SUFFOCATING MOTHERS

FANTASIES OF MATERNAL ORIGIN IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS, *HAMLET* TO *THE TEMPEST*

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To my father, who taught me that there was nothing I couldn't think about,

To my husband, whose loving support has made this project possible at every stage since its inception,

To my sons, who have patiently listened to me say "when the book is finished" for as long as they have been alive,

And to the memory of my mother.

inciting cause of a sick male desire, not the source of a near-magical restoration: a sanctuary made only to be violated, invaded and shamed as much by the play as by Angelo and the Duke, her threatening power is in the end firmly subordinated to the imperatives of patriarchal marriage.[51] Initially self-enclosed, she becomes increasingly a common thoroughfare, in the imagination of whose body the desires of others meet; initially vividly defined by her own unbending selfhood and her articulate voice, she becomes increasingly unable to say what she wants, increasingly the tool of the Duke. By thus splitting Helena's power and revealing the controlling male presence that will finally put her in her place, *Measure for Measure* undoes the central movement of *All's Well*, enabling marriage by putting it under the aegis not of a sexual woman but of a sternly a-sexual man.[52]

In the final revelations of *Measure for Measure*, it is the pure father rather than the sexual mother who proves to have been everywhere unseen. Only in the presence of this father can sexuality and marriage be made safe; when he withdraws at the start of the play, sexuality bubbles and boils (5.1.316) like a witches' cauldron (*Macbeth*, 4.1.19) in Vienna, threatening to overwhelm both Angelo and Isabella in what they feel as their maternal legacy. But this is exactly the condition that obtains at the beginning of *Hamlet*, where the disappearance of Hamlet's father immerses Hamlet in the realm defined by his mother's sexuality; and it is the condition of *All's Well*, where a similar disappearance puts Bertram under the combined power of his mother and Helena. No wonder, then, that the Duke returns as a revised version of Hamlet's ghostly father,[53] a version in which that father proves to be all-powerful: the pattern of doing and undoing implicit in *All's Well* and *Measure for Measure*, and most visible in its repeated bed tricks—the one the mother's, the other the father's—responds to the crisis initiated by *Hamlet*. But the bodiless Duke is not finally an adequate solution to this crisis; as the persistence of Juliet reminds us, maternal origin cannot simply be wished away. In *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Coriolanus*, Shakespeare returns to the vulnerability of the bodily father and hence to the world of paternal absence in which the mother is given full sway.

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Suffocating Mothers in *King Lear*

Troilus and Cressida, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Othello* are all to some degree exfoliations of Hamlet's spoiled relation with Ophelia, following out the consequences of his recognition that there can be no more marriage in a world contaminated by maternal sexuality. *King Lear* also plays out this recognition, excising any imaginable space in which legitimate sexuality might take place. But in *King Lear*, the marital plots are no longer central; here Shakespeare returns to the primary material of *Hamlet*, where the virtual abdication of the father from his position of power unleashes for his son a violent fear of unmediated maternal power. And here, father and son are collapsed into one figure: for Lear is simultaneously the father who abdicates and the son who must suffer the consequences of this abdication. In thus collapsing father and son into one figure, Shakespeare enables his story about a father's relationship with his daughters to carry the immense fear and longing of a son's relationship with a mother, investing it with infantile fantasies so unmediated in their intensity that they are relatively disorganized, not bound within the limits of a single fictional character or plot movement. For the collapse of father and son into one figure is only the first of many such collapses. If Hamlet must struggle to keep male and female apart, struggle against the horror of the "one flesh," at least his own identity remains relatively assured; but here all the traditional guarantees of identity itself dissolve in a terrifying female moisture in which mother and daughter, male and female, inner and outer, self and other, lose their boundaries, threatening a return to the primal chaos.[1] For here the fantasies are themselves wholly unbounded, and in their unboundedness return us to the maelstrom of what Freud called primary process thinking, making us lose our bearings as Lear loses his; in measuring these fantasies,

we measure the distance between the literal mothers Tamora or Gertrude or Volumnia and the power of the storm.

It may at first seem merely perverse to understand *King Lear* as in part the adumbration of fantasies about maternal power, particularly given the entire absence of literal mothers in the play; at first glance, *Lear* seems overwhelmingly about fathers and their paternity rather than about mothers. The motherlessness of Lear's world is striking particularly if one comes to it from the source play, *The True Chronicle Historie of King Leir*, in which the emotional starting point is the king's dismay at the death of his wife and the motherlessness of his daughters; in that play, the king's decision to abdicate and divide the kingdom is presented in part as his response to her loss.[2] But our King Lear has no wife, his daughters no mother; nor, apparently, have they ever had one: Queen Lear goes unmentioned, except for those characteristic moments when Lear invokes her to cast doubt on his paternity. *Leir* starts with the fact of maternal loss; *Lear* excises this loss, giving us the uncanny sense of a world created by fathers alone.[3]

But Lear's confrontation with his daughters (I will argue) repeatedly leads him back to the mother ostensibly occluded by the play:[4] in recognizing his daughters as part of himself he will be led to recognize not only his terrifying dependence on female forces outside himself but also an equally terrifying femaleness within himself—a femaleness that he will come to call "mother" (2.4.56). For this text about fathers insistently returns to mothers: discovering what he is father to, confronting the implications of his own paternity, Lear is brought to acknowledge their absent presence; and even Gloucester, unproblematically father to sons, is made the victim of their awesome power. I take as a central text of the play the fool's bitter "thou mad'st thy daughters thy mothers; . . . thou gav'st them the rod and putt'st down thine own breeches" (1.4.179–81), with its painfully literal suggestions of both generational and gender reversal, of infantile exposure and maternal punishment. Much of the play's power comes, I think, from its confrontation with the landscape of maternal deprivation or worse, from the vulnerability and rage that is the consequence of this confrontation and the intensity and fragility of the hope for a saving maternal presence that can undo pain. In the characteristic way of the return of the repressed, that is, the excision of the mother that seems initially to allow for a fantasy of male parthenogenesis ends by releasing fantasies far more frightening than any merely literal mother could be, fantasies that give emotional coloration to the entire play in part because they are not localized in (and hence limited to) any single character.

We can see this process of repression and terrifying return played out in miniature in the Gloucester plot. In the opening lines of the play, Edmund's mother is invoked only to be absented, apparently for the rest of the play. The opening exchange between Kent and Gloucester is full of nervousness about the biological relation between fathers and sons, and about the place of mothers; Edmund's mother appears in the text only in response to a pun that emphasizes the differing reproductive roles of men and women:

> *Kent* Is not this your son, my Lord?
>
> *Glou.* His breeding, Sir, hath been at my charge: I have so often blush'd to acknowledge him, that now I am braz'd to't.
>
> *Kent* I cannot conceive you.
>
> *Glou.* Sir, this young fellow's mother could; whereupon she grew round-womb'd. . . . Do you smell a fault?
>
> *Kent* I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper. (1.1.8–18)

Kent could not conceive, but this fellow's mother could. The pun doubly turns on the tenuousness of this father's biological relation to his son: Gloucester's terms for his part in the making of Edmund ("his breeding . . . hath been at my charge") are so evasive[5] that Kent does not at first understand what Gloucester means; and their evasiveness is a function not only of Gloucester's shame but also of the tenuousness of the male role in reproduction *per se*. But there is nothing tenuous about that round womb: Edmund is unequivocally his mother's child, the "issue" from her "fault."[6] As though in response to that unequivocal round womb, Gloucester then turns from Edmund to the absent Edgar: "But I have a son, Sir, by order of law, some year elder than this" (1.1.19–20). His shift from one son to the other—"but I have a son"—in effect distinguishes between Edmund as his mother's child and Edgar as his father's: if Edmund is the product of a mother's womb, Edgar is the product of patriarchal law, apparently motherless. In distinguishing between his legitimate and illegitimate sons, Gloucester manages to do away with the womb altogether, making Edgar all his.

The differences between these sons will be played out in the dynamic between them. But for the moment, let us ask what becomes of Edmund's mother in this transaction. Present only as a site of illegitimacy, she—and the round womb of maternal reproduction—are erased by Gloucester's reference to Edgar and by the rest of the play. She may make a brief and covert reappearance under the guise of "Nature" in

Edmund's apostrophe to her when he next appears; at least his dedication of himself to Nature's "law" (1.2.1–2) reminds us that there is more than one law and recalls the outlaw status of Edmund's mother. For the most part, however, her erasure seems total. But although exiled as a bodily presence or even as a figure to whom others allude, she returns in full force in the last moments of the play, when Edgar offers a moralized account of his father's history:

> My name is Edgar, and thy father's son.
> The Gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
> Make instruments to plague us;
> The dark and vicious place where thee he got
> Cost him his eyes.
>
> (5.3.169–73)

In Edgar's account, the play comes full circle and we are returned to its beginning. As legitimate Edgar identifies himself to his dying brother ("My name is Edgar, and thy father's son"), he stresses not their fraternity but his claim to his father, reiterating the distinction of the opening scene: once again, Edgar—the legitimate, the would-be rescuer of his father—is his "father's son"; once again, Edmund—the illegitimate, his father's scourge—is his mother's, derivative from her dark and vicious place. And now the vice lightly acknowledged—and dismissed—by Gloucester is revealed as the cause of all his suffering. But even as Edgar blames his father for his own blinding, he constructs an alternate version of the story in which the blinding is less the logical moral consequence of Gloucester's vicious action than it is the analogical extension of the place of vice; and in this version, the blinding is all the mother's fault. Wholly excising Cornwall's role in Gloucester's blinding, acknowledging even Edmund's only parenthetically ("where thee he got"), Edgar in effect names the female sexual "place" as the blinding agent, metonymically making the darkness of that place equivalent to the darkness into which Gloucester is plunged. And at this moment, the presence occluded throughout the play reinstates itself with a vengeance, and reinstates itself in Gloucester's body: blinded by his commerce with her darkness, he carries in himself the darkness of this "dark and vicious place" writ large.[7]

In simultaneously marking the mother's child as illegitimate and locating the place of female begetting as the father's scourge, the Gloucester plot plays out a bizarre fantasy in which social anxieties about illegitimacy and patriarchal inheritance are fused with psychological anxieties about sexuality and masculine identity. Patriarchal society depends on the principle of inheritance in which the father's

identity—his property, his name, his authority—is transmitted from father to son; in the words of the Paphlagonian king who is Gloucester's prototype in *Arcadia*, the father of a true son need "envie no father for the chiefe comfort of mortalitie, to leave an other ones-selfe after me."[8] But this transmission from father to son can take place only insofar as both father and son pass through the body of a woman;[9] and this passage radically alters them both. This is the weak spot in patriarchal inheritance: maternal origin and illegitimacy are synonymous in the Gloucester plot—and throughout *Lear*—because sexuality *per se* is illegitimate and illegitimizes its children; whether or not the son is biologically his father's, the mother's dark place inevitably contaminates him, compromising his father's presence in him.[10] For the son who has traversed the maternal body cannot be wholly "an other ones-selfe" for his father; the mother's part in him threatens the fantasy of perfect self-replication that would preserve the father in the son. As Falstaff tells us, "the son of the female"—any female—"is the shadow of the male" (*2 Henry IV*, 3.2.126–28). And the father himself will be deeply compromised by the sexual concourse that produces the son. Edgar's bizarre metaphor for his father's blindness—"in this habit / Met I my father with his bleeding rings, / Their precious stones new lost" (5.3.188–90)—makes plain what his earlier equation of blindness with the place of female generation (5.3.172–73) had implied: both the secondary meaning of "stones" as testicles and the frequent association of rings with the female genitals rewrite Edgar's reassuringly cold and hard metaphor for loss as an image of castration, in effect registering the transformation of his father into a woman with a bleeding ring.[11] In Edgar's image, that is, the father bears the corrosive signs of his concourse with the female; the occluded maternal presence is in effect etched on his face.

The pattern of repression and return visible in Edmund's illegitimacy and in the blinding of Gloucester is played out again in the Lear plot, where the presence of daughters *per se*— daughters instead of sons—has a function equivalent to the presence of illegitimacy in the Gloucester plot, that of returning the father to the occluded maternal place. Shakespeare in fact arranges matters so that we will feel the presence of Lear's daughters as a slight disturbance, a perplexing substitution for the sons we expect him to have: in the play's opening lines, both Gloucester's reference to his own two sons and the talk of dividing the kingdom between two men we know nothing about predispose us to think of these men as Lear's sons; and Lear himself refers to Albany and Cornwall as his sons (1.1.41–42) before he mentions that he has daughters (1.1.44). Our carefully induced surprise at the sudden substitution of daughters—three of them for the two sons we had

apparently been promised—registers something like Lear's unspoken problem:[12] by definition, his daughters disrupt the patriarchal ideal, both insofar as they disrupt the transmission of property from father to son and insofar as they disrupt the paternal fantasy of perfect self-replication. Even more clearly than the mother's son, the daughter is but "the shadow of the male," carrying within her the disruptive sign of the mother's presence. (Why does this father have only daughters?)

In its representation of Lear's problematic relation to his daughters, the Lear plot simultaneously replicates and analyzes the logic of illegitimacy in the Gloucester plot. If Gloucester's wicked son is literally illegitimate, Lear similarly imagines that his disobedient daughters are illegitimate, "degenerate bastard[s]" (1.4.262), the products of an adulterous womb (2.4.131–33). If the only mother of the Gloucester plot is Edmund's, the only mother of the Lear plot is the adulterous mother Lear thus imagines; and like Edgar,[13] Cordelia is motherless, purely her father's child. Once again, the female sexual place is necessarily the place of corruption, the "sulphurous pit" (4.6.130) that is Lear's equivalent to Edgar's "dark and vicious place";[14] present only as a site of illegitimacy, the mother once again transmits her faults to her issue, the children whose corrupt sexuality records their origin. And once again the plot sets the father's pure and a-sexual child[15] against the mother's, making his child the father's bulwark against her dark power as it is played out through her children.[16] But the logic of illegitimacy is played out with a difference in the Lear plot. For we know, as Lear comes to know, that Goneril and Regan are not in fact illegitimate; the whole of the play works to bring him to the recognition of his own complicity in their making. And this time the protective function of the fantasy of illegitimacy is made visible. Lear imagines his daughters illegitimate when he cannot tolerate their failure to meet his needs; he would rather imagine himself a cuckold than be forced to acknowledge that the female children who so imperfectly replicate him are part his. The fantasy of their illegitimacy is thus his pyrrhic solution to the larger problem of daughters: insofar as he can make their disruptive femaleness entirely derivative from their mother's sexual fault, he can dissociate himself wholly from it, in effect disowning them as he has earlier attempted to disown Cordelia.

