of contractions and elisions, as well as modernization of spelling, with each decade of the period 1590-1620, it is logical to infer that the simpler use of apostrophe antedates the more sophisticated, and that archaic spellings precede those which are more up-date."¹⁶

¹⁴Partridge, p. 40.

¹⁵Boas, Shakespeare, p. 161.

¹⁶Partridge, p. 40.

Woodstock, though skillfully crafted, is generally more naive than the work of the Jacobean age. The play, as Rossiter has amply demonstrated, is most particularly indebted to the Morality tradition, and Nimble is a clown of the simpler early Elizabethan type. The nature of the story is tied strongly to the 1590's and the plays of that era; it is influenced by The Troublesome Reign of King John and more intimately by 2 Henry VI; Woodstock, in its turn, may have influenced Edward II and I Henry IV; and there are numerous and convincing parallels in Richard II. One could object that any seeming dependence of Marlowe's play and of Shakespeare's two might be the result of a revised Woodstock having been influenced by them. However, the copyist alterations occur primarily in the middle of the play and concern mostly the Nimble and Tresilian scenes, leaving relatively untouched the material upon which claims of dependence are based.¹⁷ The changes, in any case, are probably minor since copyists usually "would not venture to modify much more than spelling marks of elision and punctuation;" Partridge furthermore thinks that the "copyist of Woodstock was not... enterprising, and indeed must have been rather slavish" in following his Elizabethan script.¹⁸ There are no topical references to help dating, but there are three possible allusions to Elizabeth I: the figure of Cynthia in the masque, which use

¹⁷Partridge, p. 41.

¹⁸Partridge, p. 42.

is a common compliment to the queen (possibly used here ironically), the phrase "England's fair Elysium" (I.iii.44), spelled originally Elizium, which "makes the allusion to Elizabeth the clearer,"¹⁹ and the reference to England as a "maiden conqueress" (IV.i.149), which is appropriate for Elizabeth, but not for James. The final support is that the majority of critics, including Boas after he reconsidered the question,²⁰ believe that Woodstock is of the early 1590's.

¹⁹Rossiter, p. 213.

²⁰Frederick Boas, "Aspects of Shakespeare's Reading," In Queen Elizabeth in Drama and Related Studies (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1950) pp. 63-4.

HISTORICAL SOURCES

Wolfgang Keller's 1899 edition was the first to list the sources of Woodstock. Keller found that Holinshed was the main source, with some details supplied by Stowe. He is fairly thorough in his discussion, devoting a third of his critical introduction to the matter. Rossiter accepted Keller's findings, though he supplemented them with the suggestion that Grafton had been used. He found, however, no evidence for Froissart as source. Rossiter's is the currently accepted critical view.

There is one other study of the play's sources, that of Robert Metcalf Smith in his Froissart and the English Chronicle Play, published in 1919. Smith deals with the translation of Froissart by John Bouchier, Lord Berners (completed 1523-5) which influenced many of the English chronicles that followed it. Neither Frijlinck nor Rossiter make any reference to Smith, nor seem to have read him. Millett is the only critic to display knowledge of Smith's work on Woodstock. Smith was the first to propose Grafton as a source; but his main purpose is to advance the case for Froissart. He presents a weak one. Many of the passages he cites are either duplicated or more detailed in the English chronicles, usually Holinshed. For example, he states that the Duchess of Ireland's complaint about her husband (II.iii.10-12) is to be found in Froissart, but he neglects to say that the information is also to be found in the other three chronicles; more damagingly, he misinterprets a passage from a description

of Richard claiming his throne - "And Kynges Richard was in his chapell in his palyes richly appareyled, with his crown on his head" - in order to prove that the re-coronation of Richard (II.ii), a fictional event, is in Froissart.¹

Froissart covers the events of Richard's reign and his troubles with his uncles in detail and would certainly have been adequate as a general source, but there is little evidence it was actually used. Smith offers one verbal parallel, but its thought is commonplace:

Woodstock: Enough, enough
 Good brother, I have found out the disease:
 When the head aches, the body is not healthful.

(I.i.141-3)

Ye haue herde often tymes sayde, that if the heed
 be sickke, all the members can nat be well; the
 malady must first be purged.

Berners. II.281

I find that there are only three instances given by Smith in which Froissart supplies details that are not in the other chronicles and for which Froissart therefore may have been used. One is the arrangement of the fictional Woodstock after death in order to ward off suspicion of murder:

First Murderer: Pull off the bed now - smooth down
 his hair and beard. Close his eyes ... and set his
 neck right: why so. All fine and cleanly: who
 can say that this man was murdered now?

¹Robert Metcalf Smith, Froissart and the English Chronicle Play (New York: 1915, rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1965), p. 121.

(V.1. 241-5)

Only Froissart gives details of the murderers' cover-up.

So they strangled hym and closed his eyen: and whan he was deed they dispoyled him, and bare hym to his beed, and layde hym bytwene the shetes all naked and his heed on a softe pyllowe, and couvered with clothes furred: and than they yssued out of the chambre into the hall ... (to announce he had died of palsy).

(II. 706)²

Rossiter's note about this fact refers to the murdered Gloster of 2 Henry VI. According to Shakespeare, the murderers attempt to pass off their crime as a natural death, but the body's condition is too suspicious: "But see, his face is black and full of blood/ His eyeballs further out than when he lived/ Staring full ghostly like a strangled man" (III.-iii. 168-70). (The historical murderers were more skillful so that Gloster could be "shewed to the lords and commons, as though he had died of a palsie, or of an imposteue.") Rossiter states that he has considered "all about Woodstock's murder in the light of the murder of Duke Humphrey."³ Rossiter's reliance on 2 Henry VI illustrates the lack of information given by the English chronicles on this event, but Shakespeare's play, even with the quarto's stage directions, is not sufficient to stand as the complete source. The

²Smith, p. 126.

³Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 233.

details concerning Woodstock's murder are much more elaborate. Much of the extra material, for instance the pairing of a ruthless murderer with a hesitant partner, can be traced to stage-convention. However, Froissart warrants some consideration since it is the most complete chronicle source.

The second instance deals with the parliament called by Richard's uncles. Keller and Rossiter state that no chronicle lists a parliament summoned without the king's knowledge. Richard himself, according to the English chronicles, appointed the parliament at which he claimed his full powers. 2 Henry VI is cited as the source for the use of the idea in Woodstock. In Shakespeare's play, Duke Humphrey is confronted with the news of a secret parliament, as is Richard in this.

Herald: I summon your grace to his majesty's parliament.

...

Gloster: And my consent ne'er asked herein before!
This is close dealing. Well, I will be there.

(II.iv. 70, 72-3)

However, Froissart provides an alternative source. It specifies "that the kynges uncles, and the newe counsaile of England, will kepe a secrete Parlyament at Westminster" (II. 285).⁴ A messenger is eventually sent, like York in the play, to inform Richard "that if it were his pleasure to come to London to his palyes of Westmynster, his uncles and mooste parte of the realme wolde be ryght joyious, elles they wyll

⁴Smith, p. 120.

be ryght sorie and yuell displeased" (II. 294).⁵ At this parliament, Richard claims his full powers. This sequence matches that of Woodstock.

The third instance concerns the appearances of the Duchess of Gloster on the battlefield demanding vengeance for her husband's murder. In the other chronicles the duchess is heard of no more after Woodstock's death and our previous knowledge of her is contained in a few incidental references. Froissart mentions her more fully (though the increase is slight) and only in Froissart does she plead for action to respond to Gloster's kidnapping:

The duchess was "sore troubled and abassed" and took council of Sir Johan Laquyham who told her to send to the dukes of Lancaster and York. "The duchesse indyd as the knyght counsayled her, and she sente incontynent messangers to these two dukes, who were farre asondre, who whanne they herde thereof were sore displeased, and sente words agayne to the dūchessa that she shuld be of good coforte."

(II.705)⁶

There are also some other hints of Froissart's being used by the Woodstock author. The characters Surrey and Cheyne have no historical counterparts in the Woodstock saga, but it has been suggested that both their names, at least, derive from Froissart. Smith points out that Froissart was "personally acquainted with R. Surrey, probably the Surrey"

⁵Smith, p. 120.

⁶Smith, p. 127.

of the play."⁷ Smith, in this case again, misinterprets Froissart, since the name actually mentioned is Stury, not Surrey. Rossiter, though rejecting Froissart as source, writes that the name Cheyney "might just conceivably come from the breakdown-products of Froissart's struggles with 'syr Johan Laquynquay' (i.e., Lakingheath or ? Laconheath, who appears as Laquynham and Quynghay)."⁸ These two suggestions are perhaps over-ingenious for both the names, particularly Surrey, can be found in the English chronicles and so it is unnecessary to postulate such theories.

The fictitious division of England in Woodstock might also originate from Froissart. Rossiter remarks that there is in this chronicle a "curious passage on a scheme of Gloster's to divide England into four." A division proposal is presented and though it "bears but little resemblance to the Woodstock scheme ... the author might have known of it by hearsay."⁹ Another possible influence is the use of the phrase "on pain of life," which occurs only twice in Shakespeare, both times in Richard II. Dover Wilson suggests that he got the expression from Froissart, "who frequently uses it,"¹⁰ but Rossiter counters with Woodstock (IV.iii. 171). Both claims have legitimacy. However, a resultant question is whether Woodstock

⁷Smith, p.116.

⁸Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 209.

⁹Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 228.

¹⁰Wilson, p. 142.

copied the uncommon phrase from elsewhere. If so, the logical source would be Froissart.

EDWARD II

Keller was the first to propose that Marlowe's Edward II had influenced Woodstock. He pointed out certain similarities in situation and character, advancing thirty verbal parallels to support his case. Until Rossiter, Keller's proposal was accepted as fact: any critic who mentioned Woodstock commented on its indebtedness to Shakespeare and to Marlowe. Some, like Frijlinck and Charlton, found in Woodstock an "unmistakeable dependence on ... Edward II."¹ Some, like Briggs and Bakeless, rejected a few of Keller's verbal parallels. All critics, however, either cautiously or incautiously, accepted Keller's basic tenet.

Rossiter was to investigate where the others apparently had not. He began by examining the parallels that earlier scholars had found so convincing. Of the thirty, "10 concern data which could have been taken, and which sometimes quite clearly was taken, from the Chronicles, 2 overlap what could equally come from Shakespeare, and 2 more are about as near to 2 Henry VI as to Marlowe; 6 are downright bad claims."² Thus the number of parallels is certainly less "striking than that which impressed his predecessors."

Keller's parallels are sometimes obviously weak:

1. a. Isabella: O miserable and distressed queen.

(Edward II I.iv. 170)

¹H.B. Charlton and R.D. Waller, eds., Edward II by Christopher Marlowe (London: Methuen, 1933), p. 27.

²Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 62.

b. Anne: I now am crowned a queen of misery.

(Woodstock II. iii. 78)

2. a. Y. Spencer: Ah, traitors! will they still display their pride?

(Edward II III.ii. 151)

b. Richard: Presumptuous traitors!

All: Traitors!

— (Woodstock V.iii. 121-2)

Keller links lines that are connected by words or phrases which are common in Elizabethan drama, and which are definitely not-exclusive to Marlowe (e.g. I cannot brook; revenged at full; stiff; and the murmuring commons).

Some of Keller's better claims were apparently the result of Marlowe and the anonymous author having been both inspired by Shakespeare's 2 Henry VI. e.g.

Baldock: As though your highness were a schoolboy still
And must be awed and governed like a child.

(Edward II III.ii. 30)

Bushy: Your uncles seek to overturn your state,
To awe ye like a child ...

(Woodstock II.i. 11)

Rossiter believes that the following quotation from 2 Henry VI was the father of the other two:

Queen: I see no reason why a king of years
Should be to be protected like a child.

(2 Henry VI II.iii.28-9)

Since Shakespeare uses a similar metaphor in 1 Henry VI and the only chronicle source for this type of phrase comes in the life of Henry VI, not of Edward II or Richard II, Rossiter seems to have a stronger case than Keller.

Of the claims that Rossiter thinks good, these show no evidence to indicate exactly which author (if there were any influence) was the borrower:

1. a. Y. Mortimer: We'll pull him from the strongest
hold he hath...

Lancaster: On that condition, Lancaster will
grant.

Warwick: ~~And so will~~ Pembroke and I.

Old Mortimer: And I.

(Edward II I.iv. 289f.)

- b. Woodstock: I will remove those hinderers of his health
- Tho't cost my head.

York and Lancaster: On these conditions, brother,
we agree.

Arundel: And I.

Surrey: And I.

(Woodstock I.i. 189f.)

2. a. Gaveston: No, threaten not, my lord, but pay them
home.

Were I a king -

(Edward II I.iv. 27)

- b. Greene: Change no more words, my lord, ye do
deject

Your kingly majesty to speak to such ...

Were I as you, my lord -

(Woodstock I.iii. 189f.)

3. a. I dare not, for the people love him well.

(Edward II II.ii. 233)

- b. I dare not, Greene, for ...

...he's so well beloved.

As all the realm will rise in arms with him

(Woodstock IV.i. 80f.)

Even these supposed parallels are weak. For instance, the sequence of speeches of example one have an analogue not only in the expected 2 Henry VI, but also in Nobody and Somebody and the later The Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntington.

Two other parallels that Rossiter believes good seem to him to have influenced Edward II, rather than having been derived from it.

4. a. Richard: Was ever subject so audacious?

(Woodstock IV.i. 70)

- b. Edward: Was ever king thus overruled as I?

(Edward II I.iv. 38)

5. a. Richard: But as for you,

We'll shortly make your stiff obedience bow.

(Woodstock I. iii. 203)

- b. Edward: The sword shall plane the furrows of thy brows,

And hew those knees that now are grown so stiff.

(Edward II I.i. 93-4)

Rossiter does not find the Woodstock quotation of example five to be watered Marlowe. Rather, he suggests the Edward II quotation is "a marlovian enviolencing of another's image of pride."³ Marlowe's possible source would be either Woodstock or a similar image in 2 Henry VI. Both of these Woodstock quotations may have originated from one passage in Holinshed. Holinshed tells of Richard complaining to the Earl of St. Paul about "how stiff the duke of Gloster was."⁴ The Earl then replies about the duke's "stout demeanor" that "it was not to be suffered, what a subject should behave himself in such sort towards his prince." Holinshed was certainly used by the Woodstock author, so this passage was probably seen by him. As source for Woodstock it takes precedence over Edward II. If borrowing between the dramatists did take place, Marlowe therefore would be the borrower.

The other similarities between the two plays concern those of story. Frijlink concisely sums up the proposed connections:

The author was a follower of Marlowe in his treatment and choice of plot, the conflict between the king and the nobles; on the one side a weak and frivolous king and his unworthy favourites; on the other the patriotic lords; this symmetrical

³Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 63.

⁴The word "stiff" is also used to describe Woodstock and his brother in Grafton, another chronicle source for Woodstock.

grouping also marks Woodstock as an early play. There is a great similarity in the defiance of the nobles, even in the vocabulary (wanton king, base flatterers, minions, upstarts); there is the same complaint about the fantastic and costly dress of the favourites; there is another parallel in the preparation for the murder, the warning to the murderers to be resolute and not to be impressed by regal or noble mien, in the victim asking pardon for his suspicions, and the way in which the murder was committed. The argument for a secret murder, the love of the people, is also the same.⁵

Rossiter replies to Frijlinck's argument:

Even if all these correspondences were magnetically true, they do not prove that Marlowe was not a follower of Woodstock in his choice of plot, etc. . . . is not the plot of Woodstock largely "The Good Protector's Tragedy" rather than "The Fall of Richard II"? To traverse this kind of assertive miscertainty is always tedious. But does not every schoolboy know the way in which the murder of Edward was committed, without reading Marlowe to find that Lightborn requires a table, a feather-bed, and a spit? Woodstock was stunned with a hammer and stifled with towels and a feather-bed: the last two items are in Holinshed, together with the "argument for a secret murder, the love of the people." Symmetrical groupings are inevitable in plays on faction, and (like the complaint of extravagant dress) can be found in 2 Henry VI, along with the whole atmosphere of rantipoll baronial antagonisms and defiances. As for vocabulary, Keller showed conclusively that many phrases came from Shakespeare.⁶

⁵Frijlinck, pp. xxiv-xxv.

⁶Rossiter, Woodstock, pp. 58-9.

In a later note Rossiter points out that while the murderers in Woodstock are warned against their victim's "regal or noble mien", there is no similar warning in Edward II.⁷ Also, though Woodstock and Edward both ask pardon of their murderers, Woodstock does so in a natural manner, while Edward is more extravagant. Woodstock may promise to reward Lapole's pretended love, but Edward actually does Lightborn's:

Forgive my thought for having such a thought.
One jewel have I left; receive thou this.

(Edward II V.v. 85-6)

This gesture of giving a jewel seems to Rossiter an improvement, a curious one for an imitator to have omitted. He senses the debt of influence to be opposite to the one envisioned by Frijlinck: "Marlowe has seen a dramatic opportunity in another man's work, and has treated it more tersely, forcefully, marlovianly."⁸

Rossiter also remarks that there is in Woodstock a piece of information relating to Edward II that is not in Marlowe's play. Bushy's chronicle mentions that Mortimer was hanged "on a gallows fifty foot in height" (II, i. 60). This detail comes from Holinshed, though it does not relate to Mortimer, but to another malefactor of Edward's time, Hugh Despenser.

⁷Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 231.

⁸Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 63.

The "inference is that the man who wrote Woodstock knew the factual story of Edward II without going to a play to learn it."⁹

The most damaging evidence against Marlowe's influence is the absence of any Marlovian touches in style. The language in Woodstock is far more natural than Marlowe's "mighty line". The characters are far more human than the Marlovian supermen. The sometimes befuddled and comic Woodstock is beyond Marlowe's imagination. Marlowe's humour might be under-rated, but it does not reach the quality or pervasiveness of that in Woodstock. Even Charlton admitted that the Woodstock author had "a much more human and moral mind" than Marlowe.¹⁰

Rossiter suggests that Marlowe may himself have been influenced by Woodstock. This would explain "why Marlowe so abruptly turned his hand to a study of petulant weakness."¹¹ The "slight resemblances in phrase" between the two plays, especially in the earlier part of Edward II, Act I, scene iv in particular, might result from the "effect of hearing or reading the play [being] transient in Marlowe's ear."¹² After Rossiter's comments, no one has attempted to reinstate the Marlovian claims over Woodstock. Ribner was the first to take up Rossiter's counter-suggestion. He believes it impossible to decide whether Edward II or Woodstock was earlier, but

⁹Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 59.

¹⁰Charlton, p.55.

¹¹Rossiter, Woodstock, p.64.

¹²Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 64.

suspects that it was Woodstock. Subsequent references have been bolder. Harold F. Brooks states that Rossiter argued that "Marlowe's play owed something to Woodstock";¹³ a 1967 edition of Edward II states that "it is now generally agreed that Marlowe's Edward the Second followed both the early Shakespeare history plays and the low-keyed Woodstock;¹⁴ Robert Potter in 1975 agrees that "Woodstock is now acknowledged to be a direct and crucial influence on Marlowe's Edward II and Shakespeare's Richard II".¹⁵ No evidence has been added to prove Rossiter's mere suggestion. His basic purpose was to expose the faulty scholarship of Keller and his echoers. This he did effectively. However, his evidence for Marlowe's dependence on Woodstock is not conclusive enough for the decisive affirmations made by his followers. It is ironic that Rossiter's own work on the connection between Marlowe and Woodstock has been copied and exaggerated with even less examination than was Keller's.

¹³Harold F. Brooks, "Marlowe and Early Shakespeare," in Christopher Marlowe, ed. Brian Morris (New York: Hill and Wang, 1969), p. 69. -

¹⁴Moswyn Merchant, ed., Edward II by Christopher Marlowe (London: Ernest Benn, 1967), p. xii.

¹⁵Robert Potter, The English Morality Play: Origins, History and Influence of a Dramatic Tradition (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975) p. 113.

2 HENRY VI

Keller was the first to establish Woodstock's dependence on 2 Henry VI. He cited the character of Woodstock, the general outlines of the plays, and twenty-two detailed parallels in support. His claims are irrefutable. Rossiter is the only critic to re-examine Keller's parallels and he confirmed them; though he thought six of Keller's parallels were weak, he added a number of his own.

