

Henry VI: Critical Essays
Ed. Anne A. Pendleton
NY: Routledge, 2001: 127-155

SHAKESPEARE'S MEDIEVAL DEVILS AND JOAN LA PUCELLE IN 1 HENRY VI

SEMIOTICS, ICONOGRAPHY, AND FEMINIST CRITICISM

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All things considered, Shakespeare's plays avoid the representation of devils. In Shakespearean drama, a devil or a demon is about as welcome as the personified abstraction: although ornamental personifications may crowd spoken discourse, only a few personified characters lumber onto Shakespeare's stage—Time in *The Winter's Tale* or Rumour in *2 Henry IV*—and even then in very compromised ways. The same goes for devils, as John D. Cox once pointed out.¹ Very rare were characterizations of the devil on the Renaissance stage overall; at that, he would usually appear in programmatic incantation scenes of the sort witnessed in Greene's *Frier Bacon and Frier Bongay*. Shakespeare, in sum, seemed to have little use for stage fiends.

In accord with the aesthetically oriented drift in Shakespeare criticism—the drift monumentalized by E. K. Chambers and followed by virtually all of us—the personification character and the devil do not serve Shakespearean dramaturgy well. Although personifications or devils intrigue Marlowe (whose *Dr. Faustus* presents the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins along with the most famous of Renaissance stage devils, Mephistopheles), Shakespeare's drama distinguishes itself as having gotten beyond the crude clutter of medieval devils, angels, and embodied abstractions. The stripping of the medieval in general, as customary wisdom has it, animates Shakespeare's early modern drama; dramatic modernity entails escape from the medieval. As a semiotic category, the medieval demonic must likewise be stripped away or avoided.

Although I support historicist or ideologically focused explanations about the evacuation of devils from the Tudor stage,² the aestheticist model—the bardolatrous model that fosters our view of a Shakespeare who was ever perfecting a modern form of art that needed to reject medieval

materials—serves me as a mainstay in my teaching of Middle English and Tudor drama. I can adore postmodern theory; but I'm sometimes timorous about straying far from Chambers or Tillyard pedagogically.

However, alone among all of Shakespeare's plays, *1 Henry VI* presents devils in a manner drawn from the traditions of medieval theater, the pre-professional theater of miracle and mystery plays in the English tradition. Called "fiends" in the play's rubrics, they remind us of figures such as Tutivillus, Lucifer, or the blackened, raucous demons of the Fall and the Harrowing of Hell in cycles such as Chester or Wakefield. If Shakespeare's history plays contain an often-ignored reservoir of medieval dramatic or iconographic images, structures, and characterizations, then the fiends of *1 Henry VI*, as well as the sorcological figures Joan la Pucelle and Margery Jourdain, serve as the most direct and literal markers of residual medievalism.³ The fiends and witches (or personifications) must not, I believe, be brushed aside as merely aesthetic detritus still cluttering the desk of a new and young playwright finding his way; linking a "witch" such as La Pucelle to the old personificational Vice, in fact, David Bevington, Robert Turner, and Bernard Spivack have emphasized the importance of Shakespearean characterizational hybridity and its concomitant regeneration of medieval dramatic principles.⁴ (This is of course a still-popular treatment regarding Iago and Falstaff.) The devils and their allied witches of Shakespeare's First Tetralogy signify in unexpected ways.

But above all, I assert, we must visualize Shakespeare's scarce devils according to a tradition still popular in the sixteenth century: the carnivalesque fiends who graced stages as well as public pageants or festivities on the Continent and in England bore faces or heads on their crotches instead of genitals. The "nether-faced devil" can thus be understood as a version of the polyfaced devil well known throughout medieval and Renaissance Europe, and their purview, especially in manuscript illuminations and printed books, was so widespread that the tradition was in fact a cliché (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). To imagine a devil in the fifteenth or sixteenth century meant to envision a thing with a face on its crotch as readily as it meant envisioning a devil's horns, scales, and saucerlike eyes.

If several of the essays in this volume support the thesis that of all Shakespeare's texts, the First Tetralogy draws most heavily on medieval dramatic and cultural models, then I too seek to promote that thesis, specifically by showing that the imagery of *1 Henry VI*'s fiends depends upon a common iconographic tradition in the sixteenth century—the nether-faced devil. My method will be at times highly speculative; such is the cast of theory-driven projects. But I believe there is enough evidence to warrant articulation of an important symbolic connection between Joan la Pucelle's briefly conveyed characterization as a witch, a witch whom we actually see commercing with devils, and some traditional demonic iconography common to the Tudor era.

My argument will thus have three phases. First, I shall argue that the nether-faced devil proper "appears" not in person but at discursive levels in other Shakespeare plays, notably *1 Henry IV*, *King Lear*, and *Othello*. Yet the image of the nether-faced devil also surfaces as well during a key moment in the discourse of Joan la Pucelle at the end of *1 Henry VI*. Second, I provide a detailed and lengthy analysis of the nether-faced devil in medieval and Renaissance visual art, having already noted at the outset of this article's first phase, what I believe to have been its possible theatrical purview and material production in the English mystery plays. This iconographic segment, which delineates the heart of my project, will try to account for many meanings in the nether-faced devil, most of which descend from medieval theological and philosophical protocols formed largely in late-classical patristic thinking. My emphasis here, however, will be on gender; on the significance of embodied femininity in residual medieval imagery. Third, I shall conclude by trying to reconcile the demonic iconography of the nether-faced devil with the current stream of feminist and ideologically oriented criticism of La Pucelle as a demonic or negative feminine dramatic type central to the gender poetics of *1 Henry VI*. The nether-faced devil incorporates a variety of semiotic codes, as I will show, but I find that in the case of *1 Henry VI* the cartoonish La Pucelle can be better understood if we contextualize her appearance and her literal commerce with demons not just within our historicist sense of Tudor dramatic propaganda or according to insights from modern gender theory, but within the historically warranted medieval iconographic matrix centered on the demonization of female physiology. Medieval and early modern stage fiends who sport faces on their crotches and bellies represent a plausibly "feminized" notion of the demonic; in corollary terms, problematic or evil women equate to a demonization of the feminine.

I will come to this conclusion in order to give more depth and solidity to the now commonplace notion, made by feminist Shakespeareans including (especially) Phyllis Rackin, that Joan la Pucelle exhibits or signifies a broad but diffuse sense of "the demonic" that threatens masculine or paternal order. English national sensibility, vertical class structure, and even the philosophical stability afforded by a kind of Realism seen residually in the nostalgic project of the First Tetralogy. No doubt the "demonic" has taken on the chic of terms including "power" or "subversion" or "subjectivity" in contemporary Shakespeare criticism: it has been inflated out of all useful proportion and lives, as Bardolph would say, out of all reasonable compass. I want to restore to the term the iconographic texture or edge evident in the semiotics of the medieval demonic, an edge evident, though often tacitly, through Shakespeare's characterization of Joan and her fiendish familiars in *1 Henry VI*.

At the defeat of the French in Act 5, La Pucelle—who is indisputably a

concern in this play—calls on her familiars for protection and deliverance one last time. References to “fiends” are made by both the French and the English characters in the play as casual rhetorical flourishes; indeed, even Talbot is called a “fiend of hell” (2.1.46) well before he brands Joan a “fiend of France and hag of all despite” (3.2.52).⁶ But Shakespeare wants to materialize demons in this play directly:

The regent conquers and the Frenchmen fly.
Now help, ye charming spells and periapts,
And ye choice spirits that admonish me,
And give me signs of future accidents.

You speedy helpers, that are substitutes
Under the lordly monarch of the north,
Appear, and aid me in this enterprise!

This speedy and quick appearance argues proof
Of your accustomed diligence to me.

Now, ye familiar spirits, that are culled
Out of the powerful regions under earth,
Help me this once, that France may get the field.

O hold me not with silence over-long!

Where I was wont to feed you with my blood
I'll lop a member off and give it you,

In earnest of a further benefit,

So you do condescend to help me now.

No hope to have redress? My body shall

Pay recompense if you will grant my suit.

Cannot my body or blood-sacrifice

Entreat you to your wonted furtherance?

Then take my soul—my body, soul, and all—

Before that England give the French the foil.

