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“Famine and no other hath slain me”: Jack Cade in the Garden of Iden

EMILY GRUBER KECK

The figure of Jack Cade has dominated recent scholarship considering Shakespeare’s *2 Henry VI* in the context of early modern political and social debates. The bifurcated nature of the Cade plotline, however—half violent rebellion, half pathetic starvation—seems to present distinct interpretive problems in accounting for the rebel’s place in the political matrix of the text. Historically, scholars have focused on Shakespeare’s departures from the chronicle sources in depicting the commons’ uprising that threatens London, arguing that the playwright “blackens” the historical Cade, presenting a caricature of disorderly common appetites “finally designed to justify oppression.”¹ More recent critical approaches have emphasized the subversive potential of Cade’s hungry pleas after the rebellion fails, suggesting that his plight articulates “a consciousness . . . of political alternatives still in the offing” and draws attention to “systemic failures of justice.”² Cade’s final appearance in the garden seems to contradict and confuse Shakespeare’s portrayal of the rebel leader. And yet reading these scenes together allows us to recognize his consistency: in every appearance, Jack Cade is focused on food, whether he is imagining Cockaigne-like abundance or desperately eating grass. This contrast goes beyond dramatic irony, prompting us to read the rebel as deeply entangled in contemporary food politics.

The Cade plotline reveals Shakespeare’s deep imaginative investment in responding to the social tensions raised by the harvest failure of 1586. The carnivalesque rebellion in London not only evokes protests against high prices, it also stages violent defiance of ongoing public regulations surrounding market spaces, which purported to protect poor men while also restricting their consumption. In the garden of Iden, Cade’s self-identification as a hungry “stray” echoes contentious enclosure disputes, locating his “famine” and eventual death within the violent class friction that attended agricultural conflict. Most importantly, both halves of Cade’s narrative explicitly refuse the terms in which local and royal authorities framed the sources and repercussions of hunger. During the dearth, Elizabeth’s government sought, through homilies, authorized sermons, and orders to magistrates, to impose a monolithic narrative of scarcity and its causes: that famine was God’s punishment visited on the sinful. Framing hunger as the inevitable result of gluttony, idleness, religious heterodoxy, and especially rebellion, this narrative reinforced orthodox perspectives on the Providential nature of secular hierarchy and the dangers of disobedience. In *2 Henry VI*, Shakespeare draws on this dominant understanding of hunger as a punishment in order to interrogate these underlying perspectives,

Early Modern Culture

suggesting that the hunger of poor men may have more immediate material causes.

1586 was not the first poor harvest of Elizabeth's reign, but the last had occurred more than a decade previously, in 1573. Anticipation of grain scarcity was strong even in the summer of 1586, motivating Elizabeth's Privy Council to codify for the first time the *Orders for the reliefe and stay of the present dearth of Graine within the Realme*, which instructed magistrates around the country in measures to be taken to maintain local grain supplies and ensure that they were sold at fair prices. Although these measures were not new—they had been put in practice during the reigns of both Edward and Mary—their formalization in 1586 into a rulebook disseminated and implemented across England indicates the seriousness with which Elizabeth's government regarded this particular threat of famine.³ The city of London, heart of the government and the theater of England, suffered fewer effects of the dearth; no food riots were recorded in the late 1580s, and mortality rates were near normal. But the fear of famine spawned by the poor harvest, perceived as the first real subsistence crisis of Elizabeth's reign, made its indelible mark on the political and cultural landscape of the city.⁴

Anthropologist Carole Counihan has mobilized the term “foodways” to describe the network of interconnected practices by which food is produced, circulated, sold, and consumed in a society, including those practices' implication in various systems of cultural meaning. As an analytical framework, Counihan argues, “foodways enables a holistic and coherent look at how human beings mediate their relationship with nature and each other,” recognizing food as “a product and mirror of the organization of society . . . a prism that absorbs and reflects a host of cultural phenomena,” from class mobility and changes in land use to religious dictates and gender norms.⁵ The study of foodways also insists that we re-situate the political within a material perspective, as foodways reveal fundamental power relationships:

Food is essential to life and must enter our bodies daily in substantial amounts if we are to live. Because of our dire need for it, [David] Arnold suggests that “food was, and continues to be, power in a most basic, tangible and inescapable form” Class, caste, race, and gender hierarchies are maintained, in part, through differential control over and access to food. One's place in the social system is revealed by what, how much, and with whom one eats.⁶

Foodways thus proves valuable as a lens through which early modern social conflict can be made legible as political, particularly those forms of conflict that challenge traditional models of politics. The possibility of a popular “politics” in early modern England remains contentious among social historians, but Andy Wood makes the strong case that “early modern villages had a politics of their own. . . . [a] politics [that] was deeply concerned with the ownership and control of material resources.”⁷ In foodways terms, early modern Londoners were still

Jack Cade in the Garden of Iden

materially and imaginatively linked with such villages, remaining invested in the rural politics of food and land. During times of dearth, this ideological investment, shared to varying degrees by many Londoners, led the urban population—and the newly popular urban theaters—to examine hunger as a political question. Shakespeare's first history play gives this public conversation a voice in the figure of Jack Cade.

* * *

The Elizabethan pulpit, always a critical mouthpiece for official discourse, took on a special role during dearth years, working in concert with the *Orders* enforced by magistrates. The *Orders* of 1586/7 instructs local Justices of the Peace:

That all good meanes and perswasions bee vsed . . . by admonitions and exhortations in Sermons in the Churches, by the Preachers and ministers of the Worde, that the poore may bee serued of Corne at conuenient and charitable prices. And . . . that the richer sort bee earnestly moued by Christian charitie, to cause their Graine to be solde vnder the common prices of the Market . . .⁸

The church's interest in addressing questions of English foodways significantly predates late-sixteenth-century scarcity. Throughout her reign, Elizabeth's prescribed homilies raised hunger as a specter to the sinful, widely disseminating an understanding of famine and hunger as divine punishments. The "Homilie against Gluttonie and Drunkenesse" links dearth with mankind's original unholy appetite, arguing that "If our first parents Adam and Eue had not obeyed their greedie appetite in eating the forbidden fruite, neither had they lost the fruition of Gods benefites."⁹ The "Homilie against Idlennesse" likewise attributes hunger to a failure of Godly labor: "he that tilleth his land, shall haue plenteousnesse of bread, but he that floweth in idlennesse, is a very foole, and shall haue pouertie enough."¹⁰ Famine holds a prominent place in the diatribe against rebels in the 1570 addition to the Elizabethan sermons, the "Homilie against Disobedience and Wilfull Rebellion":

. . . rebels wast and consume in short space al corne in barns, fieldes, or else-where, whole garners, whole store-houses, whole cellars, deuoure whole flockes of sheepe, whole droues of oxen and kine. . . . for hunger and famine, they are the peculiar companions of rebellion . . . who seeth not that extreme famine and hunger must needs shortly ensue and followe rebellion?¹¹

Early Modern Culture

The harvest of 1586, however, was poor enough to make traditional ideas of dearth and hunger newly relevant, to the orthodox and the heterodox alike. An *Order for publike Prayers* published in that year instructs that the “prayer appoynted to be sayde in the time of dearth and famine” should follow the litany of the church service, so that in churches throughout the country, parishioners heard the exhortation, “O God . . . graunt that the scarcitie and dearth (which we doe now most iustly suffer for our iniquitie) may through thy goodnesse be mercifully turned into cheapnesse & plentie.”¹² In the same year, John Udall delivered five sermons that were collected and published as *The true remedie against Famine and warres*. Citing the book of Joel, Udall argues that, like the Israelites, England suffered a scarcity of grain as a punishment for the sins of the nation: “as the hand of God was vpon them in the want of bread, so (though not in the like measure) is it vpon vs . . . the punishment of god vpon them for their sins.”¹³ Less than a year later, Wilfride Roos, in the sermon published as *A Combat betwixt the Spirite and the Fleshe*, vividly evoked the dearth as he discussed what he saw as the failure of religion in England: “there is some great punishment prepared for those that are disobedient to Gods worde . . . wee are as the figge tree not onely vnfruitfull, but keepe the ground also barren.”¹⁴

In tandem with the Providential narrative of sin and punishment, preachers in times of dearth implicitly acknowledged that more human factors were at work—that the hunger of some men was not unrelated to the excessive consumption of others. Throughout the *Second Tome* of Elizabethan homilies, gluttony and insatiable appetites are linked with the tyrant, that figure of political controversy that raised dangerous questions about duty, obedience and the possibility of rebellion. Over and over, the “Homilie against Gluttonie” emphasizes that excessive eating and drinking make tyrants of virtuous rulers, robbing them of their good judgment, since “A full belly maketh a grosse vnderstanding,” and “a drunken man hath a tyrannous heart, and therefore wil rule at his pleasure, contrary to right and reason.”¹⁵ This link between tyranny and consumption suffuses the homilies at a metaphorical level as well. The later parts of the “Homilie against Disobedience” emphasize the “iniuries, oppressions, rauenie, and tyrannie” of the Pope, and cite King John’s capitulation to Rome as a cautionary tale: “miserable tyrannie, rauennie, and spoile of the most greedie Romish wolues ensuing heereupon, the kinges and Realme of England could not ridde themselues by the space of many yeres after . . . to pay whatsoever those vnsatiable wolues did greedily gape for.”¹⁶ In the Elizabethan pulpit, such images are deployed to reinforce orthodox narratives of foreign tyrants and the threat they pose to England. But like famine, the tyrant was also figured in orthodox discourse as a Providential punishment to be endured by his subjects, rather than rebelled against. The “Homilie against Disobedience” affirms that

the further and further that an earthly prince doth swarue from the example of the heauenly gouernement, the greater plague hee is of Gods wrath, and punishment by