But even while the logic of illegitimacy is thus stripped bare, the female site of generation nonetheless remains the site and sign of corruption in the Lear plot as in the Gloucester plot. For Lear's acknowledgment of complicity in the making of his daughters turns out to mean not so much his acknowledgment of his own sexual darkness as his acknowledgment that he too has been contaminated by the dark and vicious place. Far from recuperating the place of female sexuality

by freeing it from blame, his recognition that his daughters are legitimate merely invests the horror of that place in him. Recognizing his part in Goneril and Regan entails recognizing their part in him; if they are his, then he is intolerably implicated in their femaleness.[17] Forced to acknowledge his own part in the making of Goneril, he identifies her as the disease in his own body:

> We'll no more meet, no more see one another;
> But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;
> Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,
> Which I must needs call mine: thou art a boil,
> A plague-sore, or embossed carbuncle,
> In my corrupted blood.
>
> (2.4.222–27)

Even as he would disown her ("We'll no more meet"), he must acknowledge that she is inextricably his, and hence the sign of corruption in him. For if she is his, then he is complicit with the dark and vicious place that made her: both her name and the imagery of skin disease make her the sign of the specifically venereal disease that registers his own participation in the sexual fault.[18] And as he imagines her a swelling within him—"a boil, / A plague-sore, or embossed carbuncle" in his corrupted blood—he takes that dark place into himself; his language figures his body as grotesquely female, pregnant with the disease that is his daughter. Acknowledging Goneril his flesh and blood entails making his own body the site of her monstrous femaleness.[19]

Lear cannot ultimately sustain the protective fantasy that his daughters are bastards, wholly separate from him, and the collapse of this fantasy illustrates what it is designed to protect him from: if Goneril is his, then her female corruption is within him; in attempting to disown her, he finds her inside himself. Like Edgar's account of the blinding of Gloucester, this moment seems to me characteristic of the broader pattern of repression and return that governs the play's treatment of mothers: for the play that apparently excludes mothers simultaneously plays out a dark fantasy about the interior of the female body, about the position of the male who traverses that body, and about the traces the female body consequently leaves within the male. This fantasy everywhere shapes Lear's encounters with his daughters, the literally female flesh that he must needs call his. But it is most terrifyingly expressed not through them but through the storm that is their avatar; its traces in fact determine the logic that governs Lear's meditative reworking of the storm in his meeting with Gloucester in 4.6, the logic that links his greeting of Gloucester ("Goneril, with a white beard" [l.

97]), his recollection of the rain that came to wet him once (ll. 102–8), his bitter acknowledgment that his daughters were "got 'tween the lawful sheets" (l. 119), his recoil from the "sulphurous pit" (l. 130), and the smell of mortality on his own hands (l. 135). For he concludes his meditation by arriving at the place of his birth, acknowledging his mortality as he remembers his origins: "We came crying hither: / Thou know'st the first time that we smell the air / We wawl and cry" (ll. 180–82). Within the logic of these associations, the storm comes to function as the sign of the female place of origin; in remembering it, Lear records its traces in himself.

Initially, the storm seems to Lear to be the place of the male thunderer classically associated with its powers. In his initial response to it, he invokes this thunderer, rewriting his impotence in the face of the daughters who have thrust him into the storm—the daughters who can "shake [his] manhood thus" (1.4.306)—by imagining himself on the side of the "all-shaking thunder" (3.2.6) that makes the caitiff shake (3.2.55). And he invokes this masculine authority specifically against the female site of origin, "round-womb'd" as Edmund's mother (1.1.14): commanding the thunder to "Strike flat the thick rotundity o' th' world! / Crack Nature's moulds, all germens spill at once" (3.2.7–8), he cosmologizes his earlier attack on Goneril's womb ("Into her womb convey sterility! / Dry up in her the organs of increase" [1.4.287–88]). But Lear cannot reinstate his own masculine authority by joining with the thunderer in his destruction; he cannot command this or any other power. Recourse to male authority—his own or that of the gods—will not protect him; as the storm speaks his impotence, exposing him as "a poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man" (3.2.20), it reiterates not his lost power but his own helplessness in the face of his daughters' rage, and the elements themselves come to seem less the signs of male authority than the exfoliations of their power, "servile ministers / That will with two pernicious daughters join / . . . 'gainst a head / So old and white as this" (3.2.21–24).

For if the storm is classically the domain of the male thunderer, it is simultaneously the domain of disruptive female power: associated both with the storms that witches were commonly suspected of raising and with the storms that conventionally figure the turbulence of Fortune (the "arrant whore" who—like Lear's daughters—"ne'er turns the key to th' poor" [2.4.52–53]), this storm becomes in effect the signature of maternal malevolence, the sign of her power to withhold and destroy.[20] As Poor Tom reminds us, this storm is witch's turf, where "Swithold . . . met the night-mare, and her nine-fold; / . . . And aroint thee, witch, aroint thee!" (3.4.123–27). It is no accident, I think, that Poor Tom himself defines his place in this nightmare world by what

he has been forced to eat: asked who he is, he answers with a catalogue that anticipates the "eye of newt, and toe of frog," the toad and dog and lizard, of *Macbeth* (4.1.6–17); he is

> Poor Tom; that eats the swimming frog, the toad, the todpole, the wall-newt, and the water; that . . . eats cow-dung for sallets; swallows the old rat and the ditch-dog; drinks the green mantle of the standing pool.
>
> (3.4.132–37)

This is the landscape of the witches' cauldron, the obverse of the landscape on Lear's map,[21] with its "plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads" (1.1.65) reassuringly abundant and reassuringly under male control; here, the kind goddess nature whom Lear thought he could command (1.4.284) is revealed under the aspect of Hecate. No wonder that he should attempt to invoke the masculine authority of the gods against her, as though he could uproot her monstrous generativity.

Despite Lear's recurrent attempts to find a just Thunderer in the storm, that is, its violence ultimately epitomizes not the just masculine authority on which Lear would base his own but the dark female power that everywhere threatens to undermine that authority. No longer under the aegis of a male thunderer, the very wetness of the storm comes to seem a sexual wetness, a monstrous spilling of germens that threatens to undo civilization and manhood itself, spouting rain until it has "drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks" (3.2.3), its power an extension into the cosmos of Goneril's power to shake Lear's manhood. Fantasized site of Poor Tom's "act of darkness" (3.4.87–88), the storm takes on the aspect of the hellish "Lake of Darkness" in which Nero is an angler (3.6.7), becoming itself the dark and vicious place writ large.[22] Hence, I think, the logic according to which Lear's memory of the storm—"when the rain came to wet me once and the wind to make me chatter, when the thunder would not peace at my bidding" (4.6.102–4)—leads him to imagine that female place, and to imagine concentrated in it the dispersed elements of the storm:

> But to the girdle do the Gods inherit,
> Beneath is all the fiend's: there's hell, there's darkness,
> There is the sulphurous pit—burning, scalding,
> Stench, consumption; fie, fie, fie! pah, pah!
>
> (4.6.128–31)

For the "sulph'rous and thought-executing fires" (3.2.4) of that "hell-black night" (3.7.59) are replicated in the hell and darkness and burn-

ing and stench of this "sulphurous pit" (4.6.129–31); in arriving at this pit, Lear in effect traces the elements of the storm back to their origin.

The fantasy given darkest expression in the storm is of Lear's subjection to the realm of Hecate, in which masculine identity and the civilization that upheld it are dissolved in a terrifying female moisture. Hence, I think, the logic behind the awful simultaneity of Lear's exposure on the heath and Gloucester's blinding, instigated by Lear's daughters. The oscillation of scenes throughout Act III—indoors and outdoors equally brutal—serves to intensify the audience's pain, as each promises momentary relief from the other and then drives in a different mode toward the same dark place. For the one acts out the subjugation that has been implicit in the other: in the blinding of Gloucester, the punitive female power of the storm—the power of the dark and vicious place—is given a local habitation and a name. We begin the rush into the storm with the womanish tears Lear attempts to suppress, the tears that threaten to stain his "man's cheeks" (2.4.280); we end with a Gloucester vulnerable as a woman, a Gloucester whose man's cheeks are stained with the blood and jelly of his weeping eyes. We begin with the "eyeless" storm (3.1.8) and end with the blinded Gloucester. As Lear is driven toward the nightmare state of the naked baby, exposed to the rage of the punitive mother in the storm, Gloucester is transformed into a woman by the daughters who are her human agents: her dark and vicious place newly recorded in his own eyelessness, Gloucester is mistaken by Lear for that monster-woman herself, "Goneril, with a white beard" (4.6.97).

The storm as Lear recalls it is the testing place of masculine power, the site of the punitive sexualized mother; in greeting the feminized Gloucester as Goneril, Lear sees her signs in him. And as he traces the elements of the storm back to their origin in her, he comes to find the same elements in himself. This recoil onto the self is registered in part through smell, the most primitive of infant senses, the one that Lear later makes synonymous with breathing itself (4.6.181). Initially smelling out the flattery of others in the storm ("there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are not men o' their words" [4.6.105–6]), he comes via the stench of the sulphurous pit to the smell of mortality on his own hands:

> *Lear* There is the sulphurous pit—burning, scalding,
> Stench, consumption; fie, fie, fie! pah, pah!
> Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary,
> To sweeten my imagination.
> There's money for thee.

> *Glou.* O! let me kiss that hand.
> *Lear* Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality.
> (4.6.129–35)

In tracing his mortality to its source, he revises the bravado of his triumphant "there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out": the smell becomes specifically female and implicates him in its stench. Spitting out his words ("pah, pah!") as though he would violently expel the tormenting thought of that female stench within him, Lear finds it in his own body. For the stench of the sulphurous pit and the smell of mortality turn out to be one:[23] his own flesh—traditionally derivative from the woman's part in conception—carries that stench within it, as the mark of her female corruption in him.[24] This—his origin in and vulnerability to the sulphurous pit—is what Lear smells out in the storm.

Attempting to disown Goneril, Lear finds her a disease within his own body; attempting to separate himself from her corrupt femaleness, he finds himself pregnant with her. Attempting to escape his own feminizing emotions by rushing out into the storm, he finds himself caught in the female maelstrom; attempting to smell out the faults of others, he finds the stench of the sulphurous pit on his own hands. But despite his attempts to suppress its presence in himself, he has always known that that pit was within him; his rush out into the storm was in part one more attempt to avoid that knowledge. Lear wants to think that his daughters drive him out into the storm (3.4.17–19). But he is driven toward the storm less by his daughters' actions than by the intensity of feeling with which he responds to their actions; he invents his exposure to the storm (2.4.210–13) well before they close their doors against him. When the storm he imagines materializes, it announces itself as an externalization of his feelings, in effect a projection outward of everything he cannot tolerate within:

> You think I'll weep;
> No, I'll not weep:
> I have full cause of weeping, [*Storm and Tempest.*][25]
> but this heart
> Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws
> Or ere I'll weep.
> (2.4.284–88)

Attempting to mobilize masculine rage against his intolerable feelings—as he will later attempt to invoke the male Thunderer in the storm—he identifies these feelings specifically as female: "touch me

with noble anger, / And let not women's weapons, water-drops, / Stain my man's cheeks" (2.4.278–80). Rushing out into the storm made of his own tears, Lear rushes out to confront what is inside him: for if the storm is the embodiment of the female force that shakes his manhood, that force is from the start the enemy within.[26]

Earlier, before the storm, Lear has given this female force her proper name:

> O! how this mother swells up toward my heart;
> *Hysterica passio*! down, thou climbing sorrow!
> Thy element's below. Where is this daughter?
> (2.4.56–58)

The bizarreness of these lines has not always been appreciated; in them, Lear quite literally acknowledges the presence of the sulphurous pit within him. Suffocated by the emotions that he thinks of as female, Lear gives them the name of the woman's part, as though he himself bore that diseased and wandering organ within: for "mother" is a technical term for the uterus; "Hysterica passio" or "the suffocation of the mother" is the disease caused by its wandering.[27] Like Richard III, Lear discovers his origin in the suffocating maternal womb and traces his vulnerability to it: if he was once inside it, it is now inside him, and his suffocating emotions are its sign. Thus naming his pain, Lear localizes in himself the nightmare that Poor Tom will later evoke in the storm:[28] finding her within and calling her "mother," he traces his internal femaleness to her presence within him, the presence that now rises up to choke him. And at this moment, Shakespeare shows us the place of the repressed mother: her organ the epitome of the woman who refuses to stay in her proper place,[29] she turns up at the very center of masculine authority, in the king's own body; excluded outside, she returns within, undermining the gender divide and so shaking the foundations of masculine identity. It is no wonder that the storm seems a near-psychotic experience for us as for Lear, for it plays out the terror of this discovery: in the storm made of his own irrepressible femaleness, the storm that is the maternal signature, all boundaries dissolve, and Lear is once more inside what is inside him.

Insofar as the Lear plot insists on Lear's complicity in the making of his daughters and on the presence of the female within him, it scrutinizes, and criticizes, the scapegoating logic of the Gloucester plot—the logic that would make only the female the agent of darkness. In fact the play at one point thematizes the logic of this scapegoating, as

though to distance itself from it. Faced with the hard evidence of Edgar's mutilated body, Lear invents wicked daughters to account for his suffering, as though only they could be to blame:

> *Lear* Now all the plagues that in the pendulous air
> Hang fated o'er men's faults light on thy daughters!
>
> *Kent* He hath no daughters, Sir.
>
> *Lear* Death, traitor! nothing could have subdu'd nature
> To such a lowness but his unkind daughters.
> Is it the fashion that discarded fathers
> Should have thus little mercy on their flesh?
> Judicious punishment! 'twas this flesh begot
> Those pelican daughters.
> (3.4.66–75)

Inventing these wicked daughters, Lear in effect rewrites a tale of fraternal and paternal abuse as a tale of abuse by daughters. And this invention serves a patently defensive function: having invented them, he can righteously call punishment down upon them, deflecting onto them the plague that "hangs fated o'er men's faults." But this is the punishment that hangs specifically over Lear's own fault/foutre. In diverting the plagues that hang fated over men's faults onto the daughters who can be made to suffer in their stead, Lear attempts to insulate himself from acknowledgment of the "plague-sore, or embossed carbuncle" (2.4.226) in his own corrupted blood; relocating plague outside the boundaries of his body, in the wicked daughters he invents, he ensures that the daughters—rather than their fathers—are to be punished for the faults/foutres that have made them.

The mechanism of scapegoating is laid bare here, in Lear's attempt to redirect the plague from his own fault; but the plague nonetheless lights on his daughters. Even while the play enables us to see Lear's need for wicked daughters, and hence undermines the scapegoating logic, it nonetheless replicates that logic,[30] construing Lear's fault itself as the legacy of the female, the contaminating maternal inheritance that cannot be disowned or suppressed. And it moreover represents Goneril and Regan in accordance with the demands of that logic; in their portrayal, the play's dramaturgy is entirely complicit with the fantasy of the dark and vicious place. For the play simultaneously illuminates their genesis in Lear's need and embraces Lear's vision of them, making them as monstrous as he himself could have wished: as it progresses, they are increasingly identified as the source of evil; finally removed wholly from the realm of human sympathy—as Edmund never is—they die as monsters, consumed by their own excess.[31] And

insofar as the play localizes plague in them, it collaborates in Lear's own attempt to transfer blame and punishment to daughters, who thus become the contaminating plague-source that can deflect blame away from him. "Is it the fashion that discarded fathers / Should have thus little mercy on their flesh?" Lear asks; and the question cuts both ways: for if they hurt Lear, Lear—and Shakespeare—hurt them.[32] If the play relentlessly returns Lear to the dark and vicious place initially occluded, forcing him to acknowledge his complicity in the stench of female corruption, it is nonetheless the women who pay the full cost of his return. And if the cost is high for Goneril and Regan, it is even higher for Cordelia. For the monstrous mother/daughters Lear finds in them are in part Cordelia's psychic progeny, generated out of his terrible need for her; and as a consequence, she must become the sacrificial antidote to maternal malevolence in them. Acting out Lear's fantasied relation to the occluded mother through all three of the daughters who are her projections, the play divides and conquers her, recontaining her in the daughters who are her derivatives, all three of whom die in an instant. The wheel indeed comes full circle and the play ends where it had begun, with the eradication of the problematic female body.[33]

Because Cordelia is the original site of vulnerability, the site from which Lear's need unfolds, the process of recontainment is most intensely played out in relation to her. For the fantasy of maternal contamination is, I think, the flip side of the longing for maternal presence expressed through Lear's relationship to her; it is in part the price required by the fantasy of merger with which the play begins. When Lear strips himself in 1.1, voluntarily giving up everything to embrace the nothing that is his traditional end—"Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything," as Jaques would have it (*As You Like It*, 2.7.165–66)—he attempts in effect to bargain with the nothingness of death, embracing nothingness on his own terms and for his own ends.[34] And as he does so, Shakespeare psychologizes Jaques's familiar trope of old age as "second childishness": in giving his daughters control over the extended body that is his kingdom, Lear would make them his mothers, deliberately putting himself in the position of infantile need from which he will experience the rest of the play. His response to Cordelia after she has disappointed him shows us what is at stake for him in this bargain: he will trade in his *all* ("I gave you all" [2.4.252]) to secure Cordelia's *all*, exchanging both possessions and adult autonomy for the promise of her unconditional and undivided love, in order to make her nursery his final resting place ("I lov'd her most, and thought to set my rest / On her kind nursery" [1.1.123–24]). Imagining himself an infant sleeping at her breast, he revisions as plenitude the death toward which he is crawling (1.1.41), attempting to replace its nothingness with the *all* that fusion with her idealized maternal body seems to promise.