See, they forsake me! Now the time is come,

That France must vail her lofty-plumed crest,

And let her head fall into England's lap. (5.3.1-26)

Joan's speech and the scene's inter-linear directions give us the fullest material expression of devils on Shakespeare's stage; the scene is remarkable if only for the specificity of the directional rubrics, rubrics that prompt precise choreographic or kinesic effect of a sort rarely witnessed in

Shakespeare even with his human characters. Only two other conjurations in the Shakespeare canon involving full demonic materialization can compare, though faintly: these include the witch Margery Jourdain's calling up of the demon Asmath, or Asmodeus, in 2 *Henry VI*, 1.4.27-43; and *Macbeth's* interpolated invocation of Hecate by the First Witch (3.5.1-36), along with the subsequent appearance of Hecate and the three spirits or apparitions (4.1.39-44, 71-94).

Several sorciological topoi find expression in the Act 5 conjuration: the spirits serve Joan by giving her foreknowledge (cueing her in on which battles to avoid or cut short—such as the curtailed single combat with Talbot in 1.5.19); they stand in as proxies for Satan, traditional “monarch of the north”; they are undoubtedly infernal or netherworldly yet astonishingly rapid at arriving here or there in this world (like all angels or devils known to St. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica*—more on this below); and their commerce with witches works on the currency of (literally and figurally) traded “limbs,” portions of flesh, body parts. Above all, the physical realness of La Pucelle's fiends is not to be disputed—thus insuring, as criticism has long noted, the character's guilt as a witch who enjoyed wrongful victory over the English all along. If the text leaves us unclear as to how she overcame Talbot in single combat, this final demonic materialization casts nothing in doubt about the fiends' reality, specifically their physicality which has to do with everything from kinesic to their commercial stake in portions of human anatomy.

What of the implicit imagery of these dramatized devils? What of their material production on the stage of the early 1590s? We do not have a costume description of the devils in 1 *Henry VI*, but I am convinced that they would have been nether-faced. The best “journalistic” authority on the speculative visual rendering of the Shakespearean stage has been, for six decades, C. Walter Hodges. Though his own writings do not often record the historically iconographic details which might have prompted his ruminations and conjectural reconstructions, his choice of the nether-faced devil for the Act 5 conjuration scene—witness Figure 3—is decisive and powerful. His verbal explanation of Shakespeare's fiends also makes a tenuous connection between Shakespeare's stage and its medieval precursors:

The fiendish costumes would have been made up in canvas or leather, cut into fish scales and painted black, red or green. The masks and headdresses would have been of leather or moulded parchment. A collection of all these would have been a permanent part of the play-house wardrobe, and it may be imagined that some items may even have been bought in from the surplus stock of the ancient mystery plays. They were, after all, timeless in their use.⁷

“Timeless in their use.” The phrase suggests what might be less kindly

thought of as the "cliché" iconography constituting such "surplus stock" as hanging around after the 1570s—when the last of the mystery plays were mounted once they had been illegalized.

The sixteenth-century civic craft guild records also lack the preciseness of iconographic description regarding costumes and masks which one might wish for; but they provide what I believe is general reference to other faces. Filling in the holes in Hodges' description, I adduce a typical ayment record from the Coventry accounts:

1536, it. for mendyng the demones heed vj d; 1440, it. for peyntyng and making new ij damons heds (inter alia); 1556, payd for a demons face ij s . . . payd for making the ij devells facys x s.⁸

He summarized record covering the cost of demons indicates occasional ayments for single faces or heads, but more interestingly, there seem to be customary indications for two faces at a pop. To be sure, these could be for two costumes (since demons in the Coventry plays often appear, as do any kinds of characters, in groups of two or three) or for one costume representing a Janus-type polyfaced devil. But of equal likelihood, the record could refer to a devil's costume that sports an upper face and a lower face, exactly as Hodges envisions regarding the remnant costumes possibly used in the staging of the *1 Henry VI* conjuration scene. But does such literal and staged manifestation of demonic physiology have as its counterpart a purely discursive vitality in Shakespearean drama?

Other Shakespeare plays indeed furnish leads. We might, for instance, add the nether-faced devil as a visual pun or rebus evident in the culmination of Falstaff and Bardolph's brief flying match in *1 Henry IV*. After adding mutual insults on each other's "demonic" physiognomies—Falstaff is a swollen, Lord-of-Misrule physique while Bardolph has a fiery, redish face—the two thieves come to a curious conclusion:

Bardolph: 'Sblood, I would my face were in your belly.
Falstaff: God-a-mercy! So should I be sure to be heartburned. (3.3.55-58)

The rebus characterizes Shakespearean poetics at its best: what might have been a literal and actual image on the primary or outermost level of textual representation finds transformation—and really a kind of defusing—merely as an ornamental rhetorical trope rigged, in this case, purely for comic effect.

But the discursive rebus of the nether face can have more ghastly and rivifying ends while it can translate to a more direct figural form—a conscious metonymy. Shakespeare directly equates female nether anatomy with an imaginary face in Lear's famous conceit of the vagina as a "face between [woman's] forks" (4.6.121), an image which, within ten lines,

takes on even fuller equation with the bodies of devils and the pit of hell ("Down from the waist they are Centaurs,/ Though women all above./ But to the girdle do the gods inherit;/ Beneath is all the fiends'./ There's hell, there's darkness, there's the sulphurous pit. . . ." (126-133). The misogynistic conflation or exchange of the feminine and the demonic constitutes the heart of the nether-faced devil's semiotic function—a matter which will completely occupy my discussion shortly.⁹ The conceit from *King Lear*, however, verges on the erasure of rebus and the movement virtually to pornography since little ambiguity is left regarding the theme and emotional pitch of the figural reference.

A far subtler instance of the nether-face rebus organizing the discourse of a character's speech occurs in *Othello*. Here is a figurative and fugitive image that has perplexed critics as to its actual significance. Discursively toying with the idea of the found-out Iago as a devil, Othello remarks:

I look down towards his feet; but that's a fable.
If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.

Wounds Iago.
(5.2.287-288)

It would seem on first reading that Othello's conceit refers to the proverbial cloven hooves of the devil, though critics have argued that the passage indicates the disfigured lower limbs characteristic of criminal physiognomy as well as the well-known deformed anatomy of the classical hag.¹⁰ However, given the linguistic universe of *Othello*, a universe which does not seem to admit the rebus of the sort seen in the comical Shakespearean flying match, the passage may suggest the anatomy of the nether-faced devil acknowledges demonic presence by latching onto certain fixed rhetorical formulas in Othello's discourse. The preposition "towards" in line 287 connotes the downward-moving gaze of the hypothetical viewer (the discursive "Othello") fixed upon an imagined devil standing before him. This involves an ocular dynamic that constitutes the rhetorical or phenomenological structure of the conventional blazon, the descriptive trope which signals "movement" of a viewer's eyes in head-to-toe or toe-to-head sequence. Othello does not say, "I look down at his feet," which would more emphatically indicate cloven hooves. The blazonic rhetoric of that single line, rather, only mutely suggests an anatomical feature—the crotch-face—that is part and parcel of the demon's body; but apprehension of such anatomy would be unvoiceable in this play.

Given these plausible discursive appearances of the nether-faced devil in other Shakespeare plays, we should look for a rebus closer to the mimetic realization of the image made by C. Walter Hodges somewhere in the discursive armature of *1 Henry VI*. In Joan's admission that her demonic familiars have abandoned her, we might have a potential candidate:

se, they forsake me! Now the time is come
 hat France must vail her lofty-plumed crest
 and let her head fall into England's lap. (5.3.24-26)



Figure 1:
 From *The Purgatory of Saint Patrick*. Paris, 1530.
 Courtesy of Dover Books.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that Joan's metaphor of national capitulation (pun intended)—a severed head dropped into someone else's lap—comes exactly when the fiends have departed from the stage: Hodges's face-croched fiends go down through the stage's trapdoor while a poetic line of soliloquy coming out of Joan's mouth contains an occulted, paranomastic reference to the fantastic beings we the audience have just been scrutinizing with our eyes. And if the word *periapt* (line 2), which means an amulet or fetish worn on the body to ward off spirits or to work magic, connotes the iconography of the polyfaced devil because it could be linked in Protestant thought to the multi-faced, papistical imagery of ubiquitously worn Catholic saints' medals or wax effigies,¹¹ then the mimetic appearance of the fiends on stage is cordoned off not just as a sort of dumb show but as an inset episode *framed* by a pair of very oblique, tacit images in the text's discursive field—the images of little faces displayed on the surface of the body in the wrong places. This pair of images, periapt and head-in-lap (5.3.2 and 26), might itself signify poly- or nether-faced humanoid anatomy, the imaginary anatomy par excellence of the medieval devil.