Jack Cade in the Garden of Iden

Gods iustice, vnto that countrie and people, ouer whome
GOD for their sinnes hath placed such a prince If we
wil haue an euil prince . . . taken away, and a good in his
place, let vs take awaye our wickednesse . . .¹⁷

The echoes of sin and punishment that link the orthodox explanations for tyranny and famine must have proven suggestive to dramatists in the years following the poor harvest of 1586, when the fear of a subsistence crisis still plagued the capital and Elizabeth's government had worked hard to be visibly powerful in addressing the dearth.¹⁸

Simultaneously, however, the homilies advance a parallel narrative of famine and punishment, one that provided equally compelling dramatic fodder for the Elizabethan stage: the argument that the common man hungers because he is an insatiable consumer. The "Homilie against Gluttonie" cites Christ's "indignation against al belly Goddes, in that hee pronounceth them accursed, saying, Woe bee to you that are full, for ye shall hunger," and this commonplace infiltrated religious and social discourse at every level.¹⁹ The *Orders* sought to alleviate dearth by regulating such consumption, instructing taverns "not to suffer any persons to repaire thither to eate and drinke at vnseasonable times, or to continue in such houses longer, then to satisfie their necessitie of eating and drinking."²⁰ In 1592, Henry Smith likewise declared in his sermon on *The poore mans teares*, "Let the glutton seeke onely to suffice nature and leaue his dayly surfetting in belly cheere, then might the poore be fed."²¹ Moreover, in the language of the pulpit, the wastrel is the dark mirror of the tyrant; the homilies suggest that the excessive consumption of the common man can be as dangerous as insatiable tyranny. The "Homilie against Gluttonie" emphasizes the wounds the glutton inflicts on the social body, both by the creation of beggars—as he who "eateth and drinketh more in one houre or in one day, then he is able to earne in a whole weeke, must deeds [sic] be an vnthrift, and come to beggery"²²—and in rebellious, "unprofitable" behavior:

how hurtfull they are, not only to themselues, but also to
the common wealth whiles they waste they
substance in banquettinge, theyr owne housholde is not
prouided of thinges necessary, theyr wyues and their
children are euil entreated, they haue not wherewith to
releue theyr poore neighbours . . . They are vnprofitable
to the common wealth.²³

The repeated iteration of "common wealth" frames the cited "banquettinge" as not only unruly, but threatening to the body politic. The "Homilie against Disobedience" elaborates this association of consumption with rebellion in terms of cause and effect: rebels bring famine on a troubled land due to their own insatiable appetites, "wast[ing] and consum[ing] . . . whole garners, whole store-houses, whole cellars, deuour[ing] whole flockes of sheepe, whole droues of oxen and kine."²⁴ Like tyrants, rebels are led by ambition, of which their

Early Modern Culture

appetite is a physical manifestation, and the ultimate object of that appetite is the commonwealth itself: rebels

consume the strength of the Realme . . . aswell by the spending and wasting of the money and treasure of the Prince and Realme, as by murdering of the people of the same . . . to make their Countrey thus by their mischief weakned, ready to be a *pray* and spoyle to all outward enemies.²⁵

Echoing the homilies, sermons of the dearth years link “obedience to the Gospell” with metaphorical assurances of plenty, calling on listeners to “let vs . . . bring forth hearbs meete for him, that watreth vs, let vs bring forth suche fruite as maye delight the eies of God.”²⁶ The logical extension of this language inscribes “vnthankful reuolt from Christ” and secular rebellion in terms of hunger: “these euill nurses of Rome . . . feed you with trust in your own works . . . which you do not, yea being sinner cannot perfourme, and therefore needs must famish you, if that you trust to them.”²⁷ This doubled orthodox narrative of famine and hunger—as a national punishment both for tyranny and rebellion, two words that bear a complicated religious charge during Elizabeth’s reign, in particular—exerts sociopolitical control over a fractious and religiously fractured populace. At the same time, the pairing relies on a measure of cognitive dissonance, as tyranny and rebellion both can and cannot coexist—depending, of course, on who stands in the pulpit.

In the wake of the dearth of 1586, some playwrights staged, and often interrogated, these deceptively simple orthodox conclusions about sin and punishment.²⁸ Performed in the year following the dearth, Marlowe’s *1 Tamburlaine* certainly initiated a trend for plays that explored tyranny in terms of appetite. But the string of imitators who followed *Tamburlaine* cannot simply be attributed to the appeal of the stage tyrant, nor that of the long *de casibus* tradition in which they participated. Playing on variations of the *de casibus* narrative, these plays use tyrant figures and their insatiable appetites to raise questions about the homilies’ neat delineations of sin and punishment, famine and obedience—questions that the playwrights often leave provocatively unanswered, even as they demand their audience gaze upon figures “starving” onstage. In 1587, Marlowe’s *1 Tamburlaine* made a spectacle of the tyrant Bajazeth and his wife Zabina starving at a full banquet; perhaps in echo, in 1588 or 1589 Peele’s *The Battle of Alcazar* presented the tyrant Muly Mahamet and his wife Calipolis starving in the wilderness. In the early 1590s, the anonymous *Locrine* showed the invader Humber begging food from the clown Strumbo in the wilderness. The closely-related *Selimus* replicated the scene with Bajazet’s son Corcut and the clown Bullithrubble. And Lodge and Greene’s *A Looking Glass for London and England* focused on the hunger of the poor couple Alcon and Samia under the tyrant Rasni.

The First part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster—revised and published in the Folio of 1623 as *2 Henry VI*—was,

Jack Cade in the Garden of Iden

according to some recent consensus, probably performed between late 1589 and the end of the summer of 1592.²⁹ Shakespeare stages both tyrants and rebels, and their voracious appetites; the rebellion, hunger and death of Jack Cade flirt with the generic paradigm of the tyrant drama. But the singular punishment of Jack Cade invokes the narrative expectations of pulpit and *de casibus* only to interrogate them, raising questions about the value and viability of such narratives in the material circumstances of scarcity. By situating the tyrant paradigm within an English foodways that is recognizably and resolutely contemporary, Shakespeare unsettles the homilies' didactic equation of excessive consumption with rebelliousness. Rather than attempting to resolve the thorny questions of authorship and revision that the Quarto *Contention* and the Folio 2 *Henry VI* represent, I will strive here not to assign precedence or authority to one text over the other. Instead, reading these texts collectively as a palimpsest, in which approaches to questions of ambition, obedience, rebellion, and hunger often meet, reveals Shakespeare's investment in examining the problematics of orthodoxy surrounding hunger, perhaps over the course of years.³⁰

At all levels of this layered text, the figure of York is a clear descendant of Tamburlaine, marked with insatiable ambition that he feels as an appetite, describing himself as a "starved snake" and promising to "reap the harvest which that rascal [Cade] sowed"; he feeds on carnage, pursuing Old Clifford like prey: "Hold, Warwick, seek thee out some other chase, / For I myself must hunt this deer to death" (F 3.1.342, Q 3.1.380, 5.2.14-15). Such language is echoed throughout the royal court, prompting us to recognize York not as a titanic overreacher, but as a symptom of the corrupt ambition endemic among the ruling class.³¹ Suffolk and Margaret's ambitious appetites are, like those of the traditional stage tyrant, metaphorically linked with their corrupt appetite for each other;³² Suffolk declares upon his banishment that he could die "As mild and gentle as the cradle-babe / Dying with mother's dug between its lips" (Q 3.2.392-93). Shakespeare pushes the limits of his dramatic antecedents, however, in connecting these figurative "appetites" with the court's material participation in the foodways of England.³³ It is no accident that Suffolk, the Cardinal and the Queen are hawking as they try to trick Gloucester into saying something that might destroy his credit with the King; the Queen riding in "with her Hawke on her fist" visually identifies their "hunt" of their enemy with their actual hunting outing (*Con* 550). While the elite may not have viewed hawking primarily as a source of sustenance, the contentious history of power relations surrounding poaching firmly locates game sports within the class-determined foodways of England as village and rural plebeians understood them, and would have served as a potent visual metonymy for Margaret's socially destructive appetites. Likewise, Suffolk's death scene suggests that his execution punishes his actual eating, as well as his figurative consumption. To the Lieutenant, he may be the "yawning mouth" that "swallow[ed] the treasure of the realm" (F 4.1.73-4), but the Duke himself figures his power over his captor Whitmore in more recognizably material terms:

Early Modern Culture

How often hast thou waited at my cup,
Fed from my trencher, kneeled down at the board
When I have feasted with Queen Margaret?
Remember it, and let it make thee crestfallen . . .
(Q 4.1.56-59)

In the context of post-dearth anxieties about scarcity and the consumption of the rich, Suffolk's boast is calculated to inflame class tensions.³⁴ As Hillary Eklund has argued, the play "link[s] the nobles' politically erratic conduct to forms of dietary excess," framing personal eating habits as implicitly dangerous to the realm.³⁵ By focusing at once on material and metaphorical consumption, Shakespeare insists on the link between the indulgence of an "appetite" for power and an appetite at the table, suggesting the grave threat both pose to England.

