TIMOTHY ROSENDALE

Liturgy and Literature in the Making of Protestant England

CAMBRIDGE

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LITURGY AND LITERATURE IN THE MAKING OF PROTESTANT ENGLAND

The Book of Common Prayer is one of the most important and influential books in English history, but it has received relatively little attention from literary scholars. This study seeks to remedy this by attending to the Prayerbook's importance in England's political, intellectual, religious, and literary history. The first half of the book presents extensive analyses of the Book of Common Prayer's involvement in early modern discourses of nationalism and individualism, and argues that the liturgy sought to engage and textually reconcile these potentially competing cultural impulses. In its second half, *Liturgy and Literature* traces these tensions in subsequent works by four major authors – Sidney, Shakespeare, Milton, and Hobbes – and contends that they operate within the dialectical parameters laid out in the Prayerbook decades earlier. Central to all these cultural negotiations, both liturgical and literary, is an emphasis on symbolic representation, in which the conflict between collective and individual authority is worked out through complex acts of interpretation. Rosendale's analyses are supplemented by a brief history of the Book of Common Prayer, and by an appendix which discusses its contents.

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LITURGY AND LITERATURE
IN THE MAKING OF
PROTESTANT ENGLAND

TIMOTHY ROSENDALE

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For my family

. . . nam liber loquitur obscure,
et quamvis coneris candide interpretari,
non poteris effugere magnam absurditatem.
(Dryander to Bullinger, 5 June 1549)

. . . [The Book of Common Prayer] speaks very obscurely,
and however you may try to explain it with candour,
you cannot avoid great absurdity.

"O Sir, the prayers of my mother, the Church of England,
no other prayers are equal to them!"
(George Herbert)

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Acknowledgments

The course of a typically busy and self-absorbed life too infrequently forces us to stop, take stock, and reflect on those who have helped us along the way. This is too bad, because even though it deprives us of our solipsistic fantasies, doing so is an occasion of genuine pleasure; it reminds us of all the people who have more or less willingly involved themselves in our lives.

I'll begin with my institutional debts. My graduate studies at Northwestern were assisted by any number of fellowships, and the John P. Long Prize for graduate research, which enabled a summer of blissful immersion in the British Library, Lambeth Palace Library, the old PRO, and the Parker Library at Cambridge. My department and college at SMU have been even more generous, and in particular the University Research Council has enabled productive leave and summer work on this project.

Also important to the progress of this book has been the publication of parts of it in progress. Parts of Chapters 1 and 2 appeared in *Renaissance Quarterly* 54.4 (2001) as "'Fiery toungues': Language, Liturgy, and the Paradox of the English Reformation." An earlier version of Chapter 4 was published in *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, 44:1 (Winter 2004) as "Milton, Hobbes, and the Liturgical Subject." And part of Chapter 3 was included in Taylor and Beauregard, eds. *Shakespeare and the Culture of Christianity in Early Modern England* (Fordham University Press, 2004), under the title "Sacral and Sacramental Kingship in Shakespeare's Lancastrian Tetralogy." I am grateful both for the original publication of each, and for the subsequent permission to include them here, back in the project which originally generated them.

My personal debts are more extensive and varied. Rudi Heinze gets the credit, or the blame, for first getting me interested in the English Reformation and the Prayerbook. The original version of this project was ably guided by Wendy Wall, Lacey Baldwin Smith, and Mary Beth Rose; Regina Schwartz gave feedback in later stages. More recently, I received encouragement and advice from Debora Shuger, William Kennedy,

Darryl Gless, Richard Strier, and my anonymous readers at Cambridge University Press, who liked what they saw enough to help me improve it significantly. Sarah Stanton has been an indispensable ally and advocate since my first letter landed on her desk. And among the many friends/colleagues that have shared their time and wisdom with me in this process, I should single out Rajani Sudan, Rick Bozorth, Willard Spiegelman, Ezra Greenspan, and Dennis Foster.

Most important of all, and least quantifiable, is all that I owe to my family. My parents, Richard and Nella Rosendale, largely made me the person I am, though it might at times not be in their interest to have this publicized; they have been unfailingly supportive of my academic pursuits, even when they weren't exactly sure just what those were. My wife Lisa has stuck with me since college, and has variously and continually supported, encouraged, and when necessary chided me, never letting self-doubt, conceit, or lassitude get the upper hand. She is the living image of faithfulness, patience, and tolerance. And my children, Katie and Matthew, have in recent years impeded my work with an utterly charming blend of distraction and diversion, and are by far the best things I've ever produced. This project would undoubtedly have progressed much faster without my "little family," but I wouldn't want my life any other way.

Note on texts

All quotations from the Book of Common Prayer (also referenced as the Prayerbook or BCP) are taken from either F. E. Brightman's magisterial *The English Rite* or E. C. Ratcliff's *The First and Second Prayer Books of Edward VI.* Brightman's text is more scholarly; Ratcliff's is handier and more widely available; both are very useful. In most cases, unless Brightman's content or apparatus made its use necessary or specifically beneficial, I have used the more convenient Ratcliff, citing only parenthetically by page. I have left these quotations in their original spelling, for the most part, though I have done i/j and u/v modernizations, and I have quietly expanded printing elisions with the elided letters in italics.

Introduction

This is a book about early modern literature and representation. In it, I will argue that in Renaissance England, figural representations – that is, fictive and symbolic articulations of something other than themselves[1] – are the site of profoundly important cultural negotiations; that literary criticism of the last two or three decades has, despite its near-obsessive focus on this phenomenon, tended to misrepresent it; that the function of representation in England has a specific, and very important, political and religious history; and that the crucial text in this history is the Book of Common Prayer. Consequently, though the entire book is of literary import, it will deal at some length with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century history, theology, and politics to produce a deeper, richer account of early modern English culture and its textually mediated internal network of connections and dislocations. And so, since many of the problems I address involve the way we interpret the past, I would like to begin by talking not about literature, but about the remarkably durable historiographical conflicts surrounding the English Reformation. I want to propose, if not a solution, perhaps at least some grounds for a truce.

The debate, in its general outlines, goes back to the very earliest days of the Reformation. As the Henrician reforms began to be implemented

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[1] Some crucial definitions should be given here at the outset. By *representation* – a category whose capacious flexibility has been usefully and endlessly demonstrated by new historicists – I mean "the fact of expressing or denoting by means of a figure or symbol" (*OED*, 2d): in this book, it will encompass theatrical performance, wafers and wine, political personae, fruit, a sea monster, and various complex texts (literary and otherwise). The fictivity necessarily implied here should in no way be mistaken for falsity. For Cranmer, Sidney, and Milton, figural representations are an indispensable means of truth, and for Shakespeare and Hobbes, they generate highly desirable effects.

By *interpretation*, I mean simply the engagement with representations that renders them meaningful. This of course takes different forms (one doesn't "read" a king or a sacrament quite like one reads a poem), but all share some key features. First, all interpretation requires a recognition of the disjunction and nonidentity of sign and referent, figure and reality – but also a recognition that a complex and significant conceptual relationship is posited therein. Reading is thus what mediates the signifying gap and invests the signs with receptive meaning, and how this is done *always* has consequences, whether spiritual, moral, intellectual, or political.

in the 1530s, a (religiously conservative) party argued that these reforms reflected neither popular nor divine will; they were rather the arbitrary caprices of an ambitious monarch, foisted upon a resistant populace which was overwhelmingly committed to, and satisfied with, traditional forms of Catholic piety. On the other side, a (religiously progressive) party contended that reform was in fact the will of both God and people, that England was fed up with Catholic corruption and broadly receptive to the radical changes being undertaken by the godly king. Foxe, certainly the most influential exponent of this view, pointed in particular to Wycliffe and the Lollards as historical evidence of England's long and innate tendency to look through a Protestant glass.

Four hundred years later, the controversy continued virtually unchanged. In the 1950s, Philip Hughes challenged the dominant Whiggish Protestant narrative with a massive new history that highlighted the viability of the medieval Church and the coercive nature of reform. A. G. Dickens responded in the following decade with a ringing and highly influential re-exposition of the progressivist story, which insisted (relying again on the history of Lollardy as well as more immediate evidence of receptivity, like late-medieval anticlericalism) that England was a fertile seedbed for reform, and that Protestant ideas took root quickly, deeply, and widely. Dickens's book remained the standard account of the English Reformation for decades. In the 1980s and 1990s, though, it was increasingly under fire from so-called "revisionist" historians (Haigh, Scarisbrick, Duffy, etc.) who used new historiographical methods like local history to vigorously reargue a very old point: that the late-medieval Church was vitally alive, foundational to English culture, and beloved by the vast majority of English people, who found its ritual, doctrine, and institutional presence to be profoundly satisfying. More recently still, scholars like Judith Maltby have in turn pointed out the biases and distortions that revisionism has introduced into our understanding of this era. And so we now find ourselves pretty much where we began.

The astonishing persistence of this debate and its basic faultlines warrants, I think, several cautious but important conclusions. First, the perennial viability of both sides indicates that neither side has conclusively disproven the other; the absence of a truly knockdown argument either way is what has animated this controversy from the very beginning. Second, this in turn suggests that each side is in some important sense *right*. One side correctly stresses the strengths of late-medieval Catholicism and the enormous resistances that state reform encountered; the other side, equally correctly, argues that Protestantism was rather quickly embraced by significant

numbers of people who clearly found it not only personally empowering but also ritually and theologically preferable to a Catholicism they perceived as superstitious, foreign, and corrupt. Recent revisionist studies have valuably qualified the triumphalist tendencies of the Protestant view, but the strong form of the revisionist project would seem to require that the fundamental claims of a Dickens be positively disproven, and this has clearly not been achieved; demonstrating the persistent appeal of traditional religion is not the same thing as proving that Protestantism did not have a considerable appeal of its own.

This standoff, finally, suggests that the terms in which this debate has been construed are in need of some rethinking. Practically speaking, as things stand now – and, after nearly five centuries, they seem unlikely to change much from within – our options would seem to be either resigning ourselves to stalemate or finding some synthetic or dialectical way out of it.² Since the second option seems to me the only really constructive one, we would need to conceive of a new model that is sufficiently capacious to incorporate the strengths of both approaches. This model would, for example, need to reconcile structurally the top-down and bottom-up models; it would need to acknowledge that the English Reformation was simultaneously a vertical and coercive exercise of state power *and* a horizontal distribution of political and religious authority; it would need, that is, to make sense of both aspects of the dynamic of subjectification (that is, the ways in which reform both subjected people to new structures of authority and recognized them as autonomous subjects).³

I believe that we have such a model. It has been available to us for four and a half centuries. It is a text – a text created and authorized by the combined force of Crown, Church, and Parliament; a text which spawned rebellions, and for (and against) which many people gave their lives; a text often found at the center of religious and political controversy; a text indisputably familiar to virtually every English subject; a text which forms part of the foundation of England's national identity. It is not the English Bible; it is the Book of Common Prayer.

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² Ethan Shagan has recently proposed that we might get past these static binaries – Catholic/Protestant, above/below, success/failure – by rethinking the English Reformation as a more complex and dynamic "process of cultural accommodation" (*Popular Politics*, 7) in which politics and belief were experientially negotiated. Time will tell if this in fact proves to be a way out of historiographical stalemate, but in the meantime, my contention is that the Prayerbook is itself the textual site of such negotiations – not so much between Protestant and Catholic (though that tension is of course important to it) as between the conflicting models of authority upon which this particular Reformation was constructed.

³ This useful term is of course Foucauldian, though part of my argument will register some important reservations about Foucault and his influence on recent critical practice.

If there is something slightly surprising about this claim, at least to scholars of literature, I would argue that this surprisingness is an effect of a longstanding critical blind spot in literary studies, which has paid relatively little sustained attention to the liturgy. But one might argue (though I will not explicitly do so in this book; I offer it here by way of provocation) that in certain respects, the Book of Common Prayer has proven more important to the history and identity of England than have specific theological formulations (e.g. Calvinism), polemical historiographical constructions (e.g. Foxe), or perhaps indeed the English Bible itself.

This last claim may seem absurd. So let me clarify what I do not mean here. I don't mean to suggest that the BCP has ever had an equal status to the Bible in terms of affect or authority; unlike the Scripture, which all sides agreed was the inspired Word of God, the Prayerbook never claimed to be the product of anything more than state authority, careful Bible-reading, and good judgment. Indeed, both its Preface and the essay "Of Ceremonies" are quite insistent on both the BCP's derivative nature and its contingency as a specific cultural product. Hence I'm not saying that the Book of Common Prayer exceeded or even approached the Bible in terms of sheer spiritual or political impact, on either the individual or national level. It was not nearly the catalyst for literacy that the Bible was, nor did it receive the sort of veneration that the Bible did, because it was clearly not regarded as a pure or direct expression of the will of God (in fact, its authors insisted that it *could not* be so regarded, although they certainly suggested that they had done their best).

So then what's left of my claim? This: that the BCP has functioned, quietly and deeply, *in opposition to* the English Bible. This will again seem absurd, given the Prayerbook's insistence on its own biblical foundation, and the vast amounts of Scripture so deliberately present in the liturgy, which was, after all, the primary context and vehicle through which most people experienced the Bible. And it has no doubt set Thomas Cranmer spinning in his grave (metaphorically, of course; having been burned at the stake for his efforts, he doesn't have one). So let me immediately explain that this is a constructive opposition. But the Bible had always, *always* been a site of chaotic potentiality: this is why the medieval Catholic Church controlled its availability and interpretation so scrupulously, and whatever one may think of the Church's final motivations, we must allow that its concerns were precisely on the mark. The dangers inherent in the Bible, and in the mad excess of inspiration it offered, were historically controlled by its companion authorities of church tradition, conciliar decrees, and papal

edicts; but with the Reformation, many of these counterweights were cast off.[4]

It quickly became clear in the unruly early years of the Reformation that the power vacuum created by this revolution needed to be filled if religion and indeed society were to be saved from collapsing into anarchy. Three stabilizing options can be seen in the life and teachings of Martin Luther: a reinvigorated turn to Erastianism, the authoritative voice of a magisterial reformer, and the complicated recourse to a hermeneutic of literalism (which, I'll suggest, should be considerably less simple and synecdochic to us than it is). In England, where a different set of conditions obtained, this burden fell most squarely on the Prayerbook, which embodied a distinctive complex of forces: issued in the name of the king, enforced by parliamentary authority, created and administered by the episcopal hierarchy of the national Church, it staked its authority in a different sphere than that of the Bible. By regulating the conduct of public worship, the aural delivery of the Word, and by implication the format of the individual encounter with the divine, it was the central textual mediator of social and religious experience (a recent book has contended that "what church and state *meant* to by far the greatest number of people, high and low, was the Book of Common Prayer").[5] It also, crucially, provided a potent counterweight of order to balance the chaotic promise of Protestant scripturalism and its attendant controversy. The Prayerbook was, in short, designed to fix the problems that the English Bible caused, to stabilize a historical moment in which inspiration threatened to run amok. But by also incorporating the radical individualism implicit in Protestantism, it sought to weave a complex textual matrix of identity which held in productive tension both the imperatives of the hierarchical nation and the prerogatives of the evangelical soul.

It was in part this orderliness that provoked Puritan attacks in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; evangelicals saw the very idea of a coercively uniform liturgy as a popish relic which impeded the individual and improvisatory nature of true faith. Given these politico-religious valences, it is no surprise that the opposing parties in the Civil War defined themselves centrally in terms of textual affiliation. In fact, it

[4] See Kastan, "Noyse," for a good account of the English Bible's rambunctious early history.
[5] Carrithers and Hardy, *Age of Iron*, 99. Similarly, Maltby (*Prayer Book and People*, 4) suggests that "there was probably no other single aspect of the Reformation in England which touched more directly and fundamentally the religious consciousness, or lack of it, of ordinary clergy and laity, than did the reform of rituals and liturgy."

might be useful to rethink the Civil War as less a matter of old dichotomies of Crown/Parliament or court/country and more a conflict between the competing social, religious, and political visions of a Bible party and a Prayerbook party. Parliament outlawed the BCP on the same day that it attainted Laud (that old arch-liturgist), indicating the high and related priority of both actions; conversely, reestablishing the Prayerbook in what would become its final form was a centerpiece of Charles II's Restoration – a textual monument that powerfully undergirded, and indeed outlived, England's commitment to a specifically religious sociopolitical identity.

So perhaps the Book of Common Prayer, not the English Bible, is the foundational and paradigmatic text of Anglicanism (and more generally of post-Reformation England). But the Prayerbook has, for some, more than a whiff of dusty arch-conservativism about it; it is, after all, the master-text of a putatively elitist Anglicanism once coercive and now moribund. It stands decrepitly, obsoletely, against a historical trend toward accessibility and improvisation to which even the Roman Catholic Church has not proven entirely immune. It is, in short, widely regarded as a relic, a quaint and predictably hegemonic artifact of a distant and repressive past. This alienated view of the Prayerbook, however, not only discourages careful critical attention to the liturgy but also obscures its cultural centrality, its internal complexity, and its deep radicality: while the BCP had extensive continuities with its immediate past, it was also both a revolutionary reconfiguration of that past and one of the deepest taproots of subsequent English identity.

On 21 January 1549, after over a month of debate, Parliament passed the first Act of Uniformity. Attached to this Act was a draft of a new "convenient and meet order, rite, and fashion of common and open prayer and administration of the sacraments," prepared by a committee of "the most learned and discreet bishops, and other learned men of this realm" to the great satisfaction of young King Edward VI.[6] As of Whitsunday of that year (9 June), the Act dictated, all ministers in the king's dominions were to use the new forms exclusively; penalties for using other forms, or failing to use the new form, or openly derogating it, ranged from £10 to life imprisonment and forfeiture of all property. A new era of English civil, religious, and political history was thus announced with the birth of the Book of

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[6] Gee and Hardy, *Documents*, 359. For an account of this debate, see Gasquet and Bishop, *Edward VI*, Appendix 5 (pp. 395–443).

Common Prayer, a smallish book designed to provide uniform orders of worship in English for all church services in the realm.[7]

Although at this writing, 450 years after its introduction, the same essential text is still the official liturgy of the Church of England, the BCP (1549, 1552, 1559, 1662) has a history of near-spectacular neglect among literary scholars; despite the incalculable importance of both the Reformation and the Book of Common Prayer to early modern English culture, literary scholars in recent decades have tended to neglect both, and particularly the latter.[8] But the convergence in the Prayerbook of many strands of political, religious, intellectual, and aesthetic traditions make it an unusually interesting subject for analysis. Politics as well as theology were dominant in its conception, birth, and subsequent history (indeed, I will argue that it is the central textual effort to reconcile the two); in another sphere, it seems to have been looked upon almost at once, and still today, as a critical part of post-Reformation England's cultural identity; in yet another, it became almost immediately one of England's most pervasive and dominant linguistic monuments (one writer has made the striking suggestion that the Book of Common Prayer and the English Bible provided the only regular and nationally uniform experience of the English language until the advent of radio).[9] The language of Thomas Cranmer (Henry VIII's Archbishop and the BCP's chief architect), along with that of William Tyndale and his

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[7] The 1549 Prayerbook's contents: (1) Preface (2) Table and Kalendar for determining daily readings (3) Mattins and Evensong (Morning and Evening Prayer) (4) Proper readings for each Sunday and feast day throughout the year (5) Holy Communion (6) Baptism (7) Confirmation (8) Matrimony (9) Visitation of the Sick (10) Burial (11) Purification of Women (12) Ash Wednesday (13) "Of Ceremonies" (Holderness is simply mistaken when he says this essay was "added to the 1552 text" ("Strategies," 22) (14) Concluding rubrics. For a fuller account of the Prayerbook's form and contents, see Appendix.

[8] The last half-century of the Prayerbook's history as a subject of literary attention begins with C. S. Lewis's 1954 appraisal in the *Oxford History of English Literature*; notable commentators since then include Mueller, King, Wall, Booty, Guibbory, Robinson, Helgerson, Diehl, and Carrithers and Hardy (and, more indirectly, Chambers). Yet none of these brief and often incidental treatments – and the preceding inventory is something close to exhaustive – treats the BCP extensively and on its own terms, digging deeply into its text as well as its cultural position to explicate more fully its precise place in the contemporary discursive milieu, its pivotal function and enormous significance in English culture of the sixteenth century and beyond. To this end, there are, really, only two explicitly literary–critical books. The first is Stella Brook's 1965 *The Language of the* Book of Common Prayer, a book-length study of the language and style of the liturgy. Thirty-six years then elapsed before the appearance of the other – Ramie Targoff's 2001 *Common Prayer* – which is a provocative and welcome addition to literary studies, but it is also a thin and flawed book which, despite its insistence on the importance of practice, is poorly grounded not only in theology but also in history and ritual theory. Its emphasis on the triumph of the corporate voice quite deliberately ignores the individualizing implications of the BCP (and the Reformation); the dialectical complexity of the Prayerbook is thus more or less entirely left out of Targoff's account.

[9] Valerie Pitt in Bloom, *Jacobean Poetry and Prose*, 44–56.

successors in Bible translation, formed the twin textual and linguistic pillars of religious Englishness. Ian Green has estimated that the Prayerbook went through over 550 printings between 1549 and 1729 – an extraordinary figure unmatched by any other book of the era, even the King James Bible – and Judith Maltby has demonstrated the deep commitments many formed to this book in the Tudor and Stuart eras.[10] Even today, Prayerbook coinages continue to pervade our expression. Much of the modern wedding service, from "Dearly beloved" to "to love and to cherish" to "those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder," derives from the BCP; "ashes to ashes, dust to dust" we owe not to Neil Young but to Cranmer's burial service. And when Neville Chamberlain returned from the Munich Conference in 1938, thinking that he had averted war, he found the resonance of "peace in our time" (as had Ernest Hemingway) not in the Bible but in the Order for Morning Prayer.

    In short, the Book of Common Prayer is a text of enormous significance for both literary and historical study, a pivotal text in the development of early modern English nationalism and subjectivity, and a deeply pervasive presence in subsequent English language and literature. This book thus attends to the BCP as a promising avenue for an exploratory literary–historical understanding of the English Reformation and Renaissance, as well as of the relationship between these complex and ambivalent phenomena. I contend that the Prayerbook (and by extension the English Reformation itself) was a profoundly important cultural effort to synthesize productively the claims and possibilities of two enormously potent, and potentially contradictory, sixteenth-century conceptual entities: the early modern nation and the Protestant individual. This synthesis is worked out *hermeneutically*; the constantly renegotiated balance between individual and community, authority and conscience, pivots around a newly stressed faith in the power of representations and their interpretation to articulate and transform the relations of human and divine, Church and State, subject and nation. The latter half of this study traces an extension of these principles, this faith, into the theory, practice, and thematics of Renaissance literature: Sidney and Shakespeare (and by further extension Milton and Hobbes), I argue, define their literary/theatrical and political

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[10] See Green, *Print and Protestantism*, ch. 5, and Appendix 1, p. 602; Maltby, *Prayer Book and People*, *passim*. Maltby argues there has been a tendency in recent historiography to focus disproportionately on Catholicism (both pre-Reformation and recusant) and the godly activists formerly known as Puritans, to the neglect of the quietly satisfied, even enthusiastic, establishment center of the Church of England (see ibid., esp. 1–30). She, as well as Wall, Guibbory, and Targoff, usefully counter the revisionist tendency to assume that Protestantism consistently destroyed community rather than creating it.

concerns around a distinctively Reformed axis of fictive signs and their faithful interpretation.[11]

My analysis seeks to make visible some complexities that are frequently overlooked or elided in current literary and historical scholarship. Excavating the tensions in a foundational text enables a more nuanced understanding of the interplay of identity, agency, and authority in this period; in the wake of the English Reformation, I argue, the negotiated reconstitutions of nation and subject were not only intertwined but interdependent. Looking at the Prayerbook – a text that simultaneously was built on coercive vertical authority, and demanded individual construal of its contents – also makes it possible to isolate some important ways in which this dialectic was itself constituted in terms of textuality, figuration, and hermeneutics. And this stress on representation and interpretation, as a mode of negotiating fundamental cultural questions of authority and identity, creates in turn a productive link between liturgy and literature, Reformation and Renaissance.

The importance of these links has not been fully understood in criticism of the last few decades. "For the understanding of English Renaissance literature," a perceptive critic wrote in 1987, "the contribution made by the Reformation in England, Germany and throughout Europe has not yet been fully appreciated."[12] More than a decade later, this continued to be an accurate description of the state of affairs in literary–critical studies of early modern England. For all of criticism's efforts to historicize newly the English Renaissance anew, there remained a curious weakness in the field, a tacit overlooking by many critics of the enormous historical and cultural significance of the Reformation that made it possible.

One might speculate on the reasons why this has been so. To begin with, the Reformation, whatever else it may have been, was a substantially religious phenomenon, and despite its potential to do otherwise, much New Historicist criticism has exhibited painful inadequacies in its treatment of religion; though it has to some degree talked about religion from the beginning, it has done so, for the most part, in highly problematic ways. This is due in part to the thorough secularization of literary criticism in the last several decades, particularly insofar as it has been a deliberate reaction to the former hegemony of warmly Christianized approaches to literature, and in part to the ideological and methodological

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[11] No biographical claims are necessarily implied in this; my concerns are not with authors' religious beliefs but rather with the ways in which they think about the cultural function of signification and reading.

[12] Weimann, "Discourse," 109.

precommitments of the theorists who have shaped recent critical practice; in the case of New Historicism, for example, the totalizing implications of Foucauldian and Althusserian criticism virtually guarantee in advance that religion will be counted as a variety of false consciousness, a discursive mechanism of ideology, rather than a sphere of human experience with its own coherent claims to validity.[13] Consequently, the rejection of religiously normative criticism was not immediately followed with a mode of reading that took religion seriously both in its own right and in terms of its deep implication in other modes of culture. Even a study which ostensibly attempted to do so, Stephen Greenblatt's brilliantly insightful chapter on Tyndale in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, ends up exemplifying the religiously hamstrung quality of High New Historicism. In Greenblatt's account, Tyndale's sacrificial devotion to the authority and availability of the Bible stems ultimately not from religious belief per se but from "an intense need for something external to himself in which he could totally merge his identity" (111) – a simple transfer of psychological dependency from the institutional Church (More's neurosis!) to the inspired Book. This psychologizing of Tyndale's faith is symptomatic of criticism's impulse to translate religious belief into *something else* – psychology, ideology, economics, politics – before it can be talked about; in such accounts, religion is often implicitly an effect or by-product of the "real" which is its putatively true referent. This tendency has persisted in Greenblatt's more subtle recent work: in "The Wound in the Wall," the Eucharist appears to be "about" Christian–Jewish relations, while in "The Mousetrap," it appears to be "about" the philosophical problems of material remainders.[14] My point is not that Greenblatt is necessarily wrong – the eucharistic topos may well have provided a powerful mode of articulating such questions – but rather that there's a lot more at stake, and that a lot is lost when scholars treat religion as really being something else altogether.

This is in part because, despite criticism's frequently professed desires to "make the past strange," it much more often makes it overly familiar. The depth, passion, and occasional ferocity of early modern religious belief simply doesn't resonate in a secular modern culture committed to toleration and agnosticism, so we tend to reduce its alienness by overlooking it, or

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[13] Historian Brad Gregory, writing on the perplexing phenomenon of early modern martyrdom, argues that "insofar as one wants to learn what life in the past meant to the people who lived it, such theories are not the answer. They are the problem" (*Salvation at Stake*, 351).

[14] Both essays are found in Greenblatt and Gallagher, *Practicing New Historicism*. See also David Aers's trenchant critique of the former piece and its critical underpinnings in "New Historicism and the Eucharist," and Beckwith's in "Stephen Greenblatt's *Hamlet* and the Forms of Oblivion," as well as Strier, *Resistant Structures*, ch. 4.

by translating it into terms we are more comfortable with. But those are by definition *not* the terms in which these things existed and operated historically; when we use them as the basis of our critical practice, we are looking not at the past but at an image of modernity in hose and ruffs. Debora Shuger has influentially critiqued the tendency of modern scholarship to "bracket off religious materials from cultural analysis and vice versa,"[15] and contended that we do ourselves no favors by ignoring, displacing, or distorting the era's fundamental conceptual structure.

Religious belief is "about" God and the soul as much as it is "about" the sociopolitical order. Whether or not one believes in the former two entities, one gains very little by assuming that the culture under investigation did not itself comprehend the essential nature of its preoccupations . . . Religion in this period supplies the primary language of analysis. It is the cultural matrix for explorations of virtually every topic: kingship, selfhood, rationality, language, marriage, ethics, and so forth. Such subjects are, again, not masked by religious discourse but articulated in it; they are considered in relation to God and the human soul. That is what it means to say that the English Renaissance was a religious culture, not simply a culture whose members generally were religious.[16]

The present book is founded on the principle that while religious experience includes social, political, material, behavioral, ideological, philosophical, psychological, and theological dimensions, it is not finally reducible to any one (or combination) of them; my argument attempts to respect the internal coherence of religious belief (that is, the seriousness of its claims to be about what it claims to be about), while also attending closely to its deep and complex implication in these cultural spheres. My focus on liturgy seeks to elucidate the relation between a central religious text and its attendant cultural practices – cultural anthropologist Roy Rappaport has called ritual "the basic social act" – by which complex tensions are symbolically articulated and negotiated.

So I am not saying that consideration of the political, social, and material circumstances and operations of religious discourse, and of belief itself, is

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[15] *Renaissance Bible*, 2. Donna Hamilton and Richard Strier were, I think, also correct in their 1996 contention that "the great efflorescence in historicized literary studies of the early modern period in England has not been very mindful of religious issues" (*Religion, Literature and Politics*, 2), as, more or less, is Aers in his 2003 claim that even now, "for all its diversity, New Historicism itself has not been engaged by the particulars of Christian theology and liturgy, preferring to trace flows of secular power, hidden or overt, in putatively religious genres" (241).

[16] *Habits of Thought*, 6. See also Mallette's call for criticism to "examine the diversified and numinous intertextual presence of religious discourses within literary texts quite apart from any claims of truth those discourses might be making on either reader or writer" (*Spenser*, 202) – an activity distinct from source-hunting, doctrinal pigeonholing, or "dismissing 'belief' as outside the sphere of critical inquiry."

inherently invalid; such analysis has much to teach us about the historical workings of this crucial mode of culture, and this book will perform a good deal of it. But a balanced, solidly founded criticism must resist the reductive and condescending urge to translate religion wholly into other analytical categories, or to dismiss religious discourse's inaccessible, animating core of faith as meaningless; it must find ways to talk productively about the cultural operations and implications of belief, both corporate and individual, without assuming that this belief is simply an illusory ideological effect. The reductiveness of such critical assumptions has resulted in a frequently cavalier treatment of religion, and thus in any number of distorting critical shortcuts. To equate Reformed theology entirely with iconoclastic Puritan antitheatricalism (as a distressing number of critics have done), for example, or to think of Protestant literalism as being irrevocably antiliterary, is to sacrifice much of the complexity and the constructiveness of the relationship between religious belief and literary–cultural practice – and there is much to be learned from the deep and intricate links between Protestantism and the more familiar critical topics of theatricality and literary representation.

Happily, there are signs that this broad critical problem has begun to improve. Brian Cummings, in an important book of 2002, registers an ambivalent transitionality when he complains of the persistent tendency in literary studies to consider religion axiomatically "as a transparently ideological construct, an engine of the state," but does so in a book – a book accepted for publication at a major university press, and warmly received by reviewers – founded on an assertion that "without reference to religion, the study of early modern writing is incomprehensible."[17] Michael Schoenfeldt reports in a 2004 review essay that in early modern studies, "religion is back with a vengeance, not as an alternative to historicism but as its necessary medium . . . not just as the exclusive purview of Reformation scholars, or as a disguised discourse of political power, but rather as an element that pervades almost all aspects of early modern culture."[18] This model of pervasiveness comes a little short of Shuger's contention (now over a decade old, and still, I think, correct) that religion is the foundational matrix and "primary language" of early modern culture,[19] but it nevertheless bodes well for the course correction underway in early modern studies.

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[17] *The Literary Culture of the Reformation*, 12, 6.
[18] "Recent Studies in the English Renaissance," *Studies in English Literature* 44.1 (2004): 190–1.
[19] One might, for example, see "pervading" as something implicitly done *to* the substance of "real" culture by something essentially extrinsic to it.

But if religion is finding its way back into our critical discourse, the picture is further complicated by the discomforting messiness of the English Reformation itself, which has contributed to its own marginalization; it is simply a very difficult phenomenon to explain neatly, let alone to deploy critically in stable and meaningful ways. The apparently limitless longevity of the historiographical debate I discussed earlier is surely not simply a result of religiously partisan stubbornness (though one suspects it has played its part), but rather an indication of the profound ambivalence of the phenomenon in question. As I have suggested, perhaps both sides have something right: the English Reformation was at once an unprecedented extension of state power over its subjects and an unprecedented validation of individual authority over against that power. This delineates the paradox inherent in any Protestant state Church: the tension of institutional authority (necessary for a coherent sociopolitical structure) and individual autonomy (necessary for a coherent Protestant theology of Biblical access and personal salvation).

The English Reformation's concatenation of these multiple and sometimes conflicting logics is exemplified in a piece of legislation – the 1534 Act of Succession – the establishment of which involves two notable aspects. First, this is the Act which brought More and Fisher to the block: their refusal to endorse it stemmed from their recognition that this statute instituted a radically different order of authority, in which the English state decisively kicked itself free of the binding power of the papacy, and established itself as the realm's temporal arbiter of religious power. The second aspect is related to the first, although the relationship between the two is ultimately one of tension. The concrete expression of More's and Fisher's resistance to the new order, and the grounds for their executions, was their refusal to take an oath in support of the Act. This oath (which involved the recognition of the new succession as legal fact, the condemnation of the Catherine of Aragon marriage, and the implied denial of papal supremacy) was unprecedented in its administration on a national scale: Geoffrey Elton described it as an attempt to "bind the whole nation" in a "political test of obedience to the new order and of adherence to the royal supremacy in the Church."[20] In demanding this oath, the state demanded, and expected, the unified support of the realm on the individual level. But this demand also contained a far more radical implication: that the consent of individual subjects *mattered*. Henry and Cromwell coercively achieved (at least in theory) the unprecedented unanimity of England in their cause at the

[20] Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 135.

profound cost of recognizing the validity of individual opinion in these matters.

This curious, paradoxical doubleness of the English Reformation is one of the principal concerns of the present study. The other is the vast and complex cultural consequences of the English Church/State's attempt to negotiate and stabilize this doubleness by means of a text – and by turning to textuality itself.

It is a historical truism that the Reformation *in principle* disposed of the massive institutional force and external authority of the Roman Catholic Church and replaced it with individual and ideally unmediated interpretive access to God. In practice, of course, things were not that simple – especially in England, where an ambitious but conservative monarch "reformed" a church primarily by stealing it from the Pope. Henry famously complained to his last Parliament that the logic of reform had run out of control, that the English Bible he had reluctantly authorized was being everywhere recklessly read. What Henry's dilemma exposes is, again, the paradoxical – and, for the new Church of England, fundamental – tension of a vertical, hierarchical model of institutional authority and a more dispersed, individualized, and potentially contestatory model of personal faith and discretion. When his son, three years later, authorized the other great text of the English Reformation, he did so to stabilize precisely the same set of conflicts by forcibly imposing a degree of uniformity and coherence on a nation of Christian individuals. The Prayerbook is thus no less paradoxical than the Henrician Reformation, but by textualizing and dialecticizing these conflicts (between a horizontal Protestant subjectivity and a vertical, centralizing hierarchical order), it positions itself precisely at the site of their collision, and attempts to remake the conflict into a constructive and fundamentally representational synthesis. And this synthesis in turn became profoundly influential, not only in defining the Church of England, but in defining England itself, and what it meant to be an English subject.

The significance and complexity of the Prayerbook's position, and the relevance of ceremonial to these concerns, are addressed in Cranmer's essay which concludes the 1549 Prayerbook. In a sense, "Of Ceremonies, Why Some Be Abolished and Some Retayned" might be viewed as the founding document of the Church of England. It elaborated the foundational principles upon which the 1549 BCP was constructed, and these principles of worship were in many ways coterminous with those upon which the Church itself (and the entire realigned polity) was built. They expressed the basic principles of the English version of Reformation, and gave the

English Church a relatively stable groundwork of studied ambivalence and reasoned moderation – a foundation which helped mitigate the violence typical of contemporary religious change, and gave the Church its characteristic ideological shape.

The essay is a proleptic response to the situation in which the Archbishop found both himself and, as he anticipated, his new liturgy. On the one hand, he had discarded much of the old faith and ritual that was very dear to the hearts and souls of many in England; on the other, by constructing the new liturgy so much out of traditional structures and materials, he had kept much that smacked of popery to many of the more ardent reformers. He asserts a scriptural mandate for a common "semely and due ordre" within a church, yet acknowledges the difficulty of trying to establish a coherent church in a time of such seismic change:

And whereas in this our tyme, the myndes of menne bee so diverse, that some thynke it a great matter of conscience to departe from a peece of the leaste of theyr Ceremonies (they bee so addicted to theyr olde customes) and agayne on the other syde, some bee so newe fangle that they woulde innovate all thyng, and so doe despyse the olde that nothyng canne lyke them, but that is newe: It was thought expediente not so muche to have respecte howe to please and satisfie eyther of these partyes, as howe to please God, and profitte them bothe. (286)

The policy outlined here of holding extremes peacefully at bay within a general course of moderation, in some ways so foreign to the age, was to become the hallmark of the English Church: Geoffrey Cuming calls Cranmer's approach in the essay "the first tentative statement of the Anglican *via media*."[21]

But the guiding principles by which this liturgical reform was carried out are equally important. Concerning the reasons for selection and deletion of ceremonies, Cranmer advances two main strands of argument. The first concerns only the need to reduce the overabundance of them, which in recent years had grown so excessive that "the burden of them was intollerable" – a strikingly precise echo of the confession of sins in the Communion service. He continues in terms which were central to the entire Reformation ethos:

This our excessive multitude of Ceremonies, was so great, and many of them so darke: that they dyd more confounde and darken, then declare and sette forth Christes benefites unto us. And besides this, Christes Gospell is not a Ceremoniall lawe (as muche of Moses lawe was), but it is a relygion to serve God, not in bondage of the figure or shadowe: but in the freedome of spirite, beeyng contente

onelye wyth those ceremonyes whyche dooe serve to a decente ordre and godlye discipline, and suche as bee apte to stirre uppe the dulle mynde of manne to the remembraunce of his duetie to God, by some notable and speciall significacion, whereby he myght bee edified. (287)

Emancipation from an old, corrupt, "darke" faith is of course not an uncommon theme in Reformation polemics. Cranmer's words, though, are noteworthy for several reasons. His opposition of hollowly externalized ceremonial law to true inward religion is as old as St. Paul,[22] but remarkable here for its connection to the hermeneutic and tropical motifs of contemporary polemic. The key principle of his liturgical reform is the liberation from the "bondage of the figure," the rendering opaque of religious signs and ceremonies which generally characterized most of what was attacked as Roman Catholic "idolatry" and "superstition." Tyndale calls it "blind image-service," and contends that once the Roman Church had crowded out the Gospel with ceremonies and Latin, the common people, having been deprived of "the signification of the ceremonies,"

turned unto the ceremony itself; as though a man were so mad to forget that the bush at the tavern-door did signify wine to be sold therein, but would believe that the bush itself would quench his thirst. And so they became servants unto the ceremonies; ascribing their justifying and salvation unto them, supposing that it was nothing else to be a christian man than to serve ceremonies, and him most christian that most served them; and contrariwise, him that was not popish and ceremonial, no christian man at all.[23]

The English Protestant alternative to this idolatrous literalization emphasized the transparency and interpretability of signs of "notable and special signification," ceremonial and otherwise, whose value is not numinous and self-enclosed, but consists rather of the *effects* of their signification – the focus of which is always on something beyond themselves – on the *understanding* of the participants.

    The second strand of Cranmer's argument, which specifies the selection principle, goes as follows: there are many humanly devised ceremonies in the Church; some have been so abused and encrusted with superstition and confusion that they can no longer be profitably used; others can still be

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[22] See e.g. Romans 6:14, Galatians 3:23–5. As we shall see, later nonconformists would turn this opposition against the Prayerbook itself.

[23] *An Answer*, 67, 76. He lumps together the "worshipping or honouring of sacraments, ceremonies, images, and relics" (59), and argues that "all the ceremonies, ornaments, and sacrifices of the Old Testament were sacraments; that is to wete, signs preaching unto the people one thing or another" (64); under the yoke of Catholic images and services, however, he imputes "this our grievous fall into so extreme and horrible blindness (wherein we are so deep and so deadly brought asleep) unto nothing so much as unto the multitude of ceremonies" (75).

useful for edification and the keeping of good order (including temporal continuity with the past); therefore it is best to purify and keep the latter sort, and to discard the former sort entirely. "Innovacions and newe fanglenesse" for their own sake are to be eschewed, and godly traditions to be respected, in the pursuit of godly unity and concord. Cranmer closes this section of his argument with a recapitulation which stresses both the historicized contingency of ceremonial signs and the imperative of hermeneutic clarity:

as those [ceremonies] bee taken awaye whiche were moste abused, and dydde burden mennes consciences wythoute any cause: So the other that remaine are retained for a discipline and ordre, whiche (upon just causes) may be altered and chaunged, and therfore are not to be estemed equal with goddes lawe. And moreover they be neyther darke nor dumme ceremonies, but are so set forth that every man may understande what they dooe meane, and to what use they do serve. (288)

Finally, the essay closes with an affirmation of the principle of national self-determination in matters of religion. This is framed as both a charitable recognition of a limited religious diversity between nations ("wee condemne no other nacions, nor prescribe anye thyng, but to oure owne people onelye") and a reassertion of the proto-Erastian self-determination established in England during the previous decade – a claim which was still by no means secure. Ultimately, the Prayerbook sought to establish the new English Church and nation by weaving a complex textual synthesis of multiple discourses: national sovereignty, ecclesiastical and hierarchical order, Protestant scripturalism, a reconceived hermeneutic of truth, and individual competence assumed historically critical formations in the new English liturgy. The consequences of this reformulated episteme of authority, identity, and salvation were culturally deep and pervasive.

The present study, then, seeks to understand the role of the English liturgy in early modern culture by beginning with an extended treatment of the Book of Common Prayer, arguing that the Prayerbook textually synthesized some foundational cultural conflicts in a historically important and enduring way. Chapters 1 and 2 are the core of my analysis of the Prayerbook, and form a complementary dyad which addresses, in turn, the principles of national order and Protestant individualism; the larger theme of this unit is the double logic of the English Reformation discussed above, and the nature of the resolution propounded in the BCP. In Chapter 1, I argue that the political, philosophical, and theological roots of contemporary

proto-Erastianism are manifested and reworked in the Prayerbook, whose discourses of order, nationalism, and language participate in the reconstituted polities of a multinational Europe and an autonomous English state (as well as a more lateral and inclusive sense of nationhood, which partially contests hierarchical models of order, and foreshadows the concerns of Chapter 2).

The hierarchical nature of this discursive order is counterpoised in the Book of Common Prayer by its more radical theological discourse of Protestant individuality. In it, the Supreme Head coexists with personal competency, and the religious vernacular functions simultaneously as a mode of unified national identity and a means of unmediated private grace. In the same way, my study of the liturgical construction of national order is complemented and contested by an extended consideration in Chapter 2 of the more refractory implications of Protestant and Reformed theology. Through an analysis of the successive versions of the eucharistic liturgy, I argue that the theological move away from transubstantiation was accompanied by a shift in sacramental emphasis from elements to participants, from institutional *ex opere operato* objectivity to individual subjectivity. Fundamental to this shift – and additionally significant for its connections to Protestant scripturalism and vernacularism – is a reconception of the eucharistic elements as signs, representations, *texts*, whose regenerative grace was conveyed and internalized through acts of self-conscious interpretation.

Why, though, the stress on the Eucharist? Recent criticism has begun to answer this question, following in part, as it often has, the lead of Stephen Greenblatt, who has written repeatedly on the topic (in a 2000 essay, he recognized that "most of the significant and sustained thinking in the early modern period about the nature of linguistic signs centered on or was deeply influenced by eucharistic controversies"). But other scholars, religious and otherwise, have recognized for some time its absolute cultural centrality. Miri Rubin's brilliant study of the sacrament's medieval history demonstrates that it was the symbolic nexus of post-1100 European culture, the master paradigm from which flowed virtually all significant ideas about social relations, cosmic order, and human experience. And though the Reformation defined itself in large part through its rethinking or outright rejection of divine sacramental immanence, the Eucharist did not lose its fundamental place in Protestant culture. On the contrary, I will argue that the Reformed flesh-made-word was just as important as the Catholic word-made-flesh had been; it was the foundation and the beating heart of

a radically reconstructed symbolic order.[24] As such, I will suggest, it had widespread cultural (and specifically literary) consequences.

In the end, I contend, the Prayerbook helped England to navigate the cultural crisis of the Reformation by enfranchising the evangelical subject, and establishing a permanent dialectic in which the authority, and thus the identity, of nation and individual are mutually constituting. This negotiation takes place on the ground of representation and interpretation, a mode which requires the belief that sign and referent are not copresent, and that meaning and identity are thus created and mediated through the careful reading of signs. Receiving the Prayerbook sacrament was the ceremonial counterpart to the study of Scripture (just as, for Tyndale, its "idolatrous" Catholic counterpart went hand in hand with the denial of scriptural access to the laity); these companionate modes of apprehending Truth in its highest sense embody what is perhaps the ideological and hermeneutic essence of the Reformation. In both cases, divine grace and truth were made available in essentially textual form, as systems of referential signs, and their internalization was a fundamentally interpretive act – one with both individual and communal consequences.

The conceptual parallels between the reception of Scripture and sacrament, and the centrality of (controlled) reading in each, enable the present book to extend its scope at this point. The first two chapters are essentially a case study of a signally important cultural text, one that positioned itself at the confluence of two enormous and potentially conflicting forces, and whose proposed resolution thus can tell us much about these forces' collision and reconfiguration in England. The remainder of this study will attempt to trace some of the influence of this resolution in the literary culture of the following century. In it, I will argue that the Reformation's amplification of representation and reading (centrally expressed, but also restrained, in the Book of Common Prayer) as a means of truth and grace is subsequently manifested in, and is an enabling condition for, the literary outpouring of the following decades.[25] Indeed, a central import of

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[24] Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism*, 141; Rubin, *Corpus Christi*. Similarly, Robert Whalen argues that the early modern sacrament "played a crucial role in the formation of religious subjectivity" (*The Poetry of Immanence*, xxi).

[25] An influential and complementary study is Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics*, which argues that "the primary poetic influences upon [seventeenth-century religious poets] are contemporary, English, and Protestant, and that the energy and power we respond to in much of this poetry has its basis in the resources of biblical genre, language, and symbolism, the analysis of spiritual states, and the tensions over the relation of art and truth which were brought into new prominence by the Reformation" (5). The present study differs from hers in focusing not on a "specifically biblical

this book is its contention that Protestantism was not, in contrast with the richly numinous signification of Catholicism, an inherently, dourly, puritanically, unimaginatively literalist system of belief;[26] on the contrary, it had profoundly metaphorical affinities, without which the literary history of England might have been very different.

But how might such a claim be established, especially between what seem to be culturally diverse deployments of representational principle? In the absence of direct testimonial evidence (say, an explicit Sidneian or Shakespearean invocation of liturgical influence on their conceptions of literary representation), one is left to trace a more generalized route of cultural consequence. On a basic level, the linguistic pervasiveness of the Prayerbook was exhaustively demonstrated years ago by Richmond Noble, who catalogued hundreds of clear liturgical echoes in the works of Shakespeare. This makes it clear that Shakespeare, like virtually all of his contemporaries, was steeped in the language of the Book of Common Prayer, but it does little to demonstrate a *conceptual* link between liturgical or theological and literary or theatrical representation.

And yet I would contend that such links, though inferential, do exist. I've spent some time discussing the failures of New Historicism, but one of its genuinely salutary accomplishments is its insistence on the deep "interdependency of representational practices," a recognition of "the complexity, the historical contingency, of the category of literary discourse" in the early modern period – an awareness that the boundaries of the literary are "contested, endlessly renegotiated, permeable."[27] In short, recent criticism has emphasized, to the effective annihilation of New Critical principles of aesthetic autonomy, the idea that the literary is not walled off from other spheres of culture, but intimately and reciprocally implicated in their operations. And Shuger's reminder that "Renaissance habits of thought were by and large religious" highlights the centrality of religion in this culture's thinking through of a vast range of "other" issues.[28] Such conceptual

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poetics" (8), but on a broader representational poetics, foundationally articulated in liturgy, which engages recurrent questions of subject and structure, authority and identity (both religious and political), representation and interpretation.

[26] Peter Herman's contention, for example, that early Protestants "simply refused to grant the validity of the fictive" (*Squitter-wits*, 42–3) is just a particularly egregious example of a widespread, if often tacit, critical tendency.

[27] These formulations are of course Greenblatt's, from *Representing the English Renaissance*, xii, vii.

[28] *Habits of Thought*, 9. As Miri Rubin has demonstrated, this had long been the case with the Eucharist in particular: "From the very nature of its sacramental status, it belonged in every area of life, mediating between the sacred and profane, supernatural and natural. The rituals within which it was enfolded offered ideas of further and analogous uses in other spheres of life" (*Corpus Christi*, 334).

cross-pollenization is immediately visible in Reformation discourse; as I will demonstrate, questions of theology and religious practice are intertwined from the start with reflections on hermeneutics, identity (both individual and communal), history, politics, and the nature of language itself as a system of interpretable signs. This polymorphousness can also be seen in the range of objects under study in the present book, wherein the capacious category of "representation" will include not only canonically literary texts but also bread, wine, a tree, a sea monster, theatrical dynamics, the political practices of several kings, and any number of nonliterary texts; all of these diverse literary, political, and religious phenomena are structurally related in that each depends on both a signifying gap between sign and referent, and interpretive intervention to render that relationship meaningful. In each case, the reading of these representations leads to referents (whether divine grace, moral truth, or political authority) that are experienced and affirmed, both individually and collectively, as objects of faith and bases of consensus.

Another important accomplishment of recent criticism is its recognition that representation is always, in both its generation and its reception, a form of *power*. By abstracting from a narrowly literary sense of representation while also deepening the category's cultural potency, Robert Weimann has constructed an ambitious theory of the relations between the Reformation and Renaissance. In his account, one of the key consequences of the Reformation's dislocation of traditional structures of authority was an inversion of the customary relations between authority and representation: whereas previously, authority generally preceded discourse and made it possible, post-Reformation authority is increasingly a *product* rather than a precondition of discourse. "There is a link (which, I suspect, is of unique cultural potency) between the decline of given, unitary locations of authority," he argues, "and an unprecedented expansion of representational discourses." And this link is not simply the negative relation of a shifting fulcrum, but is positively connected to the bases of reform: "the 'interpretive imperative' served as an invisible link between the diverse promises of emancipation associated with Protestant piety and the 'redemptive' uses of secular writing and reading respectively . . . In England, early modern uses of representation were unthinkable without the growth of Protestant debate and interpretation; they went hand in hand with the gradual spread of literacy, nourished by the increased spread of printed vernacular texts."[29] If, as Protestants loudly insisted, reading is good for you spiritually – indeed

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[29] *Authority and Representation*, 8, 4, 11.

essential for access to truth, and for a fully realized existence – then why wouldn't this dynamic be similarly beneficial in other areas of life?

If Weimann's highly suggestive model is correct, it should then come as no surprise that representation, unmoored from its predefinition and its ultimately restrictive claims of immanence, assumed new cultural forms and alliances. Part of my own argument is that the Reformation, in the process of desacralizing the absolute and immanent signs of medieval Catholicism, simultaneously resacralized the representational sign *as sign*. The divine will revealed in the text of Scripture is manifested not in the accreted authority of medieval commentary but through direct, individual interpretive engagement with the text; the divine grace available in the sacrament takes effect not in terms of literal presence, but through faithful individual reception of representational signs as signs. And as the sacrament's claims to presence gave way to a spiritually invested model of "notable and special signification" (even as the spread of print and literacy made Bible-reading not only desirable but increasingly feasible), this principle stimulated an expansion of the cultural status and function of representation and interpretation,[30] the operations of which became in turn broadly constitutive not only of belief and knowledge, but of individual and communal identity.

Subsequent literature is of course not immune to a hermeneutic revolution at such a fundamental cultural level; it in fact at almost every turn registers its deep relationship to the central problematics of the Reformation. As I turn to literary analysis, the second half of this study considers canonical works of literary theory and practice by four major figures: Sidney, Shakespeare, Milton, and Hobbes. The last two figures explicitly address liturgical issues in their writings; the first two do not. All four, though, write in the context of the newly unified but still sometimes discordant polity of post-Reformation England. All address issues regarding the risks, value, and cultural status of representation and reading. And all exhibit

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[30] I use the term "expansion" to qualify any suggestion of an absolute, radical epistemic break between the medieval and early modern periods; the cultural project of reevaluating signification surely did not begin in 1549. Jesse Gellrich (*The Idea of the Book*) has argued that some works of Chaucer and Dante actively demythologize the foundational medieval assumptions of closure and immanent, total meaning in signification. But whether or not one accepts Gellrich's claims, the terms in which they are couched suggest something important: Dante and Chaucer, even if they were hermeneutic revolutionaries, were nevertheless part of a general episteme which presupposed the direct immanence of meaning. In the end, such a reading works more to qualify than to disagree with such formulations as Terence Cave's: "In the course of the sixteenth century . . . other accounts of reading began to impose themselves, accounts that make the task of the reader more central and correspondingly change the status and function of the text. In a sense, this is perhaps already a generally accepted hypothesis: for example, it is well known that Protestant theories of Scriptural reading, as well as humanist stress on the return *ad fontes*, release the reader from the constraints of what one might call institutionalized allegory and glossing" (Lyons and Nichols, *Mimesis*, 151).

distinctive combinations of religious, political, and hermeneutic questions characteristic of the new conceptual polity. The first half of this project considers the Book of Common Prayer as one exceptionally significant effort to negotiate and synthesize central Reformation conflicts between Church and State, individual and order, authority and interpretation. In the second half, these issues redivide to some extent, and the two pairings of authors each exemplify the divergent possibilities inherent in (and constitutive of) the Prayerbook solution; in each pair, one figure focuses on the individualizing implications of Protestant thought, while the other concentrates on its consequences for communal identity and authority.

My analysis turns in Chapter 3 to Sidney and Shakespeare, in both of whose works the value and function of representation is self-consciously foregrounded and theologically inflected. In Sidney's *Defense*, literary representation, by virtue of its fictive signifying structure, becomes in effect a means of sanctifying grace; Shakespeare's English history plays of the 1590s, pivoting compositionally around the proleptic Reformation in *King John*, enact a progressive rehabilitation of theatrical–political representation as a constructive, cooperative, and salvific tool of a recognizably and anachronistically Protestant national order. And finally, a concluding chapter on revolution and representation looks ahead to the seventeenth century, when Milton and Hobbes addressed a revolution which crystallized significantly around liturgical issues; in the end, I suggest, even these two vastly differing figures operate within a matrix defined a century earlier in the Book of Common Prayer. The Prayerbook had done more than its ostensible job of restructuring public worship; it had played an important role in reconstituting the terms in which it was possible to think about reading, individuality, and England itself.

Prelude/Mattins: through 1549

A brief account of the history of the English liturgy is useful in understanding the historical and cultural role of the Book of Common Prayer. My aim here is not to produce a definitively new history of the Prayerbook;[1] rather, while presenting an introductory sketch of its history, I intend this account to demonstrate narratively several important things about the liturgy, and through it, about the English Reformation itself. First, simply a sense of its historical *importance*: in a sense, it's not wholly inaccurate to say that English history from the mid-sixteenth through the late seventeenth centuries centers on the BCP, in part because it articulates conflicts whose (ir)resolution was fundamental to the national project (the Civil War split between royalist/Anglicans and parliamentarian/Puritans, for example, which expressed itself so centrally in conflicts over the liturgy, was essentially a spectacular crystallization of always present tensions in the Prayerbook). Second, a sense of its significance for English national identity: by 1555, there were clear links between the Prayerbook, its language, and the idea of "Englishness," and this association continues to the present day. Third, this account is a narrative counterpart to some of the major concerns of the larger project: the BCP's crucial cultural position as a textual synthesis of the nascent nation-state and the potentially contradictory discourses of Protestant theology (i.e. its simultaneous commitments to both hierarchical power and an individualized model of authority), and its establishment of the characteristically Anglican solution; its implicit reconstruction of the relations of Church

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[1] Mine will be a necessarily brief account, gleaned from the mountains of available ecclesiastical and liturgical history. For fuller accounts, see the following works: Gasquet and Bishop's *Edward VI and the Common Prayer* has been largely superseded but contains several valuable appendices of documents. Procter and Frere's *New History of the Book of Common Prayer* was first written in 1855 but continues to be useful. The most recent full history is G. J. Cuming, *A History of Anglican Liturgy*, 2nd edn. Also very useful are W. K. L. Clarke, ed., *Liturgy and Worship*; Cheslyn Jones, ed., *The Study of Liturgy*; MacCulloch's magnificent biography of Cranmer; and F. E. Brightman's indispensable *The English Rite*. The most convenient edition of the 1549 and 1552 Prayerbooks is the Everyman's Library edition, edited by E. C. Ratcliff.

and State, religion and politics, in England; its general project of streamlining and centralizing English religious discourse under state control; and its dependence and emphasis on vernacular, print, and interpretation. In this way, the Prayerbook's history, distributed in three interpolated segments, will provide a narrative and thematic throughline for the more focused analyses of this book's four main chapters.

Any delineation of the history of the Book of Common Prayer is necessarily arbitrary. The book's immediate parentage was medieval Catholic material on one hand, and the various contemporary Lutheran *Kirchenordnungen* on the other, from which it was primarily composed. Through the former source, its ancestry can be traced through centuries of corporate worship in the medieval and primitive Church, and beyond that to the public worship of pre-Christian Judaism – and even this probably does not represent the traceable limit of its genealogy. For the purposes of this study, however, the conception of the BCP will be taken to coincide with the birth of the Church of England, an event which I will – again, somewhat arbitrarily – locate in 1534, the year of the Act of Supremacy. This Act finalized both the break with Rome and the subjugation of the English clergy to the Crown by officially and unambiguously declaring Henry VIII "the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England" and giving him complete doctrinal, disciplinary, and material control of the English Church.[2] The jurisdictional establishment of this Church was thus completed first, as this was Henry's real interest; his religious conservatism caused the necessary corollaries of doctrinal and textual establishment to be postponed indefinitely. Henry's gargantuan achievement was the successful political hijacking of English religion; he largely left to his children the stickier problems of redefining that religion in the context of the titanic war of ideas that was the Reformation.

Liturgical reform on the Continent had proceeded vigorously since the earliest years of the Reformation. By the early sixteenth century, there was dissatisfaction with the daily office in many quarters, even among Catholics; critics complained of the liturgy's complexity, the predominance of nonbiblical elements in it, and the great variety of usage. In 1529 Pope Clement VII commissioned a revision of the Breviary, which was produced by Cardinal Francesco de Quiñones in 1535. Quiñones' recension drastically simplified the liturgy and restored regular Scripture reading; it drew a firestorm of criticism from conservative Catholics for its radicalism, and was eventually suppressed, but it went on to serve as the model for Cranmer's revision

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[2] Gee and Hardy, *Documents*, 244.

of the Breviary portions of the BCP. Cardinal Quiñones' work was symptomatic of a widespread dissatisfaction with the liturgy within the Roman Church which culminated in full-scale revision at the Council of Trent later in the century.[3] On the other side of the debate, where profound theological objections were added to the list of criticisms, liturgical reform was an active concern of many of the earliest Reformers, and new liturgies were produced by Martin Luther at Wittenberg (1523, 1526), Ulrich Zwingli at Zurich (1523, 1526; in both these cases, the earlier version was a conservative Latin revision, the later doctrinally radical and in the vernacular), and Martin Bucer in Strasbourg. These first-generation liturgies gave birth to a swarm of local *Ordnungen*, which were specific to individual princedoms or cities, and which, like the pre-Reformation "uses," were broadly similar but not identical to each other. Many of these Orders were known to Thomas Cranmer, and several left discernible marks on the liturgy he composed.[4]

While Henry lived, however, further reform in England was slow and uneven, and influenced mainly by European politics and the sympathies of his closest advisors. Two liturgically noteworthy events accompanied Supremacy in 1534. The first is indirectly connected, as part of the general tolerance of Lutheranism following the break from Rome. Marshall's Primer contained expositions and sermons translated directly from Luther, and its second edition contained a translation of Luther's 1529 Litany rather than the traditional Sarum form; this was, according to G. J. Cuming, "the first Reformed liturgical form to appear in English."[5] The second event was also a portent of things to come. Medieval Latin services had long contained a small vernacular section of instruction, announcements, and intercessions, which was never formalized but left to the discretion of the minister. In 1534, Henry dictated a fixed form for these "Bidding Prayers" which limited the subjects and sequence of prayers, with himself especially and firstly remembered as "being immediately next under God the only supreme head of this catholick church of England."[6] The extension of both Protestant doctrine and state manipulation of the liturgy had begun.