In medieval and Renaissance art and literature, devils or demons could appear in any form—human, humanoid, zoomorphic, theriomorphic, or chimaeric, even amorphous—though they usually sported cliché charred black skins, claws, hooves, horns, bat wings, and barbed tails.¹² The particulars of disfigurement, exaggeration, and monstrosity predominated with the intent of repelling and terrifying. Just as hagiographic icons inspired veneration, serenity, and sublime feeling, demonic icons provoked revulsion, disgust, and panic. The devil's prime social or ideological function in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, with English culture taking no exception, was the sowing of fear.¹³

But what of the equally cliché and widespread image of the nether-faced devil? To be sure, the phantasmagoric image could be as comic and absurd as it was surreal, alien, and scary. This is a fact long grasped not just in early modern but in medieval representation, well prior to any examples evident in the Renaissance English cultural setting.

For example, the nether-faced devil appears as a humorous literary rebus well before Shakespeare and as early as Dante's *Inferno*. Towards the end of the final canto, when Vergil and Dante arrive at the earth's core, at Hell's center, we get an extraordinary wordplay treating the actual crux or crotch of Satan's gigantic, icebound body:

When we had reached the point at which the thigh/
 Revolves, just at the swelling of the hip,
 My guide, with heavy strain and rugged work,
 Reversed his head to where his legs had been/
 And grappled on the hair . . . (34.76-80)¹⁴

To exit Hell, Vergil and Dante must turn their own bodies' heads over heels

(or "heads-for-hips," *testa for zanche* in the Italian) and climb up Satan's fur once they have passed through the gravitational center of the planet. Vergil and Dante must effect this vertical exchange of their heads and crotches at the moment they arrive at Satan's crotch, the physiological site that might as well bear an ugly visage as does the traditional image of the nether-faced devil.

But more importantly, the image's source as a serious and actual visualization might be Hildegard of Bingen's vision of the Antichrist in the twelfth-century *Scivias*:

And I saw again the figure of a woman whom I had previously seen in front of the altar that stands before the eyes of God; she stood in the same place, but now I saw her from the waist down. And from her waist to the place that denotes the female, she had various scaly blemishes; and in that latter place was a black and monstrous head. It had fiery eyes, and ears like an ass's, and nostrils and mouth like a lion's; it opened wide its jowls and terribly clashed its horrible iron-colored teeth.¹⁵

As the world's final and apocalyptic "substitute" for the Devil, Hildegard's female Antichrist suitably proffers an anatomy which revitalizes what was probably, by the twelfth century, the insipid or hackneyed imagery of the Devil as humanoid monster—even though the crotch face itself would suffer to become a cliché and the association of the feminine with the demonic would take on still greater weight.

Nonetheless this intriguing and widespread nether-faced devil, prevalent from the thirteenth through the sixteenth centuries in European art, has so far provoked only minimal description or analysis among modern historians, iconographers, or literary and cultural critics.¹⁶ Jeffrey Burton Russell flatly declares: "[t]he monstrous Devil, with horns on knees, calves, or ankles and with faces on chest, belly, and buttocks reflects Lucifer's inner moral monstrosity."¹⁷ On this same note, Barbara D. Palmer writes that medieval devils are "multi-headed or multi-faced to suggest their duplicity."¹⁸ "Monstrosity" and "duplicité" so stated underline the moral or ethical purpose of medieval demonology, a purpose well served by the affective or aesthetic impact of devils with nether faces. However, rarer in contemporary commentary is the direct connecting of the diabolical nether face to specific scriptural passages—as in the case of the Pauline condemnation of those sinners who "serve their bellies."¹⁹ More often than not, the image of the nether-faced devil has been merely ignored in modern scholarship.

On a more promising note, the nether-faced devil has drawn the attention of folklorists and students of the grotesque. As the most comprehensive and up-to-date iconographic project of its sort, a 1995 essay collection in German included several lengthy essays treating fool figures (*Zamer* and

Blecher), drolleries, ass-baring contortionists (*Hintermentblösser*), acrobatic dancers, gargoyles, scatology, the polyfaced little monsters of ornamental manuscript *entrelacements*, and the malformed creatures from travel literature. Especially of importance in this last category are the infamous Blemmyae or Acephali—well known in Shakespearean discourse as Othello's mention of "men whose heads/Do grow beneath their shoulders" attests (1.3.144–145)—who were thought to inhabit Asian and African hinterlands.²⁰ These imaginary humanoids, believed by ancient and medieval geographers to lack heads but to have big faces on their bellies or torsos, are the closest iconographic relatives to the nether-faced or polyfaced devils who likewise sprout faces from chests and bellies and from thighs, crotches, buttocks, knees, elbows, and ankles as well.²¹ Yet the crotch-face predominates as a subspecies of the general diabolical polyface, with the belly-face and the rump-face following close behind in quantity—a summary fact well captured in Hodges's varied visualization of Joan's nether-faced fiends standing in their semicircle.

However, the programmatic consolidation of nether-faced devils with Blemmyae diminishes their demonic properties. Such demonic properties of course obsessed scholastic medieval discussion of the "bodies" possessed by angels and demons; they must also dominate contemporary semiological models that seek to articulate the rhetorical, structural, and gendered constitution of the medieval or early-modern nether-faced devil. The phenomenon of the grotesque with its subordinate (and diminished) category, the demonic, tends to underwrite an anthropology of premodern culture which we brand Bakhtinian; here we encounter the theorization of all cultural practices (artistic, literary, or festive) that are inversions, irreverent, disruptive, or vulgar. But such inversion of course reinscribes or fortifies the status quo of the "real" social world that maintains itself apart from or prior to art, literature, or festival.²² Conversely, the realization that the grotesque cannot be extricated from the demonic (the view promoted by Wolfgang Kayser)²³ partakes of a more historically localized tradition in the understanding of bodily disfigurement or inversion. The first course (Bakhtinian) in the study of the nether-faced devil has reached, in my opinion, near-exhaustion; the second course (Kayserian) still holds great theoretical potential for the grotesque demonic.

Iconographers who assimilate the nether-faced devil to the polyfaced devil diminish or elide, as I have suggested, the image's own plenary semiotic potentials. Therefore, setting it aside as a specific object of inquiry in its own right should open the way for an expanded and enriched understanding of the image that can more fully draw on the resources of contemporary theory and that can illuminate fugitive images and symbolic relations in the plays of Shakespeare. I therefore propose a semiological treatment of the image that will show how it allegorizes the late medieval, polarized representation of gender and sexuality. As a widespread repre-

sentation, the nether-faced devil builds itself out of the cultural poetics of misogyny drawn ultimately from late-classical and medieval sources.

I have speculated that the earliest description of the nether-faced devil appears in Hildegard of Bingen's *Scivias*. Some direction for understanding Hildegard's visionary image may come from near-contemporaneous Thomistic theories about angelic or demonic beings. Many theological and philosophical writers up through the High Middle Ages took up the subject of devils, but St. Thomas Aquinas has provided the most incisive and authoritative conclusions. In line with prior opinion (St. Augustine, in the main), Thomas has it in the *Summa Theologica* that the angels are immaterial, incorruptible, and eternal.²⁴ As sempiternal beings, they could all be thought of as confined to one generation. Angels need not exist in large, self-regenerating numbers, as nature commands of naturally produced, mortal animals, and their populations could in effect be tiny in number (1.50.4). Not driven by the mandates of biological nature, they heretofore have no need for reproduction and procreation. This conclusion suggests in turn that as living organisms, angels or demons would have no need for sexual organs (although in some circumstances they can imitate sexual behavior, as in the folkloric *incubus* or *succubus* and the biblical *ephilim*).²⁵ The transplanted face might therefore function as a humorous sign for the idea that angels or devils are monogenerational; not needing genitals to produce a generationally subsequent, replicant individual whose identity would be synecdochally signified by an individuated face, the devil possesses that already-present synecdochal face right on an imaginary, parental" body at the presumed site of sexual or procreational potency. The supernumerary face stands in place of the entity's superfluous (and thus absent) genitals.

