Chapter 2

The Envious Earl of Surrey

“By the Masse, now I see that the olde saied sawe is true,” erupted Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, as the Blackfriars divorce proceedings of 1529 crumbled before him: “there was neuer Legate nor Cardinall, that did good in Englane.”¹ During his ascendancy, as we have seen, Cardinal Thomas Wolsey evoked widespread disdain in both court and country—perhaps most of all in men like Suffolk. For nearly two decades, the realm’s great peers could do little but watch as their share of English governance, a formerly inalienable birthright, was increasingly consumed by the churchman’s voracious political appetite.

That Suffolk himself was newly made did little to soothe this sting, and indeed, perhaps intensified it. It was only his grandfather who had managed “to emerge from the obscurity of minor merchant status,” and Brandon’s own elevation to the dukedom in 1514—ostensibly for service in the French campaign of the previous year, but owing primarily to his personal friendship with the king—suspiciously recalled the rise of Wolsey.² (The Duke of Buckingham, a man incensed by upstarts lay or clergy, was said to grumble that “the King gave fees and offices to boys, rather than to noblemen.”)³ In just three years, Suffolk had gone from master of the horse to duke of the realm—or, as Erasmus put it, the king had “made a nobleman from Dama.”⁴ This jab suggests the resemblance of Suffolk and the slave Dama, a horse-keeper in Persius’s Fifth Satire, whose emancipation does little to elevate his innate boorishness:

Oh you in whom truth is not even
Conceivable, who think that you can twirl a man round once
(Pronouncing the prescribed gibberish) and he’ll be
Free. Here, for instance, is Dama: two cents’ worth of hired man,
Woozy with flat booze and happy to perjure himself
For a handful of wheat. This one his master accords
The ceremonious whirl and, abracadabra, he
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Comes out of the spin a free man, with a first name: he’s Marcus Dama now!

From the stables to a ducal spread, or from a dung cart to Hampton Court? “Le second Roy,” as Brandon was deemed in 1513 (even before his ennobling), or the infamous alter rex? To some, Suffolk and Wolsey were of a similar feather. This was certainly true, as we saw in the last chapter, for one Anthony Irby, who in 1516 condemned the pair for their mutual corruption of the young King Henry: “It is a wonder to see the kynge, how he is ordered now a days: For the Cardynall & the duke of Suffolk, which the kynge haith brought vpp of noughte, do rewle hym in all thynges as they lyst; whedr it be by Negramancy, wytchecrafte, or pol-lycy no mann knoweth.”

In affective terms, the disgust that Wolsey evokes in Suffolk—or that Suffolk evokes in Buckingham and Erasmus, or that both Wolsey and Suffolk evoke in Irby—returns us to Mary Douglas’s notion of “matter out of place”: in the universe of the Henrician court, these social particles are askew, a misalignment threatening to wreak havoc on the system at large. But it is not simply the threat of contamination that prompts this response, but also that of displacement: in its disruption, the offending matter has usurped a place from something else, an object exiled from its native domain. In the zero-sum court of Henrician England, an ambitious social move risked knocking others out of bounds—a maddening, inevitable fact for those who could not help but watch the game unfold around them. For every Wolsey, there was a Suffolk, and for every Suffolk, a Buckingham; entitlement was an easy thing to have, but harder to hold.

But if a disgust response, as we saw in chapter 1, is one affective manifestation of social conflict in the courtly sphere—an external performance, directed at the offending, usurping object—it often occurs in conjunction with another emotional reply, far less apt to be publicized, but still vitally shaping to the psychic world in which it manifests: the envy that is also evoked by the successful courtly rival, the venom that churns in the guts of the disgusted, displaced observer. A natural (though by no means inevitable) affective companion to disgust, envy is contamination by the social maneuvers of another: the rival’s engagement with the external world occasions a reciprocal disruption in the internal world of the envier, a reminder of the extent to which their mutual affective fates are entwined. It is no wonder, then, that envy and the related jealousy have been called the “rivalrous emotions,” a designation that indicates their inherent connection to the world of social combat. The early modern
court was nothing if not rivalrous—and understanding the workings of envy, it follows, is central to the task of mapping its affective terrain more generally.

It would be possible to organize such a study around a figure like Wolsey, by considering how an object of obvious disgust and resentment inspired envy in the social superiors who were threatened by his advancement. But while certainly valuable, this approach risks obscuring the full range of the rivalrous emotions. Feelings like envy are not only evoked by the triumphs of our sworn social enemies; the flames of rivalry can be fanned by the good fortune of strangers, or—it is sometimes difficult to admit—by the success of friends and allies, whose victories, even as we celebrate them, still inflict their own wounds upon us. To demonstrate such situational complexity, this chapter considers envy as an affective touchstone in the life and work of perhaps the realm’s most infamously haughty young man: Henry Howard, the poet Earl of Surrey. The son of England’s senior peer, Surrey was, to be sure, incensed by the upstarts and newly made men with whom he waged social war—but his experience in the Henrician court, I argue, was equally shaped by a rivalrous, envious orientation towards even those closest to him.

To consider envy thusly finds it lurking in some potentially unexpected places—such as, for example, the structure of an early modern elegy. The envy of others is treated explicitly in Surrey’s famed elegies to his friend and poetic mentor Sir Thomas Wyatt; in “W. resteth here, that quick could never rest,” “Dyvers thy death doo dyverslye bemone,” and “In the rude age when science was not so rife,” Surrey affirms his own relationship to Wyatt by denouncing the envious hearts of false mourners. But the elegiac poet, I argue, was not immune to envy himself. The first half of this chapter thus considers the rivalrous emotions in “So crewell prison” (c. 1537), Surrey’s haunting memorial to his boyhood friend Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond—better known to history as the illegitimate son of King Henry VIII, deceased suddenly in his late teens. After even a cursory reading of “So crewell prison,” it is difficult to remain unmoved by the tenderness of Surrey’s commemoration: cast as a reflection on the experience of shared adolescence, the elegy offers an astonishingly intimate glance into the formative years of two of Henrician England’s most powerful young men. But despite this intimacy, idealization, and even latent eroticism—aspects that have occupied the elegy’s previous commentators—I suggest that the poem’s primary emotional subtext registers a different kind of impulse. Composed during a period of personal turmoil for Surrey—after an act of violence at court, he had been imprisoned in the same grounds where as a youth he lived with Richmond—the poem
reveals, like much of Surrey’s work, the poet’s profound ambivalence toward the Henrician political world that inscribed his identity, and his profound ambivalence toward the friend and symbolic kinsman whose unexpected death left him to negotiate its corridors alone.

Moving forward in Surrey’s life, the chapter’s second half tracks the rivalrous dynamics that shaped the earl’s spectacular and sudden demise: one that would cost him his head at barely the age of thirty, charged with a treasonous plot to seize the English crown. The documentary record surrounding Surrey’s downfall is flush with the affective register of envy, as the earl becomes symbolically locked in a tortured, ambivalent relationship with the nine-year-old Prince Edward—half-brother to his departed friend Richmond, and a boy whose future reign Surrey had particular interest in shaping. The mechanics of envy and jealousy, as they are understood both by modern researchers and their early modern counterparts, underpin not only Surrey’s fall, but the emotional atmosphere of the dying king’s court.

A model of these (inherently ambivalent) rivalrous emotions offers a framing context for the key events of Surrey’s life—and a framing context for the courtly crisis occasioned by the end of King Henry’s four-decade reign, in which England’s most powerful men grasped and clawed for their share of the country’s future.

**Surrey’s “Noble Fere”: The Life and Death of Henry Fitzroy**

As readers have long observed, “So crewell prison” offers a moving depiction of Surrey and Richmond’s personal friendship. At the remove of some 400 years, however, what is not as apparent is Richmond’s identity as a figure of national consequence in Henrician England. Despite his illegitimacy, Henry Fitzroy was the only surviving royal son in the first half of King Henry’s reign, and the details of his brief life are accordingly chronicled in the dispatches of ambassadors, councilors, and courtiers. Fitzroy’s symbolic importance to English politics provides the civic context for Surrey’s personal grief, and the action of the elegy variously engages both the private and the public consequences of his friend’s untimely death. But Richmond remains relatively obscure to many modern readers of “So crewell prison,” whose engagement with the young duke seldom exceeds the bounds of his traditional resting place, the brief explanatory footnote. To appreciate fully the force of Surrey’s elegy, it is necessary first to excavate the historical Richmond, in order to gauge his significance both to Surrey and to the English body politic.
As the sexual appetite of Henry VIII is a cornerstone of modern lore about the king, it is a bit surprising to find that Henry Fitzroy was the only illegitimate child to be recognized during his long stay on the English throne. Despite his son’s bastardy, King Henry wasted little time in grooming him for a future place in English politics: after his birth in 1519, Fitzroy’s arrangements were immediately undertaken by his godfather Wolsey, and the boy was only six when his elevation to the dukedoms of Richmond and Somerset in 1525 made him England’s most decorated peer. As the nominal head of the crown’s revived attempt to establish conciliar management in the north, Richmond spent his early years among his own household at Sheriff Hutton, where he was immersed in both humanist learning and the aristocratic arts—an educational regime apt for a boy many already thought could one day rule the realm. In 1529 he served a short term as nominal lord lieutenant of Ireland, and in the same year, the ten-year-old boy was summoned to the first sessions of what would come to be known as the Reformation Parliament.