Liturgical reform for the remainder of Henry's reign was spotty and unpredictable, and consisted not of direct reconstruction but of partial measures which helped prepare the way for the Book of Common Prayer after his death. Thomas Cromwell's Lutheran sympathies, as well as his

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[3] Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship*, 137.
[4] For much more in-depth discussions of this, see Cuming, *History*, ch. 2, and Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship*, 137–45, as well as Brightman, *English Rite*, I.lxxviii–lxxxi. .
[5] Cuming, *History*, 31.   [6] Brightman, *English Rite*, II.1020–57; Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship*, 145.

hopes for a political alliance with the Schmalkaldic League of German Protestant princes, enabled several steps toward reform in the late 1530s. Coverdale's Bible, the first allowed in English, appeared in October 1535, followed by Matthew's Bible in 1537 and Coverdale's revised "Great Bible" in 1539. Cromwell's Injunctions of September 1538 mandated the placement of English Bibles in every church, and in 1543 Convocation began the integration of the Great Bible into worship when it ordered that every minister read, every Sunday, "one chapter of the New Testament in English, without exposition."[7] The other notable liturgical event of this period, though not made public, was Cranmer's composition of two experimental Breviary revisions. The first of these meets and exceeds Quiñones in radicalism by combining and discarding entire services, yet remains in Latin; the second largely reproduces the traditional structures in a simplified form.[8] The destruction of Cromwell in 1540, however, and the conservative reaction begun with the Act of Six Articles in 1539 put a halt to direct liturgical reform for several years.

The first steps of further reform after this hiatus tended to consolidate the reorganization of the Henrician Church. An emended edition of the Sarum Breviary appeared in 1541 which omitted all mention of the Pope ("In quo nomen Romano pontifici falso adscriptum omittitur") and St. Thomas à Becket, the symbol of church resistance to monarchical control. The following year, Convocation imposed a limited uniformity by making the Sarum Breviary mandatory throughout the southern province; Cranmer also raised the question of correcting existing service books. In 1543, Henry married Katherine Parr and the Protestant faction at court began to make progress again;[9] real reform, albeit of a moderate Erasmian variety, resumed with both the integration of vernacular Scripture into regular services and Cranmer's announcement that it was the aging monarch's will that

all mass-books, antiphoners, and portuises in the Church of England should be newly examined, corrected, reformed and castigated from all manner of the Bishop

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[7] Cuming, *History*, 34.

[8] Cuming (in C. Jones, *The Study of Liturgy*, 390–1) conjectures that this revision was made in 1538 as part of diplomatic negotiations with the German Lutherans, and was left incomplete as a result of their breakdown. See also his *The Godly Order*, ch. 1, for his arguments in favor of this dating of the manuscript. The traditional view quite naturally places the more conservative revision first; Cuming makes it part of the conservative reaction of the 1540s, with the more reformist version part of the Lutheran thaw of the 1530s. Whatever the sequence, however, we see Cranmer quietly tinkering with the liturgy only a few years after the break with Rome, and perhaps a decade before its full-scale revision became a priority of public policy.

[9] Dickens, *English Reformation*, 206, 217.

of Rome's name, from all apocryphas, feigned legends, superstitious orations, collects, versicles, and responses: and that the names and memories of all saints, which be not mentioned in the Scripture, or authentical doctors, should be abolished.[10]

In the first decade after Supremacy, then, despite Henry's determined conservatism, a tradition was established of tinkering with the English liturgy for both political and religious purposes; public worship was to be purged of both Roman authority and its most "superstitious" apparatus (i.e. those parts most clearly predicated only on that authority), with a purified, autonomous, and Erastian English Church to be established in their place.

With several key precedents thus set – state control of the liturgy, vernacular integration, the gradual introduction of Protestant elements, and a concern for formal and ideological uniformity – an important milestone in this nascent tradition was reached in 1544 with the production of the first official liturgical form completely in English. Cranmer's Litany was a wartime document, issued as Henry prepared to invade France, and is thus a text of both political and religious unification, a service designed to excite both religious and patriotic fervor. The king had commanded "certain godly prayers and suffrages in our native English tongue" for very practical reasons: "heretofore the people, partly for lack of good instruction and calling, partly for that they understood no part of such prayers or suffrages, as were used to be sung and said, have used to come very slackly to the processions."[11] English, for him, was not the essential means of direct faith that it was, theologically, for the Reformers; rather, it was a pragmatic instrument of state policy and politico-religious order. The 1544 Litany was nevertheless revolutionary, and Cranmer took the opportunity to advance some additional reform by drawing on Luther and by omitting the invocations of about fifty saints in favor of an increased emphasis on the power of the Trinity.[12]

A letter of Cranmer's, written in October of that same year to the king, indicates that the two had active plans for a full-scale English Processional; it is also the Archbishop's most self-conscious reflection on his work of liturgical translation and compilation.

[A]ccording to your highness' commandment . . . I have translated into the English tongue . . . certain processions, to be used upon festival days . . . In which translation, forasmuch as many of the processions, in the Latin, were but barren, as meseemed, and little fruitful, I was constrained to use more than the liberty of a translator: for

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[10] Procter and Frere, *History*, 31n.   [11] Cranmer, *Letters*, 494.
[12] Davies, *Worship and Theology*, 167.

in some processions I have altered divers words; in some I have added part; in some
taken part away; some I have left out whole, either by cause the matter appeared
to me to be little to purpose, or by cause the days be not with us festival-days; and
some processions I have added whole, because I thought I had better matter for the
purpose, than was the procession in Latin: the judgment whereof I refer wholly to
your majesty . . . But by cause mine English verses lack the grace and facility that
I would wish they had, your majesty may cause some other to make them again,
that can do the same in more pleasant English and phrase.[13]

In addition to Cranmer's characteristic modesty (which C. S. Lewis thought
demonstrated "more loyalty to poetry than a wilderness of sonnets"[14]), the
text evinces both his bold handling of sources at his own discretion and his
submission of all liturgical matters to the king's judgment. In this case, for
reasons unknown, the judgment was apparently negative, for these other
processions never saw the light of day, and a year later use of the Litany "and
none other" was commanded by royal injunction.[15] In that same year of
1545 the Litany was included in King Henry's Primer, a volume notable for
two reasons. First, it contained much material – most notably the Litany,
the Lord's Prayer, and several canticles – in forms very close to those that
would appear in the first BCP four years later; second, it was accompanied
by injunctions which forbade the sale of any other primers, to the end that
there might be "one uniforme ordre of al suche bokes throughout all our
dominions."[16] In both its elements and its driving impulse toward textual
uniformity and doctrinal reform, the Book of Common Prayer was not far
off.

When Henry VIII died on 28 January 1547, the old doctrines and services
lost their greatest protector. The young Protestant Josiah, nine-year-old
Edward VI, and his Protestant-dominated Council encouraged aggressive
liturgical reform, which began immediately. In April, Compline was sung
in English in the Chapel Royal. *Certayne Sermons or Homelies* appeared in
July, and provided twelve official preaching texts on matters of faith and
godly conduct. The following month, a general visitation and Injunctions
required that one official homily be read every Sunday, and that the Epistle
and Gospel be read "in English and not in Latin," as well as the removal
of venerated images. In December, Parliament called for a form of Com-
munion which provided for reception in both kinds; for this purpose, a

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[13] Cranmer, *Letters*, 412.
[14] *English Literature*, 217. MacCulloch is more frank on Cranmer's poetic self-assessment: "his realism
     meant that there were no other similar verse attempts left embedded in the English liturgy, where
     they might have done permanent damage to the English language" (*Thomas Cranmer*, 331).
[15] Cuming, *History*, 38.   [16] Butterworth, *English Primers*, 257.

commission of "grave and well-learned prelates and other learned men in the Scripture" convened, and the result of their deliberations was published in March 1548 as *The Order of the Communion*.[17]

The 1548 *Order* is simply an English form for the administration of the sacrament in both kinds to the people, and was designed to be inserted into the Latin Mass. It consists of exhortations, an invitation, confession and absolution, a prayer for worthy reception, the words of administration, and a blessing; most of it was integrated into the 1549 service. The prefatory Proclamation to the first edition demands that this order alone be used, lest "every man phantaſiying and deviſing a ſondry way by hymſelf, in the uſe of thys moſte bliſſed Sacrament of unitie, there myghte thereby ariſe any unſemely and ungodly diverſitie"; it also commands all subjects to "quyet themſelfes, wyth this our direction, as men content to followe aucthoritie," for "God be prayſed, wee knowe what by his wourde is meete to be redreſſed . . . Whiche wee doubt not, but all our obedient and loving ſubiectes, will quyetly and reverently tary for."[18] The King and Council may have been slightly overoptimistic, as the new form stirred some discontent on both sides. Several of the more conservative bishops were slow to implement it, and some parish clergy preached (perceptively, if not quite accurately) that it was a disguised extension of state power, proclaiming that the government's real interest in liturgical reform and the recent keeping of parish registers was the levying of half-crown taxes on every christening, marriage, and burial. On the other side, despite the Proclamation's warning not to "ronne afore" of official reforms, the radical practice of some overzealous clergy led to the severe restriction of preaching in April and September – the latter proclamation sounding an increasingly familiar note in its expectation that the people might now be "the more ready with thankful obedience to receive a most quiet, godly, and uniform order to be had throughout the realm."[19]

In May 1548, Henry VII's anniversary Mass at Westminster Abbey was sung in English, as were Mattins, Mass, and Evensong at St. Paul's. Over the summer, Protector Somerset sent English forms of these services to the universities to be used until the appearance of official versions, and in October a marriage was solemnized in English.[20] Meanwhile, England was becoming a place of refuge from Continental politics for a number of prominent reformers – Peter Martyr Vermigli, Francis Dryander, John à

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[17] Cuming, *History*, 40.
[18] These quotes are taken from an original edition; a modernized transcription can be found in Ketley, *Two Liturgies*.
[19] Procter and Frere, *History*, 39. [20] Cuming, *History*, 40.

Lasco, Valerand Poullain, and most importantly, Martin Bucer – as well as the exiled English radicals John Hooper and Miles Coverdale. The pace of reform was quickening palpably as the pieces fell into place.

The September proclamation had implied that a new order was looming on the horizon, and in that same month a select group of bishops and divines[21] met at Chertsey Abbey for the purpose of producing it. Archbishop Cranmer had already produced a draft of the entire book himself, and the committee's work was to discuss and emend it.[22] The product of these meetings was presented to Parliament in December, and was followed by a month of vigorous debate[23] on matters theological and liturgical. Finally, the first Act of Uniformity passed both houses by 21 January 1549; the first copies of the Book of Common Prayer were on sale by 7 March; and a new era of English political and religious history began on Whitsunday, 9 June, when its exclusive use became mandatory thoughout the realm.

The novel strategy of enforcing a liturgical form with a penal statute testifies to the government's deep interest in popular conformity, as well as its expectations of resistance. The Act itself[24] is an interesting text. It begins by positioning itself within the contemporary liturgical debate. The first paragraph notes the existence and inconvenience of the diverse liturgical uses current in England; this was a standard if somewhat exaggerated argument in favor of liturgical reform. The second paragraph, however, positions the new rite as a bulwark *against* innovation: although the king has "heretofore divers times essayed to stay innovations or new rites . . . yet the same has not had such good success as his highness required in that behalf." Thus the 1549 Book is situated both for and against both tradition and innovation; the legal weight of the new liturgy is intended to stabilize the course of the English Church, under the guiding hand of the Crown. This deft synthesis of Supremacy and the nascent Anglican *via media* in the first comprehensive push for uniformity marks a key moment in the history of Church and State in England, compounding Erastian politics and an

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[21] The membership of this committee, not to mention its operation, is shrouded in considerable mystery, but recent accounts – Cuming, *History*, and Hetherington, *Compilers* – give it thirteen members: Archbishop Cranmer (who had done most of the composition himself prior to the meeting), six bishops (Thomas Goodrich of Ely, Nicholas Ridley of Rochester, Henry Holbeach of Lincoln, Thomas Thirlby of Westminster, John Skip of Hereford, and George Day of Chichester), and six "learned men" (William May [dean of St. Paul's], Richard Cox [dean of Christ Church, Oxford], John Taylor [dean of Lincoln], Simon Haynes [dean of Exeter], Thomas Robertson [archdeacon of Leicester], and John Redman [master of Trinity College, Cambridge]). Of these, Cuming (45–6) identifies four as conservatives, two as moderates, and the remaining six as reform-minded.

[22] Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship*, 155.

[23] See Gasquet and Bishop, *Edward VI*, ch. 11 and Appendix 5.

[24] Gee and Hardy, *Documents*, 358–66.

ideal of discreet theological moderation in ways that would characterize the English Church for centuries to come.

Much of the remainder of the Act is concerned with its enforcement; apparently the "uniform quiet and godly order" was expected to require some work. Any "obstinate person" in the clergy convicted of using any other form, or speaking "anything in the derogation or depraving of the said book," was to lose a year's benefice and spend six months in prison; on a second offense, he would suffer one year in prison and the loss of all benefices, which could then be redistributed "as though the party so offending were dead"; on a third offense, his punishment was life imprisonment. And these threats were not reserved for the clergy; "any person or persons whatsoever" who "in any interludes, plays, songs, rhymes, or by other open words declare or speak anything in the derogation, depraving, or despising of the same book or of anything therein contained," or who procured nonstandard services or interrupted standard ones, would also be criminally liable for £10 on the first offense, £20 on the second, and forfeiture of all goods and chattels and life imprisonment on the third. The Crown was taking extraordinary measures to minimize the threat of "unſemely and ungodly diverſitie." And as it turned out, these precautions were well advised.

The Book of Common Prayer and national identity

> Where there has been a very godly order set forth by the authority of
> Parliament, for common prayer and administration of the sacraments
> to be used in the mother tongue within the Church of England, agree-
> able to the word of God and the primitive Church, very comfortable
> to all good people desiring to live in Christian conversation, and most
> profitable to the estate of this realm, upon the which the mercy, favour,
> and blessing of Almighty God is in no wise so readily and plenteously
> poured as by common prayers, due using of the sacraments, and often
> preaching of [the] gospel, with the devotion of the hearers . . .[1]

PERFORMING THE NATION

The Second Act of Uniformity's opening reference to the "godly order"
suggests, in its multiple possibilities of meaning – is the "godly order" a
liturgical form? a command? an ideal, stable socio-religious structure? –
something important about liturgical form: it is, inherently and always, a
form of *order*. It implicitly demands a highly regimented subordination of
private to public (common prayer is, after all, that prayer which is shared
by, or distributed to, or demanded of, all), and requires that individuals play
closely and deliberately scripted roles within the larger structures it posits;
it tells them what to say, and when to stand up, sit down, and kneel, and
in those actions an entire ideological world is articulated, constructed, and
perpetuated. Liturgy is, in short, formally predisposed by its very nature
toward the interests of order and the power that construes that order. And
indeed, to think of the Book of Common Prayer simply as a discursive
blunt object of coercive collectivity (whether devotional or sociopolitical
or both), and hence of the power that authorizes it, may be the most obvious
way to approach it critically.[2]

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[1] Gee and Hardy, *Documents*, 369.
[2] See e.g. Helgerson (*Forms*, ch. 6), who associates the BCP quite uncritically with a static, absolutist,
state-oriented model of national identity, and Targoff, who sees it as "a concerted effort to shape
the otherwise uncontrollable and unreliable internal sphere through common acts of devotion,"
an articulation of "the establishment's overarching desire to shape personal faith through public

But the relationship of the Prayerbook to the emerging identity of Protestant England is considerably more complex than this. This chapter will lay out some of the ways in which the Book of Common Prayer was implicated in establishment, development, and consolidation of the national identity of early modern England. In doing this, I will address several related but distinct phenomena; to begin organizing these conceptually (since they are necessarily intertwined in my account), it is useful to recall Marx's assertion that bourgeois society "must assert itself in its external relations as nationality and internally must organise itself as state."[3] Marx's distinction between external and internal organization enables us to isolate one of the key concerns of this chapter: the role of the Prayerbook in defining England as a distinct, autonomous entity politically, religiously, and linguistically. Closely related to this, and overlapping it in the principle of the royal supremacy, is a second major theme: the liturgy's role in constructing the corresponding *internal* hierarchy of state-national order. Thirdly, though, this chapter will begin almost immediately, in my discussion of Benedict Anderson, to complicate this picture by suggesting (though it will take the following chapter to fully develop this idea) that the BCP also clears space for a more lateral and communal (but also potentially unruly) sense of English national identity. While my focus here is primarily on the first two, I will ultimately argue that the Book of Common Prayer's simultaneous delineation of all three identities – that of a politically, geographically, religiously, and linguistically unified and autonomous nation; that of a hierarchical, state-ordered realm under royal control; and that of a more lateral, communal, inclusive nation – was fundamental to the identity of Protestant England. Revisionist historians like Eamon Duffy have suggested that the English Reformation and the fragmenting logic of Protestantism primarily had the effect of destroying England's traditional socio-religious order and sense of community; this chapter will attempt to demonstrate in contrast that the Prayerbook formed the cornerstone of a complex and powerful new collective identity.

In his seminal *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson notes parenthetically Hegel's observation that "newspapers serve modern man as a substitute for morning prayers." Anderson's argument is that the emergence of the fully modern sense of extended national community was deeply

and standardized forms" in a dynamic that displaces individual expression in favor of a "public and collective emphasis," remaking the devotional *I* into *we* (*Common Prayer*, 6, 18, 28–30; see also 34–5). Targoff's book is nonetheless a very interesting exploration of some of what was at stake in contemporary liturgical debates.

[3] Corrigan and Sayer, *The Great Arch*, 45.

linked to a shift in perceptions of temporality, from a sense of divinely syn-
chronous historical simultaneity to a more lateral and diachronic awareness
of a simultaneity that lies transverse to time. This critical sense of the *mean-
while* (and its spatial corollary, *over there*) in turn fosters the conception of
broader and more specific senses of community by means of the imagina-
tive links one forms with the posited members of that community, spread
laterally in space yet sharing the same moment of time. For Anderson, the
newspaper (along with the novel, as companion forms which emerged in
the eighteenth century) is both the emblem and the nourisher of this sense
of national identity, with its randomly juxtaposed stories of people we will
never meet, events which we will never see – yet we consider them rele-
vant, precisely because we perceive them as fellow members of an imagined
community. Furthermore, our sense of this community is itself fostered by
the very act of

this extraordinary mass ceremony: the almost precisely simultaneous consumption
('imagining') of the newspaper-as-fiction. We know that particular morning and
evening editions will overwhelmingly be consumed between this hour and that,
only on this day, not that . . . The significance of this mass ceremony – Hegel
observed that newspapers serve modern man as a substitute for morning prayers –
is paradoxical. It is performed in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull. Yet each
communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated
simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is con-
fident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion. Furthermore, this
ceremony is incessantly repeated at daily or half-daily intervals throughout the
calendar. What more vivid figure for the secular, historically clocked, imagined
community can be envisioned? At the same time, the newspaper reader, observing
exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or
residential neighbours, is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly
rooted in everyday life . . . fiction seeps quietly and continuously into reality, creat-
ing that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark
of modern nations.[4]

Anderson's citation of Hegel in this context is fortuitous for the purposes of
the present study. Hegel's sequential parallelization of morning prayers and
morning newspapers contains a variety of possible meanings:[5] it may be a
comment on the secularization of European society and its quotidian rituals,
or on the replacement of worship with consumption, or on the succession
of belief to knowledge as the foundation of daily existence. But Anderson
focuses it as an observation of two similar forms of mass ritual, and in this
light it is odd that he virtually ignores the centuries-older prototype of his

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[4] *Imagined Communities*, 35.
[5] Anderson provides neither context nor citation for this quotation, which, it turns out, is oddly elusive:
though it is frequently quoted, in a variety of versions, it is almost always done without citation.

emblem of consolidated national identity (even as he adapts its religious terminology of "ceremony" and "communicant"). For this process of the conceptual consolidation of the nation can be observed centuries earlier with the Book of Common Prayer.[6]

In fact, the BCP is arguably the first book in English to perform the functions that Anderson finds so ideologically significant in the newspaper. On the morning of 9 June 1549, for the first time in history, the common parishioner attending services at St. Paul's or St. Giles' Cripplegate could know that, at least in theory, there were people in Yorkshire and Kent, in Exeter and Colchester and Gloucester and Coventry and Norwich – but not in Frankfurt or Paris or Rome – who were participating in precisely the same services, *English* services, and quite likely at the same time. Certainly this full awareness did not spring up overnight, but from the start, the BCP was accompanied by gestures toward it: the principle of uniformity was explicitly promoted both in the Acts of Uniformity (which were printed in full in Prayerbooks from 1552 onwards) and in Cranmer's Preface, which pointed out that "where heretofore, there hath been great diversitie in saying and syngyng in churches within this realme . . . from he*n*cefurth, all the whole realme shall have but one use" (4). This homogenization of worship on an explicitly national scale also guaranteed a novel and complete exchangeability of worship, wherein anyone attending services outside their home parish would experience a virtually total familiarity with the services elsewhere, whether across town or across England. Where previously, the regional variations in use would inevitably have fostered some degree of a sense of difference and otherness – and not only were the local pre-Reformation usages different, they were also in Latin – the uniform English Prayerbook enabled a new sense of similarity and community, a "very comfortable" sense of uniform "Christian conversation" among all English subjects, and a nationally common denominator of public religious experience.[7]

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[6] Claire McEachern (*Poetics*, 15) cautions against a cavalier equation of these two very different sorts of texts: "For a zealous arbiter of historical specificity, the relation of the modern newspaper and the Book of Common Prayer is one of analogy only." And she is right, no doubt, to do so; a claim that the BCP functions *exactly* like Anderson's newspaper can only be wrong. But to say that they are analogous – as I am – is simply to point out consequential similarities, and it is surely true that the BCP's "prescriptions for the calendrically and geographically uniform consumption of the vernacular Bible promote an ideal of social simultaneity." McEachern goes on to argue that the very desire for this ideal simultaneity is a valid marker of England's national identity in the sixteenth century.

[7] Shuger notes ("Society Supernatural," 135) the later distress of Aylmer and Grindal at the persistence of minor local variations in service; indeed, it immediately became apparent in 1549 that local uniformity was going to require (and was worth) indefinite and ongoing vigilance – a vigilance clearly registered, for example, in the records of any number of episcopal visitations.

Furthermore, with this sense of otherness removed, the very nature of the liturgy enabled further imaginative senses of community to develop in a specifically English context. The structure of the BCP falls into two very general parts. The regular services – daily Mattins and Evensong with their calendar of readings, weekly Communion services (if often in "dry" form or antecommunion), and the regular recitations of the Litany – formed a continuous and linear observation of the steady march of time, celebrated regularly by the whole body of the Church of England in services whose form and content insistently encouraged communal solidarity.[8] The occasional services – baptism, confirmation, matrimony, visitation of the sick, burial, and purification of women – punctuated this inexorable progression with specific celebrations of the milestones in individuals' lives, thus setting individual experience alongside the communal life of the Church and weaving the two together in a fabric of social temporality.[9] And even these occasional services, by virtue of being formally regular, encouraged a sense of both temporal and spatial community: the baptism (or wedding or funeral) I attend today is being replicated elsewhere, and has occurred innumerable times in the past, and will in the future – including my own baptism and wedding and funeral (as Donne writes in his *Devotions* (XVI), "I am daily remembered of my own burial in the funerals of others"). Thus the Prayerbook encapsulates both public and private, "mass ceremony" and "the lair of the skull," the entire realm as well as the lives of each of its members, and fosters a conception of an England and an English Church which are essentially interconnected collective bodies of individuals, across the aisle and across the realm. In its pages, it is not fiction but liturgy that "seeps quietly and continuously into reality, creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations."

These related senses of community and order were quite arguably the unstated *raisons d'être* of contemporary (and perhaps all) liturgical form. As Catherine Pickstock has put it, "the chaos which the formalized and recursive nature of liturgy eschews is by implication its central concern."[10] Roy Rappaport observes that

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[8] See e.g. the preparatory exhortation in the Communion service, which explicitly emphasizes the Eucharist's traditional function as a generator of social harmony: "I am commaunded of God, especially to move and exhorte you to reconcile yourselfes to your neighbors, whom you have offended, or who hath offended you, putting out of your heartes al hatred and malice against them, and to be in love and charitie with all the worlde, and to forgeve other, as you woulde that god should forgeve you" (217). Those who fail to make social amends are warned to stay away from the table.

[9] See Cressy, both *Birth* and *Bonfires*.   [10] "Liturgy and Language," 115.

The term "liturgical order" . . . is an especially appropriate term because these series of events constitute orders in several senses beyond the obvious one of sequence. They are also orders in the sense of organization, form, or regularity (synonymous with the meaning of "order" in such phrases as "the social order"). As such they constitute order, or maintain orderliness, in contrast to disorder, entropy, or chaos. They are, further, orders in that they are in some sense imperatives or directives.[11]

Amid the chaos of contemporary European politics and the burgeoning multiplicity of unruly English individualisms, liturgical form was a creative assertion of temporal, political, and social order. Upon the inexorable flow of time and quotidian events, it imposed a vision of divinely controlled, sanctified time which transcended the uncontrollable linearity of the daily by touching the eternal (a synthesis of human and divine, mundane and eternal, which essentially fused divine synchrony with Anderson's secular diachrony and spatial lateralization; a continuous vertical reconnection along the horizontal trajectory of the national, lateral quotidian); within the confusion of Reformation politics it asserted a particular form of godly political stability; and from an unmoored and uncertain populace it sought to create an ordered society. Whereas for Anderson, nationalism in the modern sense is an essentially secular phenomenon which follows the decline of certain precedent sacred structures, in the Prayerbook we see the sacred *nationalized*, reworked into a specifically English and Protestant context.[12] The newly autonomous English nation – State, Church, culture, people – was in 1549 still in the process of consolidating and defining itself as a stable and cohesive entity, and the English state created for this purpose a text which in both form and content asserted stability and order amid chaos. The BCP was a text that enacted rather than depicted; it was not a portrait but a blueprint for creation. What it enacted, though, was not simply the religious rituals it prescribed, but also, through them, the social and political culture it envisioned. In short, the Prayerbook was (and is) a *performative* or illocutionary text; it not only emblematized a certain

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[11] *Ecology*, 192.

[12] Two important points need to be made here. First, Anderson is careful not to assert a necessarily causal or supersessional relationship between religion and nationalism (12); however, I think it's quite clear in his account that national identity requires for its development the decline of certain sorts of sacred, linguistically unified, supranational organizations like the Roman Catholic Church. Second, it's certainly possible to see the English Reformation as a secularizing phenomenon, especially in its state-centeredness and its deep connections to print-capitalism and vernacularism – features which Anderson so perceptively identifies as features of modern nationalization. But in my account, the post-Reformation English sacred (and many of those involved surely saw their version of Christianity as *more* authentic and sacred than that which preceded it) functions in tandem, not in competition, with national identity.

sociopolitical order, but helped to bring that order into being through the authoritative, iterative, and formalized nature of its claims. Its performance reflexively constituted its own authority, the authority of the order that commanded its use, and the simultaneously subordinate and authorizing role of individual subjects. As Rappaport has argued,

liturgy represents the *logoi* it encodes as *certain*, and that which is represented as certain is *ipso facto* represented as authoritative, or authority is attributed to it . . . To conform to an order is not simply to recognize its authority but actually to *acquiesce* to it and thereby to *realize* that authority as well as that order . . . In performing such an order the performer *participates*, which is to say becomes part of that order.[13]

But what sort of order did this text seek to create? What were the characteristics and lineages of its national self-image, the "godly order" to which it demanded conformity? The remainder of this chapter will address the BCP's discourses on nationalism and order, supremacy and community. For the time being, I will set aside Anderson's communal, proto-modern sense of nationhood and focus on the simultaneous external and internal constitution of nation and state. Toward the end of the chapter, I will turn to the linguistic dimension of defining Protestant England, and conclude with a brief consideration, with respect to the Prayerbook, of two of the major definers of this entity (Hooker and Foxe) – a consideration in which I hope to both complicate the terms of some recent critical discussions and lead in to the more oppositional and destabilizing concerns of Chapter 2.

LITURGY AND SOCIOPOLITICAL STRUCTURE

The appearance of the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549 marked a key moment in English history, a textual representation and establishment of radically new Church–State relations within the realm, and also of England's sense of itself in the broader contexts of European Christendom. Whitchurch and Grafton's affordable and mandatory quartos formed a collective monument to these redefinitions, the textual culmination and confirmation of cultural and political trends set in motion by Henry VIII in the 1530s. Ecclesiastically, there were two related jurisdictional aspects to Henry's establishment of the national Church, and both of these were necessary precursors to the Church of England's textual establishment in

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[13] "Veracity," 39–40.

1549. First, of course, was the assertion of national autonomy and independence from the authority of Rome. Second, and equally important, was the legal establishment of the royal supremacy, which placed the entire English Church under the authority of the Crown. Each of these twin principles of autonomy and supremacy followed its own historical and legislative trace, but in practice they are difficult to separate entirely; conceptually intertwined, each depended upon the other in the creation of the English Church. Each took as its immediate goal the destruction of papal authority in England, and each found justification for its practical needs in the contemporary family of Erastian, and most often Protestant, discourses.

"Erastianism" is a somewhat slippery term, with a history of loose and anachronistic application. Strictly speaking, an Erastian is a follower of Thomas Erastus (1524–83), and the first English writer who fits this criterion is Hooker; the term "Erastian" enters English usage with the Westminster Assembly and Baxter. And only three of Erastus's seventy-five theses are concerned with general jurisdictional issues (the rest deal with excommunication). He argues there that the Old Testament model of a national Church ruled by a godly king is the ideal form of polity, and in this conventional sense of "state supremacy over ecclesiastical affairs" (*OED*), the term still seems to me useful (and no less problematic than "caesaropapism," *cuius regio, eius religio*, or even those Old Testament models, all of which imply a purely royal dominion). But it is worth noting at the outset how complex this seemingly straightforward formulation actually was in early modern practice. What counts as the "state"? What are "ecclesiastical affairs"? In the seventeenth century, both royalists and parliamentarians claimed Erastian justification for ecclesiastical control,[14] and this points back to a Crown–Parliament tension that runs through English Protestantism from the very start, in the parliamentarily established royal supremacy, and formally resolved only in the ideal hybrid Crown-in-Parliament. Things are further complicated by the extensive crossover between secular and spiritual estates, with clerical representation in Parliament and on the Privy Council, and a layman as Vice-gerent of Spirituals; furthermore, while Convocation was technically the authoritative body on matters of doctrine and worship, parliamentary debates and legislation were frequently doctrinal in nature – and Henry VIII had no qualms about exerting theological authority as

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[14] Orr observes this, and proposes ("Sovereignty," 480) a useful "working definition of erastianism" as "simply the view that power to determine doctrine and exercise discipline within the Church of England rested ultimately with the civil magistrate, whether that be the king, parliament, or king-in-parliament, rather than with any ecclesiastical body, whether episcopal or Presbyterian."

authorized in the Act of Supremacy. Part of the problem was a complex dialectic between a strict theoretical separation of temporal and spiritual powers on the one hand, and their partial reconvergence on the other in the person of the godly (and well-advised) prince.[15] While my conventional (and I hope convenient) usage of the Erastian label may elide some of these complications, it will not erase them from my analysis, and indeed it provides a flexibility needed to account for the dynamics of the English Reformation.

The intellectual history of this principle has been extensively treated, and can thus be very briefly sketched out.[16] In the fourteenth century, Marsilius of Padua had argued devastatingly against the universal authority claimed by the papacy, contending instead (using Christ himself as a prime exemplar) that religious authority is entirely spiritual and next-worldly; religion's exercise in this world is a civil matter, and thus properly the domain of secular authorities. Luther went on to undercut theologically the institutional claims of Roman Catholicism, and transferred many of those powers to temporal rulers. Tyndale imported Lutheran political theory into England, to the great pleasure of Henry VIII; in this (and not much else) he was joined by Stephen Gardiner, who argued that the godly prince's duties included exercising headship over the national Church – a body coterminous with, and indistinguishable from, the nation itself. Thomas Cromwell orchestrated campaigns of legislation and propaganda that further solidified the principles of national autonomy and royal supremacy. And Thomas Cranmer oversaw the theological consolidation of these principles, and repeatedly submitted to Henry's judgment on matters ecclesiastical and liturgical. As he affirmed in his 1555 heresy examination,

I will never consent to the bishop of Rome; for then should I give my self to the devil: for I have made an oath to the king, and I must obey the king by God's laws. By the Scripture the king is chief, and no foreign person in his own realm above him. There is no subject but to a king. I am a subject, I owe my fidelity to the crown. The pope is contrary to the crown. I cannot obey both: for no man can serve two masters at once, as you [his interrogator] in the beginning of your

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[15] See Thompson, *Political Thought*, ch. 8, for a discussion of Luther's conflicted engagement with this problem.

[16] For a good start on further reading, see Copleston, *History*, ch. 8; Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor Pacis* (esp. 114, 148–56, 416); Skinner, *Foundations*; Thompson, *Political Thought*; Tyndale, *Obedience* (in Russell, *English Reformers*); C. Davies, *Religion*, ch. 4; Dickens, *English Reformation*; Gardiner, *De Vera Obedientia* (in Janelle, *Obedience*); Cromwell's 1533 Act in Restraint of Appeals (in Gee and Hardy, *Documents*); Guy, *Tudor England*; and any number of Cranmer's letters and other writings.

oration declared by the sword and the keys, attributing the keys to the pope, and the sword to the king. But I say the king hath both.[17]

As we shall see, the Prayerbook he had composed in the previous decade had been centrally dedicated to the proposition that "the king hath both." Its very existence attested to the establishment of this principle as legal fact; its enforcement, form, and rhetoric worked toward the consolidation of that fact, and its establishment in the hearts and minds of the English people.

By the mid-1530s, then, the structures of authority in England had undergone a colossal realignment. The dual hierarchies of Church and State, which had long defined England formally as a subordinate province of Christendom and divided its subjects' loyalties, had been collapsed into a unitary sovereignty in a fully autonomous realm. And this had been accomplished in large part by the symbiotic cooperation of religious and political discourses, the natural affinities of Supremacy and Reformation. As John Foxe later contended,

What doctrine did ever attribute so much to public authority of magistrates, as do the protestants? or who ever attributed less to magistrates, or deposed more dukes, kings, and emperors, than the papists? He that saith that the bishop of Rome is no more than the bishop of Rome, and ought to wear no crown, is not by and by a rebel against his king and magistrates, but rather a maintainer of their authority[.][18]

By the unprecedented step of a king declaring himself independent of the Pope, the character of English allegiance and identity was permanently changed: all legal trace of extranational jurisdiction was wiped out, all recourse to Roman authority eradicated, through the determined application of *praemunire* laws and the legislation of the Reformation Parliament. Henceforth, loyalty to Church and to State, to king and to God, were legally identical. (The buried problematics and sectarian implications of this would come back to haunt Protestants in Mary's reign, when they came to see the point of Catholic reservations about the royal supremacy, and began to develop radical theories of resistance.)

And the monarchical pinnacle on the newly amalgamated Church–State complex was arguably considerably sharper than the papal apex of the old ecclesiastical hierarchy. Previously, papal authority had certainly

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[17] Cranmer, *Letters*, 213. See Loades, *Politics*, 48–55, and Lake, *Protestantism*, for the ideological effects of the Marian dilemma on other reformers, most particularly its role in fostering advanced theories of active resistance to ungodly royal power.
[18] *Acts and Monuments*, v.603.

been supreme and binding when exercised, but in practice English bishops generally exercised relatively autonomous control over their dioceses;[19] one result of these multiple jurisdictions was the proliferation of liturgical "uses." In contrast, the 1534 Act of Supremacy granted the king ecclesiastical and doctrinal powers which are breathtaking in their scope and comprehensiveness:

[The king shall have full power to] visit, repress, redress, reform, order, correct, restrain, and amend all such errors, heresies, abuses, offences, contempts, and enormities, whatsoever they be, which by any manner spiritual authority or jurisdiction ought or may lawfully be reformed, repressed, ordered, redressed, corrected, restrained, or amended, most to the pleasure of Almighty God, the increase of virtue in Christ's religion, and for the conservation of the peace, unity, and tranquillity of this realm; any usage, custom, foreign law, foreign authority, prescription, or any other thing or things to the contrary hereof notwithstanding.[20]

These powers, exercised by Henry and by Cromwell and Cranmer in their respective vice-gerential and metropolitical capacities, aimed at the creation of an English Church uniform in doctrine and practice as well as in its subjugation to the Crown. As the Act discreetly affirms, the ultimate goals are not only religious but also sociopolitical: the "peace, unity and tranquillity" of the realm under the watchful governance of the king. Under Henry, the royal supremacy was "in every respect as extensive as the papal jurisdiction it replaced, and it was more immediate, more arbitrary, and more far-reaching in its effects."[21] He, his son, and their ministers intended to remake the Church *in* England into a decisively new department of state: the Church *of* England. And the preface to Henry's 1545 Primer made quite clear his conceptions of both his own role as Supreme Head and the importance of liturgical prayer in the exercise of that power:

It is the part of kings (whom the Lord hath constituted and set for pastors of his people) not only to procure that a quiet and peaceable life may be led of all his universal subjects, but also that the same life may be passed over godly, devoutly, and virtuously, in the true worshipping and service of God, to the honour of him, and to the sanctifying of his name, and to the everlasting salvation of their own selves . . . And we have judged it to be of no small force, for the avoiding of strife and contention, to have one uniform manner or course of praying throughout our dominions.[22]

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[19] See Loades, *The Oxford Martyrs*, 72–3 and 205–6, for examples – one conservative and one reformist – of episcopal resistance to interference, even from higher up in the ecclesiastical hierarchy.
[20] Gee and Hardy, *Documents*, 244.
[21] Rex, *Henry VIII*, 71. See also Corrigan and Sayer, *The Great Arch*, 45–50.
[22] Cranmer, *Letters*, 497.

The introduction of the first Book of Common Prayer on royal and parliamentary authority in 1549, then, was a direct result of the royal supremacy (itself parliamentarily established), and its ancestry dated back not only to the cataclysmic break with Rome but also through centuries of what we might call a proto-Erastian impulse toward secular control over ecclesiastical affairs. And it was not simply a monument to the Tudor coup, but also a major state utterance in the complex discursive field that was the Reformation. For as the widespread conservative resistance to concrete reform demonstrated – and as the Marian retrenchment would further demonstrate – in Secretary Paget's words, "the use of the new [religion] is not yet printed in the stomachs of the eleven of twelve parts of the realm."[23] The nullification of Roman authority was more easily accomplished on legislative parchment than in the hearts and minds of subjects who had been raised to think that the Catholic clergy spoke, through the Latin liturgy, with the voice of God. Now the king claimed control of the divine voice, and the Prayerbook was not only an articulation of that voice but a tool for consolidating the Tudor revolution. Paget's idiomatic "not yet printed" is illuminating here: the new religion would indeed be established on the local and individual levels through print (and furthermore, through "use" or liturgical form), and if "not yet," then sometime in the future. John Wall has argued that the BCP was a tool not of fragmenting Reformation individualism but of national unification: the advent of print had "made possible a new kind of national uniformity in religious life," and through the use of its defining text, "a nation united in worship could be transformed into the true Christian commonwealth."[24] England had declared itself an autonomous empire free of Rome, and the Prayerbook, as the central (if belated) textual expression of its Church, had the job of unifying and ordering nation and Church, of transforming a grumbling and unsure populace into a godly English commonwealth under the care of a righteous king.

If this book was to be performatively effective, to transform its imperatives into reality, to consolidate the Edwardian regime into a "uniform quiet and godly order," it needed to devolve the state's jurisdictional and hierarchical discourses into the social order. This required careful management of the point of intersection between the sociopolitical structure and the individuals who comprised it, and the liturgy was in many ways the ideal site and form for this management. It was the sole textual and

[23] Guy, *Tudor England*, 210.
[24] Wall, "Reformation," 213–14. See also pp. 1–50, and elsewhere, in his *Transformations of the Word*.

formal point of contact, in many cases, between the common people and the institutional Church, a textual interface which controlled the individual experience of communal order.[25] It was without parallel in contemporary England as a formalized and regularly and universally experienced expression of these relations between the individual and the sociopolitical order – and it was firmly under the control of the post-Reformation state. Furthermore, liturgy as a form carries an inherent ideological charge: as a uniform formula for worship, it is by its very nature committed to the claims of common over individual expression, order over improvisation (it was precisely these tensions, along with charges of residual papistry, that formed the axis of Puritan opposition to the BCP later in the century). And this charge was further enhanced by the twin principles of uniformity (that, in the words of the Preface, "all the whole realme shall have but one use") and conformity (that all individuals shall adhere to this official use) – both set out with absolute clarity in the first Act of Uniformity.

The preamble of this Act[26] makes clear its place in the history of the royal supremacy. In its narrative, which establishes the legal grounds for its enacting clauses, the right of King Edward to determine the form and content of the national religion, conclusively established in the previous decade, is simply taken for granted. All the power embodied in the Act is presented as flowing from the young king and his council. Edward has tried to stabilize English worship, with unsatisfactory results; he has mercifully decided not to punish offenders; he has also commissioned the Archbishop and a committee of divines to draw up the present godly liturgy, for which Parliament heartily thanks him, and humbly requests that it be exclusively imposed on the realm. The degree to which royal agency and authority dominate not only religious change but also the rhetoric of its enacting legislation is striking; exemplified here is the ideal authority of the Crown-in-Parliament (as well as the often suppressed tensions in that construction). Perhaps even more striking is the fact that while Convocation exercised primary liturgical authority in the early 1540s, the relevant body is now clearly that Crown-in-Parliament: while the liturgy is drafted by bishops and scholars, it is prompted by the king, and debated and authorized by Parliament.

But legislation and proclamations alone could not by sheer fiat create this stable order among the populace, let alone reinforce it day by day, week by week, as a liturgy could. Just as its conception and institutions derived from them, the text of the 1549 Book of Common Prayer literally begins

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[25] Carrithers and Hardy (*Age of Iron*, 99) assert that "what church and state *meant* to by far the greatest number of people, high and low, was the Book of Common Prayer."

[26] Gee and Hardy, *Documents*, 358–66.

and ends within the discourses surveyed above. Cranmer's Preface and the essay "Of Ceremonies," the first and last sections of the book, contextualize it firmly as a potent entry in these fundamental Reformation debates, as it comprehensively promotes the new politico-religious order and the individual's subordinate place in it. When placed in this setting, the Preface's seemingly innocuous discussion of liturgical history and principle[27] takes on a sharper political edge. This new book was to determine the form of post-Roman worship in England; delivered by the king's new authority, it had to displace the old Latin ritual – relic of the old Church, the old ways, the old papal tyranny – like his father had displaced the Pope. As a result, the Preface exhibits a polemical thrust of an obliquely but inescapably political character: the Reformation intertwining of religion and politics, the fusion of the temporal and spiritual realms in England, and the chains of associations which fostered the expulsion of the papacy make it difficult to regard this as a purely liturgiological document. Yet by 1549, the establishment of England's royal supremacy and jurisdictional autonomy was a legal fact, and the phase of direct and extended antipapal polemic was – at least in the hopes of some evangelical optimists who believed that God had accomplished the establishment of his kingdom in England – over. To reengage in vitriolic blasts against Rome would have been implicitly to recognize the old religion's continuing hold over the English people at the pivotal moment of textual institution. Cranmer's Preface silently attests both to the delicacy of the situation and to the Archbishop's cleverness: an essay which discusses liturgical principle and practice and never mentions the Pope or the Roman Church is in some ways more about the latter implicit subjects than the former explicit ones. This is not meant to suggest that Cranmer acted in bad faith, or that he meant other than what he wrote, but simply to recognize the complex situation and demands of the Preface: it must tactfully clear a space in both the religious and political spheres for the revolutionary text it introduces.

In this context, the opening words of the Preface (and the entire book) resonate with something more than strictly liturgiological significance:

There was never any thing by the wit of man so well devised, or so surely established, which (in continuance of time) hath not been corrupted: as (emong other thinges) it may plainly appere by the common prayers in the Churche, commonlye called divine service.[28]

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[27] As it was surely intended by Quiñones, from whom much of it is derived.

[28] Ratcliff, *First and Second Prayer Books*, 3. MacCulloch notes (*Thomas Cranmer*, 225) that Cranmer here inverts the cheerful progressivism of Quiñones' original opening into a "weary historical insight" typical of the English Reformation.

This divine service, instituted by the "auncient fathers" to the "great advauncement of godliness," has "these many yeares passed" been "altered, broken, and neglected, by planting in uncertein stories, Lege*n*des, Respondes, Verses, vaine repeticions, Commemoracions, and Synodalles"; the present text represents a restoration of worship to patristic purity and edifying scriptural simplicity. What is being leapfrogged, in other words, are centuries of Roman ascendancy and mountains of Catholic accretions to the true worship of God. For in the discursive world of early-Reformation England, the new is the reformed is the English; the medieval is the corrupt is the Roman.[29] Cranmer's first sentence asserts the corruption of worship over time, and his "emong other thinges" suggests that the liturgy will stand synecdochically for the corruption of the entire medieval Roman politico-religious complex, while it also implies the essential godliness of an English Reformation which persistently portrayed itself as a return to a precorrupted past. This new order of prayer is "muche agreable to the mynde and purpose of the olde fathers, and a greate deale more profitable and commodious, than that whiche of late was used."

The concluding essay "Of Ceremonies" resumes the strategy of liturgiological discussion with substantial political implications, and it clarifies and refines the political order embodied in the Prayerbook. Like the Preface, to which its argument is structurally almost identical, it takes the form of an exposition of the principles of liturgical reform: originally godly ceremonies, encrusted in recent centuries with corruption and superstition, need to be (and have now been) radically reformed. The early Church and the medieval past have the same respective positive and negative valences,[30] and the English Church therefore is reasserting its connection to the authentic Church, stabilizing itself between blind conservatism and reckless innovation. But "Of Ceremonies" goes further than the Preface in delineating the new domestic and international sociopolitical order. Its condemnation of individual extremism on either side of the debate, and its insistence on moderate official reform, affirm the state's rightful prerogative of managing the Reformation. The creation and revision of the new church order "pertayneth not to pryvate menne: Therfore no manne ought to take in hande nor presume to appoynte or alter any publyke or common ordre in

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[29] This claim does have some significant limitations: newness, especially in unapproved discourse, is not automatically good, and in fact can rather quickly become the evil of overzealous innovation. And the "new" presented by the state was almost always portrayed as a purifying return to the old, i.e. to the premedieval authenticity of the primitive and patristic Church.

[30] This historically aware self-presentation of a self-conscious connection to (and beyond) a clearly different past may be connectable to the diachronic model of time that Anderson sees as essential to a sense of nationhood (cf. this chapter's opening discussion). Rackin (*Stages*, 10) argues that "the recognition of anachronism . . . was a basic premise of Reformation thought."

Christes Churche, excepte he be lawfully called and autorized thereunto"
(286). Thus the private is decisively subordinated to the public, the indi-
vidual subsumed in the common order (although we will see later on that
in both this brief essay and the entire Book, this principle is held in tension
with a countervailing emphasis on the individual). Equally important, the
explicit requirement that creative liturgists be "lawfully called and autorized
thereunto" makes the church order a matter of law and secular authority,
and recognizes the state's power to oversee not only the administration but
also the doctrinal and liturgical content of the Church of England.

   "Of Ceremonies" also goes on to assert an explicitly Erastian vision of
European politics. One important and inevitable consequence of Erastian-
ism was an advanced theory of national sovereignty and plurality. Rather
than one broad expanse of papal Christendom with various local regents,
the thought of Marsilius and his sixteenth-century heirs imagined a Europe
composed of multiple sovereign national states, each religiously and polit-
ically sufficient unto itself, and paying no more than voluntary respect
to Rome. The popes, needless to say, vigorously contested this vision of
Europe throughout the century with all the weapons at their disposal, but
the Reformation had helped lay the ground for the political future of the
West. The principle is clearly enunciated in Cranmer's essay:

And in these all our dooynges wee condemne no other nacions, nor prescribe anye
thyng, but to oure owne people onelye. For we thinke it conveniente that every
countreye should use such ceremonies, as thei shal thynke beste to the settyng foorth
of goddes honor, and glorye: and to the reducyng of the people to a moste perfecte
and Godly living, without errour or supersticion: and that they shoulde putte
away other thynges, which from time to time they perceive to be most abused, as
in mennes ordinaunces it often chaunceth diverselye in diverse countreyes. (288)

Although the language here (especially "reducyng," with its Latin force
of "leading back") implies reform, the central concern is not evangelical
Protestantism but a fully autonomous national sovereignty in a world of
multiple independent states. The attenuative and self-limiting gesture of the
first sentence is also paradoxically an expansive and self-aggrandizing one:
in recognizing the sovereignty of other states and rulers, it also enhances that
of England and its monarch within its territorial boundaries. The dotted
lines of papal Christendom were solidifying into the more rigid borders of
nationalist Europe.[31]

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[31] McEachern notes how this passage implies "a notion of the English polity as something both
internally homogeneous and ideologically singular" (*Poetics*, 61), and argues that the idea of the
aptness of institutional forms to their populations is a key feature of national identity (11). See also,
along precisely these lines, Henry's revisions of the 1537 Bishops' Book (Cranmer, *Letters*, 83–114,
and esp. 98).

The main body of the Prayerbook both exemplifies and promotes these principles, and provides further indications of what England's internal social order should be. The proper readings for the fourth Sunday after Epiphany, for example – whether by design or coincidence, a day falling within a week of the anniversary of Edward VI's accession – present a pair of texts that form a meditation on secular power which could come straight from Luther or Tyndale. Introit Psalm 2, a Davidic coronation psalm which expresses the divine support behind those anointed to rule, begins with a complaint that the heathen kings stand against God and his anointed. But, the reader is assured, they shall answer to the displeasure of God, who declares that he has "set my kyng : upon my holy hill of Sion." Finally, the psalmist gives some righteous advice to rulers: "Be wise nowe therfore, o ye kinges : be learned, ye that are judges of the yearth. / Serve the lorde in feare : and rejoyse (unto him) with reverence" (59). The psalm says not a word about resistance, only about confidence in God's justice upon disobedient kings, and a reminder of their responsibilities toward Him. The accompanying epistle is from Romans 13 – the foundational text of Luther's politics – in which Coverdale's words sound familiar as Tyndale's:

Let every soule submit hymselfe unto the auctoritie of the higher powers; for there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordeined of God, whosoever therefore resysteth power, resisteth the ordinaunce of God: But they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnacion. (60)

The day's readings promote the conviction of the irresistibility of secular powers, for "they are Goddes ministers," even if they do evil or cause suffering. This is reinforced in the Gospel reading from Matthew 8, which describes the unresisting submission of weather and demons to the authority of God in Christ. Even the collect chimes in with a hint of Lutheran nonresistance, which demanded that the godly simply suffer the consequences if circumstances lead them to disobey an evil prince: "Graunt . . . that al those thinges which we suffer for sinne, by thy helpe we may wel passe and overcome."

The regular services construct a version of the godly order which is more subtle in both its impact and its elaboration. "O Lorde save the kyng," intoned clergy throughout the realm each morning (26). The Communion service gives the officiant a choice of two lengthier collects for him, "that he (knowyng whose minister he is) maie above al thinges, seke thy honour and glory, and that we his subjectes (duely consydering whose auctoritie he hath) maye faithfully serve, honour, and humbly obeye him, in thee, and for thee, according to thy blessed word and ordinaunce" (213). Later in

the service, in the first prayer of the central Canon, the priest prays again for the king, "that under hym we maye be Godly and quietly governed" (221). The subsequent clauses in this prayer construct a general image of the new social order. First, prayers are offered for the king's council, "and all that he put in auctoritie under hym," that they may administer justice "to the punishmente of wickednesse and vice, and to the maintenaunce of Goddes true religion and vertue." The entire secular state, that is, from the Lord Chancellor to local magistrates, is recognized by virtue of its royal derivation ("all that he put in auctoritie") to be responsible for the upholding of English Christianity. The next sentence, which prays for the clergy, makes this recognizance all the more remarkable: the clergy are *not* charged with the maintaining of religion. The prayer requests only that "thei maie bothe by their life and doctrine set furthe thy true and lively worde, and rightely and duely administer thy holy Sacramentes" – that is, to perform the two jobs most Protestants saw as the appropriate work of the Church. This extraordinarily limited ecclesiastical competence is in striking contrast to the sweeping claims of the pre-Reformation Church, and is a further sign of the ascendancy of the political state in the new order. Finally, the prayer asks for grace for "al [God's] people." The hierarchical sequence of these petitions – king/State/Church/commons – as well as the powers assigned to each subject, offer a textual representation of the recon-structed social order that the Book of Common Prayer both embodied and sought to promote. (The importance of sequence, and of its reconstruction, becomes even clearer when this liturgical moment is compared with the one it displaced: in the *Te igitur* which begins the Canon of the Sarum Mass, the Pope is prayed for first, then the diocesan bishop, then the king, then the faithful [*papa nostro N, & antistite nostro N, & rege nostro N, & omnibus orthodoxis*].)[32]

A similar construction is found in a different context in the Litany. The last of the protective Deprecations contains the Prayerbook's sole direct blast at Rome:

From all sedicion and privye conspiracie, from the tyrannye of the bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities, from al false doctrine and herisy, from hardnes of heart, and contempte of thy word and commaundemente: Good lorde deliver us. (232)

The parataxis of this petition suggests a thematic and metonymic link between all its clauses: sedition, Roman tyranny, false doctrine, and

[32] Brightman, *English Rite*, ii.688.

contempt of God's word are all related and in some sense conceptually substitutable. Now false doctrine, scriptural contempt, and hardness of heart had long been linked in religious discourse; in political discourse, heresy and sedition had been considered flip sides of the same rebellious coin in England at least since Oldcastle's revolt in 1414.[33] But the connection of the papacy with all these crimes was a fresh legacy of the Reformation and the royal supremacy. It is worth stressing the vertiginous realignments embodied here, in which connections that had been virtually unthinkable a generation earlier were promoted as official doctrine. To be a Roman Catholic now made one both religiously and politically suspect, and while this would be temporarily reversed under Mary, post-1570 Elizabethan policy would virtually equate the old faith with potential treason.

It then comes as no surprise that the first of the Intercessions, for the "holy Churche universall," is followed by a prayer not for the Pope but for the king. In fact, the king is the beneficiary of three separate petitions, followed by one for the clergy, two for the nobility and the secular state of Council and magistrates, one for "al [God's] people," and one that "it may please thee to geve to all nacions unitie, peace, and concorde." Thus the first grouping of Intercessions begins with the universal Church and ends with the plural order of nations, and in between is an image of the English nation similar to that in the Communion service. King/clergy/state/commons: the precedence of Church over [nonroyal] state may attest to the Litany's conservative Henrician genesis. But the king is firmly perched atop this hierarchy, and even in 1544, the charge to "mayntayne trueth" is given to the secular magistrates and not the Church.

One of the effects of this new politico-religious order is a new sort of homogeneity. Like the Act of Uniformity, the Preface makes capital of the "great diversitie in saying and synging in churches within this realme" (4), and presents the present text as a solution: "Now from hencefurth, all the whole realme shall have but one use." Realm and use are significantly aligned here: one realm by implication *should* have but one use, which should be used by all subjects of the realm.[34] In a bit of historical irony, diversity is associated with the entire complex of Catholic corruption which the Reformation claimed to displace, and the problem of this diversity was not only its association with this complex and the divided loyalties it demanded,

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[33] Guy, *Tudor England*, 25.

[34] McEachern sees the desire for "a performative ideal of social unity," imagined as a "projection of the state's own ideality" (*Poetics*, 5), as one of the hallmarks of nationalism: "More compelling evidence . . . of a Tudor–Stuart nation is the fact that its political culture had itself begun to ask how to effect social homogeneity" (16–17).

but also its inherent divisiveness; that is, it separated regions and subjects liturgically when all the realm should have been united in common worship. The new uniformity is thus not only an administrative and liturgical improvement, but a self-conscious means of unifying a territorially defined populace.[35]

Once again, we may profitably turn to "Of Ceremonies" to clarify the principles obliquely shadowed in the Preface. For in this essay, the link between ceremonial and order[36] is made explicit, and "order" echoes throughout with hypnotic frequency.

[There are some ceremonies] which although they have been devised by ma*n*: yet it is thought good to reserve the*m* still, as well for a decent ordre in the Churche (for the which they were first devised) as because they pertayne to edificacion: Whereunto all thynges doen in the Churche (as the Apostle teacheth) ought to be referred. And although the keping or omytting of a ceremonie (in itselfe considered) is but a small thyng: Yet the wilfull and contemptuous transgression, and breakyng of a common ordre, and disciplyne, is no small offence before God. Let all thynges bee done emong you (sayeth Sainte Paule) in a semely and due ordre. The appoyntemente of the whiche ordre pertayneth not to pryvate menne: Therfore no manne ought to take in hande nor presume to appoynte or alter any publyke or common ordre in Christes Churche, excepte he be lawfully called and autorized thereunto. (286)

In an essay constructed as an apologia for stable and moderate reform, a counterweight to both conservative resistance and radical pressure, one can see related tensions between collective and individual emphasis: order and edification, discipline and education, community and individual. Cranmer upholds both sides, acknowledging that although "Christes Gospell is not a Ceremoniall lawe," "wythoute some Ceremonies it is not possible to kepe anye ordre or quyete dyscyplyne in the churche" (287). But in this discussion of liturgical principle, it is perhaps inevitable that the ideology of order triumphs over the personal or extemporaneous focus one might expect from Protestantism. Although the essay insists that ceremonies are not the essence of Christianity – and this contention, which will be further explored in the next chapter, was fundamental to Reformation attacks on Catholicism – it also insists that they are essential tools for its maintenance in an ordered and disciplined form. By retaining the form of the best

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[35] Recall John Wall's contention that through the BCP, "a nation united in worship could be transformed into the true Christian commonwealth" ("Reformation," 214).

[36] In a related vein, see Marcus, *Politics of Mirth*, which examines the relations between social order, royal and ecclesiastical authority, and literary practice implicit in Stuart policies toward traditional holiday ceremonial pastimes.

of the old ceremonies, Cranmer asserts both a structural continuity with the authentic Church and the continued supremacy of order. Those who oppose the Prayerbook's newness are guilty of superstition and blindness, but those who oppose its oldness fail to comprehend the importance of tradition and liturgical/ecclesiastical order. The wise should be, as the text is, "studious of unitie and concorde" – that is, submissive to the principle of "semely and due ordre."

The selection above may be understood as a theory of liturgical coercion in the godly commonwealth. The paramount consideration is order. And while the status of specific ceremonies is downplayed into contingency and practical utility, the liturgical and ecclesiastical (and, as we'll see, by implication social and political) order that they collectively represent is elevated into the sphere of divine protection. This relation of the specific to the collective may be analogically relatable to what happens in the last sentence, where the logic implicit in liturgical form – the subordination of private to public, individual to order, disagreement to concord – is made explicit, denying the right of individuals to tamper with the forms they are given. And this same logic was instituted as law in the Act of Uniformity, which forbade under harsh penalty any innovation or nonuniform worship whatsoever.

It is difficult not to take this argument a further step in the context of the collapsed dualism of Church and State. The royal supremacy essentially conflated the two, and Gardiner, among others, had defended this on the grounds that the two polities were in fact identical. This conflation opens the further conceptual possibility of a discursive Church–State correlation which goes beyond analogy and into metaphorical *identity* – when one speaks of order, even specifically of church order, the referent is equally the sociopolitical order of the state and nation. James I seems to have sensed this in his famed "No bishop, no king." Part of what I'm arguing, in effect, is simply that order is order, and one hierarchy ideologically supports another structurally similar one; this was true long before the Reformation, and has been noticed long before the present study. But in post-Reformation England, one hierarchy essentially *was* the other, as simply different aspects of the same polity under the same head. When the Prayerbook asserts that "the wilfull and contemptuous transgression, and breakyng of a common ordre, and disciplyne, is no small offence before God," the order being upheld is not simply that of church worship but of the entire sociopolitical structure of the nation.