In this exchange, Shakespeare reworks the fantasy of maternal plenitude as a stay against death that he had articulated briefly in *2 Henry VI*, when Suffolk imagined death separated from his beloved Margaret:

> . . . in thy sight to die, what were it else
> But like a pleasant slumber in thy lap?
> Here could I breathe my soul into the air,
> As mild and gentle as the cradle-babe
> Dying with mother's dug between its lips;
> Where, from thy sight, I should be raging mad,
> And cry out for thee to close up mine eyes,
> To have thee with thy lips to stop my mouth.
> (*2 Henry VI*, 3.2.388–95)[35]

Nothing we have seen of Suffolk or Margaret prepares for the bizarre intensity of this moment; its very extraneousness, the extent to which it is not assimilated to the text, marks it as urgently intrusive, not merely an instance of the youthful Shakespeare's stylistic experimentation (although it is certainly that) but an early eruption of the peculiarly Shakespearean fantasy that shapes the portrayal of sexual union and death in *Troilus and Cressida*, *Othello*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* as it shapes the portrayal of Lear's need. For Suffolk, lover and mother fuse; and death is tolerable only insofar as it is imagined as union with this ideally nurturant figure. Madness, he suggests, is the only alternative to this vision. But even at this early stage, the fantasy is self-consuming. Even as Suffolk articulates it, it rebounds upon itself, making of Margaret less a stay against death than an agent of death itself: she closes his eyes; she stops his mouth. Both in the nakedness with which it articulates the fantasy of maternal plenitude and in the transformation of Margaret into an agent of death, Suffolk's speech usefully anticipates the movement of *King Lear*: for in *King Lear*, Shakespeare elaborates both the madness Suffolk hints at and the danger inherent in this maternal body.

This danger initially emerges when Cordelia cannot meet Lear's need of her; at this point, maternal presence splits in two, as the benign and nurturant mother with whom Lear would merge generates her opposite, the annihilating mothers who seek his death.[36] For Cordelia cannot give Lear her *all*; her first word to him, reiterating the threat of death itself, is "Nothing."[37] Attempting to separate herself from her

father by insisting on her duties as a wife, she partitions her love, rebuking his desire for *all* by using the language of arithmetical exactitude: "I love your Majesty / According to my bond; no more nor less. . . . That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry / Half my love with him. . . . Sure I shall never marry like my sisters, / To love my father all" (1.1.92–104). But in the arithmetic of infantile need, there can be no *some*; anything less than all is nothing.[38] Her response shatters his dream of kind nursery, of the unconditional and undivided love that could turn death itself into blissful fusion; thrust back toward the nothingness of his own death, Lear discovers from Cordelia that he is not all, that he is a finite and mortal creature.[39]

Lear responds to this discovery with the rage of an abandoned infant, banishing her both in retaliation for her abandonment of him and in order to gain control over her loss, like a child closing his eyes against the dark—or like a Coriolanus shouting "I banish you!" to the Rome that has banished him. And in his rage, he calls up the mother she has become in his mind, invoking in her place those punitive mothers to whom he himself has given the rod (1.4.179–81). Cordelia clarifies this exchange as she bids her sisters farewell, setting her "better place" against their "professed bosoms" ("To your professed bosoms I commit him: / But yet, alas! stood I within his grace, / I would prefer him to a better place" [1.1.272–74]). Like Cordelia, the play strenuously insists on the difference between these two places—and yet at the same time reveals their common origin. For these monstrously punitive mothers are, I think, psychically generated by Lear's rage at Cordelia; they play out her abandonment of him. As Goneril and Regan develop into monsters, they become exfoliations of what Lear's imagination has made of Cordelia: it is Cordelia's sexuality, her insistence on her own separateness, that first strike Lear as monstrous. If she seems willing to cuckold him by choosing a husband in place of him, they "leave his horns without a case" (1.5.31–32); her troublesome sexuality is played out in their voracious appetite. If she seems to offer him nothing in place of all, they would reduce him to nothingness; her psychic abandonment of him is literalized in their opposing the bolt against his coming in (2.4.178–79), in their driving him into the storm that is the epitome of their annihilating power. If her muted strivings toward autonomy—her standing aside from her father's need—are the first challenge to Lear's omnipotence and hence the reminder of his finitude, Goneril and Regan become the principle of female autonomy run mad, playing out the logic through which female autonomy must mean the annihilation of the male.[40]

Mothers made monstrous by Lear's disappointed rage at Cordelia, Goneril and Regan enact the fantasies of abandonment and annihilation that her rejection has created in him; we see their genesis as he attempts to disown the mother/child who has disobeyed him, invoking the horrific landscape of maternal abandonment that he will then be forced to occupy.[41] Disclaiming his paternal care of Cordelia not only "by the sacred radiance of the sun" but also by "the mysteries of Hecate and the night" (1.1.109–13), Lear calls upon the dark female region of the storm as though it were his to command; but, once invoked, it will take on a life of its own, peopled by Goneril and Regan, the cannibalistic witch-children his own rage has made. For they are the distorted children of his own appetite, born from his hunger for Cordelia. Disowning her, he compares her to "the barbarous Scythian . . . that makes his generation messes / To gorge his appetite" (1.1.116–18). Just where we might expect a reference to a wicked child, we are given this monstrously devouring father;[42] and the illogic of the image suggests the psychic source of Lear's monster daughters. For the Scythian's grotesque appetite is a nightmare version of Lear's own desire to feed on Cordelia's kind nursery; and as though in talion punishment for this thwarted desire, her punitive surrogates turn cannibal in his imagination, becoming sharp-toothed (1.4.297, 2.4.136), the "pelican daughters" (3.4.75), the kites and wolves (1.4.271, 317), vultures and serpents (2.4.136, 162), who feed on him.

As Cordelia is the original site of vulnerability, only she can serve as reassurance against the dark mother Lear's rage releases into the play. Physically separated from the place of this mother—the place of the storm—through her long absence, she comes to epitomize the antidote against it; on her return, she is identified as the "one daughter, / Who redeems nature from the general curse / Which twain have brought her to" (4.6.206–8). —But which twain? The Gentleman's words construe Cordelia as the antidote not only to the curse of Goneril and Regan, but, behind them, to the curse of our first parents. In his extraordinary condensation of Goneril and Regan with Adam and Eve, the Gentleman makes both pairs equally responsible for the fall; in superimposing one "twain" on the other, he doubles Eve's role in Goneril and Regan and eliminates Adam. Through this condensation, Shakespeare in effect offers a revised version of the fall, making our fallen nature entirely derivative from Eve and her daughters, entirely the inheritance of the woman's part. In this revision, we are fallen insofar as we are hers; our fallen nature is her sign in us. And Cordelia can return—can redeem the nature that they have cursed—only insofar as she is exempt from this maternal inheritance, in essence remade as the second Eve, the Virgin Mother who can undo harm.

But the remaking is strenuous. Cordelia leaves Act I a loving but stubbornly self-righteous daughter, devoted equally to her own harsh

truth and to her father, insisting on her right to give half her love to her husband; remade in her absence in the image of Lear's need, she returns in Act IV as a holy mother, surrounded by the nimbus of redemption. At least in the Quarto version of the play, Shakespeare works hard to prepare for her reappearance,[43] transforming her from a relatively naturalistically conceived character into a virtual icon of the *mater dolorosa*, the heavenly queen who shakes "the holy water from her heavenly eyes" (4.3.31); when she herself enters, going about her father's business (4.4.24), she confirms her assumption of this role, praying that "All bless'd secrets, / All you unpublish'd virtues of the earth, / Spring with my tears!" (4.4.15–17).[44] Hence, I think, the fate of France: for Cordelia can become the curative virgin mother only insofar as she gives up every sign of the marital sexuality that had epitomized her disturbing otherness in 1.1, the sexuality that in effect mobilized Lear's fantasy-creation of the malevolent mother. Transformed in Lear's mind into "the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took / Our youngest born" (2.4.214–15), France must be banished from the scene, however awkwardly ("Why the King of France is so suddenly gone back know you no reason?" [4.3.1]), before Cordelia can be reconstituted as Virgin Mother, exempt from the fault of Eve: we need only try to imagine where France might be in Lear's prison fantasy—"We three alone will sing like birds i' th' cage"?—to see how vital his absence is. And hence the logic that gives Cordelia no mother: she can play redeeming Mary to Goneril and Regan's offending Eve only insofar as she is radically isolated from their maternal heritage.

Only thus redefined as the holy mother can Cordelia safely return to love her father all, her kiss repairing "those violent harms that [her] two sisters / Have in [his] reverence made" (4.7.28–29); only thus redefined can she redeem the dark and vicious place of the storm, the place of Eve, and of Goneril and Regan. And with her return, the storm indeed fades, its landscape of deprivation replaced by the renewed vision of kind nursery that springs with her tears. With her return, something like trust in the natural world becomes possible again, for us and for Lear: though we do not return to the nature Lear thought he could command, the witch-nature of the storm is replaced by the figure of Cordelia as Ceres—the good mother searching "the high-grown field" (4.4.7) for her child, the mother whose care brings back spring to the earth.[45] Now, where there had been only "idle weeds"—the rank fumiter and furrow-weeds, the hardocks, hemlock, nettles and darnel that crown Lear—there is "our sustaining corn" (4.4.6). *Our* corn: Cordelia carries with her the possibility of a benign natural world, a world that can sustain us. This is the emotional landscape of Eden, nature redeemed from the curse that twain had brought her to.

Cordelia's return seems to give Lear everything that he had wanted in 1.1—indeed, everything that he had been punished for wanting—promising a return to *all*, hence enabling in him a renewed fantasy of the boundless fusion that can undo division and death. His awakening to Cordelia in 4.7 is literally an awakening from a dream of death as isolation and endless punishment, in which the tears he had tried to suppress have become instruments of torture: "I am bound / Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears / Do scald like molten lead" (4.7.46–48). At first her presence seems a faint continuation of that dream: for he can recognize her only by seeing in her the last vestige of the punitive mother his rage at her has released into the play ("If you have poison for me, I will drink it. / I know you do not love me" [4.7.72–73]); like a penitent child, he is willing to accept any punishment in order to earn her love. But Cordelia's "no cause" (4.7.75) kills the great rage in him (4.7.78–79), returning him to the dream of maternal plenitude, where love is outside the realm of deserving.[46] It is a short step from here to Lear's vision of their life together in prison, outside time and flux, endlessly reliving this flow of blessing and forgiveness in a space of undifferentiated union that itself seems to promise exemption from death:

> We two alone will sing like birds i' th' cage:
> . . . so we'll live,
> And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
> At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
> Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too . . .
> And take upon 's the mystery of things,
> As if we were Gods' spies: and we'll wear out,
> In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones
> That ebb and flow by th' moon.
> (5.3.9–19)

Recasting the walled prison in the image of the walled garden, complete with birds and butterflies, Lear in effect transforms it into a spatialized form of the unfallen maternal body in which he initially sought shelter, the representation of Cordelia's idealized virgin body. And as such, the prison he constructs is the antidote to the maternal body of the storm and the attendant horrors of mortality; sheltering in this undifferentiated space, wearing out packs and sects of great ones, Lear would unmake division and mortality itself, recapturing the kind nursery denied him in 1.1.

But the cost for Cordelia is too high: she can occupy this space, repairing the breach that twain have made, only by sacrificing her own

separateness, her own individuality; and Shakespeare makes it plain that this sacrifice is no accident, that it is just what Lear requires. If Cordelia's insistence on her separateness initially defines Lear's fall into mortality, his fantasy of recovery requires that she give up her separateness, along with the sexuality that is its sign. Lear's great prison fantasy takes as its premise his need to deny her a separate voice; it in fact emerges in response to her muted attempt to separate her voice from his:

> *Cor.* We are not the first
> Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the worst.
> For thee, oppressed King, I am cast down;
> Myself could else out-frown false Fortune's frown.
> Shall we not see these daughters and these sisters?
>
> *Lear* No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison;
> We two alone will sing like birds i' th'cage. . . .
> (5.3.3–9)

"No, no, no, no": Lear does not want to believe that Cordelia is cast down for him, does not want to be reminded of those daughters and sisters; more fundamentally, he does not want to hear her dividing *we* into its constituent *thee* and *I*. Overriding the formal couplets that threaten the intimacy of the moment he would construct, that suggest division in the doubleness of their form,[47] his outburst enfolds her in his relentless *we*, reconstructing her as part of himself. Only thus can he recreate their life together in prison as a place outside time, flux, and individual being, attempting to make of it an antidote to individual mortality and hence to the vision of the storm.