The historical Woodstock is a man almost opposite in character to that of his fictional better. He plotted against rather than advised his king. He was a proud war-monger. He was a cold man and a rogue. The basic Elizabethan conception of Thomas of Woodstock is evident in Samuel Daniel's The First Fowre Bookes of the Civil Wars Between the Two Houses of Lancaster and Yorke:

Book 1, (C2) 31

With these did interpose his proud unrest
Thomas of woodstocke, one most violent,
Impatient of command, of peace, of rest,
Whose brow would shew, that which his
heart had ment: His open malice and
repugnant brest Procur'd much mischief
by his discontent: And these had all the
charge of king and state, Till by himself
he might it ordinate.

Of all the chronicles, Grafton is the most lenient, but it does not provide the model for Woodstock.

That model is supplied by Shakespeare's "shepherd of the flock,/ That virtuous prince, the good Duke Humphrey" (II. ii. 73-4). From the good duke, Woodstock gets his unhistorical

title of Lord Protector, and the principles he embodies: "Both figures have a symbolic function over and above their individualities. What they represent is England, seen very englishly as an insulated stand of manly virtue, where the good man is simple, direct, unsuspecting, public-spirited, and good-humoured if not a humorist".¹ Woodstock is more complex and interesting than Shakespeare's duke, but essentially he is an improved version of the original.

The chronicle history of the duke is also transformed to parallel the story of Shakespeare's Duke Humphrey. The historical Woodstock was murdered, not through an upstart's machinations, but at the king's direct instigation. His death was prompted by his war-mongering and antagonism towards the king, rather than any opposition to faction. The general popularity and respect enjoyed by Plain Thomas were not offered to the historical man. No rebellion was instigated by his murder. The loving relationship between Plain Thomas and his duchess, about which the chronicles are silent, may also have been inspired by Humphrey and his wife. The chronicles, thus translated, become Woodstock: a play, like, 2 Henry VI, concerned with the fall and murder of a good Lord Protector through the work of upstarts manipulating a weak king.

The influence of 2 Henry VI is particularly evident in certain episodes. The inclusion of a wedding in Woodstock serves no intrinsic purpose, but it does mirror the opening

¹Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 66.

of Shakespeare's play. The surrender of Woodstock's staff is also derived from the earlier play. The words between Woodstock, Humphrey and their respective kings are tellingly similar:

1. a. Henry: Give up thy staff: Henry will to himself Protector be.

(2 Henry VI, II.ii. 153)

- b. Richard: Give up your council-staff, we'll hear no more.

(Woodstock II.ii. 153)

2. a. Humphrey: My staff? Here, noble Henry is my staff.

(2 Henry VI II.iii. 32)

- b. Woodstock: My staff, King Richard? See, coz, here it is.

(Woodstock II.ii. 154)

In the same episode are the parallel references about "a king a years" (which is quoted in the section on Edward II) and the following exclamations of the two of gloster upon giving up their responsibilities:

- a. Humphrey: May honourable place attend thy throne.

(2 Henry VI II.iii.38)

- b. Woodstock: Long mayst thou live in peace and keep thine own

That truth and justice may attend thy throne!

(Woodstock II.ii. 104-5)

Other parallels with Shakespeare's play may be found scattered throughout Woodstock. As these have been ably documented by Keller and Rossiter, it would be repetitious to list them here. A more complete and explicit argument will be found in the works of those two men.

THE TROUBLESOME RAIGNE OF KING JOHN

The influence of The Troublesome Raigne of King John on Woodstock has not been directly discussed. Rossiter mentions some connections, but only in his general notes. The topic, however, seems to warrant at least a few paragraphs. The play does not affect the tone of Woodstock, which is remarkably free of anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish rhetoric. Only two lines evince the usual chauvinism: one anti-Catholic: "I will not lose a hair of my lordship/ And King Richard's favour for the Pope's revenues" (III.i.33-4) and the other boasting of English superiority over: "the proud Castilian, where John of Gaunt writes King and Sovereign" (I.i.51-2). Though the philosophy of Troublesome Raigne does not affect Woodstock, some of its plot devices do.

The opening scene of Woodstock is indebted more to The Troublesome Raigne than the chronicles. There was a historical plot against Richard's uncles devised by the favourites. The dukes were to be lured to a supper and killed, though by ambush not poison. Gloster learned of the plot and warned the others for, as Holinshed writes, the duke "had no desire to take part of that supper, where such sharpe sauce was provided." Rossiter suggests that the use of poison in Woodstock was inspired by Holinshed's metaphor of "sharpe sauce",¹ That is possible, but the use of a friar as would-

¹Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 209.

be assassin increases the claim for The Troublesome Raigne.² No friar was involved in the historical plots.³ In The Troublesome Raigne, however, a friar murders the king by poisoning the wine he drinks at supper. In Woodstock, too, a bottle of wine is the vehicle for the poison. The similarity with the circumstances in Woodstock seems to imply the influence of the earlier play.

The most explicit use of The Troublesome Raigne occurs in II.ii: the re-coronation of King Richard. Surprisingly, Rossiter does not comment on this unhistorical addition to Richard's claiming of his throne. Smith sets forward a passage from Froissart as source, but it is invalid.⁴ There is no chronicle which supports the action in Woodstock. If a source other than the dramatist's creativity is to be postulated, then The Troublesome Raigne is the most likely.

Rossiter suggests one verbal parallel between the plays. He compares Hubert's internal conflict as he tries to obey King John's order to blind Arthur with Lapoole's hesitation before Woodstock's murder:

Hubert: I faint, I feare, my conscience bids desist...
My King commands, that warrant sets me free,
But God forbids, and He commandeth kings

²Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 209.

³A Carmelite friar mentioned in the chronicles does reveal a plot, but it is to the king pertaining to the treason of the Duke of Lancaster. Lancaster deals with the friar in a brutal and perverse execution. This friar is referred to in V.iii. 75-9.

⁴See Historical Sources section.

That great Commander counterchecks my charge,
He stays my hand ...

(The Troublesome Raigne sc.VII. 121-6)

Lapool: Horror of conscience, with the king's command
Fights a fell combat in my fearful breast.
The king commands his uncle here must die,
And my sad conscience bids the contrary
And tells me that his innocent blood thus spilt
Heaven will revenge, murder's a heinous guilt.

(Woodstock V.i. 35-40)

Both characters conclude their observations by acknowledging that their lives depend upon the king, though Hubert's eventual actions differ from Lapool's.

Rossiter also proposes that Shakespeare may have obtained his idea for the garden imagery in Richard II from Woodstock.⁵ As an additional source, he quotes a paragraph from The Troublesome Raigne. Though garden imagery is very commonly used, the passage from The Troublesome Raigne appears to have influenced Woodstock:

Once ere this time I was invested King...
Once since that time ambitious weeds have sprung
To staine the beauty of our garden plot;
But heavens in our conduct rooting thence
The false intruders, breakers of world's peace,
Have to our joy, made sunshine chase the storme.

(The Troublesome Raigne sc.VIII. 88-94)

These princely Edward's sons, in tender care
Of wanton Richard and their father's realm,
Have toiled to purge fair England's pleasant field

⁵Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 237.

Of all those rancorous weeds that choked the grounds
And left her pleasant meads like barren hill.

(Woodstock V. vi. 1-5)

The final link between the two plays concerns an invasion by the French. The affection Richard has for France is supported by the chronicles, but the emphasis in Woodstock placed on the close intercourse he intends may be owing to the activities of the English nobles in The Troublesome Raigne. As in The Troublesome Raigne, this folly of Richard's results in an invasion from France. Unlike that which invades King John's England, this "French" force is actually an English one—that is based at Calais. The reference to this army as French, however, recalls the invasion force that nearly triumphs in The Troublesome Raigne. Yet, whereas the earlier play is historically justified in depicting such an event, Woodstock is not. The Woodstock author evidently wishes to underline Richard's betrayal of England by invoking a parallel between the consequences of the treasonous behaviour of the nobility of King John with that of Richard's own.

RICHARD II

The aspect of Woodstock that has attracted the most scholarly attention and the only one which is generally known is its relationship with Shakespeare's Richard II. The two plays patently have some connection, the nature of which is implied by Halliwell's title. However, the first evidence proposed for the dependence of the more famous play did not see print until 1885, when F.A. Marshall cited a number of verbal parallels.¹ Typical of the resistance which the notion has generated was the fact that Marshall was debated into a renunciation by W.A. Harrison, who argued triumphantly, but with unsound evidence.² More persuasive critics continued Marshall's work, including Keller, Rehyer, Brereton and Rossiter, who discovered additional verbal parallels and other corroborating proofs. The arguments of these critics, plus the support of John Dover Wilson and Matthew Black for the precedence of Woodstock, convinced most subsequent commentators. Despite the occasional caviller, dismissals, such as those of Alfred Hart in Shakespeare and the Homilies and Feuillerat in The Composition of Shakespeare's Plays have disappeared. Even the dissenting minority admit the possibility of Woodstock having influenced Shakespeare.

¹F.A. Marshall, The New Shakespeare Society's Transactions (London, 1880-86), pp. 144-145, as quoted in Millett, pp. 17-8.

²Millett, pp. 196-200.

Some early critics were diverted from a proper consideration of the topic by the notion that Woodstock was part one of a two-part Richard drama. As Wilson and Rossiter have pointed out, it is unnecessary for this to be seriously entertained. Shakespeare's play is not a continuation of Woodstock: a number of events overlap, the favourites are once more alive and influential, the historical Mowbray, not Lapoole, is credited as Woodstock's jailor, and the details of Woodstock's murder are different. Yet, though not Richard II, Woodstock still can be thought of as an "indispensable fore-piece" to Shakespeare's play.³

The extent to which one work has influenced another is difficult to ascertain. Rossiter is the most emphatic for the claim of Woodstock. He contends that Richard II has a "peculiar dependence on Woodstock."⁴ However, this statement (like his over-estimation of the number of verbal parallels) exaggerates the true nature of the influence. Other supporters are more realistically cautious. Rossiter makes the untrue assertion that "the connection between favourites and extravagance, extravagance and exaction, exactions and Richard's loss of power, is crystal-clear in Woodstock and nowhere else."⁵ The recent appearance of Woodstock on stage

³Boas, Shakespeare, p.166.

⁴A.P. Rossiter, Angel with Horns. Ed. Graham Storey. (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1961), p. 29.

⁵Rossiter, Angel, p. 30.

may have facilitated Shakespeare's boldness in producing an abrupt beginning for his play and may have encouraged his laxness in describing the actual crimes of Richard, but the Chronicles, The Mirror for Magistrates, and evidently the common perception of Richard's reign agreed with the sequence Rossiter describes. Even the familiar Morality pattern is sufficient as background to understand the situation: as Rossiter admits, Richard is guilty of the traditional "kingly vices".⁶ Though Woodstock is not fundamentally connected with Richard II, it is responsible for many of the choices Shakespeare made, especially in presenting the first two acts of his play.⁷

⁶Rossiter, Angels, p.35.

⁷Rossiter believes that the underdevelopment of the favourites in Richard II is attributable to their actions and character being understood in relationship to their full delineation in Woodstock. However, I agree with Paul Gaudet's view ("The 'Parasitical' Counselors in Shakespeare's Richard II: A Problem in Dramatic Interpretation," Shakespeare Quarterly 33 (1982), 142-54) that Shakespeare deliberately altered the traditional depiction of a king's favourites to emphasize Richard's guilt. The favourites in Richard II are guilty only by association: through the accusations of others and the accepted image of favourites. Their own words and behaviour show them as faithful servants to a willful king. Shakespeare does not negate traditional expectations, but does depict a more sympathetic and subservient group. It is interesting that the most important verbal parallel connecting Woodstock and Shakespeare's parasites (first noted by Keller) is Woodstock's feeling farewell to his brothers:

Woodstock: Adieu, good York and Gaunt, farewell
for ever.

I have a sad presage comes suddenly
That I shall never see these brothers more:
On earth, I fear, we never more shall meet.

Woodstock's murder motivates much of the action of the first two acts, beginning with the confrontation between Bolingbroke and Mowbray. It is natural that most of the connections between Woodstock and Richard II are congregated in this part of the play. The unhistorical episode between the Duchess of Gloster and John of Gaunt, for instance, gains power if coupled with memories of her counterpart in Woodstock. Though the scene does have an independent importance, the duchess's sole appearance would then evoke more than its brevity implies. Wilson recognizes that her "references to Plashy House have a tone of reminiscence which the audience are clearly intended to share."⁸ Her role of vengeful widow is a reprise of her actions at the conclusion of Woodstock. The use of the image of Edward's seven sons is one familiar in Woodstock and both duchesses of Gloster plead for retribution similarly:

And may their sins sit heavy on their souls
That they in death, this day, may perish all...

(Woodstock V.iii. 16-7)

(Woodstock III.ii. 102-5)

Bagot: Farewell -if heart's presages be not vain,
We three here part that ne'er shall meet again

Greene: Farewell at once, for once, for all, and ever.

(Richard II II.ii. 145-6, 150)

⁸Wilson, p. 130.

Be Mowbray's sins so heavy in his bosom
That they may break his framing crowners back,
And throw the rider headlong in the lists.

(Richard II I.ii. 80-2)

The physical characterization of the dukes is also probably derived from Woodstock. The historical ages of the men at the time of the events of Richard II, 58 for York and 59 for Gaunt, were a more considerable achievement than they are today, but would not be so remarkable as to distinguish them as they are distinguished in Shakespeare's play. The opening line of Richard II is "Old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster;" he is referred to as "old" (I.ii. 44, 54; II.i. 147) and "aged" (II.ii. 72), answering to the last that he is "Old Gaunt indeed, and Gaunt in being old." In I.iii. he pleads with Richard to shorten his son's exile because of his "oil-dried lamp and time-bewasted light." York is correspondingly decrepit. He is described as "old" (I.ii. 147, 150; II.ii. 67; II.iii. 52), calls himself "old" (V.ii. 115) and has an "aged neck" (II.ii. 73). The venerableness of the dukes is not historically warranted, but seems a transferral of the insistence on age found in Woodstock.⁹ Shakespeare's York, too, is the same vacillating creature that is in Woodstock, though the chronicles do support such a portrayal. Rossiter sees in York the possibility that his humorous aspect was "perhaps poorly and misguidedly imitated

⁹J. LaGay Bureton, Writings in Elizabethan Drama (Melbourne University Press, 1948), pp. 98-9.

from the comical side of Woodstock". A particular verbal parallel also links the two Yorks. In Woodstock York's characteristic oath, "God for his mercy" (I.i. 8; I.iii. 210) is repeated by the Shakespearean Duke (II.ii. 98; V.ii. 75). This expression is to be found nowhere else in Shakespeare.¹⁰

Shakespeare's characterization of Thomas of Woodstock is one consistent with Woodstock and no other source. The "plain well-meaning soul" Gaunt speaks of is only delineated in the anonymous play. Wilson states that the reference is "a palpable reminiscence of Woodstock".¹¹ This favourable view, so contrary to the normal conception of the duke, is the greatest single evidence for Shakespeare's use of Woodstock. The shortness of the reference, unsupported by illustrations in the text of either his "plainness" or "well-meaning," argues that Shakespeare's audience would be familiar with the depiction of the duke: a familiarity available only through the other play. Ure envisions two objections to this reasoning and though both have little validity, Ure's withholding of belief has been cited as support for others who balk at Shakespeare's indebtedness to Woodstock. Ure admits that "the plain well-meaning Gloucester is unhistorical, and the line epitomizes rather the hero of Woodstock," but proposes two

¹⁰Brereton, p. 104.

¹¹Wilson, p. 161.

theories which he holds as alternative sources.¹² He conceives that "perhaps .. a family or local tradition which did not get much admission to the history books" is the origin of "plain Thomas."¹³ Shakespeare may therefore have utilized that tradition for his concept of Gloster. The chronicles do not support Ure's conjecture. Ironically, he finds his evidence for such a tradition only in Woodstock. The play's consistent use of the term "plain Thomas" as a popular nickname, he reasons, implies that the author is using a tradition. "It is hard to believe that all this sprang simply from the dramatist's head without support in a tradition of some kind."¹⁴ However, it is unwarranted to derive such an encompassing conclusion from a simple authorial device. The use of nicknames is one of the easiest means of labelling a character and is a commonplace in literature. Ure's second objection is that there is actually a "well-meaning" Gloster to be found in the chronicles.¹⁵ Though not all the chronicle commentary on Woodstock is hostile, the stray comments Ure culls do not present adequate evidence for his hypothesis. The chronicle portrait of the duke is overwhelmingly negative, and though sympathy is admitted for the nature of his death,

¹²Peter Ure, ed. King Richard II, By William Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1961), p. 58.

¹³Ure, p. 58.

¹⁴Ure, p. 58.

¹⁵Ure, p. 59.

the summation of his personality coincides with that of Holinshed's: he was of "fierce nature, hastie, wilful and given more to war than to peace."

Like his brother in Woodstock, Shakespeare's John of Gaunt undergoes a transformation of character. All the English chronicles unite in condemning him as a "turbulent and self-seeking baron."¹⁶ The source for Shakespeare's unique version of this duke has been a question for scholars. Two of the most acceptable answers are Woodstock and Froissart. Dover Wilson is the foremost proponent of Froissart's claim. He finds that the French chronicler suggests a somewhat milder and altruistic character:

The duke of Lancastre was sore dyspleased in his mynde to se the kyng his nephewe mysse use hymselfe in dyvers thynges as he dyd. He consydered the tyme to come lyke a sage prince, and somtyme sayd to suche as he trusted best: Our nephue the kyng of Englande wyll shame all or he cease: he beleveth to lyghtly yvell counsaile who shall distroy hym; and symply, if he lyve longe, he wyll lese his realme, and that hath been goten with moche coste and travayle by our predecessours and by us; he suffreth to engendre in this realme byteeme the noble men hate and dyscorde, by whom he shulde be served and honoured, and this lande keppe and douted.

Whatever additional support Wilson finds for Shakespeare's use of Froissart as source material for Richard II, the passage quoted is the basis for his belief that the French

¹⁶Wilson, p. lvii.

chronicler was the origin for Shakespeare's concept of John of Gaunt.

The evidence for Woodstock as source is more substantial. Of Rossiter's estimated twenty-five "resemblances in matter, phrase or both" connecting Woodstock and Richard II, twelve occur in Gaunt's dying scene.¹⁷ In addition, a number of other resemblances are found in the confrontation of the Woodstock - derived Duchess of Glóster and Gaunt. Besides the reference to Woodstock as a "plain well-meaning soul," some of the more persuasive of these are:

1. a. Edward III Ghost: Behold me here: sometime fair
England's lord:
Seven warlike sons I left, yet being gone
No one succeeded: in my kingly throne.
Richard of Bordeaux, my accursed grandchild,
Cut off your titles to the kingly state
And now your lives and all would ruinate:
Murders his grandsire's sons: his father's brothers.

(Woodstock V.i. 83-9)

- b. O, had thy grandsire with a prophet's eye
Seen how his son's son should destroy his sons,
From forth thy reach he would have laid thy shame,
Deposing thee before thou wert possess'd.

(Richard II II.i. 104-7)

2. a. And thou no king, but landlord now become
To this great state that terror'd christendom.

(Woodstock V.iii.106-7)

- b. Landlord of England art thou now, not king .
Thy state of law is bondsman to the law.

¹⁷Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 50.

(Richard II II i. 113-4)

3. a. Rent out our kingdom like a pelting farm.

(Woodstock IV.i. 147)

b. [England] Is now leased out - I die pronouncing
it-
Like to a tenement or pelting farm.

(Richard II II.i. 59-60)

Gaunt's reference to Richard as landlord and his farming of the realm are important in considering Woodstock as source for Shakespeare. The chronicles do mention a rumour that Richard intended to farm the realm, but it is only incidental. Holinshed sums the matter into these few words:

The common brute ran, that the king had set to farme the realme of England, into sir William Scroope earle of Wiltshire, and then treasurer of England, to sir John Bushie, sir John Bagot, and sir Henry Greene knights.

Historically, the rumour is unimportant. The transaction did not occur, nor was this one of the charges brought against the king at his deposition. Only in Woodstock is the idea developed. The imagined farming of the kingdom is concretized with a lengthy business of division of the country. In the play, Richard actually becomes landlord and his betrayal of his duties is symbolized by that term. As Urs points out, the repeated condemnation of Richard as

landlord has "no parallel in Holinshed or elsewhere."¹⁸ Shakespeare's use of the term therefore implies indebtedness. "It is of course more likely that Shakespeare remembered the word because it is repeated so often in the other play than that the author of Woodstock, expanded the single reference in Richard II into so abundant a treatment in his own work."¹⁹ Ure's thinking can encompass the whole concept of Richard actually farming the realm. Logically, Shakespeare seems to be adopting a theme of the Woodstock author, rather than the reverse. The development of the theme is much greater in Woodstock; and it must be considered that not a historical fact, but a deviation from history, is in question. Shakespeare does manipulate history, but to make Gaunt accuse Richard of so significant a crime of which he is historically innocent, it would seem that he was relying on the audience's recognition of the Woodstock version of Richard's actions.