This can be seen most clearly at one of the Book of Common Prayer's most critical moments of intersection between structure and subject. The

Confirmation service is a public display of an individual's knowledge and belief, which takes its form in the catechistic question-and-answer that comprises the bulk of the service. But it is also a voluntary entry and submission to the Church, a requirement for membership and for participation in Communion, and it is quite explicit in what it requires socially of all good Christians. Asked what the Ten Commandments teach about one's duties toward others, the confirmand must reply,

My duetie towardes my neighbour is, to love hym as myselfe. And to do to al men as I would they should do to me. To love, honour, and succoure my father and mother. To honour and obey the kyng and his ministers. To submitte myselfe to all my governours, teachers, spirituall pastours, and maisters. To ordre myselfe lowlye and reverentlye to al my betters. To hurte no bodie by woorde or dede. To bee true and just in al my dealing. To beare no malice nor hatred in my heart. To kepe my handes from picking and stealing, and my tongue from evill speaking, liyng [*sic*], and slaundring. To kepe my bodie in temperaunce, sobreness, and chastitie. Not to covet nor desire other mennes goodes. But learne and laboure truely to geate my owne living, and to doe my duetie in that state of life: unto which it shal please God to cal me. (249)

This confession, derived from the Henrician *Necessary Doctrine* or "King's Book," is a comprehensive endorsement of, and insertion into, a specific existing social order – a voluntary self-interpellation into a social structure whose claims are validated in the very act of subscription. It actively ratifies a system of property and exchange rights, and a theologically derived ideal of personal conduct within them. More significantly, its explication of the fifth commandment is, to say the least, liberal: the Mosaic charge to honor one's parents is extended to include not only the king and the secular state but all one's social superiors. And one should be happy to live quietly in whatsoever social and economic state one has been placed by God. The ideological genius of this passage lies in its use of the subjective to undergird the established order: if and when an individual's faith – to say nothing of social and legal pressures – leads him (or her) to join the Church, he must affirm that that faith demands that he "ordre [him]selfe," that he voluntarily and comprehensively insert himself into the hierarchical social, political, and ecclesiastical systems which require his submission. And this is reflected in the very form of the service, in which the individual's profession of faith consists not of personal expression but rather of subscription to set codes of belief and responsibility.

In Elizabeth's reign, this powerfully collective focus, along with the rigid uniformity, doctrinal ambiguity, and traditional residues of the Book of Common Prayer, provoked resistance and repeated attacks from

evangelicals who saw the reform of the English Church as a grievously unfinished business. In response, Richard Hooker composed his massive *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, an elaborate philosophical defense of the established and liturgically uniform Church of England, in the last decade of the century. Essentially an exposition not only of the content of the Prayerbook, but also of the order(s) it embodied and promoted, Hooker's *Laws* reasserts and further develops the connections between power, order, and ceremonial which we have already observed.

Book VIII of the *Laws* argues in support of the royal supremacy as a matter of proper jurisdiction, and the ground of this propriety descends from the prior contentions of Marsilius and Gardiner: "there is not any man of the *Church* of *England* but the same man is also a member of the *Commonwealth*; nor any man a member of the *Commonwealth* which is not also of the *Church* of *England*."[37] Since the two polities are identical, they are properly ruled by a single head. This principle is reinforced by the corroborative example of ancient Israel:

In a word our estate is according to the patterne of Godes own ancient elect people, which people was not parte of them the *Commonwealth*, and part of them the *Church* of *God*, but the self same people whole and entier were both under one cheif Governour, on whose supreme authoritie they did depend . . . The altering of religion, the making of *Ecclesiasticall* lawes, with other the like actions belonging unto the power of dominion are still termed the deedes of the *Kinge*, to shewe that in him was placed *Supremacie* of power even in this kinde over all, and that unto their *High Priestes* the same was never committed, saving only at such times as their *Priestes* were also *Kings* or *Princes* over them.[38]

Hooker is not propounding a theory of absolute supremacy, but rather a supremacy which is notable in its limitations.[39] For him, the royal supremacy exists within the three key contexts of God, law, and (since he holds, against the Elizabethan absolutists, that authority is originally granted to rulers by societies) the body politic. Yet this power, once instituted, is real, and the "power of dominion" in ecclesiastical polities belongs to the Crown-in-Parliament.[40]

Consequently, despite its limitations, royal authority is fully empowered to oversee all the hierarchies of order. And order is as crucial for Hooker

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[37] *Laws*, 8.1.2 (*Works*, III.319).   [38] *Laws*, 8.1.7, 8.1.2 (*Works*, III.330, 317).

[39] On this, see *Works*, IV.356–375. See also Helgerson, *Forms*, 280–83, on the parliamentary strain, and consequent conflictedness, in Hooker's thought.

[40] See Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans*, 209. Shuger (*Habits of Thought*, 128–41) argues that the price paid for this power was the desacralization of both kingship and the ecclesiastical arm of state; holiness is relocated by Hooker in the sacraments and liturgy.

as it was for Cranmer, whose arguments repeatedly manifest themselves in the *Laws*.

> Without order there is no living in publique societie, because the want thereof is the mother of confusion, whereupon division of necessitie followeth, and out of division, inevitable destruction. The *Apostle* therefore giving instruction to publique societies, requireth that all thinges be orderly done. Order can have no place in thinges unless it be setled amongst the persons that shall by office be conversant about them. And if things or persons be ordered, this doth implie that they are distinguished by degrees. For order is a graduall disposition. The whole world consisting of partes so manie so different is by this only thing upheld, he which framed them hath set them in order . . . This order of thinges and persons in publique societies is the worke of politie and the proper instrument thereof in every degree is *power*.[41]

To reconstruct the argument of Hooker's first sentence backwards: destruction from within results inevitably from division (and Hooker was writing in a context of a division which would explode fifty years later), which results from the confusion born of lack of (necessarily hierarchical) order. Therefore the solution to confusion and division is simply more order, which was instituted by God and is properly maintained – coercively, if necessary – by political power. Hooker delineates these ideas more clearly and explicitly than Cranmer, but there is scarcely a word that was not at least implicit in the form, content, and enforcement of the Prayerbook.

In this manner, Hooker's defense of the supremacy devolves into the social order, and the collectively derived former structures the latter, as the collective is superior to the individual, and the public is superior to the private. The evangelical emphasis on individual conscience and extemporaneity threatened the stability of proper public order, and Hooker's defensive response is decisively (and contemptuously) to downgrade individual authority. He approvingly quotes the fourth-century church father Gregory Nazianzen:

> "Presume not yee that are sheepe to make your selves guides of them that should guide you, neither seeke ye to overskip the folde which they about you have pitched. It sufficeth for your part, if ye can well frame your selves to be ordered. Take not upon you to judge your judges, nor to make them subject to your lawes who should be a law to you. For God is not a God of sedition and confusion but of order and of peace."[42]

Again, in Hooker's account, to be a good Christian and a good subject is to be orderly, tranquil, obedient, and here explicitly sheeplike. He goes on to

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[41] *Laws*, 8.2.1 (*Works*, III.331–2).   [42] *Laws*, Preface.3.2 (*Works*, I.14).

assure the reader that he quotes this not to disgrace anyone, but simply to point out that the "vulgar sort," though opinionated, don't realize their own dangerous ignorance. The proper duty of the individual is not to innovate nor to object, but to conform and obey "the orders which are established, sith equitie and reason, the law of nature, God and man, do all favour that which is in being, till orderlie judgement of decision be given against it."[43] This ideology of order demands the uniform and universal submission of all private concerns to the public order: "of peace and quietnes there is not any way possible, unlesse the probable voice of everie intier societie or bodie politique overrule all private of like nature in the same bodie."[44]

The invocation of the "voice of every entire society" reminds us of the popular sovereignty so deeply embedded in Hooker's political arguments. As Peter Lake has observed, the relation of popular will and royal prerogative had been contentiously unclear all the way back to the 1530s. Hooker's parliamentary emphasis confronted an increasingly absolutist establishment reaction to both Puritan and Catholic challenges – but it also allowed him to make the crushing argument that "the puritans, in rejecting the determinations of crown, parliament and convocation, were in fact refusing to accept the judgment of the whole realm."[45]

Several lines of argument thus converge in the Book of Common Prayer, which is at once a proper exercise of supremacy, a necessary and established instrument of power and order, and indeed, in both derivation and consequence, the voice of the entire realm at worship. And so Hooker makes the Prayerbook the subject of Book v, the central and longest book of the *Laws*, wherein he argues that common prayer is an essential element of a proper Church, and one of the most important Christian duties – so much so that he unapologetically applauds the Roman Catholic Church for recognizing what the antiliturgical enthusiasts did not. Much of the power of uniform public prayer, in both dignity and effect, derives from its collectivity: "the service, which we doe as members of a publique bodie, is publique, and for that cause must needs be accompted by so much worthier then the other, as a whole societie of such condition exceedeth the worth of anie one."[46] So potent, in fact, are the spiritual and social benefits of common prayer that Hooker makes it the central bulwark of the Church.

The best stratageme that Satan hath who knoweth his kingdome to be no one waie more shaken then by the publique devout prayers of Gods Church, is by traducing the forme and manner of them to bring them into contempt, and so to shake the

[43] *Laws*, Preface.6.5 (*Works*, i.33).   [44] *Laws*, Preface.6.6 (*Works*, i.34).
[45] *Anglicans and Puritans*, 212.   [46] *Laws*, 5.24 (*Works*, ii.113–4).

force of all mens devotion towardes them. From this and from no other forge hath proceeded a straunge conceipt, that to serve God with any set forme of common prayer is superstitious.[47]

To reject, resist, or apparently even seriously question the principle of a uniform liturgy is thus the work of the devil.

With so much at stake, then, public worship in the ecclesiastical polity must follow the principles discussed above, and of all the tools for its maintenance "the greatest is that verie sett and standinge order it selfe, which framed with common advise, hath for both matter and forme prescribed whatsoever is herein publiquely don." The historical continuity of liturgy is a work of God's "singular care and providence"; historical study reveals that "the publique prayers of the people of God in Churches throughlie setled did never use to be voluntarie dictates proceedinge from any mans extemporall witt."[48] Hooker fairly splutters with indignation when he considers the nonconformist rejection of set liturgy – Targoff observes[49] that Genevan-inspired liturgical revisions more or less refused to dictate the minister's words, and insisted rather on his use of composition and discretion – and their preference for "the irkesome deformities whereby through endles and senseles effusions of indigested prayers they oftentimes disgrace in most insufferable manner the worthyest part of Christian dutie towardes God."[50] Original and extemporaneous prayer, which for the nonconformists was the only authentic form of communication to God, is to Hooker "senseless" (at least in church) precisely because for him, (public) sense is determined by a context of collective order. In his ecclesiastical polity, public worship under royal power must leave no room for the chaos of individuality or improvisation; as the textual form of order, the BCP is the ideal and only proper expression of the commonwealth at worship.[51] Both the structure of order and the nature of authority dictate that the collective text must

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[47] *Laws*, 5.26.1 (*Works*, II.117). See also the Elizabethan Homily on Common Prayer and Sacraments, which argues that "by the histories of the Bible it appeareth, that publike and common prayer is most auaileable [i.e. efficacious] before GOD, and therefore is much to be lamented that it is no better esteemed among vs which professe to be but one body in Christ." See http://www.anglicanlibrary.org/homilies/bk2hom.09.htm.

[48] *Laws*, 5.25.4 (*Works*, II.116).   [49] *Common Prayer*, 45.

[50] *Laws*, 5.25.5 (*Works*, II.116). It's interesting that digestion, which frequently (as in the Prayerbook, and my next chapter) functioned as a trope for an intensely inward interpretive process, here becomes indigestion and indeed vomit when individually done; for Hooker, apparently, even the metaphorical digestion of prayer (and hence interiority?) requires a context of public structure.

[51] This is not the grim, elitist repression that some have seen in Hooker (and more broadly in the BCP). Shuger's wonderful discussion of his notion of affective community observes that "in the *Laws*, ritual acts do not 'declare' (i.e. signify) *Gemeinschaft* but create it . . . [Hooker] defends the Prayer Book *because* its affective and corporeal devotions lift the simpler sort to the throne of God" ("Society Supernatural," 131, 136).

triumph over the lay or clerical individual's "extemporal wit." But this is, of course, not really original to Hooker; in essence he is simply explicating what was implicit in the Prayerbook all along.

THE NATIONAL VERNACULAR

Liturgically and ecclesiastically conservative as Hooker is, he writes in English, about an English liturgy, and this points to another fundamental element in the establishment of this autonomous, uniform national order: the correlation of this identity with its indigenous language. "Why a God's name," Edmund Spenser wrote in 1580, "may not we, as else the Greeks, have the kingdom of our own language?"[52] Richard Helgerson has insightfully examined the feverish intensity of this cultural project at the end of the century. But the later Renaissance instances he addresses are not the beginning of this endeavor; rather, they are a continuation of concerns foundationally visible in the English Reformation. Among its other concerns, the Book of Common Prayer is deeply involved in the establishment, in all its political, theological, and aesthetic complexity, of the godly "kingdom of our own language." The principles discussed above of national uniformity and autonomy, in a context of plural sovereign states, found an important further expression in the discourses of linguistic nationalism. The close interrelations between language, religion, and politics in the Reformation played an important role in engendering the vernacular Prayerbook; that book, in turn, along with the English Bible, formed the nation's essential library.

The intellectual and religious life of medieval Europe had existed almost exclusively in the medium of Latin, a "dead" language that lived powerfully on because of the claims that were made on its behalf: Latin was a sacred language, a truth-language, whose very deadness enhanced its mystical signification of the divine.[53] Part of the power of the Latin Mass was precisely its incomprehensibility, its expression of the gulf between God and humanity. For the Devon rebels in 1549, for example, it was at least in part the very accessibility of the English liturgy that caused them to liken it to "a

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[52] Helgerson, *Forms*, 1.

[53] As an illustration of this, and its connection to scriptural vernacularism, Daniell (*Bible in English*, 228) notes Gardiner's desire to retain 132 key Latin words in the Great Bible "for their germane and native meaning and for the majesty of their matter." But the primary effect of retaining words like "zizania," "commilito," and "didagma" is surely opacity; Daniell dryly observes that had Gardiner gotten his way, the voice from heaven at Jesus' baptism would have said "This is my dilect son in whom complacui."

Christmas game" – something trivial and mundane which failed to fulfill its essentially sacred purpose (and indeed, the etymology of *sacred* implies difference, separation, "setting apart"). The cultural commitment to the privileged opacity of Latin resulted in the concentration of religious and cultural power in the tiny segments of the population that could understand it. And this road, of course, led ultimately to Rome. As Benedict Anderson has contended, "the astonishing power of the papacy in its noonday is only comprehensible in terms of a trans-European Latin-writing clerisy, *and* a conception of the world, shared by virtually everyone, that the bilingual intelligentsia, by mediating between vernacular and Latin, mediated between earth and heaven."[54]

Several of England's Reformers sensed that the Latin hegemony was part and parcel of the papal hegemony against which they struggled. Martyr John Bradford wrote from prison in 1555 that "this Latin service is a plain mark of antichrist's catholic synagogue. . . Moreover, this service and the setters forth of it condemneth the English service as heresy; thereby falling into God's curse, which is threatened to all such as 'call good evil and evil good.' "[55] A better-known martyr, Hugh Latimer, clarified why the two languages operate under an opposition of evil and good: "[the papists] are the devil's ministers, whose end shall be according to their deeds. They roll out their Latin language by heart, and in so doing they make the poor people of Christ altogether ignorant. . . But this is the matter, so long as the priests speak Latin, they are thought of the people to be marvellous well learned."[56] For the English Reformers, Latin was, by virtue of its opacity to most people, an obfuscatory veil behind which the Roman Church worked its corruption; the Latin Mass and the suppression of vernacular Scripture were the linguistic means by which the papacy maintained its fraudulent stranglehold over the nations and people of Europe. And, in a less polemical sense, this was actually the case: the institutional and cultural authority of the late-medieval Church was indeed, as Anderson has argued, predicated on its privileged control of access to the divine, and this was most clearly expressed in its linguistic and sacramental mysteries. In order

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[54] *Imagined Communities*, 15. Anderson goes on to argue (37–46) that print-capitalism was largely responsible for the Reformation's unparallelled explosion of both print and the vernacular: once the relatively small market for Latin texts was saturated, the print economy turned to the vast vernacular market. This in turn served both to desacralize Latin and to authorize (as well as uniformize) vernaculars. This contention has some natural links with what I am about to argue, but it seems to me a mistake to credit Reformation vernacularism predominantly to economic forces, at the expense of political and theological causes.

[55] Bradford, *Writings*, 202, 201.   [56] Ridley, *Works*, 109.

to break the power of this hegemony, both of these grips had to be broken. I will discuss sacramental philosophy in the next chapter; my immediate subject, which is intimately bound up with the emergent national identity that forms the subject of this chapter, is the Reformation's emphasis on language, and particularly the vernacular, as a politically and religiously significant category. It was an article of faith almost from the start that England, among other nations, and its language, among theirs, had to be elevated over Rome and its language.

English worshippers were confronted by this – again, whether by design or coincidence is unknown, though it seems too perfect to have been mere chance – on the very first day of Uniformity, Whitsunday (Pentecost) 1549. To explain the significance of this, a short excursus is necessary. One of the corresponding narrative pairs which help structure the Bible is that of the Tower of Babel story in Genesis 11 (which is not in that day's service) and the Pentecost story in Acts 2 (which is). Each is a story of linguistic proliferation as a key moment in human–divine relations. The Babel narrative begins by noting that "the whole world had one language and a common speech." The people decide to build a gigantic tower that reaches to heaven; God, angry at their pride and their presumption, confuses their languages and scatters them over the earth – in other words, creates an order of multiple linguistic (and by implication sociopolitical) groups. This estranging plurality is thus both an act of punitive fragmentation and a corrective remedy to the excessive pride and presumption of a linguistically unified humanity. It is an example of divine justice in the classic Old Testament style, where sin results in punishment, pride in alienation.

In this context, the New Testament story of Pentecost takes on an enhanced meaning, in which it recoups the damage inflicted by Babel. The first proper Epistle of the day tells the story:

When the fiftie dayes were come to an end, they were al with one accorde together in one place. And sodenly there came a sou*n*d from heaven, as it had bene the comming of a mighty wind, and it filled al the house where they sate. And there appered unto them cloven tonges, like as they had bene of fyre, and it sate upon eche one of them; and they were al filled with the holy gost, and began to speake with other tonges, even as the same spirite gave them utterau*n*ce. There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jewes, devout men out of every nacion of them that are under heaven. When thys was noysed about, the multitude came together and were astonied, because that every man heard them speake with his owne language. They wondred all, and merveiled, saying among themselfes; behold, are not al these, which speake, of Galile? And how heare we every ma*n* his owne tong, wherin we were borne? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the inhabiters of Mesopotamia, and of Jewry, and of Capadocia, of Pontus and Asia, Phrigia and Pamphilia, of Egipte, and

of the parties of Libia, whiche is beside Siren, and straungers of Rome, Jewes and Proselites, Grekes and Arrabians, we have heard them speake in our owne tongues the great weorkes of God. (131)

The narrative thrust of the New Testament is essentially concerned with the redemption of God's sin-stained creation, the reclamation of a fallen world and its reconstruction into an eternal new kingdom. And here, the divinely inspired linguistic profusion is not a punishment but a work of recuperation, the beginning of international evangelism, through which the whole world would eventually be brought back into God's kingdom. This is a properly and necessarily multilingual process – a fact underscored not only by the symbolic "tongues" of divine fire but also by the extensive list of regions/languages (and that close association is itself critically important) provided by the author. The model of God's redemptive plan here is not a world dominated by any one political and/or linguistic group, as sole accessaries to His truth. Rather, it is a world composed of many nations and languages, each to be taught and saved in its own native tongue.[57] This is reinforced and made an even more explicitly "national" affair in the day's proper preface (one of only five for the year, found in the Communion service), which remembers the coming of the Spirit

in the likenes of fiery toungues, lightyng upon the Apostles, to teache them, and to leade them to all trueth, gevyng them bothe the gifte of diverse languages, and also boldnes with fervent zeale, constantly to preache the Gospell unto all nacions, whereby we are brought out of darkenes and error, into the cleare light and true knowledge of thee, and of thy sonne Jesus Christ. (220)

Truth is, here, by God's own manifest desires, to be pursued and spread through the vernacular of each separate nation, dispelling the "darkness" not only of unbelief but of the tyrannous opacity of Latin. This line of thought contains two notable implications. First, it makes possible (indeed, is necessary for) the ideal congruency of realm and language – each externally distinct and internally unified – essential to a sense of national identity. Second, it alters the relationship of truth and language, sundering any necessary copresence; in place of the exclusive truth-claims of Latin, it proposes a model in which language is a malleable and multiform vehicle for the supralinguistic principle of Gospel truth.[58] The new English liturgy thus had its debut on a symbolically auspicious day; this inaugural service concretely announced that – and implicitly explained why – henceforth,

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[57] See also, in an apocalyptic context, the book of Revelation's repeated references to "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (5:9, 7:9, 11:9, 13:7, 14:6 [King James Version]).

[58] Some further implications of this model of signification will be explored in the following chapter.

"al thinges shalbe read and so*n*g in the churche, in the Englishe tongue, to thende yt the congregacion maie be therby edified" (5). The self-narrative of Reformation vernacularism is, in effect, the narrative of Pentecost; in it, the punitive legacy of Babel is turned against itself as linguistic diversity becomes a "gifte," a means of truth and reunification, and a positive marker of sociopolitical identity.

This elevation of England/English/Protestantism over Rome/Latin/ Catholicism was intimately bound up with the contemporary struggle to justify the English language rhetorically and aesthetically. In a cultural milieu where the classical languages were seen as the towering repositories of truth and eloquence, English seemed a barbarous and guttural tongue, and England spent much of the century struggling with a sense of linguistic and literary inferiority[59] that accompanied its sudden political autonomy, as the newly fledged nation strove to define and create itself on a number of levels. This struggle is often addressed in late century, when the anxieties of Sidney and Spenser were answered by the great literary flowering of the century's end. But it is also important to emphasize the Reformation – that is, religious and political – roots of the century's vernacularism. Much of the impetus for the legitimation and elevation of English, the self-conscious reflection on its deficiencies and its excellencies, stems from the Reformation transition from Latin to English in religion.

Tyndale, in the preface to his *Obedience of a Christian Man*, promotes the validity of English by asserting its continuities with the original languages of Scripture.

Thei wil saye [the Bible] can not be translated into our tonge it is so rude. It is not so rude as thei are false lyers. For the Greke tonge agreeth moare with the englysh then with the latyne. And the properties of the Hebrue tonge agreeth a thousand tymes moare with the englysh then with the latyne. . . A thousand partes better maye [Hebrew] be translated in to the english then into the latyne . . .[60]

The soundness of Tyndale's philological assertions may well be open to criticism. What is interesting, though, is the similarity of his rhetorical strategy to that of Cranmer in the Prayerbook essays. There, we saw an entire complex of values constructed which leapfrogs over the entire Catholic/Roman/papal middle ages as a time of liturgical corruption, and asserts its own continuity with the authentic precorrupted past of the early

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[59] See e.g. Jones, *Triumph*; King, *English Reformation Literature*, ch. 3; and Helgerson, *Forms*, ch. 1, for discussions of this topic which I needn't rehearse in depth here.

[60] Jones, *Triumph*, 55. For a very thoughtful discussion of translation issues, see Cummings, *Grammar and Grace*, esp. 187–231.

Church. Here, Tyndale makes a parallel linguistic argument as he skips backward over a millennium of Latin ascendancy associated with that corruption to assert a more genuine connection between English and the original languages of Scripture. Religiously exclusive Latin is, again, seen as part of a vast and tyrannous conceptual complex that had to be broken in the name of the emerging nation of Protestant England (though it of course continued to function as the common language of intellectual culture, and even the Prayerbook could be legally used in Latin by those who could understand it).

John Foxe, decades later, combined the thrust of the Pentecost service with Tyndale's rejection of charges of barbarism. Some, he wrote, "have judged our native tounge unmet to expresse Gods high secret mysteries, being so barbarous and imperfecte a language as they say it is. As though the holy spirite of truth mente by his appearing in cloven tounges, to debarre any nation, or any tounge, from uttering forth the magnificent majestie of God's miraculous workes."[61] A plural order of sovereign nations and sovereign languages, each equally viable in the pursuit and maintenance of God's truth: the privileged truth-claims of Rome and its language vanish under a maplike conception of the world.

Foxe was of course a great admirer of Tyndale and his efforts to supply the English people with religious texts in their own language. "These works of William Tyndale," he wrote, "being compiled, published, and sent over into England, it cannot be spoken what a door of light they opened to the eyes of the whole English nation, which before were many years shut up in darkness."[62] Foxe utilizes an established idiom of light, vision, and reading (even to the curious extent that it "cannot be spoken") in opposition to the darkness and blindness of the old ways, borne out by his report of Tyndale's last words: "Lord! open the king of England's eyes."[63] The essentially *textual* nature of this vision is further elaborated by Foxe's famous description of the advent of print as a new Pentecost: "By this printing, as by the gift of tongues, and as by the singular organ of the Holy Ghost, the doctrine of the gospel soundeth to all nations and countries under heaven."[64] Once again, via the mechanism of print, we see the connection of multiple vernacular languages to the new order of multiple independent nations and their churches. But furthermore, it is in some sense these languages, and these texts, which constitute these nations. In the quote on Tyndale above, Tyndale's texts collectively opened the eyes of "the whole English nation." But Foxe's correlations of vision, reading, and light, along with

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[61] Jones, *Triumph*, 58.   [62] *Acts and Monuments*, v.119.   [63] Ibid., v.127.   [64] Ibid., iii.720.

his offhandedly idiomatic dismissal of speech, suggest certain delimitations on what that nation is. By implication, it is the aggregate of those who *read* (or at least share in the reading of) these texts. This in turn implies, first, a linguistic uniformity which is constitutive of the nation, and second, collective textual engagement as a further essential element of that community.[65]

This emphasis on common reading makes it less than surprising that Foxe looked with substantial approval on both the Book of Common Prayer and the principle of uniform adherence to it. The 1548 Communion service, he wrote, was a "godly and uniform order," the "true and right manner of administering the sacrament," produced by the "long, learned, wise, and deliberate advices" of learned men. Although all "private blasphemous masses" were thereby abolished by just authority, there arose through obstinacy and wickedness "a marvellous schism, and variety of fashions, in celebrating the common service and administration of the sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies of the church." Consequently, the Crown, "having good intelligence, and fearing the great inconveniences and dangers that might happen through this division," desired "by some quiet and godly order, to bring them to some conformity." The result of further "godly and learned conferences" was the 1549 BCP, which, despite the "most godly travail of the king's highness," was "long after the publishing thereof, either not known at all, or else very irreverently used" due to the contempt and disobedience found throughout the secular and ecclesiastical administrations.[66]

Foxe's endorsement of liturgical uniformity helps to illuminate and correct some recent critical misunderstandings. Richard Helgerson asserts that Foxe, who played a moderate-left role in the troubles at Frankfurt, "avoided extended discussion of the Book of Common Prayer,"[67] and implies that Foxe was hostile to the Prayerbook and its ideological underpinnings. Both of these claims seem to me mistaken. Helgerson's rich analysis is certainly right to highlight the status of *Acts and Monuments* as a collection of narratives, many of them stories of suffering at the hands of the worldly powers of Antichrist. And certainly, Foxe's work moves within and among polar tensions of true and false Church, persecuted and persecuting, conscience and authority, individual and institution. But Helgerson may in fact be

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[65] Helgerson (*Forms*, 266) has described Foxe's invisible church as an "imagined community" of readers, which is undoubtedly true. What I'm arguing, though, is that this community is not just the invisible, oppositional community of Helgerson's account, but rather the "whole English nation" – something Helgerson is reluctant to acknowledge vis-à-vis Foxe.

[66] *Acts and Monuments*, v.719–25.   [67] *Forms*, 275.

more limited by these oppositions than Foxe is. He concludes his analysis by observing that *Acts and Monuments*

devotes far the greater part of its narrative energy, far the greater part of its enormous length, to the conflict between the godly and the established authority of church and state. It thus gives its "invisible" English church a strongly oppositional identity, an identity founded on suffering and resistance and profoundly antithetical to the hierarchical order of the English state.[68]

Helgerson's contention that Foxe's true Church and the state have a necessarily antagonistic relation seems an overgeneralization which overlooks the historical and political specificity of the contexts Foxe addressed. For the politics of *Acts and Monuments* are not purely and inherently oppositional; rather, the relations of the faithful to power are determined by the perceived relations of power to God. Under the Marian persecutions, which form Foxe's immediate context, and the larger Roman oppression of which they are a part, Foxe's true Church of course assumes an oppositional role and identity. Under the godly reforms of Edward and Elizabeth, however – times, I've argued, of vigorous expansion of state power via the established Church, in large part through the discourses of liturgy – an entirely different relationship seems to hold, and Church (both institutional and true) and State assume positions of symbiotic congruency.[69] This relationship, in contrast to Helgerson's oppositionality, can be seen in the above paragraph: the godly monarch's rightful authority to determine both the form and the content of a uniform national religion is upheld (as long as that religion is "true"); the "marvellous schisms" of nonuniform worship (i.e. the following of individual religious inclinations) are not only inconvenient but dangerous to the realm; the widespread contempt of the national liturgy is perhaps an ominous indicator of the nation's failure to cohere religiously, with disastrous results in the years between event and narrative. Small wonder that the Elizabethan Church embraced *Acts and Monuments* so

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[68] *Forms*, 268.

[69] Helgerson occasionally concedes this (253, 258, 277), but persistently qualifies its significance (258, 260, 266, 268, 277) – primarily, I presume, because his argument depends on a demonstrable opposition between radical Foxean apocalyptic and conservative Hookerian apologetic. John Pocock (108–9 in Ranum, *National Consciousness*) goes even further than I do in asserting a *necessary* connection between Church and State for Foxe: "because of [the Marian exiles'] belief that the false church had been justly legislated out of existence, in an England which 'sundry old authentic histories and chronicles' revealed to have always been an 'empire,' they were as strongly disposed to believe in a high degree of identity between the true church and the justly legislating empire and nation . . . [i]t is clear that Foxean apocalyptic was the consequence of involvement in, not alienation from, secular institutions[.]"

warmly – a fact difficult to account for in Helgerson's model.[70] For Foxe, the English Church may in fact be defined at least as much by its "godly and uniform order" as it is by its oppositionality. In an introductory essay to the 1570 edition, he uses the metaphor of a ship to talk about England and its Church in terms which would not have displeased Hooker:

yet because God hath so placed us Englishmen here in one commonwealth, also in one church, as in one ship together, let us not mangle or divide the ship, which being divided, perisheth; but every man serve with diligence and discretion in his order, wherein he is called – they that sit at the helm keep well the point of the needle, to know how the ship goeth, and whither it should . . . such as labour at the oars start up for no tempest, but do what they can to keep from the rocks; likewise they which be in inferior rooms, take heed they move no sedition nor disturbance against the rowers and mariners. No storm so dangerous to a ship on the sea, as is discord and disorder in the weal public. What countries and nations, what kingdoms and empires, what cities, towns, and houses, discord hath dissolved, in stories is manifest; I need not spend time in rehearsing examples. . . [May God] still these winds and surging seas of discord and contention among us; that we, professing one Christ, may, in one unity of doctrine, gather ourselves into one ark of the true church together . . .[71]

A ship of commonwealth (and Church; one slides almost imperceptibly into the other), doctrinally uniform as a condition of its continued existence, with some determining its course, some helping propel it, and others who must simply follow in the communal interest. This principle would seem to take precedence over the massive text it introduces: whatever Foxe's point in *Acts and Monuments* might be, he promotes it by "rehearsing examples," by stringing together hundreds upon hundreds of narrative episodes in support of it. But the value of the godly piloted ship, he says, and the danger of dissension below decks, are so manifest that he needn't spend time arguing the point. Far from being "profoundly antithetical" to the English state, Foxe seems here to fall squarely within the tradition of Cromwell and Gardiner (the Gardiner of the 1530s, at any rate) and the Prayerbook ideology, and perhaps not as far from Hooker as Helgerson suggests.

Finally, a corollary, and, for the purposes of the present study, ultimately more important criticism: Helgerson's use of the Book of Common Prayer, via Hooker, as the emblem of coercive state power, the formal triumph of the

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[70] This relationship was of course not always entirely cordial; see Betteridge's account of the tensions and increasing fractiousness of Foxe's view of Elizabeth's religious policy, which generates rather different emphases in the different editions of *Acts and Monuments*.

[71] *Acts and Monuments*, I.xxiv.

state collective over the individual, seems to me reductive.[72] For while the Prayerbook certainly contains, embodies, and reproduces such ideologies – as is manifest in my own chapter, which has highlighted them – this is only half the story. Helgerson, though he treats Hooker with characteristic insight and complexity, never seems to regard the Prayerbook as anything more than the Bible – I use the term deliberately, given the importance of the Foxe/Bible and Hooker/BCP correlations in his argument – of state-enforced uniformity. Undoubtedly, the Prayerbook's form, content, and discourses of order define and distinguish England both externally (as a linguistically, territorially, and politically autonomous realm) and internally (as a vertical sociopolitical hierarchy) as a phenomenon of collective order. But it also contains a set of contrasting ideologies, which construct a very different potential image of the English "nation," and which stress the value of the individual in important ways. This ambivalence can be seen in the Prayerbook's titular "common," which I began this chapter by reading as an indicator of its coercively uniform distribution – but as Elyot's philological argument against the term "commonweal" demonstrates,[73] commonness could also work the other way, as a principle of antihierarchical leveling. This leads us into my next chapter.

[72] An analogous critique applies to Targoff's *Common Prayer*, which focuses on the liturgy's preemption of private devotion – though her reading is much more sensitive to the conflicts surrounding, and embedded within, the BCP.

[73] Elyot prefers "publike weale," because he links "commune weale" to the Latin *Res plebeia* rather than *Res publica* – thereby implying that "commonness" necessarily entails that "all men must be of one degree and sort," and thus leading, in his view, inexorably toward the collapse of vertical social structure, and finally "universall dissolution" (*Boke*, 15–16).

The Book of Common Prayer and individual identity

And yet this notwithstanding, a great number of people in divers parts of this realm, following their own sensuality, and living either without knowledge or due fear of God, do wilfully and damnably before Almighty God abstain and refuse to come to their parish churches and other places where common prayer, administration of the sacraments, and preaching of the word of God, is used upon the Sundays, and other days ordained to be holy days.[1]

DISORDER AND SUBJECTIVITY

If the Tudor state enhanced and consolidated its power – as the preceding chapter suggests it did – by its appropriation of Reformation discourses of hierarchical national order, it did so at considerable cost. For while the Protestant political order may have been highly congenial to the interests of the Crown, it was not a free-standing ideology. The discourses of post-papal sociopolitical order were dependent upon an even larger and more fundamental, and far more unruly, discourse: that of the Protestant individual. An important recent study of the Prayerbook explicitly sets out to "challenge one of the governing premises of our understanding of early modern religious culture: that the private sphere fostered by the Protestant Reformation represented a powerful alternative to the superficial and depersonalized practices of the medieval Catholic Church."[2] While I would not reject a critique of the latter characterization of Catholicism, this chapter will aim to critique this implied dismissal of Protestant subjectivity in Prayerbook theology and worship, which, I will argue, allows – indeed, encourages and demands – a crucially individual authority in religious life and activity.

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[1] Gee and Hardy, *Documents*, 369.   [2] Targoff, *Common Prayer*, 5.

The radical and contestatory essence of Reformation thought was grounded in Luther's vision of the naked self before God; only through unmerited grace, accepted and affirmed with faith in Christ's propitiatory sacrifice on the cross, can one have any hope of salvation. Faith in one's own acts and merits as redemptive could only lead one further from the abject humility of true faith; the same was true of any institutional religious practices or forms which claimed exclusive redemptive necessity in and of themselves. This was the theological foundation of Luther's critique and rejection of the Roman Catholic Church, which claimed itself as a necessary intermediary between humanity and the divine, and was thus for him a corruption of true faith, which in its proper and theoretically pure form involved simply a relationship of the individual and God, guided by biblical revelation and the activity of the Holy Spirit.

The implications of this theology were momentous. By repositioning the individual alone before the throne of judgment, Luther implicitly authorized that individual, and rendered institutional mediation essentially unnecessary for salvation.[3] And given the intertwined nature of late-medieval structures of authority, this logic proved dangerously infectious: if the individual was competent to find his or her own way in the supremely consequential sphere of religion (though paradoxically unable to do much about it), then why not in more worldly matters as well? A horrified Luther was confronted with the anarchic possibilities of his own theology in the Peasants' Rebellion of 1524–6, which he viewed as a damnably antinomian corruption of proper Christian freedom; his notorious letter exhorting the secular authorities to "stab, smite, slay" the rebels[4] was both a realization and a repression of the chaotic energies of his philosophy. The events of this decade were pivotal for Luther, and henceforth his teachings showed a greater emphasis on the rights and powers of secular authority, and a greater restraint on the social and political implications of Protestant Christian freedom.[5]

These energies never erupted as violently in England as they did in Germany – although the disruptive potential of this line of thought went back as far as Lollardy, the two arguably most threatening uprisings of the Tudor era (the 1536–7 Pilgrimage of Grace and the 1549 Prayerbook

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[3] Of course, structured churches did not vanish with the Reformation; they continued to provide an important normative communal context for individual faith and worship. But Protestant churches, though they conducted authority and sometimes persecution, did not generally claim for themselves the sort of exclusive institutional necessity that the Roman Catholic Church did.

[4] "Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants" (*Works* xlvi.45–55).

[5] Skinner, *Foundations*, ii. 17–19; Lausten, "Lutherus," 59–60.

Rebellion) were religiously conservative movements – but they did result in activities that the Tudor Crown found difficult to control. In a speech to his last Parliament, Henry VIII admonished his subjects to

bee not Judges your selfes, of your awne phantasticall opinions, and vain exposicions, for in suche high causes ye maie lightly erre. And al though you be permitted to reade holy scripture, and to have the word of God in your mother tongue, you must understande that it is licensed you so to do, onely to informe your awne conscience, and to instruct your children and famely, and not to dispute and make scripture, a railyng and tauntyng stocke, against Priestes and Preachers (as many light persones do) . . . I am very sory to knowe and here, how unreverently that moste precious juel the worde of God is disputed, rymed, sung and jangeled in every Alehouse and Taverne, contrary to the true meaninge and doctrine of the same.[6]

One senses in Henry's words the bewildered frustration of one who has unleashed something that now exceeds all efforts to restrain and channel it. His reversal on the question of vernacular Scripture in the 1530s had been a perhaps necessary concession to the principles of Erasmian humanism and Lutheran theology, both of which insisted on the importance of individual interpretation of scriptural truth. But now, in the king's account, public religious discourse has overflowed its banks, been soiled by the casual use of the low, and even turned against the clergy. Perhaps more importantly, it has reversed the flow of religious authority: the vernacular Scripture, graciously given for personal and familial edification, has now in effect overauthorized some individuals, who now presume to judge matters formerly reserved for public and hierarchical authority (and then properly handed down to private subjects). It is, in Henry's eyes, a disaster.

This strain can also be seen in a more narrowly liturgical context. Both the 1549 Preface to the BCP and the first Act of Uniformity argue that the unification of liturgical discourse is a positive and in fact necessary step; hence the plurality of medieval "uses" are now standardized by royal authority into one nationally uniform liturgy, and "from he*n*cefurth, all the whole realme shall have but one use" (4). In addition to legally authorizing the new form, though, the Act's preamble goes further in clarifying the Book of Common Prayer's more restrictive function in a context of a very disorderly discursive situation: King Edward has "heretofore divers times essayed to stay innovations or new rites concerning the premises; yet the same has not had such good success as his highness required in that behalf."[7] Furthermore, the Act seems to anticipate some further difficulties, and provides

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[6] Quoted in Weimann, "Discourse," 119–20.   [7] Gee and Hardy, *Documents*, 358–9.

specific penalties for any who "in any interludes, plays, songs, rhymes, or by other open words declare or speak anything in the derogation, depraving, or despising of the same book or of anything therein contained."[8] Later, in the wake of the uneven reception of the 1549 Book, the various resistances and appropriations to which it was subjected, the preamble to the 1552 Act of Uniformity (printed in the new Prayerbook it enforced) acknowledges these difficulties: "a greate noumbre of people, in divers partes of this Realme, folowing theyr own sensualitie, and living either without knowledge or due feare of God, dooe wilfully, and damnablye before almightie God, absteyn and refuse" to attend the official services.[9] A further reason for this is given a bit later on: "there hath arisen in the use and exercise of the foresayde common service in the Churche heretofore set forth, divers doubtes for the fasshion & maner of the ministracio*n* of thesame, rather by the curiositie of the minister and mistakers, then of any other worthy cause."[10]

These three situations – Luther's, Henry's, the Prayerbook's – are all instances of confrontation with some of the unrulier implications of Protestant doctrine. The initial and fundamental problem that the Reformation addressed was the various forms (political, theological, linguistic, institutional, interpretive) of Roman Catholic "tyranny"; the fundamental solution was to de-authorize the forms and structures through which Roman authority propagated itself, regrounding Christianity instead in a textually mediated relationship between God and the individual. Ideally, institutional dogma would eventually melt away as all people came together, one by one, in the true biblical knowledge of Christ.

In practice, of course, things took a different course: debate and discord, not a peaceful and growing harmony, seemed to be the order of the day. While not everyone who embraced Protestant doctrine became a Müntzer, the diffusive evangelical relocation of authority into the individual interpretive conscience was potentially and logically highly subversive of prevailing ideologies of order. Hierarchical order constructs individual identity out of, and defines it within, a context of a given or desired social/political/economic order; radical individualism, such as that of the Reformation, threatens to undo that ideological economy and rather construct order (if it does so at all) out of individual identities.

This was the central tension in the position of the English Crown in the wake of the Reformation. Henry VIII found Protestant political discourse – national sovereignty, multiple independent states and state churches, secular

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[8] Ibid., 362.   [9] Brightman, *English Rite*, I.9.   [10] Ibid., I.9, 19.

control of religious affairs and properties – highly congenial to his own goals and desires. In it was contained both the strategic means and the theoretical justification of the Crown's massive social, political, and material self-aggrandizement; it was a ready-made philosophical apparatus for the expansion and centralization of the Tudor state. But the new political world offered by Protestantism was ultimately, for Henry (though he undoubtedly would have wished it otherwise) as it had been for Luther, dependent upon the anti-Catholic force of its theological base. The destruction of papal authority could not, in early modern Europe, be accomplished by simple fiat, royal or otherwise; the claims of the Roman Catholic hierarchy to eternal truth, the keys of heaven and hell, ran too deep to simply be ignored. The massive power of the late-medieval Church could only be dislodged if its comprehensive institutional claims to spiritual and soteriological truth were replaced by an equally viable alternative system. Protestant theology offered this, in a system which rendered institutional mediation inessential for individual salvation – in effect, to use an economic metaphor, a cutting-out of the middleman (though churches of course remained very important sources of teaching, sacraments, and sociality).[11]

The problem for Henry, of course, was that he simply wanted to replace the Pope himself; his interests were jurisdictional, not doctrinal, and really not even structural once he was in charge. But even the limited goals of caesaro-papism constituted a massive challenge for Henry and Cromwell, running as they did against so much deeply held popular sentiment.[12] And the Crown's strategy is indicative of its predicament. In order to sway and consolidate broad-based opinion in the initial two matters of Henry's divorce from Catherine of Aragon and the legislative achievement of the royal supremacy, Cromwell mobilized a small group of capable propagandists – including Richard Morison, Thomas Starkey, Edward Foxe, Cuthbert Tunstall, William Marshall (translator of Marsilius' *Defensor Pacis*), John Frith, Simon Fish, and John Bale – for a two-pronged campaign of print and preaching in support of the Crown's positions and actions.[13]

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[11] Calvin, for instance, felt the true Church to be such an important means of grace that "a departure from the Church is a renunciation of God and Christ" (*Institutes* 4.1.10); the forgiveness of sins takes place only within (but not through) the communion of saints (4.1.20). In this way he castigates the reckless solipsism of those who carry Protestantism's individualizing logic too far, and also the arrogance of the separatist precisianism that would sometimes be carried out in his name.

[12] The revisionist histories of recent years (most notably those of Scarisbrick, Duffy, and Haigh), while in my view not entirely successful at completely reconstructing our understanding of the English Reformation, have been valuable in their emphasis on the broad and deep resistances encountered by the entire state Reformation project.

[13] The classic treatment of the Crown's efforts to enforce and consolidate the English Reformation is Elton, *Policy and Police*. See also Skinner, *Foundations*, II.85–108; Rex, *Henry VIII*, 23–37, 141–4.

These pamphlets and sermons (and plays) defended the new order, and above all the central theme of obedience, but their authors represented a wide spectrum of religious beliefs. Stephen Gardiner, as a jurisdictionally royalist but doctrinally conservative clergyman and canon lawyer, epitomized the sort of support that Henry desired. But the team of propagandists also included men, of whom the zealously evangelical Hugh Latimer is perhaps the best-known example, whose commitment to Supremacy grew out of prior theological beliefs in a more typically Lutheran fashion. The Crown needed these talented and persuasive men to drum up support for its cause, but its employment of the doctrinally suspect created further problems. Authorized by royal sponsorship, the evangelicals took the opportunity to proclaim their broader theological platform, attacking traditional Catholic doctrines such as purgatory, and promoting new doctrines.[14] Similarly, Henry warmly endorsed Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christian Man* for its message of unquestioning political obedience despite its deeper and more radical theological underpinnings. In general, the Crown eagerly enlisted the support of the reform-minded for the vast benefits of their political doctrines; however, in so doing, it unleashed discursive forces which ran far deeper than simple political obedience, which in some ways ran counter to the interests of the centralizing Tudor state and its hierarchy, and which in the long run proved impossible to control fully. Reformation discourse as a whole was not only state-authorizing, but more importantly and more fundamentally *self*-authorizing (in a double sense): its theological foundation asserted not only its own validity, but also the relative autonomy of the individual religious subject, theoretically radicalizing the very bases of European society. As Henry later realized with regret, his and Cromwell's appropriation of Reformation discourse had let the genie out of the bottle,[15] and England would never be the same. Robert Weimann has summarized the contemporary "crisis of authority":

[In the early modern period,] ideas, convictions, abstract principles – all conveyed through discourse – became the social link and political driving force of larger groups of people. For the first time in their history, with the emergence of Protestantism, people outside and beneath the ruling class were being motivated ideologically by entering into discursive exchanges on the subject of their religion . . . [T]he relation between the textual document (in the form of Bible texts in the vernacular, sermons, pamphlets, etc.) and its effect, or the response to

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[14] Rex, *Henry VIII*, 142.
[15] Some historians – most notably Elton – have argued that this was actually a deliberate strategy on the part of the Lutheran-minded Cromwell, but the significance of Cromwell's role has been vigorously contested by Guy and others.

it, allowed much greater scope for individual views and interpretations. As never before people were now in the position of having to make their own judgments on truth and untruth.[16]

Authority, in Weimann's account, becomes in this era, as a matter of cultural practice, increasingly the *product* of discourse rather than its enabling precondition. Whereas medieval heresies were defined and repressed largely by virtue of their inversions of these traditional relations, in the wake of the Reformation these new configurations became more a matter of course, truth a matter of inquiry and evaluation rather than institutional dogmatics. Weimann contends that the central challenge of the post-Reformation Crown – even under the more evangelically minded Edward VI – was to control and reconfigure this explosion of self-authorizing discourse.

Henry's 1546 speech to Parliament thus stands as a belated recognition of some of the more refractory consequences of the break with Rome. But it is also an indication of the royal failure to comprehend these consequences fully. It presupposes a genuine demarcation between two categories of religious facts: "phantasticall opinions, and vain exposicions," which are by implication illegitimate and contrary to the set standards of order, on the one hand, and on the other, the legitimate hermeneutic practice of privately "inform[ing] your awne conscience." Public scriptural disputation by the unqualified seems automatically to fall into the former category as "contrary to the true meaninge and doctrine of the same." What emerges from Henry's speech is a defensive tactical desire to control religious discourse by maintaining a rigorous distinction between legitimate and illegitimate categories of it; in the realm of public order, this distinction corresponds to that between public and private authority. But he fails to grasp the fact that his own Reformation had begun to render these categorical distinctions largely inoperative by dehierarchizing and individualizing religious authority. The Reformation had, whether those who fostered it in England liked it or not, recognized the religious subject as the subject of religion.[17]

The remainder of this chapter will consider this side of the contemporary struggle by examining two aspects of subjectivist discourse which manifest themselves in the Book of Common Prayer. My analysis will seek

[16] "Discourse," 112. For a fuller and highly suggestive treatment of these issues, see his *Authority and Representation*, 1–99.
[17] I will be using words like "subject" and "individual" under the assumption that it is again critically safe to do so in qualified ways. The past excesses of Foucauldian and Althusserian criticism, which sometimes denied subjectivity and autonomy outright, have received the due correction of reaffirming that history without agency makes little sense and is of little interest. There is nonetheless a useful legacy to account for here; part of what I'm after in this study is a more subtle and dynamic sense of agency and its limits and complications.

to mitigate the uncertainties of the relationship of abstract theological and philosophical ruminations to popular thought and belief – a persistent source of vagueness and contention in intellectual and social history – by focusing on the implications of two immediately (if sometimes subtly) significant modes of religious *practice*, both of which contribute to the articulation of a radically individualized social model.[18] First, Reformation vernacularism and its implicit reconstruction of religious and social order. Second, Protestant sacramental theology and worship, which participates in this rebuilding at the highest moments of human/divine interaction, and which is itself deeply involved in questions of representation and individual interpretation. Finally, I will return to the larger question of how this individualist discourse relates to the discourse of national order treated in the previous chapter – how the Prayerbook attempts to mediate between these sometimes contradictory discourses (one of which seeks hierarchically and institutionally to unify England on politico-religious bases, while the other simultaneously enables the first and threatens to undermine the foundational principles of that ordering) and effect a textual synthesis. Along the way, I hope to demonstrate some ways in which early modern discourses of power, order, and individuality were closely and complexly tied both to theological constructions and to hermeneutic models of the nature and value of representational signs.

THE INDIVIDUAL VERNACULAR

The preceding chapter of the present study treated the Reformation impulse toward the vernacular as a politically significant category: the move to English (among other languages) helped both to break the papal hegemony over Europe and to define England as a separate, autonomous, and coherent political entity. But this is only half the story. Contemporary vernacularism also helped to shift the very bases of English religion.

The theological and linguistic struggles which have historically surrounded the English liturgy might usefully be approached as part of a

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[18] John Wall argues that liturgy, not theology, is central to the Church of England, whose essence is "not assent to a statement of belief but participation in worship enabled by the Book of Common Prayer" (*Transformations*, 12). His point is generally useful as a way of understanding the nature of this Church and its textual preoccupations, as well as its longstanding reputation for theological weakness, and it is a salutary reminder that Calvin's *Institutes* had far less impact on the average English person than what they were asked to do on Sunday morning at church. As he well knows, though, theology and worship are not neatly separable; liturgy is built on theological assumptions, however nebulously defined, which can in turn be inferred from it. And liturgy is, of course, precisely that literary form in which theology and practice intersect.

history of conflict between two polar approaches to worship.[19] One pole, which we might call the "intellectual" approach to worship, is ultimately predicated on the conviction that worship is a means by which humans can and must come to know God better; it is necessarily demystificatory in its approach, and it finds its natural expression in preaching, reading, and other modes of intellectual accessibility. This perspective is exemplified by Puritanism, with its hostility to transubstantiation, vestments, set liturgy, and all things that savored of the mystical, and its overwhelming (some might say crushing) emphasis on preaching, instruction, and individual intellectual initiative. The other pole exists in stark opposition to the first, and long predates it: the "aesthetic" approach is founded upon the *unknowability* of the omnipotent God, the gulf of absolute difference between God and humanity which finds expression primarily in the ineffability of the aesthetic; its natural medium is in the elevated strains of high liturgy, and its corollary effect is the elevation of the mediating institution which renders the gulf crossable. The medieval Roman Catholic Mass, in which the divine is screened not only by the aesthetic but by the nonparticipation of the congregation (a liturgy performed by clergy and choir) and above all by the mystical incomprehensibility of hieratic Latin, epitomizes this position.[20] Intellectual and aesthetic, epistemological and mystical, human and divine – though they rarely occurred in pure form, these poles defined, often contentiously, the universe of early modern worship and theology.[21] Contemporary religious conservatives might well see Reformed worship as a damnably cheapened mockery of the holiness of God (the Council of Trent in 1562 anathematized any who desired the Mass to be celebrated only in the vernacular – though it did concede that it would be acceptable to explain "some" of its mysteries comprehensibly), even as Protestants accused

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[19] The distinction I propose here is admittedly, and inevitably, reductive: it simplifies complex theological systems, flattens their contradictions, and frankly doesn't account for such things as negative theology (or, for that matter, a good deal of scholastic theology). And it is not remotely my intention to suggest that Calvinism doesn't have an aesthetic, or that Catholicism doesn't have an intellect. I offer it simply as a way of thinking generally about the competing logics of early modern Catholic and Protestant worship.

[20] These things also, of course, work themselves out in the architectural settings of worship: darkness, stained glass, and incense in aesthetic churches, whitewash, clear glass, and light in intellectual-leaning ones.

[21] Paradoxically, Protestant and Catholic sacraments seem to invert this logic: the Catholic elements make God immediately and physically present, while Protestant theology generally denies the accessible contact of such presence. But these sacraments ultimately make sense in their respective contexts. In the Catholic sacrament, the mediating institution (alone) actualizes the opaque and immanent manifestation of the divine; conversely, the Protestant elements are reconceived as spiritually effective representational signs which require the thoughtful and faithful interpretation of the individual believer.

Catholics of superstition, deliberate ignorance, and blind subservience to fraudulent tradition. And though the Book of Common Prayer staked out a complex mediatory position within these possibilities – from its birth, there have been critical currents opposed to both its novelty and its traditionality – the present analysis will focus on some foundational differences between Catholic and Prayerbook worship, and the means by which this succession took place. As I hope to demonstrate, this transition had significant theological, hermeneutic, and epistemological consequences for early modern English culture.

Catholic Latin was the expressive mode of a Truth which exceeded the competence of the individual. Its opacity enabled it to function as a system of pure signs,[22] a discourse which essentially signified absolute difference – the incomprehensible boundary between the human and the divine. Latin presented the inaccessible mystery of divine Truth, which was unreachable for the individual, known and guarded primarily by the institutional Church, and expressed in a language that appropriately veiled its occulted truths. Paradoxically, this blank linguistic wall was the self-authenticating guarantee of access (albeit indirect) to the divine: the inability of the average medieval worshipper to understand fully what was being said in church was presumably an important part of his or her assurance that something important and otherworldly was in fact happening. The significance of Latin in the popular religious experience can be inferred from the demands of the Devon rebels in 1549: three of their fifteen articles[23] focus on the restoration of Latin Scripture and service, and the extirpation of the English, which they compare to a trivial "Christmas game"[24] against the numinous obscurity of the old language.

If Latin's claims to truth were ultimately based on its opacity, the claims of English to this same eternal truth were, in contrast, based precisely upon its clarity. If Latin was a linguistic curtain that rightly screened the divine from the mundane, English was intended to function as a window, through

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[22] See e.g. Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, ch. 1–4. Pure signs refer to nothing but other signs, or themselves, and ultimately to their own sign-ness – an untranscendable and uninterpretable boundary of absolute difference. Essentially, a pure sign shouts, "I'm a sign! For heaven's sake, don't read me!!"

[23] The third (which demands the restoration of Latin services), eighth (which refuses the new English services), and tenth (which demands the withdrawal of Scripture in English on the curious grounds that "we be informed that otherwise the clergy shall not of long time confound the heretics," or in other words, that the clergy would no longer monopolize scriptural interpretation); Cranmer, *Letters*, 163–87. When they demand that "we will have the mass in Latin, as it was before, and celebrated by the priest, without any man or woman communicating with him" (169), the related senses of sacramental and linguistic communication are clearly both at issue.

[24] Ibid., 179.

whose transparency salvific truth could be seen clearly by all.[25] Although this drive toward the vernacular had a number of historical sources (most nearly and notably Erasmian humanism), it received its immediate impetus from Protestant theology: if biblical truth and saving grace are received individually rather than institutionally, then individuals interested in salvation had better set to learning about it. This renewed stress on accessibility and comprehensibility is clearly exhibited in the Prayerbook. Not only is the liturgy now in English, but the clergy are specifically commanded by rubric to enunciate this English "distinctely with a loude voice, that the people maye heare . . . standing and turnyng hym so as he maye beste be hearde of all suche as be present . . . after the maner of distincte readyng" (22). Furthermore, the theology of access even assumes an economic dimension: by royal proclamation, the BCP was to be kept affordable, not exceeding 2s 2d unbound, 2s 10d bound in forel, 3s 3d bound in sheepskin, and 4s bound in calves' leather.[26]

This shift from Latin to English, in both its theological underpinnings and its implications, was thus part of a massive refocusing and redistribution of religious authority from institutions to persons. This redistribution, relatively egalitarian in its insistence on individual religious access and competence, ran in many cases against the grain of prevailing ideologies of hierarchical order. In part, to be sure, this was a deliberate political strategy aimed at undermining papal authority. Foxe reports Tyndale's brazen assertion that "I defy the Pope and all his laws. If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scripture than [a learned divine] doest."[27] In a similar but less politically pointed

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[25] Eamon Duffy and other revisionist historians have argued that the Catholic experience was in fact not exclusionary, and that the Mass, for instance, was rather experienced fully and meaningfully by the average parishioner. In this they have valuably qualified a reductively evangelical historiography of the Reformation; surely the Catholic laity did not sit dumbly in their pews, oblivious to the significance of what was going on in front of them. But it seems to me that the revisionists have not successfully disproven the basic distinction I invoke here, and in fact, they appear to subscribe to it: Duffy, in his wonderful discussion of the late-medieval Mass, tips his hand by referring to the "decent obscurity" of Latin (*Stripping*, 110) while also recognizing that "it was part of the power of the words of consecration that they were hidden, too sacred to be communicated to the 'lewed,' and this very element of mystery gave legitimacy to the sacred character of Latin itself, as higher and holier than the vernacular" (217–18). In the sixteenth century as well, one might explain away the repeated evangelical references to issues of accessibility (linguistic, sacramental, etc.) as a mere propagandistic topos, were it not for the fact that religious conservatives, from Bonner to the Devon rebels, appeal to the very same distinction between the essential logics of Catholic and Protestant worship.

[26] Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, 1.464. The 1549 Whitchurch edition prints a slightly different price list (2s unbound, 3s 4d bound "in paste or in boordes") after the colophon.