Furthermore, as Thomas would have it, the "bodily" features of angels who were believed to have appeared to humans had no structural or substantial essence in themselves anyway; the appearances of angels in humanoid form had always involved an "imaginary" process whereby their visible forms existed only as phantasmas in the minds of humans who had held them (1.51.2). So in lacking reproductive organs, the elaborate nether-faced devil, which presents phenomenal somatic features only in reference to human perception and cognition, first and foremost signifies that Thomas understood as the angel's or demon's ontic status as an "ever mutable intelligent substance" (1.50.1). This designation could produce, in the domain of visualization, the rampant theriomorphism so characteristic of all medieval and Renaissance devils. As a mental or psychic intelligence says "on the move," the devil aptly appears, via logical correspondence, as a body whose contours or features are fluid, mobile, plastic, chaotic, and transformative. They come and go very rapidly too (making trapdoors in the stage a histrionic necessity). Demoniac duplicity and mobility are thus as much ontological categories as they are moral ones, according to Thomas.

The angelology in Thomas Aquinas's *Summa* goes on to provide supplemental explanatory models of this chaotic demonic "body." After all, Thomas (as well as Augustine) had emphasized that Satan and his angelic followers fell from the realm of heaven, from the unmediated presence of God to the lower realm of air or, still farther, to the subterrestrial region of infernal privation and punishment. The vertical *fall* found fitting expression as a spatial or somatic association of the evil angels with the lower or nether in general. Yet the vitality of the lower would manifest itself as desire or will to overcome the upper; devils desire, in the spirit of Milton's Moloch, to reascend the vertical cosmic ladder and retake their heavenly homeland. So they are nether creatures whose behavioral proclivity is the energetic and preemptive subversion or inversion of God's cosmos (as well as its corresponding microcosmos, the body).

It is fitting, then, that numerous images from medieval art and literature convey this set of ideas not only by representing devils lamenting their everlasting nether conditions at the earth's nadir, but also by picturing upside-down Lucifers about to crash into our planet. Dante, for example, follows this tradition by placing his icebound Satan feet toward Heaven inside the earth's geophysiology because the angel had fallen headlong from Heaven into the earth's southern hemisphere, causing an impact that formed the concave cone of Hell, the antipodean (in relation to Jerusalem) convex mountain of purgatory, and the aggregate mass of northern-hemisphere continents opposite the impact site (*Inferno* 34.121-126).

So in sum, the demonic body, sometimes upside down, sometimes nether-faced, signifies the concept of the inversional itself. The "demonic" means the switching of the upper for the lower, the top for the bottom: the Devil has fallen from the top of the macrocosm to its stratified bottom; he has also suffered the "fall" of his own microcosmic or bodily apex, his head or face, to the bottom of his torso as a signature of his desire to replace the uppermost level of the cosmos with his own secondariness, his own baseness. This condition resonates in metaphorical terms and, more to my purposes here, in literalized terms. Having an actual face instead of a backside, vulva, or penis, the demonic body exists as a sign of the fallen, twisted, upside-down mentality and spirituality of the rebellious Satan; it stands as microcosmic emblem of the whole macrocosmos Satan attempted to invert and contaminate.

The drift of modern criticism about devils adheres closely to Thomistic protocols. Following Maximilian Rudwin's conclusions, Barbara Palmer declares devils to be exemplary of "disintegration, fragmentation, incongruity, antithesis, exaggeration, adaptation, juxtaposition, and recombination"²⁶—each term boiling down to both literal and figural senses of inversion. That is, demonic inversions are indeed purely symbolic in that they evoke the carnivalesque social dynamics articulated by Bakhtin,²⁷ but they are also less abstract, "intrasomatic" (the body itself has upside-down

anatomy) and "extrasomatic" or "choreographic" (the demonic body inverts other physical things long after it has suffered its own vertical, downward trajectory through cosmic space and its attitudinal switching of its feet for its head). At the apocalyptic conclusion of *Piers Plowman*, for example, Antichrist "cam þanne, and al þe crop of truþe/ Tornaed it vp so down and ouertulte þe roote" (B.20.53-54).²⁸

However, let it also be said that the semiotics of inversion evident in the image of the nether-faced devil—that is, the interaction of fundamental binary oppositions like the upper and the lower exchanged—can be understood as the semiotic mechanism of structural self-reflection or self-reflexivity *par excellence*. The conceptual conflation of the demonic with the semiotic in medieval thought exists in this image, in the orthodox linkage between trope or rhetoric and the demonic, and in the conjoint symbolization of the feminine—a chain of associations this article will take up shortly. Physical reference and rhetorical trope neatly flip-flop in the conceptual realm of the demonic, as we have already seen regarding Shakespearean poetics. The demonic body serves as a sign of sign-making itself, for when the putatively fundamental binary constants of semiosis (such as upper and lower) can be highlighted and transposed, an element of vital self-reflexivity can be seen to inhabit the whole iconographic process at hand.

Apart from hypotheses about monogeneration and vertical inversion, a third semiotic moment—one not to be eclipsed in regards to the paradigm so far delineated—emerges from Thomas's findings: as I have already noted, Thomas stressed that any "forms" devils or angels supposedly possessed were imaginary, illusory, phantasmatic. Devils in particular would cultivate the dramatic powers needed for efficacious materialization; they are masterful at projecting themselves as shadows or images, as insubstantial and flattened but convincing *picturae*. This idea gained great vitality in the popular arena of later medieval demonology. Aron Gurevich summarizes the importance of this demonic quasi-body:

It is impossible to see the devil in his actual form, as a spirit, with mortal eyes. . . . But to the living the devil and his servants appear in any form. . . . Their capability for metamorphosis is unlimited. However, a demon assuming human form cannot be seen from behind, *since devils do not have backs and always withdraw by walking backwards. They are hollow inside.*²⁹

Gurevich draws this notion from Caesarius of Heisterbach's well-known *Dialogus miraculorum*, a rich collection of saints' lives and miracle tales composed in the twelfth century. And the formulation, when expounded a little further, reveals another conceptual play of logical oppositions central to medieval metaphysical thought: devils are surface-only "projections." (I

suppose we could say that, in Euclidean terms, their optical manifestations are "two-dimensional" phenomena, despite Thomas's own claims that angels and demons are extra-Euclidean beings that would "contain" three-dimensional beings such as humans.)³⁰

Everyone knows that the devil's "presence" in the material world is, as Thomas insisted, illusory. So those imaginary materializations of devils are masks, *prosopa*, facades or *faciae*. That is to say, if there is no actual, representable posterior opposite to an anterior, why should the demonic body have an anatomical posterior—a buttocks, a backside, a bottom, a fundament, a pudendum, genitals? Devils have no backs, no insides, no bottoms. As psychogenic illusions or *phantasmata*, they are tops, fronts, shells, heads, faces. What better sign to convey this ludic deconstruction of natural bodily physio-logic than a head or face put in the place of a bottom?

This explanation, however, further supports my idea that the nether-faced devil exists as an occulted sign of semiosis—not by signifying a symbolic manipulation of the upper/lower binarism but rather by the binarism of interiority/exteriority.

In turn, the conclusion that the devil serves as an occulted sign of semiosis collaborates with contemporary theoretical understanding of powerful but latent rhetorical tropes: the anatomical reassignment of the natural face's location incorporates the trope *anachorism* ("out of place")—the displacing of some object or element from a space in which it properly belongs. ("The cliché "I have eyes in the back of head," which we grumble at unruly children, employs anachorism; yet Spenser's geographical juxtaposition of a low-altitude willow with a high-altitude pine in an epic tree catalog is equally anachoristic.) In addition, the descriptive designation that the multiplied visages of a polyfaced or nether-faced devil involve making faces, of course, broadens the denotation of the monumental rhetorical trope *prosopopeia* (Greek *prosopon poein*, "to make a face"). The making of a nether face enacts in occulted form the device championed by Paul de Man and allied deconstructionists as the "master trope of poetic discourse,"³¹ the rhetorical figure or trope of troping. Virtually all the semiotic models of the nether-faced devil so far described enjoy structural parallelism with this rhetorical algorithm: nether faces self-reflexively signify the semiotics of binary semes disposed or exchanged (upper/lower and inner/outer); they also self-reflexively signify, and are mutually signified by, the trope *prosopopeia*, the trope taken by de Man and others to represent the very foundational semes (exteriority trying to contain or playing off interiority) of rhetoric or troping.³² Moreover, increased self-reflexivity rests in the fact that the lexical label "prosopopeia," the culprit in a chain of so many *figurative* and occultational processes, appears in the image of the nether face as the *literalized* visual rebus of its own lexical or semantic construction. To repeat, the devil's nether face visually echoes the poetic or pictorial move to "make a face," an anachoristic face which thus advertises its own faceness.