In negating everything outside their union in prison—no, no, no, no—Lear must necessarily negate Cordelia too; she can be made to serve his vision only insofar as he can deny the possibility of difference between them, dissolving Cordelia's identity into his own. For if Cordelia's insistence on her separateness in 1.1 casts Lear out of his dream of fusion with maternal plenitude, only the sacrifice of her separateness can allow for the fantasy of return. These are the terms of redemption implicit even as the Gentleman names Cordelia the "one daughter, / Who redeems nature from the general curse / Which twain have brought her to" (4.6.206–8); *one* and *twain* themselves specify what needs redeeming. For two is the first number, the beginning of the counting and accounting that ends in Cordelia's giving away half her love, the fall from the dream of union and the infantile *all*; two is the sign of separation and division. Beginning in the play's opening lines, with Gloucester's reference to the "division of the kingdom" (1.1.4),

this is everywhere a play of division; the violent harms that Cordelia's two sisters make in Lear's reverence (4.7.28–29)—what she calls the "breach" in his abused nature (4.7.15)—replicate internally all the external divisions that motivate the plot.[48] The very two-ness of Goneril and Regan makes them apt agents of division, particularly since they seem conspicuously divided versions of a single whole, conspicuously *twain* rather than simply two.[49] Twain, they come to stand for the fact of division itself, the fact that Lear relearns when Cordelia divides her love in half; in setting their *twain* against Cordelia's *one*, the Gentleman names the play's most primary loss: the fall into division, the loss of one-ness that only the return of the one can redeem.[50]

In the version of fall and redemption played out through Lear's daughters, Shakespeare seems to me to reiterate the organizing trope of Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, where the movement from Una to Duessa—from one-ness to two-ness—similarly signals the entrance into a fallen world, and only the recovery of the one promises redemption. And by beginning the play with Lear's fantasy of resting on Cordelia's kind nursery, Shakespeare psychologizes this trope, replaying in Cordelia's refusal and Lear's shocked response the child's fall into selfhood and finitude, the moment when self and world (in the shape of the mother) begin to divide. From Cordelia, Lear rediscovers the primal separation. And insofar as her "nothing" is the first agent of division, the immense longing for her that fills the whole space of her absence comes to stand for the longing to undo separation itself; in her absence, she becomes the bearer of the hope that twain can become one again. Although Cordelia is apparently excised from Lear's memory—he makes no direct reference to her during the play's middle acts—the longing for her reappears outside him, in the poignant song-fragment in which Edgar and the Fool speak with the voice of his loss:

> *Edg.* Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me,—
>
> *Fool* Her boat hath a leak,
> And she must not speak;[51]
> Why she dares not come over to thee!
> (3.6.26–29)

Present only in this riddling exchange, she is nonetheless intensely present: she is the beloved one on the other side of the water, the one who cannot speak. The dense complexity of "bourn"—alluding simultaneously to the watery boundary that separates Lear from Cordelia, to the fact of boundedness that marks us as separate individuals, and perhaps to the origin of finitude in birth—gathers up into itself all the inarticulate longing of the play's middle acts, recording at once all

the boundaries that enforce human separateness, that divide Lear from his beloved mother/daughter.[52] "When we are born, we cry," Lear tells us at the end of his meditation on the storm, figuring birth itself as abandonment into mortality, the smell that we take in with our first breath (4.6.180–84).[53] In this fragmentary interchange in the storm, Shakespeare thus plays with the heart of loss, setting the longing that finitude be undone against the knowledge that it cannot—must not—be undone, that Cordelia can never come over to Lear. And then, against this knowledge at its center, the play sets the return of Cordelia.

The sacrifice of Cordelia's otherness is not an incidental requirement of the plot; it is the meaning of her return. She can only come over the bourn by losing herself; according to the terms of the fantasy of kind nursery, her selfhood *is* the bourn. Lear ends his prison speech by asking, "Have I caught thee?" (5.3.21), and Cordelia's response is silence, as it must be: caught in his *we*, there is no longer an *I* from which she can speak. Permanently silenced by Lear's *no*, she does not speak again. At this moment, Shakespeare seems to make clear the cost of her return, anticipating her death in her silence and enabling us to understand both as the consequence of Lear's psychic need. But at the same time as Shakespeare seems to analyze Lear's need, and hence to distance himself from it, his representation of Cordelia is deeply complicit with that need. The Cordelia he reconstructs in Act IV is largely the Cordelia of Lear's fantasy; and unless we strain against the bias of the text, no other Cordelia is readily available to us. As with *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare's complicity with the dominant male fantasy is registered through a change not only in the character but in the mode of representation: the woman we thought we knew—or thought we could know—simply disappears from view as our access to her is blocked. In 1.1, Cordelia is very much a creature of flesh and blood, with her own psychic necessities, and the mode through which she is represented draws our attention to these necessities. The asides through which we are initially introduced to her and her exchanges with her father and her sisters make us keenly aware of her inner life: of her attempt to define or perhaps defend her nascent selfhood, her refusal to speak unless she can speak herself truly, her competitive struggle with her sisters, her need to separate herself from her father. We may well feel that we cannot fully know her; but there is no doubt that there is someone there to know. But when Cordelia returns, our questions no longer seem fully legitimate: she returns as the creature of Lear's need, changed utterly, and changed not only in her nature but in the mode through which Shakespeare allows us access to her.[54] Introduced to us initially as a subject, she returns as the object of our reverent gaze, her significance for us determined not by what she says or feels but by

what others say and feel about her. We may see some vestiges of her old self in the poignance of her desire to see her father (4.4.29), in her familiar inarticulatenesss in the reunion scene, and perhaps especially in her troublesome desire to see "these daughters and these sisters" (5.3.7); we may even be able to construct the sense of her continuing subjectivity from these hints. But we are no longer invited to speculate about her motivation; except insofar as she murmurs her love for her father, what she feels seems no longer to matter. Even before her death, even before Lear silences her, she has died as a subject, the illusion of her inwardness, of her flesh-and-blood being, visibly sacrificed to the new business the play requires of her: she now exists to bring Lear to the promised end, and that is all.

Insofar as the Cordelia of 1.1 is silenced, insofar as we feel the Cordelia who returns more as an iconic presence answering Lear's terrible need than as a separate character with her own needs, Shakespeare is complicit in Lear's fantasy, rewarding him for his suffering by remaking for him the Cordelia he had wanted all along; Shakespeare too requires the sacrifice of her autonomy. This is a very painful recognition for a feminist critic, for any reader who reads as a daughter. As feminist critics, we may once again note wryly that this sacrifice is regularly required of Shakespeare's tragic women, and perhaps of women *per se*; and yet the cases of Cressida and Desdemona are not comparable. For how can we experience this play and not want Cordelia to return to Lear? And yet how can we want what Lear—what Shakespeare—does to her? It is easy enough simply to dissociate ourselves from Lear's need, to gender it male and thus escape its traces in ourselves; it is easy enough thus to mobilize anger against both the fathers—literal and literary—that require Cordelia's sacrifice. And yet, if we allow the anger we mobilize to cut us off from the heart of longing embedded in Lear's suffering, do we not replicate Lear's own attempt to mobilize anger against vulnerability (2.4.278–80)— this time our own? For the fantasies that determine the shape of Cordelia's return are, I think, only in part gendered; in part they spring from the ground of an infantile experience prior to gender.[55]

When Cordelia insists that she cannot love her father all, she creates a rage in Lear that we might agree to call oedipal, and to gender male, insofar as it seems to have its roots in the son's frustrated desire for the mother's exclusive sexual attention; this is, I think, the stratum of desire played out, for example, in Goneril's and Regan's voracious sexuality, especially insofar as that sexuality is triangulated, adulterous. But this (gendered) rage at female sexuality in part figures and in part covers over and defends against the more primitive pain of preoedipal betrayal,[56] the betrayal inherent in individuation itself; and

though the expression of this pain will be inflected by gender, we cannot ultimately distance ourselves from it by gendering it male. For the fantasies enacted in Cordelia's loss and return—in Lear's terrible hunger and isolation, in the blissful fusion of his walled prison—derive from the very beginnings of nascent selfhood, before consciousness of the gender divide. Even while I understand the urgency of Cordelia's refusal to be all to her father, I share with Lear—and with Shakespeare—the stratum of desire that brings her back all his; and to the extent that I share in their desire, I cannot shelter in the anger that would allow me to make their need alien, gendering it male. For I too inhabit the terror of finitude and the desire for merger with the infinitely kind nursery that can undo the pain of separation; I too long for her return. And if so, then I participate with them in the destruction of Cordelia's selfhood; daughters as well as sons require this sacrifice from those we make our mothers.

Perhaps our task—if we read this play specifically as feminists—is simultaneously to acknowledge this place of common need and to measure its cost to the woman forced to bear its burden. It is by way of continuing to measure this cost that I want to turn finally to Cordelia's death, understood not only as the ultimate silencing of her subjectivity but specifically as the response of a recuperative male rage against the power vested in her. Cordelia's death used to be read largely as a stage in Lear's spiritual development; it is now sometimes read as retribution for Lear's inappropriate desires, punishment for his failure to acknowledge her otherness.[57] The order for her death ("Come hither, captain; hark. / Take thou this note; Go follow them to prison" [5.3.27–28]) in fact comes immediately after Lear asks, "Have I caught thee?" as though in response to his question. But if her death is an answer to Lear's question, it is a deeply ambiguous answer: is it the final sign of separation, proof that Lear has not caught her, that Cordelia cannot come over the bourn no matter how much he wishes it? or is it the final stage in Lear's fantasy of fusion? Lear's is the lover's question; when Falstaff similarly asks "Have I caught thee, my heavenly jewel?" misquoting Astrophel, he adds, "Why, now let me die, for I have lived long enough" (*Merry Wives of Windsor*, 3.3.35).[58] Death is often the place of union for Shakespearean lovers; and Lear carries the dead Cordelia onto the stage like a bridegroom carrying his bride across the threshold;[59] is death their new home, the final version of prison as kind nursery? Or does the reversed pietà of his gesture—the mortal father/son now carrying the holy virgin mother, dead as earth—signal the permanent loss of this possibility, the final separation?[60]

No matter what our answers are, they play across—and require—

Cordelia's dead body. At the end, the play invites us to see this dead body as a prop for Lear's anguish, whatever the terms in which we would understand that anguish; having evacuated Cordelia's subjectivity, the play takes even her death from her. Without attempting to reconstruct that subjectivity, I want to try to read Cordelia's death, first of all, as something that happens specifically to her, not only to Lear, and then as something that happens to her because of the intensity of the emotions invested in her. —What literally kills Cordelia? Much of the play—including Cordelia's own "Shall we not see these daughters and these sisters?"—leads us to expect that Goneril and Regan will have a hand in her death; but the order for her death comes from Edmund, apparently in response to Lear's prison speech. But what exactly is he responding to? He is clearly enraged by Lear's attempt to redefine his punishment as bliss, defeating Edmund's control of him. But his order to the captain conspicuously musters the tropes of manliness—"know thou this, that men / Are as the time is; to be tender-minded / Does not become a sword" (5.3.31–33); and the captain responds, "If it be man's work I'll do't" (5.3.40). This exchange places Edmund and the captain in the psychic mode of Troilus at the end of *Troilus and Cressida*, where manliness depends on leaving the hermit pity with one's mother (5.3.45); and it makes the killing of Cordelia in effect into a recuperation of masculinity, as though it were the exercise of a male rage not only against Lear's redefinition but more specifically against the threat to masculinity inherent in Lear's vision of blissful fusion.[61]

If the timing and the terms of Edmund's command make Cordelia's death seem the recuperation of a threatened masculinity, the mode of her death itself enacts a metaphoric revenge. Like Desdemona, Cordelia is choked, her potentially troublesome voice silenced in her throat; her death by hanging thus invites reading as the logical extension of Lear's own silencing of her speech in order to build his prison fantasy. But the suffocation of Cordelia seems to me the product of a retaliatory rage directed less toward her voice than toward her heart—and toward her heart as the representative site of the overwhelming feelings that Lear genders female. Both in her first appearance, when she cannot heave her heart into her mouth (1.1.91–92), and in her return, pantingly heaving forth the name of father (4.3.27), Cordelia embodies the rising, choking heart (*cor*) that we half-hear in her name, the heart that Lear would attempt to beat down, the heart that suffocates him in the end ("Pray you, undo this button" [5.3.309]).[62] Her *cor* invokes the *cor* in him; and this heart is Lear's alternative name for the suffocating feeling rising within him, the feeling he first calls "mother" ("O! how this mother swells up toward my heart; / . . . down, thou climbing

sorrow!" [2.4.56–57]; "O me! my heart, my rising heart! but, down!" [2.4.121]). As Lear imagines the internal presence that would suffocate him, "heart" and "mother" coalesce, and coalesce in the figure of Cordelia:[63] site of his deepest longings, she herself is revealed as the suffocating mother within, through the heart that is her sign. But this coalescence merely rejoins what Lear's initial act of splitting had attempted to sunder. For the idealized mother Lear seeks in Cordelia and the horrific mother he finds first in her sisters and then in himself are psychically one, merely flip sides of one another; they have a common origin in the developmental history of male identity as it is tenuously separated out from its originary matrix, the mother that it—like this text—would occlude.[64] As the site of both longing and loss, as the source of femaleness itself, the mother and her surrogates will be forced to pay the price of this history, not least in the stories told about her. For longing and terror interlock: in its longing for originary wholeness, the unstable masculinity that would escape its own finitude through a fantasy of merger with her recoils at finding the signs of her presence within, including the signs of his need for her,[65] and in its recoil transforms the dream of union into the nightmare of suffocation—as Suffolk does when he imagines Margaret stopping his mouth. This is the crime that Cordelia must pay for, and pay for with her breath: at the end, she—not he— has "no breath at all" (5.3.307). Insofar as she is the point of origin for Lear's desire, insofar as she therefore represents the source of Lear's choking emotion, her own death by choking enacts a talion punishment, the terrible recuperation of male individuality from the threat of the overwhelming mother within.[66]

King Lear is often seen as an extraordinary celebration of relatedness and emotional openness, of all the vulnerability that Lear has tried to gender female and deny in himself; and in this celebration, Cordelia must die so that Lear can die of love, "with his whole being launched toward another," in Maynard Mack's wonderful phrase.[67] But if Cordelia's death comes to Lear as the prerequisite for his new emotional openness, it comes to Cordelia herself as a punishment for the desire he has invested in her. For the mother that threatens to suffocate Lear by his sheer need of her must herself be suffocated: that is the price Cordelia pays for acquiring the power of the displaced and occluded mother. It seems to me not quite coincidental that Desdemona—who creates in Othello the same longing for wholeness, who has the same power to make men vulnerable to their own need—should also die by suffocation: if Othello too finds himself choked by his own emotion ("I cannot speak enough of this content, / It stops me here," *Othello*,

2.1.196–97), he too retaliates by suffocating his emotion at its source. In *King Lear* Edmund—and Shakespeare[68]—do to Cordelia what Othello does to Desdemona, and for the same reasons: acting on behalf of a threatened masculinity, they choke off the rising heart that is the source of danger. For the Shakespeare who wrote *King Lear*—unlike the Shakespeare who wrote *Antony and Cleopatra* or *The Winter's Tale*—could allow the expression of Lear's naked vulnerability only by simultaneously allowing the expression of the self-preserving and self-enclosing male rage that it provokes, the rage that Lear had earlier attempted to mobilize against his own female feeling (2.4.278–80): splitting off that rage, distancing and localizing it in Edmund's command, Shakespeare can simultaneously enact it in Cordelia's death and mourn its consequences. And if the celebration of Lear's vulnerability to Cordelia leads toward *Antony and Cleopatra* and the great reunions of the romances, the enactment of Cordelia's death leads toward *Macbeth*, *Coriolanus*, and *Timon of Athens*: toward the excision of the dangerous female presences—the mothers within and without—that threaten to overwhelm male authority and selfhood.

1.1.23 ("whose arms were moulded in their mother's womb"), and *Pericles* 3. chorus 10–11 ("By the loss of maidenhead, / A babe is moulded"); Coriolanus calls his mother "the honour'd mould / Wherein this trunk was fram'd" (5.3.22–23). Other uses of the term are more broadly associated with generative process; see *King Lear* 3.2.8, *Cymbeline* 5.4.49, and *The Winter's Tale* 2.3.102. For *fault/foutre*, see Chapter 2, note 26. "Fault" in *Measure* often carries the weight of the double meaning; see particularly Escalus's "some condemned for a fault alone" (2.1.40) and Isabella's "ask your heart what it doth know / That's like my brother's fault" (2.2.138–39). Though he does not work with Mariana's series of puns, Lawrence W. Hyman sees the play as an attempt to bring its characters to the sardonic recognition that life "not only can but *must* come out of vice, shame, and dishonor" ("The Unity of *Measure for Measure*," *Modern Language Quarterly* 36 [1975]: 12).