It was also in 1529 that Richmond entered the orbit of the Howard family: after Wolsey’s demise his care was transferred to Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, uncle of the increasingly influential Anne Boleyn and father to the then thirteen-year-old Earl of Surrey. Almost immediately, Norfolk took steps to forge a bond between the promising royal child and his own precocious son—who was, according to the imperial ambassador Eustace Chapuys, already writing letters in “very good Latin.” At a private meeting in December 1529, Norfolk informed Chapuys of this “project which he had”:

The King has entrusted to me the education of his bastard son, the duke of Richmond, of whom my own son may become in time preceptor and tutor, that he may attain both knowledge and virtue, so that a friendship thus cemented promises fair to be very strong and firm.

Though the future Queen Anne, a Howard relation, was already sharing the king’s bedchamber, this was not enough for Norfolk, ever the patriarch; it was by means of Surrey and Richmond’s projected friendship that he hoped to secure a place for the Howards in England’s long-term, post-Henrician future.

In April 1530 Richmond left Sheriff Hutton for his new residence at Windsor, where he and Surrey spent several years leading the life recalled in “So crewell prison.” Their growing friendship took the boys beyond Windsor’s walls, and in the autumn of 1532 Richmond and Surrey joined
the royal train to Calais on its diplomatic mission to secure French support for King Henry’s ongoing divorce proceedings. After Henry returned to England in November, Richmond and Surrey remained with the French court, as pledge of the pending Franco-English treaty; entertained by the French princes, the boys wintered in Paris, enjoyed spring at the magnificent Palace of Fontainebleau, and spent the summer touring the southern provinces on progress with King Francis. Recalled to England in August 1533, they became further entwined when Richmond was wed to Surrey’s sister Mary that November (though the couple’s youth prevented the union from being consummated). Fitzroy’s death in July 1536 was sudden: Chapuys reports on the 8th of that month that Richmond had been judged “consumptive, and incurable,” and on the 18th Lord Lisle in Calais was similarly informed that “my lorde of Rychemonde [is] very syck.” King Henry, who had both a personal and political stake in his son’s health, was especially distraught, and Chapuys wrote to his superiors that Henry had “no hope that the duke of Richmond can live long, whom he certainly intended to make his successor, and but for his illness, would have got him declared so by parliament.”

On July 22, Wriothesley records, the seventeen-year-old Richmond “departed out of this transitorie lief at the Kinges place in Saint James.” His son’s death could not have come at a more politically volatile time for Henry: just months earlier, the king had executed his second wife and married his third, and it was only days before Fitzroy’s death that Parliament had finalized its attempt to give shape to the now-muddled succession. Though details remain unclear, it seems that Henry did not want the distraction and stress of a public funeral for Richmond: on August 3, Chapuys reported that the body had “been secretly carried in a wagon, covered with straw, without any company except two persons clothed in green, who followed at a distance, into Norfolk, where the Duke his father-in-law will have him buried.” Unfortunately for Norfolk, however, the job was apparently bungled, and the duke soon found himself a victim of Henry’s famous temper. With a hand “full full full of color and agonye,” Norfolk attempted to defend his performance to Thomas Cromwell, the king’s principal secretary:

This nyght at viij a cloke came dyuers lettres to me from my frendes and seruantes abowtes london, all agreing in one tale, not a litle to my sorow, that the kynges highnes shuld be in gret displesure with me because my lord of richmond was not carried honorably and so buryed: my lord I doute not ye know the kynges plesure was that his body shuld be conveyed secretly in a close cart vnto thedford
and at my sewte thider and there so buryed; and accordyng to the same I sent order with both the cottons and commanded them that his body shall haue be wrapped in lede and a close cart provyded for hym, whose body was neyther put in lede nor no close cart provyded for him nor yet conveyed veray secretly.  

Fortunately for Norfolk, the matter was soon forgotten by the king—but not, we must imagine, by Surrey, whose virtuoso poetic commemoration in “So crewell prison” is a natural counterpoint to Richmond’s unexpectedly humble burial. At the very least, we do know that the earl remained devastated by his friend’s death; months later, Norfolk reported that Surrey had been sick with grief for “a great parte of the last yere,” and he was still “very weke, his nature ronnyng from hym habundauntlie . . . for thought of my lord of Richemond.”

But unfortunately for the earl, there would be little time to grieve in the immediate wake of Richmond’s death. October 1536 marked the beginning of the popular religious uprisings known as the Pilgrimage of Grace, and both Norfolk and Surrey played strategic roles in their eventual suppression. In early 1537 order was finally reestablished after a confused campaign, and in the conflict’s aftermath Surrey remained away from court on account of illness. When he rejoined the court in July, the specter of the Pilgrimage brought with it disastrous consequences: in an infamous episode, Surrey seems to have struck another courtier (traditionally said to be Edward Seymour, brother of the pregnant queen) to defy the treasonous charge that the Howards had secretly sympathized with the Catholic rebels. Though respect for Surrey’s rank spared the loss of his hand (the routine penalty for acts of violence within the bounds of court), the twenty-year-old earl was nonetheless reprimanded and confined to Windsor in July 1537—a palace still haunted by the memory of Richmond, who had been dead for only a year. “So crewell prison,” written during his stay, is the product of both this period of custody and Surrey’s grief—grief that would remain with the earl until the end of his short life.

Surrey, to be sure, was greatly moved by the loss of his closest companion; though destined to outlive his friend by only a decade, he never in his adult life seems to have matched the amicitia perfecta he enjoyed with Richmond. Yet to understand the full complexity of this bond, it is necessary to say another word about Surrey’s emotional profile. Surrey enacted—and indeed, perhaps helped inaugurate—a social archetype that would become increasingly prevalent throughout the sixteenth century.
I mean the angry young man of privilege, who found his way of comprehending the world—one defined by warfare, neo-chivalric cults of honor, and a masculine investment in the aristocratic arts—perilously threatened by a changing social order, in which kings and queens were happy to raise an army of bureaucrats and middlemen to administer their increasingly centralized realms. Though noblemen such as Surrey continued to serve a crucial function in England’s political hierarchy, they found less room to actualize their own ambitions, and some, at least, developed a temperament marked by frustration, impulsivity, and recklessness—especially toward the hated social upstarts (such as Seymour), whom they saw as usurping the nobility’s God-given role as monarchical advisers. Surrey exemplified this brand of sixteenth-century man; as we will see in later chapters, Sir Philip Sidney was something of this type, as certainly was the infamous Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex at the end of Elizabeth’s reign. And though these flames burned bright, they also burned quickly: Sidney died in war at thirty-one years of age, while Surrey and Essex died by the axe at thirty and thirty-five respectively. In his short life, Surrey was imprisoned at least three times for unsanctioned violence—though, because of his social standing (as we saw above), his punishments were perfunctory. As Surrey was supremely aware, the distant blood of royalty was in his veins—and in the tense, final months of King Henry’s reign, it was alleged that he had plotted to seize the crown himself from the young Prince Edward. Though these charges did not stick, Surrey was finally deemed guilty of quartering in his badge the ancient arms of Edward the Confessor—an implicit claim of royalty, so it was said, and thus an implicit threat to the king’s prerogative. This heraldic crime was enough for Surrey to lose his head in January 1547, the last person executed in Henry’s long, bloody reign.

Surrey’s sensitivity to matters of precedence, honor, and social standing ultimately cost him his life. When reading “So crewell prison,” it is thus important to consider what else, besides grief, he may have felt toward Richmond, both before and after his death. It is possible to speculate, especially when we reframe the question: what else did Surrey, at the ages of both thirteen and twenty, feel toward the best friend who was younger, but of a higher rank; who was illegitimate, but was a royal son; and who was, by many accounts, being groomed to rule the realm? How did a young man of Surrey’s volatile temperament respond to this unique playmate, perhaps the only adolescent in the realm whose standing surpassed his own?

