

## **Coronation as Legible Practice**

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### 1. Antidisciplinarity

We medievalists are more complacent about our crossdisciplinarity than we have any right to be. To be sure, we are unique among academic fields in the extent to which our journals (such as *Speculum*) and our conferences (Medieval Academy, Medieval Institute) foster cross-disciplinary encounter. But such encounters are more often "shoulder to shoulder" than "face to face." We most often read the article or attend the paper in "our field" without actually leaving the security of our disciplinary home (with historians, for example, returning to their "sources" and literary people to their "text"). Such are the emotional and material comforts of the disciplinary home that little explanation need be offered for the academic reluctance to leave it, or, leaving it, the disposition for a prompt return. The question, rather, is how the more adventurous (but more fraught and less rewarding) state of interdisciplinarity is to be sustained against the constant temptation of a return to more familiar environs.

The liminal and fragile state of interdisciplinarity is to be sustained only by adopting the most active and aggressive means; by resolving, not just to be interdisciplinary, but actively to oppose disciplinary complacencies. To be, in a word, "antidisciplinary." To be antidisciplinary is to interest ourselves and actively to prefer precisely those knowledges which are underrecognized or unrecognized within existing disciplinary terms. A discipline constitutes itself in and through the kinds of knowledges it seeks and endorses, and equally through those its methodologies render unrepresent or invisible. As a result, the processes of disciplinary analysis are likely to in fact be bound to leave a "remainder," a residue of phenomena unvoiced or uncommented upon. Antidisciplinarity asserts the importance of this invisible remainder.<sup>1</sup>

Antidisciplinarity begins with a sense of our respective fields' constructedness, a sense of where their unspoken boundaries operate to define and limit objects of disciplinary notice. But since, as Emerson says, the contours of a field cannot

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well be seen from within the field, a standpoint outside the field's boundaries is required to bring them to view. This is the standpoint of theory theory, in this case, too powerful or versatile fully to be contained or exhausted by any one discipline or field of study. One thing that interests me about this conference is that it openly names, and proceeds under the aegis of, one of the several current theoretical standpoints possessing the antidisciplinary characteristics I have in mind. This is, of course, the theory of "practice."

Theories of practice are by no means giddily new. A determinate point of origin would be the work of Bourdieu and Giddens in the 1970s, with the appearance of Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* in English in 1977 and Giddens's *Central Problems in Social Theory* in 1979. Disciplinarily, its origins are appropriately vague, but are indebted more or less equally to anthropology and sociology, with reasonably early pickups in political science and literature. In its inception, practice theory posed a welcome alternative to the unwelcome binary in which human behavior was seen either as rational, purposive, and agent-driven or as a wholly agentless product of synchronous social structure.<sup>2</sup> As a theory founded in resistance to simplifying binaries, it has proven highly resistant to disciplinary appropriation, and it flourishes twenty years after the fact precisely by virtue of its capacity to subvert or override the very simplifications (textual vs. extra-textual, temporal vs. atemporal) by which disciplines once closed themselves.

At the heart of practice theory lies an understanding of human activity as what Bourdieu calls "regulated

improvisation," [3](#) as activity occurring within structure, but not structurally determined. Or, to put it slightly differently, practice theory offers an analysis of activity as conceived, and made intelligible within, a set of tacit rules, but not as wholly predetermined by those rules. Even so short a summary suggests the advantage of practice theory over its adversaries in the 1970s: over, that is, a residual humanism that admitted no obstacles to individual self-determination, and a briefly triumphant structuralism which insisted on the subjection of individuals to rules. But what conceptual advantages does practice-theory, twenty years after, continue to allow to its practitioners? What disciplinarily specific binds does it nullify or elude?

(1) Refuses to differentiate objects of analysis. A text, a symbolic object, a performance, a ceremonial or pageant, an event may all be found equally to unfold within structure, to be subject to "practical" analysis. A more specific observation, bearing on a particular problem of my discipline, is that practice soars over the imagined chasm between the symbolic and the material, or (to put it slightly differently) the textual and the historical. This particular achievement is enabled by Bourdieu's introduction of a powerful concept which identifies the goal of all practice as identification of the goal of all practice as the accumulation of "capital," that is, social leverage, and then argues that capital may be variously symbolic or material or both at once (see his Outline, p. 183).

(2) Recognizes structure but rejects its tyranny. Practices manifest abstract (and hence timeless) structure, but the process of structuration occurs in time, with meaning subject to modification by temporal arrangement and duration or

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"tempo" (pp. 8-9). The vantage-point of practice theory thus allows the analyst of actions and events to recognize the synchrony or atemporality of the structures within which they are conceived, and to reconnect these actions and events to the diachrony or temporality of their unfolding. This mode of analysis in turn offers a way of describing the sense in which events can rebound upon, or modify, the structures within which they are produced.