50. See Marilyn L. Williamson's full discussion of Jacobean attempts to regulate sexual behavior—especially of the poor—through government control; in her view, the play "exposes the limits of public power and the fantasy of intruding power into the personal realm" (*The Patriarchy of Shakespeare's Comedies* [Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1986], pp. 74–110). Both Wheeler (*Shakespeare's Development*, pp. 12–13) and Neely (*Broken Nuptials*, p. 94) note specifically the shifting of the bed trick from female to male control; my understanding of the relationship between the two plays is very much indebted to theirs.

51. In the context of the other arranged marriages of 5.1, it makes sense to ask what crime in Isabella the Duke proposes to punish through marriage. Though the marriage proposal might be supposed to bring Isabella back to the world, and has usually been interpreted thus, its more fundamental function is to re-contain her dangerous desire to define a self outside the sphere of marriage and hence beyond the reach of male power as it is embodied in the state. (In this formulation—and doubtless elsewhere—I am indebted to a brilliant unpublished paper by Laura Camozzi Berry, written for my graduate Shakespeare seminar in May 1988; she sees the threat of independent female desire— embodied in Isabella and in Juliet's unauthorized pregnancy—as that which the play seeks to control, both through the Duke's appropriation of the powers of generation and through his management of marriage, which encloses and erases women.) Interpretations—and productions—that have Isabella refusing the Duke, even perhaps slapping his face (see Rosenberg, "Shakespeare's Fantastic Trick," p. 71), do a disservice to the play by undermining its portrayal of the impasse to which Isabella has been brought—an impasse that in effect acts out the closing of the nunneries and the loss of that option for women. In her full account of the constricting of Isabella's power—especially in comparison with the earlier comic heroines—as she comes under the Duke's control, Marcia Riefer notes the closing off of this option (" 'Instruments of Some More Mightier Member': The Constriction of Female Power in *Measure for Measure*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 35 [1984]: 162); in her view, Shakespeare's concentration of dramaturgical control in the Duke illuminates both the incompatibility between patriarchy and comedy and Shakespeare's tendency to drain

life out of the women in the tragedies (pp. 159, 168–69). Wheeler understands the diminishing of Isabella's power as a defensive response to the fear of women that will become rampant in the tragedies (*Shakespeare's Development*, esp. pp. 116, 147–51); for Sundelson, the play repeatedly exposes and then tames the threat of women (*Shakespeare's Restorations of the Father*, pp. 92–96). But Kathleen McLuskie argues in effect that there is no real change: from the start, Isabella is "defined theatrically by the men around her for the men in the audience"; any attempt to see from her point of view "involves refusing the pleasure of the drama and the text" ("The Patriarchal Bard: Feminist Criticism and Shakespeare: *King Lear* and *Measure for Measure*," in *Political Shakespeare: New Essays In Cultural Materialism*, ed. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985], pp. 96–97).

52. Leonard Tennenhouse historicizes the shift from female to male, reading *Measure for Measure* as one of several disguised ruler plays that mark the transitional period between Elizabeth and James by revealing the true king as the idealized patriarch and source of law, hence participating in the "master narrative . . . of a return to origins in which the monarch is restored to a natural position of supremacy as a father over a family" ("Representing Power: *Measure for Measure* in its Time," in *The Forms of Power and the Power of Forms*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, *Genre* 15 [1982]: 139–56). Despite my disagreement with Tennenhouse's assumption that Shakespeare's representation of women, sexuality, and the family arises from "anxiety in the political realm" (p. 154), this seems to me a brilliant reading of a particular cultural moment; though operative throughout Shakespeare's career—as early as the transition from *Venus and Adonis* to *The Rape of Lucrece* and as late as the transition from *The Winter's Tale* to *The Tempest*—the representation of the shift from female to male control must have had a particular piquancy in 1604. (See Jonathan Dollimore, "Transgression and Surveillance in *Measure for Measure*," in *Political Shakespeare*, pp. 72–87, for the more general argument that anxiety about sexuality is an ideological displacement in *Measure*.) The particular parents of the new father-king must have made it especially attractive to vest in the male ruler not only control over marriage and generation (see Tennenhouse, p.153) but also the fantasy of exemption from the woman's part in generation. This fantasy, elaborated and rejected in Angelo, returns in a muted and disguised form in the Duke and will become very signficant in *Macbeth*, another play associated with James (see Chapter 6, note 39).

53. Both Wheeler (*Shakespeare's Development*, p. 143) and Sundelson (*Shakespeare's Restorations of the Father*, pp. 98, 102) note the incipient pun on Old Hamlet in *Measure*'s ghostly father.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. Stephen Booth sees loss of boundaries, especially of intellectual categories, as the signature of Shakespearean tragedy (*King Lear, Macbeth, Indefinition and Tragedy* [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1983], pp. 5–

57). For psychoanalytic critics, this boundary confusion frequently signals Lear's re-entry into the archaic, often persecutory, world of infantile need; see, for example, Murray M. Schwartz ("Shakespeare through Contemporary Psychoanalysis," in *Representing Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytic Essays*, ed. Murray M. Schwartz and Coppélia Kahn [Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980], p. 27), and C. L. Barber and Richard P. Wheeler (*The Whole Journey: Shakespeare's Power of Development* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986], p. 291).

2. See *The True Chronicle Historie of King Leir*, 1.1.1–31, reproduced in Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, vol. 7 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 337–38.

3. This uncanniness of course serves ideological ends; see, for example, Jonathan Goldberg's account of the extent to which "the natural event of procreation becomes an extension of male prerogative and male power in Stuart portraiture of families" ("Fatherly Authority: the Politics of Stuart Family Images," in *Rewriting the Renaissance: the Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers [Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1986], esp. pp. 16–25). Many have noted the absence of mothers specifically in *Lear*; see, for example, Stephen Greenblatt's suggestive comparison of *Lear* with Francis Wayland's (successful) attempt to "displace the nurturing female body" ("The Cultivation of Anxiety: King Lear and His Heirs," *Raritan* 2 [1982]: 105). For psychoanalytic critics, this absence often functions as a "decoy" (Peter Erickson, *Patriarchal Structures in Shakespeare's Drama* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985], p. 110), serving "to highlight her psychological presence" (Coppélia Kahn, "Excavating 'Those Dim Minoan Regions': Maternal Subtexts in Patriarchal Literature," *Diacritics* 12 [1982]: 37; amplified in "The Absent Mother in *King Lear*," in *Rewriting the Renaissance*, pp. 33–49).

4. It is by now a familiar trope of psychoanalytically informed criticism to note that Lear makes his daughters into mothers; see, for example, Marianne L. Novy (*Love's Argument: Gender Relations in Shakespeare* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984], pp. 152–53), Marvin Rosenberg (*The Masks of King Lear* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972], p. 120), and Diane Elizabeth Dreher (*Domination and Defiance: Fathers and Daughters in Shakespeare* [Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986], pp. 7, 64–65). Many see in this exchange Lear's specifically incestuous and oedipal desire for his daughters; for full accounts, see especially Norman N. Holland (*Psychoanalysis and Shakespeare* [New York: Octagon Books, 1979], p. 343) and William H. Chaplin ("Form and Psychology in *King Lear*," *Literature and Psychology* 19 [1969]: 32). Like other critics who ground their work in object-relations psychoanalysis, I read in Lear's relationship to his daughters-made-mothers a reiteration of dynamics that are primarily preoedipal rather than oedipal; my account is, as always, heavily indebted to the combined work of Richard Wheeler, C. L. Barber, Madelon (Gohlke) Sprengnether, Murray Schwartz, Peter Erickson, and Coppélia Kahn.

5. "Breeding" can imply either biological reproduction or upbringing, "charge" either financial or moral responsibility: either "I have paid for his rearing" or "I have been blamed for his begetting," or some combination of the two. No wonder Kent is confused.

6. For "fault," see Chapter 2, note 26. Astington (cited in that note) argues for its use as slang for the female genitals both generally and specifically here. But the term seems to me to carry the meaning of the pun on *foutre* as well: Edmund the Bastard is the proper (=fitting) issue not only of his mother's anatomical fault, but of any fault/*foutre*, since all faults turn out to be equally illegitimate.

7. Many readers are uncomfortable with both the tone and the substance of Edgar's judgment and would not permit him to speak for the play: for a representative sample, see, for instance, A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1955), p. 244; William Empson, *The Structure of Complex Words* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1952), p. 150; S. L. Goldberg, *An Essay on King Lear* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 80, 82; Stephen Booth, *King Lear, Macbeth, Indefinition and Tragedy*, p. 47; and James R. Siemon, *Shakespearean Iconoclasm* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 274–75. But others disagree; see, for instance, Maynard Mack's strong defense of the play's homiletic character at this moment: "The blindness is not what will follow from adultery, but what is implied in it. Darkness speaks to darkness" (*King Lear in Our Time* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965], p. 70). Mack would dissociate these words from Edgar conceived as a naturalistic character with motives, partly to preserve the play's homiletic nature; although I find Edgar's words of a piece with his anger at his father (see "Introduction," *Twentieth Century Interpretations of "King Lear"*, ed. Janet Adelman [Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1978], pp. 8–20), my formulation here and elsewhere is very much indebted to Mack's. For the logic Edgar expresses is not isolated in him: Edmund's status as second son would have sufficed to motivate his plot against his brother (as in *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, and *The Tempest*); Shakespeare's insistence on his bastardy traces both his outlaw viciousness and his father's blinding to the dark and vicious place where he was got. Moreover, Edgar's judgment relies on cultural commonplaces linking blindness with sexuality. The "blind Cupid" that Lear sees in Gloucester (4.6.139) is the sign of the brothel (see Muir's note, Arden *King Lear*, p. 178) partly because blindness was thought to be a consequence of sexuality: according to the pseudo-Aristotelian *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, excess sexuality "destroys the sight, dries the body, and impairs the brain" (cited by Vern L. Bullough, *Sex, Society, and History* [New York: Science History Publications, 1976], p. 94); according to Bacon, "It hath been observed by the ancients, that much use of Venus doth dim the sight" (cited by Stephen Booth in his rich commentary on "expense of spirit" in Sonnet 129, *Shakespeare's Sonnets* [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University

Press, 1977], p. 442). Loss of the eyes or blindness was moreover sometimes recognized as a symptom of syphilis; see, for example, Charles Clayton Dennie (*A History of Syphilis* [Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1962], pp. 17, 36), and James Cleugh (*Secret Enemy: The Story of a Disease* [London: Thames and Hudson, 1954], pp. 47, 66). Whether or not this symptomology was commonly known, the association between sexual excess and blindness was familiar to Shakespeare; see Pompey's pitying description of Mistress Overdone as "you that have worn your eyes almost out in the service" (*Measure for Measure*, 1.2.101–2).

8. Cited in Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources in Shakespeare*, vol. 7, p. 404. Anxiety about the transmission of paternal identity and property is played out when Edmund the Bastard is made Earl of Gloucester (3.5.17–18) and the designation "Gloucester" is abruptly emptied of fixed meaning: after Cornwall renames Edmund (3.5.17–18), "Gloucester" refers both to father and son, most strikingly within two lines (see 3.7.13, 15). This confusion raises primary questions about who— or what—is "Gloucester": not only what that identifier means, but who has the right to it, and who confers that right. (Naming in the speech-headings is conservative, locating the right to name only in the king: they designate as Gloucester the man Lear recognizes as Gloucester.) Anxiety about names and legitimacy is of course at the heart of the Gloucester plot; see, for example, William C. Carroll's meditation on legitimacy and the natural body in Edgar (" 'The Base Shall Top Th'Legitimate': The Bedlam Beggar and the Role of Edgar in *King Lear*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 38 [1987]: 426–41). But by giving one of his fathers sons and one daughters, Shakespeare is able to play out anxieties inherent in each of the two different systems of property inheritance operating in the play. The father-son plot operates under the rules of primogeniture, where the replication of patriarchal identity is at stake; illegitimacy is thus its central anxiety. But the love test of the father-daughter plot seems to operate under the system that became increasingly common in the sixteenth century as the entails maintaining strict primogeniture were broken and the father became increasingly capable of disposing of his property as he saw fit, rewarding or punishing his children at will (see Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800* [New York: Harper and Row, 1979], pp. 112–13). It makes sense that the central anxieties of this system—anxieties about sincerity and insincerity, about bribery and misplaced trust—should be played out in relation to daughters, especially daughters whose impending marriage threatens the fantasy that they love their fathers all.

9. This is the dilemma played out in the travels of Bertram's father's ring in *All's Well*; see Chapter 4, pp. 81–82.

10. In *King John*, however, bastardy serves the function of a classic family romance, allowing the son to replace his "real" and decidedly unheroic father with Cordelion, the play's mythic Ur-father. It can serve this function partly because the fantasy is written decidedly from the perspective of the son, not

the father, and partly because disruptive maternal presence is invoked only to be contained and almost comically dismissed (4.2.120–23).

11. See Eric Partridge, *Shakespeare's Bawdy* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1960) for sexualized instances of both "stones" (pp. 195–96) and "rings" (p. 179). (Partridge omits *Midsummer Night's Dream*, 5.1.188, a comic *locus classicus* for "stones.") Without commenting on these puns, David Willbern sees in Gloucester's bleeding eyes a traumatic mask of the "nothing" that is the female—or the castrated male—genitals ("Shakespeare's Nothing," in *Representing Shakespeare*, pp. 247, 253). The equivalence of blindness and castration is familiar to psychoanalysis and to psychoanalytic criticism, where it is usually read as punishment for oedipal crime: see, for example, Sigmund Freud ("The Uncanny," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 17, trans. James Strachey [London: Hogarth Press, 1955], p. 231); Alexander Grinstein ("King Lear's Impending Death," *American Imago* 30 [1973]: 135); Mark Kanzer ("Imagery in *King Lear*," in *The Design Within: Psychoanalytic Aproaches to Shakespeare*, ed. M. D. Faber [New York: Science House, 1970], p. 223); Holland (*Psychoanalysis and Shakespeare*, p. 344); and Chaplin ("Form and Psychology in *King Lear*," pp. 38, 39).

12. In *Leir*, the dilemma of the king's sonlessness is not unspoken (1.1.21, 44). I am indebted to Zan Marquis's wonderful undergraduate honors thesis on Lear's fear of female fertility (1978) for the perception that Lear's daughters arrive on stage in place of sons.

13. Characteristically, Edgar's mother is mentioned only obliquely, and only when Gloucester believes Edgar false and hence attempts to disown him ("I never got him," 2.1.78).

14. The play makes a small move toward recuperating sexual origin in Kent's musing that "one self mate and make" have begotten both Goneril and Regan and Cordelia (4.3.35); this is the only place in which sexuality is imagined as an indifferent force, not one that necessarily breeds monsters, and the only place in which it is hinted that even Cordelia might have had a mother. (But see Robert H. West for a recuperative reading of sexuality in *Lear* ["Sex and Pessimism in *King Lear*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 11 (1960): 55–60].)

15. The extent to which their exemption from sexuality is structurally important can be gauged by the extent to which we find Tate's inclusion of a sexual relation between them utterly alien to the play Shakespeare wrote.

16. Like Edmund, Goneril and Regan seem complicit with her dark and vicious place as they initiate Gloucester's blinding (3.7.4–5); Regan may in fact imagine that she is blinding her own father in blinding him (see Stanley Cavell, "The Avoidance of Love," *Disowning Knowledge in Six Plays of Shakespeare* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987], p. 53). She and her sister are, in any case, the agents of a similar unmanning of their father: the Fool repeatedly interprets the "nothing" to which they bring him as castra-

tion; see especially the dense series of images at his first entrance in 1.4, where Lear is "an O without a figure" (ll. 200–201), "a sheal'd peascod" (208), a hedge-sparrow that "had it head bit off by it young" (225). (See Willbern's "Shakespeare's Nothing," especially pp. 245–46, on the fantasized equivalence of femaleness and castration here.)