[27] *Acts and Monuments* v.117; I follow Greenblatt (*Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 106) et al. in presenting this as direct discourse.

vein, Cranmer's preface to the Great Bible of 1540 expresses a comprehensive vision of English Bible readers: "In the scriptures be the fat pastures of the soul . . . Here may all manner of persons, men, women, young, old, learned, unlearned, rich, poor, priests, laymen, lords, ladies, officers, tenants, and mean men, virgins, wives, widows, lawyers, merchants, artificers, husbandmen, and all manner of persons, of what estate or condition soever they be, may in this book learn all things."[28] Cranmer's expansive portrayal of a realm of religious subjects is almost breathtaking in its inclusivity; it traverses English society from top to bottom and side to side along nearly every conceivable axis of class, gender, and profession (even lawyers are included!), nullifying social difference in its promise of unrestricted access to knowledge of "all things."[29]

The levelling effects which take place at the linguistic intersection of Scripture and worship can be seen in Ipswich printer Anthony Scoloker's *A Goodly Dysputatyon Betwene a Christen Shomaker and a Popysshe Parson* (1548),[30] one of many contemporary tracts aimed at influencing public religion in England after the death of Henry VIII. At the beginning of the dialogue, the "popysshe parson" enters to greet the shoemaker, explaining that he has been not in church but "yonder behinde in the gallerye and there have I mumbled." To the shoemaker's question of clarification – "What saye yowe master Parson? Have ye mombled?" – he responds, "Yea, I have said my divine service."[31] Having identified Latin worship as opaque, concealed, essentially meaningless "mumbling," the dialogue then moves on to cover a wide range of contemporary hot-button issues: papal and royal supremacy, popular access to Scripture, spiritual illumination, prayer to saints, the value of tradition, the role of good works, and so forth. Throughout, the lowly shoemaker dominates the argument with his compendious knowledge of the vernacular Bible (at one point driving the parson to an exasperated aside: "Howe do these horeson Lutheryans rejoice and laughe in theyr fyst, when they can fynde some sayings out of the Scripture, they trouble and vexe one therwith, withoute ceasyng"[32]), ignoring the parson's recommendations that he attend to his work and family rather than spend time "meddl[ing] with the Scripture." At times, the clerical/lay hierarchy the parson invokes mutates into a purely social conception of class; he asks at one point why

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[28] Cranmer, *Letters*, 121.
[29] This expansiveness would be largely revoked in the 1543 Act for the Advancement of True Religion, which re-forbade Bible-reading among women and the lower classes.
[30] STC 21537.5; edited in *An Edition of Three Tudor Dialogues* by D. A. Spurgeon. Scoloker's tract is itself a translation of a 1524 Lutheran dialogue by Hans Sachs (Ibid., xxiv).
[31] Ibid., 79.   [32] Ibid., 85–6.

so few great lords follow Luther, but rather "onely a heape of rude and unlearned people."[33] The shoemaker defuses this by recalling the common quality of Christ's followers, and his joy that God had revealed his truth not to the great but to the "lyttel flocke." Eventually the shoemaker leaves, clearly victorious; the parson's servant marvels "that the laye people are so learned";[34] and the parson is left longing for the day when papal authority will be reasserted and the pyres relit. The dialogue as a whole asserts the superiority of the vernacular Bible, and the authority that reading it confers upon individuals regardless of rank, over the ignorant, unscriptural (the parson has to instruct his maid to "swepe of[f] the dust and cobwebbes" from his Bible), restrictive, reactionary, and violent authority of the institutional Church. It destabilizes both social and religious hierarchies by trumping them with a radically individual truth, an authority given to all members of the "lyttel flocke." This tract, which affirms the royal supremacy among a constellation of standard Lutheran beliefs – a Lutheranism which had acquired full state sanction only recently with the accession of Edward VI, and which was itself already being left behind by progressive evangelicals – also voices the egalitarianism implicit in Protestant theology.

Scoloker's *Dysputatyon*, which opens with its criticism of Latin worship as "mumbling," appeared in print at a time (1548) when the Latin service was still officially the norm. It situates itself in the midst of intense doctrinal and liturgical flux – it is exactly contemporaneous with the trial-balloon *Order of the Communion* – a battleground of religious belief and practice in which the conservative Latin forms still held sway. It was in this same context, and this same year, that Archbishop Cranmer undertook his official overhaul of the liturgy of English Christianity.

Like Scoloker's dialogue, and with far greater cultural significance, the Book of Common Prayer positions itself at the intersection of vernacular Scripture and worship. One of the cardinal features of the new liturgy was its restoration of Scripture to a central place in worship. Whereas the scriptural continuity of medieval worship had been frequently interrupted by saints' days and other festivals, the new Calendar reduced these drastically and provided for a steady and complete cycle of Bible-reading in worship: under the new order, the Psalter was read completely through every month, the New Testament (not including the Apocalypse) three times a year, and the Old Testament once a year. This renewed focus on Scripture is the central concern of Cranmer's Preface, where he asserts its origin with the "auncient fathers" of the Church, and its medieval contamination by "uncertein

stories, Lege*n*des, Respondes, Verses, vaine repeticions, Commemoracions, and Synodalles" (3), by which the Word had been gradually displaced and neglected. Now, however, the Church of England has the advantage of

an ordre for praier (as touchyng the readyng of holy scripture) muche agreable to the mynde and purpose of the olde fathers, and a greate deale more profitable and commodious, than that whiche of late was used. It is more profitable, because here are left out many thynges, whereof some be untrue, some uncertein, some vain and supersticious: and is ordeyned nothyng to be read, but the very pure worde of God, the holy scriptures, or that whiche is evidently grounded upon the same . . . (4)

The new English service is (not inaccurately) presented as a purgation of traditional material, and a restoration of a regular diet of Bible-reading; Scripture and service are deliberately linked more clearly and consistently in the new order.

The grounds of this strengthened link are closely tied to the new use of the vernacular: Protestant worship is in a fundamental sense the delivery of the Word to the people, and the restoration of the Word to centrality would make little sense if it didn't entail a more extensive reception. The Preface asserts that the scripturality of patristic worship "was not ordeyned, but of a good purpose, and for a great advauncement of godlines" (3), and Cranmer gives two sets of reasons why this was so. First, it stirs up the clergy to godliness, and enables them to exhort others in wholesome doctrine and to refute heresy effectively; this rationale seems quite in keeping with contemporary conservatism (the Devon rebels demanded the re-restriction of Scripture to Latin precisely so that the clergy could accomplish these tasks more effectively). The second set of reasons, however, affirms something very different, and changes the entire tenor of scriptural access: "And further, that the people (by daily hearyng of holy scripture read in the Churche) should continuallye profite more and more in the knowledge of God, and bee the more inflamed with the love of his true religion." The "knowledge of God" is not something institutionally possessed, but individually pursued, a limitless horizon of faith to be searched out through individual contact with the Word of God. The institutional role of the Church as mediator or interpreter is effaced here, displaced by the biblical text, and the "profit" to be had from this textual exchange accrues directly to "the people."

"Or that whiche is evidently grounded upon the same": of course, the English Church was still the venue through which most people encountered the Scripture, and it maintained its prerogative of defining the boundaries of [il]legitimate interpretation. In this instance, this prerogative, and the

unifying claim to truth which authenticates the entire liturgy (and Church), is presented rhetorically as a non-decision – a simple presentation of the obvious. But it also makes these claims matters of evidence and discernment; all is judged in relation to the foundational truth of the Bible. The primary force of "evidently," which suggests a manifest and incontestable truth, does not wholly exclude its secondary meaning, and this second sense implicitly challenges the religious subject to weigh and judge evidence, to make critical distinctions in pursuit of salvation. (Indeed, this evaluative gap between Scripture and service would prove to be the space in which decades of nonconformist critique took place.)

Consider, for example, what a typical Elizabethan parishioner would experience on a mandatory Sunday morning in church. Morning Prayer begins with penitential sentences from Scripture. Then, after a general confession, absolution, and the Lord's Prayer, Psalm 95 is "said or sung," sometimes antiphonally, followed by the Psalms appointed for the day (Targoff contends that such psalmody was a formative influence on the conception of a lyric voice suitable for personal and collective expression).[35] Then is read, "distinctly with a loud voice," identified by book and chapter, and without exposition, the day's Old Testament lesson, followed by a canticle; then the New Testament lesson and another canticle or psalm; then the Apostle's Creed, responsories, and collects. Then follow the collective, responsive prayers of the Litany. The Communion service proper begins with an opening prayer and responsive Ten Commandments, followed by two collects, an epistle reading, a gospel reading, the Nicene Creed, a sermon or homily, more scriptural sentences, the offering, and a prayer for the church militant. Then, if there were "a good number" of communicants available, the service would proceed to the sacrament, which I will discuss below; if not, and usually, the congregation is dismissed after one or more collects. One cannot help but notice how deeply and constantly common prayer is saturated with Scripture, virtually all of it read but not explained,[36] laid out for the aural consumption (and inevitably the interpretation) of the assembled but individual worshipers. In this framework, even the sermon or homily, while implicitly an authoritative exposition of the Word, must have been open to some degree of scrutiny, to evaluative comparison with both the biblical text and one's reading of it. In short, Sunday mornings were ideally filled with hours of critical, individual interpretive experience.

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[35] *Common Prayer*, ch. 3.
[36] See ibid., ch. 2, for an interesting discussion of nonconformist objections to this sort of "bare reading," both scriptural and liturgical.

All of this, of course, while it takes place in a communal setting, implies individual comprehension of the Word. And the vernacularizing rhetoric in the Prayerbook consistently stresses the edification, understanding, and illumination – categories only truly meaningful on the individual level – that only the vernacular communication with God can provide.

And moreover, whereas s. Paule[37] would have suche language spoken to the people in the churche, as they mighte understande and have profite by hearyng the same; the service in this Church of England (these many yeares) hath been read in Latin to the people, whiche they understoode not; so that they have heard with theyr eares onely; and their hartes, spirite, and minde, have not been edified thereby . . . [This liturgy makes available the pure Word] in suche a language and ordre, as is moste easy and plain for the understandyng, bothe of the readers and hearers. (3–4)

Scripture and service both depend on "easy and plain" comprehensibility – a logic utterly antithetical to the experience of contemporary Catholicism – to accomplish their common goal of individual spiritual enlightenment through direct and edifying contact with the divine Word.

Cranmer's casual reference to the understanding "bothe of the readers and hearers" is doubly significant. First, it invokes the newly inclusive community of clergy and laity, performers and audience, now coequals in the act of worship. Second, and equally important, it suggests two subsets of the laity: the literate and the illiterate. Much has been made, both then and now, of the advent and availability of printed English Bibles, and rightly so. But real, constructive access to the printed Word was of course limited to the literate – a distinct minority in mid-Tudor England.[38] It was the Prayerbook, and the programmatic structures of worship it created, which made possible for *everyone* – uneducated "hearers" as well as "readers" – genuine access to the entire Bible via its systematic oral transmission in the vernacular. The "knowledge of God" through the Scriptures was no longer

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[37] See e.g. I Corinthians 14 – Paul's instructions on speaking in unknown languages – which seems highly appropriate to this discussion: "[H]e that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him . . . Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me . . . [i]n the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue" (vv. 2, 11, 19 [King James Version]). Linguistic difference in worship is figured as obfuscation, mystification, and division, while a common language brings understanding and edification. As the 24th of the 39 Articles puts it, "It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the Primitive Church, to have publick Prayer in the Church, or to minister the Sacraments in a tongue not understood of the people."

[38] David Cressy (*Literacy and the Social Order*, 176–7) estimates midcentury literacy rates at only 5 percent for women and 20 percent for men.

reserved for the clergy, nor the bilingual, nor the literate; it was, as Cranmer had promised in 1540 but was only now fully delivering, the right and the obligation of "all manner of persons."

The emphasis on interpretation as a highly personal and active interface with the Word is displayed in the collect for the second Sunday of Advent.

Blessed lord, which hast caused all holy Scriptures to bee written for our learnyng; graunte us that we maye in suche wise heare them, read, marke, learne, and inwardly digeste them; that by pacience, and coumfort of thy holy woorde, we may embrace, and ever holde fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast geven us in our saviour Jesus Christe. (34)

The essential process of learning from the Bible is figured as an intensely subjective "inward" encounter from which one derives life-sustaining nourishment – a vigorous process of receiving, noting, mastering, and finally internalizing the truth contained therein. Cranmer's focus in this collect is illuminating. Typically, his collects tie together the central ideas in the day's proper readings. For this day, Psalm 120 is a despairing call to God from one surrounded by enemies; Romans 15 focuses on Gospel truth as a unifying force; and Luke 21 contrasts Christ's apocalyptic vision with an assertion of the permanence of the Word. But these ideas exist only as traces in the collect (the Word as comfort, unity in the ambiguous syntax of "we may embrace," and the final permanence in Christ through the Word), and Cranmer focuses instead on one sentence of St. Paul's to emphasize above all the importance of the subjective task of interpreting Scripture. While one might reasonably expect him to carry through to Paul's larger point of unity and consensus – "all agreeyng together" – this is visible only in the plural pronouns. Furthermore, if we look at the sequence of necessary interpretive activities (*hear/read/mark/learn/inwardly digest*) only the first readily admits a collective sense; the next few are increasingly solitary, and by the time we get to inward digestion, the interiority of the act is so complete that no coercion or collaboration is conceivable. This collect, though it encompasses a range of interpretive possibilities, emphasizes the active individuality of the encounter with the divine Word, even when that encounter takes place in a communal worship service. It thus becomes an unusually direct metacommentary on the day's proper readings (and by extension the entire Bible) and what one does with them.

This point is further made in the collect for Whitsunday (Pentecost), a service considered in the previous chapter as an important instance of self-validating linguistic nationalism. Here, the point of vernacular contact is not the biblical text but direct inspiration.

God, whiche as upon this daye haste taughte the heartes of thy faithful people, by the sending to them the lyght of thy holy spirite; graunte us by the same spirite to have a right judgement in al thinges, and evermore to rejoyce in hys holy coumforte; through the merites of Christ Jesus our saviour; who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unitie of the same spirite, one God, worlde without ende. (131)

A close reading of this prayer suggests that the service as a whole is self-validating in ways that go beyond a larger sense of linguistic and national autonomy. The first set of clauses focuses on the arrival of the Holy Spirit on the first Pentecost – a spiritual advent inseparable from its manifestation in the cloven tongues of fire, and the subsequent enlivening of vernacular tongues in the mouths of the Apostles. It also treats this singular event as paradigmatic for a continuing historical *process* of education and illumination that occurs internally, in the plural, private hearts of the faithful. The coming of the Spirit is thus a multiplied and repeated act of vernacular teaching and learning. The second cluster, the business of which is the active petitioning, raises the stakes somewhat: it asks, as a further and resulting gift of that Spirit (and language), for "right judgement in al thinges." This request for broad and implicitly individual powers of evaluation and discernment suggests a heightened sense of interiorized authority constituted by spiritual enlightenment in comprehensible language. The remainder of the collect justifies the request through Christ and readdresses it to the Trinity.

   In general, then, the logic of the collect, which is structurally similar to that of the second Sunday in Advent, runs thus: the work of the Spirit, both as event and as process, operates in (and inseparably from) the vernacular; this enlightenment generates the further possibility of responsible individual wisdom in religious matters; this in turn, with the grace of Christ, enables subjects to address and embrace the divine. As I argued in the previous chapter, the Pentecost service asserts that vernacular religious expression is not merely viable but mandatory for the various nations. Here we can see that the ultimate basis for this necessity is the individual, illuminated and imbued with subjective legitimacy through the historical workings of the Spirit in language. Although the "us" may imply a corporate discernment of truth (in conjunction with the discrete pursuits of particular subjects), even this activity seems inescapably consensual in nature – an ideal convergence of individual understandings of truth rather than an institutionally defined norm. The Prayerbook had its debut on this auspicious day in 1549, and this service announces a self-authorizing new enhancement through the vernacular of both the English nation and the English individual.

The Prayerbook's vernacularism is thus fundamentally linked to the Protestant theological insistence on the participation and comprehension of individual subjects. The general significance of this correlation may be underscored with a final observation. We saw in Scoloker's *Dysputatyon* that traditional Latin worship was derogated by some as meaningless "mumbling," and in the Prayerbook that the clergy were commanded to enunciate the English service "distinctely." After the introduction of the Book of Common Prayer, when the linguistic barrier was removed from English worship, mumbling actually seems to have become a mode of conservative clerical resistance to the new order. With English now mandatory, conservative clergymen did what they could to preserve the sacred separateness of the old service, and mumbling was a way to keep the linguistic curtain drawn shut. Bucer wrote to Calvin that "many of the parochial clergy so recite and administer the service, that the people have no more understanding of the mysteries of Christ, than if the Latin instead of the vulgar tongue were still in use."[39] Hooper, writing to Bullinger, was characteristically more blunt: "And that popery may not be lost, the mass-priests, although they are compelled to discontinue the use of the Latin language, yet most carefully observe the same tone and manner of chanting to which they were heretofore accustomed in the papacy. God knows to what perils and anxieties we are exposed by reason of men of this kind."[40] Deliberate obfuscation functions as conservative resistance, a reassertion of sacred difference; once again, as in Duffy's "decent obscurity" of Latin, theology proves itself to be deeply bound up in language, and language just as deeply bound up in theology. The differing logics of Catholic and Protestant, Latin and English, worship play out into – or perhaps are derived from – differing views of signification: one opaque and self-enclosed, the other transparently referential; one, therefore, which in a sense resisted reading, while the other demanded it; one, finally, which enhanced institutional authority, while the other enhanced the authority and role of the individual. The Protestant shift to the vernacular had momentous implications in its appeal to the newly significant masses of English individuals.

READING THE EUCHARIST IN THE BCP

A similar dissemination of authority can be seen in an extended look at a sequence of liturgical versions of the Eucharist, traditionally the highest and purest moment of human contact with the divine. Like the process

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[39] Robinson, *Original Letters*, 547.   [40] Ibid., 72.

of vernacularization, these successive revisions (Latin source, 1548 Communion, and 1549, 1552, and 1559 BCP services) of the role, status, and operational mode of the Eucharist suggest a significant redistribution of religious authority. They also suggest, as I will eventually argue, an important and related link to modes of representation and hermeneutics: Cranmer argues in "Of Ceremonies" that Christianity is not a (by implication Roman Catholic) "bondage of the figure," but rather a public order based on "notable and speciall significacion," aimed ultimately at individual edification and remembrance. The Prayerbook's revisions instructively embody this revaluation of figurality and interpretation.

I want to state at the outset that my aim in the following discussion is *not* to read the Prayerbook communion as expressive of a precise theology; this has been done exhaustively and inconclusively by centuries of theologians, starting with Gardiner, Bucer, and Cranmer himself in 1549–51, and I have no illusions (or desires) about resolving such a tangled set of questions. In fact, I think that these sorts of questions, while understandable and perhaps inevitable, might be entirely inappropriate to the Book of Common Prayer, which was from the start designed to elide theological difference, to nullify controversy, and to create the broadest possible swath of acceptable belief. Theology, for the most part, divides through specificity by articulating differences of belief; this liturgy unites through ambiguity in an effort to bring diverse people together in the same Church. While the Church of England's notorious theological muddiness is most often mentioned to its discredit, one might say that this is the very secret of its historical success. In this sense, Stephen Gardiner may have understood the 1549 liturgy better than Cranmer himself when he infuriated the Archbishop by perversely demonstrating its theological flexibility – thus provoking the one Prayerbook (1552) that, abortively, staked itself on clarity rather than ambiguity.

I therefore have little interest in whether a certain edition can be exactly correlated with the doctrines of Luther or Calvin or Zwingli or Beza or Melanchthon or Oecolampadius. But to disavow the pursuit of theological precision here does not, of course, mean that theology is irrelevant; on the contrary, liturgy is where theology and practice intersect, and a particular set of theologically driven shifts is discernible, significant, and indeed the subject of this chapter. To this end, a brief survey of contemporary theology will provide a useful framework for this treatment. The complicated world of midcentury sacramental theology may for clarity's sake be condensed into four main points of view.[41] Since the fourth Lateran Council in 1215, Roman

[41] As is done e.g. in Davies, *Worship and Theology*, 76–85.

Catholic dogma had held that the unseen substance of the eucharistic bread and wine were transformed into the actual body and blood of Christ by the act of consecration.[42] This doctrine of transubstantiation upheld the literal sense of Christ's words at the Last Supper in the Vulgate, "Hoc est enim corpus meum" or "this is indeed my body." The second option was that of Luther, who also tried to maintain the literal sense of the dominical words of institution; Lutheran consubstantiation or "Real Presence" held that the substance of the elements is not wholly transformed, but rather coexists with the corporeal presence of Christ. Again, Christ's body, and the divine grace that goes with it, inheres physically in the elements. Zwingli's radical third option discarded this belief as irrational and idolatrous, and interpreted Christ's words figuratively (in his concise equation, *est = significat*).[43] He maintained that the Eucharist contains no divine presence at all, and is rather a strictly memorial act of thanksgiving, a remembering of Christ's sacrifice which reinvigorates the individual and communal responses of faith; Zwinglian memorialism has been disparagingly summed up as a solipsistic doctrine of "Real Absence." The fourth and final version of eucharistic theology developed in an effort to bridge the chasm between Luther and Zwingli, and to provide Protestantism with a unifying doctrine which affirmed the divine value of the sacrament without resorting to the sometimes baffling logic of Lutheran Real Presence. This doctrine, eventually held by Calvin, Bucer, Melanchthon, and Bullinger, maintained that divine grace is *spiritually* (not corporeally) given by the elements *when they are consumed in faith*. Zwinglianism has been accused of stripping the Eucharist of all spiritual significance; Lutheranism has been accused of synthesizing the difficulties of conservative and radical views without their corresponding advantages; the compromise of "spiritual presence" or Virtualism combined a heightened view of the sacrament with a relatively reasonable explanation.

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[42] See Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, for a fascinating account of medieval eucharistic theology, which prior to 1215 is a tangled web indeed. Rubin shows that the dogma of transubstantiation is not a transhistorical given of Catholicism, but rather developed out of pastoral and political contingency; conversely, Reformed views of the sacrament have an extensive prehistory as well.

[43] Brooks, *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine*, 90. Luther – not to mention the Catholics – was horrified by the hermeneutic instability this reading threatened to create: "For if we permit such violence to be done in one passage, that without any basis in Scripture a person can say the word 'is' means the same as the word 'signifies,' then it would be impossible to stop it in any other passage. The entire Scripture would be nullified" (quoted in Schwarz, *Divine Communication*, 119). But Luther's commitment to literal meaning also generates great pathos; at the Marburg Colloquy in 1529, there is a palpable sense of wistfulness as he responds to Swiss readings of the sacrament. "We would like to accept your view, but we cannot . . . Those words – 'This is my body' – hold me captive" (Ziegler, *Great Debates*, 78).

If Luther's anguish at Marburg shows him trapped between the literal and figural readings of the dominical words, Calvinist theology wrestles fascinatingly with what "figural reading" might *mean*. Calvin decisively rejects as superstitious idolatry the "local presence" of Christ (*localis praesentiae imaginatio*) claimed in Catholic and Lutheran theology. But he also resisted the evacuated signs of what, in Coverdale's translation of *De Coena Domini*, he calls the "bare and simple figure" of the Zwinglian sacrament.[44] For Calvin, these divinely ordained signs do not just remind us of God's covenant promises; they are a spiritual fulfillment of them, since God does not tease us with empty promises, and His words are truth itself. And thus "the inward substance of the sacrament is annexed to the visible signs," and "the Lord doth in very deed give the same thing that he doth represent."[45] God's signs, unlike unstable human signs, do not deceive or defer, and they are not bare or empty; they are full and fulfilling. But they are signs nonetheless, and Calvin persistently discusses them in figural and memorial terms. In Article 22 of the 1549 *Consensus Tigurinus* which declared common ground between the churches of Geneva and Zurich, he insists that the elements are signs and representations – "we hold it out of controversy that [Christ's words] are to be taken figuratively" – not infused with Christ and his virtue, but fulfillingly annexed unto them. Thus the Calvinist sacrament is not composed of "bare signs" that generate spiritual benefit entirely through human intellectual process; rather, when touched by grace and performed in faith, that process enables the reception of, and participation in, Christ's mystical body. Regarding the elements as signs enables them to be, as Calvin and so many others longed for, something infinitely more.

The four positions of this schema can be arranged into a rough theological continuum.

Roman Catholic	Lutheran	Calvinist et al.	Zwinglian
Transubstantiation	Real Presence	Spiritual Presence	Memorialism
(objective)	– spiritual locus –		(subjective)
(elements)	– focus –		(recipients)

This spectrum moves from conservative to radical. The further left, the greater and more corporeal the divine immanence claimed in the Eucharist; the further right, the less this presence is believed to inhere in the elements. The three options on the right present a range of Protestant theology, and

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[44] The Elizabethan homily on the Sacrament similarly insists that "in the Supper of the Lord, there is no vaine Ceremonie, no bare signe, no vntrue figure of a thing absent."

[45] *De Coena Domini*, Coverdale trans. (Coverdale, *Remains*, 441, 461).

again, the Virtualist position emerged as a compromise between the other two. Note also, though, that the continuum divides even more fundamentally in half: both transubstantiation and Real Presence maintain a direct physical presence in the bread and wine, while the other two hold that the presence is either spiritual and conditional (depending on the disposition of the recipient) or strictly symbolic. While, again, I will not attempt to pin the BCP down precisely on this theological schema, what follows will trace a general trajectory of the liturgy within it – a shift with important implications and consequences.

The Mass of Sarum Use, which immediately preceded the English liturgy, of course expressed the Roman Catholic orthodoxy. Functioning primarily as a religious spectacle of sacred difference, it was celebrated primarily by the clergy; lay participation was inessential, rare (once annually for most people, at Easter),[46] and then only in one kind. The climax of the Mass came in the Canon, the eucharistic prayers of intercession, consecration, and oblation which achieved the repeated miracle of transmuting bread and wine into God himself. The central request of this prayer asks God that "ut nobis cor✠pus et san✠guis fiat dilectissimi filii tui domini nostri iesu xp̄i" – that the bread and wine "be *made* unto us the body and blood of thy most beloved son, our lord Jesus Christ."[47] The priestly crossings signal the invocation of the divine in the elements – a request immediately accomplished in the dominical words of Institution (*hoc est enim corpus meum* – "this is indeed my body"), during which the actual transformation was believed to take place. The power of this service lay in its claims to literal, physical divine presence, invoked by the clergy and observed by the congregation, and founded on claims of objective presence that depended not on the disposition of priest or communicant, but on the sacral power of the Church; this was, however, a presence to which the laity had very limited access in terms of communication (both linguistic and sacramental), participation, or active comprehension – at least as these terms came to be understood in the wake of the Reformation.[48]

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[46] Cuming, *History* (1st edn), 21, asserts that lay participation would normally take place only at Easter – a practice that would persist quite stubbornly among the laity after the Reformation. But he also notes (64) that none of the Catholic Missals contain words of administration to the laity; indeed, the Mass could and often did take place perfectly well without any lay presence whatsoever.

[47] Brightman, *English Rite*, II.692; my translation.

[48] Dix contends (*Shape*, 618) that Latin "excluded the great mass of the people from intelligent participation in the church services," but Duffy, of course, among others, disputes this (see note 25). What's open to dispute is not whether Catholic worshippers experienced communication with God, liturgical participation, or comprehension – presumably many or most of them did – but rather the precise differences in what communication, participation, and comprehension *mean* in Catholic and Protestant contexts. And they do mean different things.

Cranmer's *Order of the Communion* (1548) provided a brief English insertion for the Sarum Mass. While generally consistent with the Catholic Mass, this form does indicate the beginnings of a substantial shift in sacramental emphasis. Most readily apparent is its movement toward inclusivity: not only did its language instantly integrate the congregation into what was going on, but it also extended the sacramental franchise. The proclamation printed as a preface to the *Order* specifies that the sacrament "should from thenceforth be commonly delivered and ministered unto all persons" and "under both kinds,"[49] thereby suggesting that neither the wine nor the sacrament itself should be regarded as the exclusive domain of the clergy. The exhortation, invitation, and confession, though all pronounced by the priest (as is everything; the people are allowed only the service-closing consent of "Amen"), are directed at the clearing of individual conscience toward worthy participation in the sacrament: "Judge therefore yourselves (brethren) that ye be not judged of the Lord."[50] But the Prayer of Humble Access suggests a quite traditional theology, asking God to grant the participants "so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, in these holy Mysteries, that we may continually dwell in him, and he in us, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood."[51] The regenerative sacramental action appears to be performed by real divine flesh and blood in the elements, and the importance of a clear conscience lies in the danger of taking this presence too lightly. Finally, this conservative theology is expressed in the straightforward literalism of the words of administration: "The body [blood] of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given [shed] for thee, preserve thy body [soul] unto everlasting life."[52] The divine immanence is still so direct that the elements have traditionally distinct functions, body preserving body, blood preserving soul. On the whole, the *Order* maintains a traditional element-based sacramental theology, while at the same time moving toward inclusion and individual comprehension.

The 1548 *Order* was almost entirely integrated into the Communion service in the first Book of Common Prayer, which followed it barely a year later. This 1549 service maintains a certain conservative ambiguity, and much of the structure of its Catholic predecessors, while advancing the development begun in the earlier form. To begin with, the entire service is of course now in English – an English rubrically commanded to be

enunciated "playnly and distinctly" (221). This movement toward inclusiv-
ity is further emphasized by one of the closing rubrics, which makes lay
involvement a sacramental prerequisite by directing that "there shalbe no
celebracion of the Lordes supper, except there be some to communicate
with the Priest" (229). The ascendancy of the clergy is further reduced
through a changed emphasis on the nature of the Eucharist. The medieval
Church had taught that the Mass, in reproducing the body and blood of
Christ, also reproduced his sacrifice; the significance of the Mass thus rested
in large part in its status as a propitiatory sacrifice, a clerical reenactment of
the Crucifixion, which conferred direct spiritual benefit. The BCP's prayer
of consecration specifically attacks this notion, asserting the sacrament to
be a "perpetuall memory" of Christ's "one oblacion once offered" (222).
And in the next section of the Canon, the rhetoric of sacrifice is radically
altered: it petitions God to "accepte this our Sacrifice of praise and thankes
gevyng," and offers "our selfe, oure soules, and bodies, to be a reasonable,
holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee" (223). The idea of sacramental sacrifice
as a mystical placatory offering is thus replaced with a dual focus on *histor-
ical* remembrance and *personal* response. Sacrifice becomes incarnate not
in a summoned, recreated Christ but in the bodies, minds, and spirits of
his worshippers, and this is not an inherently priestly activity but a deeply
personal one.

This attenuation of sacerdotal and institutional significance is further
reflected in the words of absolution pronounced between the Canon and
the administration. Even the 1548 *Order* had imparted this absolution in
the name of "Our blessed Lord, who hath left power to his church, to
absolve penitent sinners from their sins";[53] in contrast, the 1549 service
offers forgiveness in the name of "Almightie God, our heavenly father,
who of his great mercie hath promysed forgevenesse of synnes to all them,
which with hartye repentaunce and true fayth, turne unto him" (224). The
gracious effects of the sacrament are not accomplished institutionally, but
rather in the context of direct individual interaction with the divine. Even
in the preparatory exhortation, as John N. King notes, "the sole test of
the individual acknowledgement of sin that each parishioner contributes
to the general confession prior to communion is his inner self-knowledge:
'. . . and every man to be satisfied with his owne conscience, not judgyng
other mennes myndes or consciences.'"[54]

There is consequently a sense of demystification and individualization
in the 1549 service. I say "a sense" because, as history has demonstrated,

[53] Ibid., 7.   [54] *English Reformation Literature*, 138.

it is possible to read the doctrinal ambiguities of this service in entirely traditional ways. Cranmer's conservative archrival Stephen Gardiner commended the Prayerbook's eucharistic doctrine as "not distant from the Catholic faith," and demonstrated the possibility of producing Catholic readings of the new liturgy.[55] On the other end of the spectrum, but making essentially the same point, radical John Hooper expressed outrage over the "manifestly impious" order, insisting that unless its residual popery was removed, "I neither can nor will communicate with the Church in the administration of the Supper."[56]

The source of much of this contention can be found in the ambivalence of the words of consecration and administration. The Canon's prayer of consecration, while it downplays the propitiatory character of the Eucharist, also shifts its focus to an equivocal middle ground. After recalling Christ's sacrifice, its Invocation asks God to "with thy holy spirite and worde, vouchsafe to bl✠esse and sanc✠tifie these thy gyftes, and creatures of bread and wyne, that they maie be unto us the bodye and bloude of thy moste derely beloved sonne Jesus Christe" (222). Several changes seem to be at work here. First, the Invocation is again punctuated by priestly crossings that mark moments of high sacredness and imply divine intervention. But here, in contrast to Sarum (where they are performed at "corpus" and "sanguis"), they highlight an *activity* ("blesse and sanctifie") rather than the elements themselves. The consecration is focused on the action of the Holy Spirit (and, significantly, the "worde") rather than on soon-to-be-transformed bread and wine. Second, the ontological status of the elements, toward which this activity is directed, is perhaps subtly different. Sarum's "fiat" ("be made") expresses its theology of sacred transformation of elements into godhead; 1549's "that they maie *be unto us*" may simply translate this into English. It may, however, suggest something different: not transubstantiation, but trope – a *metaphorical* (and thus interpretive) understanding of the elements as the body and blood of Christ.[57] For this *be* evades the transformative burden of *be made*. Instead, it asserts an identity between two objects which are ordinarily understood to be different. In

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[55] Cuming, *History*, 96. Gardiner's perverse endorsement of the BCP apparently had its intended effect of stinging Cranmer deeply; all of the things he praised were changed in 1552. Gardiner's points are summarized in Brightman, *English Rite*, 1.cxlv. For a fuller account of the Cranmer – Gardiner controversy over the 1549 Eucharist, see P. N. Brooks, *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of the Eucharist*, 137–56.

[56] Robinson, *Original Letters*, 79.

[57] The significance of this difference is supported by Davies's report (*Worship and Theology*, 190) that Cranmer "hotly rejected" Bishop Thirlby's more correct emendation of the phrase to "be made unto us."

other words, it makes a metaphorical statement of being, a conceptual synthesis which is performed by the subjective mind. The internalization of this figural sacrament is thus a necessarily interpretive act; though it takes place in a communal context, it ultimately requires a highly individual mode of understanding the elements as metaphors whose effectuality is dependent on faithful personal reading.

Admittedly, the case for this reading is neither entirely clear nor exclusive (is it possible to hear the echo of "maybe" in the consecration?). The service as a whole follows its traditional models quite closely, and both the Prayer of Humble Access and the words of administration are nearly identical to those of the conservative 1548 *Order* (although there is a slight loosening of the direct activity of the elements, each of which is now said to preserve both body and soul rather than the former body–body and blood–soul pairings). Although the celebrant is rubrically forbidden to elevate or show them for adoration, the consecrated elements are announced to the communicants as the body and blood of Christ. A final symbolic point is made in the very last instructional rubric, which acknowledges the danger that people might conceal and carry off the sacrament of the body for the purpose of "diversely abus[ing] it to supersticion and wickednes." To prevent this, "it is thought convenient the people commo*n*ly receive the Sacrame*n*t of Christes body, in their mouthes, at the Priestes hande" (230). The attention given to this policing certainly suggests a high regard for the elements in and of themselves, not only among the "superstitious" but among the church hierarchy as well. And the solution has symbolic significance: the people can't be uniformly trusted to feed themselves, so they must be directly fed by the clergy to avoid misappropriation of the sacrament.

Overall, the 1549 Book of Common Prayer provides an ambivalent articulation of eucharistic theology, and this ambiguity is reflected in the varied assessments of both contemporary and modern readers.[58] In the years between then and now, some have thought this vagueness deliberate, others accidental; some a deceptive half-measure, others an example of sensible incremental reform; some a result of its committee production, others a reflection of Cranmer's own lack of clarity. Speculating on these questions is not really the purpose of the present study. It is important to note, however, the mediatory character of the 1549 BCP, both historically and within the theological spectrum of the moment. Its ambiguity provides an equivocal

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[58] For brief surveys of the historical range of interpretation, see (and follow the footnotes of) Davies, *Worship and Theology*, 178–94; Brooks, *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine*, 51–60.

midpoint between Protestant and Catholic, and between the Latin liturgy it replaced and the more radical liturgy that would soon follow.[59] The 1549 service is perhaps best understood as an essentially traditional form with significant evangelical alterations (this explains why it was so liable to attack from both sides); in its notorious murkiness, the clear teachings of received dogma are obscured, and traditional doctrine begins to be reconceived and restructured. Work began at once on its successor,[60] which would emerge from ambivalence with a clarified and unmistakably Reformed doctrine.

The 1552 Communion service was subjected to the most extensive revision of all the Prayerbook services.[61] The primary goal was to clear up the doctrinal vagueness which had been attacked by those on the left and exploited by those on the right – most importantly, the removal of all traces of transubstantiation and propitiatory sacrifice. To this end, the Canon was broken up and dispersed, and the entire service rearranged, so as to allow the administration to follow the consecration immediately without any hint of adoration of the elements. Intertwined with this, and more directly to my point, is a further enhanced emphasis on the memorial nature of the sacrament and on the role of the individual participant. The end result is a service that is lean, simple, and doctrinally clear,[62] the focus of which is decisively transferred from the elements themselves to the people who partake in them.

The 1552 service begins with a recitation of the Ten Commandments, and penitential congregational responses to each. The Law serves, in Pauline fashion, as a divine backdrop against which individual sin and failure are measured; in this context, the sacrament signifies reconciliation with God through faith in Christ's sacrifice. This stress on salvific faith is reinforced, after the collects and Bible lessons, with the recitation of the Nicene Creed and its repeated "I believe"s. While the service is certainly a *synaxis* or coming-together of the faithful, its opening moments set a strongly individual tone of scriptural despair and regeneration through faith. The

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[59] Cuming concludes that this was a deliberate strategy: "It is most probable that Cranmer did not intend the 1549 Canon to express exclusively any one doctrinal position . . . For the moment, the more doctrinal positions that could be read out of it, the better" (*History*, 80, 81).

[60] Ibid., 101.

[61] For a fuller treatment than I will undertake here, see Cuming, *History*, ch. 5; Davies, *Worship and Theology*, 201–10; Brightman, *English Rite*, 1.cxlii–clxv; MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, ch. 11.

[62] At least insofar as it definitively rejects traditional doctrine. Arguing the precise theological location of the service (i.e. is it closer to Zwingli or Calvin or Oecolampadius or . . .) is not my concern here; on this cf. Cuming, *History*, 109–10; Brooks, *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of the Eucharist* (including Patrick Collinson's Foreword); Davies, *Worship and Theology*, 190–1, 207.

elements themselves are systematically downplayed with a number of small emendations: the "so Divine and holy" sacrament becomes "comfortable";[63] the "Alter" becomes a "Table"; the prayer of thanksgiving is purged of its reference to "receiv[ing] the most precious body and bloude of thy sonne Jesus Christe"; and the mention of "holy Misteries" is dropped from the Prayer of Humble Access (though not elsewhere).

Most importantly, though, and most clearly, the shift in emphasis can be seen in the words of consecration and administration, both of which now express a decisively Reformed doctrine and are incapable of a Catholic interpretation. The words of consecratory Invocation are now free of manual acts – as Bucer referred to them, "those little black crosses" – which might suggest a conjuration of divine presence. And they have been radically refocused: whereas 1549 had prayed that God would

with thy holy spirite and worde, vouchsafe to bl✠esse and sanc✠tifie these thy gyftes, and creatures of bread and wyne, that they maie be unto us the bodye and bloude of thy moste derely beloved sonne Jesus Christe[,]

the 1552 service asks God to

graunt that wee, receyving these thy creatures of bread and wyne, according to thy sonne our Savioure Jesus Christ's holy institucion, in remembraunce of his death and passion, maye be partakers of his most blessed body and blud. (389)

The ambiguous metaphoricity of the 1549 formula is refracted and reoriented here in what Dix notes amounts to a formula of non-consecration.[64] No peculiar ontological claims are made regarding the elements; although the faithful communicants "partake" of Christ's "body and bloud," what they "receive" are symbolically charged but objectively mundane "creatures of bread and wyne"; the sacrament as a whole is clearly identified as a holy institution of historical *remembrance* and not of transformation. If Catholic orthodoxy had concentrated the *mysterium fidei* on the quasi-magical event of transubstantiation, Reformed doctrine relocated this faith *historically*, in the past atonement of a divine Christ, of which the sacrament is a spiritually beneficial reminder; the repeated Catholic miracle of the advent and sacrifice of Christ, which ran in continuous circuits back over the original event, gave way to a more diachronic repetition of acts of memory. The chasm between God and the sacramental recipients was thus bridged not with theurgical making-present but with a subjective belief, sacramentally emblematized, about the relation of a past event to a present and personal situation. In short, mystery becomes history, and physical eating becomes

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[63] Brightman, *English Rite*, ii.654, 671.   [64] *Shape*, 664.

a memorial act which inspires and signifies spiritual participation without collapsing into it.

The significance of the individual in these memorial acts is clear in their liturgical expression, which highlights the differing logics of Catholic and Protestant worship. The Catholic ritual, with its focus on the properly veiled, ineffable divinity of God, was built on sacred mystery, separation, priestly power, awed observation; the Protestant, centered instead on personal engagement and intellectual access to the divine, was built on clarity, comprehension, inclusion, and participation. The very act of informed remembering implies a greatly enhanced interior authority beyond that required for adoration of the sacredly present. Consequently, the attention of the 1552 Invocation moves away from the elements and toward the participants. The immediate object of consecratory action is not the elements but "wee"; the spiritual benefits of the sacrament still lie in a divine transformation, but not of the bread and wine. Rather, the individual communicants themselves must be transformed through grace into remembering subjects with a properly historical religious faith; as the very syntax of the 1552 consecration suggests, receiving must be remembrance to enable true partaking of Christ. As Cranmer wrote elsewhere, "the marvellous alteration to an higher estate, nature, and condition, is chiefly and principally in the persons, and in the sacramental signs it is none otherwise but sacramentally and in signification."[65]

This relocation of the eucharistic action from transformed elements to transformed and remembering subjects is further affirmed and clarified in the words of administration. The 1549 words had announced the body and blood of Christ, and their saving powers, to the recipients. In contrast, the 1552 words refer to each element with only a single noncommittal pronoun;[66] the entire emphasis is on the thought, faith, and action of the communicating subject.

Take and eate this, in remembraunce that Christ dyed for thee, and feede on him in thy hearte by faythe, with thankesgeving.

Drinke this in remembraunce that Christ's bloude was shed for thee, and be thankefull. (389)

Remembrance, faith, and thanksgiving – all enjoined of each individual participant at the very moment of reception – replace divine immanence as the essence of the Eucharist. In the process, as Dix points out,

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[65] In his lengthy *Answer . . . unto a craftie and Sophisticall cavillation, devised by Stephen Gardiner* (Cranmer, *Lord's Supper*, 323).

[66] And in the rubrics, they are called simply the "bread" and the "cuppe."

since the passion is wholly in the past, the church now can only enter into it purely mentally, by *remembering* and imagining it. There is for them, therefore, no real sacrifice whatever in the eucharist. The external rite is at the most an acted memorial, *reminding* us of something no longer present . . . Even the external rite is no longer a *corporate* rite integral to the performance of the real eucharistic action, but a common preparation for it, designed only to prepare each communicant subjectively to perform it for himself . . . From being the action which creates the unity of the church as the Body of Christ, the eucharist has become precisely that which *breaks down the church into separate individuals*.[67]

The 1552 service as a whole thus propounds a subjectively oriented sacramental theology, focused on thoughtful individual participation in all aspects of the sacrament (although the ultimate focus is of course on divine grace). It closes with a series of significant rubrics which reinforce this. A pair of rubrics reaffirm the 1549 insistence on the importance of lay communication in any Eucharist; now, however, the requirements are upped from "some" to "a good noumbre," and a minimum of three communicants are necessary for celebration even in the smallest parishes. The sacrament simply will not take place as an isolated and mystical priestly rite. It is a celebration of individuals, both lay and clerical, coming together to be spiritually reinvigorated by symbolically remembering an atonement accomplished. Finally, the infamous "Black Rubric," inserted in the middle of the press run at the insistence of John Knox, closes the form with a parting blast at traditional theology: it specifies that the kneeling posture dictated by the liturgy is done for purposes of order and gratitude, and not out of any idolatrous regard for the elements or any "reall and essencial presence" therein (392–3).

The 1552 Book of Common Prayer had a short life under Edward and a quick death under Mary, though it was used and argued over by the Protestant exiles on the Continent. To the great disappointment of the more enthusiastic among them, Elizabeth did not opt to continue the aggressive reforms embodied in her half-brother's second liturgy. She did in fact adopt the 1552 Prayerbook as the basis for her own in 1559, with "two sentences only added in the delivery of the sacrament" as stated in her Act of Uniformity,[68] but these changes muted much of the Edwardian original's polemical and theological stridency. The doggedly Zwinglian "Black Rubric," which had

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[67] *Shape*, 623, 624, 671. Dix's confessed "distress" at what he sees as a profoundly contradictory, even anti-eucharistic liturgy is evident in his italics, though he also allows it as something of a masterpiece of liturgical craftsmanship, "the only effective attempt ever made to give liturgical expression to the doctrine of 'justification by faith alone'" (672). But this fragmentation, as Wall, Guibbory, and Targoff (and I) have argued, cannot be the whole story.

[68] Gee and Hardy *Documents*, 459.

never received parliamentary force in the first place, was dropped altogether, thus clearing the way for a broader range of eucharistic interpretation with regard to kneeling and presence. More importantly, the words of administration were revised in a very interesting way: by combining, verbatim, the very different formulae of 1549 and 1552.

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul into everlasting life: and take and eat this, in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving.

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul into everlasting life: and drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.[69]

By reintroducing the direct reference to body and blood as agents of sacramental grace, this certainly seems to undo the insistent memorialism of 1552; it can be read as a step back from Zwinglianism and a step toward the more conservative and sacramentally higher Calvinism that would come to dominate the Elizabethan Church. But looked at another way, this formulation does not dictate any specific theology, Calvinist or otherwise, so much as to reintroduce ambiguity into a form that had become excessively, restrictively clear. What sort of claim is being made about the body and blood – that they are somehow present in the elements, or that their sacrifice fifteen centuries ago is the object of eucharistic remembrance? What is their relationship to the consumption of "this," to remembrance, to thanksgiving? What, that is, is the relationship of this statement to this command, ambiguously conjoined in that copulative colon? No single, clear answer can be derived from this formulation, which admits a wide variety of potential understandings (ranging from quite traditional to very evangelical). In this way, the Elizabethan Prayerbook defuses the relative clarity of the 1552 liturgy, which had rather narrowly defined a range of interpretation even as it insisted on an essentially subjective and symbolic view of the sacrament, but it did not simply replace this definition with a "higher" one. Rather, it restored the latitude that 1552 had sought to expunge, thus emphasizing even more strongly the importance of the individual interpretive moment to the meaning of the sacrament.

In a dozen years, then, English Christianity underwent a substantial reorientation. The nation at worship moved from witnessing a transubstantiatory rite in a foreign language (1547), to a limited vernacular participation in that rite (1548), to a doctrinally ambiguous but inclusive and

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[69] Booty, *Book of Common Prayer*, 264.

fully English service (1549), to the forthright Protestantism and heightened subjective emphasis of the second Book of Common Prayer (1552), and finally, after the Marian retrenchment, to a sacrament whose meaning is individually inscribed upon its deliberate ambiguity (1559). The speed with which the Church of England traversed the continuum I outlined earlier is quite remarkable, particularly when one considers its cataclysmic inversion of beliefs and practices which had held sway in England for centuries.

This discursive shift – from an opaque, element-based, institutionally oriented sacramental theology to one based centrally on individual interpretive practice – is neatly expressed and symbolized in the actual modes of administration in these liturgical forms. In the Latin Mass, the central and sacred presence of God himself was distanced from the lay worshippers, who communicated very rarely, only in one kind, and with little or no integral significance to the service. The *Order* provided for universal communication in both kinds, while maintaining the traditional doctrines. The 1549 BCP muddied the theological waters, yet held a high enough view of the sacrament (and, perhaps, a low enough view of the common worshippers) to direct that the elements be fed directly, hand to mouth, to the communicants by the priest; sacramental grace is perhaps still to be institutionally and sacerdotally delivered to a largely passive body of recipients. In the 1552 service, this feeding rubric disappears, and another appears at the administration, directing the priest to give the sacrament "to the people in their handes" (389), after which the people presumably feed themselves. Although Church and clergy make the sacrament available, its actual internalization is a strictly individual affair of subjective discretion and participation,[70] and this practice is continued in the Elizabethan Prayerbook. These successive revisions of the sacramental liturgy emblematize an important shift in focus: as the centrality of the eucharistic elements (and the sacerdotal medieval Church) declined, the role, status, and interpretive authority of the individual correspondingly increased.

THE REFORMATION AND REPRESENTATION

In the preceding pages, I have outlined both the contemporary emphasis on the vernacular and the shift in sacramental theology, both of which are manifested in the Book of Common Prayer. The principle that links the two is that of personal interpretation. Reformation scriptural translation was predicated on the belief that individual access to, and comprehension

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70 John N. King notes this in *English Reformation Literature*, 137–8.

of, God's Word was essential to a correct understanding of the divine will
and one's relation to it. Similarly, the Reformed recasting of sacramental
doctrine was also based on the idea that sacramental engagement with God's
grace involved an essentially individual act of interpretation. To this end,
Zwingli had made his radical claim that the sacraments were not containers
of the divine but rather *signs* of it – the Supper was not a reenactment or
presentation but a *representation* of Christ's redemptive sacrifice, and as such
its reception was necessarily an interpretive (and subjective and memorial)
act. Zwinglian sacraments do not make present; they represent, symbolize,
or commemorate what is absent, and thus require interpretive cooperation
to access their referents and make them meaningful (a dynamic no less
essential to the Calvinist sacrament).

Zwingli's figurative rereading of Christ's "hoc est corpus meum" as "hoc
significat corpus meum" was, to be sure, a political act: reconceiving the
Eucharist was fundamental to theologically challenging Rome's central
claim to authority. His insistence on a metaphorical interpretation opposed
the institutionally controlled literal reading of the Catholic Church – a lit-
eralism which enabled a claim of direct divine presence and power in the
hands of the priesthood. For Zwingli, and the entire Reformed tradition,
this literalization of Christ's metaphor was the theological foundation of
papal tyranny. By collapsing the distinction between signifier and signified,
the Pope and his priests were able to quite literally hold God in the palms
of their hands.

Consequently, the reassertion of the signifier/signified distinction
became a primary concern of the Reformation, and a common feature of
doctrinal polemic. In reconceiving the sacramental elements, and enhanc-
ing the role of the individual, the Swiss Reformers were essentially main-
taining what they understood to be the proper role of a ritual which was
an act of interpretive remembrance in a diachronic historical framework;
the Eucharist *represented* a significant event, from which the communi-
cants are separated by time, but with which they are connected through
subjective faith.[71] This historically oriented demystification had important
corollaries: as Catherine Bell observes, "where belief in rational doctrines
takes the place of ritualism, sacraments become mere symbols rather than

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[71] Even Calvin, who disagrees with Zwingli's eucharistic theology as well as Luther's, and insists on a
potent spiritual correspondence between the elements and Christ, insists also that those elements
are memorial signs: "the signs are bread and wine, which represent to us the invisible nourishment
which we receive from the body and blood of Christ . . . by the corporeal objects which are presented
in the sacrament, we are conducted, by a kind of analogy, to those which are spiritual . . . the object
to which the sacrament tends [is] to exercise us in a remembrance of the death of Christ" (*Institutes*,
4.17.1, 3, 37 [pp. 641, 643, 696]).

immediate sources of power and priestly mediation is rejected in favor of the personal commitment of the individual."[72] In the Reformed view, to believe in a literal body and blood would be to collapse history, to corrupt and negate true faith, to rely on the fraudulent claims of the Roman hierarchy, to focus one's attention on idolatrous adoration rather than on Christ's perfect sacrifice and the salvation it makes possible for the believing individual. All of the Protestant attacks on transubstantiatory doctrine were ultimately aimed at restoring the sign-ness of the Lord's Supper by insisting in various ways on the difference between sign and referent.

Martyr John Frith adduced a wide range of arguments against transubstantiatory doctrine, maintaining instead that the sacrament is a sign which points to the Gospel (he compares those who "seeke the health in the sacrament and outwarde signe" to a man sucking on an alepole in hopes of a drink) and identifies its participants as members of the fellowship of Christ ("there is no difference betweene a signe or a badge and a Sacrament, but that the Sacrament figureth a holy thyng, and a signe or a badge doth signifie a worldly thing").[73] "I am sure," he wrote, "there is no man so childlike, but that he knoweth that the figure of a thing is not the thing itself . . . and yet we do, nevertheless, commonly call those figures by the name of the thing that they do represent."[74] Tyndale was even more explicit on the nature of the sacraments as representational systems of signs:

God the Father . . . commanded his promises, covenants and prophecies, to be written in gestures, signs and ceremonies, giving them names that could not but keep his covenants in mind. Even so Christ wrote the covenant of his body and blood in bread and wine; giving them that name, that ought to keep the covenant in remembrance.

And hereof ye see, that our sacraments are bodies of stories only; and . . . there is none other virtue in them than to testify and exhibit to the senses and understanding the covenants and promises made in Christ's blood.[75]

The provocative ambiguity of Tyndale's assertion that "our sacraments are bodies of stories only" suggests several important things about this view of the sacraments. First, they are seen as representational collections or condensed emblems of supremely significant covenantal *stories* (whether in the sense of narratives or histories), whose truth is reproduced through their recounting and reception. But it also indicates the mode in which the sacraments are *bodies*: in them, divine presence is actualized not physically,

[72] *Ritual Theory*, 132.
[73] All uncited quotes in this and the following paragraphs are from Davies, *Worship and Theology*, 95ff.
[74] Russell, *Works of the English Reformers*, III.363.   [75] *Doctrinal Treatises*, 357–8.

but through the faithful interpretation of them as covenental symbols ("of stories only," i.e. as fictively true signs).[76] Bishop Hooper reiterated the importance of this interpretive nexus when he insisted that the sacraments "do nothing but signify and confirm the thing that they represent": "The sacraments be as visible words . . . [T]he holy supper of the Lord is not a sacrifice, but only a remembrance and commemoration of this holy sacrifice of Jesus Christ."[77]

Even those who believed, like Calvin, in a spiritual presence in the elements typically insisted on the metaphoricity of the actual bread and wine. Nicholas Ridley demonstrated the undisputed figurality of another part of the dominical words of institution,[78] and criticized the hermeneutic error of those who "deny the figure where the place so requireth it to be understood." Martin Bucer: "Our flesh is nourished by symbolical or sacramental bread, but our soul is nourished with the body of Christ." Peter Martyr: "true bread was given for a signe; and so in the supper was given both sorts of bread, even naturall and metaphoricall: and both sorts of eating is performed; to wit, both a naturall eating in signes, and also a metaphoricall, as touching the bodie of Christ, which we receive by faith." And further: "[T]hese materiall sygnes dooe moste truely sygnyfye, represente, and exhibite unto us the bodye of Chryste, to bee eaten: howbeit it is spiritually, that is, wyth the mouth of the solle to bee eaten, and not of the bodye." Future bishop and apologist John Jewel succinctly expressed the fundamental difference between the churches of England and Rome as one of hermeneutic method: "first, that we put a difference between the sign and the thing itself that is signified."

Cranmer himself followed this aspect of the Reformed tradition by making the distinction between sign and referent a central concern of his doctrinal writings. His 1551 *Answer* to Gardiner adduces copious scriptural and

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[76] In this light, Peter Herman's contention that "Frith's and Tyndale's strident dislike of poetry originated in their unwillingness or inability to distinguish fictions from lies" seems like a drastic distortion indeed; similarly, his claim that "the earler [*sic*] Reformers simply refused to grant the validity of the fictive" is simply untenable (*Squitter-wits*, 42–3). The distorted shallowness of Herman's account (for example, denouncing transubstantiation as "imagination" does not, as he concludes, necessarily imply a wholesale rejection of imagination per se) is unfortunate, because some of his claims (that Protestantism contained a tense antipoetic strain; that this suspicion affected the literary practice of Sidney, Spenser, and Milton) are surely at least partially correct. For a far more convincing corrective to such distortions, see Lewalski's excellent chapter on "The Poetic Texture of Scripture" (*Protestant Poetics*, ch. 3), where she surveys the constructive history of theology and figurality, and argues that "the superb religious lyrics of the seventeenth century reflect in various ways the heightened Protestant regard for biblical figurative language as a principal vehicle for uniting divine truth and the truths of human experience" (104).

[77] *Early Writings*, 208.

[78] The metonymy of "This *cup* [meaning the wine therein] is the New Testament . . . " *Works*, 19–22.

patristic support for his contention that "in the sacramental bread and wine is not really and corporally the very natural substance of the flesh and blood of Christ, but that the bread and wine be similitudes, mysteries and representations, significations, sacraments, figures, and signs of his body and blood."[79] Indeed, in Cranmer's usage, the words "sacramentally" and "figuratively" are often synonymous.[80]

The distinction between the literal and figurative understandings of the Eucharist also played a major role in a theological disputation the imprisoned Archbishop was required to undergo at Oxford in April 1554.[81] The entire proceeding – scholastic, arcane, and designed publicly to "confound the detestable heresy" of Cranmer – takes place in the irreconcilable registers of the two hermeneutic modes. Cranmer's Marian interrogators repeatedly confront him with the literal reading of *hoc est enim corpus meum*; he repeatedly insists on interpreting the words "sacramentally," arguing that Christ equated his body with the bread "tropically, and by a figure." The Catholic examiners, intent on protecting the crucial doctrine of transubstantiation, display a remarkable antipathy toward tropes of all sorts, insisting that their instability (i.e. their need for interpretation) is antithetical to truth.

OGLETHORPE: But no householder maketh his testament [using tropes].
CRANMER: Yes, there are many that so do. For what matter is it, so it be understood and perceived? I say, Christ did use figurative speech in no place more than in his sacraments, and specially in this his supper.
OGLETHORPE: No man of purpose doth use tropes in his testament; for if he do, he deceiveth them that he comprehendeth in his testament: therefore Christ useth none here.
CRANMER: Yes, he may use them well enough. You know not what tropes are.

As if to corroborate Cranmer's startlingly contemptuous dismissal, the prolocutor jumps in and asserts that "whosoever saith that Christ spake by figures, saith that he did lie." Cranmer responds, "who say[s] it is necessary that he which useth to speak by tropes and figures should lie in so doing?"[82]

Robert Weimann has persuasively contended that for conservatives like Stephen Gardiner, "social stability and linguistic continuity are perceived as strong when religious icons and their transcendent symbolism appear indivisible . . . The 'whole' nature of social symbols, in this semiotics of

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[79] *Lord's Supper*, 123.

[80] For example, ibid., 327: "[Christ's] words sacramentally and figuratively spoken declare not the figure or sacrament to be indeed the thing that is signified."

[81] An account of this remarkable proceeding appears in Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, VI.442–69; the parts relevant to Cranmer are reprinted in Cranmer, *Lord's Supper*, 389–428. For a condensed narrative version, see Loades, *The Oxford Martyrs*, ch. 4.

[82] Cranmer, *Lord's Supper*, 401.

political order, presupposes closure in representation; stability in their political and cultural functions appears linked to stable relations in their semiotic structure." The Protestant challenge to this conservative semiotic stability is what Weimann calls "the self-authorized stance of an intense subjectivity in reading and interpretation,"[83] manifested here in the willingness to loosen signs from their referents, and to seek truth precisely where Catholicism saw the greatest danger – in the interpretive interaction of reader and text (whether biblical or sacramental). In this exchange, as elsewhere in these debates, the Catholics' theological (and political) commitment to transubstantiation requires them to advocate a strictly literal reading, and to reject figures, which oppose a clear literal sense, as equally opposed to the truth;[84] Cranmer's evangelical theology (and politics) opposes this by embracing tropes, hermeneutic awareness, and interpretation itself. These differing and intractable terms render the disputation unresolvable and ultimately tragicomic – a situation in which, to adapt a phrase of de Man's, the literal and figural readings fight each other with the blind power of theology.

One should be cautious about overgeneralizing from eucharistic theology, in part because on this issue each side tends to adopt a paradoxical position. Catholicism's uncompromising literalism on this matter stands in contrast to its rich history of complex interpretation, as well as its cultures of visual and musical signification; conversely, the Protestants' embrace of unstable representations sits a bit awkwardly beside the broad Protestant attraction to literalist exegesis, and its hostility to allegory. But I think the image of Protestantism that leads us to expect crude literalism is itself a distorting oversimplification (even Tyndale, when famously insisting on the "literal" sense of Scripture, clearly does not mean the naïve, mechanical non-reading we may associate with literalism[85]). While Protestants often attempted to minimize and control the interpretive violence to which the Bible was vulnerable, they also embraced a robust and multiform culture of reading. And this was not only biblical in focus; as I've argued, what ultimately emerges from the Reformed understandings of the Eucharist, and from the theologically ambivalent formulations of the Prayerbook, is a figurative, interpretive, *readerly* conception of the sacrament. The implied

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[83] *Authority*, 72–3. Weimann, I should note, resists aligning representational views too systematically with the Protestant/Catholic divide, but it does seem to apply here.

[84] See also the Council of Trent's condemnation of the "wicked men" who twist Christ's "clear and definite words" (*disertis ac perspicuis verbis*) into "fictitious and imaginary tropes" (*fictitios et imaginarios tropos*) (Schroeder, *Canons*, 73, 350).

[85] P. Harrison, *Bible*, 111: "Protestant 'literalism' thus needs to be broadly conceived as an assertion of the determinacy of meaning of biblical texts, a meaning which usually, though not invariably, will lie with the literal sense."

narrative in "Of Ceremonies" (and, less polemically, in the present chapter) suggests a progression from the Catholic "bondage of the figure," and its replacement with a more interpretive, hermeneutically flexible, and edifying model of "notable and speciall significacion." Tyndale strikingly portrays Christ's role in the Last Supper as not that of a magician, but that of an author, "wr[i]t[ing] the covenant of his body and blood in bread and wine." The elements are therefore reconceived as a trope, a *text*, the internalization of which is necessarily an explicitly interpretive act. This systematic textualization links sacrament and Word as grace-filled objects of a heightened interpretive interiority.