(3) Outflanks the question of intent. An event may objectively be perceived as strategic, whether or not it is the product of a "strategic intention" (p. 73). Without ignoring people's sense of what they think they are doing, practical analysis finally bets on observed behavior, on what they may be seen to do. [4](#)

(4) Opens a theory of resistance. Practices tend, naturally enough, to reproduce the structures of which they are a product (p. 72). Yet, as Bourdieu observes, practices open the possibility of symbolic manipulation of the power relations out of which they are produced (p. 165). Moreover, as Ortner and Sahlins point out, social change may be a paradoxical result of good-faith failure; that is, change may result from "failed reproduction." [5](#)

I don't mean that practice theory is always trying to do all these things. They might be seen as among its incidental derivatives, as effects of its implementation. For it is, above all else, an "applied" theory, a "hands-on" theory, which is why I want to move as quickly as possible to some illustrative applications. As my title suggests, I will concentrate on several late-medieval English coronation events, seen as occasions of "ritual practice."

## 2. Richard II: Bad Timing as Bad Luck

Social practices including those relative formalizations which Bourdieu calls "ritual practice" manifest structure, but in their own way: not in static arrest, but as a process of structuration or realization, occurring in time. Time is, in this sense, not only the proper element of practice, but one of the ways in which it makes meaning. Bourdieu observes of the slightly different case of exchange-relations, "Even the most strictly ritualized exchanges, in which all the moments of the action, and their unfolding, are rigorously foreseen, have room for strategies: the agents remain in command of the interval between the obligatory moments and can therefore act . . . playing with the tempo of the exchange" (p. 15). Similarly, considerations of temporal order, timing, and tempo are centrally important within rituals of coronation, where the *ordo* of coronation (*ordo* referring in this case not to stratum or rank but to sequence) was of sufficient importance to be written down, revised, argued over, and learnedly commented upon.

The objective of the coronation ritual, as with most ritual practices, may be understood as what Bourdieu calls the "euphemization" of a boundary crossing (pp. 120-124). The passage from late king/present king, old king/new king presents a relatively elementary boundary-crossing, but nevertheless a crossing to be euphemized, by insistence upon legitimacy, continuity, rebirth, divine sanction, and other means. Whichever of these strategies is pursued, the analysis

of practice locates its chances for success in its manipulation of time. Analysis of

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coronation, not as an abstract pattern but as a practice unfolding in time, reveals the orchestration of these and other legitimizing effects, and also highlights those moments when the process breaks down, when the gears and wheels of the ritual's smooth euphemizations are revealed for all to see. One such moment is the ill-timed coronation appearance of Richard's own champion.

In the process of claiming his hereditary role as king's champion, John Dymock showed a clear enough sense of his moment in time: that the responsibility of the champion is to "come . . . the day of the coronation, and ride before the king in the procession ["chiuacher devant le Roi al procession"] and . . . say and cry to the people three times together . . . that if there be any man high or low who will deny that his liege lord Sir Richard, kinsman and heir to the King of England, Edward, now lately dead, ought not to be crowned King of England, that he is ready with his body to adventure now . . . that he lieth as a false traitor" (pp. 141, 160).<sup>6</sup> The notion that he should defend Richard's title on the morning of the corona-

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tion, in procession to the Abbey, makes perfect sense, for, were a defense of Richard's right to be required, it should obviously occur before rather than after the coronation ceremony.

Yet, according to anti-Ricardian Walsingham, this is not what happened.<sup>7</sup> As he tells it, the coronation was underway behind the closed doors of the Abbey when John Dymock, splendidly arrayed on a charger with two attendants, arrived at the doors of the Abbey to await the end of the coronation mass. First issuing from the Abbey doors was marshal Thomas Percy, who abruptly addressed the king's champion, saying that he ought not to have come at this time but should have postponed his arrival until the coronation banquet ("dicens non debere eum ea hora venire, sed quod usque ad prandium Preis distulisset adventum suum"). Percy then, in what seems a preemptory way, instructed him to go take off his heavy armor, and to await that time for his return ("monuit ut rediret, et, deposito tanto onere armorum, quiesceret ad illud tempus"). Walsingham says that unsurprisingly given Percy's authority and tone Dymock took his advice and withdrew. Twenty-three years later, when Dymock's nephew performed the role of champion on the occasion of Henry IV's coronation, he does indeed seem to have entered the king's hall in the course of the banquet ("in medio prandio . . . aulam intravet") fully mounted, and ready to sustain the king's right against any challenger.<sup>8</sup>

Dymock's withdrawal, and presumed humiliation, is the moment at which a tacit and barely visible, but nonetheless vital, system of reciprocity begins to break down. The king's champion customarily received his horse and harness as payment for his services though this payment is couched as the king's gift, lying within the "volonte" of the king (Legg, p. 141). Thus, Dymock's gift of loyalty was reciprocated by the king's gift of a horse: loyalty for horse, horse for loyalty. Yet records suggest that Dymock, having never fought for the king, and perhaps in disfavor besides, received no gift. Here suggested in miniature is a rending of the tissue of obligations that left Richard, in 1399, with few supporters in a time of need.