17. My formulation here, and in the pages that follow, is heavily indebted to Madelon [Gohlke] Sprengnether's classic essay, " 'I wooed thee with my sword': Shakespeare's Tragic Paradigms," in which she argues that Shakespeare's tragic heroes struggle against the signs of "femininity" in themselves and see these signs especially in their powerlessness, "specifically in relation to a controlling or powerful woman" (*Representing Shakespeare*, p. 175); she notes, for example, that Lear reads his own tears—evoked by his daughters—as dangerously feminine. Many recent critics comment on Lear's fear of his own feminization: see, for example, Patrick Colm Hogan ("*King Lear*: Splitting and Its Epistemic Agon," *American Imago* 36 [1979]: 40); Carolyn Asp, for whom Lear himself becomes a type of the (French) feminine (" 'The Clamor of Eros': Freud, Aging, and *King Lear*," in *Memory and Desire*, ed. Kathleen Woodward and Murray M. Schwartz [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986], pp. 196–97); and especially Coppélia Kahn, whose formulations are closest to my own, especially in her emphasis on Lear's identification with his daughters and his fear of the mother within ("Excavating 'Those Dim Minoan Regions,' " pp. 37–39; "The Absent Mother in *King Lear*," pp. 36, 43–44). Paul Jorgensen tends to replicate—rather than analyze—Lear's fear; for him, Lear's progress toward self-knowledge necessarily entails his sex-nausea and mysogyny because "only woman's body could suffice to illustrate the full depravity of man" (*Lear's Self-Discovery* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967], p. 126); his is nonetheless a good early account of these elements in the play.

18. By naming Goneril a disease in Lear's flesh, Shakespeare characteristically takes a name that he found lying inert in his sources and transforms it into a dense center of meaning. The term "gonorrhea" was current. Before 1767, it referred to one of the symptoms of syphilis rather than to a separate disease (see James Cleugh, *Secret Enemy: The Story of a Disease*, p. 136); William Clowes, for example, writes of a syphilitic patient who had "a stinking Gonorrhea and running of the reines" (*A Brief and Necessary Treatise Touching the Cure of the Disease called Morbus Gallicus* [London, 1585], p. 195). The skin eruptions Lear describes were characteristic of syphilis in the early stages (see Chapter 2, note 33): Cleugh describes boils and other swellings very much like Lear's embossed carbuncles (pp. 46–49); the Spanish in fact named the disease *bubas* from these swellings (Cleugh, p. 57). "Plague sore" may be a general term, or it may reflect an association between syphilis and specifically Black Plague; see Chapter 3, note 8, and see Frankie Rubenstein for the relation between (generalized) plague and pox ("They Were Not Such Good Years," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40 [1989]: 70–74). Rubenstein identifies the "good years" Lear wishes on Goneril and Regan (5.3.24) as venereal disease; if she is right, then Lear is attempting to retaliate specifically for the disease he imagines in his flesh. Insofar as blindness was associated specifically with venereal disease (see this chapter, note 7), it makes sense that it should be Goneril who first suggests blinding Gloucester.

19. Recognition of his own flesh in his daughters may again lead to Lear's sense of himself as feminized in 3.4.74–75, where Lear figures himself as a grotesque version of the maternal pelican; Muir cites several instances of the pelican who feeds or revives her children with her blood (Arden *King Lear*, pp. 118–19). Perhaps in response to Lear's apparent gender confusion, Edgar/Poor Tom immediately transforms the pelicans into decidedly male pillicocks (3.4.76).

20. As *Macbeth*'s witches imply (1.3.10–25), witches were traditionally able to raise storms. See, for example, *The Malleus Maleficarum of Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger*, trans. Montague Summers (New York: Dover Publications, 1971), pp. 147–49; Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (London, 1584; reprint, with an introduction by Hugh Ross Williamson [Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 1964], p. 31); King James's *Daemonologie* (London, 1603), p. 46; and the failure of the witches to raise a storm in Jonson's *Masque of Queens*, ll. 134–37, 209–20. Jonson's learned note to l. 134 gives his classical sources for the witches' association with storm and chaos; see *Ben Jonson: The Complete Masques*, ed. Stephen Orgel (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1969), pp. 531–32. For the association of Fortune with storms, especially in the visual arts, see Frederick Riefer, who reproduces some spectacular instances in his *Fortune and Elizabethan Tragedy* (The Huntington Library, 1983), p. 287; he comments specifically on the presence of this traditional association in Lear's storm.

21. Mack, *King Lear in Our Time*, p. 94; for him, the play is "the greatest anti-pastoral ever penned" (p. 65).

22. This lake is identified with the female sexual place by Shakespeare's other uses of fishing for sexual intercourse; see *Measure for Measure*, 1.2.83, and especially *The Winter's Tale*, 1.2.195. Many understand the storm as sexual: see, for example, Kanzer ("Imagery in *King Lear*," p. 223), Rosenberg (*The Masks of King Lear*, pp. 126, 191–92), and Lisa Miller ("A View of 'King Lear,' " *Journal of Child Psychotherapy* 4 [1975]: 102); for Chaplin, it is specifically female, "Nature's womb-like upheaval," which is "given a new location and iconology" in the sulphurous pit ("Form and Psychology in *King Lear*," pp. 40–41).

23. Rosenberg (*The Masks of King Lear*, p. 271), Novy (*Love's Argument*, p. 157), and Kay Stockholder (*Dream Works: Lovers and Families in Shakespeare's Plays* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987], pp. 135–36) note this connection.

24. See Chapter 1 (p. 6, and n. 22) for the attribution of flesh to the woman's part in generation. This nexus of ideas informs Erickson's account of Lear's "mortification of the flesh" in the storm: "Lear punishes his body in

order to purify it while at the same time destroying the universal power of procreation that corrupted him" (*Patriarchal Structures in Shakespeare's Drama*, p. 110).

25. This is Folio's stage direction; Muir uses Capell's "Storm heard at a distance" (Arden *King Lear*, p. 99).

26. See Kahn's powerful insight that Shakespeare's portrayal of the storm as the "breaking open of something enclosed" makes it resemble "Lear's heart cracking, letting out the hungry, mother-identified part of him in a flood of tears" ("The Absent Mother in *King Lear*," p. 46).

27. See Edward Jorden, *A Briefe Discourse of a Disease called the Suffocation of the Mother* (London, 1603): "This disease is called by diverse names amongst our Authors. Passio Hysterica, Suffocatio, Prasocatio, and Strangulatus uteri, Caducus matricis, etc. In English the Mother or the Suffocation of the Mother, because most commonly it takes them with choaking in the throat: and it is an affect of the Mother or wombe" (pp. 5–6); the suffocation is caused by "the rising of the Mother wherby it is sometimes drawn upwards or sidewards above his natural seate, compressing the neighbour parts" (p. 6). Not surprisingly, all Jorden's victims are women. According to The Right Honorable Lord Brain, this passage makes Shakespeare the first person to describe hysteria in a man ("The Concept of Hysteria in the Time of William Harvey," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 56 [1963]: 321); but Samuel Harsnett notes that Richard Maynie "had a spice of the *Hysterica passio*, as seems from his youth, he himselfe terms it the Moother" (cited in Kenneth Muir, "Samuel Harsnett and *King Lear*," *Review of English Studies* N.S. 2 [1951]: 14). Maynie does not, however, think that he has a uterus; he says that a Scottish doctor in Paris told him that the disease "riseth . . . of a wind in the bottome of the belly" (Muir, p. 14). By 1667, Thomas Willis had dissociated the disease from the womb, partly on the basis of its occurrence in men (see Brain, "The Concept of Hysteria," pp. 321–22, and L. R. Rather, "Pathology at Mid-Century: A Reassessment of Thomas Willis and Thomas Sydenham," in *Medicine in Seventeenth Century England*, ed. Allen G. Debus [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974], p. 107). But *hysterica passio* remained overwhelmingly associated with women: Harsnett notes that "a thousand poore girles in England" had the disease worse than Maynie (Muir, p. 14), Willis that "women of every age, and condition, are obnoxious to these kinds of Distempers . . . yea, sometimes the same kind of Passions infest Men" (Brain, p. 322). Moreover, whether or not Shakespeare knew from Harsnett or elsewhere that the disease could occur in men, Lear's words imply not only that he has the disease but also that he has the female organ (the "mother") itself: even if one wants to make this passage less bizarre by reading "this mother" (2.4.56) as the name of the disease rather than the organ, Lear's reference to the mother's swelling upward associates it unmistakably with the rising womb itself. Despite Muir's note pointing out the connection with Jorden (Arden *King Lear*, p. 85), most recent commentators have missed the precision of the anatomical reference; see, for example, Mark S. Shearer, for whom the

term functions vaguely as a birth metaphor ("The Cry of Birth: King Lear's Hysterica Passio," *Postscript* 1 [1983]: 60–66), and Margaret Hotine, who thinks that it refers to abdominal pain like that suffered by King James ("Lear's Fit of the Mother," *Notes and Queries* N.S. 28 [1981]: 138–41). The bizarreness of the anatomical reference is noted by Lisa Jardine (*Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* [Sussex: Harvester Press, 1983], p. 110) and especially by Kahn, whose account most fully anticipates my own; but even in Kahn's account, the bizarreness of the reference tends to be displaced by the speed with which the "mother" becomes metaphorical, serving simultaneously to indicate Lear's sense of loss of maternal presence ("Those Dim Minoan Regions," p. 38; "The Absent Mother in *King Lear*," p. 40), his repressed identification with the mother ("Minoan," p. 37; "Absent Mother," p. 36), and the female domain of feeling that refuses to stay in its place ("Minoan," pp. 38–39; "Absent Mother," p. 36).

28. Suffocation was the primary sign of the nightmare's or incubus's presence as it was the primary symptom of *hysterica passio*; inside (as the "mother") or outside (as the nightmare), the female remains the cause of suffocation. See Robert Burton, who notes that such sleepers "as are troubled with Incubus, or witch-ridden (as we call it); if they lie on their backs, they suppose an old woman rides, & sits so hard upon them, that they are almost stifled for want of breath" (*The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith [New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1948], p. 220). Though etymologically "nightmare" is derived from Old English *mare* and "has no connection with the word meaning a female horse" (Muir, Arden *King Lear*, p. 124), the linguistic accident that combines woman and horse in "nightmare" may have helped to shape Lear's horrific portrayal of woman as centaur (4.6.126).

29. Lear asks "Where is this daughter?" as though she too could suddenly turn up inside him. The conjunction of "Thy element's below" and "Where is this daughter?" moreover connects the medical discourse of hysteria with the social discourse of hierarchy, making the rising female element the center of anxiety for both social and bodily instability; see Kahn ("The Absent Mother," pp. 33–34, 36) and Lisa Jardine (*Still Harping on Daughters*, p. 110). Lear's discovery that he has a uterus seems to invert the Galenic model that would make the female body merely an inverted version of the male (see Thomas Laqueur's description of this model, "Orgasm, Generation, and the Politics of Reproductive Biology," *Representions* 14 [1986]: esp. 2–6); it thus serves to destabilize the reassuring primacy of the male. Moreover, the conception of the female body that would allow for the rising womb might in any case partly destabilize the hierarchical tidiness and stability implicit in the Galenic model; the body in which a womb can wander—what Edgar imagines as the "indistinguish'd space of woman's will" (4.6.273)—may figure not a comfortable homology with the male but rather a fearful interior and exterior chaos, as I think it does in Lear's storm. According to Foucault, mobility and permeability remain the keynotes of hysteria even when etiology has passed from the wandering womb to the wandering animal spirits; he asks, "If the body is firm and resistent, if internal space is dense, organized, and solidly heterogeneous

in its different regions, the symptoms of hysteria are rare. . . . Is this not exactly what separates female hysteria from the male variety?" (Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard [New York: Random House, 1965], p. 149).

30. The scapegoating mechanism has frequently been noted; see, for example, Herbert Coursen ("The Death of Cordelia: A Jungian Approach," *Hebrew University Studies in Literature* 8 [1980]:7), Novy (*Love's Argument*, p. 156), Leonard Tennenhouse (*Power on Display: The Politics of Shakespeare's Genres* [New York: Methuen, 1986], p. 138), and especially Kahn ("Those Dim Minoan Regions," p. 38; "The Absent Mother in *King Lear*," p. 44) and Erickson ("Displaced from the male body and projected exclusively onto the female, sexuality becomes female sexuality," *Patriarchal Structures*, p. 109). Coursen and Novy exempt Shakespeare from this mechanism, locating it only in his male characters; but for Tennenhouse and Erickson, Shakespeare is clearly complicit in it.

31. See Kathleen McLuskie's discussion of the ideological weight Goneril and Regan are made to bear ("The Patriarchal Bard: Feminist Criticism and Shakespeare: *King Lear* and *Measure for Measure*," in *Political Shakespeare*, ed. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985], pp. 98–99). For Bradley, there is no question that they are more monstrous than Edmund, "for Edmund, not to mention other alleviations, is at any rate not a woman" (*Shakespearean Tragedy*, p. 239). Stephen Reid's attempt to make Goneril and Regan plausible and perhaps even sympathetic by constructing numerous childhood setbacks for them is not markedly successful ("In Defense of Goneril and Regan," *American Imago* 27 [1970]: 226–44); but see Harry Berger's more sophisticated attempt to derive their characteristic stance toward the world from the Lear family dynamics ("*King Lear*: The Lear Family Romance," *The Centennial Review* 23 [1979]: 357). Claudette Hoover wisely notes that the text "teases us with explanations that consistently prove inadequate to our questions and that each of these hints involves traditions and myths about the nature of women" ("Goneril and Regan: 'So Horrid as in Woman,' " *San Jose Studies* 10 [1984]: 62).

32. My reading of this question turns on the lability of "flesh" as a marker both of the father's own body and of what he begets: throughout, Lear literalizes the trope of children as one's flesh and blood (see Gloucester, 3.4.149–50), identifying flesh as the junction point of father and daughters, hence as the place where his loathing of them turns masochistically toward his own body (2.4.223–24, 3.4.74–75). The three simultaneous and incompatible questions embedded here mark this lability: are fathers so cruel to their own bodies (=flesh)? are offspring (=flesh) so cruel to their fathers? are fathers so cruel to their offspring (=flesh)? Editors and directors usually foreground the first of these questions. See, for example, Rosenberg (*The Masks of King Lear*, p. 220) and the gloss provided by the following editions: *The Variorum King Lear*, ed. Horace Howard Furness (Philadelphia: Lippincott Company, 1880); Muir's Arden edition; *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. Alfred Harbage (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1969); and *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1980). The Signet edition (*The Tragedy of King Lear*, ed. Russell Fraser [New York: New American Library, 1963]) is virtually alone in foregrounding the second ("*on*, i.e., shown to," p. 114). Despite its syntactical clarity, the third question seems to have been largely ignored by editors and commentators; but see Booth, who notes the "fusion and confusion of agents" here (*King Lear, Macbeth, Indefinition, and Tragedy*, p. 36). All three versions of Lear's question seem to me present and important: each follows from one element in the preceding speech (the masochism implicit in Poor Tom's body; Lear's assumption that daughters are to blame; the visibility of his attempt to transfer blame to daughters); together they illustrate the fusion of masochism and sadism through the nexus of *flesh*.