Though any answers must be tentative, we can grid what we know of Surrey into the larger social matrix that underpinned Henrician
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aristocratic culture. This task must take its bearing in the familial interplay of Howard and Tudor—a relationship of enormous psychological complexity, perhaps most of all to Surrey. To put it another way, what did it mean to Surrey that he was a Howard, what did it mean that he was not a Tudor, and how did the answers to such questions inflect his friendship with Richmond? Buried in the Howard family’s ancestral tomb, Richmond was something of an honorary Howard; for his own part, we will see below, Surrey often indulged in fantasies that seem to efface the distinction between Howard and Tudor. But such fantasies were just that. Surrey was not a Tudor, and his increasingly flagrant insistence on the Howard family’s ancestral royalty suggests the envy and aggression inherent in such projective identifications. There are many reasons to suspect that Surrey’s response to Richmond’s death was profoundly ambivalent, underpinned by the long-fought competition of two powerful feelings: the idyllic fantasy of sameness, in which he and Richmond lived and ruled the realm together as brothers, and the agonizing reality of difference, that cold-blooded cultural logic assuring finally that Surrey and Richmond were not the same, and that Howard was not Tudor.

When reading the poem, this is the question I’d like us to keep in mind: is it reasonable to believe that a man like Surrey, whose concern with matters of honor and precedence was arguably pathological, would have felt no envy, no resentment, and no anger at the superior fortune of his friend? I think the answer is convincingly no, and that the manifest grief of “So crewell prison” is undercut throughout by a darker affective register. More specifically, I detect in the poem a node comprised of the rivalrous emotions I introduced above: envy, jealousy, and latent aggression. In “So crewell prison,” it is possible to explore the poem’s contestatory energy across these distinct, yet affiliated emotions; their collective operation, I suggest, fuels the ambivalence that ultimately shapes the expression of Surrey’s grief.

The Experience of Envy

For the reasons discussed above, envy seems to have been a core component of Surrey’s emotional profile. But what, precisely, characterizes the phenomenon of envy? Despite its apparent universality—recent scholars note that nearly “all cultures have a word meaning something close to envy, even though words for other common social phenomena may be absent”—defining the sentiment is deceptively difficult. In contemporary English, this confusion arises largely from a lexical imprecision: in
common usage, the word “envy” is often exchanged freely with overlapping terms like “jealousy” or “resentment.” Yet both philosophical and empirical research insists upon the importance of distinguishing envy from the related rivalrous emotions, a taxonomy that will be central to my subsequent discussion of “So crewell prison.”

In literary studies of the early modern period, envy most obviously features in René Girard’s notion of “mimetic desire,” the process through which one party’s desire inflames that of another.²⁸ This concept alone, however, does not account fully for the variety of contexts in which this rivalrous sentiment emerges—envious desire is not always mimetic—and it is thus important to supplement our understanding with the insights of alternate research traditions. Most basically, of course, scholars characterize envy as the discomfort we feel at another’s good fortune, the pain that accompanies the recognition of “another’s superior quality, achievement, or possession.”²⁹ To experience envy, however, is to experience any number of concurrent feelings, and the variegated nature of its pain suggests that envy is a compound emotion: as Maria Miceli and Cristiano Castelfranchi note, envy can be theorized across a variety of affective spectra, including longing-greed-covetousness, admiration-emulation, anger-resentment-sense of injustice, and depression-despair-inferiority.³⁰ Like many emotions, a degree of cognitive appraisal is crucial in the envious subject, but it is the specifically comparative nature of envy—the awareness of one’s own lack and another’s intolerable gain—that distinguishes it from non-differentiated hostility or antagonism. As this unfavorable comparison becomes embedded in feelings of social inferiority, the subject’s self-respect is accordingly threatened; this affective mechanism proves especially intense for a man like Surrey, for whom social standing is paramount.³¹ This is because envy (as well as jealousy) is most powerful when a rival threatens some domain that we have deemed central to our sense of self:

The critical variable that determines whether the successes of close others make us feel good about ourselves (reflection) or have the opposite effect (comparison) is the relevance of the other’s success or personal qualities to our self-definition. Reflection results when the other’s performance is in an unimportant domain. We are motivated to maintain high self-evaluation, so we bask in the reflected glory of our friends’ unimportant (to us) successes because they are not threatening to us. But when personal relevance (i.e., domain importance) is high, we are likely to experience envy or jealousy.³²
Richmond was a rival that could trigger Surrey like no other. As this passage suggests more generally, however, the envier’s precise attitude vis-à-vis the rival (and thus the coveted advantage) is contextually dependent, leading to an affective field that is often contested; this dynamic reflects the ambivalence that I detect in “So crewell prison.” Recent research suggests that there are at least two distinct forms of envy, unique in their associated thoughts and actions: the malicious (or true) envier longs to destroy the rival’s advantage, whereas the benign envier (free of venom, but not frustration) aspires to join the rival in the desired position. Envy is an amorphous emotion, capable of evoking a multitude of concurrent responses: the envier is tortured both by an attraction to the unfulfilled, desired object and by the venom occasioned by its distance.

In early Tudor England, envy was an equally vexed concept. The English word “envy” ultimately derives from the Latin invidia/invidere, to look upon (in + videere) with malice, scorn, or rivalry; the basic sense of malicious envy was thus actively used in the period, as Renaissance thinkers inherited a classical and medieval Christian framework that denounced invidia among the deadliest of sins. In Thomas Wilson’s A Christian Dictionarie, “enuie” is neatly defined as that “affection which makes men grieue & fret at the good and prosperity of others,” and the “enuious” soul is defined as one “who repineth and grutcheth at the welfare and happinesse of others.” In the Renaissance emblem tradition, the conventional iconography of invidia (popularized by Ovid) portrays Envy as a gaunt, haggard woman, who is imagined “fast gnawing on the flesh / Of Snakes and Todes, the filthie foode that keepes hir vices fresh.” Whitney’s collection offers a typical example in its commentary:

This, Enuie is: leane, pale, and full of yeares,  
Who with the blisse of other pines awaie.  
And what declares, her eating vipers broode?  
That poysoned thoughtes, bee euermore her foode.

In The Faerie Queene, Spenser adapts this trope in his famous portrayal of Envie:

inwardly he chawed his owne maw  
At neibors welth, that made him euer sad;  
For death it was, when any good he saw,  
And wept, that cause of weeping none he had,  
But when he heard of harme, he wexed wondrous glad.
Closer to Surrey’s time, Alexander Barclay’s *Ship of Fools* (a translation/adaptation of Sebastian Brant’s late fifteenth-century *Das Narrenschiff*) offers a similar depiction of those “whiche greatly them delyte / In others losse”:

> If one haue plenty of treasour and ryches  
> Or by his merytis obteyne great dignyte  
> These folys enuyous that of the same haue les  
> Enuy by malyce, the others hye degre  
> And if another of honour haue plente  
> They it enuy and wysshe that they myght sterue . . .  
> These folys desyre agaynst both lawe and right  
> Anoters good if they may get the same  
> If they may nat by flaterynge nor by myght  
> Than by fals malyce they hym enuy and blame.⁴⁰

In its basic configuration—the painful desire to level another’s advantage—the sense of malicious envy in early modern English was quite similar to the modern definitions we have seen above.

Yet Renaissance thinkers also utilized a concept of benign envy, even if no such lexical category existed. Consider, for example, the reaction of Sir William Cornwallis to the heroes of the ancient world:

> When I heare of any famous Action of our time . . . it takes away my sleepe, not with Enuie, but with an honest Emulation. I desire to robbe no man of his Glory, but to participate with Experience: well it pleaseth not my Destiny, I hope it will do, that’s my Comfort: In the meane time I will see Battailes in Imagination, and reade them, since I may not be in them.⁴¹

As Cornwallis makes clear, this desire to emulate is not predicated on robbing another of his glory, or destroying the object of envy. Yet the feeling that disturbs his sleep seems hardly pleasant, and is therefore distinct from the less agitative positions of admiration or reverence. Despite his protestation, Cornwallis describes the emotional configuration of benign envy, even though the term was not linguistically native to the early modern period.

In fact, Cornwallis’s professed distinction between envy and emulation reveals another contour to the early modern understanding of envy. Despite the common impulse to keep both terms distinct—such as in the late sixteenth-century treatise that distinguishes “countentious enuies” from “honest emulations”—the word “envy” was nonetheless also used
in the period to signify an emotionally neutral, or even admirable, form of emulation. This lexical overlap was certainly native to Surrey’s period: in *The Image of Gounernace* (1541), Sir Thomas Elyot describes how a counselor of high merit will “ingender in noble men an honest enuy, eyther to excede hym in vertue, or at the leste to be iudged equall vnto hym,” while John Palsgrave (incidentally, Richmond’s former tutor) imagines that his translation of a neo-Latin classroom drama will move “some lyttell grayne of honeste and vertuous enuye” in the hearts of King Henry’s subjects. In fact, some modern studies of envy have also argued for the emotional specificity of emulation, an orientation in which “there is no ill will towards the advantaged party,” an innocuous rival perceived merely “as an example to follow (and possibly surpass).” Though it is not necessary here to enumerate the precise differences between benign envy and emulative envy (a subject on which scholars disagree), it is important to note that there is a category of emotional response (often labeled “envy” in modern and early modern speech) that entails not pain, but genuine feelings of admiration and inspiration at another’s advantage. Whether or not we deem such feelings a species of envy, the larger point remains: notions of envy and emulation are entwined, suggesting the ambivalence so often evoked by another’s social superiority.