Also revealed through these alterations of sequence first from the coronation procession to the Abbey doors and then to a ceremonial cameo at the coronation banquet is a more general decline of the king's champion's role to derisory status. Although superficially conflictual in nature, the champion's appearance may be viewed more accurately as a euphemization, in the way it collects and stages potential conflict in a manageable form, transposing potential civil unrest into a temporal ceremony with a finite conclusion. The shunting of this ceremonial to a less consequential (and in fact redundant) moment incidentally reveals everything about the coronation that the coronation is designed to conceal. The coronation seeks, not only to elide a boundary crossing, but even more ambitiously to perform an act of "social alchemy" by which participants are encouraged to misrecognize interested gestures (magnate control, dynastic perpetuation) as disinterested or consensual in nature, and hence as Voluntary and legitimate rather than constrained (Bourdieu, p. 192). Derogation of the champion's role is a tell-tale indication of the coronation, not as a consensus-building event, but as a "done deal" a consequence of backroom brokerage within a magnate elite.

The scene in which Richard's elaborately harnessed champion is told to go away and come back later has a certain Monty Pythonesque quality . . . or at least I can imagine what the Pythons would have done with it. But such minor

slips and transpositions need not amount to much, unless somebody wants to make something of them; unless, that is, they are caught up in some larger signifying network. Walsingham's comments on Dymock's untimely appearance would seem to derive from a willingness to see Richard embarrassed, but perhaps no more than that. The real scandal, which Richard's enemies were not soon to forget, was next to ensue.

It involves, in certain respects, a charming moment. The celebrants now issuing in confused tumult from the Abbey, amidst a rout of mounted lords and preceded by a great number of minstrels ("praecedente magno numero diverse generis histrionum"), the young Richard was carried from the Abbey to the royal palace on the shoulders of a knight ("portatus est in humeris militum usque ad regale Palatium"). Although Walsingham leaves the matter there, it is pursued by the Westminster chronicler (who, via his association with the Abbey and its privileged relation to ceremonies of coronation, and his chapter's responsibility to keep the coronation regalia has a great deal more to say about the matter). Writing in 1390, the chronicler redescribes the circumstances, and informs us that the knight in question was the young Richard's tutor, the now-reviled and two years dead Simon Burley. Moreover, he tells us about a grievous blow to the ceremonial security of the coronation, a blow resulting from carelessness, but even more from failure to observe the proper order of things:

It is generally accepted that immediately after his coronation the king should go into the vestry, where he should take off the regalia and put on the other garments laid out ready for him by his chamberlains before returning by the shortest route to his palace, but at the coronation of the present king the contrary was done, with deplorable results; for when the coronation was over, a certain knight, Sir Simon Burley, took the king up in his arms, attired as he was,

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in his regalia, and went into the palace by the royal gate with crowds milling all round him and pressing upon him, so that on the way he lost one of the consecrated shoes ("sotularibus regalibus benedictis") through his carelessness ("incuria").<sup>9</sup>

Surely one could forgive the eight-year-old king's carelessness in this matter, but the monk of Westminster's actual grievance seems to be against, not the young Richard or his tutor Burley, but the violation of order, of good ritual sequence.<sup>10</sup> Already by Richard's time the regalia were known to have been highly venerable, with written record connecting many of the items to the reign of Henry III (Legg, pp. 54-56) and with common report connecting them with the coronation of Edward the Confessor (Legg, pp. 191-192). Yet antiquity alone is not at issue here; the reason for keeping Richard's ritual failure alive was its relevance to a pro-Lancastrian project of delegitimization, proceeding (among numerous other stratagems) by means of a deconstruction of its ritual basis. Among the avalanche of pro-Lancastrian portent and rumor and innuendo launched between Richard's deposition and death was this analysis by Adam of Usk:

At the coronation of this lord three ensigns of royalty foreshadowed for him three misfortunes. First, in the procession he lost one of the coronation shoes; whence the commons who rose up against him hated him ever after all his life long; secondly, one of the golden spurs fell off; whence the soldiery opposed him in rebellion; thirdly, at the banquet a sudden gust of wind carried away the crown from his head; whence he was set aside from his kingdom and supplanted by king Henry. (pp. 200-2) Adam here deconstructs or unbinds the ordered significances that make the ritual of coronation "work" as a metaphor of ordered transference. No slipper, no metaphor; no metaphor, no transference. And thus, without the stately and ordered progress through the signs by which the royal dignitas is invoked and secured, no smooth euphemization of the passage from one reign to the next. Disregard of sequence opens a rift or rent in the symbolic fabric, and this rift is the place where an argument for a new king can take hold and flourish.