33. Erickson similarly attributes the female deaths at the end to the need to separate "male spirit from female flesh" and hence to end "the threat posed by the female body" (*Patriarchal Structures in Shakespeare*, p. 110).

34. Lear's rush toward nothingness may be in part an attempt to discover what he can command on his own, without the institutional potency he has had all his life. But—as many have noted—it nonetheless has a decidedly masochistic edge, understood variously, for example, as punishment for his oedipal desires (Chaplin, "Form and Psychology in *King Lear*," pp. 32, 38), as a "masochistic prepayment" for love (Holland, *Shakespeare and Psychoanalysis*, pp. 343–44), as an attempt to fend off self-knowledge by maintaining his status as victim (Berger, "*King Lear*: The Lear Family Romance," pp. 359ff.), or as a mortification of the flesh intended to free male soul from female matter (Erickson, *Patriarchal Structures*, p. 110). For Cavell, death itself is the "payment or placation for the granting of love" (*Disowning Knowledge*, p. 70).

35. See Chapter 1, p. 8, for additional discussion of this passage.

36. Bradley notes "the tendency of imagination to analyse and abstract, to decompose human nature into its constituent factors" (*Shakespearean Tragedy*, p. 212); the prevalence of this tendency in *Lear* allows the play to be read simultaneously as a return to a more primitive mode of drama (for example, in Mack's reading of its homiletic morality roots [*King Lear in Our Time*, p. 58]) and as a return to a more primitive stage of mental life (for example, in Maud Bodkin, *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* [London: Oxford University Press, 1934], p. 15, or Kanzer, "Imagery in King Lear," p. 222). There are many analyses of the characters as split-off aspects of a single personality; for extreme versions, see Patrick Colm Hogan's "*King Lear*: Splitting and its Epistemic Agon," pp. 32–44, and Lisa Miller's little-known Kleinian analysis, in which all the characters become Lear's part-objects ("A View of 'King Lear,' " pp. 93–124).

37. Both in *Othello* and in *The Tempest*, Shakespeare figures the daughter's marriage as tantamount to the father's death; here Cordelia's "nothing" seems

to reiterate what will be left for the father after she marries. In combining a testamentary with a marital occasion in 1.1, Lear himself seems to play out the association; his own use of will—"We have this hour a constant will to publish / Our daughters' several dowers" (1.1.43–44)—hovers between funeral and marriage. Freud famously argues that Cordelia represents the goddess of death ("The Theme of the Three Caskets," *The Standard Edition*, vol. 12, p. 301); among the recent critics who use Freud's identification of Cordelia with death as a starting point, see especially Asp (" 'The Clamor of Eros': Freud, Aging, and *King Lear*," pp. 192–203) and Arthur Kirsch ("The Emotional Landscape of *King Lear*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39 [1988]: esp. 164). I am resistant to the uncritical acceptance of this equation partly insofar as it is complicit in depriving Cordelia of her status as a character; specifically, I would argue that Lear's equation of Cordelia with death in the form of maternal plenitude—Freud's "Mother Earth who receives him once more"—costs her her life.

38. All and nothing are set against one another throughout the play; their opposition helps to locate the place of the fool as a spokesman for *some*, especially in the storm (see, for example, 3.2.10–12, 3.2.80–94, 3.4.65). Rosenberg notes Lear's "infant wish for *all*," though his characteristic method does not allow him to explore it at length (*The Masks of King Lear*, p. 77); Leonard Shengold, elaborating the "all-or-nothing system of values of the early narcissistic period," sees in Lear the "portrayal of a child who wants milk and sexual gratification from the mother and is presented with 'nothing'—the castrated genital" ("More about the Meaning of 'Nothing,' " *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 43 [1974]: 116, 117). Without using psychoanalytic terms, Siemon associates Lear's *all* with the totalizing "desire for absolute plenitude" that makes "the idolatrous abbreviation [of emblem] so compellingly attractive" (*Shakespearean Iconoclasm*, pp. 265–66); he does not, however, notice Lear's investment of this *all* in the idol he (and the play) would make of Cordelia.

39. Noting that Cordelia echoes the marriage service in her response to Lear, C. L. Barber reads 1.1 as a failed marriage ritual ("The Family in Shakespeare's Development: Tragedy and Sacredness," in *Representing Shakespeare*, pp. 197–98; amplified and extended by Barber and Richard Wheeler in *The Whole Journey: Shakespeare's Power of Development*, pp. 284–88); see also Linda Boose's fine discussion of failed wedding ritual in *King Lear* ("The Father and the Bride in Shakespeare," *PMLA* 97 [1982]: 333). Social analysts tend to see Lear's anger at Cordelia's response as a function of her success in making the ideology of patriarchal marriage visible, exposing the "realities of property marriage" (Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984], p. 199) or the rival demands of patriarchy and the price of ideological coherence (Claire McEachern, "Fathering Herself: A Source Study of Shakespeare's Feminism," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39 [1988]: 273–74, 280–81); see Alan Sinfield's related analysis of the (Laingian) double-bind in which Lear places Cordelia ("Lear and Laing," *Essays in Criticism* 26 [1976]: 5).

40. My formulation here is in part indebted to a wonderful paper by Beth Howlett, written for a graduate course in 1988. The peculiar horror of Goneril and Regan's representation—perhaps especially for those of us who are daughters—seems to me to lie in the inevitability of the logic through which their initial gesture of standing aside to criticize their father becomes their active attempt to emasculate, abandon, and, if we can believe Gloucester, murder him, all in the service of an insatiable sexuality, as though that first gesture of autonomy could lead only here. I became aware of the extent to which I felt implicated by this logic when I realized that my own standing aside from this most patriarchal text caused me intense anxiety and guilt, as though by that gesture I was attempting to kill not only Shakespeare but all the much-loved fathers who first gave him to me. John Donnelly thinks that some such mechanism works for everyone: he derives the play's power from the audience's initial identification with Goneril and Regan and from its consequent guilt, assuaged by the final retribution ("Incest, Ingratitude, and Insanity: Aspects of the Psychopathology of King Lear," *The Psychoanalytic Review* 40 [1953]: 152).

41. Both Shengold ("II. More about the Meaning of 'Nothing,' " p. 117) and Erickson (*Patriarchal Structures in Shakespeare*, p. 111) discuss Lear's creation of the malevolent mother in terms close to my own. For Stockholder, each of the characters is Lear's creation insofar as the entire play is Lear's dream (*Dream Works*, pp. 118–47); though this formulation does not always permit maximum clarity, several of her insights anticipate mine (see especially her account of the genesis of Goneril and Regan, p. 129). The association of Cordelia with a benignly maternal nature and the transformation of that nature by Lear's own rage might have come to Shakespeare (in a rather pallid form) from *The True Chronicle Historie of King Leir*, where Leir despairs of kindness at Cordella's court because "the causeless ire of my respectlesse brest, / Hath sowrd the sweet milk of dame Natures paps: / My bitter words have gauld her honey thoughts, / And weeds of rancour chokt the flower of grace" (ll. 2059–62, in Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources* vol. 7, p. 387). One could hardly ask for a more clinical description of the genesis of what Kleinians would call the "bad breast" (see, for example, Lisa Miller's allusions to Cordelia and her sisters as good and bad breast, "A View of 'King Lear,' " pp. 97–98, 114).

42. Muir, citing Craig's gloss of *generation* as *parents*, hears in these lines a reference to the (expectedly) monstrous child (Arden *King Lear*, p. 11); most other editors gloss it as "offspring." Insofar as the father's cannibalism in this image may be understood as derivative from Lear's infantile desire to feed on Cordelia-as-mother, the confusion seems appropriate.

43. Too hard, perhaps. Act 4, scene 3, present in the Quarto but not in the Folio, is full of signs of strain, both in the opening allusion to France's absence that calls attention to that absence in the course of excusing it and in the artificial and (to most modern tastes) saccharine imagery surrounding Cordelia's happy smilets and ample tears. The scene is sometimes cut in performance (see Rosenberg, *The Masks of King Lear*, p. 257); if Warren and

Urkowitz and company are right in believing that the Folio *Lear* represents Shakespeare's own revisions of Quarto *Lear*, Shakespeare may also have felt the excessiveness of the scene. (See Michael J. Warren, "Quarto and Folio *King Lear* and the Interpretation of Albany and Edgar," in *Shakespeare: Pattern of Excelling Nature*, ed. David Bevington and Jay L. Halio [Newark, N.J.: University of Delaware Press, 1978], pp. 95–107; Steven Urkowitz, *Shakespeare's Revision of King Lear* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980]; and the essays collected in *The Division of the Kingdoms: Shakespeare's Two Versions of "King Lear"*, ed. Gary Taylor and Michael Warren [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983].) Whether or not we think of Folio as Shakespeare's revision of Quarto, this scene remains significant in assessing his construction of Cordelia: although he may have finally felt that it was unnecessary—that he could trust the audience to see Cordelia as a redemptive presence without it—its presence in Quarto suggests that Shakespeare initially felt that he could not let Cordelia back on stage without first strenuously instructing the audience on how to see her; the very excessiveness that may have caused its omission in Folio signals his initial anxiety about her return. (Since most of the passages that my reading of the play depends on are virtually identical in Quarto and Folio, I have not had to decide on the revision hypothesis. In fact, pace Jonathan Goldberg, for whom the fact that "in the two *Lears* different characters may speak the same lines, that the same characters . . . speak different lines, suggests the radical instability of character as a locus of meaning in the Shakespearean text" ["Textual Properties," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 37 (1986): 215], I am struck by how little difference there is in the major characters, how peripheral the changes are to the central familial confrontations.)

44. See Marina Warner's suggestive discussion of the Virgin as Mater Dolorosa (*Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* [New York: Random House, 1983], pp. 206–23). As the virginal nursing mother of Lear's fantasy in 1.1, Cordelia always has the potential to become infused with the sacredness of the Virgin; the queenliness and especially the tears stressed in 4.3—both familiar attributes of the Virgin Mary—make the identification irresistible. I am deeply indebted to C. L. Barber's understanding of Cordelia as tragic stand-in for the Virgin Mother, which was from the first central to his reading of the family and the sacred in Shakespearean tragedy (see Chapter 2, n. 45; and see Barber and Wheeler, *The Whole Journey*, pp. 284–97, for the most extended discussion of Cordelia in these terms).

45. The Virgin Mary's traditional power to calm storms (Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, pp. 265–66) is the appropriate opposite of the witches' traditional power to raise them. Cordelia can serve simultaneously as Virgin Mother and as fertility goddess in part because the Virgin herself was often associated with natural fecundity and specifically with Demeter (see Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, pp. 273–84). Shakespeare evokes these associations when Cordelia prays that the unpublished virtues of the earth spring with her tears; given the association of Goneril and Regan with winter (2.4.46, 2.4.68), the seasonal reference in "spring with my tears" seems inevitable. Shakespeare knew the myth of Ceres and Proserpina in its Ovidian form and used it in *The Winter's Tale* (see 4.4.116–18). The "darnel" that crowns Lear may in fact be taken from the *lolium* in Ovid's account of Ceres's revenge on Sicily for the loss of her daughter (*Metamorphoses* V, 485); *OED* notes that *darnel* was "known first as the English name for the *lolium* of the Vulgate." Golding's translation, according to which "the Tines and Briars did overgrow the Wheate, / And other wicked weedes the corn continually annoy" (*Shakespeare's Ovid, Being Arthur Golding's Translation of the Metamorphoses*, ed. W. H. D. Rouse [London: Centaur Press, 1961], Book 5, ll. 602–3) is reminiscent of Cordelia's list of the "idle weeds that grow / In our sustaining corn." As both mother and daughter, Cordelia combines in herself aspects of both Ceres and Proserpina: she is simultaneously the mother who searches for her child and the child who is lost and then found. Insofar as Shakespeare's use of this myth makes Lear into Cordelia's lost child ("poor perdu" [4.7.35]), he significantly revises it, turning this mother-daughter tale into a mother-son tale, hence occluding the female bond at its heart.

46. The emotional grammar of cause and effect has been so devastating in this play that we must welcome Cordelia's attempt to escape its confines; nonetheless, her response short-circuits Lear's fragile attempt to assume full responsibility for what he has done to her. There seems to be no middle ground in which these two can meet as adult father and daughter: if she is not the punitive mother who would give him poison, she is the all-loving and all-forgiving mother of "no cause." The very fullness of her forgiveness protects Lear from the specificity of his guilt; hence in part Lear's desire to relive this delicious moment endlessly in his prison fantasy. See S. L. Goldberg (*An Essay on "King Lear"* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974], pp. 32–33), Berger ("*King Lear*: The Lear Family Romance," pp. 372–33), and Asp ("The Clamor of Eros," p. 200) for similar analyses of the effect of Cordelia's "no cause."

47. See Sigurd Burckhardt's fine analysis of the ways in which Cordelia's speech warns us that the idyll cannot last (*Shakespearean Meanings* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968], pp. 255–56). Cordelia's loss of subjectivity is not at issue for Burckhardt as it is for those who note the repetition of the "kind nursery" of 1.1 in Lear's prison fantasy and consequently hear in it his continuing attempt to deny her separateness; see, for example, Coursen ("The Death of Cordelia," p. 11), Erickson (*Patriarchal Structures*, p. 114), Cavell ("The Avoidance of Love," pp. 68–73), Richard P. Wheeler (" 'Since first we were dissevered': Trust and Autonomy in Shakespearean Tragedy and Romance," in *Representing Shakespeare*, p. 163), Barber ("The Family in Shakespeare's Development," in *Representing Shakespeare*, p. 199), and Kahn, who nonetheless notes the reciprocal gestures of the prison fantasy ("The Absent Mother in *King Lear*," pp. 48–49). Rosenberg reads Cordelia's tears as a sign of her separateness, specifically as a reminder of her love for her husband; he describes one successful Cordelia who stood "uncomfortably here, arms at her side, not returning her father's caresses" (*The Masks of King Lear*, p. 300).

48. Bonds are "crack'd" (1.2.113), Cordelia's coronet is parted (1.1.139), there is rumored division between the Dukes (3.1.19, 3.3.8); throughout the play, "division" is virtually synonymous with danger. Both Lear and Gloucester enter the play with the word or its cognate on their lips (1.1.4, 1.1.37); Edmund can successfully parody fear of division (1.2.144, 153) because we have heard the word so often. Both Lear's command to Kent ("Come not between the Dragon and his wrath" [1.1.122]) and his banishment of him because he has "come betwixt our sentence and our power" (1.1.170) seem to be attempts to fend off knowledge of impending division in himself.

49. Shakespeare sometimes uses *twain* to mean simply "two"; but he often uses the word to register not simply two-ness, but unnatural or violent division in which what should be one is cleft (*Hamlet*, 3.4.158; *Measure*, 3.1.62), divided (*1 Henry VI*, 4.5.49; *Troilus and Cressida*, 2.3.245), broken (*2 Henry VI*, 1.2.26), riven (*Troilus and Cressida*, 1.1.35), cut (*Romeo and Juliet*, 5.3.99), or shorn (*Othello*, 5.2.207) in twain. Sonnet 36 beautifully illustrates the distance between *two* and *twain*: "Let me confess that we two must be twain / Although our undivided loves are one."