With these dynamics of envy in mind, I’ll now turn to the poem itself. Despite its obvious elegiac action, “So crewell prison” is also inundated with the emotional investments I have outlined above in my taxonomy of envy: a tangled network of malice, desire, admiration, emulation, and (above all) ambivalence.

### The Envious Elegy: “So Crewell Prison”

At Windsor Castle in the summer of 1537, Surrey found a ready circumstance to conjure the memory of his childhood friend. Though a meditation on the poet’s past, “So crewell prison” takes its bearing from this contextualized present, and it is in this manner that Surrey compounds the generic action of elegy by dramatizing the act of memory that inspires the elegy itself. A foundational motif throughout Surrey’s work, memory thematically governs such poems as “When ragyng love with extreme payne” and “Dyvers thy death doo dyverslye bemone,” as well as (and perhaps most prominently) his translation of the *Aeneid*. In “So crewell prison,” however, the mechanics of memory are uniquely doubled: the poem recalls both a person and a place, and it reveals how such memories necessarily overlap.
Though Henry Fitzroy becomes the eventual subject of “So crewell prison,” the poem begins with an address to Windsor itself:

So crewell prison howe could betyde, alas,
As prowde Wyndsour, where I in lust and joye
With a kinges soon my childishe yeres did passe,
In greater feast then Priams sonnes of Troye.46

By outlining the poem’s topographical and temporal scope, this apostrophe introduces the atmosphere of ambiguity that underpins “So crewell prison.” The tangled syntax of the first two lines, which collapses “prison” into “Wyndsour,” reflects the poet’s disorienting confinement within a familiar setting, while Surrey analogously disrupts the poem’s temporal frame by invoking complementary images from both the personal and the (mytho-)historical past. As a site of memory, Windsor becomes conflicted ground: its celebration of Richmond is occasioned only by his death, while Surrey’s return to this generative site comes under rather unpleasant circumstances. The hostile Windsor of 1537, tortured by this paradox, becomes the natural analogue to the prelapsarian Windsor of Surrey’s youth—until, that is, the poem reveals that even this memory of Windsor is subject, in more subtle form, to the emotional complexity that characterizes the poet’s description of his present state.

If it is hard to square the Windsor of the past with the Windsor of the present, Surrey’s celebratory comparison of Windsor and Troy is also troubled. In the most basic sense, the image is tempered by the reader’s knowledge of Troy’s ultimate collapse—a fact that casts a shadow over Surrey’s recollection, and that prefigures the conceptual fall of Windsor in the wake of Richmond’s death. But the precise terms in which Surrey frames this association are suggestive. In one sense, yoking Troy and Windsor has an obvious attraction; as Candice Lines notes, with this image Surrey effectively “writes himself into the royal family, as Richmond’s brother and a king’s son himself.”47 Yet despite this idealization, a set of darker associations also lurks in the margins of this metaphor. If Surrey and Richmond stand as the Trojan royal sons, Henry VIII must figure as King Priam—a particularly ominous identity for Henry, when considered next to the brutal rendition of Priam’s death (by the hand of Pyrrhus) that Surrey would later translate in the Aeneid:

At the altar him trembling gan he draw
Wallowing through the blodshed of his son;
And his left hand all clasped in his heare,
With his right arme drewe fourth his shining sword,  
Which in his side he thrust up to the hilts.  

Furthermore, the very association of Henry and Priam has an inherently ironic currency, as the symbolically fecund Priam (with his fifty sons) stands as the crushing inverse to Henry’s own generative difficulties. The image has a final twist when we recall that Pyrrhus also slaughtered several of Priam’s sons. Polites, the most notable case, is gruesomely described by Surrey as

fleing fourth till he came now in sight  
Of his parentes, before their face fell down,  
Yielding the ghost, with flowing streames of blood.  

Unpacked fully, the logic of the metaphor suggests a latent aggression not only toward King Henry, but also toward Richmond, and even toward himself—the poet casts himself explicitly as a Trojan prince, and implicitly as a Trojan-slaughterer. Though Surrey had probably not yet come to translate his Aeneid in 1537, he was undoubtedly aware of the metaphor’s implications: by beginning his elegy with the comparison of Windsor to Troy, he introduces an emotional ambivalence that will increasingly preoccupy the poem. Surrey’s status as a son of Troy is a site of both idealization and aggression, conflicting emotional responses that come to define the poet’s attitude to his lost friend.

It should also be clear how the double logic of the opening stanza replicates the emotional architecture I have associated with envy. By effacing the hereditary distinction between Surrey and Richmond, and by insisting instead on their symbolic equivalency as Trojan princes, the poem enacts the behavioral profile associated with benign envy: it eliminates the social disparity by elevating Surrey to a position coequal to the rival’s advantage. Yet, given the ominous history of Troy, the metaphor equally contains a violent, malicious fantasy, culminating in the destruction of both the rival and his advantage: a textbook enactment of “true” envy. “Upward social comparison,” observes Richard H. Smith and his colleagues, “often represents an unattainable, frustrated desire, invidiously personified in the advantaged person.” And, as further research suggests, the pain and frustration of such upward social comparison is amplified enormously when the envied party’s advantage seems to be absolute: as with, for example, the cultural logic that assured social preference for the younger Richmond, despite his youth and bastardy. Given this context, I suggest that Surrey harbored no small amount of this social envy,
and the opening lines of “So crewell prison” reveal the poet vacillating between an emulous love for his symbolic brother and a malicious aggression toward his social superior.

As the poem continues, Surrey depicts a variety of scenes which similarly enact this ambivalence, and which trigger the emotional configurations of envy. Masculine contests are a primary occasion in which Richmond is remembered—and though these activities certainly depict the tender act of adolescent bonding, they also introduce to the poem a more explicit dynamic of rivalry, standing as a narrative analogue to Surrey’s emotional ambivalence. Athletic competition was a cornerstone of Surrey and Richmond’s boyhood training in the aristocratic arts; such contests form a central motif of Surrey’s recollection, animating much of the poem’s charm and pathos. These bouts, however, carry a sense of both contention and intimacy, and the aggression they entail may be thought to channel Surrey’s envious, emulous relationship to his friend. Surrey’s description of mock combat offers an explicit example: “On fomynge horse, with swordes and frendlye hertes / With chere as thoughe the one should overwhelme, / Where we have fought and chased oft with darts.”\(^{54}\)

The stark contrast of “sordes” and “frendlye” suggests the proximity of combat and camaraderie within their role-play, their antagonistic “chere” (Middle English, “countenance”) confirming that the feigned pretense of mutual aggression is an integral part of their combative drama. Though the combat may be fictionalized, the rewards of athletic triumph inspire the genuine exchange of violent energies; this ambivalence is native to the ritual altogether, which serves as preparation for the bloody transactions of real combat in the future.

In the stanza devoted to hunting, we find a series of equally pregnant associations, latent with the material of envious rivalry:

\begin{verbatim}
The wyld forest, the clothed holtes with grene,
With raynes avald and swift ybrethed horse,
With crye of houndes and mery blastes bitwen,
Where we did chase the fearfull hart a force.\(^{55}\)
\end{verbatim}

It is certainly true that such lines can be read in terms of eroticism: the classical exempla of Adonis and Hippolytus provide a model for associating the hunt with the repression and sublimation of sexual desire, and Wyatt’s famed “Whoso List to Hunt” may have offered Surrey an immediate precedent for the metaphor.\(^{56}\) But the passage also depicts the process through which the adolescent boys were socialized as members of the warring class: presumably accompanied by adult men, Surrey and
Richmond here learned to generate and regulate the same violence that underpinned the aristocracy’s crucial sociopolitical identity as an instrument of controlled force. Such depictions of the symbolic, regulated violence of adolescent bonding suggest the more naked hostility that is latent in Surrey’s emotional response to Richmond’s memory. And crucially for boys like Surrey and Richmond, jousting and hunting were not socially neutral acts: they were imbued with the dynamics of age, identity, and birthright. Accordingly, because they activate the mechanism of social competition, they are also implicated in the ambivalent trajectory of identification and envy I have located elsewhere. Surrey both did and did not want to become one with his friend, just as he both did and did not want to overtake him symbolically—an emotional state, I think, that manifests remarkably in the quasi-aggression of Surrey’s grieving memories.