Appropriately, the playwright characterizes the court's virtuous counterpoints by their commitment to feeding others and to fulfilling traditional social obligations. The same *Order for publike Prayers* which mandated fasting and repentance in time of dearth also called for parishioners to be "admonished, to make their charitable contribution to the reliefe of the poore," and Smith likewise exhorts his listeners and readers that "that the kingdome of heauen belongs vnto those that harboureth strangers, cloatheth the naked, feedeth the hungry."³⁶ When Salisbury says of Warwick, "Thy deeds, thy plainness and thy housekeeping / Hath won thee greatest favour of the commons" (Q 1.1.188-89), he makes the Earl legible as a friend of the "commons" in terms resonating strongly with those deployed in orthodox sermons focused on the dearth.³⁷ The Duke of Gloucester also frames his innocence in terms that evoke contemporary anxieties about hunger at home and abroad: his declaration that "Many a pound of mine owne propper cost / Haue I sent ouer for the soldiers wants, / Because I would not racke the needie Commons" condemns the practice of "rack-rents," exorbitant rents imposed by landowners greedy for immediate profit, or looking to drive tenants to abandon their leases (*Con* 1041-43). In the context of the ambitious court, this virtuous feeder is fit only for prey, as his Duchess warns him once she has been brought low: "Suffolk . . . York and impious Beaufort . . . Have all limed bushes to betray thy wings; / And fly thou how thou canst, they'll tangle thee" (Q 2.4.51, 53-55).³⁸ When Gloucester's death is discovered, Warwick compares him to "the heifer dead and bleeding fresh," situating him in the discourse of the court as a victim of ambition rather than an insatiable consumer (Q 3.2.188). Such close echoes of the contemporary pulpit suggest Shakespeare's imaginative investment in the orthodox narrative of famine, as he emphasizes the corruption caused by ambitious appetites. Throughout the play, however, this investment pays surprisingly heterodox dividends. Warwick's lament for Gloucester closely echoes the King's lament at his disfavor—"as the butcher takes away the calf . . . Bearing it to the bloody slaughterhouse, / Even so remorseless have they borne him hence" (F 3.1.210, 212-13)—imbuing the scene with oddly subversive overtones, as Shakespeare recalls Henry's failure to save his uncle. The

Jack Cade in the Garden of Iden

prevailing picture of the ambitious court fits easily into the narrative of the ruler led astray by vicious counselors, a formula often deployed in popular protests to present reforming efforts as protection for the monarch. Such a narrative carries considerable power to displace and defuse blame from the king. Yet in the moment of Gloucester's death, Shakespeare unsettles that narrative by recalling that King Henry knew exactly how vicious his counselors were, and refused to act. He thus presents the court as a den of corrupt consumption that exists, not in spite of the king, but enabled by him. It is in the context of these unchecked appetites that we must read Shakespeare's presentation of the hungry plebeian bodies of Jack Cade and his fellows.

As social historians of early modern England have acknowledged, the "authentic" dissent of the early modern lower classes is impossible to recover. Although recent studies have depended in large part on extant court records, such documentation, Wood argues,

does not simply reflect early modern social relations; rather, it helped to constitute them. Between the speech of the witness or accused, the transcribing clerk and the interrogating magistrate lay the charged, distorting electricities of early modern power relations.³⁹

Annabel Patterson has argued that "the most important evidence, finally, of the popular voice raised in articulate protest has come down to us by way of ventriloquism, in the texts of the dominant culture," which make "ethical and pathetic claims whose force may linger" even after the dominant perspective has been reasserted.⁴⁰ Court records of the period consistently ventriloquized a language of distress, through which self-identified "poor men" performed their own powerlessness and suffering for their social superiors in the hopes of effecting change by appealing to values of paternalism. Such language carried not only emotional and social weight, but legal force; both defendants and complainants cited their poverty either as a mitigating factor in the court's compassion or as part of a call for justice. In deploying this language of distress, arguments focused on establishing the wide social gap between the parties involved. The Court of Requests was established for particular classes of complainants, including those who had not the resources to bring a bill in the Court of Star Chamber. And in its cases, this language provided a valuable formula applied in defiance of social reality, as when Andrew Woodcocke, a relatively prosperous London butcher, pled as a "poor subject" in 1590 to avoid debts incurred by his wife and servant in his absence.⁴¹ In the same court, Katheryne Honnyman, a widow who brought a bill of complaint in 1592 against the president of Trinity College in Oxford in order to retain the rights to her husband's land, not only identified herself as a "poore Subiect," but expanded on this identification by articulating her desperate circumstances:

beinge a Widowe, and havinge nothinge els lefte vnto her
for the mainten(a)nce of her poore estate of Lyvinge . . .

Early Modern Culture

her Late Husbnde w(i)th his Riotous and nawghtie
Cowrse of Lyffe havinge wasted and consumed all his
small substance to the vtter vndoyng of your poore
Subiect . . .⁴²

Ending with an appeal to the Queen's "accustomed clemencie," Honnyman's bill presents ample evidence for how thoroughly the language of distress is embedded within the legal formulae of the realm. In the varied instances of class friction mediated by the courts, this discourse authorized the less privileged subject to appeal for justice without risking sedition.

But expressions of deference and distress were not the only terms in which plebeians articulated their grievances. When dissenting discourse bubbled to the surface in moments of class friction, it frequently expressed mockery, anger, and threats of violence. As Wood argues, "popular politics often balanced deferential appeals to the gentry for protective paternalism with an aggressive, occasionally vicious, language of class," within which "body metaphors were much used to describe oppression . . . the poor dwelt upon flesh, clothes and blood in hateful description of their betters."⁴³ In times of dearth, it is no accident that such angry critiques were often framed in terms of food or eating, like the threat of Mendip miners, who told a merchant "they would kill him & cut him in peeces & lett out his fatt guts out of his bellie," or Joan Walton, who called a gentleman a "fat gutted rogue", and threaten[ed] that 'she would make his gut as poor as hers."⁴⁴ In the context of the anxieties of scarcity that Londoners experienced in the late 1580s and early 1590s, such language echoed dominant fears of the insatiable, disorderly commons—but it also suggests the commons' potential to imagine social change. Articulating class confrontations in these double languages of distress and defiance, Shakespeare reveals multiple ideological investments. As the pleas of hungry poverty voiced in the court cases of the period go hand in hand with dreams of retaliation against the well-fed, expressed in terms of foodways, one character's dramatic arc highlights the contradictions inherent in this social model: the rebel-turned-"poor man," Jack Cade.

The play offers two poor men—Simon Simpcox and Peter Thump—as instructive contrasts to the complicated dynamics of Cade's rebellious consumption and hunger. Tellingly, the Simpcox couple tell the tale of their "pure need" in terms of food, as Simon reveals that he was lamed by a fall from a plum tree (F 2.1.149).⁴⁵ As this "poor man" evokes socially- and legally-entrenched sympathy for the less powerful, Gloucester's skepticism that "Mass, thou lov'dst plums well, that wouldst venture so" (Q 2.1.98), seems myopic because he does not recognize that motives other than appetite might compel the common man to seek after food in dangerous ways. Yet Shakespeare focuses on the criminal results of their need, rather than ventriloquizing their distress, and thus defuses their potential for social critique—anticipating, in some ways, his treatment of Cade. The absurd trial by combat of the armorer Horner fits a similarly orthodox paradigm, as the conflict is resolved, against all odds, with an endorsement of Providential action.⁴⁶ Horner's repeated toasts—he says to his

Jack Cade in the Garden of Iden

three neighbors, “I’ll pledge you all,” and adds in the Quarto “Heres to thee neighbour, fill all the pots again” (Q 2.3.66, *Con* 875)—link him with the sinful drunkenness inveighed against in the homilies. By contrast, Peter virtuously abstains, telling his companions variously “Drink and pray for me, I pray you for I think I have taken my last draught in this world” and “I thanke you all, but ile drinke no more” (F 2.3.74-75, *Con* 863). From the perspective of their respective appetites, the sober Peter striking down his drunk master is not a travesty of justice, but Providence meting out punishment to the over-consumer.⁴⁷ The episode thus straightforwardly reproduces the orthodox narrative of sin and punishment in terms of appetite as well as disobedience. Collectively, Simon and Peter help situate the first half of the play within a familiar genre, as a tyrant drama that clearly reflects religious and governmental condemnations of hungry commoners.

When Cade appears onstage, more than halfway through the play, the audience expects similar echoes of political and religious orthodoxy. But Cade cannot be characterized simply as a vile rebel or a poor man, and his failed revolt offers neither a straightforward Providential narrative nor the traditional complaints of the poor seeking justice. Instead Shakespeare presents Cade at once from a “double perspective” that is meant to draw conflicting emotions from the audience, simultaneous “pleasure and horror,”⁴⁸ provoking us to re-examine the generic assumptions we bring to the play about hierarchy, obedience, and divine justice. While scholars have linked the scenes depicting Cade’s populist rebellion with the language and events of various uprisings of the 1590s,⁴⁹ the dramatic structure of the revolt is also indebted to the tradition of *de casibus* history. Sources like *The Mirror for Magistrates* frame the revolt as part of a divine plan to rectify the abuses of the court. The prose following Cade’s verse tragedy is devoted largely to the idea that his rebellion carried out Providential justice:

this I note by the way concernyng rebelles and rebellions.
Although the deuyll rayse them, yet God alwayes vseth
them to his glory, as a parte of his Iustice. For whan
Kynges and chiefe rulers, suffer theyr vnder officers to
mysuse theyr subiectes, and wil not heare nor remedye
theyr peoples wronges whan they complayne, than suffreth
GOD the Rebell to rage, and to execute that parte of his
Iustice, whiche the parcyall prince woulde not.⁵⁰

These resonances with the homiletic paradigm of sin and punishment help make sense of the appetites Cade and the rebels display in act four—appetites not, by and large, present in the *Mirror*, which focuses on rebellion rather than ambition as Cade’s damning sin.⁵¹ Cade and his rebels resonate within the Providential narrative frame as reciprocal punishment for the aristocracy, feeding on them as they have fed on the realm. The court’s ambition is predicated on the premise that their figurative consumption will go only one way—that the poor can never feed upon the rich. It is no accident that the insatiable Suffolk’s death is directly

Early Modern Culture

preceded by his declaration that “Drones suck not eagles’ blood” (F 4.1.109). The playwright thus predisposes us to read this death as a devouring, reversing the court’s dynamic of consumption, and suggests that the rebellion will continue this reversal. Stafford and a messenger twice refer to Cade’s army as “hinds” (F 4.2.113, 4.4.32)—a word used both for country denizens and for deer, which suggests the rebels’ powerlessness and links them with Gloucester as “meat” for the ambitious court. The rebel Dick the Butcher gleefully overturns this relationship, instead figuring the enemies of the commons as meat for consumption. His fellow George hails his appearance as a butcher of the corrupt, rejoicing, “Then is sin struck down like an ox, and iniquity’s throat cut like a calf,” and Cade lauds him that “They fell before thee like sheep and oxen, and thou behaved’st thyself as if thou hadst been in thine own slaughterhouse” (Q 4.2.24-5, 4.3.3-5). This violence enacts the language of anger that lurked behind plebeian expressions of distress in times of scarcity. Through Dick and his fellows, Shakespeare indulges in imagining a retribution for the well-fed that fits their excessive consumption, both figurative and literal.