Act II, 1 of Richard II is in essence a summation of Shakespeare's gatherings from Woodstock. It is here that the crimes of Richard, articulated in the other drama, are reviewed: the foreign costumes, the blank charters and the renting of England. Shakespeare's Gaunt is a substitute Plain Thomas. Gaunt, like Woodstock, becomes the great patriot, whose care is England, who opposes his king only to reform him, whose values are conservative and who reveres

¹⁸Ure, p. xxxviii.

¹⁹Ure, p. xxxviii.

the memory of Edward III and the Black Prince. Even Wilson acknowledges that "Gaunt's dying words [stress] not" Froissart's concern about "natural division as much as the farming out of the realm, which he takes over from Woodstock about word for word."²⁰ Shakespeare, says Wilson, did not use Froissart's theme of "natural division" because he had given the Bastard in King John a speech on this subject. "The logic of this is not pellucid. Shakespeare takes from Froissart a speech turning on the danger of civil strife, but does not stress it so much as pecuniary iniquities (not from Froissart) because he had done so elsewhere. In fact, Gaunt is given nothing precise about future civil strife: he foretells Richard's fall, and for reasons exactly in agreement with those repeatedly given by Woodstock and (to a lesser degree) his brothers."²¹

The evidence is strong for Shakespeare's use of Woodstock for his depiction of Gaunt. There are numerous verbal parallels, and more than are between Froissart and Richard II. The business of Richard actually becoming landlord is peculiar to the two plays and the character and concerns of Gaunt match those of Thomas of Woodstock. Ure's reluctance to embrace Woodstock as source for Shakespeare's Gaunt or even for Richard II is perhaps the greatest obstacle to the full acceptance of the idea. However, Ure does not reject the

²⁰Wilson, p. lvii.

²¹Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 52.

possibility; he even partially accepts the claims of the play's influence. Other scholars have exaggerated Ure's objections to Woodstock in order to enhance their alternative theories. Ure's own position is actually one of scholarly caution, which does not or is not calculated to contradict the arguments for the influence of Woodstock on Richard II.

1 HENRY IV

Although Woodstock's relationship with Richard II is relatively fully acknowledged, few have commented on the play's connection with 1 Henry IV. F.I. Carpenter in 1900 noted two verbal parallels, but it was not until John James Elson's 1935 essay "The Non-Shakespearian Richard II and Shakespeare's Henry IV, Part I" that a case was made for another Shakespearean debt to Woodstock. It remains the only detailed discussion of the link.

Elson contends that when Shakespeare was writing 1 Henry IV, he was reminded by his own Lord Chief Justice (even though this character does not appear in the play) of another Lord Chief Justice: Tresilian. This is unsound speculation, but, because Elson doubted the evidence for the influence of Woodstock on Richard II, he proposed this alternative, though rather tenuous, reason for Shakespeare's recall of the anonymous play. The influence of Tresilian is not, however, on Shakespeare's Justice, but on Falstaff: "in his character, behavior, and dramatic effect he bears a ... striking resemblance to Sir John Falstaff."¹ Elson displays the links between the two characters under five headings.

1. He compares Tresilian's treatment of the whisperers and Falstaff's selection of soldiers. Both allow their

¹John James Elson, "The Non-Shakespearian Richard II and Shakespeare's Henry IV, Part I," Studies in Philology, 32(1935), p. 181.

wealthier victims to buy their freedom. Tresilian will forego whipping and hanging for those who will give him lands or goods (IV.1). Falstaff presses "good householders, yeoman's sons" and "contracted bachelors" and allows them to buy out their service, replacing them with "dead bodies" and "scarecrows" (IV.ii). These actions are certainly alike in their "deliberate hunting out of prosperous persons in order to wring their means from them by intimidation."² Yet if one is committing thievery, one steals from the prosperous, not the poor. Falstaff's action was not imitative of Tresilian's, but merely a similar response made by another, but lesser, rogue. Tresilian, a natural Machiavel, would extort money from the whisperers. Falstaff, a natural thief, would abuse his position as recruiting officer for money. Falstaff's action was more likely inspired by the common practice of this abuse by Elizabeth's unscrupulous officers than Tresilian's extortion.

2. Another similarity adduced by Elson is the strain of cowardice present in both men. Elson admits that cowardice is a common trait of comic characters, but that the other similarities between Tresilian and Falstaff wafrant its inclusion. Elson's reasoning seems more wishful than logical. His textual support for this idea is weak: only "one slight verbal parallel":³

²Elson, p. 183.

³Elson, p. 185.

Tresilian: Would all were well.
A thousand dangers round enclose our state.

(Woodstock IV.iii.135-6)

Falstaff: I would 'twere bed-time, Hal, and all well.

(1 Henry IV V.1. 125)

3. Elson also notes that both Tresilian and Falstaff have a reputation for trickery. This is also another common trait of certain comic characters. There is no evidence that Falstaff's nimble deviousness was derived from Tresilian's nastier machinations. The word "trick" is unsurprisingly connected with both and not unusual in Shakespeare. Elson, however, offers this parallel for consideration:

Nimble: My lord: have ye no trick of law to defend us? No demur or wait of error to remove us?

(Woodstock V.ii. 30-1)

Prince: ...What trick, what device, what starting-hole, canst thou now find out to hide thee from this open and apparent shame?

Poins: Come, let's hear, Jack; what trick hast thou now?

(1 Henry IV II.iv. 260-3)

4. Elson includes a selection of assorted parallels which seem "coincidental" rather than imitative:

⁴Geoffrey Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, Vol. 4. (London: Rutledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 178.

sung to a. School-master: ...I'll have these verses
their faces by one of my schoolboys, wherein
I'll tickle them all ifaith.

(Woodstock III.iii. 165-7)

Falstaff: ...An I have not ballads made on you all
and sung to filthy tunes, let a cup of sack be my
poison.

(1 Henry IV II. ii. 42-4)

And:

Falstaff: Nay, I'll tickle ye for a young prince,
i'faith.

(1 Henry IV II.iv. 424)

b. Cheyney: This is somewhat too coarse your grace
should be an ostler to this fellow!

(Woodstock III. ii. 179-80)

Prince: Out, ye rogue! shall I be your ostler?

(1 Henry IV II. ii. 40)

c. Lancaster: A heavy charge good Woodstock hast thou
had
To be protector to so wild a prince.

(Woodstock I. 1.27-8)

Hotspur: Never did I hear
Of any prince so wild a libertine.

(1 Henry IV V. ii. 71-2)

5. The earlier sections do illustrate some similarities
between the two plays; yet the relationship seems slim and
unremarkable. There is no evidence which proves definite
influence. Falstaff and Tresilian are alike because they

are both sons of the same comic family. The parallels are yoked more by Elson's will than by their resemblance. The fifth point, however, has more substance and gives Elson's theory credence. He compares two passages in which "the cluster of apparent echoes in 1 Henry IV (II.ii. 79-85) is striking."⁵

Enter the Travellers

First Traveller: Come, neighbour: the boy shall lead our horses down the hill; we'll walk afoot awhile, and ease our legs.

Thieves: Stand!

Travellers: Jesus bless us!

Falstaff: Strike down with them; cut the villains' throats: ah! whoreson caterpillars! bacon-fed knaves! they hate us youth: down with them; fleece them.

Travellers: O, we are undone, both we and ours forever!

Falstaff: Hang ye, gorbellied knaves, are ye undone? No, ye fat chuffs; I would your store were here! On, bacons, on! What, ye knaves! young men must live. You are grandjurors, are ye? we'll jure ye, 'faith.

Elson selects lines from Act III, iii in Woodstock as comparisons:

Crosby: ...the rich choughs begin to flock out o'the town already.

Bailey: ...here be rich whoresons i'the town.

Grazier: Jesu receive my soul, I'm departed!

⁵A.R. Humphreys, ed., The First Part of King Henry IV by William Shakespeare. (London: Methuen, 1960), p. xxxvii.

Nimble: Here, ye bacon-fed pudding-eaters

Farmers: As good at first as last: we can be but undone.

Nimble: No, ye caterpillars, we have worse matters against ye yet.

The terms of abuse are characteristic of Woodstock. Elson, also, quotes a passage by Tresilian from Act IV, iii, in which he refers to the swindled taxpayers as "choughs", "Fat whoreson," and "hogsface." The terms are repeated throughout the play. The terms are less familiar in Shakespeare's works. Bacon references are almost exclusively connected with Falstaff. The situations in which the terms of abuse are used is similar: groups of men are set upon in order that their money be extorted. The reaction the victims have is alike. The terms themselves are identical: caterpillar, bacon-fed, chough, whoreson.

Of those few who have commented on Woodstock's influence on 1 Henry IV, all have agreed that its anonymous author apparently influenced Shakespeare in the depiction of the robbery at Gads-hill. Only one commentator, Richard Helgerson, has made any additions to Elson's claims. He sees an allusion to the masque in Woodstock and the kidnapers' disguises by Falstaff's comments that the prince and his cohorts be "Diana's foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon, under whose countenance we steal" (I,ii. 25-29). Falstaff thus suggests indirectly, but in a way that could

hardly be mistaken by anyone who had recently seen Woodstock ... that Hal imitate the dissolute and criminal behaviour of his royal cousin."⁶

The influence of Woodstock on Shakespeare probably did not conclude with the completion of Richard II. The closeness of the construction of 1. Henry IV to that of Richard II would insure that some memory of the anonymous play would remain. While most of Elson's propositions are empty, the similarity between the Dunstable extortions and the Gadshill robbery is convincing. The repetition of the vivid imagery, plus the similarity in phrasing and sentiments of the respective villains and victims of both plays, indicate that once again Shakespeare was utilizing Woodstock.

⁶Richard Helgerson, "1. Henry IV and Woodstock," Notes and Queries, 23 (1976), p. 154.

KING JOHN AND MATILDA

John Davenport was indebted to the sixteenth-century history play for King John and Matilda (written c. 1628-1634; published 1655). His source was Chettle and Munday's The Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntington (c. 1598; published 1601) but the influence of Shakespeare is noticeable throughout the play, most especially from Richard II and 1 Henry IV.¹ Ribner was the first to discover the additional influence of Woodstock.² He recognized the similarity in Davenport's Fitzwater to Woodstock and in the use of masques in order to kidnap.

Joyce O. Davis, in her critical edition of King John and Matilda, expresses a slight doubt about Woodstock's direct influence on Fitzwater: "Woodstock may be viewed as a type, the plain-spoken adviser who tends toward the comic, and it may have been with this type rather than with the actual character in Woodstock that Davenport was familiar."³ Yet, she does believe that "the character most in Davenport's mind as he created his Fitzwater was ... Thomas Woodstock."⁴ Much of Davenport's play is derived from the Chettle and Munday source play not only in plot, but also in actual speeches. Fitzwater, however, is one of the most important

¹Joyce O. Davis, ed. King John and Matilda, By Robert Davenport (New York:Garland Publishing, 1980), p. liv.

²Ribner, p. 294.

³Davis, p. lii.

⁴Davis, p. lii.

changes that Davenport made. In the earlier play, Fitzwater is mainly distinguishable from the other nobles because he is their leader and Matilda's father; position and not character makes him separate. Davenport's Fitzwater is one of the play's great merits and the qualities of his character seem to derive from Woodstock.

Fitzwater is fond of referring to his "plainness" and calls himself "Plain Robin." His clothes fit his manner: "Plain-breasted as his unaffected habit" (I.ii. 65) and possibly, a more indirect reference to his dress: "what need plain dealing// Be apparelled in particulars?" (I.ii. 2-3). Both Fitzwater and Woodstock are elder statesmen and leaders, respected by the other nobles. Both are seen occasionally comically: Fitzwater is a sentimental, emotional and sometimes absent-minded old man; Woodstock is emotional and talks to horses. Both men respect the office of king and urge moderation to those who demand immediate confrontation. Fitzwater, like Woodstock, is aware of his king's wantonness, but would rather reform than depose him. Fitzwater, also, blames the king less than his flatterers:

they (the nobles) all lov'd your Grace,
And grieve, grieve very heartily, I tell you,
To see you by some state-mice so misled.

(I.iii. 71-3)

When the king persists in misrule, Fitzwater agrees to fight against John and even to invite the French, but not as rebel:

Is it to take truth's part to be a Rebel?
 To ease my groaning Country, is that Rebellion?
 To preserve the unstain'd honour of a Maid,
 (And that maid my daughter) to preserve your glory,
 That you stand not branded in our Chronicles,
 By the black name of Wedlock-breaker; is this
 (Good heaven) is this Rebellion?

(V. iii. 24-30)

When John reforms, it is the loyal and conciliatory Fitzwater who forgives the murder of his daughter and persuades the nobles to join with their repentant king in repelling the invading French. In contrast to the chronicles, the source play and traditional ballads, Fitzwater is not banished to France, but remains to resolve his country's rift. Davenport's decision to have Fitzwater escape Woodstock's fate is "significant."⁵

The masque is the other major similarity between the two plays. The masque is a common Elizabethan stage device and there is in fact a masque in Davenport's source play. In The Downfall it is, however, essentially an interlude and has no integral dramatic purpose. Like the Woodstock masque, Davenport's is essential; it is a trick devised in order to kidnap Matilda. This trick is used in other plays, but "is particularly reminiscent of the similar device in Woodstock."⁶ In each case a king participates in the masque; the innocent Fitzwater and Woodstock welcome the masquers and each breaks

⁵Davis, p. liii.

⁶Ribner, p. 294.

off a speech (Fitzwater on the Woodstock topic of fashion) with similar urgings:

- a. Woodstock: Come, come, a hall! and music there!
(Woodstock IV.ii. 152)
- b. Fitzwater: Come, come, a hall, a hall.
(King John and Matilda III.v. 11)

There are also two possible verbal links suggested by Paul Dean,⁷ both of these occurring also within the masque scenes of the plays.

- a. Woodstock: I care not if King Richard heard me
speak it...
I speak my heart: I am Plain Thomas still.
(Woodstock IV.ii. 140, 151)
- b. Fitzwater: I am plain Robin - passion of me!
Look if he do not threaten me; I will see thee,
Wert thou King John himself.
(King John and Matilda III. v. 29-31)

And

- a. Woodstock: Fore God I do not like this whispering.
(Woodstock IV. ii. 164)
- b. Fitzwater: I do not like this whispering.
(King John and Matilda III.v. 90)

⁷Paul Dean, "Davenport's King John and Matilda:" Some Borrowings," Notes and Queries (1981), p. 175.

CONCLUSION

Matters peripheral to those discussed in the preceding chapters, like those of the Duchess of Gloster's dream, the masque, and the horse, occasionally receive mention, but the bulk of critical commentary has been summarized. Two observations should be made concerning the emphasis of the criticism. One is the concentration of scholarly attention on the relationship between Woodstock and Richard II, coupled with the dating of Woodstock, which has implications for the claims of the play as a source for Shakespeare. The disproportionate interest in this question in Woodstock study demonstrates the traditional lack of concern for the play as a separate work. The second observation is that there has been a noticeable increase in the critical estimation of the play from its earliest commentators to the present. This newer positive attitude does not coincide with a greater production of Woodstock study, but, it does bespeak a new willingness to acknowledge the intrinsic merits of the play and to accept its claims as a Shakespearean and Marlovian source.

PART II

WOODSTOCK AS MORAL

Despite the influence of Shakespeare and The Troublesome Raigne, it is the Morality to which Woodstock is most profoundly indebted. Woodstock is much better constructed, wittier, and more subtle than the usual Morality play, but its emphasis on a character's political significance, rather than his individuality, its depiction of a king being contested for by two philosophically opposite groups, and its concentration on a serious political theme, bespeak its essential Morality nature. The scholarly world, however, did not recognize the Morality dimensions of Woodstock until E.M. Tillyard in 1944. Earlier critics had accepted Keller's arguments for dependence on Edward II and had interpreted certain Morality characteristics as being Marlowe-derived. Though the inescapably representative nature of the figures in Woodstock had been noted, their origins had not been understood. Even Tillyard, impressed by Keller's supposed verbal parallels, conceded that Woodstock, if only secondarily, was indebted to Marlowe. Two years after Tillyard's observation, Rossiter refuted the Marlovian claims and underlined the play's Morality heritage, subtitling his edition "A Moral History." This view is now agreed to be correct and Ribner claims Woodstock as "one of the clearest examples of the morality as it survived in the sixteenth-century history play."¹

¹Ribner, p. 133.

Woodstock is similar in structure to other political moralities like Magnificence and Respublica. Two groups, one evil and the other good, vie for power over the king and thus the country. Right is represented by Richard's uncles, the Dukes of York, Lancaster and Gloster and their allies. These are the wise, moderate counsellors who wish to teach the young king to rule justly and to have respect for his kingdom's people and traditions. Wrong is divided into two sections: one composed of Tresilian and the Vice-like Nimble, and the other composed of the favourites. Tresilian is a Machiavellian spokesman for misrule, while the favourites are hedonists who encourage Richard to indulge himself in sensuality.

Richard, like his Morality counterparts, chooses evil. He rejects his uncles and promotes his flatterers to high offices. He leads a degenerate court: more concerned with maintaining his many lackeys, holding enormous feasts and wearing outrageous clothing than with the country's good. Under the hold of Tresilian, he instigates unparalleled crimes: those of the blank charters and of the division of England into rented lots. The kingdom is overtaxed and persecuted, and the Commons are growing mutinous. Yet Richard commits his greatest mistake by murdering Woodstock, who had the love of the Commons and who was restraining their fury.

The Morality protagonist usually repents and casts off his evil influences. This does not occur in Woodstock.

Richard remains loyal to the favourites, even during the culminating battle with his uncles. However, Richard does have some sense of his wrong-doing. He feels the dishonour of parcelling his country into lots, though Greene quickly soothes him. After the death of Queen Anne, he sorrows over his order to kill Woodstock, and sends a messenger to Calais to counteract it. Finally, on the battlefield, over Greene's corpse, he realizes the consequences of his waywardness:

O my dear friends, the fearful wrath of heaven
Sits heavy on our heads, for Woodstock's death.
Blood cries for blood; and that almighty hand
Permits not murder unrevenged to stand.

(V. iv, 47-50)

Though Richard is not actually shown acknowledging his ill-doing or renouncing his favourites, this final realization at least partially fulfills the tradition of the Morality hero's ultimate repentance. The close of Woodstock, too, follows the Morality pattern. Evil is defeated. Greene is killed, Bagot flees and the other favourites are captured. The dukes' victory and Richard's submission to their power insure that good government will return to England.

To achieve this convenient moral, the author of Woodstock, like most Renaissance historians, altered facts to preserve his truth. To the play's earliest commentators the amount of historical transformation was surprising. The changes were more radical than the telescoping of events and simplification or amplification of character necessary to dramatic rendering.

Keller called the author's handling of his source material "careless"² and Millett described the play as a "perversion of history."³ Boas thought the author displayed "a naïf disregard of the shifting of parties and complex constitutional issues of the reign."⁴ No critic examined the nature and effects of such changes: it was assumed that Woodstock's reformation was due to Duke Humphrey's good example and that historical facts were chosen or altered after the pattern of Edward II. Though a moral purpose was obvious in the opposition of upstart and noble, and in Woodstock's transfiguration, no one, until Rossiter, looked in Woodstock for any controlling artistic purpose behind its mutation of history.

One important alteration of history is the choice of Greene, Bagot, Bushy and Scroope as the king's favourites. These men comprise the historical Richard's second such collection, who flourished only after Woodstock's death. The group who actually opposed the Duke of Gloster were Robert de Vere, ninth Earl of Oxford, Thomas Mowbray, Earl of Nottingham, Alexander Neville, Archbishop of York, and Michael de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk. Only de la Pole received his seat through Richard; the rest being noble-born, though Richard increased their titles (de Vere became Duke of

²Wolfgang Keller, ed., "Woodstock," Shakespeare Jahrbuch XXXV (1899), p. 6.

³Millett, p. 11.

⁴Boas, Shakespeare, p. 144.

Ireland and England's first marquis and Mowbray became Duke of Norfolk). The historical conflict between these nobles and the dukes would naturally muddle the author's celebration of "true nobility." Therefore the later favourites were transported back in time, not to telescope events, for their downfall came with Bolingbroke's triumph, but because of their humbler births: to make the term "upstart" more fitting and to simplify the political moral. The use of Lapoole as agent of Woodstock's murder stems from the same wish to absolve the nobility of any wrong-doing.⁵ Lapoole (Sir Edmund de la Pole) was captain of Calais at the time (1388) of his brother the Earl of Suffolk's flight to that city, but he was innocent of any part in Woodstock's death. The actual agent was Mowbray, who in 1397 was Governor of Calais. However, to use Mowbray would taint the author's moral and indict the other safely eliminated titled favourites. Shakespeare, whose political aims were different, restored the guilt to Mowbray.