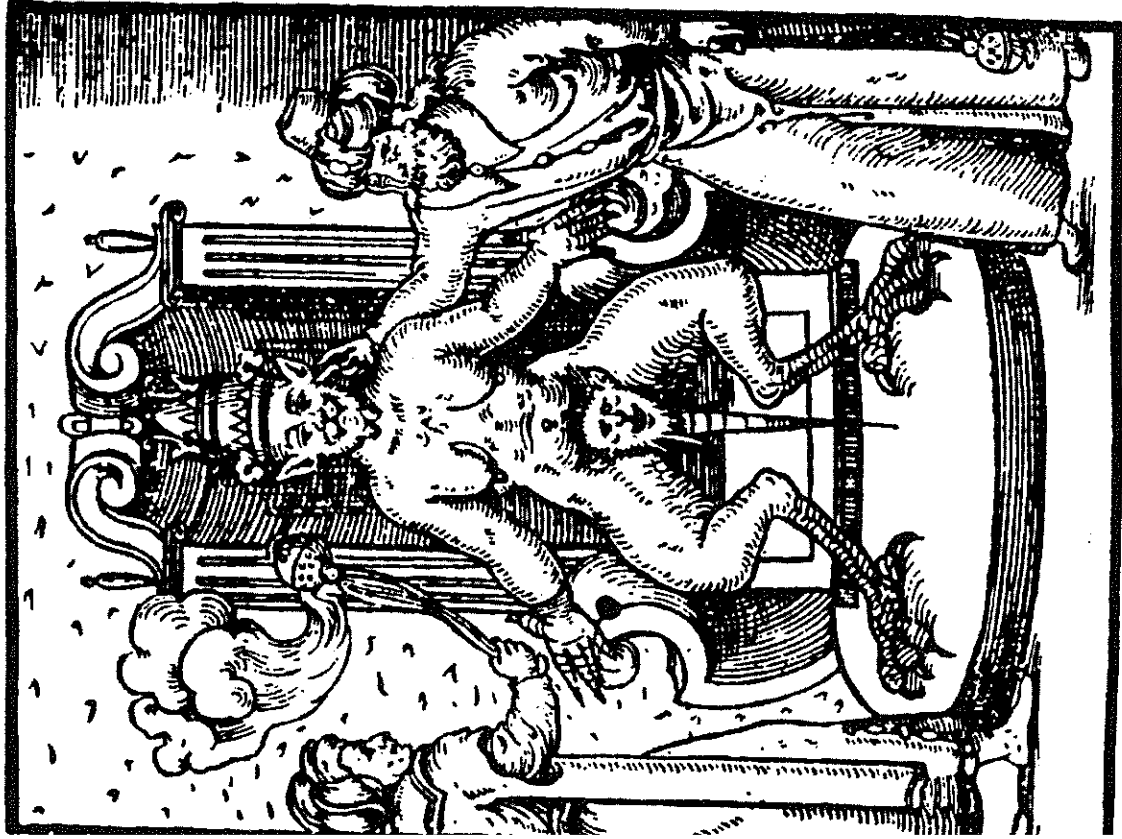


Figure 2:
From *Histories Prodigieuses*. Paris, 1560.
Courtesy of Dover Books.

Whereas de Man always located the main significance of such figural faceness in the register of voice, the demonological realization that nether faces could be the sites of actual speech further underlined such bodily anachorism in accordingly humorous ways. Ambroise Paré's 1575 *Des Monstres et prodiges* helped to get the modern medical subfield of teratology under way, particularly in its notable description of a man out of whose belly grew a human head—a description that might remind one of Blennyae, but that makes an effort to usher in a new and empirical discourse—medical teratology, the science of anatomical deformity. On the other hand, Paré's subsequent declaration concerning the bodies of persons suffering demonic possession puns wryly on the medieval stock image of the demonic body endowed with its nether, potentially loquacious mouth: "Those who are possessed of Demons speak—their tongues having been torn out of their mouths—through the belly, through the natural parts [genitals] and they speak various unknown languages."³³

Nether faces imply nether speech; yet it is curious how Joan la Pucelle's familiars "speak" not vocally and aurally, but by *shaking their heads* alone! If mystery-play devils such as Lucifer and Tutivillus, as well as typical Renaissance stage devils such as Greene's oracular demon or the bombastic Mephistopheles of Marlowe, are known for their loquacity, then Shakespeare has gone another step in estranging only select cliché ideas about devils and voice in early modern theatricality. Nether-visaged diabolicality and monstrosity entail speech governed by those figures, so inventoried in Renaissance rhetoric, called *bomphibologia* and *cacophonia*.³⁴ But Shakespeare ironizes this custom, giving us instead diabolical mimes.

All of the foregoing semiotic descriptions of the nether-faced devil hold promise but they pull us away from the ends of this essay—a fuller illumination of the femininity of Shakespeare's Joan and her fiends. As a witch, Joan enjoys the service of a demonic *familiar*—a term we need to put under more philological pressure since it captures the sense of *maternity* hinted at in Joan's characterization. The term, first used in English demonological writing by Shakespeare's contemporary Reginald Scot, connotes social, even biological kinship (OED, "familiar," B.3). Demonic familiars could take on the guises of pets, though equally often they would behave as if they were a witch's *children*, even to the point of nursing from their mistress's body, sucking blood from her supposed witches marks, as Gary Wills has emphasized in his analysis of Joan la Pucelle's authentic sociological representation in *1 Henry VI*.³⁵

This focus on the imagery of maternity takes us to the obvious, and to one of my best insights into this project's iconographical puzzle: the image of a head or face emerging from a groin might suggest human parturition. Note the particulars: the nether face looks forward; it is in line with the axis of the demon's body; and many times it replicates or suggests the contours or traits characterizing the demon's upper face (see again Figure 1). In the language of obstetrics (that is, the masculinized, professional transformation

dox cosmological narrative of the Devil's vertical drop through the cosmos compounded by direct bodily *inversion*. Devils are the upside-down-and-backward agents in the medieval universe, as are all neonatal humans when they enter their world. And because the *typological* relationship among everyday human birth, Christ's incarnation, and Lucifer's fall from Heaven would have been evident as a point of catechism (all three "descents" signify the intrusion of spirit into the subempyrean domain of materiality and the switching of what had been high for that which is low), I argue in turn that the conceptual mechanism governing the demonization of maternity or the maternalization of the demonic may well be traditional patristic typology.

In sum, the conflation or interchangeability of the demonic body and the female body bespeaks the tidy patristic equation built on the perceived biblical relationship between women and Satan and the tempter. Tertullian provides the definitive version of this equation in his *De Cultu feminarum*:

You are the Devil's gateway: you are the unsealer of that (forbidden) tree: you are the first deserter of the divine law: you are she who persuaded him whom the Devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man.⁴²

The fact that the female body of Eve served as the cosmic entry point for the Devil into this world permitted the fathers' unrestrained analogical license in promulgating a mythology of the female demonic, the demonic feminine, one of the most permanent and powerful expressions of "medieval misogyny," as R. Howard Bloch has identified it.⁴³ As a figurative gateway for the Devil, Eve's body is opened to a subsequent tropological penetration: all women, in the phenomenology of their bodies and specific body parts, have inscribed or reified the *modus operandi* of the Devil. The chain of analogical essentializations thereby incorporates the parturitional body. What had probably always been the most essentialized representation of women—the convulsed and agonized female body at the moment of childbirth—could have become yet another occulted version of the demonized female or the feminized demon.⁴⁴

Other versions of this demonic female, such as the ubiquitous image of the woman-headed serpent dramatized in the mystery plays (recall the serpent in the Chester play of Adam and Eve)⁴⁵ and reproduced in hundreds of manuscript illuminations and Renaissance paintings,⁴⁶ would have been more blunt than, though ultimately unequal to, the nether-faced devil in semiotic potency. Unlike the rouge-faced and often languorous-looking creature who leers at Adam while trying to hide its coils among the limbs of the Edenic Tree of Knowledge, the parturient devil signifies woman differentiated or alienated from man not in mythological but in everyday ways: none of the commonplace "feminine" markers comprising the sexu-

of medieval and early modern midwifery),³⁶ the demonic nether face or nether head emerges from the demonic body according to the manner of a typical maternal labor which culminates in symmetrical *presentation*. By "typical," obstetrics means the delivery enjoyed by a newborn who has emerged in that preferred posture or position clinically termed "anterior-vertex presentation." Parturitional presentation is complete once the newborn achieves what is called "internal rotation" followed by "translabial extension."³⁷ Many devils with faced crotches display a variety of stylizations and scalings but they all allegorize, I want to theorize, this quotidian, universal, human experience, the experience of labor known by midwives especially. To be sure, the nether-faced devil conceived as a parturitional symbol and thus an allegory of human maternity captures a "timeless" experience, to use C. Walter Hodges's own word.