At the same time, however, the rebels’ specific demands evoke a contemporary politics of scarcity that confound the generic expectations of the Providential narrative. The inversion implicit in the rebellion has supported readings of Cade as a “Lord of Misrule” in the carnival tradition. At the center of such readings is Cade’s initial appearance, where he extravagantly evokes the edible riches of the proverbial land of Cockaigne, promising that during his reign, “There shall be in England seven half-penny loaves sold for a penny; the three-hooped pot shall have ten hoops, and I will make it felony to drink small beer” (Q 4.2.60-3). Although Cade’s plans may evoke laughter, they also—as several scholars have recognized—speak to the reality of scarcity and high food prices in the late 1580s.⁵² In 1586, the price of wheat rose more than 35 percent higher than was average, and as Stuart Appleby notes, “the relative increases in the price of foodstuffs consumed by the poor . . . were greater than the increase in the price of wheat during a period of food shortage.”⁵³ With such dramatic price increases came correspondingly increased official anxiety, focused on the cost and quality of staples like bread and beer that depended on grain stocks—in part because government officials foresaw disorder if the poor could not be fed at reasonable prices. The Repertories of the Court of Aldermen in London are filled with orders regulating the companies of the Whitebakers and Brownbakers “durynge this tyme of scarcitye of wheat.”⁵⁴ They insist that the Brownbakers maintain “xii ownces in every horseloafe and enny three horseloaves xxxvi ownces in weyght at theyre perilles,” that the Whitebakers produce no “penny wheaten Loffe but that the same do contayne xxvi ownces,” and that “eny Baker of eyther of the sayd Companies, at the leaste bake halfe asmuche Rye as wheate.”⁵⁵ The price and quality of beer aroused a similar anxiety for London authorities. In May 1588 the Court ordered that “no beerebrewer brewe any beere above the price of syxe shillinges the barrell of the best . . . And that the said Brewers shall foorthwyth amend the goodnes of suche beere as they sell for iiiii^s the barrell.”⁵⁶ Cade’s declaration that “There shall be in England seven half-penny loaves sold for a penny . . . and I will make it felony to drink small beer”

Jack Cade in the Garden of Iden

directly defies the conditions under which London foodways operated in the wake of dearth (Q 4.2.60-63). Tellingly, he also seizes the power to regulate those conditions for himself, positioning himself as an immediate source of authority in the daily lives of Londoners.

Wood has identified London's markets as "contested sites of popular politics," where "Deliberate demonstration and riot over the price of food" could converge with "authority brandish[ing] itself . . . in the everyday form of the whipping post, the cage and the stocks," an emotionally charged "theatre for the everyday performance of domination, subversion, confrontation and resistance."⁵⁷ In times of scarcity, Elizabeth's government viewed the marketplace as a primary site through which to exercise their authority over the price and quantity of grain sold. The *Orders* of 1586 sought to regulate everything from when sellers must arrive at the market, to ordaining that they may not leave with grain unsold.⁵⁸ Moreover, the sale of grain was only the most frequently hyperbolized commodity to be regulated in London's markets; food was segregated by kind, by origin, by the freedom of the sellers, and by location. As he seeks to break free of the rigid price and quality restrictions of the marketplace, Cade likewise seeks to confound its geographic limits. In the context of stringent regulations, the declaration that "at the city's cost, the Pissing Conduit run nothing but claret wine this first year of our reign" (Q 4.6.2-4), goes beyond simple indulgence in a Cockaigne fantasy of plenty. Cade is re-imagining London foodways free of the chronological and topographical strictures imposed by the marketplace. His reward for Dick the Butcher stems from the same imagination: he grants him license to flout the rules of Lent which constrained the sale of meat (Q 4.3.6-7). While such language superficially echoes the insatiable consumption of the court, it refuses the generic paradigm that the surface parallel suggests. Cade may have quite an appetite, but that appetite operates on a different narrative level. Even as Cade proposes that "There shall be no money, all shall eat and drink on my score" (Q 4.2.67-8), Shakespeare frames his consumption in the language of the cash marketplace, not that of the homilies. In this context, his defiance of regulations firmly locates him as a leader of the very popular discontent Elizabeth's government feared during the dearth—a figure dreaded by authorities, but with whom the early modern theater audience may have had more than slight sympathy.

Cade's explicit implication in the politics of food and hunger also extends beyond the threat of urban rebellion, as he engages with rural frictions that held great imaginative weight for London audiences during scarcity. Social historians have explored in depth the evolution in land ownership and use over the course of the sixteenth century. As gentles and commoners alike enclosed common lands, pressure placed on the remaining common lands grew ever greater.⁵⁹ The small size of many poor holdings—between one and ten acres—meant that not only were most smallholders "unable to produce enough food [to feed themselves] in a poor harvest year," but "individual landholdings were . . . often smaller than the four acres considered by Elizabeth's government to be the minimum necessary to support a farm laborer and his family" even in a good harvest year.⁶⁰ Wood notes that "access to food and access to land were

Early Modern Culture

conceptually intertwined” in early modern England,⁶¹ and this imaginative entanglement stemmed, in part, from the implications land ownership carried for household foodways. In times of scarcity, the pressures on common lands to supplement individual harvests led to intensified animosity against enclosures of all kinds.⁶² And by the end of the sixteenth century, enclosure protests increasingly became one medium through which rural communities worked out class tensions, as riots were more often led by smallholders and directed against the hedges of the gentry.⁶³ By associating Cade with the paradigms of such unrest, Shakespeare engages with one of the major social debates of dearth that is deeply implicated in local class frictions.

In the rhetoric of the sixteenth century, the dangers enclosure posed to food supplies were most often framed in terms of the decay of tillage. More’s image in *Utopia* of sheep eating up men, as arable land was enclosed for sheep runs, still held great imaginative force, particularly during dearth years when the commons were desperate for grain and authorities were desperate to prevent grain riots. By the late sixteenth century, however, common fields were growing more rare.⁶⁴ Rather than common rights to arable land, most actual enclosure riots of the late sixteenth century focused on grazing rights. Roger Manning found that “In 89 per cent of all enclosure-riot cases [he] studied, the participants were attempting to assert a claim to the exercise of use-rights on wastes, commons and woodland. Only one case arose out of the enclosure of arable land.”⁶⁵ Historians of early modern foodways have documented the importance of common woods and waste lands in the household economies of smallholders, and livestock held a particular importance for the poor on the edge of hunger. According to John Pound, “It was a very poor labourer, too, who possessed no stock . . . the combination of common rights and a few animals meant that absolute poverty could usually be avoided except in the most exceptional circumstances.”⁶⁶ This dependence on livestock also meant that poorer smallholders were particularly vulnerable to the loss of common pasture. As Pound notes, “they stood to lose their all when enclosure took place, and they were very hard pressed even if a wealthier man did no more than overstock the commons” with his animals, additionally straining grazing resources.⁶⁷ Since livestock could mean the difference between maintaining the household and hungry vagrancy, it is no surprise that courts saw a proliferation of cases surrounding stock during and after the dearth. Such cases raised considerable animosity on all sides.⁶⁸ Pasture held such importance that in some land cases, parties destroyed grazing lands as part of the dispute.⁶⁹ In years of scarcity, the fate of a common man’s livestock, intertwined as it was with his own subsistence, could provoke not only anxiety, but eruptions of existing social tensions.

The dispute between the villages of Fenstanton and Fendrayton over the plowing of Elney common captures the range of imaginative investments that could make the conversion of common pasture into enclosed arable land so contentious. Bills in the Court of Requests from 1589 through 1591 resulted in a Star Chamber complaint in 1592;⁷⁰ all focused on the defendant John Battsford who, enlarging his parcel of land, allegedly “plowe[d] vpp and sowe[d] the leyes

Jack Cade in the Garden of Iden

endes or baulke in Fullwell Furlonge” and “digged a ditche ouerthwarte the . . . accustomed way for Fennystannton Cattell to passe into Elney.”⁷¹ The complainants’ bills and interrogatories emphasize the value of the common pasture, as the Fenstanton villagers took care “to kepe owt theire hogges owt of the said pasture for the better preservacon thereof”; the animals that were blocked have collective importance, the “Fenny Stanton herd.”⁷² The land has a history of tensions surrounding livestock, and one bill references an earlier suit in the Court of Common Pleas against the Fendrayton bailiff John Wrattam, “for takinge of twenty sheepe in Elney.”⁷³ The dispute turns on customary rights, to which the oldest living inhabitant was often called to testify—in this case, the elderly Richard Monck, who asserts the precedence of Fenstanton’s common rights “duringe the tyme of this said depon(e)ntes knowledge and as he hath hard tyme owt of mynd of man.”⁷⁴ And the defendants have apparently “threaten[ed] by violence to kepe the same [common] from” the complainants, while the complainants anticipate the distress of a protracted suit: the “charge and expence would grow . . . and the poorer sort of your said suppliantes would not be able to endure the same.”⁷⁵ For the inhabitants of these villages, the common pasture was invested with both symbolic and material significance. History and custom were entangled with the common’s daily value to the local foodways, making it a prime site through which the village politics of material resources were exercised and contested. Such entangled meanings still carried weight even in the metropolis. John Stow’s lament over the loss of common fields in his *Survey of London* evokes an urban nostalgia that suggests many sixteenth-century Londoners still felt the symbolic value of common pasture rights.⁷⁶ This symbolic value underpins the central strands of social critique in the *Contention* and in *2 Henry VI*.