50. Many diverse critics sense a desire for wholeness in this play. See, for example, Siemon's account of the "insistent pursuit of completeness," the "desire for the 'all' [that] makes idolatry possible" (*Shakespearean Iconoclasm*, pp. 261, 265), or S. L. Goldberg's account of Gloucester's simultaneous "helplessness in the face of his deepest feelings" and hankering for "the integrity, the fullness, they could give" (*An Essay on King Lear*, p. 80). For Cavell, the splitting and doubling of characters—so that Lear meets himself in Gloucester, his shadow in the fool—"taunts the characters with their lack of wholeness, their separation from themselves"; in his account, the inability to tolerate our separateness from each other is—for both characters and audience—at the heart of our failures of acknowledgment, and hence of our avoidance of love ("The Avoidance of Love," pp. 79, 109). (See also "Othello and the Stake of the Other," Cavell's beautiful meditation on Othello's tragic inability to tolerate his own finitude [*Disowning Knowledge*, pp. 125–42].) Although we often use quite different terms, my debt to Cavell's work is immense. When I first saw "The Avoidance of Love" in Cavell's *Must We Mean What We Say* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), it struck me—as it did many others—with revelatory force, as much for the intense relatedness Cavell demands of himself and his readers as for the brilliance of his insights; it seemed to me then, and still seems to me now, astonishing in its absolutely freshly felt and deeply thought-through responsiveness to the play.

51. I prefer the quarto punctuation, which gives a comma after "speak," to Muir's semi-colon, because it permits more enjambment, hence the possibility that we will hear "she must not speak why she dare not come over": read thus, the lines seem to allude not only to the fact of Cordelia's initial silence in 1.1. but also to the whole anguished complex of love and separateness that silences her.

52. Lisa Miller similarly identifies Cordelia as the beloved on the other

side of the bourn ("A View of 'King Lear,' " p. 108). "Bourn" is Capell's emendation of Quarto's "broome"; the song is not in the Folio. The emendation is given force by numerous references to versions of the same song. Muir (Arden *King Lear*, p. 132) cites Wager's use of it—"Com ouer the Boorne beese to me"—in *The Longer thou Livest the More Fool thou Art*. The lover's refrain was sufficiently capacious that it could be filled with all kinds of desire. Arthur R. Kinney notes that Skelton's use of it in *Speke, Parrot* derives from a popular Tudor ballad in which Christ calls to mankind with the words "Come over the burn, Besse, to me" (*John Skelton, Priest as Poet: Seasons of Discovery* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987], p. 26; I am grateful to Professor Kinney for directing me to this reference). The version in *The Harleian Miscellany* (ed. Thomas Park [London, 1813], vol. 10, pp. 260–62) is "A Songe betwene the Quene's Majestie and Englande," a dialogue in which England invites Elizabeth to become queen with the words "Come over the born Bessy, / Sweete Bessy come over to me." These desires—for union of infinite with finite, for union with a virgin queen—both seem to me germane to the desire for Cordelia evoked by the song in its place here.

53. According to Freud, this first smell of mortality may also be the prototypical experience of suffocation: he derives the sensation of choking characteristic of anxiety—our contemporary equivalent to the Suffocation of the Mother—from the physiology of birth, the first separation (*Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, *Standard Edition*, vol. 16, pp. 396–97). On the other hand, Otto Fenichel notes that "fears of suffocation are often specially directed against fantasies of being in the mother's womb" (*The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis* [New York: Norton & Company, 1945], p. 202). Either by abandoning the infant to separate existence or by overwhelming him/her in suffocating closeness, the mother remains the site of suffocation in these apparently contrary formulations.

54. Attempts to demonstrate Cordelia's consistency often require baroque and not always convincing readings of her motives in 1.1 and on her return, even among the best critics: Cavell's Cordelia is consistent because she is trying to protect Lear even in 1.1 ("The Avoidance of Love," pp. 62–66); Boose's Cordelia returns in order to win Lear's blessing so that she can go on to complete the marriage ritual ("The Father and the Bride," pp. 334–35). The most convincing case for Cordelia's consistency is, I think, made by Berger, who argues that she retains her initial smugness after her return, when she has "triumphantly refined the victim's role to a Christ-like perfection" ("*King Lear*: The Lear Family Romance," p. 372); he can construct this case only by overlooking the extent to which the play—rather than Cordelia herself—sanctifies her. But McLuskie notes Cordelia's inconsistency and sees in her return as icon a deeply problematic attempt to restore patriarchy by resolving its ideological contradictions ("The Patriarchal Bard," pp. 99–101). Other critics note the change in Cordelia but do not find it problematic: D. G. James, because it serves Shakespeare's "abstractive imagination" (*The Dream of Learning* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965], pp. 100–101, 110–17); Jungians, because Cordelia is Lear's anima and hence an aspect of him from

the start (see, for example, Alex Aronson, *Psyche and Symbol in Shakespeare* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972], pp. 185, 188; but Coursen simultaneously sees the anima in her and faults Lear for not responding to her otherness ["The Death of Cordelia," pp. 5, 8, and 11]).

55. McLuskie says, "The most stony-hearted feminist could not withhold her pity even though it is called forth at the expense of her resistance to the patriarchal relations which it endorses" ("The Patriarchal Bard," p. 102). For McLuskie, pity means the failure of resistance: either we exclude ourselves from the pleasure of the text, or we allow ourselves to be entrapped by its ideological misogyny (p. 98). In distinguishing between the (relatively gendered) fantasies of the oedipal period and the (relatively ungendered) fantasies of the preoedipal period, I attempt to articulate another alternative.

56. Insofar as the fantasy of oedipal betrayal allows the son both to mobilize an individuating rage and eventually to model himself on the father who has power, it may be a distinct improvement on the less mediated longings and terrors of the preoedipal period; it is in this sense that I see oedipal rage as a potential defense against a more primitive vulnerability. Received Freudian wisdom would in general construe this the other way around: for both Ella Freeman Sharpe ("From *King Lear* to *The Tempest*," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 27 [1946]: 29) and Chaplin ("Form and Psychology in *King Lear*," p. 32), Lear's regression to oral fantasies of merger represents a defense against genital/oedipal desire.

57. Bradley read Cordelia's death as the last stage of the poem called "The Redemption of King Lear" (*Shakespearean Tragedy*, p. 228). For updated versions of Bradley's reading, see, for example, Dreher's *Dominance and Defiance* (pp. 74–75) and especially Susan Snyder's "*King Lear* and the Psychology of Dying," where Cordelia's death is an aspect of Lear's and allows him "to experience his own death" (*Shakespeare Quarterly* 33 [1982]: 459). Among recent critics who read her death as the logical consequence of Lear's obliterating need for her, see especially Cavell ("The Avoidance of Love," pp. 72–73), Barber and Wheeler (*The Whole Journey*, pp. 38, 293–94), Erickson (*Patriarchal Structures*, p. 115), and Asp ("The Clamor of Eros," p. 201).

58. As Muir points out (Arden *King Lear*, p. 200) the line—"Have I caught my heavenly jewel?"—is from "Stella Sleeping," the second song of Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*.

59. The Variorum *Coriolanus* has a long note to 4.5.123–24 speculating about Shakespeare's familiarity with the Roman custom of lifting the bride over the threshold of the husband's house (*The Tragedie of Coriolanus*, ed. Horace Howard Furness [Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1928], p. 437). But the issue may be moot: John R. Gillis suggests that the custom was still current in England (*For Better, For Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present* [New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985], p. 75).

60. In this formulation, I am deeply indebted to Barber's identification of this moment as a reversed pietà and his reading of it as registering both sacredness and tragic loss: "The sacredness in Shakespeare's tragedy goes with recognition of the human impossibility of being divine, realized by the dread attempt, which brings destruction" ("The Family in Shakespeare's Development," pp. 200–201).

61. From the start, Edmund's masculinity has depended on his aggressive individuation; see, for example, the phallic force behind his "I grow, I prosper" (1.2.21). Since Stockholder sees Edmund as an aspect of Lear, she reads Cordelia's death as a reflection of Lear's—not Shakespeare's—ambivalence; nonetheless, her understanding of the threat Cordelia poses to masculine identity is in some respects close to mine (*Dream Works*, pp. 124, 145).

62. Shakespeare uses "heart" more often in *King Lear* than in any other play (forty-four times), and with special intensity; four strong uses of the term within thirty-five lines register the whole of the initial conflict with Cordelia, who cannot heave her heart into her mouth (1.1.91), but who nonetheless tells her father that her heart goes with her speech (1.1.104), and whose father responds by holding her as a stranger to his heart, giving his heart from her (1.1.115, 125–26).

63. Lear's association of heart and womb may have been traditional: according to *The Birth of Mankinde*, the most popular English gynecological handbook of the time (see Chapter 1, nn. 22 and 24), the "bottome of the matrix is not perfectly round bowlwise, but rather like the forme of a mans harte" (p. 27).

64. For this developmental history, see Chapter 1, p. 7, and n. 30).

65. Though I have earlier characterized preoedipal fantasies as in part ungendered, here they seem to me distinctly inflected by gender. For though the preoedipal girl may well feel overwhelmed by the mother's presence within her, she will not ordinarily feel contaminated specifically by the femaleness of that presence; though the internal mother may compromise her individuality, she will not compromise her core gender identity.

66. And perhaps not only male individuality, though Edmund's words have led me to construe Cordelia's choking thus. This play's portrayal of suffocating longing and dread are neither wholly "male" nor wholly academic for me; I read it as a childhood asthmatic, and often speak of it with one hand at my throat.

67. Mack, *King Lear in Our Time*, p. 100. (Though Mack emphasizes *esse* rather than *Existenz* in the characters and disdains the claim to "any form of psychic 'life' fluctuating among 'motives' " [p. 66], his own moving account of relatedness in the play [esp. pp. 110–13] touches on the emotions that I find central to it.)

68. The play's first audiences would have been shocked by Cordelia's

death, not only because it is a gratuituous accident that happens after victory seems assured but also because in the stories they knew she had always lived; Shakespeare's willfulness in killing her off would probably have been more apparent to them than it usually is to us.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1. This chapter largely replicates two essays published separately in 1978 and 1987, each of which deals with the construction of a rigid male identity as a defense against overwhelming maternal power (" 'Anger's My Meat': Feeding, Dependency, and Aggression in *Coriolanus*," in *Shakespeare: Pattern of Excelling Nature*, ed. David Bevington and Jay L. Halio [Newark, N.J.: University of Delaware Press, 1978], pp. 108–24, reprinted in slightly altered form in *Representing Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytic Essays*, ed. Murray M. Schwartz and Coppélia Kahn [Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980, pp. 129–49; " 'Born of Woman': Fantasies of Maternal Power in *Macbeth*," in *Cannibals, Witches, and Divorce: Estranging the Renaissance* [Selected Papers from the English Institute, 1985], ed. Marjorie Garber [Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press], pp. 90–121). I have tinkered very slightly with the *Macbeth* essay but have left the bulk of the *Coriolanus* essay unchanged. Insofar as my formulations of the dilemmas of masculinity shifted between the two essays, the shift reflects what I have learned from feminist object-relations psychoanalysis, and from a group of critics engaged with its terms: especially Richard Wheeler, Madelon Gohlke (now Sprengnether), Coppélia Kahn, Carol Neely, Peter Erickson, and Murray Schwartz. For the specific connections between *Macbeth* and *Coriolanus*, see especially Gohlke (" 'I wooed thee with my sword': Shakespeare's Tragic Paradigms," in *Representing Shakespeare*, pp. 176–77), Kahn (*Man's Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981], pp. 151–92), and Wheeler (*Shakespeare's Development and the Problem Comedies* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981], pp. 203–13), each of whom notes that the plays share a common concern with establishing a defensive masculinity; in particular, Kahn's chapter title—"The Milking Babe and the Bloody Man in *Coriolanus* and *Macbeth*"—indicates the similarity of our arguments. Linda Bamber also analyzes the two plays together but interprets their similarity differently: for her, the absence of a true feminine Other in both plays prevents the development of true manliness in their heroes (*Comic Women, Tragic Men: A Study of Gender and Genre in Shakespeare* [Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1982], pp. 20, 91–107).

2. See Chapter 1 for suffocation and the caesarian solution in Richard. In his classic preoedipal account of the failure of differentiation in *Macbeth*, David B. Barron associates the cutting and breaking imagery throughout the play with Macbeth's attempt to "cut his way out of the female environment which chokes and smothers him"; he notes that the choking/suffocating/smothering images find their realization in the witches' "birth-strangled babe" ("The Babe That Milks: An Organic Study of *Macbeth*," originally published in 1960 and reprinted in *The Design Within*, ed. M. D. Faber [New York: Science House, 1970], p. 268). For similar preoedipal readings of the play, see Marvin Rosenberg's *The Masks of Macbeth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 81–82, 270–72, and especially Kahn's *Man's Estate*, pp. 151–55, 172–92, Wheeler's *Shakespeare's Development*, pp. 144–49, and David Willbern's "Phantasmagoric *Macbeth*," *English Literary Renaissance* 16 (1986): 520–49, an essay that I saw in an earlier form in 1981.

3. Oddly, this fantasy is present in the report of the Earl of Gowrie's attempt to kill King James in 1600, a report that may have influenced Shakespeare in *Macbeth*. James Weimis of Bogy, testifying in 1600 about the earl's recourse to necromancy, reported that the earl thought it "possible that the seed of a man and woman might be brought to perfection otherwise then by the *matrix* of the woman" ("Gowries Conspiracie: A Discoverie of the unnaturall and vyle Conspiracie, attempted against the Kings Maiesties Person at Sanct-Iohnstoun, upon Twysday the Fifth of August, 1600," in *A Selection from the Harleian Miscellany* [London: C. and G. Kearsley, 1793], p. 196). The account goes on to suggest the kind of invulnerability the earl sought from the necromancer: searching the dead earl's pockets, James found nothing in them "but a little close parchment bag, full of magicall characters, and words of inchantment, wherin, it seemed, that he had put his confidence, thinking him selfe never safe without them, and therfore ever carried them about with him; beeing also observed, that, while they were uppon him, his wound whereof he died, bled not, but, incontinent after the taking of them away, the blood gushed out in great aboundance, to the great admiration of al the beholders" ("Gowries Conspiracie," p. 196). Stanley J. Kozikowski argues strenuously that Shakespeare knew either this pamphlet, printed in Scotland and London in 1600, or the abortive play on the conspiracy, apparently performed twice by the King's Men and then canceled in 1604 ("The Gowrie Conspiracy Against James VI: A New Source for Shakespeare's *Macbeth*," *Shakespeare Studies* 13 [1980]: 197–211). Although I do not find his arguments entirely persuasive, it seems likely that Shakespeare knew at least the central facts of the conspiracy, given both James's annual celebration of his escape from it and the apparent involvement of the King's Men in a play on the subject. But whether or not Shakespeare knew of and deliberately recalled the conspiracy in *Macbeth*, the pamphlet's figuration of the connection between recourse to necromancy, invulnerability, and escape from maternal origin suggests that this connection would have been culturally and psychically resonant for many in Shakespeare's audience. (See also Steven Mullaney's suggestive use of the Gowrie material as analogous to *Macbeth* in its links between treason and magical riddle ["Lying Like Truth: Riddle, Representation and Treason in Renaissance England," *ELH* 47 (1980): 32, 38].)

4. David Sundelson (*Shakespeare's Restorations of the Father* [New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1983], p. 3), Harry Berger, Jr. ("The Early Scenes of *Macbeth*: Preface to a New Interpretation," *ELH* 47 [1980]: 26–28), and Willbern ("Phantasmagoric *Macbeth*," pp. 522–23) all see Dun-