My argument at this juncture proceeds by the systematic recognition of innuendo. Yet the visual evidence at times pushes beyond mere innuendo. Perhaps in no other representation of the maternalized devil is there a more emphatic combination of all these clinical elements—anterior-vertex presentation, familial isomorphy between two faces, and the further feminization of the demonic body via the inclusion of pendant female breasts that seem ready for nursing—than in the intriguing image of enthroned Satan (Figure 2) from Pierre Boaistuau's treatise on demonology and teratology, *Histoires prodigieuses*, first published in 1560.³⁸ We could even interpret the diabolical throne as a medieval birthing chair, common up until the middle seventeenth century,³⁹ and the attendant *Bramines* as midwives; the one on the right even strokes the devil's cheek, perhaps in a gesture of comfort.

Whereas the visual representations of the nether-faced devil undergo such maternalization in early modern texts such as Boaistuau's popular *Histoires*, literary or dramatic analogs are less blatant but still unmistakably akin. For instance, the Middle English morality play *Wisdom* implies the disfigured, sin-marred female personification Soul to be a demonized parturitional body from whose loins emerge actual devils. A manuscript rubric reads, "Here rennyt owt from [v]ndyr þe horrybyll manyll of þe SOULL seven small boys in þe lyknes of dewylls and so retorne ageyn" (ll. 912 ff).⁴⁰ If the critical findings of Ribner or Spivack still hold water, the seminal morality play *Wisdom* furnishes a direction regarding the allegory of demonic maternity used in the characterization of Shakespeare's Joan.⁴¹

It is worth noting too that, what obstetrics construes as typical and healthy presentation resonates with the scholastic analysis I summarized concerning St. Thomas Aquinas's pronouncements. The fetus's final, prenatal placement in the womb, its subsequent descent through the birth canal, and its final emergence characterized by symmetrical alignment (that is, it finds itself quite upside down and backwards) adumbrate the ortho-

al dimorphism of essentializing medieval gender aesthetics—cosmetic beauty, supple limbs, curvaceous anatomy, smaller stature, even the lack of the penis—compares to the parturient's body as a decisive marker of biological gender and sexual differentiation. Whereas gender finds construction as a social process, the sexed body of the parturient seeks to achieve a differential status from the male that is biologically essential and foundational. The moment at which the human neonate's head emerges from its mother's womb serves as the reductive sign of sexual differentiation *par excellence*; it is the moment that could not be faked even by a male body trying to "perform" gendered female roles or sexed female physiology.

Parturition names the site or scene experienced by just about every human (excluding caesarian-section newborns), though witnessed only by women, by premodern midwives, mothers, sisters, aunts. In medieval culture, it was a view inaccessible and "invisible" to the male gaze—as historians of obstetrics and medicine like Renaté Blumenfeld-Kosinski and others have demonstrated. Indeed the earliest and most prominent Middle English gynecological or obstetrical treatise, the *Trotula*, contains only stylized, cutaway views of the fetus *in utero*; never does the text illustrate actual parturition.⁴⁷

So if residual patristic typology powers up even early modern, residual representations of the female as the demonic (and the demonic as the female), the parturitional body need not be altered or morphed very much in order to signify the demonic body—the body which itself already signifies all that is fallen, degenerate, unholy, invisible, unviewable, taboo (to males), toxic, and alien. Writing too on the important connections among early-modern sorcery, the hysterical fantasy of head-genital exchange (which fascinated Freud), and human maternity, Héléne Cixous and Catherine Clément have reached the same conclusion concerning our culture's long-standing symbolic representation of "women . . . the bearers of the greatest norm, that of reproduction, [who] embody *also* the anomaly."⁴⁸

It is curious that in C. Walter Hodges's memorable illustration (Figure 3) of the Act 5 conjuration scene in *1 Henry VI* we count seven devils standing about Joan la Pucelle in a semicircle. They accordingly "hang their heads," while the first devil, who faces Joan, seems to replicate her posture. The choreography of Hodges's reconstruction summarizes the semiotic system I have so far articulated.

But the equation between demonic body and parturitional body arises one final time in another signal moment of dialogue when Joan pleads to her English captors, apostrophizing herself along the way:

Will nothing turn your unrelenting hearts?
Then, Joan, discover thine infirmity

That warranteth by law to be thy privilege:
I am with child, ye bloody homicides;
Murder not then the fruit within my womb,
Although ye hale me to a violent death. (5.4.59–64)

In a dialogue marked by turns, lies, evasions, confusions (in which Joan variably claims Alençon and Regnier as lovers), she proclaims her pregnancy and thus waives (by law) from death. Aside from Joan's final curse on the English (861f), this is the closing image, the ultimate claim of identity, that the text furnishes for her.

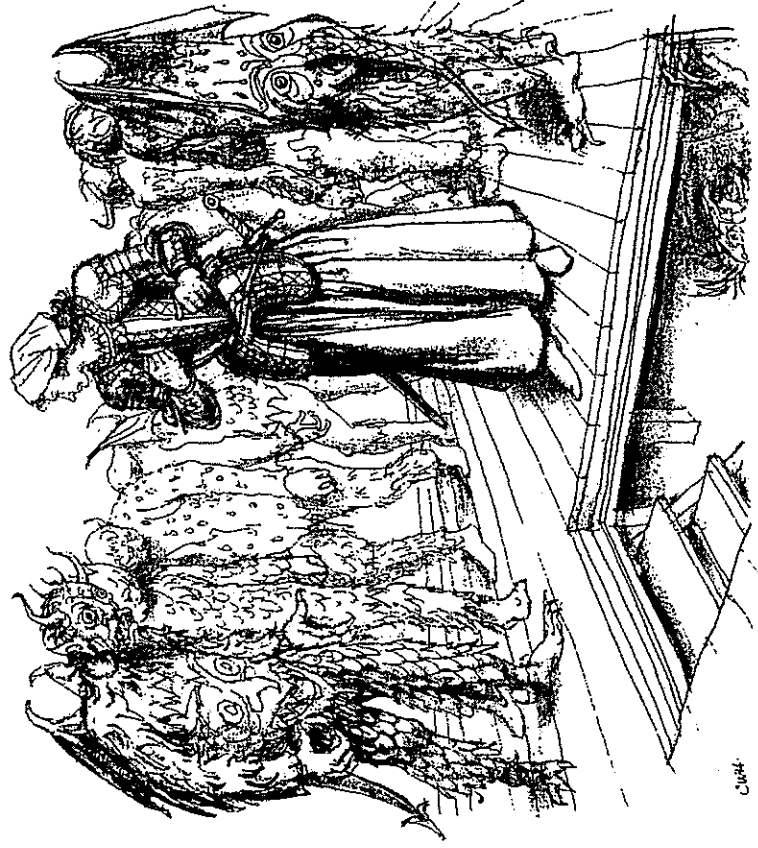


Figure 3:

The First Part of King Henry VI, 5.3 Joan La Pucelle deserted by the Fiends. They hang their heads. From C. Walter Hodges, *Enter the Whole Army* (Cambridge, 1999). By permission of Cambridge University Press.

The claim—perhaps false—frames the full representation of Joan begun many scenes ago; in her final moment she is a maternal body, while our initial reception of her, in her Act 1 first encounter with the Dauphin, disclosed her (diegetic) narrative of origin, a narrative marked by a sole physical detail. Here, Joan's claim that she was "black and swart" (1.2.84) prior to her spiritual and psychic transformation by Mary can be construed a number of ways. (Michael Hattaway's, for instance, glosses "black" to denote Joan's original "black hair," later disguised by a blonde wig, though I'm inclined to gloss the word merely as "filthy"; the term also denotes deep, peasant-grade suntan, a mark of ugliness in medieval cosmetics.) But the point connotes diabolical embodiment, for medieval and early modern stage fiends were, above all, black in appearance. As part of its semiotic framework, Shakespeare's text deploys iconic signs that demarcate Joan's diabolical agency in particular as well as the feminine status of the demonic and the demonic status of the feminine in general.