### 3. Henry IV as Social Alchemist

"Officializing strategies," according to Bourdieu, transmute private and particular interests into disinterested, collective, publicly avowable interests. Thus, the "capital of authority" works by solemnizing and thus universalizing private incident, and also (in reverse) by disowning a person "who, failing to identify his particular interest with the general interest,' is reduced to the status of a mere individual" (p. 40). We have seen this process of demotion applied to Richard's coronation, where Lancastrian interests made much of Richard's small failures to observe temporal, and hence ritual, coherence. Not only de-officializing but de-sacralizing the coronation, they performed something akin to

the ceremony of clerical degradation, in which the effects of time are reversed and run backward, with the people finally "holding him not for king, but for a private person, sir Richard of Bourdeaux, a simple knight" (Adam of Usk, pp. 32, 185). But

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officializing (and, in the case of coronation, sacralizing) strategies more often run forward than backward, and the Lancastrians may most often be seen as masters of ritual transmutation, invoking those processes of "social alchemy" which encourage the misrecognition of power relations as relations of broad consent, of compelled relations as elective ones.

Perhaps this is why Henry IV enjoys such an affirmative and Kennedyesque reputation today: his genius was to use power ruthlessly, but to encourage its misrecognition as a participatory exercise. The "participation" of which I speak is by no means to be understood (... la Bishop Stubbs) as precocious parliamentarianism. The participation encouraged by Henry IV's ceremonies of acclamation and assertions of free election was less parliamentary than ritualistic and spectacular.<sup>11</sup>

Henry, for example, appears to have wrought significant changes, as measured against previous practice, in the crucial element of the coronation ceremony, that of unction or anointment with holy oil.<sup>12</sup> According to normal practice, as described in the fourteenth-century *Liber Regalis*, the loosening of the king's garments and his anointment is to occur while a pallium or canopy is spread over him to conceal him from view ("pallio supra dictum principem extenso" Legg, p. 92). Yet in the detailed, sponsored description of MS. Julius B. ii, the pallium is unmentioned. We are told that, "Kyng Herry lay vpon a cloth off golde before the hyh awter in Westm'. Chirche. And there in ffoure parties off his body his clothes weren opyn, and there he was anoynted" (p. 49).<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, according to the account of Julius B. ii, this anointment was followed by another apparent innovation, in which the anointed monarch, rather than transporting himself from place to place, is borne to the place where crowning is to occur: "And affter this anoyntyng his body was leffte vp into another place" (p. 49). These two alterations might be found superficially discordant, with the former a gesture of accessibility or popular access and the latter a deliberate elevation of the king's supra-mundane status. Yet the two alterations possess a common denominator, which is the king's enactment of a willingness to pacify and subordinate his own volition, first as an object of his subjects' gaze, and then as the vessel of God's will. In each case, he is the object of regard first by his subjects and then by God (whose gaze the principal prayer invites: "Prospice omnipotens deus serenis obtutibus hunc gloriosum regem" p. 92). Invited is a gaze which consents in his elevation, which enstates and beholds Henry as "glorious king." Having recently seized the throne by magnate alliance and force of arms, Henry was in a position to demand compliance; yet, condescending to his subjects' (and God's!) gaze, Henry solicits consent, and transmutes an occasion of forceful seizure into a seemingly Voluntary and elective one.

Since we are looking, not only at an "officializing" moment but also at a "sacramental" one, a ratifying miracle would do no harm. Henry's coronation was indeed not to happen without a divine miracle ("sine divino miraculo" Walsingham, 2:239), and we might pause to view this miracle within the lens of practice theory. The interesting thing about practice is that it manifests rules, but the rules need not be rigorously followed. In fact, practice is annihilated pre-

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cisely in those analyses which insist that are rules always are followed, since the meaning-making edge of practice consists in difference and departure. In the case of unction, the "rule" is that there must be an oil; but the source of the oil, and the stories told about it, remain open to improvisation. Why should it not, for an exceptional king, be an exceptional oil?