Though the earlier group has been eliminated from Woodstock, characteristics from both "reigns" of the favourites are combined to create a composite anarchic rule of the upstarts. The conflict between the dukes and the court is retained, but facts have necessarily been altered: Woodstock's

⁵Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 226, suggests, however, that the Woodstock author's choice of Lapoole results from his shifting of events to the period when de la Poole actually was at Calais.

antagonism towards the first favourites (especially de Vere) is transferred to Greene and company, who are made responsible for a murder plot against the dukes planned by their predecessors. Richard's lavishing of titles and high office on his friends, to the displeasure of "not onlie the lords but also the commons," occurred during only the early part of his reign. The positions frivolously given to the Woodstock favourites were not historically theirs: Greene inherits De la Pole's Chancellorship, Scroope the Earl of Huntingdon's admiralty (stripped in the same manner from Arundel) and Bushy becomes Privy Seal. Richard's special fondness for Greene in Woodstock is derived from his historical relationship with de Vere. Richard's extravagances, however, the personal guard, the feasting and the clothes, all belong historically to the time of the later favourites. The great legal crimes also belong to the later era: the blank charters, the rumoured division of the country and the oppressive tyranny.

Tresilian's biography is similarly manipulated. He is the only one of the original favourites to survive dramatization. He actually held the post of Lord Chief Justice. However, since he was hanged in 1388 by Woodstock, he had no connection with Greene or Bushy or Scroope. The crimes of which he is made chief instigator, the blank charters, the farming and the extortions, were all committed about a decade after his death. The Woodstock author exploits Tresilian's actual

circumstance of being both favourite and Justice to create a symbol epitomizing the misuse of law.

Thus all the great crimes and excesses of Richard's historical reign (with the mere rumour of the country's farming made fact) are compressed into a single short period and made resultant from the conniving and influence of a few corrupt upstarts. By such concentration, the time is made more chaotic and tyrannous than it actually was, emphasizing the guilt of the upstarts and developing one main theme.

Though the Woodstock author considerably refashioned Tresilian and the favourites, he remained true to their historical natures. They were villains. Unfortunately, Richard's reign did not in actuality produce the hero necessary for the moral of the play and thus the baronial opposition to the court party had to be transformed. The barons, actually ruthless and ambitious men, are changed into exemplars of true nobility, with Woodstock undergoing the most radical transformation. In reality, the baronial group's antagonism towards the court stemmed not from a wish to rid the king of harmful parasites, but to regain the power the favourites had taken from them. Control over and not loyalty to the king was the barons' motivation.

The author's shaping of a moral is further illustrated in his portrayal of Woodstock's murder. The real assassination occurred in 1397, before the advent of the second group of favourites and after the successful elimination of the first.

by the barons. Mowbray, who survived the baronial purge by joining their cause, organized the murder, acting on a command from the king. The murder of Woodstock was Richard's idea which was part of a larger scheme of vengeance. At the so-called Wonderful Parliament (now referred to as the Merciless Parliament), the barony had tried Richard's beloved first favourites for treason and had condemned them to death. In 1397, in deliberate parody, Richard called the leaders of those barons to his own parliament to be tried for treason. The result was Arundel's execution and Warwick's exile. At Calais, Woodstock was tortured into confession and then murdered.

The author retains the central fact of the murder, but changes all its attendant history. Isolated from the parliamentary trials of Warwick and Arundel, the murder is thus exaggerated in importance, presented as it is as the culmination of a reign of tyranny. Richard's responsibility is diminished. Tresilian and the favourites are blamed as devisers and encouragers of the murder. The king is shown as repenting his part in the scheme, prevented from reversing his decision only by the favourites' intervention. Woodstock's dying sentiments "I wish his [Richard's] safety ... and all England's good" (V.i. 212) are opposite to the historical aims of the treacherous and warlike duke. Thus, Woodstock, who was killed partly for plotting the murder of Richard and his own brothers, is made a martyr for English justice.

The battle concluding the play is another historical liberty. There was no uprising after Woodstock's death. His brothers considered gathering a force, but on reflection reconciled themselves with the king. The battle of Radcot Bridge in 1388, in which the dukes, led by Woodstock, defeated a force gathered by favourite de Vere, has been transferred to 1397, thereby allowing the historical Woodstock paradoxically to avenge his namesake's murder. In 1388, the triumphant dukes threatened Richard with deposition if he did not surrender his friends and so provoked the Merciless Parliament. The author avoids the disloyalty to Richard. All the favourites are conveniently at the battle, so there is no need to coerce the king into betraying anyone. Thus the dukes retain their fictional loyalty, while still bringing the king under their command and the play to a neat conclusion.

In Woodstock, the chronicles suffer a sea-change. "The chronicles materials are lifted from their time-sequence to operate in a timeless conflict of moral forces, in a strictly patterned plot; which shows right-mindedness and political responsibility triumphant over wrong-headed misgovernment, and the defeat of the crafty by the patriotic. ...It is true ... that the author "pays scant respect (Dover Wilson, p. 1) to chronicle; but that is because he wrote about other things which he judged more respectable."⁶

II

⁶Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 25.

Rossiter succinctly describes the characters in Woodstock as "workmanlike." "Each fits its place in an ordered design, and none is too big or complicated for its part."⁷ There is little examination, as there is in Marlowe or Shakespeare, of a character's internal motivation or of personal relationships. Differentiation is predominantly achieved through an emphasis on a dominant trait which labels a character; for example, Lancaster is rash and Greene a flatterer; or by externals such as clothing; or by speech tags like the bailiff's "pestiferous" or York's "God for thy mercy." Though the characters are effective and coloured by the author's sardonic humour - attaining a sense of freshness with the stock Vice Nimble - they remain types. That the author could have done more is evidenced by his treatment of Woodstock and, to a lesser extent, of Richard. He does not do so because his aim is not character revelation, but the articulation of a political moral. The importance of his characters is determined by their function within the morality pattern. The clash between Tresilian and Woodstock is one of concepts, rather than wills.

The functional aspect of the characters is emphasized by their symmetrical pattern of arrangement. "On the one side there are the King, his four Favourites, Tresilian and Nimble, on the other, the Queen, two royal dukes and two earls, Woodstock and his attendant Cheyney. Each item in

⁷Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 38.

this 1:4:2 arrangement has a correspondence with its vis-a-vis in the symmetric seven-a-side design."⁸ The correspondence is exploited through contrast, the author's most important aesthetic principle. The linked characters are negatives of each other. The queen's charities are paired with her husband's excesses, Cheyney's loyalty with Nimble's betrayal, and Woodstock's careful governing with Tresilian's unjust rule. This pairing of philosophical opposites is a Morality commonplace. The seven deadly sins find their match in seven virtues. In the same manner as Greed and Charity, or Lust and Chastity, King Richard and Queen Anne, or Tresilian and Woodstock are linked opposites. The referential nature of each character to its counterpart underlines his thematic function. This relationship constantly emphasizes the ideological distance between the counterparts. The action of each character has implications beyond the action itself, implying at least his counterpart's philosophical opposition to it. Thus a character's position in the total moral pattern is stressed. His "meaning" is always pre-eminent.

This relationship, also, helps counteract one of the weaknesses in the dramatic structure of the play. Woodstock, like its Morality models, isolates the forces of good and evil from each other. Woodstock and Tresilian never meet: "the only direct opposition to the Lords comes from those who are too much the tools and fools of the Lord Chief

⁸Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 25.

Injustice."⁹ This isolation, though preserving the clarity of the moral, prevents the play from attaining the greater complexity and dramatic tension that is possible through interaction. Given this inherent limitation of the Morality, however, the particular relationship between the Woodstock characters is an effective corrective. The continual referencing of a character to its un-reflection (with the important visual devices of the contrasting costumes and age) creates a sense of direct, almost physical, confrontation. The author may thereby only partially attain the completeness of the maturer dramatic form, but these links maximize the effect of the more limited Morality.

The character design is also used as a short-cut in characterization of the dukes. The only demonstrable evidence of their goodness is the formation of a disastrous parliament and an off-stage quashing of rebellion. Even Woodstock's reputation is mainly established verbally. It is the villains who act in Woodstock, for their crimes must be presented forcefully. The dukes, necessarily passive until the final battle (for moral and dramatic reasons), are understood through the action of their enemies. Rossiter's comment on Woodstock alone can be extended: the duke's "qualities ... [are] largely interdependent on their absences in Tresilian and Greene and company."¹⁰ More accurately, it is the

⁹Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 33.

¹⁰Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 25.

presence of vices like extravagance, flattery and treachery in the one faction that creates belief in the corresponding virtues in the other.

Other than the dukes, the author does not individualize his nobility. Surrey, Arundel and Cheyney are distinguishable only by name and by Cheyney's service to Woodstock. They act as chorus to Woodstock's sentiments and balance the similarly characterless flatterers. York and Lancaster are treated more fully, though their distinctiveness is achieved through simple contrast: Richard describes York as "gentle: mild and generous" (II.i.126). He is the least aggressive of the brothers and the most willing to appease the king. Lancaster is the opposite. He inflames Woodstock's occasional temper into a humour. Their essence is demonstrated in their distinctive reactions to delivering up of their staves of office to the king.

York: Here, take my staff, good cousin ... York thus
leaves thee:
Thou leanst on staves that will at length deceive
thee.

Lancaster: There lie the burden of old Lancaster;
And may he perish that succeeds my place!

(II.ii. 132-5)

The conception of Woodstock is more complex than those of his brothers. Though "most of Woodstock's nature is suggested by his two titles - 'Plain Thomas,' The Lord Protector," he displays the greatest human variety of any character in the

play.¹¹ His relative subtlety and detail contrast with the more perfunctory design of the other characters and underscore his centrality. Rossiter, however, is correct about the core of Woodstock's personality for these two titles indicate the basis of his still-primary Morality function.

In speech, dress and manner, Woodstock is Plain Thomas. He exemplifies the honest and manly ideal that has been banished under Richard's rule. Woodstock's plainness exposes the deviousness and folly of the court. His words are sometimes blunt, but always truthful. He is a virtuous man, incapable of flattery or deceit. He is, also, unpretentious. He lives well, but not extravagantly, in the country simplicity of Plashey. His clothes, of course, are plain. The fact that he could be mistaken for a groom and his acceptance of that role demonstrate how deeply the "common touch" is part of his nature.

The title of Lord Protector complements that of Plain Thomas; it as aptly describes the exemplary public side of Woodstock, as the other the private. The protectorate is an office from which Richard could not expel Woodstock spiritually. It is his natural role, and one he continues even after his displacement. He has the two essential qualities of a Lord Protector: a concern for his country and the ability to deal with its problems. Woodstock's public-spiritedness is one of his central traits. He has "nightly waked for England's

¹¹Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 38.

good," (V.i. 125) and his patriotism extends to his life: "I would my death might end the misery/My fear presageth to my wretched country" (III.ii. 108-9). Yet care must be allied with competence. Woodstock's decisive and effective handling of the Kent and Essex rebellion and even the organization of the dukes' final parliament prove his ability. These examples of Woodstock's command, however, are merely perfunctory for the author does not wish to hazard his hero's reputation in actions which may possibly be judged as questionable or fallible. The real evidence of Woodstock's success as Lord Protector is given less directly but unequivocally: in the Lord Mayor Exton's entrance with Woodstock, symbolizing London's approval of him, in the nobles' acceptance of his leadership, in the favourites' fear and in the people's love.

Woodstock is an ideal: he is the perfect public man with the requisite private virtues; but he is not presented idealistically. Though nothing is done to taint his eminence, Woodstock has a few minor flaws. He responds to crisis with initial confusion. "Afore my God I know not what to do" (I.iii. 246), he admits upon hearing of the Kent and Essex uprisings.¹² However, this uncertainty is only momentary, and his subsequent reaction is authoritative and fitting. Another shortcoming is his temper. Despite his warnings to

¹²Also I.i. 112-130, I.iii. 240, II.ii. 3-8 for evidence of Woodstock's flustering.

his brothers not to disrupt Richard's wedding, he is the one who attacks the upstarts. When he is removed from office, he threatens Greene with "Hence flatterer, or by my soul I'll kill thee!" (II.ii. 145). These outbursts are excusable. They are the side-effects of his strong will under the provocation of the taunts of the favourites. Rossiter states that Woodstock's single "flash of unconquerable pride" when counselled by Lapoole to submit himself to Richard's mercy is his only quality in combin with the historical duke.¹³

Princes have hearts like pointed diamonds
That will in sunder burst before they bend.
And such lives here.

(V.i. 181-3)

Especially for a politician, Woodstock's greatest flaw is his naivety. His own virtue fosters a too easy trust in the virtue of others. He believes Lapoole's lies and apologizes to his murderer for suspecting him. He allows the disguised king and flatterers into his home, thereby arranging his own kidnapping. York laments his brother's gullibility:

A lack good man,
It was an easy task to work on him.
His plainness was too open to their view;
He feared no wrong, because his heart was true.

(V.iii. 5-8)

¹³Rossiter, *Woodstock*, p. 39.

Nevertheless, as unwise as such innocence is, it can only cause harm if others take advantage of it. The favourites compound their crimes by betraying an old man's trust.

Of Woodstock's positive characteristics, only his humour is underived from his two titles. The wedding shows him at his most cheerful. He comically interrupts the greetings of welcome to Queen Anne after Lancaster's speech with

Let me prevent the rest, for mercy's sake!
If all their welcomes be as long as thine
This health will not go round this week, by th' Mass!

(I.iii.14-6)

He playfully describes Richard as "a harebrain, a very way ifaith" (I.iii. 29) and hints that the women learning the new fashion of riding side-saddle expose more than a lack of aptitude. His conversation with the horse and later his ironic chat with its owner also illustrate his humorous nature.

Samuel Johnson writes "a hero would wish to be loved as well as revered;"¹⁴ Woodstock wishes to be loved. Apart from his status and abilities, he seems like a kindly old uncle. He remains heroic, but his fallibilities and his earthiness, humour and generosity make him more intimate and endearing. He is an attractive figure, and, because of his detail and the underdevelopment of the rest of the cast, the

¹⁴Samuel Johnson, "Alexander Pope," in Lives of the English Poets Vol. II, introd. L. Archer-Hind (1925; rpt. London: J.M. Dent, 1964), p. 224.

only character for whom the audience can feel genuine attachment. This calculated empathy has two purposes. One is to insure the necessary power of the murder and thus to make its political consequences inevitable. The other is to enhance his still-primary Morality function. The ideas he represents are made more attractive and gain an important emotional impetus from the appeal of their embodiment.

Woodstock's function (and that of his allies) is essentially the one fulfilled by the wise counselors of the Moralities. "They stand simply for Right, which is very little different from what it was in Magnificence: viz. Moderation and the Good Old Ways."¹⁵ Their world view is conservative. Woodstock's values are those of the dead age of Edward III. He continually compares the present disorder of kingship and state with his father's glorious and just reign. Richard has betrayed this heritage by his wantonness and misrule. He has also violated the old social order by promoting commoners to high office. By "rejecting true nobility" (II.ii. 163), Woodstock prophesies, Richard has doomed England to be "shivered, cracked and broke" (II.ii. 161). The restoration of the natural ruling class is the most important of Woodstock's objectives. Though his brothers share his beliefs, Woodstock is the most complete conservative. In contrast to them he is unfailingly loyal to the crown. His criticisms of Richard are sage.

¹⁵Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 24.

His loyalty is most explicitly demonstrated by his scorning Lancaster's suggestion of joining with the rebelling Commons.

The favourites are little differentiated. Greene is the only special one, as Richard's dear friend and the most accomplished flatterer. All four are touched by the clown, but, again, Greene, the most exuberant and vocal, exhibits this trait to the fullest. Greed and viciousness, however, transcend their nature. They are both trivial and dangerous. Their purpose is to "present Vanity (as both conceit, insolence and emptiness)"¹⁶ and they do so unequivocally and successfully.

There is little information available about the historical Tresilian. Holinshed has only a few paragraphs and Stowe comments that "all his life time he did all things closely." He was a cruel and unjust Lord Chief Justice. The Mirror for Magistrates utilizes Tresilian to represent the general abuse of law during Richard's reign. The Mirror Tresilian states that he is "by discent a gentleman, no stain was in my stocke,"¹⁷ but his origins are different in Woodstock. He is explicitly presented as an example of the social mobility of the talented lower class that is challenging the established order Woodstock wishes to preserve:

Tresilian: Canst thou remember, Nimble, how by degrees

¹⁶Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 42.

¹⁷The Mirror for Magistrates, ed. Lily B. Campbell (London: Cambridge University Press, 1938; rpt. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1960), p. 75.

I rose, since first thou knew'st me? I was first a schoolboy ...

Nimble: Ay, saving your honour's speech, your worshipful tail was whipped for stealing my dinner out of my satchel. You were ever so crafty in your childhood, that I knew your worship would prove a good lawyer.

Tresilian: Interrupt me not. Those days thou knewst, I say, From whence I did become a plodding clerk, From which I bounced, as thou dost now, in buckrum To be a pleading lawyer (and there I stayed ...)

Till by the king I was Chief Justice made.

Nimble, I read this discipline to thee
To stir thy mind up still to Industry.

(I.ii. 104-18)

Tresilian's first scene promises a subtle characterization to equal that of Woodstock's. He preens himself when told of Richard's gift of the office of Chief Justice ("Hum, Lord Chief Justice: methinks already/I am swelled more plump than erst I was" - I.ii. 57-8); he advises himself to be cautious and "Janus-like" to please both the dukes and the king till he is secure; he displays an affection for Nimble in his promise not to betray him to the hangman ("Those fearful words shall not be pronounced against thee, Nimble." - I.iii. 98-9); and, humorously, but with characteristic deceit, he bids Nimble inform Lady Tresilian "with how much peril/We have attained this place of eminence" (I.ii. 120-1). Such variety is not displayed in his subsequent scenes. He is allowed an early impressiveness to establish his persona, but his character is deliberately controlled thereafter. Tresilian's personality is curtailed so that he does not gain too much of the audience's interest or distort the nature of the play by making it an

individual battle between himself and Woodstock. The greatest sacrifices to his character occur at the play's finish. Though from a character viewpoint Tresilian's mildness when captured by Nimble is unsatisfactory, his silence in the dukes' tent insures that he does not disturb the dukes' quiet triumph and additionally symbolizes the complete emptiness of his position after his power has collapsed. However, it is Tresilian's Morality function which is most important and that consideration overrides any possibility of a developed individuality.

Tresilian is basically a melding of two types: the Vice and the Machiavel.¹⁸ The former strain is evident in his close association with the Vice-proper, Nimble, his delight in trickery, his sense of humour, his cowardice and his disguise during the battle. The Machiavellian aspect is more indicative of his Morality function. He is the predictable greedy and politic intriguer. He also incorporates the Machiavel's rejection of conventional values, not only of morality but of traditional order. His repudiation of established views and his commentary on the system of degrees are sufficiently explicit, but it is his rise from the lower class to become the most powerful man in England itself which is his greatest revolt against the traditional order.

The author is subtler in demonstrating Tresilian's dismissal of religion, a trait the favourites have in common

¹⁸Rossiter, *Woodstock*, p. 41.

with him. Tresilian does not expressly condemn religion, but his philosophy is utterly world-based: "for thus conclude these times:-/So men be rich enough, they're good enough" (IV.i. 12-3). The real evidence, however, depends upon an absence. The dukes and their supporters all indicate a belief in Christianity. Woodstock's frequent invocations and humble prayer before his death, York's trademark "God for thy mercy," the Shrieve of Northumberland's hope expressed to Tresilian that "God [will] forgive both you and us, my lord" (IV.iii. 44), and the grazier's simple "Jesu receive my soul" (III.iii. 104) are all examples of a felt and binding belief. Religion is shown as a societal bond that links both nobility and Commons, a bond that the court manifestly ignores. Discounting the oaths "s'foot" and "s'blood," the only references to religion by a court member is Tresilian's wishing a Carmelite damned to "a deeper hell than Limbo Patrum" (I.ii. 9), his recitation of the court formula "Lord have mercy on thee" (I.ii. 33) and Scroope's blurted "Fore God, my lord, had they not been your uncles/I'd broke my council-staff about their heads" (II.ii. 171-2). Their silence amidst the general affirmation of belief marks them as outsiders in a Christian country.