The Experience of Jealousy

Of course, aggression and rivalry in “So crewell prison” are not limited to such boyhood exercises. Though much time at Windsor was conducted under the sign of Mars, an important share was also governed by Venus, and the poem’s wistful memories of the erotic hunt naturally compliment the boys’ adventures in the woods and lists. To this end, it is important to expand our discussion of envy by considering a distinct but intimately related phenomenon: the rivalrous dynamics of jealousy.

As is the case with envy, it is no easy task to arrive at a working definition of “jealousy”; though the emotion contains its own affective mechanism, in common speech “jealousy” routinely stands in for the affiliated “envy.” Because of this confusion, scholars have devoted no small time to parsing the two emotions, and both theoretical and empirical research suggests that each has a set of unique characteristics. More precisely, “envy” and “jealousy” have something of an opposite valence: whereas the envier suffers on behalf of some current lack—the coveted advantage, just out of reach—the jealous subject cannot tolerate the threat to something he or she already possesses (or thinks to possess)—and the anticipation of its loss, whether reasonable or unreasonable, fuels the subsequent agitation. In most situations, the threat is occasioned by a specific rival; hence, jealousy is most often thought in terms of a three-party relationship, as in the familiar case of romantic jealousy. Yet, despite these differences of orientation, envy and jealousy often co-occur (as is clear from ordinary experience), and their affective domains overlap. At the categorical level, envy and jealousy tend to prompt similar reactions: “both can involve
some form of hostility (envy may produce resentment and rancor; jealousy may produce anger over betrayal), and both can involve some form of lowered self-esteem and sadness (envy because of inferiority and longing and jealousy because of rejection and loss).” Though distinct, these emotions are clearly linked in our common experience, and it is no surprise that both emerge in the affective subtext of “So crewel prison.”

It is equally unsurprising that “jealousy,” like “envy,” was a quite flexible term in early modern English. Renaissance usage often entailed the basic configuration of three-party rivalry, as shown in this verse “description of Jealousie”:

It is the death of joy, twixt man and wife,
Where love is too much loaden with mistrust:
It makes the maide to feare the married life,
Least firmest faith should fall to be vniust:
It beats the braine and grindes the wit to dust,
It makes the wise a fool, the wealthie poore,
And her that wold kepe house, to ope the dore.60

Then, as now, jealousy was a common condition of wedded life. A similar sentiment is repeated in an advice manual of 1540:

Wedded persons may thus passe over theyr lyues quietly and without complaynynge, yf the husbande become deafe, and the wyfe blynde. Signifyenge, that womankynde is much subiecte to the sycknes of gelousie, wherof vndoubtedly springeth greate variaunce & playntes. . . . [She’d thus avoid] the suspicion to be made Cokequen [a female cuckold], yf she wanted her eye syghte.61

And I needn’t spend more time showing that romantic jealousy was an active concept in the early modern period: Shakespeare, after all, provided us with its most enduring epithet.

But like “envy,” the term “jealousy” also encompassed a broader register. Descended from the Greek zelos, jealousy in the Renaissance was intimately connected to the notion of zeal; as such, it too participated in a much larger semantic network, of contextually fluid association. Jealousy, like zeal, entails the intense activation of emotional energy—and like zeal, its ethical valence is shaped by the particular whims of the speaker. This ambivalence is well reflected in early modern usage. While Thomas Wilson, for example, defines jealousy in the sense of triangulated (romantic) rivalry—“Griefe, for suspition of dishonesty in married yoake-fellowes,
Husbands or Wiues”—he also offers a positive sense of the term: “One which loueth others truely, not for lucre and glory to him-selfe, but for the benefit of the persons loued. . . . Heere Jealous is taken in good part.”

Furthermore, jealousy (like envy) also had a close association with the act of emulation. Indeed, in ancient Greek, *zelos* can refer to honorable emulation, as in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*: “Emulation [*zelos*] . . . is therefore virtuous and characteristic of virtuous men, whereas envy [*phthonos*] is base and characteristic of base men.” In the early modern period, the amorphous boundary between these terms is illustrated splendidly by an annotation in the Geneva Bible, which describes the Apostles’ persecutors as “ful of blinde zeale, emulation and ielousie.” As with envy, the experience of jealousy is varied, involving ambivalent feelings of rivalry, aggression, and emulation, often simultaneously.

In “So crewell prison,” notions of jealousy offer a valuable guide for considering the specifically eroticized competition latent in the poem—that is, when a third party becomes implicated in Surrey and Richmond’s combative play. Windsor’s “ladyes bright of hewe” provide this source of libidinal competition for the boys, whose attempts at teenage love are often imbued with rivalrous energy. This dynamic can be detected in the passage describing their love-struck banter:

The secret groves, which ofte we made resound  
Of pleasaut playnt and of our ladyes prayes,  
Recording soft what grace eche one had found,  
What hope of spede, what dred of long delayes.

Within the pastoral world of Surrey’s idealized Windsor, such ostensibly erotic (and homoerotic) expression must also be read as contentious—the kind of rustic sparring Surrey may have encountered in his own reading of the pastoral mode, and that Spenser would go on to portray so notably in *The Shepheardes Calendar*. Though ostensibly good-natured, such poetic contests serve as a further analogue to the physical rivalry of masculine play.

But more notably, Surrey himself reveals the thematic proximity of jealousy and eroticized rivalry in the stanza devoted to a sporting event with Richmond:

The palme playe, where, dispoyled for the game,  
With dased eyes oft we by gleames of love  
Have mist the ball and got sight of our dame  
To bayte her eyes which kept the leddes above.
In his memory of the disrupted game, Surrey recalls both the envious rivalry of physical competition and the jealous rivalry of erotic competition. On one hand, the match is another example of direct engagement between Surrey and Richmond, an extension of the various war games described elsewhere in the poem. In this sense, vying for both skill and advantage entails envy and emulation: as Kenneth Burke elegantly notes, “what we call ‘competition’ is better described as men’s attempt to out-imitate one another.” Yet on the other, Surrey suggests that the true source of the boys’ contention lies not in the action on the court, but in their battle to attract the female spectators: here, the three-term configuration of jealousy rules the day, governing Surrey and Richmond’s development as both aristocrats and as sexually mature men.

As a concrete site in which eroticism and rivalry converge, the sporting of “So crewell prison” suggests the larger way in which the celebration of Richmond’s life is fraught with impulses that are often competing; in Surrey’s recollection, formative moments of both adolescent bonding and adolescent sexuality are framed within an oppositional context, bubbling with latent energy of both jealousy and envy. This emulative combat is a crucial counterweight to the more obvious dynamic of “So crewell prison,” in which Surrey comes to identify with his lost companion: as Lines has demonstrated, the poem systematically “erases any distinction of identity between the two friends,” while the increasingly intimate description of their shared bedchamber (“The voyd walles eke, that harbourd us eche night... wherwith we past the winter nightes awaye”) suggests the extent to which Surrey and his “noble fere” finally become indistinguishable. Throughout the poem, Surrey works with one hand to efface the distinction between Howard and Tudor, even as he cannot help but affirm it with the other. Such confusion of intersubjective boundaries is a key dynamic of the rivalrous emotions, and it is one that ultimately underpins the poem’s concluding movement.

We have seen how the bulk of “So crewell prison” is an architectural catalog, in which the castle’s various locales trigger memories from Surrey and Richmond’s shared past. In the poem’s conclusion, however, Surrey comments directly on his grief, seeking desperately to make sense of both Richmond’s loss and his own imprisonment. With “sobbing sighes,” Surrey rails against Windsor itself, asking for some account of his friend’s absence:

‘O place of blisse, renewer of my woos,
Geve me accompt wher is my noble fere,
Whome in thy walles thow didest eche night enclose,
To other lief, but unto me most dere."\(^{70}\)

Though consistent with the poem’s larger mode of address—“So crewell prison” is, of course, an apostrophe—Surrey’s accusation here begins a series of displacements and confusions that overwhelm the final lines. Unsurprisingly, Windsor provides no satisfactory answer:

Eache stone, alas, that dothe my sorowe rewe,
Retournes therto a hollowe sound of playnt.\(^{71}\)

This echo exemplifies the erosion of boundaries that has been steadily enacted by the poem; it is a ghostly utterance that both does and does not emanate from Surrey’s own mouth. Because it is an act of reflexive speech, Surrey is implicated in his own allegation: though he may charge Windsor with his sorrow, Windsor charges him right back. To compound the confusion a final degree, there is even a sense in which the speech belongs to Richmond, the figure who has from the elegy’s opening moments haunted the castle.