Accounts of such an exceptional oil, an oil presented to St Thomas ... Becket by the Blessed Virgin, had been long in circulation before the accession of Henry IV. Edward II, for example, sponsored an account of such an oil, informing Pope John XXII that he had considered coronation with it, but had decided to content himself with the customary oil ("unctione consueta contentus" Legg, p. 71) but that now, as a result of reversals in his reign, he was considering a second ceremony of anointment. Among the properties of this oil were: the fifth king from the one then reigning (a slot occupied by Richard II) would, by virtue of this oil, recover the Holy Land from the heathen. Taken up by the Lancastrians, this older legend was first stripped down for use by omission of the "fifth king" in favor of a "rex



futurus" (Legg, p. 169) who, anointed with this oil, will recover "sine vi," not the Holy Land, but the lost lands of Normandy and Aquitaine (p. 169).<sup>14</sup> Now, stripped of its previous, inopportune association with Richard II and crusades, this legend lay open to new inscription. We reencounter it in Walsingham as a fully Lancastrian miraculum. Walsingham gives it a specific Lancastrian genealogy: it is now discovered by Henry, first duke of Lancaster, passed by him to the Black Prince (who, had he lived, would have been worthy recipient and fifth king), then placed in the Tower only to be rediscovered accidentally ("inopinate" p. 239) by Richard II in 1399 as he was randomly rooting around in relics of his ancestors. The insertion of Richard in the chain might seem strange, until we see how he is used: as an unwitting, and hence innocent, vehicle of Henry's felicity. Learning of the oil's properties he seeks a renewal of his unction, but is refused. He then (pathetically) carries the ampule around with him, along with other items of regalia, until handing it over to the Archbishop of Canterbury, observing (in words assigned him by the Lancastrians) that it was not the divine will that he should be so anointed but that this noble sacrament was intended for another.<sup>15</sup>

In the Arundel manuscript of Walsingham, a later (presumably Yorkist) commentator marginally debunked this account, inserting "unguentum fictitum" adjacent to the oil's discovery. But such fictions have their uses, one of which is to open new forms and modes of belief for the larger circle of the ceremony's participants. Speaking of the means by which difference may be consecrated as common consent, Bourdieu observes that, "For ritual to function and operate it must first of all present itself and be perceived as legitimate, with stereotyped symbols serving precisely to show that the agent does not act in his own name . . . but in his capacity as delegate."<sup>16</sup> Here Henry IV, as when he permitted himself to be lifted and carried about the altar, offers himself as delegated sovereign, and agent of God's plans for England in a form conducive to ratification by all those who believe that a miraculum has indeed occurred.

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#### 4. Joanne of Navarre as Liquid Asset

Shortly after her arrival in England and marriage to the widowed Henry IV at Winchester in 1403, Joanne's leading role was solemnized in a formal ceremony of coronation, with invitations broadly distributed among the lords, ladies, and knights of the realm. This was, to judge from such indications as its ambitious guestlist,<sup>17</sup> a sumptuous affair, conducted (in the view of one chronicler) with due honor and festivity ("satis honorifica et festiva").<sup>18</sup> An illustration of the event (British Library, MS Cotton Julius E. iv, fol. 202) shows Joanne enstated with the contradictory symbols of majesty and subjection typical of late medieval queenly coronation: on the one hand enthroned in majesty; on the other, her hair loosely tressed, symbolically suggesting her supplementary role as the king's virginal bride.<sup>19</sup> The point of difference from tradition which measures the esteem in which she was held is that, along with the traditional virga or rod in her hand, she extraordinarily holds an orb surmounted with a cross in her left. Before Philippa in 1330, English queens seem to have held only the virga. The fourteenth-century recension of the *Liber regalis* grants queens a scepter, but a lesser one, unequal to that of the king: a small one, gilt, surmounted by a dove ("paruum septrum deauratum in cuius summitate est columba deaurata" Legg, p. 100). The orb and cross are unusual, and regal indeed. Additionally, she is shown alone, rather than together with, but at a lesser level than, the king. No formality is spared because of her solitary status, with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Abbot of Westminster simultaneously placing the crown upon her head. Behind are various emblems of English and continental royalty: at her right the Plantagenet lions and fleurs-de-lys, and at her left possibly a more fanciful evocation of the arms of Brittany.

Measureable, against previous coronation practice, is a margin of exceptionality: the exceptions, in this case, underscoring the honor and sumptuousness of this coronation event. Intent here is hard to assign, since different sorts of symbolic capital would appear to accrue to it different participants. The intent may be Joanne's. Daughter of the king of Navarre, fiancée of the Dauphin of France, subtle manipulatrix of the quarrelsome John Duke of Brittany, regent of Brittany, architect of an attempted deal to secure her own fortune by selling the city of Nantes,<sup>20</sup> reputed mistress of deception and disguise,<sup>21</sup> survivor of witchcraft charges,<sup>22</sup> politically influential in the reigns of three Lancastrian kings she was no pushover. Perhaps the sumptuous coronation was her idea, and demand. But despite the fact that she dominated and outmaneuvered her king in every material respect Henry IV also had something to gain from her elevation. Bourdieu would locate regal marriages among those extraordinary cases occurring outside normal kinship groupings, in which the woman is treated as a "political instrument, a sort of pledge or liquid asset, capable of earning symbolic profits" (p. 54). And, if Joanne was a liquid asset, convertible to capital, the capital in question was going to have to be symbolic, because that is all the capital Henry was ever going to get.