This critique anticipates Cade’s presence onstage by three acts, when a “poor petitioner of [the] whole township” appears seeking Gloucester’s aid “*Against the Duke of Suffolk, for enclosing the commons of Melford*”; as Queen and Suffolk tear this petition, they dismiss the injured commoners as “base cullions,” or “pesants” (Q 1.3.20-21, F 1.3.41, *Con* 341). The mere mention of enclosure invokes a tradition of protest and structures of class animosity that are linked with food and hunger, so it is no accident that the insatiable Suffolk is an encloser. Cade’s crusade against literacy can also be directly linked with enclosure’s contentious history. His plan to free the realm of men who can read and write is founded, as Maya Mathur and Elyssa Cheng recognize, on “the relationship between legal documents and agrarian displacement,” and a “strong contempt for the lawyers’ power to exploit the tenants by writing legal documents that favor the landowning aristocracy.”⁷⁷ This link between the law and the politics of food runs through much of the rebels’ complaint. In the Folio text, Cade’s declaration that “All the realm shall be in common, and in Cheapside shall my palfrey go to grass” directly follows his re-pricing of bread and beer (Q 4.2.63-4), implicitly linking the complaints through proximity, and the Weaver’s joke about Cade’s new laws is likewise suggestive:

Early Modern Culture

BUTCHER. . . . that the laws of England may come out of
your mouth.

NICK. 'Mass, 'twill be sore law then, for he was thrust in
the mouth with a spear and 'tis not whole yet.

WEAVER. Nay, Nick, it will be stinking law, for his
breath stinks with eating toasted cheese. (F 4.7.5-10)

Though the rebels mock Cade's hypothetical laws for being subject to his most recent meal, the joke also reflects, albeit distortedly, the plebeian hope: that the law of the land will be, as Eklund argues, "informed by and uttered from the site of experienced hunger,"⁷⁸ affected by the material reality of poor men's foodways, where now it is inimical to those foodways. Dick's encounter with the Sergeant in the *Contention* text makes this opposition clear. The butcher frames his rape of the Sergeant's wife as part of the rebels' strike against literacy and law. He explains to Cade that the husband "would haue rested me, / And I went and entred my Action in his wiues paper house," and Cade tells him to "follow thy sute in her common place" (*Con* 1843-45). Cade's vitriol against the Sergeant, however, cites legal action as actively taking food from men's mouths: "Take any man by the throate for twelue pence, / And rest a man when hees at dinner, / And haue him to prison ere the meate be out of his mouth" (*Con* 1847-49). Shakespeare depicts the hunger of poor men not as the result of excessive consumption or collective sin, but as a normal function of the legal process. Moreover, the Sergeant is paid for his participation in this systemic deprivation. This perspective on hunger—as a function of laws that reward some men and starve others—plays out in greater detail in Cade's encounter with the landowner known variously in the *Contention* and *2 Henry VI* as Eyden and Iden.

The mutual link established between the legal system, land ownership, and hunger persists into the scene of Cade's demise, as he laments that "I am so hungry that if I might have a lease of my life for a thousand years, I could stay no longer" (F 4.10.4-6). More dramatically, of course, Iden/Eyden complains in the *Contention* that Cade has "broke my hedges, / And enterd into my ground" (*Con* 1940-41)—evoking the common behavior of enclosure protesters, and directly linking his "famine" with the contentious hedging of common land. Cade's imagination of himself as a "stray" reinforces this link by drawing on the critical importance of livestock during scarcity, connecting his hunger with the recent dearth. In previous scenes, the rebels' claims have emphasized the symbolic and material value that they place on livestock, and Cade in particular appreciates that material value. As Dick the Butcher comments, he has been "burnt i'th' hand for stealing of sheep," and he declares that "All the realm shall be in common, and in Cheapside shall my palfrey go to grass"—imagining the restoration of ancient commons specifically in terms of grazing rights (Q 4.2.58, 63-4). When he tells his followers that the nobility will "break your backs with burdens," or "bend your neckes vnder their seruile yokes," however (Q 4.8.28-9, *Con* 1875), Cade appropriates the imaginative weight attached to livestock during dearth in service of a more controversial claim: that the elite see plebeians as animals, valuable for their labor, but utterly dependent on their whims for

Jack Cade in the Garden of Iden

sustenance. His claim is borne out in the following scene, when the rebels must approach the King “*with balters about their necks*” to await his “doom of life or death,” even though Buckingham has promised them clemency (Q 4.9.9sd, 12). Chris Fitter notes that this performance of self as animal “was a traditional appeasement tactic of the commons, a language of visible deference” demanded by monarchs when “public repentance better served their hegemony than physical punishment.”⁷⁹ Cade’s bitter joke in Iden/Eyden’s garden, that the squire is “come to seize me for a stray for entering his fee-simple without leave” (F 4.10.24-5), performs precisely this traditional gesture of deference, in a pastoral context that emphasizes the performance’s material corollaries. The “stray” animal focused a great deal of animosity towards landlords, since if a bailiff found animals in formerly common pasture, they would be impounded—often bringing anger, financial distress, and lawsuits. Thus enclosure protests often involved, according to Manning, “depasturing of cattle in a close . . . and rescue of distrained cattle” as “symbolic ways of reclaiming lost rights of common pasture.”⁸⁰ In identifying himself as a stray animal—particularly after he “lies downe picking of hearbes / and eating them” (*Con* 1928-9)—Cade insists on a material link between his hunger and the loss of pasture to enclosure that was so contentious during dearth. He identifies himself as an animal because he knows that, in the eyes of the aristocracy, he is no better, and he forces the audience to see his starvation as the material consequence of the same deference performed by the rebels in halts. Simultaneously, Cade frames his hunger in Iden/Eyden’s garden within the protest tradition of setting animals to graze on enclosed land, participating, albeit figuratively, in widespread disputes that had clear class overtones during times of scarcity. Shakespeare articulates Cade’s desperation in terms that establish his hunger as a condition entangled in early modern class frictions, even as they refuse the closure of the homiletic narrative of sinful consumption and punishment.

This refusal is critical, because Cade’s insatiable ambition and consequent hunger, in structural terms, make perfect sense within the vogue for tyrant drama as a *de casibus* narrative. Indeed, the garden scene in the Folio opens with a clear invitation for such a reading: “Fie on ambitions! Fie on myself that have a sword and yet am ready to famish!” (F 4.10.1-2). Yet as we have already seen, Cade’s ambitious appetites fit only uneasily into this tradition, and his starvation in Iden/Eyden’s garden further resists this generic interpretation. Scholars have acknowledged the sympathy Cade elicits in his hunger, especially since, as Cheng notes, “‘famine’ was consistently the subject matter and major complaint in all peasant revolts and enclosure riots.”⁸¹ Like Cade’s identification with the vagrant,⁸² however, which evokes the contradictory impulses of Elizabethan England to both aid the poor man, and punish his potential for rebellion and sedition, the rebel’s hunger simultaneously provokes and repels sympathy. These clashing feelings are reinforced by Cade’s oblique association, through his pun on “sallet” as both a meager meal of greens and a soldier’s helmet, with the discharged, unpaid soldiers and sailors who were wandering the country and flooding London during the late 1580s and 1590s.

Early Modern Culture

Cade is far from a paragon of the virtuous, worthy poor. When he encounters Iden/Eyden, he approaches the level of violence that he and his followers achieved, exhorting his sword to “cut . . . out the burly-boned clown in chines of beef” (Q 4.10.55-56). Like that earlier violence, this carries overtones of Providential retribution for the excessive consumer. But he also echoes the angry language which was the hidden corollary of plebeian deference, and which frequently focused in times of dearth on the bodies of the rich. Cade similarly invokes the contemporary language of distress, as he laments at some length the role hunger plays in his death. First, it drives him into Iden/Eyden’s garden, prompting the criminal acts that will be his downfall—he has “hid me in these woods and durst not peep out, for all the country is laid for me; but now I am so hungry that if I might have a lease of my life for a thousand years, I could stay no longer” (F 4.10.2-6). Then he succumbs to Iden/Eyden’s sword because his strength is gone: “Famine and no other hath slain me. Let ten thousand devils come against me, and give me but the ten meals I have lost, and I’d defy them all. . . . I, that never feared any, am vanquished by famine, not by valour” (Q 4.10.59-61, F 4.10.73-4). Like his lament of “famine,” Cade’s “picking of hearbes and eating them” echoes a tradition of plebeian complaint (*Con* 1928-29). This is not to argue that Cade is a “realistic” portrayal of early modern hunger, but to identify the playwright’s specific dramatic investment. As an alternative to the Providential understanding of hunger, Shakespeare offers a dramatic snapshot of English foodways—albeit in a historical frame—that draws on contemporary anxieties about prices, the market, and the polemic of his distressed and rebellious contemporaries to evoke the audience’s emotion. Those emotions are certainly conflicted, but as Cade inspires strong feelings of rage and fear, laughter and sympathy, Shakespeare offers his audience an opportunity for catharsis, exploring and then exorcising the specter of class animosity raised during the recent scarcity.