Morally and philosophically, Tresilian is Woodstock's antithesis. His self-regard, unscrupulousness and avarice oppose the other's altruism, honesty and incorruptibility. He abuses the government and the nation for his own benefit,

while Woodstock selflessly nurtures them. He is an upstart whose high status disturbs the old social order and who rejects the notion of such an order along with his country's traditions. Woodstock is a noble committed to the old ways and to restoring the primacy of the old order. They are the epitomes of evil radicalism and good conservatism which constitute Richard's moral and political choice. Contrast is an essential aspect of their relationship, but there are parallels which also illustrate their differences.

A minor similarity is nervousness. Woodstock's confusion when first confronted with crisis has been noted. Tresilian is confident until the king almost reveals to the duchess the plot to kill Woodstock, when his fearfulness is exposed. He can only mutter "Would all were well./A thousand dangers would enclose our state" (iv.iii. 135-6) and must be encouraged by Bagot. Woodstock's greatest fears naturally occur when he is prisoner at Calais. The situation, intensified by the visitation of the ghosts of his father and brother, terrifies him. Shaken, he awakes with the prayer to God to "lighten my fears" (v.i. 121). When Lapoole enters he gabbles at him. Yet he quickly recovers and commands Lapoole: "I am a prince. Thou dar'st not murder me" (V.i. 135). Woodstock controls his passions and demonstrates in his death-scene "a fine responsible dignity."¹⁹ Tresilian has none of Woodstock's strength. He hides from the battle, tries to escape in

¹⁹Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 38.

disguise and gives himself up to Nimble's capture without defence. The importance of this comparison is that while both men experience fear, Woodstock masters it and Tresilian succumbs.

Tresilian also shares Woodstock's love of humour, so that he is "to some extent [a] rival humorist."²⁰ The difference between them, however, is witnessed by the type of humour they express. Woodstock's is always good-natured. Even his teasing of Richard at the wedding shows affection and his satire of the courtier, as skillful and telling as it is, is too gentle for the fop to realize that his manners have become a joke. Tresilian's is darker, especially in his conversations with Nimble. They touch on nothing pleasant: execution, hanging, treason and sexual quibbles about widows' marks. Nor are the exchanges friendly: Nimble mocks his master and Tresilian abuses his servant with terms like "villain," "ass" and "gross incaput." Tresilian is rendered more petty by the distastefulness of his comedy. The most explicit example of this occurs when Tresilian swaggers over his promotion, becoming himself laughable. He is not made less evil by his clownishness, but more despicable. Contrariwise, Woodstock's pleasantries accentuate his humanity, but do not detract from his status as hero. He is merely brought closer to the audience: chatting to a horse does

²⁰Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 26.

not impair his dignity, but displays his likeable ability to unbend.

The final comparison is political. Both men were de facto rulers of England: Woodstock as Lord Protector and Richard's guardian, Tresilian as Lord Chief Justice and Richard's guide. Yet, because of Tresilian's craft, Rossiter claims him as "the only politician in the play."²¹ Woodstock's unsophisticated care evidently does not earn him the title. Rossiter cites Tresilian's restraint of the king from rashly executing what Greene urges against the dukes: to "hale them to th' block and cut off all their heads" (II.i. 40) as proof of his political skill. This incident, however, recalls the preceding scene in which Woodstock prevents his brothers from similar rashness to

Join with the vexed Commons
And hale his [the king's] minions from his wanton
side.
Their heads cut off, the people's satisfied.

(I.iii. 247-9)

Woodstock is as aware as Tresilian of the necessity for tactics and caution. Earlier, he advised his partners to "be smooth awhile" (I.i. 176). His response is as politic as Tresilian's. The parallel shows them equal in ability, and, in the absence of any physical clash, the parallel substitutes for confrontation by providing a direct, rather than general,

²¹Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 41.

example of their opposition. Woodstock's reason for prudence is to protect "the kingdom's safety/And the king's honour" (I.iii. 252-3). Instead of revolt, Woodstock proposes a parliament to examine the favourites' actions. Tresilian counters that the attack on the duke "must be done with greater policy" (II.i. 45). These contrasting legal and illegal solutions to analogous problems effectively encapsulate the men's antithetical philosophies.

One quality which separates the court and noble factions is love. The court members have only contempt and distrust for one another. The few personal comments made by favourites about one another are derogatory: an unplayful "ye wenching rascals" (IV.i. 62) and Bushy's terming of "smooth-faced flattering Greene" (IV.i. 47) "a flattering hound" (IV.i. 64). However, division is more evident between Tresilian and the favourites. He scorns them, staying aloof from their games; they describe him as "old turkeycock" (IV.i. 135). During the parliament scene the favourites sneer at Tresilian for lurking cowardly nearby until he hears if the king has safely gained his throne. When Greene informs Tresilian of his promotion to Lord Chief Justice, Greene is unsure how the favourites will now be treated. "Your laws must not be headles then, Tresilian,/To punish your benefactors, look to that" (I.ii. 43-4). Tresilian's reply is as falsely sweet as Greene's words to Richard, "How sir, to punish you, the minions to the king/ The jewels of his heart: his dearest

loves?" (I.ii. 45-6) Though Tresilian does not use the law against the favourites, he does swindle them. He steals more than half of the yield from the blank charters, which is rightfully theirs since, for a stipend, the king has allowed them control of crown-revenues. Nor do the favourites love Richard; they feign love and flatter him solely for power and money. Their activities have also destroyed the marriage of the Duchess of Ireland and presumably others. The single case of affection is that of Tresilian's for Nimble. Yet, even this slight love is unreciprocated. Nimble readily betrays his master to the hangman.

The nobles, in contrast, are warm-hearted and bound in solidarity. Their kindness is demonstrated by the support given to them by the queen and the Commons as well as by the support they give to each other. The dukes defy the king to praise Arundel's capture of enemy ships. Unlike Nimble, Cheyney has loyalty enough to hazard combat with Greene in order to avenge his master's death. Woodstock and his wife have a happy and loving marriage. Woodstock, Lancaster and York are close, which is especially evident in their human and natural-sounding conversation at Plashey and in Woodstock's touching farewell to his brothers. Ironically, war is the greatest example of their bond. The nobles' revolt is prompted as much by love for Woodstock as by the hope of correcting England's injustice; and, unlike Tresilian, not one noble abandons his partners or their cause.

Richard, like his Morality counterparts, is caught between the two oppositions. His ability to love separates him from the favourites and links him with the nobility, but his choice is symbolic of his conundrum. His affections are shared by Greene and Queen Anne. His attachment to them seems equal. They are the only people he terms "sweet" and to whom he exhibits especial fondness. Both, when dead, are the loss for him of "all [his] earthly joys." Greene has "King Richard's love and heart in keeping" (IV.i. 161), and receives favours accordingly: the English Chancellorship, the "greatest part" (IV, i. 246) of the land distribution and the liberty of calling his king "sweet bully" (IV.i. 216). Richard's feeling for Anne is less demonstrative: he will not quieten his favourites at the wedding, despite her tears, and he ignores her plea to restore his uncles to power. Death evokes his most passionate affirmation of his love for both. He orders the castle at Sheen where Anne dies to be destroyed, lamenting:

Then let sad sorrow kill King Richard too,
 For all my earthly joys with her must die
 And I am killed with cares eternally.
 For Anne a Beame is dead, for ever gone!
 She was too virtuous to remain with me,
 And heaven hath given her higher dignity.

(IV.iii. 141-6)

His response to Greene's death on the battlefield is similarly felt:

O princely youth! King Richard's dearest friend!
 What heavy star this day had dominance
 To cut off all thy flowering youthful hopes?
 Prosper, proud rebels! as you dealt by him
 Hard-hearted uncles, unrelenting churls,
 That here have murdered all my earthly joys!
 O my dear Greene, wert thou alive to see
 How I'll revenge thy timeless tragedy
 On all their heads that did but lift a hand
 To hurt this body, that I held so dear
 Even by this kiss and by my crown I swear

(V.iv. 25-35)

Despite his dual loves, Richard is not bi-sexual. His interest in Greene is extravagant, but it is not physical. Anne confirms Richard's marital fidelity in her reply to the insinuation that her sorrow stems from Richard's incontinence: "The sighs I vent are not mine own, dear aunt, /I do not sorrow in mine own behalf" (II.iii. 30-1) for she is "happy in King Richard's love" (II.iii. 34). Greene's own inclinations are indicated by his inquiry if "there are any pretty wenches" (IV.i. 250) in his portion of the rented country. The function of Richard's relationship to them is to be emblematic of his attraction towards both good and evil. Anne is as representative of the one as Greene of the other. Unlike her husband, she is a virtuous prince who tries to rectify his injustice with charity. Her care wins her the people's love. Her goodness is such that even Tresilian acknowledges it in regretting her death. Richard's love for her, continuing after the adoption of the favourites, illustrates the good still within him.

Richard is ruled by his favourites, but, despite his implication in and approval of their crimes, is not as unregenerate as them. Unlike them, he is capable of true love. His passion for Greene and Anne is genuine and his willingness to be persuaded to follow the favourites' wishes is, in part, to keep their supposed friendship. He tells Greene that "the love of thee and these" (IV.i. 138) alone have won from him the shame of renting his country. Nor does Richard share their lack of religion. He is as silent as they are for most of the play, but crisis provokes a reaction from him. He invokes both God and "heaven's love" (IV.iii. 172) after the death of his queen, seeing in his defeat a divinely-inspired punishment: "O my dear friends, the fearful wrath of heaven/Sits heavy on our heads for Woodstock's death" (V.iv. 47-8). Richard also wishes to succeed as a wise and strong ruler. When Bushy reads the chronicles about the Black Prince's victories, Richard reacts:

But these bright shining trophies shall awake me,
 And as we are his body's counterfeit,
 So will we be the image of his mind,
 And die but we'll attain his virtuous deeds.

(II.i. 92-5)

Despite his intentions, immaturity prevents Richard from ruling well. He enjoys playing king, but is unprepared to be one. He is concerned solely with the ornaments of kingship, and, encouraged by the favourites, exploits the throne for his own glory: his aim is to "ride through

London only to be gazed at" (III.i. 81). He carelessly relinquishes his duties to Tresilian and the favourites to be naively manipulated by them. He lacks knowledge and experience. He self-centeredly sees only how his actions will profit himself. His suggestion to Greene for collecting rent from his tenants by "rack[ing] them soundly" (IV.i. 170) shows callousness, not inbred, but made possible by youthful ignorance of the consequences. Similarly, Greene easily assuages his qualms about renting the country with a simple "what need you care what the world talks?" (IV.i. 150) Even his opposition to his uncles is an adolescent rebellion against parental authority and his regality "a phantasy of defiance of the Old Men."²² His parable used to gain the throne is a clever boyish trick; and Tresilian proves his understanding of the king by cunningly disguising Woodstock's kidnapping as a game: as a masque, not a murder.

Richard is also hampered by an inferiority complex. He rejects his uncles because their excellences and their closeness to his father and grandfather make him feel awed "like a child" (II.i. 12). He is comfortable with his favourites because they are low-born and flatter him. He is distant from his wife for fear her virtues will make him appear insignificant. The greatest challenge, however, is from the dead. He is conscious of following the legends of Edward III and the Black Prince. He realizes how weak he is

²²Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 44.

compared to them. He can only compete for a like glory by substituting extravagances for their accomplishments:

At Westminster shalt see my sumptuous hall,
 My royal tables richly furnished
 Where every day I feast ten thousand men:
 To furnish out which feast I daily spend
 Thirty fat oxen and three hundred sheep,
 With fish and fowl in numbers numberless.
 Not all our chronicles shall point a king
 To match our bounty, state, and royalty.
 Or let all our successors yet to come
 Strive to exceed me... and if they forbid it,
 Let records say, Only King Richard did it.

(III.1. 84-93)

The most consistent and dominant part of Richard's nature is its instability. Emotion, not reason, controls him: "his behaviour is that of a thwarted schoolboy preparing to break out or broken loose: sulky, defiant, fretful, malicious, irresponsible, drunk with self-esteem."²³ His posture towards his uncles, before settling into hatred, is indicative of an emotionally insecure youth. "On one side he wants to be liked, on the other to assert himself. The natural result is that he attitudinizes: now he is the naughty-boy affectionate nephew: now the adolescent impatient with elders who haven't noticed that he is grown-up: now the man who dominates by passionate force of character."²⁴

Once more, be still!
 Who is't that dares encounter with our will?

²³Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 43.

²⁴Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 44.

(I.iii. 160-1)

His reactions, also, are usually exaggerated, as in the violence of his lamentations for both Greene and Anne, his excessive shows of love for the favourites, especially Greene, and his display of voluptuous pleasure upon gaining the throne.

The Richard of Woodstock is not truly responsible for his crimes. Admittedly, he rejects his uncles and chooses evil; starves his country to feed his excesses; sanctions repressive laws; and, though not the instigator, approves of the actions of Tresilian and the favourites. Yet Richard is not evil; he is wanton. His particular hysterical and self-centred character excuses him, for he needs guidance. The favourites, whose manipulations of the king are calculated and knowledgeable, are the true culprits. Richard is most culpable when he instigates activities himself: he suggests participating in the masque to kidnap Woodstock; it is his decision to devise a "trap for York and Lancaster" (III.i. 117); he betrays his kingdom by choosing to ally himself with France in the event of rebellion, planning to reward her with English possessions. Richard's responsibility for these crimes is lessened because of his ignorance of their import. Importantly, the guilt he feels for these actions, though initially assuaged by the influence of the favourites, does culminate in his final realization during the battle.

Richard's repentance, though not as complete as that which concludes more conventional Moralities, fulfills the same purpose of demonstrating the king's acknowledgement of his irresponsibility and his new-found understanding of the duties of kingship.

Woodstock is emphatically a Morality play. History is distorted to comply with the structure of a political Morality framework; the historical political factions have been altered to accommodate the traditional animosities depicted between the wise and the wanton advisers to the king; the historical personalities of characters, especially those of the nobility, have been transformed into traditional Morality figures. Richard's dilemma is that of the usual Morality king: he is trapped between the two factions and chooses the wrong one. Woodstock, like other Moralities, demonstrates the injuries to the country caused by the king's choice, concluding with the defeat of the harmful faction and a return of good government. Woodstock is "the culmination of a tradition that goes back to Skelton's Magnificence."²⁵ The greatest difference between the play and most of its Morality predecessors is that Woodstock succeeds in presenting its political arguments in an artistically satisfying manner. Outside of Shakespeare's second tetralogy, Woodstock is the most perfect realization of the artistic potential of the Morality.

²⁵Potter, p. 113.

IMAGERY AND FUNCTION IN WOODSTOCK

No critic has systematically examined the sets of images in Woodstock. Only the clothing imagery has received any attention. This results in part from a wish to demonstrate similarities between Woodstock and Edward II, Richard II and the Moralities, and in part from the pre-eminence of the image. The relative subtlety of the imagery has been recognized by the occasional critic, but the representative commentary is a simple acknowledgement of the dress theme. Aside from Martha Fleischer's comments in her general study of iconography and Armstrong's succinct praise of "the illuminating images drawn from bird and animal life,"¹ the other sets of imagery in Woodstock have rarely been mentioned. This essay will be the first to rectify that neglect.

The basic theme of contrasting costume for court and opposition is a Morality commonplace in which extravagant fashion is the habitual indulgence of wanton kings. In Woodstock, as in the Moralities, outrageous fashion symbolizes the decadence of court. The king neglects his country's starvation, and yet sits three days in council to devise new clothes. Richard's concern is not for England, but only for his pleasure. His dress is designed to be envied: he parades through London "only to be gazed at" (III.i. 81). The symbolic epitome of this degeneracy is the effeminate fop whose mind is easily distracted from business to discuss his

¹Armstrong, p. xi.

clothes.² The unpatriotic and unhealthy nature of court is emphasized by the fact that the clothes are foreign. The courtiers wear continental luxuries: "French hose, Italian cloaks, and Spanish hats" (II.iii. 91). "Never was English king so habited" (III.ii. 38) laments Woodstock. The complaint is historical, but also one common to the Moralities Edward II, Edward I and Shakespeare's Richard II are all condemned for similar tastes.

Despite the king's enthusiasm for altering the fashion of his country and his devoting days of council to the matter, his involvement is secondary to that of the favourites, who encourage him to "buy new suits." After Richard has crowned himself, they tell him that this is "a special purpose to be thought upon/It shall be the first thing we'll do" (II.ii. 208-9). It is Greene who persuades the king to "ride somewhither an it be but to show ourselves" (III.i. 76-7). They, unlike Richard, are themselves designers. "Sir Henry Greene devised this fashion shoe/Bushy this peak: Bagot and Scroope set forth/This kind coherence, twixt the toe and knee, //To have them chained together lovingly" (III.i. 53-6). Greene is so clothes-conscious that he thinks in clothes. He tells Tresilian that he "must observe and fashion to the time/The habit of your laws" (I.ii. 40-1) and refers to Woodstock's

²As Rossiter remarks (Woodstock, p. 223), the fop's adoption of the new fashion and, in particular, the use of Richard's term "coherence" to describe how a chain links knee to toe show how closely he is a student of the king.

opinion as mere "homespun judgements" (I.iii. 191). The favourites' interest in and responsibility for the new fashion is greater than the king's. Richard's participation is willing, but he is really manipulated by the favourites. This relationship indicates who is culpable for the decay at court.

To the favourites, their clothes represent power and success. They do. But, like the seating arrangement at the wedding ("Bagot and Greene next to the fair Queen Anne/ Take your high places, by King Richard's side" [I.iii. 1-2]) and the favourites' preference in the exit following the wedding, the clothes are primarily visual reminders of political violation and sycophantic sway. Lancaster recognizes the significance. He will allow Richard's clothing, "But we have four kings more are equalled with him:/ There's Bagot, Bushy, wanton Greene and -Scroope/ In state and fashion without difference" (III.ii.40-2). The upstarts have disturbed the political order by becoming indistinguishable from their king.

In general, the court fashion condemns its wearers. They appear foolish by its extravagance and outrageousness, a condition the king amplifies by his enthusiasm over an item like his peaked boots. The fop's over-riding regard for his appearance satirizes the sartorial fussiness of court. Nible's parody of court dress mocks its serious users. The costumes of the masque, however, are more subtly revealing. First they suit the task the masquers have

planned. The boar-hunters are trying to capture a human boar. These disguises as "violations of proper natural dress" are appropriate to an assault upon Woodstock.³ The illegality of the intent is demonstrated by the sinister nature of the clothes and the green colour which indicates the outlaw hunter. Richard's subservience to his favourites is shown by his sharing of the same costume with them. His vanity is shown by the elaborateness of the clothes, which nearly jeopardizes his plan: Woodstock remarks "Ha, country sports say ye? 'Fore God tis courtly" (IV. i. 125). If Woodstock were less innocent he would have realized who his masquers were.

Woodstock's sartorial plainness contrasts with the court finery, just as his honesty contrasts with its decay. The clothes symbolize the man: "his mind suits with his habit/Homely and plain" (I.i. 106-7). The very material he wears, frieze, displays his character, as it is "noted for its sobriety, serviceability, and good taste."⁴ Unlike Richard, Woodstock buys British: his coat is of "English frieze." This alliance with his country is strengthened by another clothing reference. Both Woodstock and England are deprecatingly described as "homespun" by the king and his favourites (I.iii. 76, 191; III.i. 49). The word evokes the

³Martha Fleischer, The Iconography of the English History Play (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur Universität Salzburg, 1974), p. 225.

⁴Fleischer, p. 85.

court's contempt for and separateness from the nation, but identifies Woodstock and England as sharing the same interests and earthy virtues.

The chronicles do not tell of Woodstock's dress; he is tailored by the author. The intent is clearly to complete the visual metaphor of the contrasting ethical positions of nobility and court. However, in addition, Bevington believes that the author has a "radical interest in plain clothes" and is advocating actual dress reform.⁵ This belief is not supported by the text. Lancaster and York do not share their brother's taste in clothes, though presumably their fashion is more subdued than the court's. The fact that Woodstock alone of the nobility is plain-clothed indicates his own particular exemplary position rather than making a general political statement. Lancaster, also, states that it is not the king's clothes which cannot be endured, but the inherent meaning of the favourites sharing of them. The brothers also encourage Woodstock to doff his plainness in honour of the king's wedding day and "be brave." When Woodstock complies, he explains to Richard the reason for his being "hatched and gilded" (I.iii. 77): "I am no stoic, my dear sovereign cousin, / To make my plainness seem canonical" (I.iii. 78-9). This comment makes explicit that, unlike the

⁵David Bevington, Tudor Drama and Politics (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 253.

stoics whose philosophy required restrictions on dress,⁶ Woodstock is more flexible. He prefers simple clothing himself and wishes a similar restraint in others, but does not expect or command this restraint.