Joanne was a wealthy heiress, and contemporary commentators supposed that Henry had reaped a financial windfall. In fact, Henry received no dowry,

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gained no access to her substantial dower from Duke John of Brittany, and paid her a massive dower of 10,000 marks annually a sum amounting to some ten percent of the royal government's annual income.<sup>23</sup> The immensity of the resources available to Joanne, and the autonomy with which she enjoyed them, are emblemized by Henry's 10 December 1404 grant to Joanne of the new tower at the entrance of the great gate of the great hall within the place of Westminster, for management of her councils and business, the auditing of her accounts, and other aspects of her own fiscal self-determination.<sup>24</sup> Seeing all this money so close but unavailable must have greatly pained the ever-impecunious Henry. Nonetheless, from the viewpoint of the Lancastrians, as a usurping and ever-insecure dynasty, any sort of marital tie to the ruling houses of Europe evidently made sense as a symbolic contribution to their legitimization, however exorbitant the cost. Whose agency is finally exhibited, Joanne's or Henry's, practice theory does not begin to tell. What it does is register a pressure, an interest, a socially-defined desire that Joanne receive more than ordinarily deferential treatment. Practice theory doesn't have a lot to tell us about individual agency, or personal volition. But it has much to tell us about social process, about a collective preparedness to misrecognize Joanne as things she could never be: to misrecognize a thrice-betrothed, twice-married mother of eight as a virginal bride with untressed hair; a daughter of the ill-reputed Charles "the Bad" King of Navarre as an important royal alliance; a representative of sectional, and more often personal, interests as a queen, an object of general regard.

## 5. The Antidisciplinary Remainder

Earlier I suggested that certain antidisciplinary theories highlight things which traditional disciplinary configurations leave unsymbolized, undiscussed, unseen. What, then, has practice theory rendered visible, which might otherwise have remained invisible to disciplinarily-sanctioned procedures?

A preliminary answer might involve practice theory's capacity to identify, and appreciate the importance of, the exceptional, the aberrant, the symptomatic. Richard's lost slipper, Henry's miraculous oil, Joanne's orb: each is in some way legible as a deviation from an expectation or a norm. Yet practice theory is not alone in its capacity to respond to such exceptions. The rear-guard attack on contemporary theory has deplored the extent to which almost all currently admired theories return to the exceptional case. This is true of performance-theory (with its dexterous movement across, or defiance of, traditional categories). And of queer theory (with its reinstatement of the repressed or jettisoned remainder, its interest in whatever was omitted or thrust from visibility in the process of constructing stable binaries). And of post-Freudianism (with its interest in the symptom, and what the symptom has to tell us about the whole).

Practice theory's more specific contribution is to grasp the exceptional at its moment of origin or production. The exceptional is produced (along with its near-relation the unexceptional) by a process of structuration, in which abstract and atemporal structure reproduces itself as concrete and timebound action. Moving between abstract structure and its instantiation via the process of

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structuration, practice theory sees Richard's lost slipper not just as childish inattention or as a ten-year old's forgivable resistance to an overly awesome interpellation, but as a telling and potentially exploitable failure in a larger temporal process, by which structure is either affirmed or (in this case unfortunately) altered. John Dymock's delay is not just confusion or insubordination, but a breakdown in a crucial ceremony of legitimization. Henry's oil and his queen's orb renew coronation structure, but novelly so, with adjustments which assert the exceptionality of their incumbency.

To be sure, practice theory is not alone in attending to the shift from atemporal structure to temporal realization. A similar "reading" of culture occurs in performance-theory, as in the performative emphasis of Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (although Butler places somewhat more emphasis on the creativity of improvisation),<sup>25</sup> and is also at least implicit in much narrative theory. The moment of structure's realization via "structuration" can be approached and described in several interrelated languages. But this moment is still often elided within existing disciplinary configurations. Social science privileges structure over its instantiations. Narrative history, and the study of literary narrative, favor the nuances of temporal instantiation over the structure's essential contribution to their intelligibility.

Practice theory's obligation runs both ways at once: to structure, at the very moment when it is newly produced as possible difference. Respecting pattern and respecting sequence, practice theory brings us excitingly close to that critical moment, the point of structural difference or the gap or lapse in sequence, signaling a change, a shift of intent, the end of something and the beginning of something else.