We need not embrace a fully psychoanalytic reading of the poem to acknowledge the emotional displacement at play in these passages. In simplest terms, Surrey’s fixation on Richmond’s absence provides an attractive safeguard from the events that have resulted in his imprisonment: by immersing himself in the loss of his friend, Surrey sidesteps the need to confront his own erratic behavior. (He also avoids the unenviable task of condemning those responsible for his sentence, including King Henry.) In this sense, the intensity and quality of Surrey’s grief suggest that his lamentation for Richmond is in many ways a displacement of the sorrow he feels for himself: grief for the friend, in other words, is substituted for the narcissistic mourning of Surrey’s own wretched state.\(^{72}\)

Yet at the same time, when Surrey does explicitly address his own misfortunes, we may also detect some attendant aggression toward Richmond: the friend who, by virtue of his unexpected death, has abandoned the poet and condemned him to unhappiness. This sentiment emerges in the elegy’s final lines, when Surrey finds means to express the hostility and resentment that lurks beneath his grief:

Thus I alone, where all my fredome grew,
In prysone pyne with bondage and restraynt,
And with remembrance of the greater greif,
To bannishe the lesse I fynde my chief releif.\(^{73}\)
Like Jonathan Crewe, I find it difficult to read this concluding moment without detecting some animosity toward the friend who has left the poet in his time of need. A logical extension of the poem’s latent rivalry motif, this aggression is a counterpoint to the larger elegiac action—but, given the reality of Richmond’s death, Surrey seems to feel no small guilt at his own ambivalence. The logical conclusion of rivalry is a fantasy of the other’s destruction: it is this thought that Surrey cannot tolerate, and he must accordingly divert its attendant aggression toward himself and his own misfortune. Insofar as Surrey feels abandoned by Richmond, he develops an anger that must be subsequently repressed; insofar as he has also become identified with this lost friend, the anger directed outward must be also directed toward himself. This ambivalence forcefully emerges in the final couplet—in which, despite the ostensible agenda of the elegiac occasion, it is difficult to ultimately know what part of Surrey’s grief is the greater.

The properties of the rivalrous emotions help account for the position in which “So crewell prison” leaves its grieving poet: as R. Horacio Etchegoyen and Clara R. Nemas put it, envy entails “the paradox that the same faculty that allows [the envier] to appreciate the good qualities of the object is at the same time the source of unbearable pain.” In this view, envy is grounded upon “an unconscious projective identification with the envied person, who represents the image of whom the envying person would want to be in the ideal sense . . . [but] because feelings of inferiority partly motivate such identification, this idealization is blended with resentment and derogation.” Surrey and Richmond certainly enjoyed a close relation, as symbolic brothers of the highest social order—but as experience often confirms, we are most quick to envy “those who are close to us in terms of time, space, age and reputation.” This feature of social life was not obscure to Renaissance thinkers:

Lastly, near kinsfolks, and fellows in office, and those that have been bred together, are more apt to envy their equals when they are raised. For it doth upbraid unto them their own fortunes, and pointeth at them, and cometh oftener into their remembrance, and incurreth likewise more into the note of others; and envy ever redoubleth from speech and fame.

Such proximity, and the co-mingling of social identities it entails, ultimately confound Surrey’s attempt to console himself with his verse, in which he finds it impossible to clearly delineate the object of his grief.

Despite its resounding success as a poetic performance, “So crewell prison” thus fails as a tool of grief. If, as Peter Sacks has argued, the
conventional elegy guides its speaker through the “work of mourning,” then Surrey’s poem to Richmond must be recognized for the way it rejects consolation: there is no vision of renewal, no sublimation of the lost object, no affirmation of the speaker’s willingness to endure. In this sense, the poem has surprising affinities with the modern elegy, which has been characterized by a tendency toward “unresolved, violent, and ambivalent” forms of mourning. Though “So cruel prison” can express, it cannot finally escape the act of memory that entwines Surrey’s present fate with the idealized vision of his friend. At the poem’s end, Surrey is left with only the choice between two kinds of grief—and though the lesser may be banished, it is only by reference to the larger shadow that still hangs over both Windsor and the speaker. “So cruel prison,” it turns out, is an unexpectedly angry poem: the troubled comparisons to Troy, the simmering displays of adolescent aggression, and the severity of the poet’s melancholy suggest a well of emotional energy too often ignored by scholars. The poem registers the concurrent loss of an ideal companion, of a pastoral youth, of face at court, of a promised future: it accordingly reflects, in its emotional tenor, the profound entanglement of tenderness, melancholy, and aggression. As a core emotional response of courtly combat, envy installs the affective network through which these varied feelings flow.

**Like Surrogate Father, Like Surrogate Son**

Though deprived of Richmond, Surrey was restored to court in the fall of 1537—where (as Susan Brigden puts it) “he assumed the role of guardian of honour and defender of true nobility, and began to be notorious for the extremity of his pride.” He was a principle mourner at the November funeral of Queen Jane, who died only days after giving birth to Henry’s long-sought legitimate male heir; in the next three years, Surrey was appointed to a number of local posts in Norfolk, and in 1541 was made a Knight of the Garter. (And as that year turned over, he also attended the trial and execution of his infamous cousin Katherine, the second Howard queen to share Henry’s bed and die by his will.) But Surrey, by his own admission, was still fueled by “the fury of reckless youth,” and before long he was jailed for a second and third time. In the first incident of 1542, he was imprisoned in the Fleet Prison after challenging an adversary to a duel over a private matter. In the second, his notorious Lenten romp of 1543, he and a posse of friends were charged with terrorizing London “in the night abowght the stretes and breaking wyth stonebowes
off certeyne wyndowes”; this incarceration inspired one of Surrey’s best-known lyrics, the scathing jeremiad “London, hast thou accused me.”

But despite these disruptions, in the years that immediately followed—what would be the final years of his life—Surrey became quite happily entwined in the emulous, envious rivalry of another: that of Richmond’s father. Now in his sixth decade of life, the ailing King Henry renewed his war with Francis I of France in 1543, backed by the (ostensible) support of imperial forces. This was to be, reflects David Potter in his magisterial account of the conflict, a war between “two ageing warhorses . . . prematurely aged by illness,” whose “relations since 1515 had been marked by alternating phases of competition in war and diplomatic/cultural display.” Childs similarly notes that the action found fuel in the long-simmering, “intense personal rivalry” between the princes, with Henry making “no secret of his desire to emulate his ancestors, especially Henry V, and revive the ancient English claim to suzerainty over France.” The psychodrama here seems to reflect Henry’s grasping attempt to reclaim long-expired years for both his body politic and body natural—fanning, in the words of Polydore Vergil, his long-simmering desire “not merely to equal but indeed to exceed the glorious deeds of his ancestors.”

It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that in his declining years, Henry had fantasies of recapturing his former glory, three decades exactly after winning his spurs on French soil at Thérouanne and Tournai. Yes, the spirits of both his royal ancestors and his younger self would be revived—and King Henry was “determined to heave his huge body into armour” and don those spurs again. But, as Potter outlines, this was something of a large issue: for Henry to personally lead English forces was “like conveying an ungainly and threatening totem into the midst of the war; there was no doubt his presence was an encouragement but it also had its penalties.” It was a delicate point indeed, and one that occasioned considerable logistical attention; English councilors were reluctant to voice their concerns, while Chapuys, noting that Henry possessed “the worst legs in the world,” observed that troops would be forced “to march much more slowly because of the weight and illness of the said lord King.” Eventually, a diplomatic calculus thankfully proved that both princes might forgo direct forward command with no loss of honor—but King Henry, who “night and day thought of nothing else” but military glory, would still eventually taste war on French soil, suited in a massive coat of armor preserved today at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

It was ultimately the young Surrey, not much older in 1543 than Henry had been in 1513, who would become the king’s own avatar in the field, a linkage through which cross-generational fantasies of honor and conquest
might be shared between the earl and the father of his closest friend. We see hints of this dynamic early in the conflict, when Surrey was allowed to cross the Channel and observe the Anglo-imperial siege of Landrecy in 1543; King Henry recommended him personally to the emperor, whom he asked “to order the captains and lieutenants of [his] army to help and assist in all things in which the said Earl may advance and improve his knowledge of military affairs.”91 (Though even here Surrey couldn’t stay out of trouble: according to Chapuys, Henry was not pleased by “a certain foolish letter written by the earl of Surrey,” who was consequently ordered “to abstain in future from making such reports.”)92 When English troops were deployed the following year, “the Duke of Norffolk” and “therle of Surrey” were appointed leaders of “the vantgards”; Surrey was named lord marshall of the army, and soon he and his father began (an ultimately untenable) siege of the port town of Montreuil.93