These two phenomena in the Book of Common Prayer, then – the vernacularization of Word and worship, and the shift in sacramental theology, each of which has both theoretical and practical significance – simultaneously acknowledge and create the discursive possibility of a new subjectivity, centered on individual interpretive agency in relation to both Scripture and sacrament. Institutional authority gives way to individual competence; an interpretive monopoly is disseminated among the common people; hegemonic definitions of religious truth are remade (within limits) into personal understandings of the divine will; grace and truth migrate from object to subject, from transformed sacramental elements to sacramentally transformed participants; numinous separation is displaced by inclusivity; mystery becomes hermeneutic clarity; ineffably opaque truth is translated into readable texts; and the Church's demand for passive acceptance of doctrine is transformed (at least partway) into an individual exegetical imperative. None of these characterizations is completely airtight, of course; all but the most radical Protestant churches retained considerable institutional authority over their members, and Christianity is never completely subjective nor free of the mysteries of faith. But to a significant degree, religious authority is driven downward and inward, focused on and constitutive of a newly authoritative interiority.

<center>LITURGICAL NEGOTIATIONS</center>

The Book of Common Prayer, then, contains two seemingly contradictory discourses, each of which was fundamental to the larger discursive situation of the Reformation. On the one hand, as I argued in the previous chapter, the Prayerbook is unmistakably prescriptive of sociopolitical order and hierarchy. Liturgical form itself is an order-based discursive mode, restricting improvisation and randomness by imposing set formulae of religious expression on those under its aegis. The legislative coercion of uniform BCP

use further amplified this function, as it sought to control the possibility of "unseemly and ungodly diversity" by imposing a single state-appointed form of worship on the entire nation. And the Prayerbook's discourses of order simultaneously [re]created both an autonomous identity for England in a multinational Europe, and a fairly rigid sociopolitical matrix within the realm; both the royal supremacy itself and the maintenance of the epis-copal hierarchy attest to the continuing importance of vertical structures of authority in the Church of England. Individual engagement in BCP worship, compulsory though it was, constituted a tacit acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the multiple orders it construed, and of the necessity and propriety of the individual's subordinate position within them. In short, the Prayerbook established hierarchical order as the proper and definitive context for individual identity and conduct.

On the other hand, the BCP discursively envisions a different distribu-tion of authority which implicitly reconstructs the entire politico-religious order. In keeping with the Protestant refoundation of theology, it posits direct individual contact with the divine – primarily through various texts and interpretive acts – as the primary location of religious authority. This interiority is deepened by its theologically demanded deployments of his-torical memory, symbolic understanding, and rational comprehension; it becomes the active locus of both divine revelation and the operations of the Spirit. Whereas the former discourse construes individuals as subordi-nate effects of authoritative order, this one makes them the authoritative *grounds* of order, and order (as the *congregatio fidelium* and whatever more concrete forms it may assume, whether an organized Church or perhaps a consenting populace) an effect of collective subjectivities.

The relationship of these two discourses, each of which always claimed its own validity, assumed different forms over the years. At first, the relation of the second to the first was simply one of expediency: Henry reluctantly invoked (or at least allowed) the larger discourses of Reformation, and employed those who subscribed wholeheartedly to them, to achieve his more limited aims of national autonomy and royal supremacy. Once he had attained full control over the English Church, however, he found it impossible to close the Pandora's box of discourse that he had cracked open. His 1546 speech to Parliament expresses the semi-comprehending frustration of a dying monarch who wishes desperately to reimpose social and discursive order in his realm by restricting the energies he had released a decade earlier.

With the accession of the "young Josiah" and his Protestant advi-sors the following year, the configuration of these discourses was altered.

Full-fledged Protestant discourse, no longer a necessary evil concomitant with the exercise of caesaro-papist state power, was recognized and authorized by the state – in increasingly Swiss formulations, no less – as a positive good. Preachers, writers, and theologians silenced or absent under Henry, both English (John Hooper, Miles Coverdale) and foreign (Bucer, Martyr, Dryander, Poullain), were invited by Edward and Cranmer to advance the cause of reform. The programmatic demolition and rebuilding of the liturgy, while gradual and uneven (as was the conversion of the realm, which would take decades to complete), was both a manifestation of this new theological climate and a major attempt to reconfigure religious discourse – and the entire field of conceptual possibilities it determined – evangelically. By the end of Edward's reign, as I have argued, and again in Elizabeth's, the Protestant individual was officially established in quite revolutionary ways as a (and perhaps *the*) fundamental component of English Christianity.

Neither the State nor the Church, of course, relinquished their authoritative and controlling claims on religious belief and practice; over a century of coercive uniformity, and an apparently infinite future of institutionally defined forms of worship, still lay ahead. The very existence of a state liturgy, issued and enforced at a time when some Continental churches were moving away from set forms, attests to the state's continuing determination to order and control the realm at worship. The Book of Common Prayer thus in both form and content holds in tension two radically different discourses, out of which it endeavors to construct a productive textual synthesis. Its form both orders and includes, enforces and enfranchises; its content both dictates and defers. It discursively constructs a Christian nation characterized centrally by order even as it elevates individual discretion over that order. Its theology simultaneously legitimates and undermines its political discourse of autonomous hierarchical authority.

In a seminal exploration of discourse and authority in sixteenth-century Europe, Robert Weimann discusses the proliferation of discourse attendant upon the conflict between the interpreting Protestant individual and more traditional forms of authority, and argues that the "forces of debate and discord were situated at the very frontiers of the Reformation's division between official polity and self-authorized exegesis of Scripture."[86] It should

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[86] *Authority*, 61. Commenting on the ideological conflict between More's institutional body of faith and Tyndale's individuating faith in the Book, Greenblatt (*Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 159) asserts that "no successful synthesis of the two modes of being was possible." But this synthesis is perhaps exactly what the Prayerbook aims at, and while its success in this endeavor is not indisputable, neither is its failure.

be clear by this point that this highly contentious cultural space is precisely the position staked out by the Prayerbook. The new state liturgy attempted to control the refractory and potentially anarchic tendencies of Protestant individualism not by attempting to eradicate it – an effort that would likely have been doomed from the start by the contemporary rise of print and literacy, especially with reference to the vernacular Bible and the interpretive discourses surrounding it – but rather by recognizing and legitimating it. The BCP endeavored to stabilize and navigate a profound cultural crisis by enfranchising the Protestant subject; in it, the state, rather than punishing the rebellious subject, made it a full (if perhaps junior) partner.

What we can see in the Book of Common Prayer, I would suggest, is a new dialecticization of the Church of England – and, since, as Gardiner and others pointed out, Church and State were coterminous polities, a similar reconstitution of England itself. The BCP officially instituted the individual as a primary component of religion, without abrogating the normative claims of the hierarchical socio-politico-ecclesiastical order that had traditionally been the sole determinant of religious affairs. This new and fundamental tension established a new ground for the continuous reconstitution of the English polity: henceforth, "England" and its Church would be the product of ongoing negotiations between order (in various forms) and individual – not as necessary antagonists, but as the potentially competing primary values of the two ideological systems the Prayerbook sought to reconcile.

Theorist Catherine Bell has argued for a more nuanced view of the ritual play of power than the common understanding of ritual as a straightforward tool of ideological articulation and social control.[87] While ritual certainly is a cultural form which attempts to order, define, and subordinate individuals, she suggests that its circulation of power is more complex and multivalent than a simple foisting of conformist ideology upon its credulous participants.[88] Individual engagement in ritual activity is a site not only of passive consent and subordination, but also of active consent, potential appropriation, resistance, and negotiation. Bell is, I think, worth quoting at some length here:

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[87] See *Ritual Theory*, 169–223, for Bell's stimulating account of some influential variants of this model, as well as her theoretically nuanced response: that ritual "constitutes a particular dynamic of social empowerment," and is a mode of "the very production and negotiation of power relations."

[88] Althusser sums up this tradition nicely in his paraphrase of Pascal ("Ideology," 168): "Pascal says more or less: 'Kneel down, move your lips in prayer, and you will believe.'" Ritual, as a material ideological apparatus, generates belief through action, rather than vice versa.

[Individual r]itual mastery is itself a capacity for and relationship of relative dom-ination. It does not merely socialize the body with schemes that structure and reproduce parts (large or small) of the social order, nor does it merely construct the social person with versions of these schemes as the order of its subjectivity and consciousness. To do all that it must also enable the person to deploy schemes that can manipulate the social order on some level and appropriate its categories for a semicoherent vision of personal identity and action . . .

This is *not* a matter of simply reinforcing shared beliefs or instilling a domi-nant ideology. At the same time, as a strategic embodiment of schemes for power relationships – schemes that can hierarchize, subordinate, integrate, define, and obscure – ritualization can also promote forces that have been traditionally thought to work against social solidarity and control . . .

The strategies of ritualization clearly generate forms of practice and empower-ment capable of articulating an understanding of the personal self vis-à-vis commu-nity, however these might be understood. The results might well be seen in terms of the continuity between self and community, or in terms of an autonomous identity. However, the result might also be the formation of a subjectivity that polarizes thought and action, the personal self and the social body . . .

The person who has prayed to his or her god, appropriating the social schemes of the hegemonic order in terms of an individual redemption, may be stronger because these acts are the very definitions of power, personhood, and the capacity to act.[89]

Personal engagement in public ritual is thus, in Bell's account,[90] a complex reciprocal constitution of self and order. Order both asserts its own claims and implicitly appeals to the endorsement of individuals, offering forms of both obedience and potential resistance; individuals can simultaneously

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[89] *Ritual Theory*, 215–18. Judith Butler ("Contingent Foundations," 12–13) argues a similar point in the course of a very different argument: "to claim that the subject is constituted is not to claim that it is determined; on the contrary, the constituted character of the subject is the very precondition of its agency. For what is it that enables a purposive and significant reconfiguration of cultural and political relations, if not a relation that can be turned against itself, reworked, resisted?" Similarly, Roy Rappaport, while he sees ritual as "the basic social act," also insists that it is not a unidirectional or irresistible one, but rather a complex act of negotiation, a "reciprocal interplay between authority and acceptance. On the one hand, the performers are the most important receivers of the messages they themselves transmit. They inform themselves that regardless of their possible private ambivalence, doubt, or disbelief, they have performed a public act of acceptance, and acceptance is understood to have consequences. On the other hand, the act of performing a liturgical order *realizes* it, which is, among other things, to vest it with whatever authority it possesses. Performance grants authority to liturgical orders, and to the *logoi* they encode. If they are not performed, they are devoid of authority" ("Veracity," 40).

[90] Bell's account is more persuasive and stimulating than many "Foucauldian" models in part, I think, because she bases her model on Foucault's late essay "The Subject and Power," which I read as a late-career attempt by Foucault to mitigate some of the bleaker (and more questionable) aspects of his earlier thought. In it, he backs away from the idea of the completely heteronomous pseudoself, proposing instead a more reciprocal dynamic between power and genuine human agency – a potential contradiction of his earlier work, but also precisely what makes Bell's account so interesting and useful.

obey, appropriate, struggle, both recognizing the power and legitimacy of the larger order and carving out a highly subjective personal space within it. She concludes that while ritual cannot, through sheer compulsion, create genuine community out of nothing, it *can* "take arbitrary or necessary common interests and ground them in an understanding of the hegemonic order; it can empower agents in limited and highly negotiated ways."[91]

This interaction is made explicit in the Prayerbook, where the two discourses I have discussed at length coexist in a relationship of mutual dependence. The discourse of Protestant order – specifically, that of an autonomous national Church under royal control – relied ultimately on the larger theological discourse of the Reformation; in turn, this larger discourse, though restrained under Henry, was actively promulgated under Edward. The discourse of Protestant individualism depended on official state sanction for its public legitimacy and advancement; at the same time, this theological system authorized the new social order (even as it undermined its claims). Public and private, state and subject, order and individual come to occupy positions of mutually sustaining tension; each simultaneously enables and contests the other in a complex process of reciprocal constitution. It is in this tenuous textual and hermeneutic balance that the BCP, as the textual paradigm of the English Reformation, sought to reconcile the contradictions of a system which upheld both a vertical politics of centralized authority and a horizontal theology of dispersed individual competence.

This, I would suggest, was a radically new situation for England. The Book of Common Prayer was an integral component of a major cultural transition, after which the concept of "England" was to be the product of continuous negotiation between the fundamental values of individual and order. The Prayerbook itself both embodies and demands (and, arguably, textually institutes) this ideological negotiation, even as it attempts to effect a textual synthesis of these two bases of authority and identity. And perhaps this permanent negotiation *is* the synthesis, or as close an approximation as one could hope for between two deep and contradictory cultural logics. Subsequent English history, while it always (after Mary) assumes the autonomy of England, is also a persistent struggle to define the precise nature of that England in terms of this tension: the Anglican/Puritan struggles of later in the century, the Laudian reaction, the Commonwealth, and even the eventual discontinuation of religious coercion might be usefully viewed as episodes in the ongoing struggle to formulate and modify the

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[91] Bell, *Ritual Theory*, 222.

constitutive "English" combination of internal and external authority – to reunderstand perpetually, in other words, England's fundamental sense of identity as a nation at worship.[92] And the matrix upon which this reunderstanding took place was frequently the Book of Common Prayer itself, a text that from the very beginning, and from cover to cover, had sought to dialecticize textually these foundational conflicts. In so doing, it created a different future and a new (and ceaselessly renegotiated) identity for the fledgling nation-state of England.

This perpetual negotiation was, in the wake of the Reformation, established in several important and related ways on the field and grounds of *representation*. First, though I haven't argued it at length, a sense of political representation seems fundamental to the English Reformation: while the location of ultimate authority in this era has been hotly contested (was this refoundation primarily accomplished by royal or parliamentary authority?), it seems undeniable that the authority of the entire realm represented in Parliament – itself essentially a politically binding synecdoche – was crucial to the success of this movement, and grew in consequence of it.[93] Second, the Prayerbook itself, encapsulating as it does these profound tensions of structure and subject, is a textual representation of the newly reconstructed order in all its complexity and ideality. Third, these tensions are intensely focused in the eucharistic liturgy, where the relations of individual and order (and the transmission of salvific grace) are articulated around the pivotal node of a multivalent sense of sacramental representation and reception.

That this eucharistic dynamic had both individual and communal consequences can be seen in closing by glancing briefly at the idea of the Body of Christ. I've argued that the departure of this Body from the Prayerbook

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[92] These two poles of identity form the basis of Richard Helgerson's analysis in *Forms of Nationhood*, where he analyzes their interplay in later-century literature. The following extract is typical of Helgerson's schema: "Authority in Foxe's apocalyptic church resides ultimately with the individual believer, with the individual reader of God's word. Authority in the apologetic church of Hooker [which is closely identified with the BCP] belongs to the state, which, though itself a wholly contingent product of history, provides the institutional setting in which orderly public worship and thus the saving transmission of grace can take place" (278). As this chapter has argued, though, this tension was anticipated by, and built into, the Book of Common Prayer from its very beginning; to affiliate it with one side exclusively is to miss what it's all about.

[93] Helgerson contends (*Forms*, 281–3) that even the authoritarian Hooker ultimately looked to hear the "echo of God" in the representative voice of parliamentary consent. On the not-coincidental overlap of political and literary representation, see Lentricchia, *Criticism*, 155; Burke, *Philosophy*, 26. The histories of Parliament and Prayerbook are intertwined throughout the life of the latter, and indeed some historians have contended that the English Reformation was something of a watershed in the history of Parliament; might there be some deep affinity between the logic of the BCP and the logic of parliamentary representation, as two analogous ways of resolving the conflicts I've been discussing?

Eucharist implied a corollary enfranchisement of individual authority. But it's also a basic axiom of ritual theory that all public rituals symbolically articulate a model of communal identity. Protestants certainly didn't invent the idea of the Church as the body of Christ – this idea runs through Christian thought all the way back to the New Testament – but late-medieval theology increasingly applied the term *corpus Christi* to the sacrament rather than the Church.[94] The Protestant sacrament, as codified in the BCP, factors out this physical presence and thus turns this central figure of identity and its attendant organizational orientation back toward community. The focal point of spiritual identity shifts: in the elements, from an immanent divine body to an explicitly and self-consciously metaphorical set of symbols. That is, the identity and solidarity of the sacramental Church of England, and thus to some degree of the social and political structures with which it was coterminous, comes to be built around a metaphor rather than a physically present deity, as the literal gives way to the figural, and the symbolic nature of ritual becomes explicit. If the Catholic Mass was a spectacular assertion of the word made flesh, Prayerbook Communion pushed the focus back toward the word, and the bodily incarnation of Christ was relocated not in the elements, but in the community of believers that partook of them interpretively. There is still a mystical transformation, and a body of Christ, but Reformed theology denied that either was to be found in the elements; the former occurred as a spiritual regeneration of the participant's heart, and the latter as a symbolically constituted and textually oriented community.

This sacramental replacement of physical divine presence with a principle of sacred representation was a profoundly important part of a larger and deeper cultural valorization of representation itself – a newly intensified faith, on both the individual and collective levels, in the redemptive potential of signs via a hermeneutically aware engagement with them. The Reformation did not, of course, invent the category of representation. What it did do in England was elevate an existing conceptual possibility (evangelical polemicists, for example, drew on such diverse sources as Augustinian sacramental theology and common-sense models of how signification works) into a newly fundamental cultural episteme. This theologically derived and Reformation-enhanced sense of representationality became a conceptual grid upon which the identity and authority of nation and individual could be mapped – often simultaneously and reciprocally,

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[94] See Louth, "Body," 122–4. This shift in usage was contemporaneous, and I suspect not randomly so, with the consolidation of transubstantiatory doctrine.

as I've argued they are in the Prayerbook. At the same time, representation and interpretation (variously embodied in this chapter as Protestant vernacularism, scripturalism, and eucharistic theology, and in subsequent chapters as literary theory, drama, poetry, political writing, and historiography) was increasingly seen as a mode in which such questions of authority and identity could be articulated, explored, and perhaps even constructively resolved. It is to some subsequent manifestations of this new cultural faith that I will turn in my third chapter.

Interlude: 1549–1662

The precautions and coercions with which the first Book of Common Prayer was hedged turned out to be well advised. Cranmer, in constructing a broadly acceptable (and probably intentionally ambiguous) order out of old and new materials, had anticipated in his essay "Of Ceremonies" that people toward both ends of the religious spectrum would still be displeased with the new book. This is exactly what occurred: while many people were generally content to follow the lead of Church and State, conservatives resented the replacement of an order they considered holy, and which had prevailed in England for nearly a thousand years; radicals lamented the many similarities of the new services to the old; and both were frustrated by the Prayerbook's formal and doctrinal ambiguities. The new books sold briskly in London, and Dryander wrote that "the English churches received the book with the greatest satisfaction," but seething beneath the surface was a darker discontent that qualified Somerset's assertion of "as great a quiet as ever was in England."[1] The radical Zwinglian John Hooper, Somerset's chaplain and later bishop of Gloucester, wrote to Bullinger that

it is no small hindrance to our exertions, that the form which our senate or parliament . . . has prescribed for the whole realm, is so very defective and of doubtful construction, and in some respects indeed manifestly impious . . . I am so much offended with that book, and that not without abundant reason, that if it be not corrected, I neither can nor will communicate with the church in the administration of the supper.[2]

Martin Bucer wrote a more measured criticism of the objectionably conservative elements in the Prayerbook; his *Censura* influenced some of the revisions in the more extreme 1552 version. On the other side of the debate, Bishop Bonner of London took no steps to implement the new liturgy

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[1] Procter and Frere, *History*, 55; Gasquet and Bishop, *Edward VI*, 239; Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship*, 167.
[2] Robinson, *Original Letters*, 79.

until forced to do so by the Council in August, and then he "performed the office . . . sadly and discreetly";[3] his continuing recalcitrance led to his imprisonment and deposition in October. Princess Mary simply ignored the new order and continued to have her chaplains perform the old services, despite the Council's rumblings. Innumerable clergymen continued to perform as much of the old ritual – vestments, gestures, and so forth – as was not expressly forbidden in the new. The universities, despite their role in fostering reform, remained full of what Bucer called "the most bitter papists."[4] Perhaps the most stinging evaluation of the new liturgy came from Stephen Gardiner, former bishop of Winchester and England's preeminent conservative, who adopted a policy which seems to have been deliberately aimed at aggravating his archrival Cranmer: his written appraisal of the BCP isolated key points and then warmly praised them as "agreeable to the Catholic doctrine" and "not distant from the Catholic faith."[5]

Accompanying these peaceable disapprovals of the Prayerbook were others far more immediate and tangible. The summer of 1549 saw the Somerset Protectorate shaken by uprisings in Somerset, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Kent, Sussex, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Yorkshire, Hertfordshire, and many other places due to a combination of agrarian, fiscal, religious, and social grievances.[6] Conspicuous among these, though, is the revolt in Devon and Cornwall which has come to be known as the Prayerbook Rebellion. Unlike the others, in which religion played partial and varying roles, this insurrection seems to have been first and foremost a popular conservative reaction to recent innovations, most specifically the Book of Common Prayer.[7]

The rising began on 10 June, the day after the new services were first used, when the villagers of Sampford Courtenay in Devon persuaded their priest to join them in defying the government.[8] The Council in London, busy with other unrest, fearful of a French invasion, and unaware of the gravity of the situation, did not dispatch even a small military force until 29 June; when Lord Russell and his 300 men finally arrived, they found a fairly well-equipped and growing army of several thousand laying siege to

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[3] Cuming, *History*, 70.   [4] Davies, *Worship and Theology*, 198–9.
[5] Gasquet and Bishop, *Edward VI*, 279–85.   [6] Guy, *Tudor England*, 208.
[7] Although there seems to be some consensus on the conspicuous primacy of religion in this revolt, historians' precise appraisals vary. John Guy (ibid.) lumps all the 1549 risings together as "the closest thing Tudor England saw to a class war," while a recent full-scale history of the rebellion (Cornwall, *Revolt*) asserts that "the western rebellion was resisting the imposition of the Book of Common Prayer, and did not concern itself with economic questions at all, despite the facile assumptions of recent historians" (236).
[8] Fletcher, *Tudor Rebellions*, 42.

Exeter.[9] Helpless and only slowly reinforced with government troops and foreign mercenaries, Russell's army could do nothing until the end of July.

During this period of stalemate, the rebels presented several similar lists of demands to the government. These articles demanded, among other things, the restoration of the Henrician Six Articles, which had a decade earlier affirmed such conservative doctrines as transubstantiation, clerical celibacy, and private masses. They also demanded the adoration of the sacrament, the restoration of the Latin Mass, the restoration of images and prayers for the dead, the restoration of monastic lands seized in the Dissolution, and the withdrawal of all vernacular Scripture and service. Of particular note is the eighth article, which asserts that "We will not receive the new service, because it is but like a Christmas game; but we will have our old service of matins, mass, even-song, and procession in Latin, as it was before. And so we the Cornish men, whereof certain of us understand no English, utterly refuse this new English."[10] In short, the rebels' demands called for a comprehensive return to the old faith, and a complete rejection of the governmental reforms epitomized in the new service. This was no enclosure riot flavored with religious conservatism, but a thoroughgoing defiance of the Crown's entire religious policy.

It is worth pausing to note some of the essential features of the rebel position here. First, and most obviously, their demands demonstrate a deep allegiance – ritually (restoration of the Mass and prayers for the dead), theologically (restoration of the Six Articles), and materially (restoration of images and seized monastic lands) – to the traditional Catholic (though perhaps not Roman) faith. Second, they indicate a profound commitment to Latin as an opaque and privileged truth-language, and a corresponding suspicion of English, which is paradoxically rejected on the grounds that not all the Cornish understand it. Cranmer correctly pointed out that far fewer of them knew Latin than English, but perhaps the point of resistance here (besides the hieratic status of Latin) is a regional resistance to national linguistic standardization, the imposition of one English dialect upon the entire realm (i.e. a resistance to the increasing claims of the nationally centralized over the local). And third, there seems to be a related resistance to texts *as texts*: couched among the more straightforward demands for restoration of traditional theology and worship is a firm refusal of both of the textual pillars of the English Reformation, specifically in each case because of the accessibility the English Bible and liturgy offer. This rebellion, occasioned incidentally (so it might seem) by the introduction of a particular

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[9] Cornwall, *Revolt*, 97.   [10] Cranmer, *Letters*, 179.

text, turns out to be in some respects a rebellion against texts themselves, against a new religious system which both promoted and rested upon the availability of standardized religious materials in printed English form.

Cranmer composed a systematic and furious reply to the "ignorant men of Devon and Cornwall."[11] In it, he repeatedly insists that the insurgents were not acting out of deeply held convictions, but had simply been "craftily seduced" by a handful of rank papists; this insistence was the government's official rhetorical strategy for defusing the rebellion and maintaining at least the fiction of harmonious obedience.[12] Cranmer expresses outrage over the rebels' impudence, contempt for their ignorance, and cool menace regarding their insubordination. He perceptively recognizes that their actions and demands are a "clear subversion of the whole state and laws of this realm," and he refutes them point by point with extended polemics against their doctrine and practice.[13] This vigorous counterattack may have been written as late as the following autumn,[14] and is thus best read as a set piece of propaganda which both recognized the seriousness of popular discontent and signaled the government's determination to consolidate and continue its reforms.

Lord Russell's reinforced army took the offensive in late July, engaging the rebels in battle on the 28th and relieving the besieged city of Exeter on 6 August; combat concluded with a bloodbath at Sampford Courtenay on the 17th. Russell and his deputy Anthony Kingston proceeded to carry out their instructions to "execute the heads and cheyf styrrors of the rebellyon . . . in so dyverse places as ye maie to the more terror of the unrulie."[15] The mayor of Bodmin was hanged after hosting Kingston for dinner; others were hanged on tavern signposts and hastily erected gallows. Robert Welsh, vicar of St. Thomas and one of the "cheyf styrrors," was hanged in chains from the tower of his church "in his popish apparel and having a holy-water bucket, a sprinkle, a sacring bell, a pair of beads and such other popish trash hanged about him,"[16] and apparently left there until his corpse dwindled

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[11] Ibid., 163–87.

[12] See e.g. the Council's instructions to Russell of 29 June (Pocock, *Troubles*, 15–18): he is to make it known that "yt is thought that the greate number of them be but seduced and deceyved" and "wonderfully abused." This, combined with reminders of the gravity of their offense, should make them "waxe fant and so fall to fearre by degrees," and return them to their natural state of godly obedience.

[13] His answer also contained considerable mockery. A late addition to his original draft (Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 102, fo. 386) responds to the eighth article by asserting that "It is more like a game & a fonde play, to be laughed at of al men, to heare ye preist speake alowde to ye peple in latyn, & ye people lysten to their eare to heare . . . & none understandeth other."

[14] Cranmer, *Letters*, 163n.; Rose-Troup, *Western Rebellion*, 222.   [15] Pocock, *Troubles*, 53.

[16] Rose-Troup, *Western Rebellion*, 292. This contemporary account is by John Vowell *alias* Hooker, who went on to edit the second edition of Holinshed's *Chronicle*, and whose nephew Richard would figure prominently in the subsequent history of the Prayerbook.

into a broken skeleton – a grimly vivid image of the state's disposal of both
the seditious and the entire old faith. The ringleaders were transported to
London to be examined and to suffer the even more spectacular deaths
of traitors. The "wonderfully abused" commoners were issued a general
pardon to return to their lives of peace and obedience; as many as seven
thousand of them had died in the rebellion.[17]

The unrest of 1549 and Somerset's shaky handling of it weakened his
protectorate. William Paget wrote a letter to the Protector soon after the
revolt started in which he analyzed the current troubles. Somerset's "opinion
to be good to the poor," his softness on opposition and popular opinion,
had made the rabble "become a king, appointing conditions and laws to
the governors." At bottom, Paget believed, the problem was this:

Society in a realm doth consist and is maintained by mean of religion and law.
And these two or one wanting, farewell all just society, farewell king, government,
justice and all other virtue . . . Look well whether you have either law or religion
at home and I fear you shall find neither. The use of the old religion is forbidden
by a law, and the use of the new is not yet printed in the stomachs of the eleven of
twelve parts of the realm, what countenance soever men make outwardly to please
them in whom they see this power resteth.[18]

Paget's idiom is striking: despite varying degrees of external conformity,
true religious obedience (and the resulting stability, justice, and order) is
figured as an act of printing on subjects' innards.[19] Protestant authority is
to be exercised outwardly and inwardly, in law and religion.

Despite the mixed and sometimes bloody reception of the 1549 Book of
Common Prayer, the government pushed on with its reforms. It seems likely
that the first book was regarded from the first as a temporary measure, a
half-step of reform similar to the conservative liturgies produced by Luther
and Zwingli in 1523, and revision of the 1549 text had begun immediately.[20]
The fall of Somerset in the autumn prompted rumors that the old services
would be restored; in response, a Christmas circular letter from the king
denied that the Prayerbook had been the duke's work, and reasserted its
theological and parliamentary validity. It advised the people to "putt away
all such vain expectac*i*on of having the publick Service, the Administrac*i*on
of the Sacraments, and other rights [*sic*] and ceremonies again in the latin
tongue, which were but a p*re*ferring of Ignorance to knowledge and darknes

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[17] Cornwall, *Revolt*, 234.   [18] Guy, *Tudor England*, 210.

[19] This is just one instance of a persistent rhetorical (and historical) association of print and Protes-
tantism. Just as the Devon rebels rejected print in the name of Catholicism, so the strategic alliance
between the new faith and print technology, for reasons both practical and theological, bleeds over
into language.

[20] Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship*, 175; Cuming, *History*, 101.

to light";[21] more concretely, it mandated the collection and destruction of all service books whatsoever which might impinge on the BCP's province. Far from stopping the course of Protestantism in England, the transition to the Northumberland Protectorate seems to have strengthened and quickened it.[22]

Amid this melee of events and ideas, then, the revision of the Prayer-book (about which little is known) took place over the next two years. Religious conservatives for the first time in English history found themselves in the difficult position of opposing the official policies and doctrines of the Church; by the same token, religious radicals enjoyed unprecedented influence, and the second BCP reflects this. Many of the criticisms of Bucer and other reformers were addressed in it, as were, perhaps more tellingly, all of Gardiner's praises; as both a further stage of reform and a response to conservative resistance, the studied ambiguity of 1549 gave way to a book built on clarity and Swiss-style austerity. The second Act of Uniformity[23] was introduced in Parliament on 9 March 1552, and passed both houses by 14 April. It asserted that the first Book was "a very godly order . . . very comfortable to all good people desiring to live in Christian conversation, and most profitable to the estate of this realm"; however, many people, "following their own sensuality," had "wilfully and damnably" refused to take part in the new services. To address this problem, the king had caused the Prayerbook to be "faithfully and godly perused, explained, and made fully perfect." The resulting "perfect" text, attached to the Act, was to come into general use on the first of November under all the provisions and penalties of the first Act.

In general, the revisions of the 1552 Book of Common Prayer made it doctrinally clearer and ceremonially leaner than its predecessor.[24] They tended to reduce traditional vestments and gestures, increase congregational participation and instruction, and clarify doctrinal emphases in a Reformed direction while removing many traces of its Catholic ancestry. The most heavily revised service was the Communion, where numerous changes were made to remove any suggestion of transubstantiation or propitiatory sacrifice. The three prayers of the Canon were broken up, with

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[21] Pocock, *Troubles*, 128.

[22] An anonymous memorandum entitled "Certein enormities in the comyn welth to be reformed in October 1550" (British Library MS Egerton 2623 fo. 9) begins with an indication of continuing dissatisfaction with lax uniformity: "The forme of religion is not used alike in all places, but one useth one facon an other useth an other facyon. diversitie as diverse mens fantazies thinketh it best."

[23] Printed in Gee and Hardy, *Documents*, 369–72.

[24] For exhaustive analyses of these changes, see Brightman, *English Rite, passim*, and especially 1.cxlix–clvii; Cuming, *History*, ch. 5; Procter and Frere, *History*, ch. 4; Davies, *Worship and Theology*, 201–10.

the communion immediately following the consecration so as to preempt any adoration of the elements; the "altar" became a "table"; the manual acts vanished, as did the epiclesis and the *Agnus Dei*; the stress on faithful reception shifted the focus to the communicants as partakers of the memorial Supper; and the general emphasis on remembrance rather than sacrifice was exemplified in the new words of administration – "Take and eate this, in remembraunce that Christe died for the, and fede on him in thy heart by faith, with thankesgevyng." Other significant changes included the removal of "commonly called the Masse" from the title; the forbidding of all but the simplest vestments; the removal of proper introit psalms; and the addition of the Ten Commandments. Finally, numerous rubrical changes restricted the conduct and theology of the new service; among these was the notorious "Black Rubric" which addressed the opposition of Hooper and John Knox to kneeling by affirming the practice but denying that it implied adoration or any change in the elements.

Other services were subjected to varying degrees of revision, usually to the end of more thoroughly expunging Roman "superstitions" of theology and worship. In Baptism, the exorcism, unction, chrisom, and blessing of the font were removed, as was the two-part structure of the service, the entire business now taking place at the font. The priest's questions were also more sensibly addressed directly to the godparents instead of to the child. The Burial service was drastically reduced by the removal of all of its psalms, all prayers which implied intercession for the dead, and the entire Communion service (Eamon Duffy has dryly observed that "the oddest feature of the 1552 burial rite is the disappearance of the corpse from it").[25] Unction and reservation were removed from the Visitation services. The daily Office was changed in title to Morning and Evening Prayer, and enlarged by the addition of penitential introductions. The Purification service was renamed "The Thankesgeving of Women After Childe Birth," and like Baptism, its welcoming-in nature was eliminated along with its two-part structure.

These changes, along with innumerable minor alterations, produced the most stripped-down and unambiguously Protestant liturgy in the history of the Church of England. Its introduction on All Saints' Day in 1552 was marked by none of the violence of its predecessor's debut. However, as might be expected, its reception was mixed. For the reform-minded, it was a godly and much-needed corrective to the ambiguity and residual papism of the 1549 Prayerbook. For ardent proto-Puritans like Hooper and Knox, it

[25] Duffy, *Stripping*, 475.

still smacked (though less so) of its popish ancestry. For conservatives, it was a further travesty of Catholicism's ancient and holy worship.[26] But the lack of organized resistance suggests that most people were for whatever reasons willing to accept and use it. The 1552 BCP, though, never got a chance to settle in as England's liturgy. The sickly Edward VI died the following July, and Cranmer performed his funeral in Westminster Abbey using the official English services; meanwhile, at the Tower, Queen Mary signaled the burial of all three – king, primate, and liturgy – with the celebration of a Requiem Mass in Latin.

Cranmer's reluctant support of Jane Grey placed him in a perilous position with the new monarch, but at first he was unmolested – so remarkably so that rumors spread that he had agreed to reintroduce the old Latin services. The Archbishop's response was a public declaration in September that he would publicly defend in disputation

that not only the Common Prayers of the churches, ministration of the sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies, but also that all the doctrine and religion, by our said sovereign lord king Edward VI is more pure and according to God's word, than any that hath been used in England these thousand years.[27]

Cranmer's protectiveness of the Book of Common Prayer proved to be the occasion of his undoing; within a week he was summoned before the Council and committed to the Tower. In November, he was tried and convicted on charges of high treason, and sentenced to the traitor's death; the queen, however, was more interested in punishing his heresy than his treason, and he remained in prison for the time being. Meanwhile, the first Marian Act of Repeal negated all religious legislation passed during her brother's reign. This of course included the new liturgies, and as of 20 December 1553, the only legal forms of services were to be those in use at the death of Henry VIII. A year later, the Second Act of Repeal nullified the Henrician reforms as well and thus returned the English Church to its pre-1529 state; twenty-five years of ecclesiastical and liturgical reform were thus undone in eighteen months. The Marian persecutions began in earnest in February 1555 with the first of nearly three hundred burnings, one of which was Cranmer himself. With the Archbishop died even the most unrealistic hopes of preserving reform in England; the Book of Common Prayer was legally dead after a life of only four years; and Protestant exiles fled England

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[26] This disagreement continues even in our own century, in which 1552 has been both praised for its doctrinal purity and decried as the "low water mark" of English religion (Procter and Frere, *History*, 85).

[27] Quoted by R. W. Heinze in Ayris and Selwyn, *Thomas Cranmer*, 264.

for the safety of the Continent, bringing with them the Prayerbook, the textual spark of hope for the Protestant future of the Church of England.

The history of the Prayerbook thus leaves England during the reign of Mary Tudor, and the events surrounding it on the Continent were a portent of its subsequent career. Several hundred of the English exiles migrated to Frankfurt, where they formed a congregation led by William Whittingham. Without the threat of conservative reprisal or the stabilizing restraint of institutional authority, liturgical reform could advance unchecked, and the congregation's leaders (including, by December 1554, such future luminaries as John Foxe and the redoubtable John Knox) soon discarded much of the Prayerbook in favor of sparer Calvinistic forms. These new forms were resisted by some of the congregation, so in February 1555 a compromise was drawn up; despite the moderating advice of Calvin himself, however, the church leaders retained most of the radical reforms. Thus the future of even the exiled BCP looked bleak. Within months, it had come to be regarded as obsolete and inadequate to "true" religion, and even among the similar sympathies of the exiles it failed to serve as a basis for unity or compromise. Even before Cranmer's death, the last spark of his liturgy seemed in danger of being extinguished.

All of this changed in March 1555 with the arrival of a party led by Dr. Richard Cox. Cox had been one of Prince Edward's tutors, a member of the original Windsor Commission which produced the Prayerbook, and vice-chancellor of Oxford University, where his vigorous prosecution of "popish" practices had earned him the nickname of "the Cancellor" – quite literally, a Reformation Terminator. Cox and his followers had one purpose in Frankfurt: the protection of England's liturgy. On his first Sunday there, he loudly interjected the responses that had been deleted in the new forms; when scolded by the church elders, he insisted that "they would do as they had done in England, and that they would have the face of an English Church."[28] This demonstrates quite clearly that, despite its brief life and quick demise at home, the Prayerbook already had deep associations of essential Englishness; Mary may have dismantled the Church of England, but the idea of a distinct national Church maintained an appeal for many, which carried a special force at a time when Mary's Spanish marriage and resubjugation to Rome posed such profound threats to English autonomy. Cox's mission was thus the preservation of an entire English identity in exile, founded primarily upon Protestant theology and this particular set

[28] Dickens, *English Reformation*, 346. Most of this account is drawn from his, 344–9. See also Arnoult ("Defining"), who (I think correctly) sees this episode as a defining moment for English Protestantism.

and uniform liturgy. The radical attacks and incursions on the Book of Common Prayer, as with later ones, seem to derive primarily from a proto-Puritan theological objection to the external constraints of set forms of worship, and to the "popish" implications of ceremonial, while its defense is framed largely in terms of its significance for communal order and nationalist identity. Calvin seems to have sensed this complex nationalism when he wrote to Cox that

certene off my frindes founde the*m* selves greved that yow woulde so preciselie urge the ceremonies off Englande / wherby it might appeere that ye are more geven and addicte to your countrie than reason woulde . . . [N]ether do I se to what purpose it is to burthen the churche with . . . hurtful and offensible ceremonies / when as there is libertie to have a symple and pure order.[29]

For Knox and the proto-Puritans, these were theologically "hurtful and offensible ceremonies" which contaminated authentic worship with popery and empty externals; for Cox and the proto-Anglicans, their importance derived mainly from the fact that they were the "ceremonies of England," and not a burden to the Church but the core of its identity and the nation's. In the end, the Coxians prevailed by having Knox expelled from the city, and the liturgy was restored. Their conflict had both saved the BCP and foreshadowed the debates which were to surround it for the next century.

Queen Mary and Cardinal Pole died within hours of each other on 17 November 1558, and with their death-knells sounded that of official English Catholicism. Henry and Edward had largely succeeded in making Rome the enemy in the eyes of the English, and Mary's resubjugation of the realm to Rome, along with the full restoration of Roman Catholicism, her hated marriage to Philip of Spain (and all it implied in terms of womanly subjection on a national scale), and the vivid memories of the flames of persecution had confirmed the demonization of the old faith.

Yet the newly crowned Queen Elizabeth had little intention of fostering further radical reform. Her first Parliament was opened with a sermon and prayer by none other than Richard Cox, the preserver of liturgical uniformity at Frankfurt. This signaled, despite the ambiguity of Elizabeth's own religious beliefs, the general thrust of her religious policy: national unity through liturgical uniformity, the restoration of moderate reform, suppression of religious dissent, and an uncompromising insistence on royal supremacy in ecclesiastical matters.[30] To quell the storm of speculation and

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[29] This contemporary translation is from Whittingham's *A brieff discours*, LI–LII.
[30] Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship*, 180.

debate over her religious policy, Elizabeth issued a royal proclamation on 27 December 1558 which forbade preaching and "unfruitful dispute in matters of religion."[31] Early in 1559, a set of royal injunctions restored moderate reform, and a new Act of Supremacy repealed the Marian repeals and specifically restored much of the Henrician and Edwardian legislation, as well as explicitly reasserting Elizabeth's supremacy under penalties ranging up to high treason.[32]

Concerning the reestablishment of the English liturgy, Elizabeth had both the lessons of the past and the demands of the present to consider. The conservative Catholic side, though disordered and discredited by Mary's tragic reign, still commanded respect as the voice of large segments of the nation's population.[33] On the other side, the minority reform faction, fired by the return of radicalized exiles from Protestant strongholds on the Continent, was highly vocal and increasingly well organized. As before, the actual process of revision is obscure, but a committee of divines seems to have been appointed to submit a revision, apparently based on the 1549 Prayerbook. The draft they finally submitted turned out to be more Reformed than the 1552 liturgy, and was thus quietly dropped by the government, which then submitted to Parliament a book which was essentially 1552 but revised in a conservative direction.[34]

The Elizabethan Book of Common Prayer differed from the 1552 liturgy in several small but significant ways. The Calendar and lectionary were altered, and several prayers added to the Litany. Some staples of schism and reform – references to the "detestable enormities" and "usurped power and authority" of the bishop of Rome, and the Black Rubric regarding kneeling – were dropped. The austere vestments clause of 1552 was replaced by a vague rubric which would cause controversy for centuries to come. And perhaps most importantly, the theological decisiveness of 1552 was at least partially undone by the new words of administration at Communion, which amalgamated those of the first two versions into a newly ambiguous form: "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was geven for thee, preserve thy body and soule unto everlasting life: and take and eate this, in remembraunce that Christ died for thee, and feede on hym in thy hearte

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[31] Gee and Hardy, *Documents*, 416.   [32] Ibid., 417–42 and 442–58.

[33] Although the Catholic position became increasingly untenable with edicts which condemned all English services (1562) and excommunicated Elizabeth (1570). Procter and Frere also note (*History*, 111) that Pope Pius IV seems to have been prepared to recognize the BCP in exchange for England's recognition of his religious supremacy – a bit of wishful thinking on his part that missed the central political thrust of the English Reformation.

[34] On this confused process, see Procter and Frere, *History*, 97–101, and Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship*, 181–2.

by fayth, wyth thankes gevynge."[35] The interpretive latitude of this form, which admits a wide range of doctrinal readings, typified one aspect of Elizabethan religious policy by delimiting a fairly broad and flexible range of acceptably centrist theology. Another aspect was embodied in the newly stiffened Act of Uniformity which made it law: the Crown's determination that all subjects would abide by its liturgical will.[36] Where Edwardian Uniformity prescribed graduated penalties of £10, £20, and life imprisonment for open derogation or obstruction of the Prayerbook, Elizabeth upped the stakes to 100 and 400 marks (£67 and £267 – devastating penalties for any but the wealthy) for the first two offenses. Furthermore, Edward's Act had simply forbidden the laity to use services other than the official ones; Elizabeth's expressly mandated that "all and every person and persons within this realm" actively attend service every Sunday and holy day, under penalty of a one shilling fine in addition to church censures. Passive uniformity was no longer enough, and the new queen expected the active participation of her subjects in their insertion into the socio-religious order. Even as the Elizabethan *via media* broadened the swath of common ground of belief, the links between state control of the liturgy and the behavior of individual subjects were growing more intimate.

Unsurprisingly, the advocates of thoroughgoing Swiss reform were not happy with the conservatism and ambiguities of the 1559 Book of Common Prayer, and their continuing efforts against it characterize much of the remainder of the reign. As early as 1562, articles were submitted and only narrowly defeated in Convocation, which would have abolished vestments, compulsory kneeling, crossing at baptism, and other practices distasteful to those of the Genevan persuasion. A bill was introduced in Parliament in 1571 which added confirmation, the marriage ring, and the questioning of infants at baptism to the list of suspect practices; this infringement on royal authority drew a warning to the entire lower house, and a summons before the Council for its authors. A bill offered the following year to make the use of the BCP optional met a similar fate, and Elizabeth issued a royal proclamation "against the despisers or breakers of the orders prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer." That same year, a new level of Puritan criticism was reached with the publication of *An Admonition to Parliament*, which attacked the "unperfect Boke, culled and picked out of that Popishe dunghill the Portuise and Masse boke, full of all abominations." The *Admonition* condemned the reading of services ("as evil as

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[35] Davies, *Worship and Theology*, 211.
[36] The act is printed in Gee and Hardy, *Documents*, 458–67.

playing upon a stage, and worse too") and prayers for the dead in addition to the standard ceremonial objections; its authors were soon reconsidering their critique in prison. In 1587, a full Genevan form was proposed in Parliament, and within days it was killed and its chief backers sent to the Tower. The year 1594 saw the publication of the first installment of Richard Hooker's massive *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, an elaborate rationale for the established and liturgically uniform Church of England which, with dissent from both right and left vigorously suppressed, was firmly in the ascendant at the close of Elizabeth's reign.[37]

The accession of James I in 1603 was the first in nearly a century not accompanied by major changes in religion and worship. The Puritans sensed an opportunity for further reform, and presented the new king with the Millennary Petition, the first point of which requested the redress of the familiar Puritan criticisms of the Book of Common Prayer. In response, James called the Hampton Court Conference the following year, which resulted in minor and superficial textual emendations to placate the reformists (as well as the far more significant commissioning of the Authorized Version of the Bible, which was itself a response to the perceived inadequacies of the Scriptures in the Prayerbook).[38] These meager concessions were incorporated into the minor revisions which became the Jacobean BCP in 1604,[39] and the royal proclamation which mandated the new Book made clear that subjects should "not expect nor attempt any further alteration" in service.[40]

The remainder of James's reign saw no more significant alterations in the liturgy other than the addition of a yearly commemorative service on the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot. The continued Puritan pressure, however, served to polarize the Church of England by fostering a reactionary High Church party now generally associated with Archbishop Laud. On the one side, the institutional Laudians encouraged a sense of the numinous in worship through rich furnishings and elaborate ceremonial; on the other, the Puritans increased their pressure for simpler and more extemporaneous Genevan services, and naturally saw Laudianism as thinly disguised resurgent papistry. In the reign of Charles I, the Book of Common Prayer became a chief battleground of this struggle, with the Laudians secure in

[37] Procter and Frere, *History*, 111–15; Cuming, *History*, 98–101.
[38] Brightman, *English Rite*, 1.clxxxiii.
[39] On the complex and arcane history of the Stuart BCP's, see Cuming, *History*, ch. 7; Procter and Frere, *History*, chs. 6 and 7; Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship*, 185–97; Brightman, *English Rite*, 1.clxxix–ccxi. More interestingly, see Ferrell, "Kneeling and the Body Politic," for an explication of the political and religious significance of kneeling in James's reign.
[40] Gee and Hardy, *Documents*, 515.

its institutional authority and the Puritans opposed to its inflexibility and doctrinal ambiguity.

Much of the Crown's liturgical energies in the third and fourth decades of the century were directed toward Scotland, where the post-Knoxian Church was feeling its way toward a new form of worship. James, Charles, and Laud were all desirous of bringing the Scottish Church into the English liturgical fold, but the Scottish bishops resisted and were eventually allowed to compose their own liturgy under Laud's direction. The resulting form of 1637 was closer to the 1549 Book than anything else, and unlikely to be welcomed by the populace that had welcomed John Knox only decades earlier. Its introduction on royal authority led to rioting and its hasty withdrawal – and, in Hobbes's account, to the English Civil War.[41]

By 1641, reconciliation between the royalist, Anglican, liturgical right and the parliamentary, Puritan left seemed all but impossible. By autumn, "it was the question of the Prayer Book which divided the House of Commons into the two great parties which thenceforward contended to the death."[42] Bills of ecclesiastical reform and anti-episcopal sentiment, as well as the wide-ranging Grand Remonstrance, issued from the Commons and were answered by increasingly hollow reassertions of the BCP's authority from the Lords and the Crown.[43] By the spring of 1642, both the Commons and the newly bishop-free Lords felt free to declare that they "intend a due and necessary reformation of the government and liturgy of the Church" without reference to the royal will. On 3 January 1645 – the day that Laud's attainder passed the House of Lords – Parliament declared the use of the Book of Common Prayer to be illegal, and enforced the ban in August with penalties similar to those in previous Acts of Uniformity. In its place was established the *Directory for the Public Worship of God*, which was more a collection of instructions than of common prayers; for example, it suggested sequences of topics for prayer rather than dictating fixed formulae.[44] A royal proclamation in November reasserting the BCP seems to have had no practical effect on the Puritan purge. For the next fifteen years, use of the Prayerbook was proscribed,[45] as Catholic and Puritan worship had been in

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[41] Hobbes argues that this "unlucky business" of the Scottish BCP provided the Presbyterians with a key opportunity to provoke the king, and eventually resulted in his fateful summoning of the Long Parliament (*Behemoth*, 28–38).

[42] Procter and Frere, *History*, 155.   [43] Cf. e.g. Gee and Hardy, *Documents*, 553, 562–3.

[44] Cuming, *History*, 110; Procter and Frere, *History*, 158–9; Brightman, *English Rite*, 1.clxxxix.

[45] The outlawing of the BCP was far from successful. John Morrill (*Nature*, 163–70) points out that the Prayerbook was widely, if prudently, used throughout the 1640s and 1650s, and that during that period more parishes possessed the BCP than the official Directory – evidence of a widespread and deeply ingrained commitment to the banned liturgy.

the past, and a number of prominent Anglican royalists (the high degree of overlap between these two categories was far from coincidental) were imprisoned, exiled, or executed.

The Restoration of Charles II in 1660 featured as one of its center-pieces the restoration of the liturgy. For this purpose, he appointed twelve reinstated bishops and twelve Presbyterian divines to discuss whatever revisions would be "needful or expedient for the giving satisfaction to tender consciences and the restoring and continuance of peace and unity in the churches under our protection and government."[46] The Savoy Conference took place in 1661 and was the predictable showdown of High and Low Church interests, but by this time the bishops were back in control and able to force the Presbyterians to make their case to them. Despite a barrage of suggestions, the bishops had little to gain from concessions and ended up making only minor ones. From here, the negotiations were transferred to Convocation and finally to Parliament; at each stage, the agendae of right and left were haggled through in great detail.[47]

In the end, though, what emerged was a text very much like that of 1604, with only minor alterations and no radical changes. The new Preface is polemically directed at the Puritans, and asserts the authority of the previous liturgies over which they had caused so much trouble; one of the revisers' central aims was "the cutting off occasion from them that seek occasion of cavill, or quarell against the Liturgy of the Church." Also added whole are new services for adult baptism ("always usefull for the baptizing of Natives in our plantations") and prayers at sea. Other additions include various occasional prayers and thanksgivings, along with clarified rubrical instructions. The Communion service was again conservatized with the restoration of a commemoration of the dead, the manual acts of consecration, and the hint of consubstantiatory doctrine. The scriptural lessons were redone from the Authorized Version of 1611, with the exception of the Psalms, which remained in Coverdale's translation. Hundreds of minor verbal alterations removed archaisms and ambiguities. But this was not a new Prayerbook, nor was it a doctrinally innovative one; it was the old Book, a lineal descendant of 1549, clarified and slightly expanded.

The fourth and last Act of Uniformity became law in May of 1662, and required general use of the new liturgy by August. The Act required all clergy to declare openly their complete endorsement of the new liturgy: "I,

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[46] Gee and Hardy, *Documents*, 591.
[47] I needn't rehearse the minutiae here, but they can be found in Cuming, *History*, ch. 7, and Procter and Frere, *History*, ch. 7.

A. B., do here declare my unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the said book entitled, The Book of Common Prayer."[48] It also required all clergy, schoolteachers, cathedral officials, university teachers, and tutors to subscribe to a set declaration that "I, A.B., do declare that it is not lawful, upon any pretence whatsoever, to take arms against the king; and that I do abhor that traitorous position of taking arms by his authority against his person." In effect, the Act sought – in addition to its keystone of liturgical uniformity under penalty of law – to undo or neutralize not only the execution of Charles I, but all of the vertiginous political and religious events of the past twenty years. The memories of Civil War and Revolution, linked irrevocably to religious radicalism and liturgical iconoclasm, were very much present in the establishment of the 1662 BCP, which was the textual centerpiece of religious, social, and political Restoration, the turning of the English world back right-side up.

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[48] Gee and Hardy, *Documents*, 604. This had of course never been the case, and set a higher standard than ever before, but perhaps in 1662 the stakes of uniformity were more viscerally apparent than they had ever been.

Representation and authority in Renaissance literature

LITURGY AND LITERATURE

When the imprisoned Cranmer asked his interrogators in 1554, "who say it is necessary that he which useth to speak by tropes and figures should lie in so doing?", he highlighted the centrality of representation and reading to the entire Reformation project. The hostility of his examiners to the destabilizing implications of figural reading – "whosoever saith that Christ spake by figures, saith that he did lie" – demonstrates how, despite its varied and extraordinarily rich medieval interpretive tradition, the Roman Catholic Church under Reformed pressure reverted to a dogmatic and uncompromising literalism, a hermeneutically reactionary rejection of figurality in general much like that often rather crudely attributed to Protestantism. The Reformed challenge, which undercut the institutional power of transubstantiation by circumventing it with a figural reading of the dominical words – and thus reorienting both doctrine and sacrament away from institution and elements and toward the individual – polarized this Reformation debate, like many others, around questions of rhetoric and interpretation, representation and hermeneutics. In this case, the old faith sought to control, minimize, annihilate the unruly space of signification; the new insisted that this space, both sacramental and scriptural, was the arena of truth.

This latter claim in particular is necessarily subject to some qualification: no mainline version of Protestantism endorsed or allowed an utterly free play of signs. Zwingli was no less insistent on his view of the sacrament than the Pope was on his, and the literalist strain undeniably present in Protestantism manifests a deep anxiety over the chaos of reading not far removed from what I've observed in Catholicism. My point is simply that the interpretive moment itself is newly central in Protestantism; truth and grace emerge from fundamentally interpretive individual encounters with the signifying fields of Scripture and sacrament. Though this particular set of alignments sits rather curiously beside both Protestant literalism and

Roman Catholic allegorism (and in particular the crucial and almost limitless gap between substance and accidents, which achieved closure, quite literally, only through dogmatic fiat), I think both of these tensions can ultimately be explained in terms of political and hermeneutic exigencies. And it is essential to understand that in the Catholic sacrament, which appears to support an almost total disjunction of appearance and significance, the relation of sign and referent (in this case, accidents and substance) is emphatically *not* a figural one, as it explicitly *is* in the Reformed.

In England, as I have argued, this emphasis on figurality and reading carried enormous freight: it was the theological linchpin of both Protestant individualism and a reconstituted national order (as its inverse had been the linchpin of Catholic order), as well as the central point of negotiation between the claims of each. It was also the primary evangelical weapon against Catholic "idolatry" – the variously misdirected devotion that focused on collapsed signs (primarily sacramental and visual) rather than on the graceful God to whom they were supposed to point referentially. For most Protestants, idolatry was thus a hermeneutic problem, and it was accordingly often combated by emphasizing the structure and potential of signs which necessarily and symbolically represent *something else*. A proper understanding of the individual's relation to the social and divine orders, one might say, required a proper understanding of the relation of signs (including wafers, metaphors, poems, political personae, and pieces of fruit) to their referents.

Therefore, although the Book of Common Prayer has frequently been recognized over the centuries for its aesthetic power, its peculiar felicities of language and style, and its subsequent influence on the English language, its deliberate use of figural representation and critical reading to effect important cultural negotiations may provide a more productive cultural link to the literary flowering of the English Renaissance. It has been argued[1] that in the wake of the Reformation's destabilization of traditional forms of authority, representational discourse became both a conspicuous ground of negotiation and a primary mode of authority. And the long history of conflict surrounding the Prayerbook, as well as the tensions it embodied from the start, center around both the fragility and the enormously enhanced cultural potential of representation itself. Might there not be some essential and positive link between Reformation's redistribution of authority, its recasting of representation as a mode of transformative and unifying potential, and the ensuing explosion of literary representation (much of

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[1] Weimann's *Authority and Representation in Early Modern Discourse* is, in a sense, a book-length explication of the "link (which, I suspect, is of unique cultural potency) between the decline of given, unitary locations of authority and an unprecedented expansion of representational discourses" (8).

it notably self-reflexive) later in the century? For there is in subsequent literature an implicit faith in the power of signs strikingly analogous to that advanced, in a theological context, in the Prayerbook.[2]

My intention is not to assert a direct causal relationship between the Prayerbook and the authors I address here; though the legal requirement of liturgical uniformity makes it virtually certain that Sidney and Shakespeare were intimately familiar with the BCP and steeped in its expression,[3] neither author explicitly engages its form, content, or cultural logic. Rather, my aim is to trace a deeper and broader route of cultural consequence from Reformation to Renaissance, from liturgy and theology to literary theory and practice. In instituting a formalized and mandatory communion service that demanded individual construal of an ambiguously symbolic sacrament, as well as insisting on the importance of individual Bible-reading, the English Reformation (and especially the BCP) had replaced a belief in the immanent sacramental presence of God himself with a newly stressed faith in the power of representations and their faithful interpretation to define, express, and transform our relation to the divine; at the same time, representation and reading became the active field of negotiation between the identity and authority of both the individual and the collective order. This distinctive overlapping of representation, religion, individual autonomy, and national identity – a concatenation made uniquely possible by the English Reformation – is clearly visible in the Renaissance literary samples I am about to examine. In the process, my analysis will articulate some important links between early modern political, religious, and literary culture in England.

This chapter will discuss Sidney's *Defence of Poetry* and Shakespeare's history plays as manifestations of this newly enhanced cultural faith in representation. Both of these authors oppose a hermeneutic mode which collapses the distinction between signifier and signified, a mode which we may provisionally (in the light of both my previous analyses and contemporary ways of thinking) think of as "Catholic";[4] both promote instead a self-aware

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[2] Weimann, again (ibid., 4): "the 'interpretive imperative' served as an invisible link between the diverse promises of emancipation associated with Protestant piety and the 'redemptive' uses of secular writing and reading respectively. In both directions, a new construction of the self emerged through the interiorization and privatization of meaning."

[3] Richmond Noble (*Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge*), and more recently Naseeb Shaheen (*Biblical References*), have demonstrated, through hundreds of liturgical echoes, the pervasiveness of the Prayerbook in Shakespeare's linguistic expression.

[4] Paradoxically, of course, the most immediate antagonists of Renaissance literature and theatre were not Catholics but Puritans like Gosson, Stubbes, and Prynne. But iconoclastic suspicion is, I suggest, essentially a reactionary reproduction of a prior belief; the smashing of an image is perhaps the critical counterimage of its veneration. Both depend on a belief in (or fear of) a peculiar strength of signs in and of themselves – a relatively direct and nonnegotiable connection, for better or worse, to the signified (or an idolatrous absorption into the sign itself). See Diehl, *Staging Reform*, ch. 1, and esp. pp. 12–22.

interpretive participation in signs – both literary and otherwise – which is potentially redemptive[5] and, I contend, a recognizable cultural outworking of Reformation. At the same time, their differences in focus indicate the importance of representation for both sides of the tensions encapsulated and synthesized in the Prayerbook: for Sidney, correctly interpreted poetic representations have the decidedly theological power to elevate and transform the individual, while for Shakespeare, they are a legitimate and stable means of national unification.[6]

SIDNEY AND REDEMPTIVE INTERPRETATION

Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poetry*, written some thirty years after the appearance of the Book of Common Prayer, specifically excludes religious considerations from its central purview. Sidney makes two deliberate moves to ensure, as it were, the secularity of his argument. First, he cordons off religious literature as, though the highest and best kind, something distinct from his real subject of the "right poet." Secondly, although he adduces poetry's long vatic tradition and the Psalms of David as evidence of its high cultural position, he distances himself from Neoplatonic claims about the divine inspiration of poetry, upholding instead a poetic process entirely contained within the human sphere ("freely ranging only within the zodiac of his own wit"),[7] and connected to the divine only by way of analogy. Plato himself, Sidney notes, "attributeth unto poesy more than myself do, namely, to be a very inspiring of a divine force, far above man's wit" (109).