[Page numbers of the printed text appear at the right in bold.]

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Notes

1. I am indebted to John Mowatt's observation that symbolic objects are "constructs of the interaction between a signifying practice and a methodological field," and that we bear a particular obligation to the question of "how what eludes us in our interpretation has to do with the limits imposed upon our construction by the field in which it is executed." See Mowatt, *Text: The Genealogy of an Antidisciplinary Object* (Durham, NC, 1992), pp. 45-46.
2. Intelligently surveying the origins of practice-theory, and critiquing some of its assumptions, is Sherry B. Ortner, "Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26 (1984), 126-66.
3. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, 1977), p. 54. Unless otherwise indicated, Bourdieu references are to this work.
4. A corollary is that not all knowledges are discursive; that people know more than they can say they know. See Giddens on the distinction between discursive and practical consciousness, in *Central Problems in Social Theory* (London, 1979), p. 25 and passim.
5. See "Theory in Anthropology," in *Culture/Power/History: A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory*, ed. Nicholas B. Dirks et al. (Princeton,

1994), pp. 400-1. Ortner and Sahlins here anticipate Judith Butler's emphasis on the possibility (even the inevitability) of the "swerve," the sense in which a sub-

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version of identity becomes possible "within the practices of repetitive signifying." See Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, 1990), p. 145.

6. Unless otherwise specified, page references to medieval coronation documents are to English Coronation Records, ed. Leopold G. W. Legg (Westminster, 1901).

7. Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana*, ed. Henry Thomas Riley, Rolls Series 28.1, 2 vols. (London, 1863), 2:332-39.

8. Adam of Usk, *Chronicon*, ed. E. M. Thompson (London, 1904), p. 34. 9. *Westminster Chronicle*, ed. L. C. Hector and Barbara Harvey (Oxford, 1966), pp. 414-17, with minor alterations. These same points are made in the Liber Regalis, a coronation ordo of Westminster provenance, of which the fourth recension may have been followed in the coronation of Richard II. There, the king is to be divested of his principal regalia immediately after the service, and, taken to a closed place near the altar, he is divested of his tunic and shoes and sandals ("caligas regales et sandaria" p. 106), the latter to be delivered to the Abbot of Westminster. Then, clad in other vestments, he is to exit the Abbey through the choir (*English Coronation Records*, ed. Legg, p. 127).

10. Certainly, Richard was made to feel his omission, since in March 1390 (his first regnal year of majority) he sent to the monks of Westminster a new pair of sandals or sotularia blessed by Pope Urban VI. (This act, in turn, triggered the chronicler's tirade.)

11. See Strohm, "Saving the Appearances," *Hochon's Arrow* (Princeton, 1992), pp. 75-94.

12. "Nothing that goes before, and nothing which follows, can approach the anointing in significance. Without it the King cannot receive the royal ornaments, without it, in a word, he is not King . . . the King is vested and adorned with the regalia because he is anointed; . . . he is not anointed in order that he may receive the regalia" (Legg, *English Coronation Records*, p. xxxiv).

13. As printed in *Chronicles of London*, ed. Charles Kingsford (Oxford, 1905). Possibly corroborative of the suggestion that Henry's anointment was open to view is the early fifteenth-century *Forma et Modus*, which omits mention of the pallium and says only that "surgat Rex de cathedra et vadat ad altare et deponet vestes suas . . . vt recipiat vncionem" (Legg, *English Coronation Records*, p. 175).

14. Legg translates the phrase "recuperabit sine vi" as "shall recover by force," on the apparent assumption that Henry IV wanted to represent himself as a conquering king. In fact, the Lancastrians proposed to effect this recuperation as an easy and beneficent side-effect of their ascent to the throne. Before and during Richard's negotiation of the peace treaty of 1396, the English feared the alienation of Aquitaine through its reversion to the duchy of Lancaster; with the crowning of Henry IV, Aquitaine would once again become Crown land.

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15. The manipulation of Richard as unsuccessful claimant is carried one step farther in the Eulogium Continuation, which first relates his discovery (in the "stripped," Lancastrian version), then passes on to other subjects, then returns to it in recounting Henry's coronation with the previously mentioned oil ("cum oleo aquilae innotatae" pp. 380, 384). The oil here functions as a prophetic object, carried around unwittingly by Richard II until its meaning is retrospectively conferred. Opening a temporal and narrative division between the oil's discovery and its use, this account preserves the innocence of its own corroborative scheme.

16. *Language and Symbolic Power* (Harvard, 1991), p. 115.

17. Frederick Devon, *Issues of the Exchequer* (London, 1837), p. 296.

18. *Annales Henrici Quarti*, ed. H. T. Riley, Rolls Series 28.3 (London, 1866), p. 350.