In July 1544 King Henry had made the journey to Calais; rather than fortifying Surrey and Norfolk’s siege, he and his old friend Suffolk embarked upon a concurrent assault on Boulogne, which surrendered to great fanfare in September. Surrey, who had come to witness the siege personally, arrived just in time: a “Trayne of Powder was set to the Castell” on the 11th of that month, and “the Kinges Majestie, accompanied with the said Erle of Surrey . . . went to his Standing to see the Castell fall.”94 The surrender, which Sessions deems “the most spectacular military triumph of Henry VIII’s career,” offered cause for immediate celebration, and the king’s victorious entry into the city was “carefully dramatized to make the decaying Henry VIII appear like Henry V on the nearby field of Agincourt.”95 His honor appropriately puffed, Henry soon returned to England, eventually appointing Suffolk to defend his prize—but, in August 1545, the duke died before he could assume his post. This was great luck for Surrey, who was weeks later named “Lieutenant, and Captain General, Commander-in-chief and Governor” of Boulogne.96

With this appointment, Surrey was now, undisputedly, Henry’s proxy in the field. And in fact, there emerged a triangular dynamic in which Surrey, inhabiting the symbolic position of his lost friend, appears to actively dismiss the guidance of his own father in favor of the surrogate Henry.97 The keeping of Boulogne—“the one tangible fruit of [the king’s] campaigns in France,” and the nexus of Surrey and Henry’s twin chivalric fantasy—was a money-pit for a realm already sinking in debt, and consensus in the king’s council urged for a speedy withdrawal.98 In a letter from Windsor that September, Norfolk explicitly warned his son to “anymate not the kyng to moche for the kepyng of boleyne, for who so doth at length shall get small thank” among those at court.99 But this, and
similar advice that he should be "maid werye . . . of Bowleine," did little to deter Surrey, who relished his lieutenancy, and who would in the coming months continue to construct elaborate plans for its fortification and victualing.\textsuperscript{100} "In conversation," an imperial ambassador reported, King Henry had "called Boulogne 'his daughter'"—and Surrey, in turn, stuck up admirably for his symbolic sister.\textsuperscript{101}

In early November 1545, the earl received a scathing letter from Norfolk’s secretary, which did little to hide his real father’s displeasure:

\begin{quote}
I see my lordes grace somewhat offended by your priuate letteres to the Kynges Majestie of such vehemency as towching the animatynge of the King’s Majesty for the kepynge of Bowlleyn and in especial considering his dyuers letteres adressed to you lordschype to the whiche as he thinketh ye haue gevyn simple credence for what his grace and the rest of the Cownsell worketh in for the renndre of Bowleyne [and] the conclewdyng of a pease.\textsuperscript{102}
\end{quote}

Despite Norfolk’s explicit instruction to the contrary, Surrey had continued to inflame the king’s desire for a hopeless cause; in fact, in a personal letter to the increasingly invalid Henry, Surrey boasted of his search for "the grounde of most advauntage for your majesties campe if it shuld be your pleasure to come to the felde the next yere."\textsuperscript{103} To the great annoyance of the royal advisors, the earl’s dispatches had a special gravity: what the “Cownsell worketh . . . in vi daies,” Surrey was warned, “ye with your letters sett bake in sixe owres, sutche importans be your let-
ters in the kinges oppinion at this tymme.”\textsuperscript{104} But that “every cownsellor saithe away with it” mattered little to Henry Howard or Henry Tudor, united in equal vehemence for Boulogne as an English holding.\textsuperscript{105} Given the familial symbolics inherent to this affair, the precise manifestation of Norfolk’s anger and betrayal seems particularly apt: “I herde my lordship [Norfolk] saye,” Surrey was told, “that he had rathe burie yow & the reste of his childrene befooure he shulde geffe his consent to the rwyne of the realme.”\textsuperscript{106}

But things went bad for Surrey, and they went bad quickly. On January 7, 1546, only two days after dispatching an elaborate stratagem for Henry’s forces in the region, Surrey suffered the first defeat of his military career, when French troops overwhelmed his army at St. Etienne, slaying nearly two dozen English captains and forcing the (hungry and destitute) common-file to a mutinous retreat.\textsuperscript{107} This “shame of St. Etienne,” Sessions suggests, “mark[ed] the first stage of Surrey’s downfall,” and the earl himself was instantly affected—in the midst of the English retreat,
so records one contemporary account, Surrey had apparently “begged Sir John Bridges and some of the gentlemen who were with him to stick their swords through his guts and make him forget the day.” In their account of the disaster, Surrey and his command scrambled to emphasize the positive—there was “mo of their parte slayne then of oures,” they reported, and (more importantly) assured that “ther was no defaule in the Rulers nor lacke of courage to be geven them”—but an unreceptive audience awaited in London; only days after the battle, the imperial ambassador François van der Delft concluded his dispatch on the matter by observing that Surrey “has consequently lost greatly in reputation, and there is considerable discontent at these heavy losses.” (Surrey was also a victim of the early modern post: while his own debriefing was still in transit home, he was sent a scathing letter from the Privy Council, who, having learned of the defeat, could “nott butt marvyll very much thatt in so many dayes [Surrey had] aduertysed hither no part of that mater.”)

The defeat of St. Etienne shattered Henry’s faith in his chivalric surrogate, and Surrey’s attempts at damage control “did so little satisfie our King (who lov’d no noyse but of Victory) that he ever after disaffected him.” The immediate cost was the earl’s lieutenancy, which was transferred to his old rival Edward Seymour, a man much advanced since 1537: now earl of Hertford, Seymour had (as Sessions puts it) “not only distinguished himself as the leading military figure of England, both in Scotland and in France, but had also represented the king in almost every major diplomatic initiative.” (He was also, not unnotably, uncle to the young male heir of a moribund king—a fact that becomes quite relevant to Surrey’s ultimate demise.) With considerable frankness, Secretary Paget (another “new man”) urged the earl to “passe the thing over in silence” and accept a lesser command, lest a retreat home further tarnish his reputation:

\[
\text{Being hitherto noted, as you ar, a man of a noble courrage and of a desyre to shewe the same to the face of your ennemies, if you shuld now tarye at home within a wall, havynge I doubt a pece of your authorite toched, it woold be thought abrode, I feare, that either you wer desyrous to tary in a sure place of rest, oreles that the credit of your courrage and forwardnes to serve wer diminished, and that you wer taken here for a man of non activite or service.}
\]

It seems safe to say that such sentiments, from such a source, must have especially stung the earl—and indeed, when on trial a few months later, Surrey (so says one account) would command Paget to “hold thy tongue,
for the kingdom has never been well since the King put mean crea-
tures like thee into the government.” But Surrey was a man who, in
his own words, couldn’t “dare kepe silence,” and continued to advocate
for himself, despite pending demotion to captain of the rearward—and
that March, as Hertford assumed his new command, the Privy Council
summoned Surrey home to account for a variety of issues related to his
former governance, including some “aduertisementes . . . of treasons that
ar conspired specially touching the victuails & munitions.” A diplo-
matic missive of the 28th suggests his welcome, noting that “the Earl of
Surrey, formerly captain of Boulogne, arrived at Court yesterday, but was
coldly received and did not have access to the King.” It seems the con-
sequence of his defeat was not lost upon the earl: “after the ouerthrow of
the grete skyrmoche at St Etiuens,” a witness later reported, “I hard hym
saye he had the kinges majestes dyspleashor or disfavour, [to which] he
hath taken greate thought.”

In ten months, the earl would be headless. But it was not St. Etienne that
signaled Surrey’s doom—and in fact, Henry would soon thaw, bestowing
on him several honors for his French service in April and May. Rather,
Surrey had to die because Henry soon would. “His Majestie was sickly,”
all were aware as 1546 ticked on, “and could not long endure,” leaving
the nation to wonder just who would steady the ship of state as a nine-
year-old prince became a nine-year-old king. This, the realm’s most
pressing political dilemma, choked the dying Henry’s court, now dually
anchored by Surrey’s primary rival Hertford—who would, as future duke
of Somerset, serve as lord protector for the first half of his nephew’s immi-
nent reign—and lesser rival Lord Admiral John Dudley—who would, as
future duke of Northumberland, himself unseat Somerset and orchestrate
the remaining years of Edward’s short kingship. It was with grave con-
sequence that Surrey lost his own bid to govern the young prince.

Prince Envy? The Death of Surrey
and Prince Edward’s Legacy

In some seventy years of life, the Duke of Norfolk had established him-
self as one of the sixteenth century’s premier political survivors—and
he predictably spent the final months of King Henry’s reign attempting
to ensure that the Howards, a pillar of ancient English nobility, had a
place among those who would rule the boy king. Unencumbered by Sur-
rey’s intractable sense of ancestral purity—and by this time, apparently
growing weary of (what he called) “my foolish son’s demeanour”—he
concocted a plan in the summer of 1546 to intimately enhance his family’s affinity with the emerging Seymour regime:

I brake unto his Majesty most humbly beseeching him to help that a marriage might be had between my daughter [Richmond’s widow] and Sir Thomas Seymour [Hertford’s infamous brother]; and whereas my son of Surrey hath a son, and divers daughters, that with his favour, a cross marriage might have be made between my Lord Great Chamberlain [Hertford] and them: and also where my son Thomas hath a son . . . that he might be in like wise married to one of my said Lord’s daughters. 121

In 1538 Norfolk had made earlier efforts (with apparent royal support) to bestow “his doughter, the Duchesse of Rychmonde . . . uppon the saide Sir Thomas Seymour.” 122 His renewed attempt, however, would similarly come to naught—owing in no small part, we’ll see, to his son’s obstinacy.