If the playwright proposes an alternative reading of English foodways, it lies, as suggested above, in Cade’s final interactions with Alexander Iden/Eyden. When Cade offers to fight the country squire in his own garden, Iden/Eyden calls him to gaze on their bodies and rethink his plan:

Set limb to limb, and thou art far the lesser;
Thy hand is but a finger to my fist,
Thy leg a stick compared with this truncheon.
My foot shall fight with all the strength thou hast;
An if mine arm be heaved in the air
Thy grave is digged already in the earth. (F 4.10.46-51)

In light of the scene’s echoes of contemporary dearth, one might read this as a moment which calls on the audience’s sympathy for Cade, as the Folio Iden calls attention to his physical frailty, resulting from malnutrition.⁸³ In the Quarto, however, that gaze produces a different result, as Eyden declares, “looke on me, my limmes are equall vnto thine, and euery way as big, then hand to hand, ile combat thee” (*Con* 1949-50). This is one of the few points where *2 Henry VI*

Jack Cade in the Garden of Iden

seems to reverse the political potential of *The Contention*—but in fact, it only *seems* to do so. The point of the comparison in both texts is not whose body is the larger—as speculations about the massive Will Kemp’s role suggest, such a contrast would be necessarily impermanent. Instead, Shakespeare, through Iden/Eyden, demands the audience make the comparison because doing so forces a recognition that the rebel and the squire are linked, their physical circumstances entangled, each body reflecting on the other body. An attentive reading of Cade’s hunger, therefore, must comprehend an understanding of his link with Iden/Eyden.

The play’s interest in enclosures contextualizes Cade’s appearance in the garden and evokes a whole range of power relations, “unlock[ing] its actual status as a space intersected by mutually exclusive and competing class interests” and revealing Cade’s powerlessness.⁸⁴ Scholars have differed in assessing to what extent Shakespeare condemns Iden/Eyden as a representative of those interests—is he simply an “owner of property” provoked into unaccustomed violence, or an ambitious social climber dominated by “economic self-interest”?⁸⁵ The answer seems to vary according to which layer of the text we consider. According to James Siemon and to William Carroll, “the Folio palliates the potential identification of Iden with possessive accumulation,” and “ensures that Iden will be seen [as] . . . an emblematic version of the happy rural man.”⁸⁶ The key point of difference is Eyden’s complaint that Cade has “broke my hedges, / And enterd into my ground” (*Con* 1940-41), which, as suggested earlier, evokes the animosity directed against the physical signs of enclosure and “envelop[s] Iden in the hated tones of an encloser.”⁸⁷ Iden’s complaint that Cade did “break into my garden / And like a thief . . . Climb[ed] my walls” does not carry the same connotations (*F* 4.10.32-4). Arguably, however, the Folio text links Iden with insatiable ambition in other ways. Certainly Cade feels such a link in both Quarto and Folio; hence the shades of reciprocal punishment in his threat to Iden/Eyden that he will “make thee eat iron like an ostrich, and swallow my sword like a great pin” (*Q* 4.10.28-9). In light of the emotional weight attached to the enclosure of common pasture, the Folio Cade’s figuration of himself as a stray carries a similar power to identify Iden as an encloser. If the rebel is an animal seized for trespass, the squire’s violent rejection of his intrusion echoes the injuring of such livestock in the heat of historical tensions and class frictions that land disputes provoked in times of dearth.

The episode also problematizes Iden’s assertion of his own positive, paternal role within the local foodways. The squire’s initial self-blazon seems designed to distinguish him from the rapacious appetites of the court: “I seek not to wax great by others’ waning . . . Sufficeth that I have maintains my state, / And sends the poor well pleased from my gate” (*F* 4.10.20, 22-23). Iden presents his traditional hospitality as evidence of his lack of ambition; he feeds the poor, rather than figuratively consuming them in order to “wax great.” But as Fitter observes, his encounter with Cade proves him a liar, one who “will precisely ‘wax great by others’ waning’: on slaying Cade, he promptly forswears his boasted rustic contentment and hastens to court rewards.”⁸⁸ The play’s fascination with English foodways encourages us to interpret this “waxing” as

Early Modern Culture

gluttonous: Cade's head becomes the "food" for his ambition, increasing his material substance and offering him an entrée to the court with all its corrupt consumption. Iden's symbolic "eating" of Cade is reinforced by the fate of the rebel's body,⁸⁹ which can be read as a metaphorical digestion and excretion:

Hence will I drag thee headlong by the heels
Unto a dunghill, which shall be thy grave,
And there cut off thy most ungracious head,
Which I will bear in triumph to the King,
Leaving thy trunk for crows to feed upon. (F 4.10.79-83)

Iden's "appetite" transforms Cade into offal, fit only to be consumed by animals. This fate may echo Providential ideas about the reciprocal punishment of the insatiable rebel. In the *Mirror for Magistrates*, Cade's body is first "caried like a hog / To Southwarke borow," site of a huge market, then essentially cooked and eaten: "on poales [were] my parboylde quarters pight, / And set aloft for vermine to deuower, / Meete graue for rebels that resist the power."⁹⁰ Nevertheless, in enacting that punishment, Iden/Eyden cannot be understood simply as an instrument of Providence. He kills a man whom he does not know as an infamous rebel, but as a "poor famished man" (Q 4.10.43), and directly profits from his death, figuratively consuming him. And like the Sergeant, who is paid to arrest men even in the midst of dinner, the squire's "ingestion" and growth are sanctioned by the law of the land. Reading Cade through his link with Iden, then, is to read him as the victim of the aggressive consumption of the elite, his appetite and violence overwhelmed by Iden's sword and his own hunger.

The narrative echoes of the Providential and *de casibus* traditions have been elided from much recent criticism that focuses on Cade in the garden and the potential for social critique. But genre encodes audience expectations, and the tyrant vogue during the scarcity of the late 1580s and early 1590s loaded portrayals of hungry bodies with expectations of just those traditions. Recognizing the interpretive pressure of the genre is necessary in order to appreciate how deeply revolutionary—politically, or simply dramatically—*Henry VI* is in complicating those expectations, as we strive to untangle the politics of resources that the scene encodes. Cade's starvation, so different from that of the punished tyrant, dismisses the very assumptions about sin and obedience on which the orthodox homilies and sermons depend. Shakespeare's decision to ground that hunger in the recognizable popular complaint of dearth may speak to his investment in popular politics, or simply to his powers of ventriloquism. In either case, his portrait of Cade demands from his audience a recognition that famine is a social and political condition, implicated in the day-to-day foodways of England—perhaps itself a rebellious idea in an Elizabethan London scarred by dearth.

Jack Cade in the Garden of Iden

Notes

1. Richard Wilson, "A Mingled Yarn": Shakespeare and the Cloth Workers," *Literature and History* 12, no. 2 (1986): 164-180, 167; Phyllis Rackin, *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 219.

2. Hillary Eklund, "Revolting Diets: Jack Cade's 'Sallet' and the Politics of Hunger in *2 Henry VI*," *Shakespeare Studies* 42 (2014): 51-62, 53, 60. The roots of both critical strains stretch back in different ways to the commonplace of Shakespeare's contempt of "the mob." As scholars have increasingly recognized the play's ambivalent perspectives on plebeian protest, however, particularly in the "moral authority" granted to the offstage rising of the commons after Gloucester's death, many have persisted in viewing Cade as the traitorous counterpart who provides "an opportunity to discriminate: between contrasting attitudes toward the popular voice protesting; and between socially useful or abusive styles of its mediation," or as a class traitor who "hijacks" the popular revolt, "a figurehead whom Shakespeare divorces from, and renders inferior to, authentic popular consciousness" (Annabel Patterson, *Shakespeare and the Popular Voice* [Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1989], 48, 51; Michael Hattaway, "Rebellion, Class Consciousness, and Shakespeare's *2 Henry VI*," *Cahiers Elisabethains: Late Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 33 [1988]: 13-22, 19; Chris Fitter, "'Your Captain is Brave and Vows Reformation': Jack Cade, the Hacket Rising, and Shakespeare's Vision of Popular Rebellion in *2 Henry VI*," *Shakespeare Studies* 32 [2004]: 173-219, 200). Among others, Stephen Longstaffe has reacted strongly against this perspective, arguing that "we should be very wary of assuming that merely showing Cade's violent actions would frighten an audience into repudiating his politics, or that his illogical speech and actions . . . [would] appear simply ridiculous" ("A short report and not otherwise: Jack Cade in *2 Henry VI*," in *Shakespeare and Carnival: After Bakhtin*, ed. Ronald Knowles, 13-35 [New York: Macmillan, 1998], 19); Jonathan Bate similarly suggests that in Cade, the groundling "would have seen himself mirrored on the stage . . . a plain man speaking of new-dressing the commonwealth of England" (quoted in Roger Warren, introduction to *Henry VI, Part Two*, by William Shakespeare, ed. Roger Warren, The Oxford Shakespeare [Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2002], 51). Both perspectives, however, are in danger of overly simplifying Shakespeare's heteroglossic presentation of rebellion.

3. Their fears did not go unrealized. As Stuart Appleby has described, conditions became particularly dire in the north, where famine led to spiking mortality rates that persisted into 1588 (*Famine in Tudor and Stuart England* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978], 95, 135), and Buchanan Sharp has explored the dramatic numbers of food riots in the west, where the anticipation of dearth in the summer of 1586 combined with depression in the cloth trade to exacerbate the deprivations of unemployed wage-workers, and to evoke their violent discontent (*In Contempt of All Authority: Rural Artisans and Riot in the West of England, 1586-1660* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980], 11-14).

4. In part, this fear can be traced to the very real links between the growing urban population and the rural communities of England. London's population doubled between 1580 and 1600, largely due to what Roger B. Manning describes as an "inward flow of people . . . especially from the Midlands and the North" (*Village Revolts* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1988], 189). Thus, a tenuously causal relationship existed between dearth in the countryside and the growing urban audiences for the city's theaters. This worked to reinforce the echoes of rural life that many residents of the capital still experienced, as news of famine circulated in taverns, alehouses, and market spaces where grain and foodstuffs from the country were sold, and as many city wives still grew a portion of their households' food in gardens (Sharp, *In Contempt*, 41; Andy Wood, *Riot, Rebellion and Popular Politics in Early Modern England*, Social History in Perspective, gen ed. Jeremy Black [New York: Palgrave, 2002], 117-118; Appleby, *Famine*, 14).

5. Carole Counihan, *The Anthropology of Food and Body: Gender, Meaning, Power* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 6-7.