Another reason for rejecting Bevington's statement is that the only other character to follow Woodstock's fashion is Tresilian. It seems illogical for a supposed advocate of dress reform to make the villain a model equal to the hero; but this parallel does have its purposes. First, Tresilian is distinguished from the favourites. Secondly, he is visually linked to Woodstock. Tresilian is older than the favourites. This can be inferred from the attitude they display towards him. When asking Tresilian not to use the law against them Greene's excuse that "The king is young/Ay, and a little wanton-so perhaps are we" (I.ii. 41-2) is one of a young man to an older. Tresilian's age is more explicit in Greene's reference to him as "old-turkeycock" (IV.i. 135). Tresilian is also bearded. The clean-shaven favourites command "Prithee Tresilain, off with it./Sfoot, thou seest we have not a beard amongst us!" (III.ii. 27-8). Tresilian replies "I tell ye, gallants; I will not lose a hair of my lordship/And King Richard's favour for the Pope's revenues" (III.i. 32-3). Nor does he participate in or approve of the

⁶"For your body take just as much as your bare need requires, such as food, drink, clothing, servants, but cut down all that tends to luxury and outward show." Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 33.

court fashion; he chides Nimble for adopting the clothes. What Tresilian wears specifically is not given, but certainly it is plain.⁷ His age, beard and dress visually separate the two branches of misrule, while physically connecting him with Woodstock.

Act II, iii is designed to establish Queen Anne's industry and virtue. It is appropriate that the main symbol is clothing. The scene opens with Anne and the Duchesses of Gloster and Ireland entering with their maids, according to the stage directions, "with shirts and bands and other linen" as proof of their labour. The queen confirms her actual sewing, besides the arrangement of the scheme: "This mine own industry - and sixty more/I daily keep at work" (II.iii. 48-9). Richard's comment upon seeing his wife idle "Is't holiday, my love? Believe me, lords/Tis strange to take her from her sempstery" (III.i. 37-8) acknowledges her work. The simple "needful clothing" (II.iii. 59) she produces contrasts with the extravagant fashion of court, just as her charity contrasts with the court's greed. Anne's activity is part of traditional symbolism in which "needlework in a woman's hand is a transparent sign of her goodness and active virtue."⁸ She is additionally connected with the Morality figure of Charity, which is often represented as a female distributing clothing to the poor.

⁷Rositer, p. 24.

⁸Fleischer, p. 119.

Like clothing, the use of feasting to represent the misrule of government is a commonplace. "Man's act of eating is singled out in history plays as the main sign of Original Sin, appetitive Necessity, or the venial and private vices dramatizing misgovernment."⁹ However, as with Richard's fashions, the daily feasts of ten thousand men with thirty fat oxen and three hundred sheep is an historical fact. History conveniently accords with the existing symbolic tradition. The self-indulgence of Richard's reign is effectively marked immediately after his coronation by Greene's question "What cheer shall we have to dinner, King Richard?" (II.ii. 191-2). Richard's reply is to announce the enlargement of Westminster to feast ten thousand men daily. This announcement is quickly followed by Scroope's request to hold council in order to "devise some new" suits (II. ii. 207). Throughout the play, Richard's two great extravagances are linked, thereby augmenting their individual effect. In addition, by association with the theatrically visible clothes theme, the off-stage feasting becomes imaginatively amplified. The decadence of the revels is made immediate by contrast with the condition of England. Greene admits that the Commons have grumbled a long while "and there's no such means as meat to stop their mouths" (II.ii. 197-8). The queen laments "Fond Richard! thou buildst a hall to feast in/And starv'st thy wretched subjects to erect it" (II. iii. 102-3). Scroope

⁹Fleischer, p. 144.

expresses the favourites' feeling about the Commons by saying "let's first fetch their money and bid them to dinner afterwards" (II.ii. 200).

Just as Greene is particularly associated with the clothes imagery, Tresilian is especially associated with the food imagery. He savours his promotion to Lord Chief Justice with "I am swelled more plump than erst I was/Authority's a dish that feeds men fat,/An excellent delicate" (I.ii. 59-61). Nimble feeds Tresilian with his title: "since he became my master I pared away the Ah and served him with the Sir" (I.ii. 81-2). Nimble also recalls the school-boy Tresilian as stealing his dinner out of his satchel. It is ironic that, though the country is starving, Tresilian and his cohorts see the victims of their extortion as "bloated oafs, swollen with excess wealth."¹⁰ The word "fat" is used to characterize them. Nimble describes the citizens of Dumstable as "bacon-fed pudding-eaters" (III.iii. 110); Tresilian vividly refers to one signer of a blank charter as "a fat whoreson in his russet slops" (IV. i. 28). Tresilian and his men will not admit to the actual condition of the people they are robbing; the words, however, aptly fit their own greed. In addition, if Elson's suggestion is correct, Tresilian himself is portly.¹¹ If this is true, the irony is physically apparent and Tresilian would be linked with the

¹⁰Elson, p. 181.

¹¹Elson, p. 181.

Morality figure Gluttony: an appropriate symbol of his avariciousness.

Symbolic of their enforced starvation of the country, the king and his flatterers are shown destroying people's meals. The first action of the play is the discovery of poisoned wine at the dukes' dinner. They rush on-stage with table knives in their hands and napkins on their arms telling plainly of the disruption of their eating. The frightened York wonders if Woodstock will experience a similar attack: "Fears he no drug/Put in his broth?" (I.i. 105). Just as Nimble had his dinner stolen by Tresilian, Nimble himself plans a punishment of the schoolmaster by tormenting him on a holiday: "I'll have him march about the market-place with ten dozen of rods at's girdle the very day he goes a-feasting, and every one of his scholars shall have a jerk at him" (IV. iii. 94-7). The country has so degenerated that unsavory thoughts flavour the meals of every citizen: "Treason is whispered at each common table/As customary as their thanks to heaven" (I.i. 158-9).

Since the court feasts by destroying the country, it is natural that its acts are shown as cannibalistic. The scene of the great feasting, erected by Richard for his revels, is described as a never-sated beast: "If Westminster Hall devour as it has begun/Twere better it were ruined lime and stone" (III.ii. 24-5). A more direct allusion is Woodstock's lamentation of the Common's mutiny which is blamed on the

court's opprobrium: "O vulture England, wilt thou eat thine own?" (III.ii. 84). Just as Richard is excused guilt for his part in England's ruin, he is protected from the charge of cannibalism. It is the favorites alone who are accused of consuming the kingdom. "Never such vipers were endured so long/To grip, and eat the heart of all the kingdom" (V.iii. 30-1); they are ivy which grows around the great oaks (the dukes) in order to eat their hearts; they are cankers which devour the fruit of the husbandry that the nobility has nourished; and are "consuming fires" that "eat all their fury falls upon" (I.iii. 160-1). The only specific "act of cannibalism" in the play is Woodstock's murder. He is to be slaughtered as if for Richard's table: "knock him down like an ox, and after cut's throat" (V.i. 10-11). The murderers describe themselves in terms that recall and make actual Woodstock's "vulture England": "like vultures we come flying and seize him presently" (V.i. 31). The image is explicit during the killing when the second murderer in his excitement calls the other a cannibal (V.i. 239). The reservation of this ultimate expression of the image for Woodstock's death emphasizes the importance and heinousness of the crime.

The food imagery connected with the nobility is pleasanter. Unlike the self-considering court, the dukes share their food. Woodstock arranges that the courtier's horse will be well fed and invites its owner to eat: "The rest I'll tell

ye as ye sit at meat./Furnish a table, Cheyney: call for wine" (III.ii. 236-7). He is as generous with the supposed masquers: he invites them into his home and orders a banquet prepared. Despite his drab appearance, Woodstock does not demand abstinence. He is liberal with both food and drink. He is a restorer who feeds the hungry, rather than starves them. A contrast is also made between the opening dinner party and the king's expensive feasts. The dukes' gathering is not an extravaganza, but a meeting of friends. Such expressions of true friendship and kindness illustrate a humanity that is entirely lacking in Richard's gargantuan feasts.

The animal imagery that has been mentioned (vulture, viper) is characteristic of Woodstock. The comparisons, like the others applied to the favourites by the nobility, such as serpents, kites (as contrasted with the ducal eagles), caterpillars and wolves are traditional for describing villains and parasites.¹² However, it is the favourites who are most accomplished and inventive in using animals as part of the rhetoric of invective. They are restrained in applying the language to themselves: Greene refers to Tresilian as "turkeycock" and the murderers call each other "dog" and "hell-hound." The remaining particular abuse is reserved

¹²Richard is exempt from such terms. He is compared to the traditional kingly symbols: lion, eagle and sun. There is a slight emphasis on the sun imagery (I.i. 161; I. iii. 40, 172; II.i. 15; II.ii. 149) which the play has in common with the two other extant Elizabethan Richard II plays, Jack Straw and Richard II.

for the Commons. The favourite term is chough, a bird associated with the supposedly countrified Cornish people and therefore meaning a foolish country bumpkin. A more exotic animal is employed by Nimble to envision his triumph over the Commons. He perverts the image of England's patron saint by claiming he will "domineer over the vulgar, like so many St. Georges over the poor dragons" (III.i. 168-9), thus making George's accomplishment symbolic of the destruction of the country, rather than its protection. The court's contempt for the Commons is exemplified by the insults formed from parts of animals, including "boar's grease," "ox-jaw" "codsheds" and "hogsface." Other expressions include "hoarding cormorants," "all rich chubs," "caterpillar," employed - ironically - by the parasite Nimble, and "sheepbiter," a name that "can mean 'pestilent fellow' (dog that worries sheep) as well as 'bumpkin' (mutton-eater)."¹³

Most of these images occur during the Dunstable scene, in which the few citizens who appear in Woodstock are congregated. These images are linked with them, but they are also connected with a more benevolent animal imagery. The people depicted are rural, not Londoners, and, apart from the schoolmaster and serving-man, their occupations derive from the land or animals. There is a butcher, a farmer, and a grazier who dwells at Leighton Buzzard with the curious name of Cowtail. A connection between these country

¹³Rossiter, p. 225.

people and animals is therefore natural. The farmer describes the confusion which occurs in escaping the king's men as a "murrain" (III.iii. 44), a type of disease which afflicts cattle. The grazier wishes a homely revenge on Nimble and his associates: that "you and they were sodden for my swine" (III.iii. 125-6). The man who is arrested for whistling treason is caught while searching for his two missing calves. (The whistler is also compared by Nimble to a bird, like the raven or crow, that "speaks"). In addition, mention is made of lion - and bear-baiting, pastimes generally, though not exclusively, associated with the working class. Both the citizens' own concerns and the court's invective emphasize a connection with the land; and Dunstable, through the representative occupations depicted, is established as a model rural community. Thus an antagonism between court and country (or government and people) is evoked. The court has only contempt for the country people, denigrating them as fools and reducing them to by-products of animals. The rural response to this is not reciprocal; they are not correspondingly prejudiced against the court, but merely condemn the favourites. The occupations of the citizens and the reminders of their work underline their role as producers of food. The court is only an ungrateful and parasitic consumer. Woodstock's preference for the country simplicity of Plashey links him with the citizenry and illustrates one of their bonds of alliance.

The relationship of Woodstock and the Commons is part of the significance of the Duchess of Gloster's dream:

Methought as you were ranging through the woods
 An angry lion with a herd of wolves
 Had in an instant round encompassed you;
 When to your rescue, gainst the course of kind,
 A flock of silly sheep made head against them
 Bleating for help.

(IV.ii. 20-5)

Like Shakespeare's Duke Humphrey, Woodstock appears in the traditional role as a shepherd of the people. His concern for the people is equalled by their love for him. The Protector is protected by the naturally docile sheep: a prophecy of the uprising of the Commons after Woodstock's murder. Woodstock pictures the outrages against the Commons as a form of cannibalism: forest thieves break in and suck the blood of the sheep. The identification of the Commons with one of the main dishes of Richard's table makes explicit one of the themes of the Dunstable scene. The citizens are indistinguishable from the food they produce and thus, metaphorically, are eaten each time the court feasts.¹⁴

Woodstock's special connection with the Commons is symbolically reinforced by his being likened to and persecuted in the form of an animal. The lion and wolves of his wife's

¹⁴Another reference to the Commons as sheep is Nimble's complaint about the desertion of pressed soldiers for the king: "Marry, the lords no sooner turn their backs, but they run away like sheep, sir." (V.ii. 11-3).

dream hunt him as a boar, an image derived from the emblem of the Duke of Gloster, the Calydonian boar.

One of the interesting features of Woodstock is the use of an actual horse on stage. Horses are indicated as having been used in a number of Elizabethan plays besides Woodstock, such as Soliman and Perseda, Liberality and Prodigality and Summer's Last Will and Testament.¹⁵ The presence of a horse in Woodstock is therefore not unique. However, perhaps its physical appearance is distinctive. Woodstock remarks that the horse is "pricked more with the spur, than the provender" (III.ii. 166-7). It is logical to assume that the animal used would fit the description of over-worked and under-fed. Fleischer suggests that the horse "may stand for common sense as opposed to his rider's silliness."¹⁶ This suggestion does not consider the horse's condition. Earlier, Woodstock's own horse suffers under the weight of his master's wedding costume worth "ten acres of good land" (I.iii. 98). This on-stage horse carries the weight of England. Since no poor or starving citizen is actually portrayed, this horse, appropriately in light of the animal/human imagery, becomes their representative. The abuse of the country is paralleled in the courtier's misuse of the horse; the country's situation in the horse's hunger and weariness; Woodstock's concern for

¹⁵Louis Wright, "Animal Actors on the English Stage before 1642," EMLA, 42 (1927), p. 656.

¹⁶Fleischer, p. 183.

England and his practical abilities in his care and feeding of the horse.

Though there are a number of shared groups of images in Woodstock and Richard II, including those of clothing, of sickness and cure, of the weather and of the garden, there are only two extended sets of images common to both plays. One of these is the celebration of the triumphs and ideal of Edward III and the Black Prince. The image is more pervasive and its uses more varied in Woodstock, yet the basic theme is common: the contrast between Richard's degenerate kingdom and person with the rule and character of the hero-princes. Their exploits are reiterated throughout the play, especially the conquests over the French. In Act I, Lancaster lists "the warlike battles won/At Crecy Field, Poitiers, Artoise and Maine" (I.i. 34-5); in Act II Bushy reads in the chronicle of the Black Prince's victory at Poitiers and his capture of King John of France; in Act IV, Richard recalls his father's sacrifice in winning France; in Act V the ghosts of Edward III and the Black Prince relate their successes.¹⁷ Though the defeat of France is the most explicit example of their glory, their leadership brought to England a time of national

¹⁷One of Edward's supposed feats, the capture of four kings, is unhistorical. Rossiter (Woodstock, p. 232) suggests that "Possibly the Lord Mayor's feasting four kings in 1357 gave the idea. Two only were captive, France and Scotland. The third was barely a king (Cyprus), if only for his conduct at games of chance. The fourth was Edward." However, since the four favourites refer to themselves as kings, Edward's triumph may be a prophetic parallel of their downfall.

strength and international prestige: an Eden lost by Richard's wantonness.

The greatness of these two men is one of the few beliefs shared by Richard and the dukes. Both sides ally themselves with the dead heroes, evoking their memories and emphasizing the personal relations between them. Lancaster defines himself and his brothers as "great Edward's princely sons" (I.iii. 210). Woodstock demands loyalty from Lapoole by the reminder that he is one of the "offspring of King Edward's house" (V.i. 150). Lancaster vows vengeance on the favourites "by kingly Edward's soul, my royal father" (I.i. 68). Richard swears to humble his uncles "by my grandsire Edward's princely bones/[and] My princely father's tomb" (I.iii. 199-200). He attempts to shame York into an admission that the dukes have been defaming him by saying that "We had a father that once called ye brother:/A grandsire too-that titled you his son" (II.i. 133-4) who would never condone such behaviour. By claiming the spiritual support of Edward and the Black Prince, each side attempts to enhance its authority.

However, only the dukes can legitimately claim that support. They are the true inheritors of the heroes' beliefs and abilities. They have grown up in the old order and have fought alongside their father and brother. Now, as capable statesmen, they are intent on preserving the old values and social order that they saw make England great. The approval of Edward and the Black Prince is explicit in their appearance

as ghosts to warn Woodstock of his fate. Ironically, Richard had earlier told York that these ghosts would rise to haunt his uncles to protect him; they return to urge Woodstock to take arms against him. The Black Prince calls on Woodstock to "stay King Richard's rage" (V.i. 61) so as to "prevent his ruin and thy tragedy" (V.i. 75). Edward's words are harsher: Richard is his "accursed grandchild" (V.i. 86) who has murdered his relatives and destroyed the England Edward had nurtured. Woodstock must join with his brothers who "are up in arms" (V.i. 100). "Richard has betrayed his father and grandfather and therefore his invocation of their spirits is empty. His comparison with them only shows contrast. Richard is the Black Prince's "unlike son" (I.i. 45). He "is "far degenerate from his noble father" (I.i. 29). He represents nothing that the heroes would approve of.

Yet Richard's desire to be connected with the greatness of his ancestors does demonstrate a wish to be a good ruler. He genuinely loves and admires his father and would like to emulate him:

O princely Edward, had thy son thy hap,
 Such fortune and success to follow him...
 But these bright shining trophies shall awake me,
 And as we are his body's counterfeit,
 So will we be the image of his mind,
 And die but we'll attain his virtuous deeds.

(II.i. 88-9, 92-5)

The recognition of the gap between his father's actions and his own provokes one of his few mature thoughts:

We shall be censured strangely, when they tell
 How our great father toiled his royal person
 Spending his blood to purchase towns in France;
 And we his son, to ease our wanton youth
 Become a landlord to this warlike realm,
 Rent out our kingdom like a pelting farm.

(IV.i. 142-7)

Unfortunately, Richard's emulation is hollow. He feels obliged to equal his ancestors' triumphs, but cannot compete with their military or governmental prowess. His extravagances are perverse attempts at matching their accomplishments. Unlike them, his end is glory. He wants the by-products of their actions: to establish records his successors must strive to attain and to be remembered in the chronicles for deeds "Only King Richard did" (III.i. 93). His goal is debased from performing "virtuous deeds" to purchasing fame, regardless of the cost. The desire to do good remains, but insecurity and the manipulation of the favourites pervert his natural inclinations. He can be redeemed, but only by following the duke who will show him the true way of proving himself a worthy son.

The second image shared with Richard II, blood is interconnected with the first. The two underline the familial bond between Richard, his uncles, and the past greatness. As in Shakespeare's history plays, blood "stands figuratively for inheritance, descent, familial pride."¹⁸ The relationships

¹⁸Richard Altick, "Symphonic Imagery in Richard II, EMLA, 62(1947), p. 345.

between the three generations are reiterated throughout the play: the terms "father," "brother," "uncles," "son" and "coz" are common. The conflicts are heightened by being thus personalized. Richard's contrast, and the dukes' similarity with Edward and the Black Prince are underlined by their familial ties. The dukes and Richard have the respective roles of obedient and disobedient sons. The horror of Richard's crimes is augmented because they are against his own family. Lancaster wonders how Richard could harm people "so near in blood, his hapless uncle, / (His grandsire Edward's sons; his father's brothers)" (I.i. 73-4). Woodstock's murder is more shocking than the ridding of a king's gadfly: a nephew kills his loving uncle. Another aspect of the imagery is that it stresses the dukes as Edward III's true inheritors. The use of the term "royal blood" is significant.¹⁹ Arundel reminds the dukes that they "are all princes of the royal blood" (I.i. 165). Woodstock's defence against the masquers is an appeal to his pedigree: "I am descended of the blood royal/King Richard's uncle, / His grandsire's son; his princely father's brother" (IV.i. 181-3). His murderer drenches "his black soul in a prince's blood" (V.i. 227); his murder is a shedding of "royal blood" (V.iv. 14). Not merely is the

¹⁹It is never directly applied to Richard. Besides the examples here, it is used twice more: when Lancaster says that the Black Prince would "have lost his royal blood in drops" (I.i. 42) before acting as cruelly as his son, and when Woodstock describes Richard as being "descended from the royal'st bloods in Europe" (I.iii. 27), though not specifically attributing Richard with royal blood.

nobility of the dukes thus confirmed, but a claim is made for at least equality with Richard. The king's heritage is not denied. The insistence on the lineage of the dukes elevates the legitimacy of their authority in challenging the power of the king.