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[5] This may seem a strange term to apply (as I will) to secular politics, but note that the *OED*'s first recorded use of the word occurs in the phrase "Redemptive Divine Right" (Hudson, *The Divine Right of Government*, 1647) – though I will not be linking redemption and divine right in Shakespeare's histories.

[6] The differences among these instances are worth noting; Sidney, Shakespeare, and the Prayerbook of course don't say exactly the same thing about representation, and my claim is not that these authors simply reproduce the logic of the Prayerbook but rather that they literally extend some of the implications of that way of thinking. Sidney makes specific claims about the nature of poetic representation, and the consequent potential for redemptive reading. In Shakespeare, these concerns are simultaneously theoretical, thematic, and formal: the implicit claims made for theatrical representation in (and of) politics and history operate within and outside of the plays, in their internal functions as well as in their theatrical structure. A thoroughly articulated taxonomy of the varieties of early modern representation is beyond the scope of the present study; if such a project is possible, it might provide a productive topography of contemporary culture. Still, this chapter proceeds on the heuristic assumption that these instances are indeed related (though distinct), thematically and genealogically; within these similarities, their differences are perhaps evidence of the very depth, flexibility, and polymorphousness of the early modern category of representation.

[7] *Miscellaneous Prose*, 78. All further references to the *Defence* (some given parenthetically in the text) are from this volume.

Sidney's poesy is planted firmly and deliberately within the terrestrial, a thoroughly human endeavor.

Nevertheless, there is much of the theological in his discussion of the "sacred mysteries of poesy" (121), and I want to argue that in many ways, the Sidneian poetic is a recognizable heir of the Reformation.[8] Indeed, Sidney systematically allies poesy more closely with theology than with any purely secular endeavor, even in non-Christian cultures: "see whether the theology of [ancient Greece] stood not upon such dreams which the poets indeed superstitiously observed – and truly (since they had not the light of Christ) did much better in it than the philosophers, who, shaking off superstition, brought in atheism" (108). The central task of the *Defence* is to advocate poetry's cultural value by clearing out a primarily ethical space for it. For Sidney, literature is a discourse of imagination and self-improvement, capable of mitigating to some degree our sinful condition and leading us on toward the good. The central problematic it addresses is precisely our postlapsarian condition of pervasive sin ("that first accursed fall of Adam"), which confronts us with a chasm between the real and the ideal: "our erected wit maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected will keepeth us from reaching unto it" (79). While literature on its own can certainly never bridge this chasm altogether, its operations can bring us closer to the other side, in a limited and worldly version of divine salvation – a secular analogue, perhaps, to the Protestant process of sanctification, the saved sinner's ongoing struggle to conform to the perfections of the divine will. Indeed, the *Defence's* definitions of poetry register both the radical disjunction of wit and will, and the possibility of a limited remedy through literary representation. The final end of all learning, Sidney maintains, is "to lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clayey lodgings, can be capable of . . . to know, and by knowledge to lift up the mind from the dungeon of the body to the enjoying his own divine essence" (82). And poetry offers the greatest secular potential for this sort of achievement in its "ethic and politic consideration, with the end of well-doing and not of well-knowing only" (83).

Some large claims, then, are made on behalf of imaginative literature, which Sidney defines as a mimetic "representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth – to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture[9] – with this end, to teach

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[8] This is of course not a from-the-ground-up claim; Continental Catholic theorists, and indeed many of Sidney's sources, had developed similar views of representation without Reformation. It's the way Sidney conceives, builds, and inflects his argument that I think is distinctively Protestant.

[9] A counterpart, perhaps, to Hooper's "visible words" of the sacraments?

and delight" (80). What exactly qualifies it for the quasi-redemptive "divine consideration of what may be and should be" (81), and enables it to "plant goodness even in the secretest cabinet of our souls" (85)?

One can begin answering this question by looking at Sidney's examination of the relative merits of poetry's two chief rivals in secular moral learning. Philosophy and history present different claims for the crown of virtuous learning, and Sidney satirizes both. Philosophy's hold on the universe of moral virtue consists of its abstract consideration of ideas and ideals, the logical induction and deduction of the categories of essential good and evil. In Sidney's acerbic description,

These men casting largess as they go, of definitions, divisions, and distinctions, with a scornful interrogative do soberly ask whether it be possible to find any path so ready to lead a man to virtue as that which teacheth what virtue is . . . by showing the generalities that containeth it, and the specialities that are derived from it; lastly, by plain setting down how it extendeth itself out of the limits of a man's own little world to the government of families and maintaining of public societies. (83)

The end result of this method is, of course, a curiously unproductive sort of moral instruction. Philosophy's abstractions and difficulty militate against translation into virtuous action; lacking concrete application, even the "many infallible grounds of [philosophical] wisdom . . . lie dark before the imaginative and judging power" (86), floating high above the sphere of real human activity.

History offers precisely this solidity of the real world, but this too proves inadequate in Sidney's account. For the historian is overly bound to the capricious facts of reality, and must recount a morally undifferentiated history in which virtue is not invariably rewarded, nor vice reliably punished. In short, history offers no stable moral structure; the historian, armed only with his "old mouse-eaten records" (83) and his "bare *Was*" (89), is obligated to paint a morally inconsistent picture, one which may in fact encourage evil in a world of Machiavellian pragmatism. In fact, historical causation itself, ostensibly the linchpin of instructive history, lies often beyond the reach of historiography and accessible only through poetic imagination: "Many times [the historian] must tell events whereof he can yield no cause; or, if he do, it must be poetically" (89).

History and philosophy, then, both ultimately fail as vehicles of moral instruction.[10] The hazy abstractions of the philosophers have no imaginative

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[10] Margaret Ferguson (*Trials*, 146–51) argues, though, that their practitioners are resurrected as useful, critically reading allies when Sidney turns to his defense of poetry against abuses; the philosopher and historian are "metamorphosed from deluded writers into astute readers."

and effectual hold on real human activity, and thus very little impact upon it. The historian's concrete facts of human endeavor have no consistent informing principle, no transcendent significance beyond themselves, and his examples thus provide "no necessary consequence, and therefore a less fruitful doctrine" (85).

In Sidney's schema, it is poetry and poetry alone that exceeds these two forms of secular moral learning. Poetry's great virtue in this context is that it combines the strengths of both history and philosophy while avoiding their weaknesses. From philosophy, it takes ideas and principles but not its inaccessibility; from history, it takes the concrete example but not its randomness. The poet's golden world is one in which facts are *created* and informed with the consistency and purpose of a clear moral idea. By combining the virtues of history and philosophy, the poet creates a world whose moral, instructive, and transformative value exceeds them both. The "peerless poet" is indeed the "right popular philosopher" (87), through whom moral truth is made real, "illuminated or figured forth by the speaking picture of poesy" (86). Given poetry's moral goals, this "figuring forth" carries an important double (one might even say sacramental) sense in Sidney's argument: morality and virtue are figured forth not only in the fictional text but, in turn, in the attentive reader as well.

To bolster his argument decisively for the transforming power of the figurative, Sidney adduces no less a fellow poet and moral instructor than Christ himself, who "vouchsafed to use the flowers of [poetry]" (99), and who "could as well have given the moral commonplaces of uncharitableness and humbleness as the divine narration of Dives and Lazarus; or of disobedience and mercy, as that heavenly discourse of the lost child and the gracious father . . . [which] more constantly (as it were) inhabit both the memory and judgement" (87). Much of Christ's teaching, Sidney observes, is in the form of self-consciously fictional parables, which should not be mistaken for historical accounts (this would cripple their moral significance by limiting them to the amoral realm of mere events); these poetic teachings carry truth by representing and embodying moral ideas, which are both created and received through the "imaginative and judging power." Sidney implies that Christ, in his role as teacher, deliberately chose the role of poet over those of historian and philosopher.[11]

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[11] This observation would apply by extension to God himself, whose inspired Word is pervasively figural and poetic (as so influentially observed by Lewalski); Donne would later explicitly make this case in Expostulation 19 of his *Devotions*.

The ultimate point of both parables and poesy, of course, is moral instruction, and Sidney's rhetoric reflects the quasi-religious importance of imaginative representations: poetry deals with the *katholou* or universal consideration (and quite literally, a catholicity of purpose and authority which exceeds that of the attenuated Roman Church), and in this consideration the perfections of Xenophon's fictional Cyrus are clearly "more doctrinable" (88) than Justin's historical one. Paradoxically, Sidney strips truth in its largest philosophical and moral sense from the factually accurate and accords it instead to the self-consciously fictional and imaginative – a mode whose claims to truth are based precisely upon its fictivity. To recall Archbishop Cranmer's puzzled question, "who say it is necessary that he which useth to speak by tropes and figures should lie in so doing?" Both Cranmer and Sidney implicitly affirm that sometimes tropes and figures are the fullest and most effective vehicles of truth.

This is possible, in Sidney's case, because poetry's fusion of the universal and the particular transcends the gap between history and philosophy, exceeding them both by creating a metaphorically embodied ideality. And this enables a further crucial bridge, across the canyon between *gnosis* and *praxis*. In his well-known discussion of "moving," Sidney divides knowledge from practice: if knowledge alone (and, for the most part, philosophy along with it) is stuck on one side, gazing longingly and helplessly at the final payoff of *praxis* on the far side, no form of human learning is as apt to carry us across the chasm as poetry is. It is this translation of knowledge into action – "the end of well-doing and not of well-knowing only" (83) – this moral and practical transformation, which is "well nigh both the cause and effect of teaching" (91). And this transformation is precisely what allows us to accomplish (actually, precisely what *is*) the central aim of poetry: to efface the disjunction between wit and will, between our sin-stained condition and our higher aspirations. (This, again, interestingly parallels the distinction between justification and sanctification: between the radical moment of being saved [to which, for most Protestants, we contribute nothing] and the ongoing process of becoming holy [in which we do have a concrete and active role]. In this sense, one might say that poetry can't save our souls,[12] but it can make us saints.)

So what has all this to do with the English Reformation and the Book of Common Prayer? A lot, I would suggest. The Prayerbook's Protestant

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[12] Or maybe it can: in the conclusion of his argument, Sidney (perhaps with tongue in cheek) suggests that the reward for various sorts of poetic belief is that "your soul shall be placed with Dante's Beatrice" (121), i.e. in heaven.

theology and Sidney's cultural–poetic theory exhibit some striking similarities in the status and role they carve out for representation. They both, in opposition to powerful and pervasive cultural suspicion, posit a particularly close relationship between figurality and truth; indeed, they both insist that figurality is *essential* for an understanding of certain profound modes of truth. They both view representation as a means toward an ultimate goal of moral or spiritual transformation. And they both position representation as a peculiarly potent site of negotiation between real and ideal, mundane and transcendent, earth and heaven – a means of apprehending "that unspeakable and everlasting beauty to be seen by the eyes of the mind, only cleared by faith" (77).

There may be more specifically significant parallels between the theological situation faced by the Prayerbook and the moral situation faced by Sidney; in each case, the answer appears to be figurality and good reading. Roman Catholic transubstantiation's transcendent claims were based on its highly idealized sacrality, its anti-empirical claims that, regardless of what they appeared to be, the sacramental elements were indeed the body and blood of Christ. These claims to presence and ultimate truth were, in the eyes of evangelicals, intensely problematic: in artificially attempting to resolve this purely spiritual and conceptual relationship by dogmatic literalization, Catholic doctrine destroyed its own credibility and paradoxically fostered a cult of idolatrous public devotion. Similarly, Sidney portrays the claims of philosophy as, though perhaps valid, so abstract, so ethereally vague and inaccessibly idealized, that they have little chance of concrete results in the real world of decisions and actions. In each case, there is a failure to link the ideal to the real properly and symbolically, and hence a failure of outcome. At the other pole, Zwinglian theology asserted that sacramental elements were nothing more than bread and wine; this non-sacral theology was criticized by many for being too mundane and specific, too empirically limited and thus sacramentally undifferentiated. (This is not entirely fair, as even the Zwinglian sacrament is clearly set apart to operate in a different symbolic register; after all, a *completely* desacralized Eucharist would be nothing more than a snack[rament].) And for Sidney, history shares some of these crippling limitations: in its commitment to real, concrete facts, history is by definition morally undifferentiated and thus unable to instruct or transform. In both cases, then, there is a conflict between heavenly abstractions and mundane realities, and the job of both sacrament and poesy is to resolve that conflict meaningfully.

In each of these situations, a mechanism is proposed which is not simply a compromise or mean between two extremes; it is a productive fusion of

the essential virtues of each pole that transcends the limited potentialities of either. And in each case, the proposed solution is above all a *representation* which bridges the gap between fact and idea, subject and object, earthly and divine. The Prayerbook Sidney used promotes a transformative principle of sacred representation, a field of spiritually effective but explicitly figural signs which, when correctly interpreted (i.e. faithfully received as covenant symbols), redemptively synthesize the physical and spiritual.[13] And for Sidney, the ultimate secular moral tool is imaginative poetry, whose literary representations, when correctly interpreted, productively fuse real and ideal, particular and universal, gnosis and praxis, in morally transformative ways. In both the Prayerbook and the Sidneian poetic, the final purpose of this synthetic, representational form of truth is the drawing of the recipient toward truth, the good, the divine, the eternal, in a transformation of heart, mind, and will – a turn from sin to sanctification through a deliberate and self-aware internalization of signs (whose beneficial effects might then even exceed the expectations of the recipient).

This relationship between figural representation and truth may be further clarified by Sidney's refutation of the common charge that poets are liars who state the false as true. Sidney's response is a further distancing of poetry from the limited world of facts to which history is bound; poetry's truth-claims are primarily derived not from the real but from the ideal. In a famous passage:

Now, for the poet, he nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth. For, as I take it, to lie is to affirm that to be true which is false. So as the other artists, and especially the historian, affirming many things, can, in the cloudy knowledge of mankind, hardly escape from many lies. But the poet (as I said before) never affirmeth. The poet never maketh any circles about your imagination, to conjure you to believe for true what he writes . . . [The goal of the poet is not] to tell you what is or is not, but what should or should not be. (102)

Again, poetry establishes its claims to truth by way of its representation of the ideal. The ethical and subjunctive mood of this representation ("what should or should not be"), predicated upon the self-conscious disparity

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[13] This does not, though it might seem to, necessarily imply a Calvinist reading of the Prayerbook Eucharist. The issue is not whether or not there is spiritual presence within the elements (i.e. between Calvin and Zwingli), but rather whether grace can be transmitted, and spiritual regeneration triggered, via explicitly representational sacramental signs (which they would both affirm). So perhaps this might rule out a Lutheran reading, but as I've argued, any kind of theologically specific case is difficult to make because, except for 1552, the BCP sacrament has always maintained a politic vagueness – thus further enhancing the role of individual interpretation in construing what the sacrament *meant*.

between real and ideal, is what gives poesy its transformative moral force in shaping the real.

But poetic representation can have little effect without the active cooperation of thoughtful readers; poesy's potential is only realized in its proper reception. Indeed, Sidney's defense of poetry is at times just as much a defense of good reading, which both helps readers internalize the promise of poesy and protects them from the dangers of misreading.[14] Consequently, to avoid the sort of interpretive abuses (whether accidental or intentional) which can turn even God's word into heresy, and to make use of the "inward light each mind hath in itself" (91),[15] the reader of literature must be keenly aware of two related sets of distinctions. First, he or she must be conscious of our sinful predicament, the disparity between our "infected will" and our "erected wit," which it is poetry's central ethical task to mitigate. Without some awareness of the crucial otherness of the ideal embodied in literature, the reader would have little chance of being "moved" toward it. Secondly, the realization that poetry is not an art of falsehood requires a grasp of the importance of its fictionality in its claims to truth. If, for Sidney, all worthwhile poetry is moral idealization, the reader must comprehend both the distinctiveness and the necessity of its fictive nature in order to be moved toward the improvement it offers.

What child is there, that, coming to a play, and seeing *Thebes* written in great letters upon an old door, doth believe that it is Thebes? If then a man can arrive to that child's age to know that the poets' persons and doings are but pictures of what should be, and not stories what have been, they will never give the lie to things not affirmatively but allegorically and figuratively written. And therefore, as in history, looking for truth, they may go away full fraught with falsehood, so in poesy, *looking but for fiction*, they shall use the narration but as an imaginative ground-plot of a profitable invention. (103; latter italics added)

In this passage, so important to Sidney's assertions about the truth-claims and ethical efficacy of literary representation as well as the proper hermeneutic stance towards it, two things may recall us to the Reformation debates surrounding the sacrament which were treated in the previous chapter. First, to rebut conservative and skeptical criticism of representation itself,

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[14] It may also be what enables a Christian reader to benefit from pagan texts: whereas a poor reader might read the *Iliad* as evidence for the existence of Zeus, a good reader can safely derive appropriate and transformative lessons in virtue. The way a text is read, in short, seems at least as important as the text itself or the authorial intention behind it. As Milton would argue in *Areopagitica*, even bad books "to a discreet and judicious reader serve in many respects to discover, to confute, to forewarn, and to illustrate" (*Complete Poems*, 727).

[15] Ferguson highlights both the Protestant emphasis of the "inward light" and the critical importance of interpretive responsibility in the use and abuse of poetry (*Trials*, 145–7).

he levels a charge of interpretive naïveté (or stupidity) by invoking the child topos: even a *kid* knows that there is a difference between a sign and its referent. This satirized collapsing of signifier and signified in a regressive refusal of figurality, fundamental to the suspicious charge of literary deceit, had also played an important role in the earlier theological debates. Half a century earlier, martyr John Frith had adopted a similar strategy to refute those who supported the Catholic reading of the sacrament as the literal body and blood of Christ: "I am sure," he wrote, "there is no man so child-like, but that he knoweth that the figure of a thing is not the thing itself . . . and yet we do, nevertheless, commonly call those figures by the name of the thing that they do represent."[16] For Frith, as for Sidney, to equate a sign with its referent is a mark of hermeneutic ignorance and potentially tyran-nous misreading (which might seek to quash the Reformed understanding of the Eucharist in one case, or literature itself in another).

Of course, accusing an opponent of childish naïveté is a common rhetor-ical strategy, and doesn't prove a meaningful link between two given instances. But in each of these two cases – the discourses of Reforma-tion theology and Renaissance literary theory – the accusation carries a similar point (interpretive ignorance) and is linked to a larger hermeneu-tic claim. For in both discourses, what is being asserted is the importance of a figural understanding of representation itself. In Sidney's account, to accuse poets of lying is to demonstrate a fundamental impercipience of the mode in which literature conveys truth – a misguided effort, made by those confused by poesy's verisimilitude, to read in the limited sphere of verifiable facts rather than as "true doctrine" (109) of moral ideality. In such cases, of course, much of the transformative potential of poesy is lost; only those who understand that it is written "not affirmatively but allegorically and figuratively" have a chance of fully reaping its benefits without falling into error. This in turn suggests the importance of a proper hermeneutic approach, one which embraces figurality and representation rather than ignoring, fearing, or rejecting them. Sidney's wise reader, who is open to the moral improvement literature offers, cannot dismiss poesy as either an idle trifle or a crafty artifact of falsehood; rather, he or she must come to it "looking only for fiction," aware of its special relations to both reality and ideality, and with a willingness to be transformed in thought, belief, and action.

The parallels between this mode of thinking and that which was liturgi-cally codified in the Book of Common Prayer should by now be fairly clear.

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[16] Russell, *Works of the English Reformers*, III.363.

Both the Prayerbook Eucharist and the Sidneian poetic insist on the absolutely critical centrality of figural understanding as a means of spanning the gap betwen real and ideal, earth and heaven. Both of these forms of truth must be accessed and understood in terms of signification, not absolute identity; in other words, both insist on a conscious engagement with systems of signs that are not (and cannot be) identical to their referents.[17] And both view this mode of interpretation as one with profound transformative potential, which offers the possibility (in differing degrees, of course) of negating the nasty effects of sin itself. Andrew Weiner, in his discussion of the *Defence*, cites a striking parallel from Swiss Reformer Henry Bullinger, in which mid-century theological argument resonates unmistakably with many aspects of Sidney's poetic theory.

The truest and most proper cause, why sacraments be instituted under visible signs, seemeth partly to be God's goodness, and partly also man's weakness. For very hardly do we reach unto the knowledge of heavenly things, if, without visible form, as they be in their own nature pure and excellent, they be laid before our eyes: but they are better and more easily understood, if they be represented unto us under the figure of earthly things, that is to say, under signs familiarly known to us. As therefore our bountiful and gracious Lord did covertly and darkly, nay rather, evidently and notably, set before us to view the Kingdom of God in parables or dark speeches; even so by signs it pleased him to lay before our eyes, after a sort, the very same thing, and to point out the same unto us, as it were painted in a table, to renew it afresh, and by lively representation to maintain the remembrance of the same among us.[18]

The notion that figures were an effective means for apprehending the divine was by no means exclusive to Protestantism; it was part of the Renaissance's intellectual heritage, and can be seen in the visual and allegorical culture of Catholicism.[19]

But on the crucial matter of the Eucharist, Roman Catholicism staunchly opposed the figural model, insisting instead on the strict literalism necessary for Christ's physical presence and all that came with it. If people like Bullinger and Cranmer thus to some degree shared a figural epistemology with their Catholic opponents, they differed from them in applying this principle to the sacrament, as well as Scripture, thus explosively releasing

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[17] As I argued in the previous chapter, this is true of both Zwinglian and Calvinist theology (either of which might be applied to the Elizabethan Prayerbook's Eucharist); despite the much "higher" implications of the latter, its sacramental mode is nevertheless explicitly figural.

[18] *Sir Philip Sidney*, 42–3.

[19] Shuger argues that Renaissance Christian rhetoric "operates according to sacramental rather than dialectical modes. It incarnates the spiritual and elicits the affective/intuitive response that can spring from visible sign to invisible reality" (*Sacred Rhetoric*, 227).

the interpretive energies so carefully bound up in transubstantiation and institutionally controlled reading. This, as I've argued, necessarily entailed a devolution of religious authority onto individual interpretive practices, including the rereading of the Bible in ways that undercut the interpretive hegemony of the Church; the recasting of eucharistic theology via a figural rereading of the dominical words is the most conspicuous example of this strategy at work. In the process of this hermeneutic revolution, representation and discourse emerged as newly central modes of cultural authority, the new site at which identity and authority would be mediated and negotiated.[20] Thus, though I've argued that the history of this dynamic is in England fundamentally religious, it should come as little surprise that it carries over into the secular, as Sidney continues to put great value, even in his deliberately secular argument, upon the empowering and sanctifying activity of careful reading.

By way of wrapping up this discussion, I want to point out briefly that, as in the Prayerbook's case, Sidney's focus on literary representation has connections to and implications for nationalism and order. To begin with, of course, the point of the *Defence* is the ability of literature to restore or establish a *moral* order, and to lead individuals to properly aligned existences within it. But in the long digression which forms the penultimate section of the piece, Sidney turns to a more specifically national context. This lengthy hand-wringing over why England "should be grown so hard a stepmother to poets" (110) has long been noted as a contrasting voice to other parts of the essay, which uphold a seemingly boundless scope for poetic imagination. Here, though he commends a handful of English authors and works, the bulk of Sidney's energy is spent castigating the remainder of the nation's output for its failure to observe the classical unities (of place, time, and action), decorum (of tone and genre, in the "gross absurdities" of the "mongrel tragi-comedies," in which class is also an issue, in their scandalous "mingling [of] kings and clowns" [116]), and a proper style of language and diction. The point of all these charges, it seems to me, is an insistence on the importance of an established and socially inflected *aesthetic* order, which provides a ground for the "right use of the material point of poesy" (117), an orientation necessary for the "virtue-breeding delightfulness" (120) of literature to take effect.

The significance of this in a national context (surely it is no coincidence that Sidney concludes his scolding with a Tyndalesque consideration of the excellencies of the English language as "most fit to honour poesy, and to be honoured by poesy" [120]) is in the spin that it puts on his entire argument.

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[20] See, again, Weimann's *Authority*.

For while Sidney's case is in many ways both more limited (in its focus on individual transformation) and more transcendent (in its connection to larger categories of truth) than this national frame, his digression implicitly orients his polemic as a critical exhortation that the English, as both a language and a nation, embrace and participate in the possibilities of poetry. The "sacred mysteries of poesy" may operate primarily in the sphere of individual interpretation and morality, but they are also an important mode of *national* transformation – a linguistically and sociopolitically communal pursuit of virtue which "deserveth not to be scourged out of the Church of God" (77). For both nation and individual, poetry is, as it were, a potential and quasi-sacramental means of sanctifying grace.

REFORMED POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORIES

These concerns also play an important role in the works of Shakespeare, where questions of representation repeatedly intersect with questions of authority, identity, order, and religion. The Book of Common Prayer had deployed Reformed doctrines of sacramental representation as an essential element in its reconstitution of the church polity in England; Sidney had used an analogous sense of representation and interpretation in a more secular but still theologically inflected context, in which fictive literary representations, properly read, become a means of sanctification in a national setting. I will argue in the remainder of this chapter that Shakespeare's history plays of the 1590s are yet another manifestation of the post-Reformation emphasis on the power of signs. These plays, in their compositional order,[21] enact a rehabilitation of political representation into a constructive and unifying cultural process; eventually, the ideal monarch is characterized as much by consciously fictive role-playing (recognized – and contributed to – as such by his subjects) as by good faith. Though much critical capital has been made in recent years of Shakespeare's "subversive" interrogation of monarchical power as a theatrical construct, I'd like to suggest that Shakespeare presents this political theatricality as a positive thing: in these royal representations – much as in the Prayerbook – the divisions between sovereign and subjects, Church and State, and collective and individual authority and identity are bridged, enabling productive new syntheses which are distinctively English and Protestant.

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[21] I will adopt the traditional Riverside sequence of 1H6, 2H6, 3H6, R3, KJ, R2, 1H4, 2H4, H5, though minor variations in this would not much affect my argument.

In the critical reaction of recent decades to a long tradition of idealized Christian readings of Shakespeare, considerations of the relationship between Shakespeare's theatre and contemporary Christianity have generally followed two main paths. One has focused on the opposition between the two, especially as it involved the iconoclastic Puritan hostility to "idolatrous" representation of all kinds.[22] The other, exemplified in the work of Louis Montrose and Stephen Greenblatt, argues that the success of the theatre was in substantial part due to its restoration of cultural ritual to a populace hungering for its lost Catholic ceremonies; theatrical representation thus becomes a form of compensation for the supposed bareness of Protestant worship.[23] In both cases, the relationship between drama and the adolescent English Protestantism is figured as a negative one of opposition, competition, even antagonism.

Recently, however, a few critics have taken seriously Foxe's "triple bulwark" of "players, printers, and preachers"[24] and begun to argue that the relationship of Protestantism and literary/theatrical practice was more constructive and positive than has heretofore been thought. Huston Diehl, for example, has contended that

[o]bserving (celebrating) the Lord's Supper and observing (watching) the Lord Chamberlain's men are . . . related cultural activities that help to structure the way Elizabethans and Jacobeans know and understand their world . . . [Both] insist on the figurative power of the visible sign, inculcating a new mode of seeing that, while it requires people to be skeptical about what they see and self-reflexive about their own looking, also encourages them to be receptive to the capacity of signs, in conjunction with spoken words, to move, persuade, and transform.[25]

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[22] See e.g. Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle*, 28: "anti-Catholic and antitheatrical polemics converge in this period because in a strongly Protestant discourse, . . . the theater, like the Catholic Church, is constructed as committing its patrons to the worship of hollow idols: outward signs, not inward essences, things of the flesh, not of the spirit." See also Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice*, chs. 4 and 6. Herman, *Squitter-wits*, looks beyond the theatre to find a general antipoetic bias in Protestantism. My objection to such accounts is not that there is no truth in them – there were, of course, evangelicals who opposed literary/theatrical representation for religious reasons – but that the model of a necessary antagonism is a distorting oversimplification (one which indicates various critical biases of its own). For corrective accounts, see not only the present study and those cited below, but also Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics*, and Butler, *Theatre and Crisis*, which demonstrates "how false it is to conceive of puritan feeling as being in a state of intransigent hostility towards the theatres in the 1630's" (94).

[23] See e.g. Montrose, "The Purpose of Playing"; Greenblatt, "Shakespeare and the Exorcists."

[24] *Acts and Monuments*, VI.57.

[25] "Observing the Lord's Supper," 150, 151. Her *Staging Reform* is an important book which bucks the dominant critical tendency by seriously exploring the productiveness, not the antagonism, of the relationship between Protestantism and Renaissance drama; it also offers a compelling critique of the Montrose/Greenblatt approach (94–109). Other major works in this vein include Paul Whitfield White's *Theatre and Reformation* and Jeffrey Knapp's *Shakespeare's Tribe*, which sees the theatre not

The following reading of Shakespeare's English histories situates itself generally with this latter critical grouping, and reads them in the light of the previous chapters' analyses of the Book of Common Prayer. Ultimately, I will argue, the political discourse of the history plays is a recognizable heir to the Prayerbook's reconfiguration of representation, authority, and national identity.

The three parts of *Henry VI* provide a backdrop for the subsequent histories, and present in loose episodic form fifty years of deepening political chaos under a weak monarch. Part 1 depicts the disastrous international results of complex domestic strife, and ends in a queasy peace cemented with a duplicitous marriage. Part 2 focuses on internal discord and the continuing moral and political dissolution of England; as the link between morality and politics rots into sheer Machiavellian chaos, good Duke Humphrey, the only major character with any moral credibility left, is destroyed by factional maneuvering. Part 3 is a reaping of the whirlwind, as rivalry erupts into civil war. The atrocities committed by both sides eliminate the possibility of any unsoiled claim to authority. If, as Herschel Baker suggests,[26] this leaves England itself as the tragic hero of the trilogy, England's monarchy has paid a terrible price for it; we're not left with much to believe in regarding the English throne (or any undergirding link between power and right), which is perched on the very edge of an abyss of ambition, lust, and savage violence.

Out of this maelstrom emerges the only character able to dominate the chaos. Richard of Gloucester certainly possesses the brutal lust for power that is required for success in this world, but so do many others. What sets him apart is a further gift for acting. In his first menacing monologue, he explodes into life and announces himself as both actor and Machiavel:[27]

> Why, I can smile, and murther whiles I smile,
> And cry "Content" to that which grieves my heart,
> And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
> And frame my face to all occasions.

as a secularizing form, but as a consciously religious and even sacramental institution. Even more significantly, Robert Weimann has undertaken a sweeping historical theorization of "the culturally potent links between the crisis of authority and the simultaneous expansion of representational form and function in the Reformation and Renaissance"; he argues that in the wake of the Reformation's dismantling of traditional, unitary structures of authority, representation and discourse became the grounds and sources of a recognizably modern cultural concept of authority ("'Bifold Authority,'" 168. See also his "Discourse," and his book-length collection of essays, *Authority*.).

[26] *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 592. In addition, all textual references will be taken from this edition.

[27] Rackin's assertion that "in Shakespeare's history plays there is a persistent association between Machiavellianism and theatricality" (*Stages*, 74) certainly applies to Richard, though I will argue that as a generalization about the histories it is rather misleading.

> I'll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall,
> I'll slay more gazers than the basilisk,
> I'll play the orator as well as Nestor,
> Deceive more slily than Ulysses could,
> And like a Sinon, take another Troy.
> I can add colors to the chameleon,
> Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
> And set the murtherous Machevil to school.
> Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?
> Tut, were it farther off, I'll pluck it down.
>   (*3 Henry VI*, III.ii.182–95)

Richard's subsequent career bears out this prophetic resumé of his acting skills. In the play that bears his name, his rise to power is dependent not only upon his ruthlessness but also upon his protean ability convincingly to adopt a variety of politically effective roles: loyal brother (I.i), ardent lover (I.ii, IV.iv), pious Christian (III.vii), humble refuser of the throne (III.vii), grateful friend (IV.ii), brave commander (V.iii), and even a simple man incapable of disingenuity:

> Because I cannot flatter and look fair,
> Smile in men's faces, smooth, deceive, and cog,
> Duck with French nods and apish courtesy,
> I must be held a rancorous enemy.
> Cannot a plain man live and think no harm,
> But thus his simple truth must be abus'd
> With silken, sly, insinuating Jacks?   (I.iii.47–53)

All of these roles, which Richard plays with a gleefully Marlovian abandon, allow him to achieve power through amoral and deceitful misrepresentation; he exploits at every turn the disjunction of seeming and being, constructing his crown out of the multiple personae which his demonic talent enables him to create ("thus I clothe my naked villainy / With odd old ends stol'n forth of holy writ, / And seem a saint, when most I play the devil" [I.iii.335–7]). And we're in on the joke all the way through, regularly updated by the transparently evil king on the precise nature of the deceptive relations between his actions and his motives. It is this singular genius he narrates and explicates for us, along with his utter divorce of ethics from politics, which enables this monster to take the throne.

Yet how anomalous is Richard? Although the play seems to want us to see Richard as a monster, a devilish aberration from whose despotic clutches Henry VII saved England, this is clearly not the case: Richard's startling

individuality,[28] which stands out in bold relief from the flat homogeneity of most of the other characters in the tetralogy, obscures the fact that he is very much a citizen of this world. To begin with, bad as Richard might be, he is through and through the product – one might say the inevitable outcome – of contemporary politics, which have long had little moral footing. The ever-deepening morass of the preceding three plays presents a world in which providential political theory has ceased to hold much meaning, especially for the political players (and, practically, for the saintly but weak Henry VI); legitimate claims of right have dissolved on all sides, replaced by pragmatism, manipulation, and horrifying acts of treachery.[29] Consequently, it is difficult to imagine a more qualified candidate for the throne than Richard, who combines the skills mentioned above with an astute faculty for misrepresentation, which cripples even the most basic survival instincts of his peers. Morally lost in a world bereft of political legitimacy, they are unequipped for this further dissolution of meaning, and Richard ascends with a Darwinian inexorability. For the two young princes, a prayerbook is an unproblematic sign of their innocence and piety (iv.iii.14); in Richard's hands (iii.vii.98), it becomes a tool of power via misrepresentation. Insufficiently skeptical readers like Lord Hastings, unable to comprehend the possible disjunction of sign and reality, are destroyed by the workings of the master manipulator.

So Richard's role-playing and strategic misrepresentations are clearly an ethical problem here, on several levels. His acting is a series of masks, behind which he is able to achieve the power he desires, and it depends on the credulity of his victims to succeed. Bad readers who fail to see through this are rewarded with destruction, and this play breeds almost limitless skepticism regarding the epistemological and ethical manipulability of representation. Yet, as a play, *Richard III* also depends on a similar credulity. The success of this horrifying interpretive lesson depends on two complicating factors: first, the implied legitimacy of its own claims to represent history, and second, the ability of an actor to play a role as convincingly as Richard himself, to (albeit temporarily) "fool" the audience into thinking of him as Richard. In other words, the play demands a certain faith in its unproblematic representationality in order to deliver a message of relentless

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[28] In his own words, "I am myself alone" (*3 Henry VI*, v.vi.83); "Richard loves Richard, that is, I am I" (*Richard III*, v.ii.183).

[29] Rackin (*Stages*, 27–8, 51, 62–75) observes that Richard's fall is the tetralogy's first sign of providential causality – an ideological clarity which will, of course, be severely questioned in the second tetralogy. Rackin usefully reads the histories as a series of meditations on historical causation; her study is generally relevant to the related concerns of the present chapter.

skepticism and the murderous abuse of such representation; it effaces its own theatricality even as it exposes Richard's as a moral abyss and mortal danger. Balanced on a razor's edge, it wants, I think, to draw a very tricky line between its own theatricality and Richard's.

This tension is at least partially resolved in the later histories, where this demonically abusable role-playing is rehabilitated into politically useful and ethically defensible practice. While the Yorkist tetralogy leads historically and politically to the triumph of Richmond at Bosworth Field, it points sequentially and thematically to the Lancastrian tetralogy and Henry V.

Significantly, however, another play intervenes. *King John* continues Shakespeare's exploration of the unstable relations between signification and reality, but its political representations are less evil than ineffectual. The action before Angiers in II.i is a semi-comic war of words, in which the contending parties of John and Arthur lay extravagant verbal claim to legitimate rule of England: first sniping at each other's legitimacy, then describing to the citizens of Angiers the horrors of the battle to come, and finally, after brief and apparently rather lame excursions, each asserting a bloodsoaked victory which confirms the justice of their claim to authority. Throughout, Hubert and the citizens refuse to acknowledge the authority of these empty words, insisting that they will open the city only to him who can demonstrate his legitimacy through action, "until our fears, resolv'd, / Be by some certain king purg'd and depos'd." The conflicted double sense of Hubert's "certain" – both a vague intensification of "some," and a synonym for "definite" – denies a clear and unproblematic relation between verbal representations of authority and the real thing. And the Bastard's appalled analysis underscores the theatrical stakes:

> By heaven, these scroyles of Angiers flout you, kings,
> And stand securely on their battlements
> As in a theatre, whence they gape and point
> At your industrious scenes and acts of death.
>
>   (II.i.373–6)

Given the ineffectual verbal posturing of what has gone before, the affronted irony of the Bastard's description is palpable, but his simile is surely right in its identification of the players as hack actors, not warrior kings. Such impudence on the part of the audience/citizens, of course, is anathema to both parties, who form a temporary and absurd confederation to destroy it: "France, shall we knit our pow'rs, / And lay this Angiers even with the ground, / Then after fight who shall be king of it?" (II.i.398–400). Hubert's challenge to the congruency of verbal representation and true authority,

far from being effectively answered, causes the situation to degenerate into something more reminiscent of Joseph Heller than of medieval heroism. And John's later, dying assertion that "I am a scribbled form" (v.vii.32) is a despairing recognition of the profound impotence of empty words.

King John also makes another, more constructive contribution to the political discourse of Shakespeare's histories. While Shakespeare's treatment is more complex and ambivalent than those of many other sixteenth-century writers, who recreated John as a proto-Protestant hero,[30] this play does set questions of national identity and authority in a new frame of reference. The papal legate Pandulph is a merciless meddler in European politics, destroying the fragile peace on account of a conflict with John over an archepiscopal appointment, and John's response is anachronistically comprehensive and ferocious:

> What earthy name to interrogatories
> Can taste the free breath of a sacred king?
> Thou canst not, Cardinal, devise a name
> So slight, unworthy, and ridiculous
> To charge me to an answer, as the Pope.
> Tell him this tale, and from the mouth of England
> Add thus much more, that no Italian priest
> Shall tithe or toll in our dominions;
> But as we, under God, are supreme head,
> So under Him that great supremacy,
> Where we do reign, we will alone uphold
> Without th' assistance of a mortal hand.
> So tell the Pope, all reverence set apart
> To him and his usurp'd authority.
> . . . .
> Though you and all the kings of Christendom
> Are led so grossly by this meddling priest,
> . . . .
> Yet I alone, alone do me oppose
> Against the Pope, and call his friends my foes.
> (III.i.147–60, 162–3, 170–1)

Praemunire, Erastianism, royal supremacy, restraint of annates – the legal cornerstones of the English Reformation are anticipated here, centuries before their historical advent. And so are some of its financial and administrative tactics: John follows up on this violent rhetoric two scenes later with a plan to "shake the bags / Of hoarding abbots" (III.iii.7–8) – a miniature

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[30] As in Bale's *King Johan* and, a bit less stridently, the anonymous *Troublesome Raigne*.

version of Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries. All this involves significant anachronism and distortion, of course, and John is later forced to re-enfief himself to Rome,[31] but the overall effect is the delineation of an autonomous English identity forged out of opposition to papal Rome and its trappings. And this is actually something of a watershed in Shakespeare's histories: whereas earlier characters like Winchester had explicitly used their papal authority as a tool of political power (cf. *1 Henry VI*, I.iii.52; III.i.47, 52), the intersections of religion and politics in the Lancastrian tetralogy take place in a strictly domestic context. The Archbishop of York in *2 Henry IV* may "turn insurrection to religion" (I.i.201), and the bishops of *Henry V* may have their own interests to protect, but the Roman origins of their authority are never visibly at issue; henceforth, the relations of politics and religion will be worked out within the borders of an autonomous England. In effect, one might say, the proleptic Reformation in *King John* has the effect of reconstructing the Church–State polity of the history plays; the earlier tetralogy depicts a pre-Reformation order of feudal struggle with Rome – it in fact literally begins with this tension, at the funeral of Henry V (*1 Henry VI*, I.i.32–6) – while the latter presents a recognizably post-Reformation order of intertwined royal and ecclesiastical power. This, along with the play's skeptical treatment of political representation, sets the stage for the fuller project of reconstruction enacted in the Lancastrian tetralogy.

This latter series (1595–9) begins with a complex and ambiguous play. The tragic hero of *Richard II* is of course the irresponsible poet-king, and Henry Bullingbrook is the able and pragmatic usurper; this tension of providential inheritance vs. Machiavellian effectiveness constitutes a traditional critical axis of the play, and centuries of debate have revolved around who is in fact the hero, which is the ascendant political philosophy. How are we to regard Richard's deposition, and Bullingbrook's rise? As tragic necessities, or as crimes against the divinely appointed political order? Queen Elizabeth herself, in famously identifying herself with Richard, seems to have agreed with the supporters of Essex who paid to have the play performed the night before his rebellion: *Richard II*, though appalled at the prospect, dangerously endorses the deposition of a divine-right monarch in favor of a more popular and able claimant. But many other readers – and here I would include any supporters of teleological readings of the histories, in

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[31] Which in Shakespeare's presentation further underscores the spuriousness of papal authority: Pandulph's presumptuous promise that "My tongue shall hush again this storm of war" (v.i.20) asserts an explicitly Christlike power over political events (cf. Luke 8:24), but he proves utterly unable to deliver.

which the tumults of the fifteenth century are a direct punishment for this crime – regard the play as Richard's, and see Bullingbrook as a grasping Machiavel little better than Richard III.

The long duration of these controversies,[32] I think, bears witness to the determined ambiguity of the play itself. Richard is unquestionably a bad king who has forfeited any conditional right to authority (Acts I and II are an exhaustive demonstration of this point), yet his assertions of indefeasible right are never decisively invalidated, and are seriously questioned only by the actual course of events. Bullingbrook is undeniably a usurper, yet no judgment rains down from heaven on him for his deeds – certainly not in this play, and arguably not in any other. The play's presentation of the simultaneous fall and rise is horrified by the one, fascinated by the other, and characterized by a deep ambivalence: it is impossible decisively to evaluate Bullingbrook's claims, Richard's divine connections (or his role in his own downfall), or the play's position on their intersection. The key scenes of transfer (III.iii, IV.i) are so ambiguous, so vague regarding agency or motive or action, that readers are left without a clear sense of moral direction. Consequently, most partisan readings of the play seem to end up saying more about the reader's politics than about the play's. If we can say with any confidence what *Richard II* is politically "about," perhaps it's simply about this difficulty, about the complexity and intractability of this clash of two diametrically opposed political philosophies – one which envisions authority as flowing unconditionally downward from heaven through a hierarchical society, and another which sees it welling up contingently from below (that is, in which performance criteria and popular as well as aristocratic assent can play a significant role).

But, one might think, there *must* be a way out of this dilemma; surely the play can't ultimately be about the impossibility of political decision or of the establishment of stable sociopolitical authority. I'd like to suggest that there is a constructive solution proposed, but that it lies outside the boundaries of this play. *Richard II* presents us with a conflict, much like that embodied in the Book of Common Prayer, between two sociopolitical visions: one based on a divinely ordained vertical order and the immanent presence of divine authority in the person of the king (this is what I am calling a sacral model of kingship), the other on the more pragmatic claims of competence, contingency, and dispersed authority. In the tetralogy, this

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[32] A quick survey of the criticism collected in Forker's *Richard II* makes the persistence of these debates quite apparent.

struggle is not resolved until Henry V, the "mirror of all Christian kings" (*Henry V*, ii.Cho.6), is able to resolve this conflict by uniting the claims of both. My readings of these four plays will argue that, as in the case of the Prayerbook, this synthesis depends on the function of representation itself in the construction and stabilization of a new polity.

The two central characters of *Richard II* do more than present us with two competing political philosophies; there is something about their respective approaches to signification itself that is worth thinking about. Richard is not only a divine-right absolutist (and a bad and tyrannical one), he's also a poet and something of a literalist, and these terms are related. When confronted with a problem or crisis, his characteristic response is to convert it wholly into language, metaphorizing it, exploring and explicating these metaphors, wrapping himself in folds of gorgeous eloquence. This behavior is visible in the play's opening scene, when Richard assures Mowbray of his impartiality:

> Now by my sceptre's awe I make a vow,
> Such neighbor nearness to our sacred blood
> Should nothing privilege him nor partialize
> The unstooping firmness of my upright soul.
>
> (i.i.118–21)

Richard's justice is guaranteed not with evidence, or precedent, or principle, but with an appeal to the royal scepter itself. Upon his return from Ireland two acts later, he expands upon the metaphorical fictions of the "king's land," and addresses the soil itself in an extravagant apostrophe which he literalizes into something resembling genuine belief.

> Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand,
> Though rebels wound thee with their horses' hoofs.
> As a long-parted mother with her child
> Plays fondly with her tears and smiles in meeting,
> So weeping, smiling, greet I thee, my earth,
> And do thee favors with my royal hands.
> . . . .
> Mock not my senseless conjuration, lords,
> This earth shall have a feeling, and these stones
> Prove armed soldiers, ere her native king
> Shall falter under foul rebellion's arms.
>
> (iii.ii.6–11, 23–6)

When Aumerle suggests that they get down to business, Richard's response is a lengthy simile (lines 36–53) which equates his royal glory with the

sin-searching sun. Significantly, this leads directly to an assertion of the permanence and divine derivation of his authority, which itself flows seamlessly into another deluded literalization.

> Not all the water in the rough rude sea
> Can wash the balm off from an anointed king;
> The breath of worldly men cannot depose
> The deputy elected by the Lord;
> For every man that Bullingbrook hath press'd
> To lift shrewd steel against our golden crown,
> God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay
> A glorious angel; then if angels fight,
> Weak men must fall, for heaven still guards the right.
> (III.ii.54–62)

In Richard's mind, tropes and divine right generate each other so immediately that they become indistinguishable. Anointing oil is equivalent to right; rebellious challenge becomes an elemental struggle of steel against gold; the crown itself is the focus of the assault; and Richard's army of animated stones is augmented by another of angels, as a philosophical (and metaphorical) belief is converted into a tangible fighting force mustered by a divine paymaster. More bad news brings Richard to a final burst of desperate hope:

> I had forgot myself; am I not king?
> Awake, thou coward majesty! thou sleepest.
> Is not the king's name twenty thousand names?
> Arm, arm, my name! a puny subject strikes
> At thy great glory.   (III.ii.83–7)

It would be almost comforting, in a way, to read Richard's words as bitterly ironic, but I don't think they are; though shaken, his tone is still one of genuine (if deluded) confidence. By this point in the scene – and it's not yet halfway through – he has taken at least four metaphorical conceptualizations of royal authority and literalized them, treating them as though these figures were the thing itself.

Examples such as these could be multiplied almost indefinitely. For Richard, a meditation on kingship becomes an eloquent speech on a crown (III.ii.160–70), itself further metaphorized as a theater in which he plays; a threat of deposition is figured less as a politically consequential event than as a personal exchange of accoutrements and signs.

> I'll give my jewels for a set of beads,
> My gorgeous palace for a hermitage,
> My gay apparel for an almsman's gown,
> My figur'd goblets for a dish of wood,
> My sceptre for a palmer's walking-staff,
> My subjects for a pair of carved saints[.]
>
> (III.iii.147–52)

In the deposition scene (IV.i), Richard figures himself as a betrayed Christ (170–1, 239–42), a tear-filled bucket (184–9), a "mockery king of snow" (260) to Bullingbrook's sun; his lost authority is only fully realized and grasped when it becomes a smashed mirror. Even at Pomfret, Richard continues in his complex and involuted soliloquy to "people this little world" with "still-breeding thoughts" (V.v.9,8) and metaphors.

Richard, in short, exists, both poetically and politically, at the level of the signifier, in what Thomas M. Greene has described as "a kind of formalist heresy."[33] In his world of symbols, signs are directly equivalent to their referents: the crown *is* kingly authority, his name *is* a standing army. There is no sense of slippage or potential dissociation between signifier and signified (in this respect, the poet-king is a rather poor poet indeed, and perhaps even an antipoet). And this hermeneutic is strikingly reminiscent in this respect of late-medieval Catholic theology, in which the sacramental elements were dogmatically not signs which pointed to some external referent, but precisely *were* that referent; in the Reformed account, this collapsed hermeneutic generated not only authority but also tyranny. In Richard's case as well, this absorption is symbolically and thematically related to his political philosophy, which hinges on a similarly irrefragable and unproblematic identity of person, authority, and office: for him, kingship is not conditional but immutable and divinely ordained, and his authority as king is absolute (and absolutely contained in his person). He preserves his conviction that "Not all the water in the rough rude sea / Can wash the balm off from an anointed king" (III.ii.54–5) – and his solipsistic engrossment in the world of signs – in the only way possible: by washing it off himself ("With mine own tears I wash away my balm" [IV.i.207]), dissolving the essential liquid of divine right with the essential liquid of tragedy. Richard's corrupt absolutism manifests itself in his systematic collapsing of sign and referent, and vice versa. He is lost in his own mastery of signification, as he is in his personal rule, unmoored from any stable referential reality, and unaware that he's adrift.

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[33] "Ritual and Text," 193.

Richard's rival is conspicuously free of this weakness. Bullingbrook is keenly aware of the dissociability of person and office – as a usurper, he has to be – and this sensibility is closely related to his semiotic awareness. His political ascent is enabled and precipitated by Richard's disastrous absorption in verbal and political signifiers, and the systematic abuses that stemmed from it across England; his pragmatic ability to manipulate signs and their attendant uncertainties in the service of the realities of power establishes him, despite the tragedy of the deposition, as a better and more effective ruler who saves England from Richard's abusive misrule. Bullingbrook realizes, as Richard doesn't, that the relation of king to kinghood is as contingent as that of signifier and signified.

His semiotic self-consciousness manifests itself early in the play. Mowbray responds to his exile by seeing it as a linguistic execution: "What is thy sentence then but speechless death, / Which robs my tongue from breathing native breath?" (1.iii.172–3). The English language is for him not only inseparable from his existence and identity, but a decisive limitation upon them. In contrast, Bullingbrook's response in lines 253–309 highlights the limits of language itself, and its arbitrary and incongruent relation to reality. Asked by Gaunt "to what purpose dost thou hoard thy words," he answers that "I have too few to take my leave of you, / When the tongue's office should be prodigal / To breathe the abundant dolor of the heart." When Gaunt suggests that he simply think of his exile as "a travel that thou tak'st for pleasure," his response is that of a realist: "My heart will sigh when I miscall it so, / Which finds it an enforced pilgrimage." Gaunt encourages him to console himself by imposing a variety of illusory frames on his journeyings, but his son's rejoinder is a thorough statement of imaginative representation's impotence in the face of hard realities:

> O, who can hold a fire in his hand
> By thinking on the frosty Caucasus?
> Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite
> By bare imagination of a feast?
> Or wallow naked in December snow
> By thinking on fantastic summer's heat?
> O no, the apprehension of the good
> Gives but the greater feeling to the worse.
> Fell Sorrow's tooth doth never rankle more
> Than when he bites, but lanceth not the sore.
>
> (1.iii.294–303)

Bullingbrook's hermeneutic sophistication, his grasp of the limits of language and fictivity, insists on the distance between representation and

reality, signifier and signified. But rather than being restricted by this disjunction, he remakes it into a condition of his power. Richard ignores the signifying gap in a systematic, solipsistic, and self-destructive way; Bullingbrook proceeds to *occupy* it as a constructive site of effective and ultimately positive and unifying (though this will take several plays) authority. He is perhaps, in all his opacity, ambivalence, opportunism, and plausible deniability, Shakespeare's ultimate politician.

For it is out of this manipulable site of slippage that the opaque selves[34] of Bullingbrook and eventually his son emerge. With them, it is often difficult or impossible to determine the relationship between declaration and intention, act and motive. Unlike Richard III, whose scheming and dissembling are foregrounded at every point, evaluation of the two Henries is as difficult for readers as it is for the other characters. When Richard III woos Princess Anne, we know (because he himself has told us) that his intentions are not what they seem; but when Bullingbrook announces that "I come but for my own" (III.iii.196), it's much harder for us to know if he's telling the truth. And Shakespeare makes this opacity systematic. Bullingbrook's connection to (and judgment of) Richard's murder is similarly difficult to assess, as is the odd fact in II.i that word of his imminent return from exile comes in the same scene as Gaunt's death (which could be explained as either manifest treason or simple dramatic economy).

This opacity has contributed in large part (out of frustration, one suspects) to the critical tendency to view Bullingbrook and his son as scheming, amoral Machiavels. But this reductive view is not supported by the plays. *Richard II* would not be such an ambiguous and historically contentious play if the two central characters didn't present competing philosophical claims to power of at least roughly equal viability (divine, inheritory authority on Richard's behalf, pragmatic ability and support from below on Bullingbrook's). Furthermore, if we think of Richard's absolutism as part of his hermeneutics (i.e. that there is no possibility of slippage in the unconditional link between – actually, identity of – royal person and monarchy), and of Bullingbrook's conditionalism as part of his (i.e. that embodied monarchical power is simply a contingent representation of a network of powers and responsibilities), the latter system is clearly portrayed as the one which yields better results, at least in the short term. Richard's ideology produces abuses; Bullingbrook's, even in its most limited claims, upholds traditional legal and property rights, and as king, he is noteworthy for his magnanimity toward Mowbray, Carlisle, and Aumerle,

[34] On the opacity of the two Henries, see Cox, *Shakespeare and the Dramaturgy of Power*, ch. 6, esp. 108–24.

as well as for his broad popularity (v.ii) and the sort of strict discipline endorsed in the Garden scene (iii.iv).

This is, admittedly, a notoriously difficult point, with a contested critical genealogy as old as the play itself: the Lancastrians' methods are certainly not untroubling ethically – Hotspur's description of Bullingbrook as a "vile politician" (*1 Henry IV*, i.iii.241) has proven for many readers remarkably easy to sympathize with – and the loss of divine authority with Richard reverberates as a genuinely tragic and epochal moment of history (a similar sense of disillusionment and loss, I should note, also understandably animates a great deal of Catholic and revisionist historiography of the English Reformation). But I'd like to suggest what I think Shakespeare does: Bullingbrook's approach can also serve as a preventive and corrective to the tyrannous abuse of power. Implicit in Richard's literalist and absolutist ideology is a belief that the monarch can do no wrong (no wrong, at any rate, that legitimizes political consequences from below). The Lancastrians' greater hermeneutic and political flexibility, on the other hand, allows the belief that the monarch is accountable to external standards, and that power is conditional on this reckoning. Representational thinking may have its downside politically, particularly in its decidedly unattractive pragmatism, but it also serves here as a means of justice and the pursuit of certain ideals, a site of potential resistance to uncritically concentrated power.

Richard II thus leaves the Crown in the hands of a pragmatist whose hermeneutic awareness is intertwined with his politics, and who has already begun to use this combination in constructive and beneficial ways. For Bullingbrook as for Richard, the relations of signifier/signified and king/authority come to occupy analogous and related positions. But Richard's deposition and death have not only stained him, they have left a notable absence in his authority: Henry IV's lack of an unchallengeable blood claim, and his abrogation of Richard's, have undermined the relatively stable foundations upon which the English monarchy had rested. In the following plays, he will continue to seek ways to consolidate and augment his promising but shaky authority, and to secure his dynastic hold on the Crown. The solution which eventually develops, much like that embodied in the Book of Common Prayer, will create a new sort of polity which, in contrast to the murderous uncertainties of the Yorkist plays, relies fundamentally on representation and interpretive participation.

The two parts of *Henry IV* trace the contestation and consolidation of the new king's authority, and the nature of the challenge is instructive. The central political conflict between absolute and contingent authority is still active in Part 1, particularly when the king contemplates his wastrel son:

> For all the world
> As thou art to this hour was Richard then
> When I from France set foot at Ravenspurgh,
> And even as I was then is Percy now.
> Now by my sceptre, and my soul to boot,
> He hath more worthy interest to the state
> Than thou the shadow of succession.
>
> (III.ii.93–9)

Henry's comparisons of Hal to Richard, and Hotspur to himself, continue the dialectic of ability and inheritory right. Hal, like Richard, carries only the "shadow" of authority that inheritance grants; Hotspur, like Henry, presents the more compelling claims of demonstrated merit. And this is true, as far as it goes, but the king's analogies suppress some other salient truths. Though Hotspur and Hal are clearly counterparts, constantly compared to one another (by no one more than Henry himself), Hotspur's political challenge is not directed at Hal, but at the king, who in this comparison displaces his own vulnerability onto his son. In other words, Hal may be like Richard and Hotspur may be like the young Bullingbrook, but Henry is also very much like Richard: he is the king, widely suspected of complicity in a political murder, and accused of misgovernment and breaking his sacred trust. And his oath by his scepter seems to underline these similarities by echoing one of Richard's stock appeals to the symbols of kingly power.

Yet both the nature of the rebellion and Henry's own conduct suggest that he is unlike Richard in ways that are ultimately more important. The rebels assert that Mortimer, one of their own, has both a better blood claim to the throne and Richard's designation as heir apparent (I.iii.145–6), and the play consequently seems to be shaping up along the familiar lines of *Richard II*. But this does not turn out to be the case. The rebel leaders discuss his claim to the throne almost exclusively among themselves; although Hotspur's formal complaint to Blunt finds the king's title "too indirect for long continuance" (IV.iii.105), Mortimer's claim is alluded to only in a vague parenthetical remark (94–5), and in Worcester's formal list of grievances (V.i), it's not mentioned at all. Mortimer himself is curiously and unexplainedly absent from the climactic battle. And in the only scene in which he does appear (III.i), the plan drawn up for the tripartitioning of the kingdom suggests quite clearly that this rebellion is not about questions of royal legitimacy.

Exactly what it is about is harder to say, and Shakespeare is largely responsible for this. The rebel claims are clear enough. They supported

Bullingbrook's return only for the sake of his inheritory rights, not to help him usurp Richard; he had made them an oath at Doncaster to that effect and subsequently broken it; once king, he had not shown them the favor their actions had warranted; and he had generally ruled poorly and dishonestly. What's interesting about these claims is that they never, with the possible exception of the Doncaster oath, achieve a firmer status than subjective testimony (and even this never approaches the litany of complaint in *Richard II*, II.i, which seems to gain a certain credibility through its sheer choric weight). Perhaps what Hotspur, Worcester, and Northumberland are saying is true, and perhaps it's not; even referring to the previous play yields no clear answers (although it may make one skeptical: Northumberland's desire to "Redeem from broking pawn the blemish'd crown" [*Richard II*, II.i.293] and Worcester's breaking of his staff of office certainly seem to suggest more than the simple restoration of Bullingbrook's estate). And Shakespeare contributes to this by providing no clear evidence or corroborating testimony which would enable us to evaluate their claims one way or another. There is no Doncaster scene in *Richard II* to which we can refer as fact. On the other hand, Holinshed reports that part of the rebels' strategy to drum up popular support was an announcement that Richard was alive and waiting for assistance at Chester castle; Shakespeare leaves this out of the play, denying us an opportunity to falsify a rebel claim decisively and place ourselves on firmer epistemological ground. Henry, of course, concludes from their articles that "never yet did insurrection want / Such water-colors to impaint his cause" (v.i.79–80), and we expect no different from a king who so deeply understands the political value of spin. But for all we know, his assessment may be right. In any case, all he needs to do when confronted by this dubious challenge is invoke his kingly status and mobilize its widespread support.

The only thing that encourages unproblematic sympathy for the rebels is the meteoric brilliance of Hotspur. But his magnificent valor in pursuit of honor is also his fatal flaw, and points up some of his affinities with the dead Richard. Crackling with anger at the king, he exclaims,

> By heaven, methinks it were an easy leap,
> To pluck bright honor from the pale-fac'd moon,
> Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
> Where fadom-line could never touch the ground,
> And pluck up drowned honor by the locks,
> So he that doth redeem her thence might wear
> Without corrival all her dignities[.]   (I.iii.201–7)

Worcester's response – "He apprehends a world of figures here, / But not the form of what he should attend" – pinpoints the danger of Hotspur's approach. Absorbed here in a series of tropes, and generally in the significant feats which he reifies into a terminal principle of "honor," he loses touch with the hard reality of political objectives. And this leads to his downfall: his defeat and death at Shrewsbury are in large part due to his honor-blinded failure to take realistic stock of his situation and larger objectives. Of course, Falstaff's categorical rejection of honor as a "mere scutcheon" (most clearly explained in his subversive catechism in v.i.127–41) is just as unacceptable politically;[35] honor is neither a meaningless sign nor the all-in-all of political activity.