6. Counihan, *Anthropology*, 7-8.

7. Wood, *Riot*, 192.

Early Modern Culture

8. *Orders devised by the especial commandement of the Queenes Maiestie, for the reliefe and stay of the present dearth of Graine within the Realme* (London: printed by Christopher Barker, 1586/7 [January 2]), STC 9194, accessed via eebo.chadwyck.com, B3v.

9. “An Homilie against gluttonie and drunkenesse,” in *The seconde Tome of Homilies. Of such matters as were promised, and entituled in the former part of Homilies. Set out by the authoritie of the Queenes Maiestie: and to be read in euery Parish Church agreeably* (London: Printed by J. Charlewood and T. East, 1587), STC 13673, accessed via eebo.chadwyck.com, N1v.

10. “An Homelie against Idlennesse,” in *The seconde Tome of Homilies. Of such matters as were promised, and entituled in the former part of Homilies. Set out by the authoritie of the Queenes Maiestie: and to be read in euery Parish Church agreeably* (London: Printed by J. Charlewood and T. East, 1587), STC 13673, accessed via eebo.chadwyck.com, Hh6v.

11. “An Homelie against disobedience and wilfull rebellion,” parts 1-6, in *The seconde Tome of Homilies. Of such matters as were promised, and entituled in the former part of Homilies. Set out by the authoritie of the Queenes Maiestie: and to be read in euery Parish Church agreeably* (London: Printed by J. Charlewood and T. East, 1587), STC 13673, accessed via eebo.chadwyck.com, Nn4r-5r.

12. *An order for publike Prayers to be vsed on Wednesdayes and Frydayes in euery Parish Church within the Prouince of Canterburie, conuenient for this present time: Set forth by authoritie* (London: printed by Christopher Barker, 1586), STC 4587, accessed via eebo.chadwyck.com, A4v; *The Booke of Common prayer, and administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies in the Church of England* (London: printed by Christopher Barker, 1586), STC 16311.3, accessed via eebo.chadwyck.com, B5v.

13. John Udall, *The true remedie against Famine and warres. . . . Preached in the time of the dearth. 1586* (London: Printed by Robert Waldegrave for T. Man and T. Gubbins, 1586), STC 24507, accessed via eebo.chadwyck.com, 1r, 2v.

14. Wilfride Roos, *A Combat betwixt the Spirite and the Fleshe. A Right Fruitefull and godly Sermon* (London: printed by Robert Waldegrave, 1587), STC 21315.6, accessed via eebo.chadwyck.com, A8r-v.

15. “Homilie against gluttonie,” N6v, N5v. Rebecca Bushnell has identified the roots of this connection between tyranny and appetite in the Platonic tradition: “As a character type, Plato’s tyrant is a man who gives free rein to desire The lecher, the drunkard, and the lunatic are the types of the *tyrannos*” (*Tragedies of Tyrants: Political Thought and Theater in the English Renaissance* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990], 13).

16. “Homelie against disobedience,” Oo8r, Pp3r.

17. “Homelie against disobedience,” Ll7r, Mm1r.

18. Wood describes how the *Orders* played a part in a larger exercise in public relations during years of scarcity: “Tudor magistrates were expected to be seen to be acting against forestallers and corrupt market officials. . . . demonstrating an ostentatious, proactive concern for the supply of food” (*Riot*, 97).

19. “Homilie against gluttonie,” M8v.

20. *Orders . . . for the reliefe and stay of the present dearth*, B4r.

21. Henry Smith, *The poore mans teares* (London: printed by John Wolfe, 1592), STC 22683, accessed via eebo.chadwyck.com, 34.

22. “Homilie against gluttonie,” N6v.

23. “Homilie against gluttonie,” N6v-7r.

24. “Homelie against disobedience,” Nn4r.

25. “Homelie against disobedience,” Nn6r, emphasis mine.

26. Roos, *Combat*, B2r, B1r.

27. Edward Hutchins, *A sermon preached in S. Peters Church at West-Chester the XXV of September, 1586* (Oxford: printed by Joseph Barnes, 1586), STC 14016, accessed via eebo.chadwyck.com, A6r, B5r.

28. As various historians have noted, a single poor harvest could have effects—both material and imaginative—that persisted for years. Appleby describes how “In a year of bad harvest, the hungry farmer may eat some of the next year’s seed corn, and accordingly his harvest the next year will be diminished, whatever the weather. Thus bad years tend to run as a series”

Jack Cade in the Garden of Iden

(*Famine*, 11), and Manning claims that “Some of the food riots of this period were probably caused more by fear of hunger than by the actual presence of famine” (*Village Revolts*, 314-15).

29. The *Contention* has inspired heated debates over the text’s authorship, date, and sequential relationship to the Folio texts of *1* and *2 Henry VI*. Those conversations lie beyond the scope of this exploration, but in support of the dates cited here, see Hanspeter Born, “The Date of *2, 3 Henry VI*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (1974): 323-334; Michael Hattaway, introduction to *The Second Part of King Henry VI*, ed. Michael Hattaway, New Cambridge Shakespeare, gen. ed. Brian Gibbons (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 1-69, 61-68; and Ronald Knowles, introduction to *King Henry VI, Part 2*, ed. Ronald Knowles, The Arden Shakespeare, third series, gen. ed. Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson and David Scott Kastan (London: Thompson Learning, 1999), 1-141, 113-121.

30. Throughout, I will cite lines from the Quarto *Contention* that appear in identical or closely similar form in the Folio *2 Henry VI* as “Q” lines. Lines that appear only in the Folio text will be marked as “F” lines, while lines that appear only in the Quarto or differ significantly from the Folio will be marked as “Con” lines. Citations of “Q” and “F” lines refer to *King Henry VI, Part 2*, ed. Ronald Knowles, The Arden Shakespeare, third series, gen. ed. Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson and David Scott Kastan (London: Thompson Learning, 1999); citations of “Con” lines refer to *The First Part of the Contention: 1594*, ed. William Montgomery, Malone Society Reprints (Oxford: University Press Oxford, 1985). All further references to these editions will be cited parenthetically.

31. In this, Shakespeare closely follows Hall’s *Chronicle*, which describes Queen Margaret as “of haute stomacke, desirous of glory,” Suffolk as “the moste swallower up and consumer of the kynges treasure,” and indicts the Cardinal of Winchester for his “covetous insaciablen” (“Hall’s *Chronicle* (1542, 1548, 1550; reprinted 1809),” Appendix I: Source-Material, in *The Second Part of King Henry VI*, ed. Andrew S. Cairncross (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd, 1957), 157-179, 163, 166, 165).

32. According to Bushnell, this link post-dates the Platonic tradition: “It is the Senecan tyrant, above all, who thus helped to shape the Renaissance tyrants consumed by ambition as well as lust” (*Tragedies*, 34).

33. Michael Harrawood’s reading, linking Shakespeare’s portrayal of ambition in the *Henry VI* plays with a conception of passion and its performance that is embodied in digestion and evoked in references to the aristocratic “stomach,” offers an alternative understanding of ambition as a material force; he argues that “Ambition is linked with appetite throughout the literature of the early modern period because both share a sense of vertical trajectory,” as “the stomach had to assert its primacy over the other organs and to jockey for position around them” (“High-Stomached Lords: Imagination, Force and the Body in Shakespeare’s *Henry VI* Plays,” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 7, no. 1 [2007]: 78-95, 83).

34. Chris Fitter’s description of this confrontation in terms of “raging class-conflict” is apt (“Emergent Shakespeare and the Politics of Protest: *2 Henry VI* in Historical Contexts,” *ELH* 72, no. 1 [2005]: 129-158, 136).

35. Eklund, “Revolting Diets,” 54.

36. *Order for publike Prayers*, A3v; Smith, *Poore mans teares*, 4.

37. In emphasizing this concern, Shakespeare also follows Hall, who associates the Nevilles with traditional, paternalist foodways by emphasizing Warwick’s “abundant liberalitie, and plentiful house keynge” or hospitality, “by reason of whiche doynge, he was in suche favor and estimacion, amongst the common people” (“Hall’s *Chronicle*,” 175).

38. Ironically, the Queen, York and Suffolk use the terms of their own insatiable ambition to damn Gloucester, likening him to “ravenous wolves” and “an empty eagle” (F 3.1.78, 248), before elaborating on him as a fox: “let him die in that he is a fox, / By nature proved an enemy to the flock, / Before his chaps be stained with crimson blood” (Q 3.1.57-9).

39. Andy Wood, “Poore men woll speke one daye: Plebeian Languages of Deference and Defiance in England, c. 1520-1640,” in *The Politics of the Excluded, c. 1500-1850*, ed. Tim Harris (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 67-98, 82.