19. A good reproduction may be viewed in *Pageant of the Birth, Life and Death of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, K. G., 1389-1439*, ed. Viscount Dillon and W. H. St. John Hope (London, 1914). On the ramifications of these symbolic inflections, see John Carmi Parsons, "Ritual and Symbol in the Medieval English Queenship to 1500," *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. Louise O. Fradenburg (Edinburgh, 1992), pp. 61-66.

20. Gui Lobineau, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1707), 2:878.

21. Guillaume Gruel, *Histoire d'Artur III, Duc de Bretagne*, ed. Th.odore Godefroy (Paris, 1622), pp. 11-12.

22. See A. R. Myers, "The Captivity of a Royal Witch," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 24 (1940), 263-84.

23. As daughter of the notorious and well-heeled Charles le Mauvais, king of Navarre, Joanne did bring a dowry to a marriage, when her father promised the remarkable sum of 120,000 gold livres and 6,000 livres annually in rents for her 1386 marriage to the elderly, headstrong, and truculent John IV, Duke of Brittany. John, for his part, responded with an equally munificent dower, including the rents of the city of Nantes, and other substantial properties (Pierre-Hyacinthe Morice, *Histoire Eccl,siastique et Civile de Bretagne*, 20 vols. in 10 (Paris, 1750-56), 1:395). The duke dying in 1399, Joanne served as regent of Brittany until 1401, when her twelve-year-old son was enstated in office. Negotiations for marriage with Henry IV were begun in March, 1402, and consummated with considerable rapidity, considering that the marriage required a papal dispensation on consanguinity, a 3 April 1402 proxy ceremony in England, a further dispensation from the pope to live among schismatics, and arrangements for the bestowal and governance of her lands. On 20 December 1402 Joanne set out from Nantes, with the marriage finally occurring at Winchester on 8 February 1403 and a ceremony of coronation on 26 February at Westminster. Speculation about Henry IV's interest in marriage to Joanne cannot avoid the subject of this wealthy widow's dower from the duke of Brittany. The chronicler of Saint-Denys says that first awareness of the marriage negotiation sparked a rumor to the effect that she had shipped her treasure and

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jewels abroad (*Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denys*, ed. M. L. Bellaguet, 6 vols. (Paris, 1839-52), 3:40.) Writing at the end of the seventeenth century, Lobineau lists an interest in the dower prominently among possible considerations: the likelihood of her continuing influence in duchy affairs, the possibility of an English-Breton alliance against France, access to continental ports, and "le gros douuaire qu'elle avoit en Bretagne, auquel le feu Duc avoit adjoust, trois ou quatre ans avant que de mourir" (*Chronicon Briocense*, in Lobineau, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 1:cols. 500-1.) If this was indeed Henry's list, he must have been a disappointed man. Joanne left the young duke and her other sons under the hostile guardianship of the duke of Burgundy, the Bretons were in arms against the British within months after the wedding, and Joanne was thwarted in her attempt to

raise ready cash by selling the governorship of Nantes to Olivier de Clisson for 12,000 crowns. The dower and its disposition appear also to have eluded whatever hopes Henry might have entertained.

In fact, the ever financially hard-pressed Henry IV was to endure a squadron of monetary disappointments in his alliance with the wealthy countess, at least when the financial aspects of his marriage are compared with generally accepted medieval norms. First, no record exists of any dowry that came to Henry as a result of the marriage. A second area of more promise would seem to be the large dower from her previous marriage which Joanne brought with her to England, and to which medieval precedents would have granted Henry administrative control and enjoyment during his lifetime (Sir Frederick Pollock and Frederic William Maitland, *The History of English Law before the Time of Edward I*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. [Cambridge, 1968], 2:407-8, 427. On dower in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see Judith M. Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 110-14, and Diane Owen Hughes, "From Brideprice to Dowry," *Journal of Family History*, 3 [1978], 282.) Henry, however, seems to have achieved no control whatever over his wife's inherited revenues and funds. Rather, in another costly decision, he followed a different medieval precedent, acting promptly to assure Joanne of a second dower, from the English treasury and from lands under his control, together with certain guarantees from the income of the Lancaster estates: on 8 March 1403, a month after the marriage, a sum of 10,000 marks annually was granted to the queen, to be paid from the exchequer, pending satisfaction of the sum by rents from possessions later to be assigned (*Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1401-5*, p. 231). This massive sum, amounting to some ten per cent of the annual income of the royal government, was roughly half again as large as the  $\text{œ}4500$  granted to English queens in dower over the preceding two centuries.

24. *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1401-5*, p. 473.

25. (incomplete) London and New York, 1990.