Entwined in the play's political narrative, of course, is the rise of Prince Hal, whose tutoring by his father and strategic relations to his tavern friends simultaneously clarify the nature of Lancastrian authority and point forward to its problematically glorious fulfillment in the later plays. Henry is distraught at his son's profligacy precisely because dynastic succession still does matter; as he explains in the following play, the hopes of his house depend on a successful fusion of inheritory right and practical ability. But Hal will have his inheritance no matter what, and consequently the advice Henry begins to give him in this play focuses on the secrets of his own success. In their pivotal encounter in iii.ii, the king's advice centers on the careful management of the royal presence. He explicitly compares Hal's conduct with Richard's:

> The skipping King, he ambled up and down,
> With shallow jesters, and rash bavin wits,
> Soon kindled and soon burnt, carded his state,
> Mingled his royalty with cap'ring fools,
> . . . .
> Grew a companion to the common streets,
> Enfeoffed himself to popularity,
> . . . .
> And in that very line, Harry, standest thou,
> For thou hast lost thy princely privilege
> With vile participation.
>
> (iii.ii.60–3, 68–9, 85–7)

To Richard's already impressive list of faults is now added the charge of excessive and indiscreet display. Confident in the inviolable majesty of his presence, he had unthinkingly spent it into cheapness, oversupplying the

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[35] The thematic significance of the Hotspur–Falstaff opposition was pointed out years ago by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Heilman in *Understanding Drama*, 376–87.

demand for royal accessibility. As a result, he ended up as a vassal whose kingly glory was not enhanced but sacrificed to the glutted beast of "vile participation" with a quickly unimpressed populace; indeed, Richard is figured in this speech as not only a feudatory but a comestible, "daily swallowed" by the eyes of people who soon sickened at the excess, thus disinclining them to contribute the "extraordinary gaze" (78) essential for royal authority. Henry, on the other hand, propounds a theory of royal ubiquity which operates primarily through *absence*.

> By being seldom seen, I could not stir
> But like a comet I was wonder'd at,
> That men would tell their children, "This is he";
> Others would say, "Where, which is Bullingbrook?"
> . . . .
> Thus did I keep my person fresh and new,
> My presence, like a robe pontifical,
> Ne'er seen but wond'red at, and so my state,
> Seldom but sumptuous, show'd like a feast,
> And wan by rareness such solemnity.
>
> (III.ii.46–9, 55–9)

In Richard's hands, monarchical splendor is depleted by being spent on a populace that grows sick of it; in Henry's, it is enhanced by being reserved and tightly controlled. In the king's absence, his subjects augment his glory with their imaginations, filling out the image of power on their own, to be all the more dazzled when it does flash across the sky. In other words, the participation of the common gaze is essential, but it works best when its object is unseen; for Henry, an adequately plenary spectacle of power is the product of a carefully managed combination of general absence and occasional but (or thus) blinding presence. One of the effects of this orchestration is an enhancement of both desire and uncertainty in those who seek contact with the royal person – "Where, which is Bullingbrook?" – and this is reflected later in battle, when we can hear this question echoed in Douglas's frantic search for the real king. Henry's manipulation, multiplication, and control of his persona becomes an effective tool of power which magnifies his own authority while it frustrates the efforts of those who seek to diminish or destroy it.

Hal's response to this lesson – "I shall hereafter, my thrice-gracious lord, / Be more myself" – suggests that he has absorbed the general burden of his father's advice. But the prince is in the midst of developing a strategy of power which, though recognizably similar to his father's in its reliance on self-conscious representation, will ultimately prove more complex and

capacious (and, not at all incidentally, more theatrical). Whereas Henry's popular support is shown to derive in large part from his restricted contact with the people, Hal's is founded upon his interactions with subjects from all levels of society. "I know you all," mutters Hal of his no-good companions, and his initial speech on his intended reformation (I.ii.195–217) suggests that he means these "base contagious clouds" to serve primarily as a contrasting background for his emergent royal glory: "I'll so offend, to make offense a skill, / Redeeming time when men least think I will." But there's more to his activities than this. Those with whom he has "sounded the very base-string of humility" have already assured him that "when I am King of England I shall command all the good lads in Eastcheap" (II.iv.5–6, 13–15). Although his future status as king will require him to make some decisive, and heartbreaking, decisions and distinctions regarding his co-revellers, he is nevertheless a "sworn brother" to them all. Even though he will even now have to begin distancing himself from Falstaff's subversive – and thus politically unsuitable – world of anti-values, the bonds of brotherhood and comprehension which tie him to its citizens will serve him well in his later efforts to construct an authority which exceeds his father's in stability and success.

In the second part of *Henry IV*, the Lancastrian consolidation continues in a world shot through with interpretive uncertainty. The play is introduced by none other than Rumor himself, who informs us that

> The posts come tiring on,
> And not a man of them brings other news
> Than they have learnt of me. From Rumor's tongues
> They bring smooth comforts false, worse than true wrongs.
> (Induction. 37–40)

This is presented not as the result of anyone's deceptive efforts at misinformation, but rather as a condition of the world. The play thus takes place in a political universe where the potential disjunction of what seems to be and what is is omnipresent; those who fail to take it into account do so at the risk of their own destruction, while those who master it enhance their power immeasurably. And indeed, the two central betrayals on which the plot pivots – Prince John's perfidious destruction of the rebels at Gaultree Forest, and Hal's shattering rejection of Falstaff at the play's end – owe their existence to this fact of life. Although both have been persistent critical problems which continue to leave a bad taste in the mouths of most readers, they form a part of the tetralogy's rehabilitation of political representation. Machiavelli and Richard III are unsettling because they remind us of the instability, and indeed the fictivity, of our sense of the real, but the Lancastrians make that fictivity into a sociopolitically stabilizing force.

The rebel faction in *2 Henry IV* contains at least one pragmatist, who wishes to avoid the mistakes of both Richard II and Hotspur. But Lord Bardolph's insistence that they not "fortify in paper and in figures, / Using the names of men instead of men" (I.iii.56–7) is quickly overruled by confident projections and the "double surety" of religious and political authority secured by the Archbishop of York. Both this confidence and the Archbishop's conversion of "insurrection to religion" (I.i.201), however, prove inadequate in the face of Prince John's stratagems.

Although the Roman origins of the Archbishop's authority are, significantly, never an issue in this play, his fusion of religion and politics is somewhat suspect from the start. Even the appreciative description of his ally Morton gives no sense of a necessary link between his moral authority and his revolt.

> Suppos'd sincere and holy in his thoughts,
> He's follow'd both with body and with mind;
> And doth enlarge his rising with the blood
> Of fair King Richard, scrap'd from Pomfret stones;
> Derives from heaven his quarrel and his cause;
> Tells them he doth bestride a bleeding land,
> Gasping for life under great Bullingbrook,
> And more and less do flock to follow him.
>
> (I.i.202–9)

Although he comes off fairly well in the play with his faith in peace and truth and the commonwealth, the Archbishop's uprising is never given the solidity of a genuine religious cause, and even in this speech his ecclesiastical authority seems as much a pretense as a source of real moral force; being "suppos'd sincere and holy" is not equivalent to sincerity and holiness. Consequently, there is a ring of truth in Prince John's description of the holy man turned "an iron man, talking, / Cheering a rout of rebels with your drum, / Turning the word to sword and life to death" (IV.ii.8–10):

> O, who shall believe
> But you misuse the reverence of your place,
> Employ the countenance and grace of heav'n,
> As a false favorite doth his prince's name,
> In deeds dishonorable? You have ta'en up,
> Under the counterfeited zeal of God,
> The subjects of his substitute, my father,
> And both against the peace of heaven and him
> Have here upswarm'd them.   (IV.ii.22–30)

Of course, John crowns his technically defensible betrayal of the rebels' expectations with a similar claim: "God, and not we, hath safely fought to-day" (121). His invocation of divine approval for his unpleasant and manifestly political actions has outraged generations of readers, but one might argue that it's really not all that different from what the Archbishop had been doing all along. And if we consider this competition in the light of providential theory, the only sure loser is the rebel side: John's victory either renders the competing claims to religious authority effectively meaningless (in which case the key quality becomes simply efficiency), or it places the divine seal on the king's party and ratifies the prince's accusations of the primate. In either case, the contending assertions of prince and bishop, equally dependent on fusing religious and political claims under the final aegis of the former, are resolved in favor of the Crown.

Although Prince Hal is absent from these dealings, his continuing metamorphosis into a worthy successor to the throne looms large in the play. Like its predecessor, *2 Henry IV* contains a pivotal scene (IV.v) between king and prince, and each has similar elements of scolding, defense, reconciliation, and instruction. Hal, thinking Henry dead, places the crown on his own head with these words:

> My due from thee is this imperial crown,
> Which as immediate from thy place and blood,
> Derives itself to me. Lo where it sits,
> Which God shall guard; and put the world's whole strength
> Into one giant arm, it shall not force
> This lineal honor from me.   (IV.v.41–6)

Henry, awakening, is understandably horrified, and proceeds to weave together the anguish of father and king in a long and dark speech. Hal's defense insists that he regarded the crown as an "enemy" (166), a responsibility which he accepted only grudgingly and without joy, pride, or "the least affection of a welcome . . . to the might of it" (172–3). His account is basically true – although it's difficult not to detect at least a trace of joy, pride, or welcome in his earlier words – and perhaps above all, it's *believable*. And when Henry gratefully credits God with Hal's "pleading so wisely" (180), it's hard to tell if his joy is at being fully persuaded or at seeing Hal put a credible and positive face on his actions. In other words, Hal's final reconciliation with the king depends on a basically true but slightly doctored (and at any rate, crucially, unfalsifiable) account of himself; knowing what we know of the old king, might he not be cognizant of this, and cheered at the prospect? His dying words are a respectful lesson in

Lancastrian statecraft to an heir who, he hopes, will reign with the legitimacy of succession, and without the troubles which inevitably attended Henry's usurpation.

Once the king is dead, Hal begins the reordering of his symbolic family; Act v deals primarily with his exchange of surrogate fathers. After testing the integrity of the Lord Chief Justice in v.ii, he proceeds to adopt him:

> You shall be as a father to my youth,
> My voice shall sound as you do prompt mine ear,
> And I will stoop and humble my intents
> To your well-practic'd wise directions.
>
> (v.ii.118–21)

Symbolically, of course, this indicates Hal's public submission to the larger ideals of law and justice; like his father (and unlike Richard), he recognizes authority as something beyond the person of the king. The Lancastrians' grasp of the difference between signifier and signified, person and authority, makes their power and identity flexible and manipulable, and for this, they have been widely disliked as devious Machiavels whose successors got what was coming to them. But as I argued previously, one might also see this as a mode which makes possible – if obviously not inevitable – a remarkable synthesis of pragmatism and justice.

Hal's other act of familial reorganization is more troubling but no less necessary: with his father dead, the new king must reject his old surrogate and antic antithesis Falstaff to enter into the serious world of leading a nation.

> I know thee not, old man, fall to thy prayers.
> How ill white hairs becomes a fool and jester!
> I have long dreamt of such a kind of man,
> So surfeit-swell'd, so old, and so profane,
> But being wak'd, I do despise my dream.
> . . . .
> Presume not that I am the thing I was,
> For God doth know, so shall the world perceive,
> That I have turn'd away my former self;
> So will I those that kept me company.
>
> (v.v.47–51, 56–9)

If Hal had promised us a dramatic contrast, this certainly seems to deliver; the public destruction of Falstaff, and the vitality associated with him (which, like Richard's fall, is experienced with an aching sense of loss), vividly illuminates the clash of values resolved in, and mapped upon, the

person of the king. Warwick had earlier theorized (iv.iv.67–78) that Hal consorted with the tavern crowd only to study it, like a language, for the purpose of definitively rejecting both ("But to be known and hated"). In this he turns out to be only half-right: Hal does shatteringly reject his old friends, but he never lets go of the language, or his ability to use it to represent himself among his extended family of sworn brothers. In the final play of the tetralogy, he and Shakespeare will transform and exploit his power, and powers, into astonishing new configurations wherein political representation and interpretation need not entail betrayal; on the contrary, these become constructive, cooperative, communal acts of faith.

In the play that bears his name, Henry V, the "mirror of all Christian kings" (ii.Cho.6), brings the English monarchy to its zenith in a land newly free of the internal discord which had racked it in all of Shakespeare's previous histories. Strife is relocated across the Channel, as domestic unrest and civil war give way to international conquest. No English lords vie with Henry for our attention, let alone for the Crown. Questions of legitimacy and authority, so central to the preceding plays, all but vanish,[36] replaced by a unified focus on the king's glorious exploits. And though these exploits are often manipulative, self-serving, and morally questionable, this play concentrates on unification and heroic success, produced in large part by Henry's potently constructive combination of inherited legitimacy and pragmatic ability – the latter largely constituted by his long apprenticeship in the value of political signification. In this play, the meditations of Hal and Shakespeare come to their fulfillment, as the theatrical representations of both king and play construct a new sociopolitical order characterized by expansiveness, inclusivity, and unity.

At the very beginning of *Henry V*, we are presented with a significantly new Church–State polity. The nervous consultation of the bishops in i.i, and their self-interested support of the king's French expedition in the following scene, do little to convince us of their Christian piety or moral authority, but they do indicate something important: in Henry V's world, the interests of the Church are thoroughly bound up with, and subordinated to, the interests of the Crown. The Roman origins of the bishops' power are entirely irrelevant, in contrast to the Yorkist plays, and they never attempt to use this power to oppose the king. In other words, although we don't see Henry making doctrinal pronouncements *à la* Henry VIII, the political order of this play is recognizably post-Reformation in nature.

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[36] The historical fact, included in Holinshed, that dynastic rivalries played a role in the conspiracy of Act ii is reduced by Shakespeare to a vague and cryptic comment by the Earl of Cambridge (ii.ii.155–7).

I argued earlier that this is true of all four of the histories that follow the proleptic Reformation in *King John*, but the point is reemphasized here, and after it's made, the bishops vanish completely from the play, absorbed into the unified national pursuits of the king. The specifically Protestant nature of this order has been further pre-emphasized in the closing words of *2 Henry IV*, where the Epilogue insists that Falstaff is not the historical Sir John Oldcastle. This is usually attributed to pressure exerted on Shakespeare by one of Oldcastle's descendants, but there is a further reason why the distinction is important. The Lollard Oldcastle, burned by Henry V for heresy in 1417, had by Shakespeare's time been transformed by the historiographic lens of the Reformation into a proto-Protestant martyr; Shakespeare goes out of his way to remove the taint of Catholic persecution from his hero-king. While historically, of course, Henry was a loyal son of the Universal Church, Shakespeare's version of him is a nonpartisan Christian prince who rules an anachronistically Protestant English polity.

Within this polity, Henry carries on further efforts at unification along class and regional axes. His modification of Henry IV's strategic absence into strategic presence enables him to use not only the traditional rhetoric of martial valor with his soldiers, but also the more inclusive and class-transcending rhetoric of brotherhood that he had learned in Eastcheap. "There is none of you so mean and base," he tells his troops at Harfleur (III.i.29–30), "that hath not noble lustre in your eyes." And in his famous speech before Agincourt, he refers to the assembled host as

> We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
> For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
> Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
> This day shall gentle his condition;
> And gentlemen in England, now a-bed,
> Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here;
> And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
> That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.
>
> 　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(IV.iii.60–7)

The shared experience of this battle, Henry assures his now enormously extended family, promises to elevate the "vile" (with whom he has participated all his life) over the comfortable gentry back home in manhood.

This sense of brotherhood is of course a trope, a rhetorical tool, designed to inspire his troops into the performance of their lives. And it works in part because everyone recognizes and participates in it as such. Whereas Richard II, addressing the earth on his return from Ireland, found it necessary to exhort his friends to "mock not my senseless conjuration" (*Richard II*,

III.ii.23), Henry's speech elicits no sign of puzzlement or misunderstanding; throughout the play, his subjects appear to understand and engage in his symbolic rhetoric and authority (witness, for example, how busy Fluellen keeps with gloves and leeks and historical "figures"). This is in turn due to the somewhat paradoxical fact that in a limited but important way, Henry himself seems to believe in the truth of this figure of brotherhood, thus facilitating its reciprocation. We can see this in his night vigil in IV.i, which, while of course a disguised exercise of surveillance and power, concludes with him alone on stage, lamenting the insomnia that seems to run in his family. His meditation on ceremony is something of a thematic culmination of the previous plays.

> And what have kings, that privates have not too,
> Save ceremony, save general ceremony?
> And what art thou, thou idol Ceremony?
> . . . .
> Art thou aught else but place, degree, and form,
> Creating awe and fear in other men?
> . . . .
> Canst thou, when thou command'st the beggar's knee,
> Command the health of it? No, thou proud dream,
> That play'st so subtilly with a king's repose.
> I am a king that finds thee; and I know
> 'Tis not the balm, the sceptre, and the ball,
> The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,
> The intertissued robe of gold and pearl,
> The farced title running 'fore the king,
> The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp
> That beats upon the high shore of this world –
> No, not all these, thrice-gorgeous ceremony,
> Not all these, laid in bed majestical,
> Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave[.]
>
> (IV.i.238–40, 246–7, 256–68)

Henry's speech seems to echo two primary sources in the previous plays: Falstaff's subversive catechism on the mystified ideal of "honor" (*1 Henry IV*, v.i.127–41), and Henry IV's tortured apostrophe to sleep (*2 Henry IV*, III.i.5–31). Insofar as Hal's speech partakes of the latter, it participates in the care-worn mystique of monarchy, which suggests that the sleep enjoyed by the lowly is preferable to the power wielded by the great. But to the extent that it echoes the former, it depicts a skeptical but now ultimately constructive view of royal authority. To Hal, the "ceremony" that distinguishes king from subjects is primarily a convergence of signs ("place, degree, and form"

as well as the itemized catalogue he proceeds to give) which, like Cranmer's sacrament, becomes an "idol" only if its signification is collapsed into a reified thing-in-itself; Hal's dissection of "idol ceremony" is precisely what prevents it from being such. And though this symbolic order of difference has no inherent power – a recognition unimaginable for Richard II – it unmistakably does matter, creating not only "awe and fear" but also, in turn, royal authority and the entire sociopolitical order. Hal's soliloquy simultaneously recognizes both his genuine commonality with all his subjects and the genuine difference made by the representational order of power. Richard felt his mortality only out of despair; Henry V reworks it into an enabling condition of his power.

This expansive and class-inclusive sense of unity among ruler and ruled also transcends the geographic differences which figured so heavily in the previous plays. In *Richard II*, the Irish are unruly outsiders, and the Welsh are unreliable allies; in *Henry IV*, both the Welsh and the Scots are rebellious enemies of the crown. But in *Henry V*, English, Welsh, Irish, and Scottish soldiers fight side by side, putting aside their petty squabbles to focus on their common allegiance to Henry. The king particularly encourages his Welsh connections, embracing the symbolic leek as a "memorable honor" (IV.vii.104), but two scenes later, this leek transcends regional identity and becomes the emblem of a decisively new order of merit and unity: in the comic action of v.i, Pistol, the last surviving member of the formerly vigorous tavern world, is forced by Fluellen to eat it, after which he slinks off forever. Henry's good subject becomes his agent, reproducing the symbolic order and extinguishing the last embers of a subversive subculture which has no place left under Henry's rule. (As Gower taunts Pistol, "let a Welsh correction teach you a good English condition" [78–9].)

The hero-king's authority, like the Prayerbook Eucharist, is thus constructed fundamentally on an inclusive and unifying sense of signification, and on the communal participation of subjects in these representations (this self-consciously figural, cooperative, interpretive model is what I mean by "sacramental" [in the Protestant sense] kingship); signs of higher truths are offered up for common interpretive consumption, in the process validating (though not without tension) both a hierarchical corporate identity and the cooperative, constitutive authority of their recipients. But this dynamic also radiates outward in (and beyond) the play. *Henry V* highlights, to an exceptional degree, its own status as a theatrical work of literary representation, and explicitly enjoins its audience to compensate imaginatively for its limitations as such. The chorus which opens each act repeatedly acknowledges the inherent inadequacy of its own representation, its inability to be that to

which it refers. At the same time, it insists that participative interpretation can effectively transcend these limits, making the performative text into something that is real and powerful both despite and precisely because of its fictivity.

> O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend
> The brightest heaven of invention!
> A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,
> And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!
> . . . .
> But pardon, gentles all,
> The flat unraised spirits that hath dar'd
> On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
> So great an object. Can this cockpit hold
> The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram
> Within this wooden O the very casques
> That did affright the air at Agincourt?
> O, pardon! since a crooked figure may
> Attest in little place a million,
> And let us, ciphers in this great accompt,
> On your imaginary forces work.
> . . . .
> Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts[.]
>   (I.Cho.1–4, 8–18, 23)

The subsequent prologues continue to exhort the audience to compensate for the limits of the stage (which, significantly, I just mistyped as "state"), to traverse and transform space, time, and event (both real and staged) with their imaginations: "Linger your patience on, and we'll digest / Th' abuse of distance; force a play" (II.Cho.31–2); "Still be kind, / And eche out our performance with your mind" (III.Cho.34–5); "we shall much disgrace / With four or five most ragged foils / (Right ill dispos'd, in brawl ridiculous) / The name of Agincourt. Yet sit and see, / Minding true things by what their mock'ries be" (IV.Cho.49–53); "admit th' excuse / Of time, of numbers, and due course of things, / Which cannot in their huge and proper life / Be here presented" (V.Cho.3–6).[37]

Henry V, in short, does as a play exactly what its hero does as a king: it relies on its representationality, and the informed cooperation of its audience, to achieve a final effect which matches or exceeds the potential of any other mode – even blood inheritance, the "real," or the immanent

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[37] For a fuller explication of this dynamic and its sacramental implications, see Knapp, *Shakespeare's Tribe*, 128–40.

divine. Although the pious king is careful to attribute his victory to God, the success of his performance is due at least as much to the interpretive participation of both his subjects and his audience. Lancastrian power, I've argued, is built on a hermeneutic and political awareness of representational difference, and the enormous possibilities that fictive signs hold when read by cooperative interpreters. This final play not only shows us this constructive ability in the hands of a virtuoso, it also draws us into the circuit of participation: by imaginatively treating the player as a king, we ultimately contribute to the dazzling theatrical power of the player-king himself. The wicked transparency of Richard III (whose role-playing coexists uncomfortably with its theatrical setting) creates the possibility of watching and even enjoying his exploits without interpretively supporting them; in *Henry V*, the representational practices of king and theatre are so intimately and persuasively connected that such distance may not be possible. Surely this is a play and a tetralogy which, as Stephen Greenblatt has argued in a brilliant and influential essay, lay bare the modes of power "even as they draw their audience irresistibly toward the celebration of that power."[38] But whereas Greenblatt sees this as part of a complex dynamic of subversive exposure and power-enhancing containment, in which the generation of doubt paradoxically undergirds faith, I'm suggesting a different way of looking at these plays. In them, I contend, Shakespeare demonstrates the constructive political potential of a recognizably Reformed sense of representation, in which ruler and subjects, actor and audience, participate self-consciously in a positive and redemptive system of signs.[39]

This, I would argue, owes something to the Reformation's reconstruction, effected in large part by the Book of Common Prayer, of the cultural status and potential of representation itself. The Prayerbook had theologically refounded English Christianity (and the reconfigured Church–State polity) on a new conception of the Eucharist as an essentially interpretive

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[38] "Invisible bullets," 20.

[39] This reading also opposes Rackin's assertions that monarchic and theatrical representation are "severely qualified" and "deeply compromised" by their interdependence (*Stages*, 61, 80). It is closer to Howard's contention (*Stage and Social Struggle*, 145): "No longer the mark of the demonic [as in *Richard III*], theatricality has [in *Henry V*] become a tool for effective modern kingship" – though I am of course not contending that all tensions are resolved, all questions answered, all politics redeemed; indeed, a tremendous, if necessary, price has been paid in the transition from the politics of divinity to the politics of modernity, and the conflicted interpretive history of these plays bears witness to the residual tensions in the post-Reformation yoking of structure and subject. Norman Rabkin, in a seminal 1977 essay, argued that the mutually exclusive readings this play has tended to produce are extensions of the radical ambivalence between the two parts of *Henry IV* (which embody, respectively, "our deepest hopes and fears about the world of political action" ["Rabbits, Ducks, and *Henry V*", 296]).

phenomenon; the sacramental elements were recast as a signifying text, and the divine grace they promised was realizable only if they were internalized, in faith, as complexly meaningful signs. This instituted the competent, autonomous, interpreting Protestant individual in official liturgical discourse, which had traditionally stressed the necessary mediation of the institutional Church in brokering the restricted contact between the human and the divine. At the same time, it established representation itself as the ground of negotiation between this individual and the larger polity of the early modern nation (in which, after the Reformation, the sociopolitical and the ecclesiastical were coterminous). The identity and authority of order and individual thus became, in this post-Reformation English context – as I've argued they are in *Henry V* – representationally and mutually constituting; subject and structure are simultaneously and perpetually constructed through hermeneutically aware engagement in systems of signs.

If, then, the divinely energized sign became the locus of these cultural transactions, it is less than surprising that the status and significance of representation began to grow in all directions. Thirty years after the introduction of the Prayerbook (and scarcely twenty after the end of its Marian hiatus), Philip Sidney translated the logic of sacramental representation to the worldly sphere of the literary. His *Defence of Poetry* posits a particularly close relationship between figurality and truth, and positions poetic representation as a peculiarly sensitive site of synthetic access and constructive negotiation between real and ideal, mundane and transcendent, earth and heaven. Ultimately, the Sidneian engagement with fictive signs offers nothing less than a worldly version of the sanctifying grace available to the faithful participant in the Reformed sacrament.

Shakespeare takes this in a different direction. His history plays trace the rehabilitation of the uncertainty and fictivity of representation into a means of *national* salvation from sociopolitical chaos. And while the Lancastrian plays keenly register the costs of the loss of divine immanence, they also suggest the necessity of a more consciously figural alternative. In this world of intertwined political, religious, and hermeneutic questions, representational role-playing ultimately emerges as a potential force for justice, authority, and a unified and inclusive national order. The status of the "mirror of all Christian kings" depends on his ability to understand and manipulate signs, as well as on sociopolitical and theatrical participation in them as signs. Order and subjects, no less in *Henry V* than in the Book of Common Prayer, reciprocally constitute one another around a fulcrum of symbolic representations whose referents (whether divine grace, moral truth, or political authority) are experienced and affirmed, both individually

and collectively, as objects of faith and bases of consensus. For Hal as for Cranmer, the construction of the "godly order" is a cooperative and interpretive – and ongoing – venture.

Of course, given the profound conflicts they sought to address, none of these attempted resolutions proved to be completely successful; the conflicts and tensions inherent in each continue to the present day. The Prayerbook failed to prevent the emergence of discord and revolution within England and its Church, and controversy over its status and significance has played a major role in English history and identity through the end of the twentieth century. Sidney's salvific trust in literature has borne dubious historical fruit, and the antihumanist thrust of much recent criticism has seriously questioned the very possibility of disinterested and morally elevating literature. And Shakespeare's presentation of the Lancastrian solution is shot through with conflict and ambivalence, forming a field of vigorous contestation for centuries of critical discourse; as the ominous Epilogue warns, this stability will be fragile and short-lived, and will end in national catastrophe – as would happen again in the middle of the seventeenth century. But in each of these sixteenth-century instances, questions of authority and identity, religion and politics, and order and individual intersect in distinctive and similar ways, and their provisional answers are forged out of a culturally potent hope in representation. And their pervasive, and perhaps deliberate, ambiguities suggest and demand that we act as interpretive partners in this process of perpetual reconstitution.

Revolution and representation

The Book of Common Prayer proved, in its efforts to stabilize conflict into dialectical ambiguity, tragically unable fully to contain the conflicting energies it sought to synthesize. The individualizing logic of reform contributed to the continuing growth of an aggressively evangelical strain of Protestantism, which even in Elizabeth's reign came to see the Prayerbook as an empty popish form which impeded authentic religious expression, and which supported monarchical and prelatical tyranny. The rise of High Church Laudianism in the seventeenth century founded itself in the set form and ceremonial of the Prayerbook, and its implied corollaries of royal and ecclesiastical hierarchy. These two poles, defined substantially and not at all coincidentally around liturgical issues, developed into the parties whose growing conflict would eventually erupt into civil war and the beheading of a king. The BCP was originally an attempt to mediate textually the powerful oppositions of one revolution in the sixteenth century; this resolution proved insufficiently flexible to prevent another revolution in the seventeenth.

This latter revolution was a defining event for two of the most influential English voices of the seventeenth century. John Milton and Thomas Hobbes were, to a great extent, both heirs of the English Reformation and its textual establishment in the Prayerbook. Both took it as a matter of course that England should be free of Roman authority, and both decisively rejected not only the political but also the hermeneutic claims of Catholic theology. Yet from this common ground, Milton and Hobbes came to vastly different liturgical and sociopolitical conclusions, equally extreme, respectively, in radicalism and royalism. In this chapter, I will briefly consider these two figures and some of the theological, hermeneutic, and sociopolitical implications of their thought; at the same time, I will suggest that, profoundly different as they may be, both men define their ideas around a distinctively Reformed faith in representation. If the differences between Milton and Hobbes are instructive consequences of the spectacular rupture

of the Anglican synthesis in the 1640s, the sometimes surprising common ground they share – and the reciprocal ambivalences in what makes each distinctive – may also have much to teach us about the nature, depth, and historical significance of this particular epistemological system. Perhaps the Prayerbook solution was ultimately more capacious than it seemed.

Before turning to these two figures, a brief consideration of a recent piece of criticism may help articulate some of the concerns of this chapter – which center on the role of Reformed representationality as a grid on which to map the relations of self and nation, internal and external – in the context of my previous analyses. In a 1997 essay and subsequent book, Ramie Targoff intelligently challenged the critical "assumption that the private and public self are entirely discrete and separable agents,"[1] and argued that both the Elizabethan antitheatricalists and the liturgical Church founded themselves in common assumptions of the performative efficacy of external conduct on internal belief. In so doing, she provocatively rethinks the relations of representation, public practice, and "personal and private subjectivity" (55).

Targoff's analysis, however, provides a somewhat distorted picture, and my reasons for disagreement will help frame the present chapter. Though she perceptively recognizes that the "tension between an interest on the one hand in denying and on the other in affirming the connection between the inward and outward self lies at the very heart of sixteenth-century secular as well as religious culture" (58), her claim of a "nearly identical logic" among the "mostly nonconformist opponents of the stage" – a formulation which suggests not just a coincidental or analogical relationship of nonconformity and antitheatricalism, but a substantive one – and the established Church (54) is not entirely convincing. She suggests that the antitheatrical nonconformists believed in an essential continuity of external and internal in the theatre (as the establishment conformists did in public worship), and that their opposition to drama stemmed from a fear that what begins as "a purely hypocritical performance would become a transformative experience" (52). But if we apply this logic to its implied liturgical corollary, it provides an inadequate account of the nonconformist position; of course evangelicals saw potential for popish seduction and misdevotion in the liturgy, but as we will see in Milton, their attacks on it were founded primarily in the inauthentic hypocrisy it mandated.[2] In other words, the central nonconformist fear seems to have been not cross-contamination

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[1] "The Performance of Prayer," 50; hereafter cited parenthetically.

[2] In *Common Prayer* (36–7), Targoff does recognize this, but by the end of the chapter the general terms of her argument have reasserted themselves, and external conformity again molds the devotional interior.

but the spiritually eviscerating fragmentation of inner and outer states, and this perhaps suggests a disjunction between the logics of antitheatricalism and nonconformity greater than what Targoff implies.

Furthermore, to construe the logic of establishment conformity as primarily devotional is to leave out the sociopolitical emphasis that was at least as important to it.[3] While there were, of course, theological rationales and ideals for uniform public worship – it would be surprising if there were no pastoral arguments for its efficacy – the other central goal from Henry VIII on seems to have been obedience and the maintenance of public order, considered positive goods in themselves, rather than the transformation of personal devotion or doctrinal conviction. This is nowhere more evident than in the Elizabethan words of administering the sacrament, which allowed a significant latitude of interpretation and belief, even as Prayerbook uniformity was vigorously enforced in the interest of peace and unity. Public worship, that is, can only reliably indicate conformity of action and not belief; ideally, the former may influence the latter, but was it consistently and rigorously expected to, even among the church establishment (which Targoff asserts to have "denied the worshiper's capacity to prevent the internalization of external devotion" [51])? The correct answer to this question, I think, can only be no; the vexed relation of inner and outer was perennially at issue, and the Hobbesian understanding of the function of liturgy which I will present below seems to me more plausible, more historical, and more in keeping with the deep tensions of the Reformation than Targoff's.[4]

Still, Targoff's argument can help us rebalance our assessment of the tendentious mixture of internal and external objectives at the heart of these debates, and is a useful reminder of the contestedness of the boundaries between personal conviction and public performance. Both Milton and Hobbes recognize the potential for slippage between the two, though they appraise this potential differently. Each man's ideal subject brings him to different conclusions regarding the ideal form of polity, and the hierarchy of values and the role of representation and interpretation within it;

[3] Targoff (ibid., 17–18) positions her book against, or as a corrective to the distortions of, accounts of common prayer which focus on it as an instrument of sociopolitical order. But to discount this is itself a distortion; see Ch. 1 above.

[4] See Claire McEachern's sensible evaluation of this conflict (*Poetics*, 77): "ultimately, as far as the state's scruples are concerned, such discontinuities [of internal and external conviction] can no doubt be tolerated, insofar as a harmonious social practice is sufficient to meet its demands – if unfaithful people want to do good works, the distance between inside and outside is a matter for their conscience alone." Queen Elizabeth reputedly, and famously, declared that she did not "make windows into men's souls"; Targoff, by implication, reads this sort of claim skeptically, but I think it makes more sense to see it as a perfectly coherent statement of religious policy.

in each case, as in the Prayerbook, Sidney, and Shakespeare, the constitution of subject and polity are complex, reciprocal, interpretive processes. But the differences between these two figures are themselves a link which recapitulates and extends their common assumptions; in all their radical opposedness, these two seventeenth-century figures exemplify the divergent possibilities inherent in the Prayerbook synthesis of the preceding century – as well as its cautious but deep faith in the salvific potential of signs to delineate, govern, and transform our relationships to God and to our fellow citizens.

MILTON AND THE SUBJECT OF READING

From his earliest prose Milton took a radically antiliturgical stance. In tracts of 1641, he flatly denounces the liturgy as "evill," its authors as "halting and time-serving Prelates."[5] He devotes an entire chapter of *Eikonoklastes* (1649) to the Prayerbook and its royalist backing; not only does he find the now century-old Book of Common Prayer itself "superstitious, offensive, and indeed, though Englisht, yet still the Mass-Book," but he also categorically rejects the possibility that "any true Christian find a reason why Liturgie should at all be admitted."[6] Milton's arguments against liturgy typify the extreme nonconformist position: liturgy is a popish relic, unapproved in primitive use, which restricts authentic worship and encourages meaningless conformity by forcibly prescribing repetitive set forms. The false division these forms encourage is, as he argues in *De Doctrina Christiana* (1660), actually antireligious: "Also opposed to true religion is hypocritical worship, where the external forms are duly observed, but without any internal or spiritual involvement. This is extremely offensive to God."[7]

The radical individualism (and the ideal of a unified religious self) implicit in Milton's far-left politico-religious beliefs, in short, seems to have taken precedence over the claims of the existing ecclesiastical hierarchy and its common liturgy: contact with the divine, through both word and worship, is to be a highly inward, extemporaneous, and interpretive pursuit rather than a formalized, external collective endeavor. And there is in Milton, I will argue, a fundamental stress on the power of signs to delineate the human relationship to God. But along with this emphasis is a resulting (and perhaps inevitable) anxiety, itself perhaps Reformed, about the risks and instabilities inherent in the interpretation of these signs.

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[5] "Animadversions" (*Complete Prose Works* I.691); "Of Reformation" (ibid., I.532).
[6] Ibid., III.508, 504.   [7] Ibid., VI.667.

Areopagitica, for example, in which he rails against "rigid external formality" and "gross conforming stupidity,"[8] is a text founded upon internal contradictions by means of which its argument is simultaneously tolerationist and exclusionary, latitudinarian and inquisitorial. Its dogmatic condemnation of Catholic publications – "I mean not tolerated popery and open superstition, which, as it extirpates all religions and civil supremacies, so itself should be extirpate"[9] – belies its fundamental structural dependence on a conception of Truth as dialectical, processual, and strengthened by conflict with its opposition: "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unproved, that never sallies out and seeks her adversary . . . [T]hat which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary."[10] The reader of *Areopagitica* is left with an insoluble dilemma as Milton preaches a policy of Protestantism, free press, toleration, good (and "promiscuous") reading, and dialectical truth, while he subtly practices the opposite, an exclusionary and censorious "Spanish policy" in the service of moral and ethical absolutes: "that also which is impious or evil absolutely, either against faith or manners, no law can possibly permit."[11]

The reader, or rather the participants, of *Paradise Lost* seem at first glance to be caught in a mirror image of this bind. Adam and Eve are in a situation which implies a similar (if precisely opposite) dialectical epistemology, in which the Fall is figured as "Knowledge of Good bought dear by knowing ill" (IV.222). The very name of the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil" suggests this structural simultaneity, but in this work, the enactment of the dialectic of truth is precisely what is expressly forbidden. Adam and Eve seem to be trapped, promised on one hand that "Light after light well us'd they shall attain" (III.196), yet threatened on the other with doom and death if they introduce this version of the War in Heaven into Paradise.

The apparent contradiction between *Areopagitica* (which demands the dialectic of truth) and *Paradise Lost* (which forbids it absolutely) is reproduced internally within the poem in the persistently unstable relations of knowledge and guilt. The Fall is figured as an act of intellectual pride, as Eve reaches for the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge in order to become like God, and many traditional interpretations of the poem read it as a parable of intellectual humility.[12] Such readings are sure to cite Raphael's

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[8] *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, 747. All references to *Areopagitica* and *Paradise Lost* will be taken from this edition.
[9] Ibid.   [10] Ibid., 728.   [11] Ibid., 747.
[12] See e.g. Schultz, *Milton and Forbidden Knowledge*, an impressively documented study of various traditions of intellectual sobriety, which includes sections on "Curiosity and Pseudo-Science," "Knowledge and Zeal," "Tithes and Clergy-Learning," and "Philosophy and Vain Deceit." For a stimulating argument *against* the idea of a Miltonic humility, see Richard Strier's "Milton against Humility."

warning to Adam in Book VIII: "Heav'n is for thee too high / To know what passes there; be lowly wise: / Think only what concerns thee and thy being" (172–4). However, Raphael begins that same speech by assuring Adam that "To ask or search I blame thee not, for Heav'n / Is as the Book of God before thee set" (66–7). And the narrator, Milton himself, ambiguously laments the blindness that makes one mode of wisdom inaccessible to him and prevents him from reading the "Book of knowledge fair" (III.47). The relationship of knowledge and guilt, of curiosity and culpability, thus seems very unstable throughout *Paradise Lost*. Yet these troubled relations, and especially the one which renders the *book* of knowledge "fair" – suggesting the centrality of reading itself in the poem – while the *tree* of knowledge is death, may provide a framework upon which to attempt a different inter-pretation of the poem. In the following pages, I will seek to make sense of these relations and argue a reading of *Paradise Lost* as an allegory of read-ing which participates in the deep theological and hermeneutic tensions embodied in the Prayerbook.[13]

The narrative of the Fall in *Paradise Lost* is undoubtedly on some level a parable of humility, but readings of the poem which follow this straight didactic line may not do full justice to the deeper complexities at stake. I'd like to suggest that the final inadequacies of such readings are the result of an oversimplified (or perhaps even overallegorical) reading of Milton's allegory – specifically that of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Like these readings, the problems of pride and aspiration in the poem are ultimately founded in problems of [mis]interpretation.[14]

Perhaps a good way of beginning to weed out the interpretive problems surrounding the Tree would be to point out what the Tree is *not*. The Tree is not sin, and not knowledge. Neither is its fruit an allegorization of knowl-edge or pride per se. It clearly does not stand for knowledge proper, since Adam was created with various forms of knowledge – self-knowledge, and knowledge of essences (demonstrated in his intuitive naming of animals in

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[13] The critical work looming behind all current reader-oriented accounts of *Paradise Lost* is of course Fish, *Surprised by Sin*, a vigorous account of the ways in which the poem convicts its readers of their own fallenness and encourages them to reorient their responses toward obedient faith. For an energetic critique of the totalizing and deterministic tendencies of the Fish model, though, see John Rumrich, *Milton Unbound: Controversy and Reinterpretation*, in which he insists on the interpretive importance of indeterminacy and the "crucial possibility of otherness" (p. 22). My reading, rather than focusing on the educative strategies the poem deploys, will center instead on the role of signification and interpretation in the internal plot, ethics, and epistemology of the poem. In other words, rather than looking at the reader as Adam and Eve, I look at Adam and Eve as readers.

[14] In ch. 7 of *Milton's Burden of Interpretation*, Dayton Haskin argues that indeterminacy, verbal complexity, and interpretive responsibility are not only present in Paradise but are constitutive of prelapsarian ethics.

Book VIII)[15] – and Books V–VIII are largely about the prelapsarian transmission of enormous amounts of knowledge from Raphael to Adam and Eve, as human curiosity is repeatedly satisfied by the angel. Furthermore, the Tree and its fruit do not even represent a more specific knowledge of good and evil: an unfallen Adam indicates not only an awareness of the existence and threat of evil, but also some powers of evaluation and discernment, in V.116–19 when he tells Eve to

> be not sad.
> Evil into the mind of God or Man
> May come and go, so unapprov'd, and leave
> No spot or blame behind . . .

Thus the Tree cannot be the source of such knowledge.

John Reichert makes a first step toward this realization when he asserts that Adam "is never deceived, before the Fall, into thinking that God had forbidden them knowledge."[16] Counterintuitive as this may seem, it actually is correct: when Adam speaks of the Tree before the Fall, he says simply that "God hath pronounc't it death to taste that Tree, / The only sign of our obedience" (IV.427–8). Many readers tend to conflate the name of the Tree and the Tree itself, and thus conclude that to partake of the Tree is to partake of knowledge, and both are forbidden. But when God himself speaks of the Tree, it is in terms which Adam's echo faithfully: "Man will heark'n to his glozing lies, / And easily transgress the sole Command, / Sole pledge of his obedience" (III.93–5). Similarly, in VII.542 Raphael recounts God's reference to "the Tree / Which tasted works knowledge of Good and Evil," and in VIII.323–33 Adam recalls God's command:

> But of the Tree whose operation brings
> Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set
> The Pledge of thy Obedience and thy Faith,
> Amid the Garden by the Tree of Life,
> Remember what I warn thee, shun to taste,
> And shun the bitter consequence: for know,
> The day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command
> Transgrest, inevitably thou shalt die;
> From that day mortal, and this happy State
> Shalt lose, expell'd from hence into a World
> Of woe and sorrow.

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[15] John Leonard ("Language and Knowledge in *Paradise Lost*," in Danielson, *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*) cites Milton's comment in *Tetrachordon*: "Adam who had the wisdom giv'n him to know all creatures, and to name them according to their properties, no doubt but had the gift to discern perfectly" (99).

[16] *Milton's Wisdom*, 207. Unfortunately, he doesn't go on to develop this important insight, but reverts back to a discussion of wisdom and restraint.

It is the "operation" of the Tree, not the fruit itself, which brings conse-
quential knowledge of good and evil and thus enacts the Fall.

Interpreters of *Paradise Lost* who equate the Tree itself with knowledge are
therefore perhaps guilty of hasty allegorization: something along the lines
of "The tree is called the Tree of Knowledge; this name clearly indicates
the allegorical nature of the tree; therefore the Fall must be at bottom some
sort of epistemological transgression." But while the Tree is of course a
pivotal presence in the Fall, this is not because of any inherent or directly
allegorical significance in its branches and fruit; to draw the allegorical
boundary at that point is to miss what underlies the Fall. As we have seen,
the acquisition of knowledge, even the specific knowledge of good and
evil, is not the essence of the Fall, and neither Adam nor Raphael nor God
himself really indicate that it is.

Rather, their testimony indicates that the essence of the Fall resides
in the act, and not the Tree at all – a point to which I'll return. The
Tree's significance lies in its "operation," in its status as a "pledge," and
most importantly, a "sign." The physical Tree is like any other in Eden,
but God chose it to function as a symbol, a pure sign: the Tree is the
sign of the hierarchical difference between God and humanity, between
Creator and creation. In a Paradise where humans walk with God in the
cool of the evening, where all things save one are permissible, the arbitrary
designation of the Tree is the chief emblem of God's absolute difference and
universal authority. It is also, in demarcating discrete realms of permissible
and forbidden, the source of ethics. Respecting God's arbitrary injunction
thus becomes not only the clearest mode of human obedience; it is also an
affirmation of the ontological difference that undergirds it.

What makes the Tree a pure and transcendent sign[17] is the fact that it
finally refers to nothing but absolute difference. Between God and even
prelapsarian humanity there is an unbridgeable and inexpressible gulf, and
the very arbitrariness of the sign insists upon this. The Tree symbolizes what
cannot be symbolized; it expresses what cannot be expressed; it means what
cannot be interpreted. It symbolizes not knowledge, but the *impossibility* of
a particular knowledge, the inscrutable fact that God cannot be truly and
fully comprehended by humans, even before the Fall. It is, at once, both the

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[17] See Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, esp. ch. 4, for the idea of the transcendent and nonreferential (and
therefore unreadable) pure sign as the point of access to essence and absolute difference; essentially,
Deleuze suggests, a pure sign screams out "I'm a sign!! Don't read me!!" Not entirely unrelated, I
think, is Calvin's assertion (in a discussion of divine mysteries and hermeneutic propriety) that "it is
unreasonable that man . . . investigate, even from eternity, that . . . which God would have us adore
and not comprehend, to promote our admiration of his glory" (*Institutes*, 3.21.1) – a recognition of
unreadability and absolute difference essential for worship (as well as for a correct ontology).

ultimate sign and the ultimate anti-sign: though it (like the Reformed sacra-
ment) demands to be understood as a mechanism of signification, its very
unreadability, the inaccessibility of its referent, signifies the crucial deter-
minative fact of human–divine relations. This single arbitrary boundary
signifies the absolute difference and ineffability of God.[18]

Adam seems at least to intuit the true significance of the Tree's sign-
ness; his speech in IV.411ff. is entirely consistent with God's earlier words
regarding it. Eve's response is an account of her narcissistic episode at the
lake, in which she mistook her reflection for another person – an important
instance of misreading (specifically, a mistaking of representation for reality)
which prepares the way for Satan's speech in lines 505–35. He begins in anger,
raging to himself that they should be so happy in Paradise while he suffers
in Hell. Then he begins to mull over what he has learned about the Tree,
and thinks aloud:

> all is not theirs it seems:
> One fatal Tree there stands of Knowledge call'd,
> Forbidden them to taste: Knowledge forbidd'n?
> Suspicious, reasonless. Why should thir Lord
> Envy them that? can it be sin to know,
> Can it be death? and do they only stand
> By Ignorance, is that thir happy state,
> The proof of thir obedience and thir faith?
> O fair foundation laid whereon to build
> Thir ruin!

It is thus Satan who first confuses and conflates the arbitrary injunction
regarding the Tree with a forbidding of knowledge itself. The Tree is, in
my reading, a pure sign, a pure metaphor; Satan's literalization of it (itself
duplicated by many readers) is either an extraordinarily crafty rhetorical
maneuver or, more likely, a reduplication of his own fall from Heaven. The
Fall thus has its roots in a hermeneutic problem, and one with significant
similarities to Reformed accounts of the Catholic sacrament: it asserts the
identity of sign and referent, the immanent presence of the signified within
the signifier, and in so doing it collapses the signifying structure and destroys
the potential of the correctly understood sign.[19] Satan's own prior challenge

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[18] As biblical and other traditions make clear, a principle of ineffability need not necessarily forbid all
representations of God – whose ineffability requires some sort of representation to be communi-
cable – but must simply preserve the realm of absolute difference from any but pure (i.e. uninter-
pretable) signification, and this is exactly what the Tree maintains.
[19] Cf. *De Doctrina Christiana*, I.xxviii (*Complete Prose Works* VI.556, 555): "it is clear that the Papists are
wrong when they attribute to the outward sign the power of conferring salvation or grace . . . [In
the sacraments,] a thing which in any way illustrates or signifies another thing is mentioned not so
much for what it really is as for what it illustrates or signifies."

to the Omnipotent God was a result of his analogous failure correctly to interpret (or, more accurately, correctly to appreciate and *not* interpret) the absolute difference between them; now, by reading badly, by failing to grasp the significance of the pure sign *as sign* and on its own terms, he sets the stage for the infectious spread of his idolatrous hermeneutic disease.

The narrator's plea in IV.775 – "know to know no more" – is a warning to stay away from the attempt to interpret the ineffability of God and thus to relativize His absolute difference; Satan's literalization of the sign of the Tree enables him to obscure this danger and lure Eve to her death by assigning an incorrect signification to the Tree and exploiting the resulting prideful will to knowledge. Significantly, Eve had been absent or inattentive during the tutoring sessions of Books V–VIII, and is therefore less prepared to read critically. Adam's informed wariness in their debate in Book IX contrasts with Eve's self-confidence. Her words – "what is Love, Faith, Virtue unassay'd / Alone, without exterior help sustained?" (335–6) – echo Milton's in *Areopagitica*, but Eve's lack of preparation for the upcoming test of her interpretive abilities fills them with tragic irony. She proves to be an all too willing disciple of satanic misreading.

The serpent's first speech to Eve leaves her "more amaz'd" but "unwary" (IX.614) and "credulous" (644); her protest – "God so commanded, and left that Command / Sole Daughter of his voice; the rest, we live / Law to ourselves, our Reason is our Law" (652–4) – repeats the characterization she has heard, but leaves open the door of reason and knowledge for Satan to slip in. He capitalizes skillfully on this, and couches his entire argument in terms of knowledge contained within the Tree itself, referring to the Gods "who enclos'd / Knowledge of Good and Evil in this Tree" (722–3). As we have seen, this is a fundamental (and, in a Miltonic context, distinctly Catholic) misreading, but it enables Satan to exploit fully the will to knowledge and to manipulate Eve into storming Heaven unawares.

Satan begins his speech (679–732) by directly addressing the "Sacred, Wise, and Wisdom-giving Plant, / Mother of Science,"[20] and in so doing asserts the identity of Tree and knowledge per se. The fruit has given him the power "not only to discern / Things in their Causes, but to trace the ways / Of highest Agents, deem'd however wise." The unwitting implication of "however wise" is perhaps "however *un*wise," which suggests the precise problem of both Satan and Eve – the prideful will to claim interpretive privilege and trace the ways of the Almighty in ways that imply parity. Satan assures Eve that the Tree "gives you Life / To Knowledge," at best

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[20] Milton surely intended the Latin meaning of *scientia*, "knowledge" or "skill"; the etymologies of this word and *sapientia*, "wisdom" or simply "taste," are central to Books IX and X.

a very sly misuse of language,[21] for the knowledge turns out to be that of separation and death. The core of his argument, and the core of his own problems, comes in lines 708ff.:

> ye shall be as Gods,
> Knowing both Good and Evil as they know.
> . . . .
> And what are Gods that Man may not become
> As they, participating God-like food?
> . . . .
> and wherein lies
> Th' offense, that Man should thus attain to know?

Satan reduplicates his own errors by questioning the absolute qualitative difference of God (precisely what the Tree signifies), by making equality with God a thing to be grasped (the impossibility of which is precisely what the injunction against eating the fruit signifies), and by conflating this divine knowledge with the physical tree itself (thus propagating a fundamental and pernicious misreading of its absolute sign-ness).

Eve is a quick study at bad reading. She concludes, "In plain then, what forbids he but to know, / Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise? / Such prohibitions bind not" (758–60). Her adoption of Satan's misreading causes her immediately to miss the point of the Tree, to be blinded to its inexpressible signification. Eve's Fall, her consumption of the forbidden fruit, is a presumptuous effort to interpret the uninterpretable, to internalize the ineffable by collapsing the sign, and to relativize the absolute difference signified by the Tree[22] – in short, a failure to adopt an appropriately Reformed hermeneutic stance toward the sacred sign.

(Surprisingly, though, the logic of Milton's poem provides more here than a critique of Catholicism: it may also suggest the necessity of resisting some of the more extreme tendencies of evangelical Protestantism. In the Book of Common Prayer, the Protestant interpretive imperative, while omnipresent, is also constrained and counterbalanced by the structured and normative context of a uniform, mandatory, and hierarchically appointed liturgy, the form and authority of which are legally beyond question. In *Paradise Lost*, similarly, unlimited, "promiscuous" reading *cannot* be the order of the day; it is bounded, even in Paradise, by the divinely appointed

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[21] John Leonard ("Language and Knowledge," 99) contrasts Adam's naming of the animals with Satan's manipulation of language, and argues that "in a world where names correspond to natures, language is knowledge . . . The corrupting of innocence begins with the corrupting of language."

[22] Marshall Grossman, in "Milton's Dialectical Visions," argues the connection between food and knowledge, and asserts [in the course of an argument different from mine: that the movement in *Paradise Lost* is a teleological movement from metaphor to synecdoche] that the eating of the apple is "a hermeneutic failure and a founding of error."

Sign. Indeed, the Protestant will to read, the belief (so omnipresent in *Areopagitica*) that all things are accessible to the free interpreter, may be as much at issue here as the Catholic aspects of Satan's hermeneutic.)

Both Adam and Eve are tainted by their transgression of the Tree's pure signification, by their efforts to interpret and internalize and thus transcend the difference between themselves and God. It is, quite literally, a damned bad reading. It is also, I would suggest, a bitterly ironic anti-sacrament – an act of manducation that deeply separates humanity from God rather than bringing them closer together. And this in turn is because it departs from Reformed understandings of sacramental representationality. For in the Reformed sacrament, there is always some crucially differential space between the participant and the divine (just as there is between sign and referent), an irreducible gap bridgeable only by divine grace and self-conscious interpretive faith; in contrast, both Milton's Fall and the Catholic sacrament presume to close this gap, to make the divine present and internalize it directly.

The effects of the initiation of this tragic dialectic are felt immediately and pervasively. The knowledge of evil comes by the separation from God (a traditional definition of hell) that their act of interpretive transgression entails. The Fall was not the result of the transgression of knowledge; rather, the knowledge of transgression was a result of the Fall, which was itself the transgression of the Sign of God's divinity. The promise of knowledge in the Tree's name, which has misled many interpreters of it from Satan onward, is primarily an indicator of God's foreknowledge of the results of the deliberate transgression of the Sign, and not a name with any inherent referent in the Tree itself; the tendency to literalize the signifying name and locate its referent in the Tree itself is another instance of the tradition of fallen interpretation instituted by Satan. The knowledge of the act of transgression, "Knowledge of Good bought dear by knowing ill," is the knowledge of separation and loss, of the lost paradise of harmony with God. Heaven, Hell, and earth are shaken by the effects of this violation of God's ineffable majesty. God seals off the Garden and the Tree of Life, lest Satan use the "stol'n Fruit Man once more to delude" (XI.125).

Adam's fallen understanding must now be retaught, and this is the central concern of the poem's last two books.[23] Michael's tutoring of Adam is a preview of history that ranges freely over space and time, and the purpose

[23] Fish (*Surprised by Sin*, 287) sees Adam's education as a "conveniently concise summary of what the poem has taught diffusely" to its readers. It is a training away from what he calls the "politics of short joy" (or rational, empiricist, self-reliant "plot-thinking") and toward the "politics of long joy" (or faithful, obedient "faith-thinking") – a refounding of experience and action in the universal plenitude of God (ibid., Preface to the Second Edition, *passim*).

of it all is to teach Adam to read critically. Michael presents a scene; Adam responds to it; Michael encourages correct responses and corrects faulty ones. Adam's joy at the sight of the tents on the plain, for example, is corrected by Michael's lesson in critical interpretation:

> Judge not what is best
> By pleasure, though to Nature seeming meet,
> Created, as thou art, to nobler end
> Holy and pure, conformity divine.
>
> (XI. 604–7)

As this tutelage continues, Adam shows evidence of a gradually developing critical awareness: "I was far deceiv'd; for now I see / Peace to corrupt no less than War to waste" (783–4), and later, "now first I find / Mine eyes true op'ning, and my heart much eas'd, / Erewhile perplext with thoughts what would become / Of mee and all Mankind" (XII.273–6). This interactive preview of the history of redemption provides Adam with a framework of obedience, temperance, and interpretive awareness in which to live and read human history.

Book XII continues the history of God's chosen people, including the giving of Mosaic law:

> And therefore was Law given them to evince
> Thir natural pravity, by stirring up
> Sin against Law to fight . . .
> . . . .
> So Law appears imperfet, and but giv'n
> With purpose to resign them in full time
> Up to a better Cov'nant, disciplin'd
> From shadowy Types to Truth . . .
>
> (XII.287–9, 300–303)

The Law is thus given, in Pauline fashion, as a hermeneutic framework by means of which fallen man may accurately read both himself and his relationship to God. It functions as a postlapsarian analogue to the Tree of Knowledge by providing an indication of a proper interpretive perspective; like the Tree, it exists as a pure sign, a symbol of a difference now greater than ever between Almighty God and fallen humanity. It is not an interpretable entity or an end in itself (this is why religious legalism is a form of idolatry), but a symbolic indicator of ineffable divine perfection and human failure by which one can interpret worldly existence. And it also points forward, both hermeneutically and historically, "from shadowy types to Truth," to the ultimate restoration of the unity of God's creation through the sacrifice

of his Son (who will institute an entirely new system of signs by which to read humanity's relationship to God).

His apprenticeship to postlapsarian signs completed, Adam concludes his lesson with joy (XII.557ff.):

> Greatly instructed I shall hence depart,
> Greatly in peace of thought, and have my fill
> Of knowledge, what this Vessel can contain;
> Beyond which was my folly to aspire.

Michael responds that Adam "hast attain'd the sum / Of wisdom . . . / A paradise within thee" (575–6, 587). Adam has been reeducated, has learned how to read postlapsarian history and his place within it, and thus has been restored to grace and hope. The development of a new "paradise within thee" suggests the birth of a new mode of interiority, shaped by the new ability of a fallen humanity to interpret correctly the suddenly dangerous world of history, guided by sharpened critical faculties and a new appreciation of the absolute difference which frames and determines human–divine relations. These critical faculties are the necessary hermeneutic tools for navigating the dialectic initiated by the Fall; this process, figured by Milton in *Areopagitica* as the reassembly of the torn body of Osiris, is a strictly postlapsarian phenomenon whose end is the recovery of lost truth.[24] Indeed, in his stridently patriotic appeal to Parliament, truth is to be found, both individually and nationally, through critical reading. And the same might be said of providential history, which begins at the sadly hopeful end of the poem, as Adam and Eve set forth from Paradise to enact and interpret their future:

> The World was all before them, where to choose
> Thir place of rest, and Providence thir guide:
> They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow,
> Through Eden took thir solitary way.

And yet this faith in interpretation is not without its ambivalences. *Paradise Lost* narrates the seductive hermeneutic pitfalls involved in presumptuously thinking one can fully read the divine; Miltonic (and Reformed) interpretation thus requires a certain humility to be effective.[25]

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[24] This fact is the starting point for making sense of the apparent contradiction of the two works noted in the introduction to this section. It also creates the provocative possibility that reading itself is inherently fallen (and perhaps indeed constitutive of the Fall itself) – paradoxically, both the source of and the solution to our sinful predicament.

[25] As my argument implies, this requirement applies, in different degrees, both before and after the Fall. Strier ("Milton against Humility") provocatively argues that Milton steadfastly maintains the value

Areopagitica, despite its main thrust of free interpretation and the dialectical recovery of truth, has a darker undertone which reserves the right to categorize certain ideas and texts as too wrong and harmful to be permitted. And though Milton's repeated attacks on liturgy implicitly include the "evil" and "superstitious" Book of Common Prayer in this rightly banned class, he himself partakes of the Prayerbook's faith in representation and interpretation – as well as its caution about letting these potent principles operate unrestricted in a world of sinful opportunity.