I argue, therefore, that the text's figural depictions of Joan's body designate that she herself is a kind of embodied demon or devil, though her unquestionable status as witch and her implicit commerce with the actual demons who appear on stage already configure her as a collage (and decolorator, if you will) of human anatomy. When the Duke of York interrogates her as to her pastoral origins, she rejects her father, the old shepherd, who counters by declaring casually that Joan is a "collop of his flesh" (5.4.18), that is, a severed slice of his body. The metaphorical or literal (but programmatic) imagery of lopped limbs, clipped flesh, and spilled blood permeates the conjuration or staging of demons in Act 5. The devils conjured not only share the same ontological stage space with Joan alone, but they have been physiologically spliced, it is implied, onto her actual body during sorciological nursing. Joan promises her body as both food and nursing reservoir to the fiends, drawing on the characteristic imagery of sorciology thought to have been part of the witches' Sabbat and typically displayed in the literary depiction of demonic monsters (witness Errorour's ghastly offspring who eat of and nurse from their mother's blood in the first book of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*). The consumption of (co)lopped limbs and spilled blood suggests a range of normative and abnormal practices, from parturition, with its sanguinous theatrics and extrusion of a new body from a maternal body—a "collop," one might imagine—to cannibalism, incestuous intercourse, and matricide:

Where I was wont to feed you with my blood
I'll lop a member off and give it you
In earnest of a further benefit,
So you do condescend to help me now.

They hang their heads.

No hope to have redress? My body shall
Pay recompense if you will grant my suit. (5.3.14–19)

The explicit evocation of maternal nursing, of course, lies in the image of blood-feeding habitually practiced by Shakespeare's witches, as Gary Wills has observed. Joan's subsequent offer that her "body shall Pay recompense" implies sexual union, taking the monstrous collage of demonology, sorciology, female sexuality, and maternity yet another horrid step. The text's demonic nether-faced iconography, occulted sign of inversion, chaos, and the maternal feminine, finds reinforcement through Joan's demonic discourse, a discourse inhabited by literal and figural references to the abnormal, monstrous, and maternal too.

My semiological, iconographical, and historical speculations, reinforced by some conventional close readings of Shakespeare's texts, provide what I hope is a larger historical platform on which to situate feminist critical inquiry into the characterization of Joan la Pucelle. The critical or theoretical treatments of the character range from broad ethical judgments to broad ideological claims involving political and social states of affairs in Elizabethan England. That is, major feminist critics have actually paid little attention to the iconographical basis of Shakespeare's dramatical diology. Critical inquiry has underlined Joan la Pucelle's military prowess, her cunning, and her single-mindedness as she aids the Dauphin Charles against the invading English, embodied in the heroic Talbot. In short, the emphasis of feminist criticism—best summed up in Phyllis Rackin's work on Joan in *Stages of History* and *Engendering a Nation*—has been on the various "social imaginaries" that constitute Joan, from her depiction in the chronicles of Holinshed and Hall (and back further—to putatively more authoritative French sources such as Froissart or de Pizan) to the always-prioritized mimetic representation of her in the dynamic (and thus very seductive) action of *1 Henry VI*. Joan's actions, less so her language, tag her as an emblem of "antihistoricity," antiaristocracy, and a sixteenth-century anxiety about emergent feminine unruliness and dominance.⁴⁹ Rackin's summary work responds to or echoes a number of earlier critical projects adumbrating these themes.⁵⁰

In some partial form or another, however, feminist discussions of Shakespeare's Joan key on versions of the deep structure of gender consciousness I have traced back to patristic topoi in this essay. Programmatically, these discussions rearticulate what had been identified by pioneering feminist theorists (such as Simone de Beauvoir or Sherry Ortner) as the motivating binarisms of patriarchal thought: women in general and powerful women in particular get depicted as saints or whores, pucelles or puzels, mothers or murderers, creators or destroyers, nourishers or parasites. Nonetheless, these structural binarisms get explored or situated overwhelmingly in the context of the historical tableau of Shakespeare's socially transitional England (an England remaking itself as an infrastructure of modernity) and far less so with a debt to medieval materials.⁵¹

All this has amounted to a stream of good and productive scholarship—recently revolutionary though much of it actually redolent of long-standing and conservative critical views of Joan and women in Shakespeare's history plays.² But I maintain that such scholarship will make a greater impact when the further cultural underpinnings of the “demonic”—medieval iconographic and semiotic underpinnings—enjoy fuller exposure. Such readings gain greater impact, too, when the medial and rhetorical structures of Shakespearean histrionic representation are integrated into the iconographic and semiotic picture. C. Walter Hodges and Phyllis Rackin represent two poles of historical reconstructive speculation, but the two are seldom brought together in Shakespeare criticism. I insist that we must bring them together—we must splice them—if we are to understand how Shakespeare's Joan and the bard's employment of the medieval devil, devil who wears a symbolically overdetermined nether face, energizes *1 Henry VI* in creative ways.

NOTES

¹ Cox, “Devils and Power in Marlowe and Shakespeare” 14. I add that a parallel study I am treating the “diegetic quarantining” of personification characters in Shakespeare's plays among discrete narrative levels such as framing inductions or embedded stories and plays-within-plays.

² See my article, “Theorizing the Mysteries' End,” for a discussion of the theological need to rid the sixteenth-century English public of the common idea that devils were predominantly the stuff of play and theater. As a corrective coming from both Church and State, this evacuation of the “artificial demonic,” which was never realized or theorized consciously, stemmed from the witch craze—a cultural exercise that was all about making devils more real and serious because they were invisible. I add that the inspiration for this 1997 article came from Stephen Greenblatt's work on witches and devils in Shakespeare; my 1997 article owes a debt to his Shakespeare Bewitched.” I am dismayed at present, therefore, that Greenblatt's article, which focuses on *Macbeth* and Reginald Scot's 1584 *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, completely avoids discussion of Shakespeare's Joan, though it alludes to *1 Henry VI* but once (111).

³ See Stevens, *Four Middle English Mystery Cycles*, 6, 203. Stevens champions the idea that the mystery plays were the main contributors of tradition to Shakespeare's history plays; for an earlier and pioneering glimpse of this thesis, see Kasran, “The Shape of Time.” But see below, note 41, for the parallel argument that the morality plays contributed materials more decisively to Shakespeare's histories.

⁴ Bevington, “The Domineering Female in *1 Henry VI*”; Turner,

“Characterization in Shakespeare's Early History Plays”; Spivack, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil* 253–254.

⁵ Rackin, *Stages of History* 156.

⁶ All citations to the text of the play are taken from Hattaway, ed., *The First Part of King Henry VI*.

⁷ Hodges, *Enter the Whole Army* 116.

⁸ Craig, *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays* 100. See also Ingram, ed., *Coventry* 247.

⁹ The exchange of upper and nether anatomy, the casting of genitals as heads or faces, and the linking of the demonic to the feminine, have held special prominence in Freudian psychoanalytical criticism of *Lear*. For the most complete treatment of this critical tradition and its fruits, see Rudnytsky, “The Darke and Vicious Place,” 291–311.

¹⁰ Citing texts such as Helkiah Crooke's seventeenth-century *Microcosmographia*, Otten, “What's Wrong with His Feet?” 87–88, argues for reference to criminal physiognomy in Othello's conceit; countering Otten's study by adducing seventeenth-century sociological literature such as Richard Head's *The Life and Death of Mother Shipton* is Levin, “What's Wrong with His Feet?” 28–29.

¹¹ On the Protestant anxiety over Catholic charms and amulets worn on the body, see Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* 30–31. Displayed animal forms or faces matched human ones in number, for, as Thomas writes: “The most common amulet was the agnus dei, a small wax cake, originally made out of paschal candles and blessed by the Pope, bearing the image of the lamb and flag” (30).

¹² See Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* 209–212, for a good summary of the devil's physical representation in art of the later Middle Ages. An equally succinct summary can be found in Palmer, “The Inhabitants of Hell: Devils” 22–27. Link, *The Devil: The Archfiend in Art from the Sixth to the Sixteenth Century* 35–79, provides a comprehensive but nontechnical summary of diabolical iconography throughout the Middle Ages mainly in terms of pagan source images. But see Russell 129–133, for description of early medieval pictorializations of the devil which tended to be minimally grotesque and more human. For this second section of the present essay, I draw material from my article, “The Nether-Faced Devil and the Allegory of Parturition.” I am grateful to the editors for permission to reprint parts of that article in revised form here.

¹³ Vatter, *The Devil in English Literature* 44. This also seems to be Russell's view regarding the general utility of diabolical images; see 210 n. 4.

¹⁴ *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, trans. Mandelbaum 298–299.