Blood is also the symbol of sacrifice. The feats of Edward and the Black Prince are gained by the loss of their blood. The Black Prince spends his blood "to purchase towns in France" (IV.i. 144). He and his father with the peers take Calais "fearless of wounds" (V.i. 164). This kind of patriotism is continued by the present noble class. Arundel, included in the favourites' plot to poison Lancaster and York because his naval victories have won him great public favour, is unconcerned: "If service such as this done to my country/Merit my heart to bleed, let it bleed freely" (I.i. 91-2). Lancaster answers him: "We'll bleed together" (I.i. 93). The aim of the nobles is stated by Woodstock: "We'll thus resolve, for our dear country's good/To right her wrongs, or for it spend our blood" (I.iii. 262-3).

Woodstock is naturally the character most connected with the idea of blood-sacrifice. Martha Fleischer points out that Woodstock's murder though more elaborate, is similar to the basic depiction of scenes of sacrifice. The preparation for it begins with the duchess's ominous dream and the ritual of the masque. "The music played at the entrance of the masquers and for their preliminary dance produces the

atmosphere of otherworldliness common to scenes of sacrifice."²⁰ The theme of a bear hunt, with its appropriate costumes, incarnates "the hunt or ritual-kill motif, also obligatory in slaughter scenes."²¹ At Calais, the atmosphere is well-set. Lapoole reminds the audience of Woodstock's "innocent blood" (V.i. 39). Music is played "To rock his senses in eternal slumbers" (V.i. 52). Thunder and lightning announce the ghosts' arrival. The ghosts arrive to warn of Woodstock's imminent death. These are common elements that signal a sacrificial death. Woodstock is conscious of the inevitability of his death, but is willing to endure it for his country's sake:

If I must die, bear record, righteous heaven,
 How I have nightly waked for England's good,
 And yet to right her wrongs would spend my blood.
 Send thy sad doom, King Richard: take my life.
 I wish my death might ease my country's grief.

(V.i. 124-8)

The approval of the ghosts and the linking of their recited accomplishments with Woodstock's death implies that his sacrifice is comparable with and as important as theirs. This connection is strengthened by Woodstock's own participation in the great English victories:

This town of Calais where I spent my blood
 To make it captive to the English king,
 Before whose walls great Edward lay encamped

²⁰Fleischer, p. 224.

²¹Fleischer, p. 225.

With his seven sons almost for fourteen months;
 Where the Black Prince my brother, and myself
 The peers of England, and our royal father,
 Fearless of wounds, ne'er left till it was won.

(V.i. 158-64)

His valour is especially impressive since the historical Woodstock was born nine years after the 1346 victory. Woodstock's supposed involvement in Edward III's campaigns solidifies his embodiment of the old order; when Woodstock is attacked so too is Edward III.

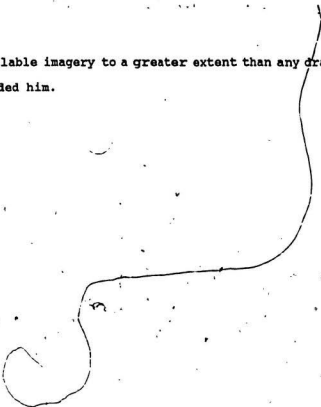
Blood also stands for murder and destruction. The dukes twice make reference to taking blood. The first, by Woodstock, uses the traditional image of letting blood to cure the body politic. The favourites must be gotten rid of: "some vein let blood - where the corruption lies/And all shall heal again" (I.i. 147-8). Yet York even denies that blood will be spilt for the favourites' veins "run naught but poison" (I.i. 151). The second, by Arundel, occurs immediately after his killing of Greene. He hopes that, like Greene, all "the foes of England fall in blood" (V.iv. 20). Despite these sentiments, the image is most associated with Richard's hysterical hatred. He is "resolved with blood to wash all former wrongs" (IV.ii. 274). His vengeance will not be satisfied until "with [Woodstock's] blood mine eyes be satisfied" (IV.i. 77).

Richard's hatred brings about "bloody acts" (IV.iii. 151). The oppressions caused by the king and his favourites fulfill the prediction by Woodstock of making "our country's

bosom shortly bleed" (III.ii. 89). The courtiers are characterized as blood-suckers of the Commons. Despite the outrages against the populace, it is Woodstock's blood that is the catalyst for war. His death is described as a loss of blood: he realizes "by wolves and lions now must Woodstock bleed" (IV.ii. 211), the murderers are "drenched" in his blood, Richard and the favourites "shed royal blood" (V.iv. 14). It is his "innocent blood thus spilt/Heaven will revenge" (V.i. 39-40). Richard sees his defeat by 'the nobles as justice for Woodstock's death: "the fearful wrath of heaven/Sits heavy on our heads for Woodstock's death./Blood cries for blood" (V.iv. 47-9).

None of the images in Woodstock is startling. The conventionality of the imagery underlines the play's Morality influence, which is especially evident in the clothing and feasting imagery. These traditional images are elaborated upon and used with an artistic deliberation unknown to the Woodstock author's Morality models; yet the function of the imagery remains that of elucidating the political concerns of the play. The improvements serve to further the political aims. For instance, the similar costumes of Tresilian and Woodstock evoke a comparison of the political values the characters represent, rather than of their personalities; and the theme of cannibalism heightens the horror of Richard's crimes. Just as he did with the dramatic possibilities of the Morality, the Woodstock author realizes the potentiality

of the available imagery to a greater extent than any dramatist that preceded him.



THE POLITICS OF WOODSTOCK

Woodstock is a political play. Despite the obviousness of this observation, the political component of Woodstock was late in being commented on. Appropriately, the first to investigate the political concepts present in Woodstock were those who identified the Morality influence in the play. Tillyard began the process, examining the play for reference to the "cosmic order" and finding that "on matters of civil war and obedience to the king, the author of Woodstock is ample, explicit and scrupulously orthodox."¹ Rossiter was next to write on this topic. He recognized the presence of the orthodox thinking Tillyard had exposed, but concluded that the play "sharply conflict[s] with the political principles fully accepted by most dramatists, Shakespeare among them."² As with most other Woodstock concerns, Rossiter's view is the one now accepted as correct; David Bevington and Marie Axton, the only other critics to supplement the earlier work, support Rossiter's position.

Yet Tillyard, though he over-emphasized the importance of the conservative element, exposed an influence that is nevertheless considerable. The play accepts the universe, including human society, as being one of order and degree. Its metaphors would satisfy a completely orthodox playwright. For instance, the traditional imagery of primaries is regularly

¹E.M.W. Tillyard, Shakespeare's History Plays (London: Chatto and Windus, 1944), p. 118.

²Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 32.

invoked. Richard is compared to the usual lion, eagle and sun. Ironically, the upstarts employ the imagery (which implies a condemnation of themselves) to flatter the king:

Bushy: Your uncles seek to overturn your state,
To awe ye like a child - that they alone
May at their pleasures thrust you from the throne.

Scroope: As if the sun were forced to decline
Before his dated time of darkness comes.

Green: May not the lion roar, because he's young?
What are your uncles but as elephants
That set their aged bodies to the oak?
You are the oak against whose stock they lean.

(II.i. 11-5, 18-21)

Also, as in Shakespeare, the social order is described in terms of primal chaos. When Richard removes his uncles from office to appoint his favourites, the natural order is violated:

What transformation do mine eyes behold
As if the world were topsy-turvy turned!..
Shall England, that so long was governed
By grave experience, of white-headed age,
Be subject now to rash unskilled boys?
Then force the sun run backward to the east,
Lay Atlas' burden on a pygmy's back,
Appoint the sea his times to ebb and flow;
And that as easily may be done as this.

(II.ii. 141-2, 146-52)

The orthodoxy is most explicit in one of the main themes of the play: the celebration of the nobility. Its heroes are a group of nobles, transformed from their historical selves into an ideal; its villains are exclusively common-born. Part of Tresilian's menace comes from his humble

birth (as this author characterizes him) which makes "his rise to fortune and power a mocking comment on the rigid system of Degrees."³ England's ruin occurs because power has been given to those who are unfit to wield it. Woodstock tells Richard that the state of England will be "shivered, cracked and broke/...By... rejecting true nobility" (II.ii. 161-2). The restoration of authority to the nobility regains for England her justice and greatness.

Despite this conservative view of society, Woodstock is notable for advocating civil war as the ultimate response to a bad king. For an author who accepts the social structure, especially in a time when rebellion was considered "the whole puddle and sink of all sins against God and men,"⁴ the idea is both contradictory and revolutionary. Rossiter writes:

The interesting thing about Woodstock in this context is that its author, while using the orthodox system quite orthodoxly, deals with a rebellion-plot without showing it as what the earlier homilist called the reign of "all abuse, carnal liberty, enormity, sin, and Babylonical confusion." In fact, he seems not to accept unreservedly the 'Doctrine of Non-resistance' which is not only in Shakespeare but also in the old Kynge Johan, in Gorboduc... and Jack Strawe. On the one hand he accepts the commonplaces about God's deputy, the celestial omens which naturally foreboded "change and fall of states," the condemnation of upstarts as symptoms of "corrupted

³Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 41.

⁴Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 14, quoting anonymous Elizabethan homilist.

blood" necessitating political phlebotomy (as in I.i. 142-50). But on the other he shows a revolt succeeding, against a king who is himself in arms, all without a line of condemnation from anyone for whom the audience could feel much sympathy.⁵

The official line of non-resistance to a tyrannous king is not ignored. Woodstock is the spokesman for this view. He prevents his brothers, who are anxious for confrontation, from joining the mutinous Commons. When a rebellion over the use of blank charters appears imminent, his response is orthodox: "I must tell them plain/We all are struck-but must not strike again" (III.ii. 112-3). Ironically, his most eloquent plea for passiveness against royal injustice is made to the masquers, whom he suspects of having iniquated some anti-Richard sentiments:

His youth is led by flatterers much astray.
 But he's our king: and God's great deputy;
 And if ye hunt to have me second ye
 In any rash attempt against his state,
 Afore my God, I'll ne'er consent unto it.
 I ever yet was just and true to him,
 And so will still remain: what's now amiss
 Our sins have caused...and we must bide heaven's will.

(IV.ii. 143-50)

Yet even Woodstock's position on non-resistance is not intractable. His reply to Lancaster's aim to "take open arms" (I.iii. 247) with the people of Kent and Essex, though

⁵Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 14.

negative, is "indecently mild."⁶ He is also understanding of the rebellion of the Commons, who are oppressed by the blank charters. Though he sends his brothers to restrain them, he does not condemn their actions. "Afore my God I cannot blame them for it/...Can they be rebels called, that now turn head?" (III.ii. 82,85). Woodstock himself realizes that if legal means cannot stop the destruction of England by the king, rebellion is the unfortunate, but necessary conclusion:

if by fair means we can win no favour...
 We'll thus resolve, for our dear country's good
 To right her wrongs, or for it spend our blood.

(I.iii. 260-2)

His brothers are less hesitant in choosing confrontation. Their sole concern initially is not whether they should fight their king, but the timing of the plot. When the battle finally arrives, Lancaster is sure about the justice of their action:

If he [Woodstock] be dead, by good King Edward's soul
 We'll call King Richard to a strict account
 For that and for his realm's misgovernment.
 You peers of England, raised in righteous arms
 Here to re-edify our country's ruin,
 Join all your hearts and hands never to cease
 Till with our swords we work fair England's peace.

(V.iii. 19-25)

⁶Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 30.

Approval is even given by the more authoritative voice of Edward III. The dead hero's ghost urges his son Woodstock to "haste thee to England, close and speedily! Thy brothers York and Gaunt are up in arms, / Go join with them: prevent thy further harms" (V.i. 99-101).

Yet the bounds of rebellion are set. Care is taken not to expound deposition or regicide. The dukes never wish to wrest power from the king himself, only the favourites. Civil war is undertaken by the dukes "in tender care / Of wanton Richard and their father's realm" (V.v. 1-2). Nor do the people abandon loyalty to the crown. While they hope the favourites are "both flayed and bald" (III.iii. 179), they pray that "God [will] mend the king" (III.iii. 190). Those who escape from the press gangs refuse to fight because they must harm the "king's friends," indicating thereby support for both the dukes' cause and the king himself. The end of the play demonstrates an authorial delicacy in not offending the orthodox. Though Richard has been defeated, the dukes' triumph is muted, Richard is discreetly absent and attention is directed to Tresilian's capture and Nimble's antics.

The conundrum for Rossiter and others was how Woodstock could reconcile orthodoxy and radicalism. The critics' problem was accentuated because of limited historical information. It had been assumed that all Elizabethan political thinking was based on orthodoxy; that the radical was a revolt against it. No one investigated the possibility of a

separate and vital political theory. Even as late as 1968, Bevington could only postulate that the mixture of old-fashioned values and radicalism was due to a "political alignment" of the conservative aims of such rebellions as the Pilgrimage of Grace or the Northern Rebellion of 1569 and "a coalescing of extremist dissidence in the 1590's."⁷ However, historians have been revising the conception of Elizabethan political thought. Along with the orthodoxy of divine right co-existed theories emphasizing a law-centred kingship. Research on these issues was overlooked until this century, the lure of the "dazzling light of God-granted authority" delaying work.⁸ In 1965, G.R. Elton reported that "serious analysis of doctrines opposed to the absolute assertion of divine right... has only recently been making progress."⁹

Literary criticism dealing with Elizabethan politics before this historical re-conceptualization naturally utilized the then-known facts. Interpretation of Woodstock attempted to categorize the play by reference to this knowledge. The confusion admitted by Rossiter, in retrospect, demonstrates the inadequacy of the old scholarship and, incidentally, indicates the special nature of the politics of Woodstock.

⁷Bevington, p. 253.

⁸G.R. Elton, "The Divine Right of King," in Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government Vol. II (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974) p. 197.

⁹Elton, "Divine Right," p. 197.

The concept of a law-centred kingship has been claimed by Donna B. Hamilton to be evident in Richard II, The Mirror for Magistrates and Holinshed's Chronicle; Marie Axton has mentioned that it is "sometimes" advanced in histories and historical romances. Both critics find Woodstock as a proponent. The uniqueness of the play is that, unlike other works which "about always contradicted, defeated or discredited" the concept of law-centred politics, or those like Richard II which submerge it, Woodstock is directly affirmative.¹⁰ Woodstock was difficult to classify because it "stands out, unconventional and audacious,"¹¹ it could not be easily reconciled with the now out-dated critical thinking.

The idea of law-centred kingship is an old one. It was articulated during the thirteenth century in Henry De Bracton's pioneer work on English law De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Anglae. In 1583, it was restated in contemporary form in Thomas Smith's De Republica Anglorum. The concept was influential in the political thinking of the Renaissance, even affecting the rule of the supposed-absolute Tudors.¹² The theory essentially states that the king's power is derived from the law; that the king must limit himself to

¹⁰Marie Axton, The Queen's Two Bodies (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), p. 97.

¹¹Axton, p. 97.

¹²G.R. Elton, "The Rule of Law in Sixteenth-Century England," in Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government Vol. I (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 260.

what is lawful and, though still supreme legislator, temper his decisions with counsel. A king who abuses the law is a tyrant. "The king himself must be, not under Man, but under God and the Law, because the Law makes the king ... For there is no king where arbitrary will dominates, and not the law."¹³ The king has a responsibility for the well-being of his state and the people. If the king's rule is evil he can legitimately be deposed. Despite this seeming radicalism, the theory is not incompatible with conservatism. The king, at least in part, derives his power from divine will. The social structure, too, is to be preserved. These are propositions identical to those advanced in Woodstock.

There are two incidental issues that Rossiter attributed to the author's unorthodoxy, but which really are facets of law-centred politics. One is "the writer's slight but noticeable emphasis on the use of persuasion and parliaments."¹⁴ Support for parliament comes from the nobles. They are the ones who summon the parliament to investigate the upstarts' ill-doing and are shown participating in the parliamentary process by their distribution of "petitions/To the knights and burgesses o' the lower house,/Sent from each several shire of all the kingdom" (II.ii. 4-6). Interestingly, the queen also

¹³Henry de Bracton, *De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliae*, Trans. in Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 156.

¹⁴Rossiter, *Woodstock*, p. 32.

affirms the power of parliament. Her statement concerning her acts of charity "The wealth I have shall be the poor's revenue/As sure as twere confirmed by parliament" (II.iii. 46-7) implies an active participation by this body in the law-making process and its necessary ratification of law. The king, by contrast, believes parliament to be dependent upon his wishes. He dismisses the session arranged by Woodstock with the imperial words: "When we are pleased, they shall have summons sent/And with King Richard hold a parliament" (II.ii. 215-6). Richard emphasizes the king's prerogative. He presumes that he is an absolute ruler.

Both Woodstock and law-centred politics refute Richard's conception of the power of kings. Smith describes parliament's status in law-centred politics:

"The most high and absolute power of the realme of Englande, consisteth in the parliament." What is done by Parliament "is the Prince and whole realmes deede: whereupon no man can complaine, but must accommodate himselfe to finde it good and obey it," for it "representeth and hath the power of the whole realme both the head and the bodie." "For everie Englishman is entended to bee there present, either in person or by procuracion and attornies of what preheminance, state, dignite, or qualities soever he be, from the Prince (be he King or Queene) to the lowest person of Englande. And the consent of the Parliament is taken to be everie mans consent."¹⁵

¹⁵Ernest William Talbert, The Problem of Order: Elizabethan Political Commonplaces and an Example of Shakespeare's Art (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1962), p. 31.

This pre-eminence of parliament does not disturb the king's authority over certain central issues, such as appointment of high officials, decisions concerning war and peace, or his "absolute power... during wartime, on the field, and on other occasions subject to martial law."¹⁶ Yet even in exercising these rights, the king is to take counsel. Parliament's role is to provide a check on the king's powers and to ensure that the general interests of the commonwealth are predominant. Woodstock does not specify a division of authority between king and parliament, nor does it boldly champion parliament's power. The necessity of parliament is an important but tacit argument of the play. Woodstock demonstrates the consequences of a king's absolutism. Like most Moralities, it urges good counsel as a restraint against the king's excesses. Woodstock, in addition, promotes the use of parliament as an insurance of good government. Bevington points out that "ultimate failure at conciliation must rest solely on the king's decision to close Parliament without redress of grievances."¹⁷ The aims of parliament implied by the play coincide with that of law-centred politics, though it is in its rejection that parliament's importance is fully understood.

The second issue which results from the political thinking of the play is the treatment of the Commons.

¹⁶Talbert, p. 30.

¹⁷Bevington, p. 253.

Rossiter recognizes "the total absence of the orthodox manner of referring to the people. This can be felt behind all Shakespeare's crowd-scenes, if we qualify our reading with such pieces as Jack Straw or Edward IV. Some suggestion of the pet tags 'the multitude (a beast of many heads)' or 'the wild-beast multitude' is always there. In Woodstock it is absent."¹⁸ This courtesy does not expand itself into the celebration of a working-class ideal, as it does in George a Greene or A Merry Knack to Know a Knave. Woodstock's murderers and the ludicrous but dangerous Bailey Ignorant are commoners. The citizens of Dunstable with their homely confusions over Black Chapters are portrayed as comic. Yet the humour is gentle. Though simple, the people are not simpletons; they realize how and by whom they are threatened. Only the court's tool, Baily Ignorant, appears as a buffoon.

Though the author is favourable towards the Commons, he distinguishes a gap between them and the nobility: the nobles are idealized, the Commons are a humbler sort. The maintenance of the social order that Woodstock propounds is in accordance with law-centred politics. The theory does not advocate any dissolution of the class structure, but accepts the present social situation. The nobles' status is evinced by one important principle of the theory. The decision to rebel against the king is only to be made by

¹⁸Rossiter, p. 31.

"the wise," i.e. the nobility.¹⁹ The populace must wait for their superiors to judge that conditions have necessitated the use of force against an unjust government and then follow that lead. This policy is demonstrated in Woodstock. Though he understands the motivation of the Commons, Woodstock crushes the popular rebellions. He agrees with his brothers that it may be necessary to undertake an armed revolt, but that this action must be the dukes' choice. Rebellion must be a considered and unavoidable action on the part of the nobility. Reason and time must be employed first. Woodstock's murder concludes peaceful options; the nobility then embarks on its necessary revolt.

While Woodstock and law-centred theory accept the social strata, they do recognize that the common people have rights. Parliament is committed to attempting to speak for all the people. The judicial system too is to favour equally the rich and the poor. The king rules in part by the will of his people, therefore their well-being is to be protected. The king should consider that "his strength, power, and crowne doth stande and consiste in the force of his people, and the maintenance of them in securitie and peace."²⁰ The Commons is not a "multi-headed beast" but a political force whose opinion and wishes must be a governmental concern. The contempt Richard and his favourites feel for the Commons

¹⁹Talbert, p. 40.