READING, FAITH, AND CITIZENSHIP IN HOBBES

For Thomas Hobbes, this caution was foundational; a vast faith like Milton's in interpretation as a conduit to truth was anathema, and precisely the cause of the Civil War and Revolution. The bulk of Hobbes's writings, in *Leviathan* and elsewhere, are dedicated to the proposition that "the supreme power must always be absolute."[26] For a radical Protestant like Milton, such absolutism was repugnant, overriding as it necessarily did the individualized authority of Reformed theology. But Hobbes, looking back on the extreme consequences of this theology, proposed an alternative model of order which was at once Protestant, anti-interpretive, and highly representational.

In *Behemoth*, his appalled analytical history of the upheavals of the mid-seventeenth century, Hobbes outlines two different configurations of destructively divided sovereignty. The Henrician Reformation had happily remedied the longstanding division of royal and papal authority by fusing the religious and temporal dimensions of the realm. But Protestant scripturalism had, rather than resolving this problem, produced another division of authority between law and Scripture, public and private, obedience and interpretation:

after the Bible was translated into English, every man, nay, every boy and wench, that could read English, thought they spoke with God Almighty, and understood what he said, when by a certain number of chapters a day they had read the

of a classically appropriate pride (or the Aristotelian *magnanimitas*, though the two are not identical); this seems a natural corollary of Milton's Arminian tendencies (though it's worth noting that even the hardline Reformed position requires a sort of interpretive confidence alongside a fundamental sense of depravity). Nevertheless, the Fall essentially redraws the boundary between proper and improper pride – a boundary which, interpretively speaking, has been there from the beginning (cf. Haskin, *Milton's Burden*, ch. 7). Strier is especially illuminating in his treatment of Milton's paradoxical association of false humility with the lay/clerical divisions of ceremonial Christianity (pp. 262–8), but his account generally risks minimizing the essential role of humility (or *modestia*, though again they are not exactly congruent) in defining and limiting the nature and capacity of the self.

[26] *Behemoth*, 112.

Scriptures once or twice over. And so the reverence and obedience due to the Reformed Church here, and to the bishops and pastors therein, was cast off; and every man became a judge of religion, and an interpreter of the Scriptures to himself.[27]

This excessive dissemination of authority was fundamental to the self-created authority of Puritan and Presbyterian ministers, and in turn to their claims to the authority to challenge royal power. These clerical (and lay) pretensions, no less damaging for Hobbes than the former Catholic ones, manifested themselves in opposition to the Book of Common Prayer.

[T]heir prayer was or seemed to be *extempore*, which they pretended to be dictated by the spirit of God within them, and many of the people believed or seemed to believe it. For any man might see, that had judgment, that they did not take care beforehand what they should say in their prayers. And from hence came a dislike of the *common-prayer-book*, which is a set form, premeditated, that men might see to what they were to say *Amen*.[28]

An excessive embracing of one of the Church of England's two central texts, in Hobbes's account, thus leads to the rejection of the other; if one is authorized to read and judge God's word for oneself, then why shouldn't one have the same latitude when responding in prayer? Individual authority, when put in a position to challenge the power of collective order, did so, disastrously, at order's expense. (Here again we can see the stabilizing function of the Prayerbook as a counterweight to the energies unleashed by the English Bible.)

The problem for Hobbes, though, is not the availability of the vernacular Bible, which he endorses quite warmly. The problem is interpretation itself, and the reliance of a highly interpretive faith like Presbyterianism on such an unstable means of truth. Multiple interpreters, each convinced they "spoke with God Almighty," will inevitably produce different readings of the same text, all perhaps equally tenable, and the unavoidable result is division and conflict (or, Hobbes might say, disputational theology itself: "I like not the design of drawing religion into an art, whereas it ought to be a law"[29]). Once Bible readers are inherently authoritative "judges of religion," there is nothing to stop them from setting their readings up against others, or against the established order itself.[30] Hobbes's conservative fears are reminiscent of the position of the contemporary Catholic Church, but for him, of course, the maintenance of this order is the province of the state.

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[27] Ibid., 21–2. [28] Ibid., 25. [29] Ibid., 43.
[30] In the dedication to *Leviathan*, Hobbes calls nonconsensual readings of Scripture "the outworks of the enemy, from whence they impugn the civil power" (p. 2).

But if interpretation is itself objectionable, what place can the scriptural text have in the commonwealth? Hobbes proposes a principle of noninterpretive reading which can make available all the essential and indisputable truths of the Bible; everything else is properly the doctrinal jurisdiction of the state.

Whatsoever is necessary for them to know, is so easy, as not to need interpretation: whatsoever is more, does them no good. But in case any of those unnecessary doctrines shall be authorized by the laws of the King or other state, I say it is the duty of every subject not to speak against them: inasmuch as it is every man's duty to obey him or them that have the sovereign power, and the wisdom of all such powers to punish such as shall publish or teach their private interpretations, when they are contrary to the law, and likely to incline men to sedition or disputing against the law.[31]

Consequently, everything outside the essentials of faith is under the jurisdictional prerogative of state authority; true religion should be "a quiet waiting for the coming again of our blessed Saviour, and in the mean time a resolution to obey the King's laws (which also are God's laws)."[32] Hobbes characteristically defines the essentials of faith primarily in terms of obedience[33] (not unlike Milton's Paradise!), and thus all of faith becomes a matter of obedient subordination to power.

Significantly, though, all of Hobbes's prescriptions relate to *conduct*, what one may and may not *do* (teach, publish, dispute, act rebelliously) with regard to religious faith; he nowhere proposes that the state should (or could) regulate internal belief – only its destabilizing consequences. This is because, paradoxically, Hobbes bases his system on a view no less Reformed, in its way, than Milton's. "We cannot safely judge of men's intentions,"[34] he warns, and this is indicative of a systematic distinction he makes between intentions and actions, inner and outer, private and public, righteousness and justice.[35] Over the interior pole of private belief the state has no jurisdiction; over the exterior pole of actions, the state has a legitimate and compelling interest in regulation and conformity. Hobbes may share with the Catholic Church a fear of the anarchic consequences of the dispersed authority of individual scriptural interpretation, but he differs importantly from it by allowing (where the Church had demanded conformity of inner belief as well as outward practice) a relatively independent

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[31] *Behemoth*, 55.   [32] Ibid., 58.
[33] "*Children obey your parents in all things: Servants obey your masters: Let all men be subject to the higher powers, whether it be the King or those that are sent by him: Love God with all your soul, and your neighbor as yourself* " (Ibid., 54).
[34] Ibid., 72.   [35] On this last opposition, see ibid., 63.

sphere of personal faith; like Queen Elizabeth, he is wary of peering into men's souls. In other words, for Hobbes, the Protestant subject is not eradicated; he or she is free to think and believe according to the leading of spirit or conscience. But when one acts, one must do so as a subject of the state. For Milton, the possible disjunction of inner and outer is by definition a zone of antireligious hypocrisy; for Hobbes, this same slippage is precisely what enables the establishment of a stable Christian polity.

It is also, in some respects, the natural arena of liturgy. The Book of Common Prayer defined, above all, a textually stabilized code for public religious conduct, while at the same time reserving a critical space for individual belief and involvement. The debate over the Prayerbook never took the form of forbidding private prayer or belief, but rather concerned itself with the public formulation and conduct of worship within the sociopolitical order. Radicals rejected the liturgy because of the potential conflicts it created between public and private faith; Hobbes contends in contrast that this tension of the personal and the public – itself embodied in the Prayerbook from the beginning – needn't be a bad thing as long as it doesn't interfere with public order. One can, and must, whatever one's beliefs, act, and even pray, like a citizen.

For Hobbes, of course, the guarantor of this stable order, and the restraint to the anarchic Behemoth of the 1640s, is the overwhelming power of Leviathan. The frontispiece to the 1651 edition of *Leviathan* graphically illustrates the book's argument. The monstrous collective sovereign rises over the land, holding the sword of state in one hand and the staff of religious authority in the other, and arrayed under these symbols are matching columns which depict the civil and religious powers he dominates: castle and church, crown and miter, war and disputation. Erastianism could hardly be more vividly figured forth, and the text repeatedly insists on this unified structure of authority:

From this consolidation of the right politic and ecclesiastic in Christian sovereigns, it is evident they have all manner of power over their subjects that can be given to man for the government of men's external actions, both in policy and religion, and may make such laws as themselves shall judge fittest for the government of their own subjects, both as they are the commonwealth and as they are the Church; for both State and Church are the same men.[36]

The tradition of Marsilius, Gardiner, and Hooker echoes in this argument: since Church and State are coterminous, the sovereign beast possesses the

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[36] *Leviathan*, 42.79 (p. 372).

complete and arbitrary right to order both the civic and the religious dimensions of its realm.

Hobbes's specification of "external actions," however, indicates the same distinction made in *Behemoth* between belief and action, inner and outer. The great sovereign's power is not limitless, but rather limited to the externals of public conduct. Consequently, faith itself is untouchable: "belief and unbelief never follow men's commands. Faith is a gift of God, which man can neither give nor take away by promises of rewards or menaces of torture."[37] And it is precisely this private subjectivity of faith that renders public religious action regulable without hindering in any way the individual pursuit of truth. "Profession with the tongue," Hobbes asserts, "is but an external thing, and no more than any other gesture whereby we signify our obedience."[38] And this distinction also functions the other way, as a protection for individual conscience; one objectionable characteristic of the "Kingdom of Darkness" in Part IV is the impulse "to extend the power of the law, which is the rule of actions only, to the very thoughts and consciences of men, by examination and inquisition of what they hold, notwithstanding the conformity of their speech and actions."[39]

Ultimately, Hobbes's rigorous separation of belief and action provides a space for both the stable collective order of Leviathan and individual liberty of conscience; in his commonwealth, public and private (each in its proper place) need not overlap or compete. A public order for worship can dictate individual conduct without infringing on belief, while the inner dictates of conscience need not threaten sociopolitical stability. Religion and citizenship, private and public, individual and order can, in Hobbes's account, coexist in peace. And *Leviathan* thus becomes an argument, not only for absolute collective sovereignty and coercive uniformity, but also for a remarkable tolerance of individual belief (a tolerance which had been silently built into the Prayerbook's tactful ambiguities from the beginning). Unsurprisingly, given the similar conflicts it sought to contain, the Book of Common Prayer is (implicitly, though never mentioned by name) a natural outwork of Leviathan, a proper piece of its domain and an appropriate form for the commonwealth at worship. The prayers of the collective beast, in order properly to honor the all-powerful deity, ought to be "made in words

[37] Ibid., 42.11 (p. 338).
[38] Ibid. Similarly, Rappaport ("Veracity," 40) contends that the acceptance implied in liturgical performance "is not belief nor does it even imply belief. Belief is an inward state, knowable subjectively if at all. Acceptance, in contrast, is a public act visible to the self as well as to others. Belief may constitute one reason for acceptance but not the only reason. Conversely, acceptance *may* encourage belief, but that is another matter."
[39] *Leviathan*, 46.37 (p. 466).

and phrases, not sudden, nor light, nor plebeian, but beautiful and well composed"⁴⁰ – prayers, in short, like those Hobbes (the vicar's son and church-school student) had grown up with.

Leviathan's reconciliation of public and private religion, theoretically airtight as it might have been, presupposes some neat demarcations where none may exist; belief and action are more reciprocally implicated than this schema suggests. But it is in some sense this very messiness that makes the sea-monster a necessity for Hobbes. The unruly, selfish, and violent (or as a theologian might say, sinful) nature of individual human inclination requires the restraining power of some overwhelming principle. And the power proposed – the disciplinary corrective to our naturally sinful condition, the war of all against all – turns out to be, if not interpretive like Milton's, at any rate a highly representational one.

Hobbes employs the etymology of the word *person* in his definition of the sovereign power, and this etymology yields a primarily theatrical and fictive definition.

> The word Person is Latin, instead whereof the Greeks have *prosopon*, which signifies the *face*, as *persona* in Latin signifies the *disguise* or *outward appearance* of a man, counterfeited on the stage, and sometimes more particularly that part of it which disguiseth the face (as a mask or vizard); and from the stage hath been translated to any representer of speech and action, as well in tribunals as theatres. So that a *person* is the same that an *actor* is, both on the stage and in common conversation; and to *personate* is to *act*, or *represent*, himself or another.⁴¹

Those on whose behalf the prosopopoetic actor acts – those who create his role and identity – are, accordingly, *authors*, and as such inherently authoritative. Their collective efforts create ("authorize") the ultimate theatrical and political fiction: the artificial man, and "*Mortal God*,"⁴² Leviathan. The terrifying beast of Hobbesian absolutism is thus in essence a contractual and metaphorical *representation* of the collective will of its subjects.⁴³ And though its presence may be more ominous and frightening than the representations of Sidney, Shakespeare, and Milton, it is no less redemptive, in its way. For this theatrical creature, asserting as it does its collective author-ity over the individual passions of its creators, does more than simply unify the realm and protect it from foreign enemies; it saves its subjects from the nasty and brutish domestic chaos of their naturally sinful existence. Once

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⁴⁰ Ibid., 31.34 (p. 241).   ⁴¹ Ibid., 16.3 (p. 101)   ⁴² Ibid., 17.13 (p. 109).
⁴³ Significantly, this does not involve the ongoing renegotiation that the Prayerbook institutes (though it will, by the time Locke is done with it). But it does imply a similarly constructed and (originally) negotiated sociopolitical order in which the interests of power and people are mutually sustaining.

again, the salvation of national unity and stable sociopolitical and religious order is sought and achieved in the potent field of representation.

The upheavals of the 1640s, explicitly focused as they were in large part around liturgical issues, suggest that the Book of Common Prayer failed to synthesize the previous century's fundamental tensions in a stable form. But the commonalities between the radically different positions of Milton and Hobbes indicate the English Reformation's profound and continuing importance in restructuring the cultural field. For Milton, a Reformed principle of individual competence led to a model of dispersed authority, which rejected the claims of liturgy and sought salvation (both individual and national) through critical reading; for Hobbes, the natural rights of individuals both necessitate and create an irresistible sovereign authority, which dictates the public form of worship while respecting the internal autonomy of the Protestant self. Though revolution polarized the two, both nevertheless operate firmly within (while responding differently to) the tradition established in the Prayerbook, in which individual and collective authority perpetually, and reciprocally, support and contest one another around a representational fulcrum. This may also account for the ambivalences in each man's radicalism: Milton's faith in individual interpretation is not without its dangers and limits, while Hobbes's sovereign beast is never allowed to intrude inside its subjects.

These same tensions and commitments are visible in Sidney and Shakespeare, though in perhaps less conflicted forms, untempered by the chaos and bloodshed of the seventeenth century. Sidney, like Milton, looked to literary representation as a signifying field in which truth and transformation could be found, both individually and nationally, through careful reading. And Shakespeare, like Hobbes, synthesized literary and political representation into a model which created political authority in a cooperative and self-conscious persona of nationally unifying power.

Ultimately, I've argued, all of these models were made possible by the English Reformation, and especially by its textual embodiment in the Book of Common Prayer. In it, the seemingly irreconcilable claims of early modern absolutism and Protestant individualism were textually synthesized into productive new tensions. Central to these ongoing cultural negotiations was the newly valorized principle of representation and interpretation, the redemptive potential of signs and reading. These distinctive concatenations of authority and identity, State and Church, individual and order, signification and interpretation, came in large part to define (and perpetually redefine) post-Reformation England and its subjects.

And this process goes on. Social contract theory continued to evolve dialectically in the space between Hobbes and Milton, eventually stabilizing individual rights and the need for authority into a binding and representational parliamentary supremacy. And the Church of England continued to reassert and reformulate its role as a national Church as history and society changed around, through, and sometimes despite it. But through all of this, improbable as it may have seemed in 1553 or 1645, the foundational negotiations instituted in the Book of Common Prayer have remained a deeply woven part of the fabric of English culture. The monumental importance of the Reformation and its liturgy to the language, history, and identity of England continues, grounding the present in the past from which it came.

Postlude/Evensong: 1662–present

Although few could have known it at the time, the 1662 Book of Common Prayer was destined to become in effect the permanent liturgy of the Church of England, up to our own day and into the foreseeable future. Its subsequent history can thus be sketched out quite quickly. The remainder of Charles II's reign saw active efforts to repress religious dissent, and the Test Act of 1673 sought to restrict nonconformity by requiring – under penalties including the forfeiture of £500 and the right to pursue legal actions – all holders of civil and military office to subscribe to oaths of allegiance and supremacy as well as the BCP Communion service. Roman Catholic James II sought to ease these strictures in 1687 by issuing a declaration that, since "conscience ought not to be constrained nor people forced in matters of mere[1] religion," the enforcement of religious tests and penal laws was to be suspended. This attempt to override parliamentary authority was the first in the list of grievances against James in the 1689 Bill of Rights that permanently barred Catholics from the English throne.[2] But in the same year, the Toleration Act established an important new principle by allowing limited religious dissent for those who would affirm by oath a basic Trinitarian doctrine, the royal supremacy, and their allegiance to it. Post-Commonwealth England seemed weary of religious strife and wary of the dangers of narrowly state-enforced religion, and whatever his larger purposes may have been, there was considerable perception in James II's observation that "after all the frequent and pressing endeavours that were used [in the last four reigns] to reduce this kingdom to an exact conformity in religion, it is visible the success has not answered the design, and that the difficulty is invincible." One might see the advent of toleration as a loosening of Uniformity, and thus yet another failure of the Prayerbook synthesis – but I think it more plausible to see it as simply a broadening

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[1] This word should be understood here in its superlative, absolute sense of "pure," not its later, dismissive sense – though one can see the shift taking place around this time.

[2] All the documents cited in this paragraph can be found in Gee and Hardy, *Documents*, 620–64.

of its fundamental logic, a progressive affirmation of the diversity that was always, implicitly and paradoxically, at its ambiguous core.

In the eighteenth century, the Book of Common Prayer continued to be a ground of vigorous contention. But as religious toleration increased, the drive toward a single and comprehensive liturgy which could be broadly accepted and universally enforced – in short, the motive logic of all previous liturgical efforts – gave way to a more fragmented tinkering for more specific doctrinal, pastoral, and aesthetic reasons. The market for commentaries and expositions on the Prayerbook, born in the years before the Savoy Conference, continued to grow briskly. The Low Church party produced numerous schemes for revision, and late in the century John Wesley produced a Methodist liturgy entirely culled from the BCP. On the other side, the High Church party continued to look to the past as it produced doctrinally conservative and ceremonially rich revisions of its own. While none of these schemes – and many were never more than that – achieved official recognizance, by century's end a considerable latitude had been established in the arrangement and use of Prayerbook materials.[3]

In the conservative wake of the French Revolution, England's liturgical energies in the first half of the nineteenth century were displaced from its reform to its study, and there was an unparalleled explosion of liturgical scholarship and republication.[4] Once the ascendancy of this liturgical introspection subsided, the debate resumed along familiar lines. The Evangelical [Low] arm of the Church continued to both defend the Protestantism of the Anglican Church and push for further reform, and eventually organized itself into the Church Association. On the other side, the Anglo-Catholic [High] party, intellectually fueled by Newman's Oxford Movement, formed the Church Union and began actively looking to Rome for liturgical enrichment. A royal commission was appointed in 1867 to resolve the key conflict of clerical vestments, which it failed to do; more notably, it led to the 1872 Shortened Services Act, which permitted the certain minor truncations and alterations in service, and was the first legal variation in the BCP's main text since 1662. But the Church's liturgical polarization was far from resolved: its High faction moved ritually ever closer to Rome, and for this four clergymen were imprisoned between 1878 and 1881.

The Church of England entered the twentieth century by addressing this problem with the customary royal commission, which found liturgical

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[3] Cf. Cuming, *History*, ch. 8, for a fuller discussion of the century.

[4] This scholarly wave peaked around midcentury with the publication of such works as Procter's original *History*, Keeling's *Liturgiae Brittanicae*, Cardwell's *Documentary Annals*, and the entire Parker Society series of Reformation reprints.

variation – ranging from inconsequential omissions to full-blown Roman Catholic practice – everywhere in the Anglican Church. The commission concluded that

the law of public worship in the Church of England is too narrow for the religious life of the present generation. It needlessly condemns much which a great section of Church people, including many of her most devoted members, value . . . It is important that the law should be reformed, that it should admit of reasonable elasticity . . . but, above all, it is necessary that it should be obeyed.[5]

The door was thus opened (despite a continuing stress on liturgical conformity) for an assault on the Book of Common Prayer and its legal primacy. By 1927 the Church had drafted and approved a new Prayerbook which printed 1662 complete but provided extensive alternative forms which recognized the range of moderate illegalities that were felt to be tolerable. Despite the Church's full backing, the proposed Book was twice defeated in Parliament. The bishops responded by circumventing parliamentary authority and announcing that use of the 1928 Book would not be regarded as a problem within the Church; nevertheless, the Book was a compromise which, like its 1549 original, ended up pleasing very few. It never came into significant use, and its failure quelled the impulse for liturgical revision for years.[6]

   The history of the Book of Common Prayer – both as a mutable document and as the sole text of Anglican uniformity – came to an end in 1965. Pressure for a more modern and flexible liturgy had built up alongside both the BCP's immense cultural status and its history of failed comprehensiveness, and the Alternative and Other Services Measure gave legal authority to some of the proposals of 1928. In 1974, the Church of England Worship and Doctrine Measure marked Parliament's abdication of liturgical authority for the first time in over four centuries; it gave the Church permanent authority to introduce new forms of service without parliamentary consent, but only in exchange for the permanent protection of the 1662 Prayerbook.[7] Parliament bowed out of the liturgy business, and in effect out of 425 years

[5] Quoted in Cuming, *History*, 163. His ch. 9 is the basis of the present summary of the nineteenth century.

[6] For more on the 1928 disaster, cf. Cuming, *History*, ch. 10, or the concise summary (in the context of the recent revisional debate) in the *Daily Telegraph*, 2 January 1979, p. 8. Midcentury liturgical revision was carried on vigorously not in England but in Anglican Communion churches in India, Canada, Africa, the US, and elsewhere.

[7] The measure (which is printed in *Public General Acts and General Synod Measures 1974*, 1885–92) transfers these powers only under the express condition that "the forms of service contained in the Book of Common Prayer continue to be available for use in the Church of England." It also repeals a long list of ecclesiastical legislation, going back to the 1549 Act of Uniformity.

of legislative religion, only after ensuring that its greatest and most enduring legacy in this area would continue.

Fifteen years of liturgical experimentation culminated in the first full-scale alternative ever to exist alongside the BCP – the *Alternative Service Book* of 1980. The new services, and the threat they posed to the Prayerbook, caused recurring and sometimes frenzied national debate. Poet-critic C. H. Sisson, in a withering review, decried the "sheer outrageous ineptitude" of the "disintegrative book."[8] An odd but telling episode in that debate was the presentation of a petition to the Church which was signed by six hundred "distinguished people" – many of them professed atheists or agnostics – including university professors, high government officials, and such cultural celebrities as Sir John Gielgud, Lord Olivier, Philip Larkin, Iris Murdoch, Henry Moore, and Andrew Lloyd Webber. The petition warned against "a terrible act of forgetting," and read in part:

We are concerned for the wellsprings of expressive power in the Authorized Version of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, the great originals of English life and language, informing piety and inspiring justice. New and necessary initiatives must not smudge or obliterate the deep grooves cut by the Lord's Prayer, the collects and the canticles, by the historic Eucharist and all the powerful words which mark birth, marriage and death. We only ask that the traditional texts be restored to a central and regular place of honour in the mainstream of worship.[9]

The range of religious [dis]belief among the petition's signers precludes any consistent theological purpose in their protective veneration of the Prayer-book. Rather, even in the decidedly nonuniform twentieth century, it is seen as a foundational and unifying element of England's cultural and national identity and its continuity with the past, a "great original of English life and language" which remains profoundly relevant. Four hundred and fifty years after Archbishop Cranmer's first liturgical scribblings, postmodern and in many ways post-religious England continues to recognize its origins and its identity in the central original text of the English Reformation.

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[8] *Times Literary Supplement*, 14 November 1980, p. 1281.   [9] *Daily Telegraph*, 6 November 1979, p. 6.

"THE booke": The structure and contents of the 1549 Book of Common Prayer

This appendix is intended simply to acquaint unfamiliar readers with the text of the Book of Common Prayer, which, for such an important book, is relatively little known to people outside the Anglican Communion. To do this as straightforwardly as possible, I will focus this account on the 1549 Prayerbook – a text which, while subsequently (and sometimes substantially) revised, established the foundational structure and content of all Prayerbooks to come. The vast majority of 1549 survived not only in the Elizabethan BCP, but also into that of the present day. And focusing on the first Prayerbook also enables some clearer discussion of its sources, context, and immediate significance.[1]

The original title of the Book of Common Prayer, as given on the title page of Edward Whitchurch's edition of June 1549, was "*THE booke of the common prayer and administracion of the Sacramentes, and other rites and ceremonies of the Churche: after the use of the Churche of England.*"[2] This comprehensive title provides a wealth of information about the book: the first two and last eight words explain its provenance, status, and uniqueness, while those in between give a full account of its contents. I'll address each phrase of the title in turn.

"*THE booke.*" Until the eleventh century, ritual texts were organized by office; each position had its own specific text for the Mass. Thus there was a Sacramentary for priests' prayers; a Lectionary (Comes), containing epistles and lessons, for the subdeacon; a Gospel book for the deacon; a Cantatorium (Gradual, Grail) for choral parts. Divine service required a Psalter for psalms and canticles; an Antiphonary and a Responsorial for the antiphons and responds; a Bible for scriptural lessons; a Legenda Sanctorum

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[1] My account owes much to the work of Brightman, Clarke, Procter and Frere, Gasquet and Bishop, Booty, and Cuming – all of whom would be profitably consulted by readers seeking greater depth and detail.

[2] Brightman, *English Rite*, i.2.

for saint's lives; a Homiliary for readings from the Church Fathers; and an Ordo for instructional rubrics governing each book's role.[3]

After the eleventh century, church use was simplified into five major books. The Breviary (also called the Portiforium, Portuis, and other odd variants) contained all necessary readings for the Divine Service of eight canonical hours for every day of the year. The Missal contained the Mass, including its invariable framework and variable "proper" readings and formulae for specific days. The Manual (Ritual, Agenda, Sacerdotal) provided forms for all other priestly services such as baptism, matrimony, and extreme unction; the Pontifical, bishops' services such as ordination, consecrations, and so forth; the Processional, anthems and other materials sung in procession on Sundays and holy days. This system, though perhaps an improvement, was nevertheless criticized as being cumbersome and overly elaborate: Cranmer's Preface to the 1549 Prayerbook asserts that "many times, there was more busines to fynd out what should be read, than to read it when it was founde out." And, while this may seem a polemical construction of the contemporary situation, it is worth noting that the Council, in a circular letter of December 1549,[4] felt it necessary to specify the recall of "all antiphoners, miſſales, grayles, proceſſionalles, Manuelles, Legendes, pies, portasies, Jornalles, and ordinalles after the uſe of Sarum, Lincolne, Yorke, Bangor, Herforde, or any other private uſe, and all other bokes of ſervice, the kepinge whereof ſholde be a lett to the uſings of the ſaide boke of comon prayer."

Into this wilderness of liturgical texts, then, the introduction of "THE" book was indeed an event. The Book of Common Prayer replaced the notorious confusion of medieval service books with a single volume that comprehended them all in drastically simplified form. Henceforth, the only books needed for the conduct of worship in England were the BCP and an English Bible.[5] Cranmer's Preface makes plain the benefits of the new system:

It is also more commodious, bothe for the shortnes thereof, and for the plaines of the ordre, and for that the rules be fewe and easy. Furthermore by this ordre, the curates shal nede none other bookes for their publique service, but this boke and the Bible: by meanes wherof, the people shall not be at so great charge for bookes, as in tyme past they have been. (4)

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[3] Brightman in Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship*, 130–6. He also mentions the lesser Hymnary, Sequential, Troper, Collectar, and Benedictional.

[4] Lambeth MS 1107 fo. 59a.

[5] The English Ordinal, corresponding to the medieval Pontifical, was not composed until 1550; from that date until 1552, when it was incorporated into the 1552 Prayerbook, this form would also be necessary for services of ordination.

The claims made here are worth noting. This simplification and standardization of the texts of public worship has significant beneficial consequences for both clergy and laity: greater access both intellectually (due to the improved clarity and simplicity of the new system) and economically.[6]

". . . *of the common prayer.*" After the Preface, the first section of the 1549 Book corresponds to the medieval Breviary – it is in fact almost entirely derived from the Sarum Breviary, of the influential diocese of Salisbury – and contains the Calendar for feasts and Scripture readings throughout the year as well as the forms for daily prayer. Again, the Preface makes clear the rationale for Breviary reform with a polemical but generally accurate history of the tradition. The ancient fathers of the Church had ordained "common prayers in the Churche, commonlye called divine service" for the purpose of systematically reading Scripture to the people and ministers of the church, to their edification and inspiration. In the intervening centuries, however, "this Godly and decent ordre of the auncient fathers, hath bee*n* so altered, broken, and neglected" by the accretion of "uncertein stories, Lege*n*des, Respondes, Verses, vaine repeticions, Commemoracions, and Synodalles" that the calendar was constantly interrupted by saints' days and other festivals, and scriptural readings were reduced to a fraction of the desired full coverage; moreover, services were conducted in Latin, which the people "understoode not; so that they have heard with theyr eares onely; and their hartes, spirite, and minde, have not been edified thereby" (3). Accordingly, the Breviary revisers

left out many thynges, whereof some be untrue, some uncertein, some vain and supersticious: and . . . ordeyned nothyng to be read, but the very pure worde of God, the holy scriptures, or that whiche is evidently grounded upon the same: and that in suche a language and ordre, as is moste easy and plain for the understandyng, bothe of the readers and hearers. (4)

The essence of this liturgical reform, then, is a turn away from traditional accretions and toward the comprehensible Word. The new Calendar reduced the number of festival days to twenty-five; this, combined with the removal of a great deal of responsory material and metrical hymns, as well as the expunging of nonscriptural readings, enabled a full course of Scripture reading throughout the year. Each of the two daily services included several psalms in sequence, one Old Testament lesson (continuous), and one New Testament lesson (a Gospel at Mattins, an Epistle at Evensong); thus, for example, the readings for 19 February of every year are Psalms 102 and 103, Numbers 23, and Luke 2 at Mattins, and Psalm 104, Numbers 24, and

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[6] The theological implications of the various forms of popular access are explored in Ch. 2.

Galatians 2 at Evensong. As a result of this rigorous schedule, the Psalter was read completely through once a month; the Old Testament once a year; and the New Testament (with the exception of the Apocalypse) three times a year.

The recitation of the Divine Service, or Daily Office, or Hours of Prayer, originated in the first-century Church, where it was an early Christian continuation of the Judaic tradition of prayer at certain hours of the day; its dual purpose was the orderly recitation of Scripture and the consecration of certain daily hours to prayer.[7] Through addition and systematization, it had reached its full form of eight canonical hours – Mattins and Lauds (midnight), Prime (early morning), Terce (9 a.m.), Sext (noon), None (3 p.m.), Vespers (evening), and Compline (late night) – in the Western Church by the end of the fifth century. Medieval accretions increased the complexity of the services, usually at the expense of scriptural reading. Quiñones' papally commissioned 1535 revision of the Breviary is evidence of dissatisfaction with the contemporary state of the Office, even within the Church, and Cranmer looked to it as a model of liturgical reform. Part of the problem both addressed was that the extensiveness and intricacy of the Hours made their observance largely the province of the Catholic clergy; in contrast, early Lutheran forms provided simplified vernacular services in which the people could take part. Cranmer's two drafts of revisions,[8] made in the last decade of Henry VIII's life, reveal England's uneasy position between the two. One draft meets and exceeds Quiñones in radicalism by combining and discarding entire services, yet remains in Latin; the other largely reproduces the traditional structures in a simplified form. Radical reform was not likely while the doctrinally conservative Henry lived.

Edward VI, however, was another matter entirely, and the services finally produced for the Book of Common Prayer represent a wholesale reworking of their predecessors. The "Little Hours" of Terce, Sext, and None have vanished without a trace. Of the five remaining services, three (Mattins, Lauds, and Prime) have been eviscerated and combined into a single, simple Mattins; the remaining two (Vespers and Compline) have been similarly cannibalized and turned into Evensong. Every word of the Office is now in English, and the rubrics indicate that significant lay attendance is expected. And true to Cranmer's word, the services are simple and unremittingly biblical, built centrally around the *lectio continua* of daily psalms and lessons.

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[7] Procter and Frere, *History*, 347ff.
[8] Gasquet and Bishop, *Edward VI*, 311–94. The manuscript, British Library MS Royal 7. B. IV, is edited in its entirety by J. W. Legg in *Cranmer's Liturgical Projects*.

The new services of Mattins and Evensong are structurally identical. Each begins with the Lord's Prayer in English, followed by several brief versicles and responses (V: "O Lorde, open thou my lippes." R: "And my mouthe shall shewe forth thy prayse.") and the *Gloria Patri*: "Glory be to the father, and to the sonne: and to the holye ghost. As it was in the begynning, is now, and ever shalbe, world without ende. Amen."[9] Then comes the heart of the service, beginning with the psalms of the day, which are appointed in an invariable table; these are followed immediately by the Old Testament lesson as appointed in the Calendar, which is itself followed by the first canticle[10] (*Te Deum* or *Benedicite* at Mattins, the *Magnificat* at Evensong). The core of the service is completed with the New Testament lesson and another canticle (*Benedictus* at Mattins, *Nunc Dimittis* at Evensong). This distinctive and elegant pattern of Psalms – Lesson – Canticle – Lesson – Canticle remains the heart of the "classical Anglican service" and is quite nearly original.[11]

The remainder of the service returns to communal participation with the traditional *Kyrie*, the Apostle's Creed, the Lord's Prayer again, and a series of short responsive suffrages for grace, mercy, peace, the monarch, and God's "ministers." Finally, the service concludes with three collects: first the collect of the day (i.e. the proper collect of the preceding Sunday) and then two invariable collects – for peace and grace at Mattins, and as darkness falls at Evensong, for peace, and the lovely collect for "ayde agaynste all perils":

Lyghten our darkenes, we beseche thee, O lord, and by thy great mercy defende us from all perilles and daungers of thys nyght, for the love of thy onely sonne, our saviour Jesu Christe. Amen. (29)

The final element of "common prayer" in the BCP is the Litany, frequently called the "common prayer of procession,"[12] although as this title implies it is strictly speaking the Prayerbook's version of the medieval Processional. It is the earliest royally sanctioned piece of liturgy in English, dating back to 1544, when Henry VIII, at war with France and Scotland, ordered Cranmer to draw up a national form of procession. Henry wrote in the letter of injunction to his Archbishop that considering "the miserable state of all Christendom, being at this present, besides all other troubles, so plagued

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[9] Ratcliff, *The First and Second Prayer Books*, 21. Following this is the single structural difference between the services: the recitation of the invitatory Psalm 95 ("O come, lette us syng unto the Lorde") at Mattins.

[10] A canticle is a scriptural or patristic hymn which is not a psalm.

[11] Cuming, *History*, 51.   [12] Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship*, 130.

with most cruel wars, hatreds, and dissensions" as well as the fact that the people had in recent years "come very slackly" to earlier processions, he had caused to be set forth "certain godly prayers and suffrages in our native English tongue."[13] Despite its wartime genesis, the 1544 Litany continued, largely untouched, not only into the 1549 Prayerbook but to the present day.

The Litany is Cranmer's usual condensation of sources, primarily the Sarum Processional and Luther's Litany. By royal injunction or implication, it was to be used on Sundays (between Mattins and Communion), Wednesdays, Fridays, and festival days. The Litany (from the Greek *litaneia*, "entreaty") is the longest and most comprehensive single form of pure prayer in the Book, and consists mostly of fixed congregational responses (e.g. "We beseche thee to heare us good lorde") to petitionary sentences pronounced by the priest. This long series of responses falls into a sequence of specific categories of prayer. It begins with a series of responsory invocations of the Trinity. The Deprecations follow, and request protection and deliverance from a variety of sins and dangers, ranging from lightning to fornication to sedition. The Obsecrations request divine mercy through the redemptive work of Christ. The Intercessions make a number of appeals, in the following sequence: one petition for the universal Church; three for the monarch;[14] one for the clergy; two for the Council, nobility, and magistrates; and the remaining thirteen for various graces and blessings for various categories of people (most conspicuously the troubled, downtrodden, and oppressed, but also including enemies and persecutors). The remainder of the service is a mixture of familiar liturgical elements (*Agnus Dei*, *Kyrie*, the Lord's Prayer, the *Gloria Patri*), a few further responsories, three collective prayers which recapitulate the central concerns of the Litany proper, and a final prayer that God would answer all the preceding prayers, "grauntyng us in this worlde knowlege of thy trueth, and in the worlde to come, lyfe everlasting" (235). The service as a whole is a remarkably comprehensive, graceful, and multifaceted flowering of common prayer which despite its status as Cranmer's earliest lasting liturgical work has been called "the most beautiful intercession in any language."[15]

"*. . . and administracion of the Sacramentes.*"[16] The next section of the Book corresponds to the medieval Missal, and contains all the necessary

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[13] Cranmer, *Letters*, 494.

[14] According to Procter and Frere (*History*, 416), the English Litany is rather unusual (though not unprecedented) in putting the prayers for state rulers before those for church rulers.

[15] Harrison, *Common Prayer*, 95.

[16] The seven traditional sacraments are the Eucharist, Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Matrimony, Unction, and Ordination; Protestant churches generally accepted only the first two as authentic, i.e.

materials for celebration of the Eucharist, the most important and contro-
versial ritual observance of all major Christian churches. Its first part com-
prises roughly three-fifths of the entire 1549 BCP, and contains the proper
readings (Introit Psalms, Epistles, Gospels) and collects for all Sundays
and festival days throughout the year. The second part gives the invariable
liturgical framework for the celebration of the sacrament.

"The Supper of the Lorde, and the Holy Communion, commonly called
the Masse" incorporates in its 1549 title the Reformed, Lutheran, and
Catholic names for the Eucharist, as well as the vernacular title of "Holy
Communion." It is based primarily on the Sarum Missal, which it follows
closely in form, and includes much of the text of Cranmer's 1548 *Order of
the Communion*, which was originally designed as a vernacular insertion
into the Latin Mass. The Communion service is perhaps best understood
as falling into three major sections: the introductory material, the "liturgy
of the Word," and the "liturgy of the Upper Room."[17]

The form begins with several rubrics governing clerical vestments and
notification, and barring "notorious evill livers" and those in unreconciled
conflict with others from partaking. The service begins with the Lord's
Prayer and the Collect for Purity, followed by the appointed Introit, *Kyrie*,
and *Gloria in excelsis* (an invocation of praise and supplication to the
Trinity). A Salutation between the priest and the congregation symboli-
cally joins their voices for the rest of the service, most of which is said or
sung by the officiant or choir. The collect of the day follows, and then one
of two collects for the King, that he may rule in prosperity and godliness,
and that "we his subjectes . . . maye faithfully serve, honour, and humbly
obeye him" (213). This concludes the introductory material.

The preparatory work of penitence and praise completed, the service
proceeds to the liturgy of the Word. This portion of the liturgy is itself a
further preparation for the Eucharist, focusing on the revelation of God
in Scripture and the believer's response of faith which enables the act of
celebration. The Epistle appointed for the day is read, followed without a
break by the Gospel, and then the Nicene Creed. The exposition of the
Word continues with a sermon or an official homily. If the sermon contains
an exhortation to worthy reception of the Sacrament, then the liturgy of
the Word draws to a close and the service continues with the Offertory;
if it does not, then one of two prepared exhortations is to be read, which

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explicitly enjoined by Christ. Henry, of course, maintained the traditional view, but the Reformed
position was articulated as official doctrine in the 39 Articles of 1562. As the matter was in flux in
1549, and ambivalent in the BCP, this chapter will adopt the Protestant classification.

[17] The last two terms come from Harrison, *Common Prayer*, 67ff.

explains the history and significance of the rite, and the need for repentance and conscientious participation.

The Offertory consists of sentences of Scripture sung while the people make a dual offering – the offering of their donations to the "poor mennes boxe" and the curate's salary, and the offering of themselves for participation in the sacrament. Thus the Offertory occupies a liminal position in the service: it is both the final response of faith in the liturgy of the Word (and the penultimate act of the "dry communion" if there were no partakers), and the opening act of the liturgy of the Upper Room.

This Communion proper continues with the *Sursum corda* ("Lift up your heartes." "We lift them up unto the Lorde" [219]) and the Canon, the long central prayer of consecration on which the entire service depends. As the act of consecration, the Canon had become the locus of much that was anathema to the Reformation – belief in transubstantiation and the theurgical role of the priesthood – and thus Reformed liturgies ordinarily dismantled it entirely.[18] In England, however, this did not occur until 1552; the first Prayerbook retains the central core of three long prayers. The first is a long intercessory prayer for "trueth, unitie and concorde" in the universal Church, for the King, Council, and clergy, for the needy and troubled, for the dead, and for the present congregation. Second, the prayer of consecration contains the *epiclesis* (the invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the elements) and the Words of Institution (e.g. "Take, eate, this is my bodye which is geven for you, do this in remembraunce of me"). Two points in this prayer are especially worthy of note, as they indicate the reformist direction of Cranmer's revisions of the Sarum Mass. First, against the Catholic conception of the Mass as a recurring propitiatory sacrifice, the 1549 Canon stresses that Christ's "one oblacion once offered" was a "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifyce," of which the present rite is a "perpetuall memory" (222). Second, where the Sarum Canon had prayed that the elements "be made unto us" the body and blood of Christ (*ut nobis corpus et sanguis fiat dilectissimi filii*), the BCP requests that "they maye *be* unto us the bodye and bloude"; thus the transformational consecration is made into a metaphorical one as transubstantiation is replaced by trope.[19] Finally, the prayer of oblation concludes the Canon with a further remembrance of Christ, an offering of oneself to God, and a plea for blessings on all partakers of the sacrament.

Although the consecration is now complete, the Communion itself has not yet been administered at this point. First comes the Lord's Prayer,

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[18] Cuming, *History*, 54.   [19] See Ch. 2 for a much fuller development of this crucial shift.

followed by another brief remembrance of Christ's sacrifice and a brief exhortation to worthy reception, and then a general confession and absolution. The words of absolution are noteworthy for their deinstitutionalizing thrust: whereas even Cranmer's 1548 *Order* had stated that God "left power to his Church to absolve penitent sinners,"[20] 1549 says simply that God has promised forgiveness to all who turn to Him in repentance and faith, and removes all suggestion of institutional mediation. The absolution is followed by the biblical "comfortable words" to encourage the penitent, and the "prayer of humble access" which pleads God's mercy as the participant's only claim to the sacrament.

Finally, accompanied by the choral *Agnus dei*, the sacrament is administered with these words: "The body [bloud] of our Lorde Jesus Christe whiche was geven [shed] for thee, preserve thy bodye and soule unto everlasting lyfe" (225). The sacrament now completed, the service wraps up quickly. A single verse of Scripture is followed by a single response and a prayer of thanksgiving for God's grace and the "spirituall foode" of the sacrament. The priest pronounces a blessing upon the people, who answer "Amen," and the service is complete.

The other Protestant sacrament, Baptism, brings us into the section of the BCP that corresponds to the medieval Manual. As usual, Cranmer's service follows and condenses the structure of the Sarum service while adding original and Lutheran material. Under ordinary circumstances, it is to be performed on Sundays or festival days, and inserted into Mattins or Evensong immediately before the second canticle. The service falls into two parts, which are distinguished by where they take place in the church: at the church door and at the baptismal font.

Since the sacrament of baptism is essentially a welcoming of a person into the mystical body of the Church, the service begins with the child and godparents at the church door, the gateway from the world into the church. The priest begins with a brief introduction that emphasizes the need for all sinful humans to be reborn into the kingdom of God. Next, Luther's "Flood prayer" recalls the biblical precedents for baptism and prays that this "holesome laver of regeneracion" may wash away the subject's sins and replace them with grace. The child receives the sign of the cross, and another prayer repeats the request for acceptance into "the eternall kyngdome whiche thou haste promysed" (238). To accompany the removal of sin, a brief exorcism banishes the "uncleane spirite" in the name of the imminent claim of the Church on the child.

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[20] Cuming, *History* (1st edn), 365.

A gospel reading from Mark 10 – "Suffre lytle children to come unto me" – and exhortation stress the biblical and ecclesiastical mandate for the welcoming of children into the Church. This is followed by expressions of communal faith in the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, and then a prayer of thanks by and for those already called to faith. This concludes the service at the door; the priest then brings the child to the font, saying, "The Lorde vouchsafe to receyve you into his holy householde, and to kepe and governe you alwaye in the same, that you may have everlasting lyfe" (239).

After a brief introduction, the service at the font continues with a series of questions asked of the child regarding the renunciation of evil, the basic tenets of faith, and the desire to be baptized. Since the child should be less than a week old, it is odd to note that the questions are addressed directly to him or her; the answers, unlikely to be forthcoming from that source, are ventriloquized by the godparents. The baptism itself follows, with the priest "discretely and warely" dipping the child into the font. The child is clothed in a white garment called the chrysom (to be returned by the mother at her Churching service) which symbolizes regenerate spiritual purity, and then anointed with a further sentence. Finally, an exhortation reminds the godparents of the import of their spiritual commitment to the child, and charges them with its proper upbringing and instruction.

"*. . . and other rites and ceremonies of the Churche.*" The remainder of the 1549 Book of Common Prayer consists of other occasional services taken from the medieval Manual: Confirmation, Matrimony, Visitation and Communion of the Sick, Burial, the "Purificacion of Weomen," and a penitential Ash Wednesday service. Along with Baptism, the first four of these provide liturgical accompaniment to the milestones in the trajectory of a normal life, forming a rich harmony in combination with the continuous observances described above.

The first of these "other rites," Confirmation, is essentially the second half of Baptism, where the final charge to the godparents mandates the child's training in the faith and particularly in the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed. The final rubric of Baptism commands that as soon as the child masters these, he is to be brought to the bishop for confirmation. In the same way, the opening rubrics of the Confirmation service recall the promises made on the child's behalf at Baptism, and the importance of a public affirmation of them as soon as he or she comes to be of "perfecte age" and can take responsibility for personal faith.

The first part of the Confirmation section is a brief question-and-answer catechism, which is intended to be used both for instruction and evaluation. It contains a reaffirmation of personal faith, the basic tenets of Christianity,

the three basic forms mentioned above, and brief expositions on the purpose of prayer and the Christian's duty toward God and neighbor. The confirmation itself is very brief, consisting of three sets of responses, a prayer for the Holy Spirit, signing with the cross, a further prayer for guidance, and a final blessing. Some final rubrics underscore the need for education in the Catechism, and the necessity of confirmation for participation in Holy Communion.

The "Forme of Solemnizacion of Matrimonie" is closely adapted from medieval ceremonies and has changed little since.[21] Its two main sections are the espousal, which adapts ancient Roman civil rituals and involves the legal exchange of promises and tokens, and the wedding proper, which is essentially a series of benedictory prayers. This structure reflects the history of the ritual, which is in origins and essence a legal proceeding to which the religious blessing of the Church was added.

The service begins with the familiar "Dearly beloved," the opening words of an exhortation that outlines the gravity, the sanctity, and the biblical history of marriage, as well as its significance as a metaphor for the "misticall union that is betwixte Christe and his Churche" (252). The three primary reasons for marriage are then delineated: procreation, protection from concupiscent lust, and "mutuall societie, helpe and coumfort." Lastly, the couple and the congregation are given opportunity to proclaim any impediment to a legal and proper marriage, and these words also, like many others, remain a familiar part of many modern weddings in English: "Leat him nowe speake, or els hereafter for ever holde his peace."

The espousal proper contains three parts. First, the officiant asks the legal questions of intent – "Wilte thou have thys woman to thy wedded wyfe," etc. – and each party answers "I will."[22] Second, the plighting of troth consists of the actual vows made from one to the other:

I *N.* take thee *N.* to my wedded wife, to have and to holde from this day forwarde, for better, for wurse, for richer, for poorer, in sickenes, and in health, to love and to cherishe, till death us departe: according to Goddes holy ordeinaunce: And therto I plight thee my trouth. (253)

The addition of "obey" is the sole difference between the bride's and groom's vows; the Sarum vows, which were given in English, had also required her promise to "be bonere and buxum in bedde and at borde,"[23] and contained

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[21] Cuming, *History*, 63; Harrison, *Common Prayer*, 107; Procter and Frere, *History*, 611ff.; Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship*, 463–7.

[22] The groom promises specifically to love, comfort, honor, and keep his bride in lifelong monogamous marriage; she promises to obey, serve, love, honor, and keep him in the same.

[23] Brightman, *English Rite*, II.804.

no mention of loving and cherishing on either side. And third, the groom places the ring on the bride's finger, saying, "With thys ring I thee wed: Thys golde and silver I thee geve: with my body I thee wurship: and withal my worldly Goodes I thee endowe" (254). The priest then recites a prayer of blessing, proclaims the couple husband and wife, and pronounces a benediction upon them. This ends the legal ceremony of matrimony; what follows is its religious solemnization.

The couple and priest proceed immediately to the altar, accompanied by Psalm 128 or 67, and then exchange a series of suffrages. These are followed by a prayer of general blessing, a prayer for fruitfulness (unless the woman is "past childe birthe"), another prayer of blessing, and a further benediction. Finally, the priest is to either preach a sermon or read a brief homily which outlines the New Testament teaching concerning the institution of marriage and the proper roles of the partners. The wedding service ends abruptly with an instruction to proceed to Holy Communion, which again confirms the marriage in the tradition of the medieval nuptial Mass, and is technically the third component of the service.

Provision was made for those unable to attend church by reason of illness in the forms for Visitation and Communion of the Sick, which could be used separately or in combination. The Visitation service combines the medieval rites of Confession/Absolution and Unction, which latter service requires some comment. Originally an apostolic and primitive continuation of Christ's conspicuous ministry of healing, this anointing of the sick became increasingly associated with mortal illness, and hence as a preparation for imminent death. As Charles Harris notes,[24] after the eleventh century, those who received Unction were encouraged to expire as soon as possible afterward; those who declined to do this and recovered after reception were expected to live as dead to the world, fasting, walking barefoot, sexually abstinent, and in some cases unable to make a new will. The 1549 service, while allowing for imminent death, restored the focus of the service to comfort, purification, and the healing of body, soul, and mind.

The Visitation begins when the priest arrives at the sick person's house, with a blessing and penitential Psalm 143, followed by a series of supplicatory responses. Two prayers for the comfort, healing, and sanctification of the sick are followed by a lengthy exhortation which asserts God's control over all things, and argues that suffering can be a means of grace and purification, the submission to which brings one closer to God. This exhortation prepares the way for the subject's response of faith, beginning with a

[24] Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship*, 536.

question-and-answer rehearsal of his faith in the articles of the Creed. Following this is a series of further exhortations which encourage a setting-right of one's life, whether it soon ends or not: the sick person is exhorted to forgive and make amends in all cases of interpersonal conflict; to make a will, if none exists; to declare all debts and credits; and to give generously to the poor. An optional confession and absolution, to be used at the discretion of the sick, is followed by a further prayer for forgiveness, comfort, and spiritual – not physical – renewal.

The second half of the service is, like the first, built around a former sacrament which is itself rendered optional. A psalm of praise and supplication is followed by a benedictory sentence that stresses the protection and edification of the subject. If anointing is desired, it is administered with a prayer for physical and spiritual strength, and a request that God "restore unto thee thy bodely helth, and strength, to serve hym, and sende thee release of all thy paines, troubles, and diseases, bothe in body and minde" (264). The service ends with the further supplication of Psalm 13.

The form for the Communion of the Sick requires relatively little comment. It gives instructions for administration and for combination with Visitation. Otherwise, it is essentially a shortened form of the Holy Communion service, with proper collects and readings appropriate for one who is ill or near death. As in Visitation, the tone is appropriate for both hope of healing and preparation for death, but the quasi-magical associations of the medieval sacrament are broken by a rubric which assures the celebrant that repentance and faith are all that are required for "his soules helth," and that actual Communion, while always desirable, is not necessary.

The sequence of occasional services continues with the logical next step – the Burial service. With the medieval ascendancy of the doctrine of Purgatory and intercessions for the dead, funeral services had acquired enormous significance and length;[25] accompanying this was a stern emphasis on death and purgation as the *Dies irae* or day of wrath. Cranmer's 1549 service, while as usual shortening and simplifying the service, restored its tone to a bittersweet beauty that combines sorrow and mourning with celebration of Christ's victory over death and anticipation of the Resurrection and the life to come. Its four principal parts are a brief procession to the grave, the inhumation, a short Office of the Dead, and a celebration of the Eucharist.

The procession consists of several sentences of Scripture which contemplate the transience of earthly life and the hope of eternal life. The inhumation begins at the grave with a further verse and a short devotional

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[25] Ibid., 620; Cuming, *History*, 64.

prayer for grace and mercy in death, followed by the casting of earth upon the corpse and the words of committal:

I commende thy soule to God the father almighty, and thy body to the grounde, earth to earth, asshes to asshes, dust to dust, in sure and certayne hope of resurreccion to eternall lyfe, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall chaunge oure vile body, that it may be lyke to his glorious body, accordyng to the myghtie workyng wherby he is hable to subdue all thynges to himselfe. (269–70)

A verse from the Apocalypse follows, with two prayers of thanksgiving and commendation. The Office consists primarily of readings of four of the most remarkable scriptural meditations on life, death, and the individual's relation to God (Psalms 116, 139, and 146, and I Corinthians 15), followed by the Lord's Prayer, a series of versicles and responses, and a final prayer for the departed which anticipates the glories of resurrection and eternal life. Finally, the Eucharist is celebrated, and its fixed readings frame it clearly as a celebration not only of Christ's sacrifice, but of the grave-transcending communion of the saints which it makes possible. This pervasive aspect of the service is a liturgical expression of the words of Tyndale's translation: "Death is swalowed up in victorye: Death where is thy styng?"[26]

The brief "Ordre of the Purificacion of Weomen" is somewhat misleadingly titled. The term "purification" indicates the origins of the ritual in Jewish law (cf. Leviticus 12), in which a woman was considered ceremonially unclean for a time after childbirth; Mary's observance of this law after Jesus' birth, recorded in Luke 2, passed the custom along to the Christian Church.[27] The 1549 service, however, contains only traces of this traditional emphasis, primarily in its title and in the woman's position near the door, which made this a welcoming-in service similar to Baptism.[28] The service is primarily one of thanksgiving and praise for a safe delivery; this is made clear in the explanatory address that begins the service. Following this is Psalm 121, the *Kyrie*, the Lord's Prayer, a responsive prayer, and a final prayer of thanks and blessing for the woman.

The final service in the 1549 BCP is the Ash Wednesday service, called a "Commination" in later editions, which takes place after Mattins and the

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[26] The determination of some extreme Reformers to avoid all hint of prayers for the dead led to the mutilation of this graceful and beautiful service in 1552. All the Psalms and the entire Eucharist were removed, and much of the rest was recast in ways which destroyed its beauties of tone and liturgical structure.

[27] Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship*, 425–6.

[28] Even these traces were expunged in 1552, when the woman's place was moved to the Communion table – the very heart of the church – and the title was changed to "The Thankesgeving of women after childe birth, commonly called the Churchynge of women."

Litany. As the inaugural service of the penitential season of Lent, this is a ceremony of public contrition and a denunciation of impenitent sinners. The customary introduction is followed by a series of biblical curses against those who commit a variety of sins from murder and idolatry to land fraud and drunkenness; the people affirm each curse with "Amen." A long fire-and-brimstone exhortation weaves more scriptural passages into a dark and violent warning against sin and damnation, and a call to repentance and blessing through Christ's sacrifice, which is the focus and object of Lenten remembrances. Penitential Psalm 51 is recited kneeling, followed by the *Kyrie*, Lord's Prayer, suffrages, and two collects for forgiveness and mercy. Finally, a devotional anthem is said or sung:

Turne thou us, good Lord, and so shall we be turned: bee favourable (O Lorde) bee favourable to thy people, whiche turne to thee in wepyng, fasting and praying . . . Heare us (O Lorde) for thy mercy is great, and after the multitude of thy mercyes looke upon us. (285)

Although the form of the service is closely derived from the Sarum ritual of the Blessing of the Ashes,[29] there are no ashes and no ritual proper in Cranmer's service; as is often the case in the 1549 BCP, the movement is away from ritual and toward personal edification and transformation, and this service is an exhortation to individual and communal repentance.[30]

One further category of services requires brief comment at this point. As noted above, the forms for Ordination of deacons, priests, and bishops were not composed and published until 1550, and thus were not part of the 1549 Book; however, as necessary services, they were subsequently included in all editions beginning in 1552. The three services differ somewhat, but a brief description of the form for the ordering of deacons should give a sufficient sense of them. The presentation of the candidates is followed by the Litany in its entirety and then a prayer that recalls the history of the office and requests blessings on its holders. A New Testament reading relevant to the office leads into the original and characteristically Anglican feature of the Oath of the King's Supremacy. In this oath, the candidates renounce all papal jurisdiction, wholeheartedly endorse the royal supremacy, and promise to defend it against "all maner of persones" (300); in this way the monarch was assured of a national clergy of men legally sworn to uphold the jurisdictional Reformation, as well as any doctrinal matters which followed from it. An examination follows in which the bishop questions the candidates on their beliefs and sincerity, and instructs them on the duties

[29] Cuming, *History*, 66.
[30] Cranmer's closing essay "Of Ceremonies," omitted here, is discussed in the Introduction.

of the office. Then he lays hands upon them and formally commissions them, and then ceremonially delivers the Word and its responsibilities to them.[31] The service proceeds to Communion and then closes with a final prayer of blessing for the newly ordered ministers. The services for ordering priests and bishops are generally similar, and differ mainly in increased gravity and stringency as the level of the office goes up; each service is not only a commissioning and exhortation to specific duties, but also a careful insertion into the church hierarchy, under the ultimate pinnacle of the monarch.

   "*. . . after the use of the Churche of England.*" Late-medieval worship in Western Europe was not uniform in a strict sense. Rather than sharing identical forms, each diocese, and in some cases even individual churches within a diocese, had its own peculiar "use." As Brightman has noted, "by the middle of the sixteenth century there were something like 200 Missals which it had been thought worth while to print with the names of the dioceses or provinces to which they appertained, and it is probable that these did not fully represent the extent of the existing diversity."[32]

   The effects of this diversity should not be exaggerated; these variations were differences of detail and formula rather than radically different rituals, although their coexistence could be the source of some confusion and inconvenience.[33] In addition, between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, a loose and gradual standardization had already begun as the use of the influential diocese of Salisbury (Sarum) had acquired wide popularity throughout England, particularly in the south. It was frequently referred to as "the use of the English church," although this was not comprehensively the case, and in 1542 the Convocation of Canterbury made the use of the Sarum Breviary obligatory throughout the southern province.[34] Nevertheless, diversity of use was still enough of a problem in 1549 to warrant special mention in the Preface of the BCP:

And where heretofore, there hath been great diversitie in saying and synging in churches within this realme: some folowyng Salsbury use, some Herford use, some the use of Bangor, some of Yorke, and some of Lincolne: Now from he*n*cefurth, all the whole realme shall have but one use. (4)

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[31] Deacons are given the New Testament; priests, the entire Bible along with the Communion chalice; bishops, the Bible and the pastoral staff.

[32] Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship*, 135.

[33] Especially when, as sometimes happened, they were found side by side in the same church (Procter and Frere, *History*, 13).

[34] Ibid., 21–2.

Liturgical diversity was also the opening gambit of the first Act of Uniformity, with which, at a stroke, all variety of use was legally abolished in 1549 and reduced to formal consistency.

To a critical modern reader, this insistence on the problems which Prayer-book uniformity "fixed" may seem a polemical back-formation of history. And to some degree, this is undoubtedly true, although not entirely so (the evidence suggests, I think, that diversity was a genuine problem, if not the crippling one the state portrayed). But even when read as a mode of self-presentation, this insistence of state and liturgy indicates some important features of strategic intent: the Book of Common Prayer was clearly presented as a force against not only Roman Catholicism but also against diversity, disorder, variation, and inauthenticity in public worship – and thus as a force *for* purification, standardization, and centralization as well as Protestantism and English. And it is not difficult to see this as a dimension of the closely related Tudor project of state centralization and nation-building.

Whatever the accuracy or distortion of the state's historical claims of prior chaos, though, this much seems true: the textual institutionalization of the Church of England in the Book of Common Prayer brought with it an instant uniformity of worship previously unknown in Western Europe.[35]

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[35] Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship*, 135–6.

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