¹⁵ Hildegard von Bingen, *Scivias*, trans. Hart and Bishop, 493. For original text, Führkötter and Carlevaris, eds., *Hildegardis Scivias, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* 576–577. I thank Rick Emmerson

er bringing to my attention Hildegard's Antichrist image. See also his introduction: *The Apocalypse in Medieval Culture*, "The Apocalypse in Middle Ages 298, for discussion of the Scivias image. For more general discussion of medieval Antichrist iconography, see Emmerson's *Antichrist in the Middle Ages*.

¹⁶ In his elaborate summary of demonic iconography, for instance, Link mentions the devil's nether face only once (71). But following the lead of Russell, I have surveyed photographic reproductions (in the Princeton Index of Christian Art) of over a thousand manuscript illuminations, paintings, and sculptures containing devils that were completed between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. I concur with Russell that pre-twelfth-century images of devils tend to be minimal and more human, and that the borate bestial devil proliferates only in the High Middle Ages. I thus find Anglo-Saxon and Carolingian manuscripts to contain devils that are nothing more than the "small black imp" (see Russell 130) so common to illumination miniatures. Moreover, images in Greek manuscripts tend to maintain the same minimalistic human devil through the late thirteenth century. If, as Russell asserts, no images of the devil predate the thirteenth century (129), neither does the nether-faced devil predate the late thirteenth-century or postdate the early seventeenth century.

¹⁷ Russell 210.

¹⁸ Palmer 24.

¹⁹ Link 71.

²⁰ Kröll and Steger, eds., *Mein ganzer Körper ist Gesicht*.

²¹ Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, provides one of the fullest accounts of the Blemmyae by tracing their own conceptual roots and their eventual centrality in travel tales from East.

Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* 303–367.

Kayser, *The Grotesque in Art and Literature* 19–23.

²² *Summa Theologica* 1.50.5, ed. Gilby. All subsequent citations from edition of the *Summa* will be made parenthetically in the text to part, section, and article numbers.

The *incubi*, whose sexual powers would not have been doubted, like the rare images of medieval pictorial devils who in fact do have faces, although the depiction of devils with genitals becomes more prominent in the illustrations to printed books on demonology in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. On the masculine sexuality or penile basis of the devil's body, see Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* 466–468.

Palmer 27. See also Rudwin, *The Devil in Legend and Literature* 3.

See Jonassen, "The Morality Play and the World Upside Down" 2, for comparison of (Bakhtinian) symbolic and actual manifestations

of inversion in the English morality plays.

²³ *Piers Plowman: The B Version*, ed. Kane and Donaldson 662–663. For general discussion of Langland's agri-allegory, see Aers, "Piers Plowman" and *Christian Allegory*.

²⁴ Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture* 188; my emphasis.

²⁵ See *Summa Theologica* 1.50.2 for Thomas's claim that angels, demons, or spirits would in fact "contain" a dimension and material object with which they came into spatial contact, just as the human soul should be said to contain a person. This idea supersedes the Euclidean idea that three-dimensional objects and beings contain two-dimensional ones.

²⁶ de Man, *The Resistance to Theory* 48.

²⁷ See Paxson, *The Poetics of Personification* 68–70, 152–156, 162–164, *et passim*.

²⁸ See Paré, *On Monsters and Marvels* 21, for the illustration of a sixteenth-century man who had a head growing out of his belly; see 88 for the point regarding nether-speech produced by possessed persons from their *parties naturelles* ("genitals," translator's English interpolation). For French original of the possession passage, see Paré, *Des Monstres et prodiges*, trans. Pallister 83.

²⁹ Sonnino, *A Handbook to Sixteenth-Century Rhetoric* 197. The former is the figure of bombast or overblown language; the latter is the general cultivation of ugliness or viciousness in speech.

³⁰ Wills, *Witches and Jesuits* 45.

³¹ Donegan, *Women and Men Midwives*, makes the case that early modern midwifery competed with the obstetrical practices institutionalized in the emerging arena of male-controlled professional medicine. She in fact attributes the early-modern witch craze to this competition—one in which midwives were often accused of witchcraft by default and linked to the demonic.

³² Olds, London, and Ladewig, *Maternal-Newborn Nursing* 399–420.

³³ See Boastuaun, *Histoires prodigieuses* 1; the source I have used for this figure as well as Figure 1 is Lehner and Lehner, *Picture Book of Devils, Demons and Witchcraft* 18 and 14, respectively. Note that the image of Satan enthroned—the first-page image in Boastuaun's popular treatise on teratology and monsters—presages the image-text mismatch in Hodges's illustration of Joan and her fiends in Act 5 of *1 Henry VI*. Because Satan's body serves, for Boastuaun, as the genealogical beginning of all deformed bodies, monsters, and wonders that would follow chronologically (1–2), the maternal allegory is implicit. However, Boastuaun's terse description does not identify an actual crotch-face, although it does make an ambiguous point, using an indefinite article, about "an open mouth" of great size: Satan possesses "quatre dens avec une grand bouche ouverte, le nez & les yeulx de mesme, les mains comme un Singe, les pieds comme un Coc. . . ." (4). As the illustration shows, the upper face's feline-looking mouth is

closed, while the mouth in the identical nether face is "open"; nor does Joanstuan mention the pendant female breasts in the illustration, despite the on-target mention of the rooster "feet" and the ape "hands."

³⁹ See Weigle, *Creation and Procreation* 128.

⁴⁰ Eccles, ed., *The Macro Plays* 144.

⁴¹ The important early studies arguing for continuity between the English realities and the Shakespearean history play include Ribner, *The English Story Play in the Age of Shakespeare* and Talbert, *Elizabethan Drama and Shakespeare's Early Plays*.

⁴² Tertullian, "On the Apparel of Women" 14.

⁴³ Bloch, *Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Ite*.

⁴⁴ My argument at this point therefore downplays the bestial attributes the late medieval devil, hastening to the semiotic features which reveal Devil always allegorized as a human form. I thus play out here another version of the orientation exhibited in Stevens and Paxson, "The Fool in Wakefield Plays" 49–80, an article in which we explored the English story-play devil as "the demonic fool, the insipient demon." See also my article, "Personification's Gender," 169–174, for a fuller unpacking of tullian in relation to the feminized demon/demonic feminine and the ster trope *protopoiea*.

⁴⁵ A rubric reads, "Upper part of the body with feather of a bird; serpent, shape in the foot; in figure, a girl" (ll. 208ff); Mills, ed., *The Chester Mystery Cycle* 33.

⁴⁶ Images of the woman-headed serpent are so prevalent in medieval and renaissance art that survey would escape the scope of this essay; widespread knowledge of the Edenic serpent's womanlike face goes back to er Comestor's influential *Historia scholastica*. For the earliest full study the woman-headed serpent, see Bonnell, "The Serpent with a Human ad in Art and in Mystery Play" 255–291.

⁴⁷ See text of the Middle English *Trotula* (British Library Sloane 24648... n Rowland, ed., *Medieval Woman's Guide to Health*.

⁴⁸ Cixous and Clément, *The Newly Born Woman* 7–8.

⁴⁹ Rackin, *Stages of History* 197–200, 209–10. See also Howard and Mackin, *Engendering a Nation* 50–57, *et passim*, for a rehash of the dissection of Joan from Rackin's earlier book.

⁵⁰ Silber, "The Unnatural Woman and the Disordered State in Shakespeare's Histories," 87–96, like French, *Shakespeare's Division of Experience* 46–48, zeroes in on Joan's depiction as a violator of natural order; Pitt, *Shakespeare's Women* 148–150, studies her status as whore; in, *Man's Estate*, and Bamber, *Comic Women, Tragic Men*, investigate v Joan bends gender categories; Sundelson, *Shakespeare's Restorations the Father* 20–23, employs the Freudian picture, arguing that Joan is a traitor and infertilizer of the men around her; and Bassnett, "Sexuality

and Power in the Three Parts of King Henry VI," reads Joan as a negative version of Elizabeth I.

⁵¹ Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance* 160, and Williamson, "'When Men Are rul'd by Women,'" give Joan better mythographical density: she is the most vital embodiment of the medieval Amazon topos on Shakespeare's stage.

⁵² See Bevington, "Domineering Female" 51–58; Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays* 194, for whom Joan is an instrument of "theodicy," a "scourge" of God against the reprehensible English; Fiedler, *The Stranger in Shakespeare* 150, for an existentialist analysis of Joan as a liminal figure marking off the human.