40. Patterson, *Shakespeare and the Popular Voice*, 41-42.

Early Modern Culture

41. Court of Requests: Pleadings, National Archives (Kew, United Kingdom), 2/289/67. Further references to pleadings in the Court of Requests will be prefixed with the conventional abbreviation REQ.
42. REQ 2/222/44.
43. Wood, *Riot*, xi; Andy Wood, "Fear, Hatred and the Hidden Injuries of Class in Early Modern England," *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 3 (2006): 803-826, 815.
44. Quoted in Wood, "Fear," 815.
45. Though Simpcox has traditionally been interpreted as a comic reflection of the corruption of the court and Gloucester's good judgment, Maya Mathur has recently connected the scene with Cade's rebellion, recognizing their shared "source in rural poverty . . . revelations of their deceit are presented alongside images of the economic hardships that compel fraudulent action" ("An Attack of the Clowns: Comedy, Vagrancy, and the Elizabethan History Play," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 7, no. 1 [2007]: 33-54, 41). For a reading of the Simpcox episode as a critique of orthodox understandings of poverty, see Eklund, "Revolting Diets," 56-57; for further analysis of Simpcox in relation to Cade, see William Leahy, "For Pure Need: Violence, Terror and the Common People in *Henry VI, Part 2*," *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 143 (2007): 71-83.
46. This episode has likewise been regarded as reflecting ironically on the court's ambitions, and as a "travesty" of divine justice that only the innocent King Henry could see as Providential; among others, Ronald Knowles argues that "drunkenness becomes the warranty of providence" ("Introduction," 88).
47. Shakespeare may re-assign the guilt of the situation from prentice to master, but otherwise this is a clear echo of Hall's *Chronicle*, which evokes the "Homilie against Gluttonie" in presenting Horner as a brief *de casibus* tragedy: "so he beyng a tall and hardye personage, overladed with hote drynkes, was vanquished of his servaunt, beyng but a cowarde and a wretche" ("Hall's *Chronicle*," 162).
48. Hattaway, "Rebellion," 19; Ronda Arab, "Ruthless Power and Ambivalent Glory: The Rebel-Labourer in *2 Henry VI*," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 5, no. 2 (2005): 5-36, 11.
49. See especially Fitter, "Your Captain," 173-219; Wilson, "A Mingled Yarn," 170-73; and Leahy, "For Pure Need," 80-82.
50. *The Mirror for Magistrates*, ed. Lily B. Campbell (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1960 [orig. Cambridge University Press, 1938]), Prose 12.12-18. The *Mirror* goes on to cite Cade's aristocratic victims by name, and concludes that "As for this Lorde Sayes whom Cade so cruelly kylled and spytefully vsed after his death (I dare say) . . . God would never have suffred him to hae been so vsed, except he had fyrst deserved it" (*Mirror*, Prose 12.30-33).
51. Such appetites complicate the readings of Hattaway and others who challenge overtly Providential narratives of the play, noting that "Shakespeare's laying out of motive, event, and consequence offers spectators no real demonstration that the troubles of the kingdom are the *consequence* of divine displeasure or retribution" (Introduction, 8).
52. Ellen C. Caldwell wonders "what portion of Shakespeare's audience in the early 1590s would have found dearth and its consequences entirely farcical" ("Jack Cade and Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part 2*," *Studies in Philology* 92, no. 1 [1995]: 18-79, 52). See also Leahy, "For Pure Need," 78; Arab, "Ruthless Power," 14-15; Hattaway, "Rebellion," 17; and Thomas Cartelli, "Jack Cade in the Garden: Class Consciousness and Class Conflict in *2 Henry VI*," in *Enclosure Acts: Sexuality, Property and Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. Richard Burt and John Michael Archer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 48-67, 62-3.
53. R. B. Outhwaite, *Dearth, Public Policy and Social Disturbance in England, 1550-1800*, *Studies in Economic and Social History* (London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1991), 20; Appleby, *Famine*, 6.
54. Repertories of the Court of Aldermen, London Metropolitan Archives (London, United Kingdom), COL/CA/01/01/021, 21.334r. Further references to the Repertories of the Court of Aldermen will be prefixed with the conventional abbreviation Rep.
55. Rep 21.499r, 503r, 334r. Successive orders lowered and raised this mandated proportion of the more plentiful rye, but, "in respect of the great Scarcytye and dearthe of wheate

Jack Cade in the Garden of Iden

at this present and doubt of the lyke hereafter,” it never fell below one-third rye (Rep 21.414r, 441v).

56. Rep 21.558v.

57. Wood, *Riot*, 118-119.

58. *Orders . . . for the reliefe and stay of the present dearth*, B3r, B1r.

59. Joan Thirsk has detailed the broad range of motives for enclosing at different levels of society, from agricultural experimentation to increasing cultivation to the pressure of a growing population (“Enclosing and Engrossing,” in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales: Volume IV 1500-1640*, ed. Joan Thirsk [Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1967], 200-255, 200-12; *The Rural Economy of England* [London: The Hambledon Press, 1984], 67-79).

60. Appleby, *Famine*, 58, 66. The standard of four acres was set in the Statute of 1589, which sought to address some of the contention over the incremental encroachments on common land that surfaced during the scarcity of 1586-7 (Sharp, *In Contempt*, 158).

61. Wood, *Riot*, 101.

62. R. B. Outhwaite notes that “whilst enclosures could occur at any time, outbreaks of resentment against them were often precipitated by dearth” (*Dearth, Public Policy*, 47); see also Manning, *Village Revolts*, 23.

63. Manning, *Village Revolts*, 64-65.

64. Thirsk, “Enclosing,” 203.

65. Manning, *Village Revolts*, 57.

66. John Pound, *Poverty and Vagrancy in Tudor England*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1986),

77.

67. Pound, *Poverty*, 8. In areas where pasture was scarce, the number of animals each tenant could graze was strictly limited or “stinted”; for more details, see Thirsk, *Rural Economy*, 67, and “Enclosing,” 247-8, and Manning, *Village Revolts*, 19.

68. In 1588, during a suit in the Court of Requests over common pasture rights, the villagers of Plumpton, with the local knight Thomas Chamberlin, “did w(i)th their mastiue dogges & grayhound so chase hunt & bite diuers of Your Ma(jes)tes said suppl(ica)ntes beastes . . . a hole mile from Plumpton playne,” leading to frantic anxiety over the fate of the livestock: “some of them dyed therof & many of them wer sore hurt and in greate hazard of lyf to the vtter vndoinge of Your Ma(jes)tes said supl(ia)ntes” (REQ 2/290/67).

69. In 1589, the defendants in such a case concerning a manor in Cumberland occupied the lands in question and “with like force & Riotte did plowe vp, diuers the pasture groundes” (Court of Star Chamber: Proceedings, Elizabeth I, National Archives [Kew, United Kingdom], 5/D25/4; further references to the proceedings of the Court of Star Chamber will be prefixed with the conventional abbreviation STAC). It is notable that the complainant decries the “plowing up” of the pasture; cases like this turn More’s paradigm on its head, as tillage becomes the destructive threat to grazing.

70. Documents from these cases are collected in the National Archives of the United Kingdom under REQ 2/242/17, 2/244/28, 2/157/296, and STAC 5/B13/24.

71. REQ 2/242/17.

72. REQ 2/242/17.

73. REQ 2/242/17.

74. REQ 2/244/28.

75. REQ 2/242/17.

76. Manning, *Village Revolts*, 22.

77. Mathur, “Attack,” 44; Elyssa Y. Cheng, “Disputing Boundaries: Space and Social Boundary in 2 Henry VI,” *Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies* 34, no. 1 (2008): 185-201, 190. As Geraldo U. de Sousa argues, the violence hinges on an understanding of “writing as the power that authorizes and perpetuates social injustices. . . . confirm[ing] traditions and confer[ring] privileges from which the illiterate are by definition excluded,” particularly in the realms of legal activity (“The Peasants’ Revolt and the Writing of History in 2 Henry VI,” in *Reading and Writing in Shakespeare*, ed. David M. Bergeron [Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996], 178-93, 180). It is through legal documents, we must assume, that Suffolk was able to enclose the commons of

Early Modern Culture

Melford—an act which, as William C. Carroll recognizes, expands on Hall's *Chronicle* in order to create a material link between the Duke and "the conditions that helped create the rebellious multitude that now calls for his head" ("The Nursery of Beggary": Enclosure, Vagrancy, and Sedition in the Tudor-Stuart Period," in *Enclosure Acts: Sexuality, Property and Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. Richard Burt and John Michael Archer [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994], 34-47, 43).

78. Eklund, "Revolting Diets," 57.

79. Fitter, "Your Captain," 202.

80. Manning, *Village Revolts*, 26.

81. Cheng, "Disputing Boundaries," 195.

82. Among others, Mathur ("Attack," 40-41) and Arab ("Ruthless Power," 19) have explored the complicated social semiotics that attend Cade's marking as a vagrant figure; Eklund is the critical outlier in arguing that "Cade's hunger is not the unique companion of the criminal and the downtrodden . . . Cade's status as an outlaw becomes startlingly irrelevant, and hunger a matter of universal concern" ("Revolting Diets," 58).

83. Critical responses to this moment have varied greatly; some scholars argue that "Cade is undone 'naturally' in daring to contend with someone whose social superiority also makes him his superior in strength and skill" (Cartelli, "Jack Cade," 51-2), and others contend that Cade may have been originally acted by Will Kemp, whose great physical size may have lent a "farical point" to the comparison that undercut Iden's power (Ronald Knowles, "The Farce of History: Miracle, Combat, and Rebellion in 2 *Henry VI*," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 21 [1991]: 168-186, 182).

84. Cartelli, "Jack Cade," 52. The play's investment in enclosure has been widely recognized; the political entanglement of Iden's pastoral idyll has been explored from various angles by Arab ("Ruthless Power," 21), Mathur ("Attack," 45-46), and Cheng ("Disputing Boundaries," 187-194).

85. Stephen Greenblatt, "Murdering Peasants: Status, Genre, and the Representation of Rebellion," *Representations* 1 (1983): 1-29, 25; Mathur, "Attack," 46.

86. James R. Siemon, "Landlord Not King: Agrarian Change and Interarticulation," in *Enclosure Acts: Sexuality, Property and Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. Richard Burt and John Michael Archer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 17-33, 26; Carroll, "Nursery," 43.

87. Fitter, "Your Captain," 210.

88. Fitter, "Your Captain," 210.

89. This fate has been variously read as evidence of elite violence (Cartelli, "Jack Cade," 51-52), a Foucauldian display of power in punishment (Cheng, "Disputing Boundaries," 195-6), and a symbolic reinscription of social boundaries (Francois Laroque, "The Jack Cade Scenes Reconsidered: Popular Rebellion, Utopia, or Carnival?" in *Shakespeare and Cultural Traditions: The Selected Proceedings of the International Shakespeare Association World Congress, Tokyo, 1991*, ed. Tetsuo Kishi, Roger Pringle and Stanley Wells [Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994] 76-89, 85).

90. *Mirror*, Tragedy 12.141-2, 145-7.

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