²⁰Smith, quoted in Talbert, p. 37.

illustrates their ignorance of the true source of a king's power. Richard's opposition knows that just rule is a monarchical obligation. The queen's charities are not only an expression of her personal goodness, but an example of her husband's neglected duty. Edward III's ghost is concerned that Richard "racks my subjects/That spent their lives with me in conquering France" (V.i. 91-2). The dukes are cognizant of the needs of the Commons. Lancaster proclaims on the battlefield that the rebellion is being fought for the rights of all Englishmen.

This day shall here determinate all wrongs.
 The meanest man taxed by their foul oppressions
 Shall be permitted freely to accuse,
 And right they shall have to regain their own;
 Or all shall sink to dark confusion.

(V.iii. 32-6)

II

The dual-themes of lustful excess and abuse of law that dominate Richard's downfall are common to the historical sources and to other fictional representations of the reign, like Mirror for Magistrates and Richard II. The two themes are usually blended since they are interdependent: law-breaking feeds the excesses which require the law-breaking. Woodstock naturally portrays this connection: the blank charters support Richard's banquets. However, the play is unusual in explicitly distinguishing the two themes. The embodiments of the two, Tresilian and the favourites, are

separated by physical appearance, mutual distrust and divergent characterization. Their distinctiveness preserves the functional nature of the two themes. Each implies its own question concerning the nature of kingship. The excesses provoke an examination of the relationship between the king and the people; the misuse of law an examination of the relationship between the king and the law.

The problem with Richard's excesses is their cost. He is willing to rack his country to satisfy his selfishness. He pays for his wishes through oppression and unjust taxation. His rule is likened to cannibalism; his banquets contrasted with the country's hunger; his fashions flaunted beside the people's rags. Reiterated throughout the play is the acknowledgement of the wrongs done to England by Richard. According to orthodoxy, Richard's crimes are to be endured. They are trials placed upon the people by God. Law-centred theory is more humanistic. The king has a duty to serve his people. He has a responsibility for their well-being. the conversation between the arrested shrieves of Kent and Northumberland and Tresilian concerns the amount of power the king should have over his subjects:

Tresilian: Is not the subject's wealth at the king's will?
 What, is he lord of lives and not of lands?
 Is not his high displeasure present death?
 And dare ye stir his indignation so?

S. Northumberland: We are free-born, my lord...yet do confess
 Our lives and goods, are at the king's dispose:
 But how, my lord?-like to a gentle prince
 To take or borrow what we best may spare;

And not, like bondslaves, force it from our hands.

(IV.iii. 30-8)

Tresilian reacts to this with the cry: "Will you set limits to the king's high pleasure?" (IV.iii. 40). For Woodstock and law-centred politics, the answer is yes. They envision England as a commonwealth in which all classes benefit. The three divisions of government - king, nobility and Commons are to share power. Restraints control the amount each can wield to prevent any form of absolutism, either of king or mob. Still, loyalty to the king is expected. The shrieve admits that his life and goods are at the king's command. However, this loyalty does not deny him his rights. He is free-born, not a bond-slave. Smith describes the proper relationship between the king and the people:

A common wealth is called a society or common doing of a multitude of free men collected together and united by common accord & covenantes among themselves, for the conservation of themselves as well in peace as in warre... And if one man had as some of the olde Romanes had ... V. thousande or L. thousande bondmen whom he ruled well... yet that were no common wealth: for the bondman hath no communion with his master, the wealth of the Lord is onely sought for, not the profit of the slave or bondman. For as they who write of these things have defined, a bondman or a slave is as it were...but the instrument of his Lord, as... the saw, the chessyll and gowge is of the charpenter. Truth it is the charpenter looketh diligently to save, correct and amend all these: but it is for his own profit, and in consideration of him selfe, not for the instruments

sake... and there is no mutuall societie
or portion, no law or pleading betweene
thone and thother.²¹

Both Smith and Woodstock make a distinction between freeman and bondslave. Both claim that an Englishman is free-born; that he has rights; that communication between the people and the king must be insured, through processes like parliament and the courts; and that the king has a duty, independent of his own inclinations, to promote the well-being of his subjects. A commonwealth is a "mutuall societie;" the king should not, as Richard does, rule to indulge his own lusts, but to maintain the property of his country. Richard has destroyed this contract. By diminishing parliament and instigating arbitrary arrest, he has cut off communication between the people and the crown. He rules solely for his own pleasure uncaring of its cost. He has denied Englishmen their rights, considering them only as his bondslaves. The dukes' insistence on the rights of the people has been noted. Their concern for justice for every class is attested by their reaction to Richard's parable. Richard says he wishes to provide justice for the son of a poor man who on his death gave charge to a rich man to hold his son's inheritance of land until he came of age. The son now is twenty-one, but the rich man will not relinquish the

²¹Thomas Smith, De Republica Anglorum (London, 1583), Book I, Ch. 10, sig. C^v - C^{iv}, as quoted in Donna B. Hamilton, "The State of Law in Richard II," Shakespeare Quarterly, 34 (1983), 6.

property. Richard demands: "will not our English laws/Enforce this rich man to resign his due?" (IV.ii. 73-4). Woodstock is joyed to see Richard's interest in this case. York claims that justice such as this will make Richard a greater king than the victories of the battlefield did his predecessors. "Such deeds as this will make King Richard shine/Above his famous predecessor kings/If thus, he labour\to establish right" (II.ii. 78-80). The glory of Edward III and the Black Prince, so celebrated in the play, would be eclipsed simply by enforcing the right. Yet the story is only Richard's trick of presenting his own wish for the throne. The episode itself thereby becomes a parable of the king's betrayal of the people's rights for his own gain.

The significance of the references to landlord and Richard's transformation into one is elucidated by law-centred theory. The reduction of a country into rental plots is a heinous crime. The act denies the rights of every subject; like a slave, he is sold with the land. For the Elizabethan, the crime would be compounded by the division of England between the favourites, which manipulates a common fear of the dissolution of the country upon the death of Queen Elizabeth. Yet, despite the agreement, no consequences actually occur: the favourites do not claim their territories and no rents are shown to be collected. The direct purpose of the map ceremony is to concretize the idea of Richard as landlord. Donna B. Hamilton has already pointed out the use

of the term 'landlord' in Richard II as defining the king as acting as "though the royal prerogative allows [him] to do anything he wishes."²² For both Woodstock and Shakespeare's play, the word relates to the relationship between king and country. Richard is "no king, but landlord" (V.iii. 106), for he has abandoned his responsibilities towards the people, treating them, like a landlord his tenants, solely as a means. Instead of supposed care, the king substitutes exploitation. The metaphor is much more explicit in Woodstock, where Richard is formally crowned landlord, the adoption of this title significantly coming after his approval of the kidnapping and murder of Woodstock. His crimes have now reached their apogee.

What should prevent Richard from exploiting the people is the law. In some degree the king is above the law. He is without equal in his kingdom; he is government's executive head and possessor of a number of prerogatives; his superiority is protected by a number of supra-legal rights, such as immunity from being sued and protection of his goods from taxation. Yet even his pre-eminence and supra-legal rights are dependent on his bending himself to the law. The law determines the powers of the king and gives authority to his

²²Hamilton, p. 7. She also notes that Woodstock uses this image, but does not comment on its political implications for the play, nor does she credit the probable influence of Woodstock on Richard II. She ignores the rumour that the historical Richard had planned to rent his kingdom, the clever use Woodstock makes of that fact and the additional meaning this gives the images for this play and Richard II.

state; only by submitting himself to the law can he legitimately rule. Bracton describes the position of a king as being both exalted and submissive:

The king himself must be, not under Man, but under God and the Law, because the Law makes the king...For there is no king where arbitrary will dominates, and not the Law. And that he should be under the Law because he is God's vicar, becomes evident through the similitude with Jesus Christ in whose stead he governs on earth. For He, God's true Mercy, though having at His disposal many means to recuperate ineffably the human race, chose before all other expedients the one which applied for the destruction of the devil's work; that is, not the strength of power, but the maxim of Justice, and therefore he wished to be under the Law in order to redeem those under the Law. For he did not wish to apply force, but reason and judgement.²³

This injunction to rule within the law, combined with the necessity of counsel, checks the "arbitrary will" of the king.

The law is not the expression of the king's will. It is the corporate expression of the realm designed for the protection of the realm. "The law could be altered only by its own doing (judicial decision) or by legislation in which the whole realm was deemed to participate."²⁴ The king cannot unilaterally revoke, create or alter law. Even his prerogatives were only exclusive when dormant, but once in

²³Bracton, as quoted in Kantorowicz, p. 156.

²⁴Elton, "Rule of Law," p. 277.

effect would be subject to common law. From the time of Bracton to that of the Tudor rule, the influence of parliament had increased. The privileges of kingship had been made more specific and limited. The king was now a constitutional monarch. Henry VIII admitted "that according to his judges he stood highest when in Parliament, when knit as head with the members of his realm to produce one body."²⁵ It is parliament which was the law-creator; the king was the ratifier. The king's powers were real and far greater than those of any present-day constitutional monarch, but he derived his powers from the law, was limited to what was lawful, and the parliamentary system was the originator of actual legal change.

Richard clearly violates the rules by which he rules. He rejects the limitations placed upon him. He assumes absolute power. He claims, as Bushy states, the "lives and livings and lands" (IV.i. 37) of his subjects. He dismisses parliament and the good counsel of his uncles. The law becomes an expression of his self-interest. He has had a "proviso enacted in our last parliament, that no statute were it ne'er so profitable for the commonwealth, should stand in any force against our proceedings" (IV.i. 171-4). The law has now degenerated into Tresilian's tricks. The purpose of law to protect the people has been prevented. Blank charters, arbitrary arrests and over-taxation, all

²⁵Talbert, p. 19.

carrying the facade of legality, have denied the English people their rights.

Richard, in attempting to consolidate his power, has destroyed the basis of his kingship. By overturning the law, he has overturned the authority by which he rules. By dismissing parliament, he has dismissed his legitimacy. Richard has "transcend[ed] the lymittes of his lawe,/Not raygning but raging by youthfull insolence."²⁶ He cannot rule by "arbitrary will;" he has descended from lawful kingship to tyranny. When Richard claims that rebellion against "the Highest God's anointed deputy" breaks "your holy oaths to heart and us" (V.iii. 58-9) he is shunned. Richard has broken his earthly contract between himself and the people. Woodstock does not condemn the Commons for revolt because Richard's lawlessness has released them from obedience. The dukes want a return to the law and the king's compliance with the law. That is the purpose of the argument between the shrieves and Tresilian, the insistence on the rights of the people and the favouritism towards parliament: the wish for a limited constitutional monarchy. The dukes are the upholders of law, supporting the processes of parliament. Woodstock, when captured by the masquers, cries out "I'll put in bail, and answer to the law." (IV.ii. 178). His cry is futile because the law has been destroyed, but it tells of his faith in law and his willingness to be submissive to it.

²⁶Mirror, p. 78.

The dukes allow the king the choice of battle or the law courts: "grant that these pernicious flatterers/May by the law be tried, to quit themselves/Of all such heinous crimes alleged against them,/And we'll lay down our weapons at thy feet" (V.iii. 116-9). It is symbolic of the return of law to England after the dukes' victory that Nimble's deliverance of Tresilian to the dukes is prompted by a proclamation. The law captures the instigator of the country's law-breaking.

It is characteristic of the play which presents a Richard divided between good and evil that, apart from a haughty rebuke to his wife's concerns that "king's words are laws" (III.i. 64), most of the claims for absolutism are made by the favourites, especially Tresilian. Richard wants complete power, but he is not the one who wields it. The crimes usually originate with Tresilian. Tresilian claims control of the law. He tells the favourites: "Zounds, I will screw and wind the subtle law/To any fashion that shall like you best,/It shall be law, what I shall say is law" (I.ii 47-9). To Nimble, he states "I rule the law" (I.ii. 131). These words are actually attributable to the historical Richard, but the author diplomatically transfers them to Tresilian.

Richard is treated delicately in Woodstock. As explained earlier, his culpability for the crimes against England has been reduced. He is presented as a dupe of Tresilian and the favourites, who are the true originators of the ill-

doing. Richard is too immature to be held responsible for his actions: he has no conception of their actual consequences. He has an inclination to be a good ruler, though insecurity subverts the aim. He is genuinely repentant for his part in ruining the country. The dukes' fury is logically centred on the upstarts. Directly, Richard is incriminated only through two flaws.

The most frequently reiterated charge against Richard is his wantonness. The fact is condemned throughout the play. However understandable may be the character weaknesses which allow him to act as he does, the acts themselves cannot be condoned. His deadly frivolousness alienates the sympathy of the dukes and the audience. He condemns himself most fully by his eager furtherance of Tresilian's plot to kidnap Woodstock by deciding to devise his own "trap for York and Lancaster" (IV.i. 117) and by his participation in the masque. These unprompted acts, particularly his willingness to become "an active accessory to murder,"²⁷ increase his direct responsibility for the crimes, especially Woodstock's death.

Richard is also undermined by his attachment to France. The nobles' patriotism is in part defined by antagonism towards the French; the conquests of Edward III are a reiterated theme of the play. In this pro-English context, Richard's friendliness towards France is akin to treason. The king is

²⁷Rossiter, Woodstock, p. 43.

purposely referred to as "Richard, of Bordeaux" to remind the audience that Richard is not a true-born Englishman. The suspect loyalty of Richard is bluntly spoken of by Lancaster: "His native country! why that is France my lords! At Bordeaux was he born, which place allures/And tries his deep affections still to France./Richard is English blood: not English born" (V.iii. 97-100). The truth of Lancaster's words is proved by Richard's own proposal of an alliance with France in time of rebellion. In return for aid, Richard is willing to "surrender up/Our forte of Guisnes and Calais to the French" (IV.1. 124). This transference of territory does not actually occur. Though Richard does receive much of his supplies from across the channel, Lapoole, not the king of France, is the supplier. Though Lapoole is English, the dukes emphasize the fact that Richard has had to depend on his foreign territory for support, thereby indicating his betrayal of England and its abandonment of him: "send for more supplies from France,/For England will not yield ye strength"²⁸ (V.iii. 92-3).

²⁸The queen contrasts with her husband in this respect also. She is a foreigner by both blood and birth, yet fully accepts and is accepted by the English:

My native country I no more remember
 But as a tale told in my infancy,
 The greatest part forgot: and that which is,
 Appears to England's fair Elysium
 Like brambles to the cedars, coarse to fine,
 Or like the wild grape to the fruitful vine
 And, having left the earth where I was bred
 And English made let me be englished:
 They best shall please me shall me English call.

Yet Richard is indirectly responsible for all the crimes committed by his favourites. They could not have succeeded without his nurturing of them. In doing so he has abandoned the duties of his kingship. He may have been ignorant of the totality of their crimes, but he is conscious that he is doing some wrong. The guilt occasioned by the signing of the kingdom's lease, his wife's death and his loss on the battlefield indicate that his submerged maturity realizes the higher duties of kingship. He chooses instead to rule for pleasure. The consequence is that he loses his status as king. Throughout the play Richard is defined by the epithet "wanton" and his stature is continually diminished by his follies and crimes. The culmination arrives when he signs the lease; as Rossiter points out he is signing away his crown.²⁹ From that point on Richard's kingship is denied. Lancaster vilifies him as a "wanton tyrant" (V.iii.3) and castigates him for his foreign leanings. Richard's claim to be "the highest God's anointed deputy" (V.iii. 58) is snubbed. He is told that he is "no king, but landlord now become" (V.iii. 106). Edward III's ghost issues the strongest attack against Richard: terming him "accursed," landlord and a foreigner. His speech also contains the statement that Richard is metaphorically a usurper: Richard has "cut off your [Edward's sons] titles to the kingly

²⁹Rossiter, *Woodstock*, p. 227.

state³⁰ (V.i. 87). Three visual images illustrate Richard's empty throne. One is the equality he and the favourites share in fashion, which not only symbolizes the flatterers' elevation, but his degradation to their level. The second is that of the coronation, which is a stage emblem of usurpation.³¹ The third is the visual imagery contained in the masque of Richard's fall. "Not Richard but one of his flatterers impersonates Cynthia, giving wordless support to the Duke of Lancaster's earlier accusation that the king no longer rules the realm; the vizarded figure of the immortal body politic is a base sham."³²

The dukes do not battle a king. Richard has dethroned himself. "There is no king where arbitrary will dominates, and not the Law" writes Bracton. As Marie Axton writes, Woodstock "exploits for all it is worth [the] dramatic separation of the kingly figure from the kingly function."³³ Richard is played against Woodstock, who embodies the qualities Richard should have. He has concern for the Commons. He is a defender of the English people's rights and a supporter of

³⁰Axton, p. 93, suggests that Edward is forwarding the Lancastrian claim to the throne. However, the remark is too isolated to support that view. Its purpose is to lessen the authority of Richard by his grandfather's disapproval. Edward is lamenting that, though he left seven sons, an unworthy grandchild became king.

³¹Fleischer, p. 67.

³²Axton, p. 99.

³³Axton, p. 98.

the law. He is willing to submit himself to parliamentary process and the courts. By killing Woodstock, Richard "strikes down both a man and a legal ideal,"³⁴ he commits a form of regicide. Like Poe's William Wilson, by murdering his conscience, he has killed himself. That which makes a king is dead. The dukes have no choice but to rebel against the no-king.

Woodstock is a commentary on kingship. (Perhaps because of contemporary politics, the author diverted much of the blame onto the favourites, yet the centre remains the king. It is the power of the king which the play examines. Richard transcends the limits placed upon him by the very nature of kingship. The dukes therefore take an action that is considered just and necessary. Though Richard is replaced on the throne, the implications of the dukes' rebellion are clear. The diplomatic division of guilt between the favourites and the king allows the author to avoid the dangerous subject of deposition, but the justness of such an action is unambiguous. The cautiousness exhibited by the author in restoring Richard to his throne, probably prevented Henry Bolingbroke ascending his. The explicit example of Bolingbroke combined with the boldness of the politics of Woodstock would probably been too hazardous for the author. However, the triumph of Henry IV is unnecessary to understand the political message of

³⁴Axton, p. 98.

Woodstock: the king must adhere to his lawful duty or
forfeit his crown to someone who will.

CONCLUSION

Beyond its specific contributions to Richard II, Woodstock is noteworthy for two reasons. One is its centrality to the development of the Elizabethan history play. Ribner describes the Woodstock author as "of the utmost importance" as a "shaping force upon the history play."¹ Woodstock is, in many respects, a conventional Elizabethan play. It adheres to the traditional Morality structure and themes. It displays many of the typical Elizabethan theatrical devices, such as the masque, the prophetic dream and vengeful ghosts. Yet Woodstock is not an inferior work or blatantly imitative. The intelligence and the humour of the play constitute its most pleasurable excellences. Yet, from an historical viewpoint, the most significant quality of Woodstock is its unified construction. The episodic nature of the early history plays is absent. History is selected and altered to fit a coherent theme. Scenes are fully developed and dramatically effective. The comic elements are integrated into the plot. The unity evident in Woodstock was an important development in the evolution of Elizabethan drama. The attractiveness of the play, for Shakespeare and, possibly, Marlowe must be partly attributable to its construction. Woodstock provided an example of how effective the history play could be, if properly shaped.

¹Ribner, p. 142.

The second reason for the notability of Woodstock is its political concepts. The primary function of this "powerfully didactic"² piece is to dramatize a political viewpoint rarely expressed in Elizabethan literature. The theory of law-centred kingship is one unfamiliar to many scholars, and its importance to the study of Elizabethan history and literature has not been understood. Woodstock provides the boldest expression of the theory in Elizabethan drama. Study of Woodstock would increase understanding of both the theory itself and the possible applications of it in other works or Elizabethan literature.

The arguments presented in this thesis demonstrate that a new substantive edition of Woodstock is needed. Rossiter's edition, though admirable, contains its share of inaccuracies and is out-dated on some major points, especially that of the play's politics. Information has also been added about the play's relationship with John and Matilda and the dating of the manuscript. The absence of collation of such material prevents any real advance in study of the play. Most scholars, rely on Rossiter's work, thereby missing the later, more accurate criticism. A new edition would make the newest material easily available to the scholar and would encourage investigation of Woodstock, an activity which the quality of the play will clearly justify.

²M. N. Reese, The Cause of Majesty: A Study of Shakespeare's History Plays (London: Edward Arnold, 1961), p. 84.

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