In 1546 Surrey too considered, with grave concern, his place in England’s future—but he did so in a manner that fixed his gaze firmly on the past. This is exemplified in Surrey’s famed “Arundel portrait,” an iconographic spectacle prepared by William Scrots, successor to Holbein as England’s royal painter. (See figure 2.) In the painting, which has been analyzed in great detail, a full-length Surrey emerges triumphantly from a centered arch, to an interior space flush with marble statues and decorative icons in a classical mode. 123 Most prominent in this frame is the pair of figures flanking Surrey, each holding a shield: a man, to the viewer’s left, displays the paternal arms of Surrey’s ancestral link to Edward I, while a corresponding woman advertises the earl’s maternal inheritance from Edward III. There is little subtle about this announcement of the subject’s royal blood. But of even greater interest, given the focus of this chapter, is the composition of the earl’s right arm, which leans against a broken pillar emblazoned in gold: in Surrey’s original design, the column’s anchor was to feature a “tablet wher my lord off Richmondes pictuire shuld stand.” 124 For reasons that remain obscure, Surrey abandoned the plan in the final months of his life, and the column’s base instead features the motto SAT SVPER EST—“enough survives.” But it is striking that, nearly a decade later, Surrey’s “noble fere” remained important enough to have been featured in so provocative a portrait—and indeed, it has been suggested that its inherent provocativeness may have ultimately occasioned Richmond’s absence, lest the envelope be pushed a bit too far. 125 For it seems at least partly clear, as Sessions (and others) have thoroughly detailed, that the Arundel portrait looks forward to the coming
succession, despite its obvious reverence for the Howard past. In boasting a “genealogy worthy [of] a possible king,” the painting argues that its subject “possessed a right to be Protector to the young Prince Edward”—and the canceled image of Richmond, Edward’s half-brother, would have powerfully reminded that Surrey had already once nursed the blossoming of a Tudor royal son. At the time of Surrey’s trial, we will see below, similar images of genealogical interest were seized from the Howard residence at Kenninghall—where they served, we must presume, not as external envoy of Surrey’s credentials, but rather as an identity-affirming mirror of their subject, mired in the most difficult (and final) year of his young life. The form of that identity, emerging from the insistent, inextricable proximity of Surrey’s Howard blood to the Tudor throne, replicates much of the symbolic dynamics embedded in “So crewell prison.”

And that proximity would eventually kill him. The powers that be, including the dying king, wanted him dead, so they found a way to make it so—and, to be sure, Surrey did little to make things difficult for them. Though many official records are now lost, a narrative of Surrey’s ultimate

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**Fig. 2.** Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, NPG 5291. By courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London.
downfall emerges from a variety of sources. He was arrested on December 2, 1546, when Richard Southwell, a cousin to Surrey, revealed that “he knew certain things of the earl, that touched his fidelity to the king”; after an initial confinement at Lord Chancellor Wriothesley’s house, on the 12th he was “sent to the Towre of London” via a humiliating march through the streets of London.127 (Norfolk was arrested the same day for undisclosed reasons.) In the weeks that followed, royal agents scoured for “report off suche” Howard doings that “myght in any wyys towche the kynges hyghnes & hys posteryte,” eventually compiling a litany of possible charges by which Surrey, and for good measure his father, might be destroyed.128

Surrey’s conduct was scrutinized on a variety of fronts. Specific inquiries, for example, were made about the earl’s governance in France—whether (quite ridiculously) he had plotted the “selling or yelding vp of Bulleyn”—while agents equally considered more nebulous matters like “my lord of S dissembling” and “my lord of Surreys pryde and his gowne of gold.”129

But in the month of investigation, three major themes emerged in the crown’s discovery, and each tellingly engages the central focus of this chapter: Surrey’s ambivalent, envious affinity with the royal family, a dynamic first apparent in his complex friendship with the lost Richmond.

The first concerned Surrey’s relationship with Richmond’s half-brother, the nine-year-old Prince Edward. Earlier that year, it was alleged, Surrey had initiated a discussion of “who were meetist to haue the rule and governmennt of the prync,” arguing that “his father was the meetist personage to be deputed to that roome as well in respecte of the good seryvce that he had donn as also for his estate.”130 Sensing a potential whiff of treason, the authorities raised the issue directly with men like Hugh Ellis, the earl’s servant, who was asked “whether you haue hard the said Erle at any tyme speake of the sycknes or deceasse of the kinges majestie and who shuld . . . haue the rule and gouernance of the prince?”131 Further depositions similarly suggested that Surrey openly “thought noe man soe mete to have the governance of the Prince as my Lord his Father,” and issues relating to this notion are featured prominently in the interrogatories prepared for Surrey himself:

- yf the King shuld dye my Lord prince being of young and tendre age whether you haue at any tyme diused who shuld haue the rule and gouernance of him
- whithr you have at any tyme sayd that if the King shuld die my lord prince being of tender age you or your father would haue the rule & gouernance of him
what meanes and wayes have you at any tyme devised and doon wherby you might rule the King in his owne tyme or the prince if god shuld dispose of his Majestie

In other words, Surrey was accused of thinking exactly what the Arundel portrait seems to suggest he may have thought: that the Howards, through both birthright and service, were natural guardians of a royal minor, a role they had played in the past. Given the fantasies of the Richmond elegy, Surrey’s particular focus on the meritorious claim of Norfolk is telling: if, a decade after presiding over Richmond, the duke could reprise his role as surrogate father to Edward, Surrey would again find himself the symbolic brother of a Tudor heir. And if the power ultimately fell to Surrey himself—as would seem likely, given Norfolk’s age, and as the Arundel portrait seems to argue—the earl further collapses the distinction between Howard and Tudor, reiterating the affective implications of “So crewell prison.”

The second point of contention returns us to Norfolk’s marriage plot of that summer—a plan (it seems) largely foiled by Surrey, who was “so much incensed” against Hertford. (Though it presumably counted for less, it was also said that Lady Richmond’s “Fantezy would not serve to marry with” Admiral Thomas.) But, with a little revision, there was one part of the scheme that Surrey could endorse:

She should dissemble the matter, and he would finde the means that the Kings Majestie should speake with her himselfe, but that she should in noe wise utterly make refusall of him, but that she should leave the matter soe diffusedly that the Kings Majestie should take occasion to speake with her againe, and thus by length of time, it is possible that the King should take such a fantezey to ye that ye shall be able to govern like unto Madame Distamps, which should not only be a means to halpe her selve but all her freinds should receive a commodyte by the same.

The mistress of Francis I for some two decades, Anne, Duchess of Étampes wielded profound influence in the French court: in other words, Surrey thought to bawd his sister, the beloved Richmond’s widow, to the rotting body of her former father-in-law. (Lady Richmond, it was reported, said “she would Cutt her own Troate rather than she would consent to such a villany.”) According to the crown’s further investigation, “therle of Surrey” did indeed “wishe or devise that his sister of Richemond might rule about the king,” hinging on the possibility that Henry “might caste some Love
vnto her wherby in processe she shuld leave as greate a stroke aboute him as Madamme Destampz doth abowte the Frenche king.”

When Surrey was questioned, the issue was likely broached both indirectly and explicitly. Besides wondering “whithr you have at any tyme procured any person to dissemble . . . for the better compassing of your purposes”—and asking for his hypothetical opinion on a man who, “cumpassing hymself to gourner the realme [and] rule the kynge,” did “for that purpose aduise his daughter or sister to becom an harlot”—Surrey’s interrogators were also slated to ask directly “whethr euer he made his father pryvey to the mater of my Lady of Richemondes.”

In one query list, a canceled item wonders if Surrey had “procured [his] sister or any othr woman to be the kinges concubyne”; a version of the question was perhaps asked anyway.)

In fact, according to one account, Lady Richmond informed investigators herself that Surrey had advised her to “lay herself out to please the king”; at the trial, when “shown a certain writing in the hand of his said sister in which she made this charge against him,” an exasperated Surrey exclaimed “Must I, then, be condemned on the words of a wretched woman?” The precise force of Surrey’s plan has long been debated; as Childs observes, apologists have traditionally been forced to “bend over backwards to exonerate Surrey in this affair,” suggesting that the earl’s words had been “distorted by his malicious sister and her evangelical friends,” or that Mary had perhaps “genuinely and guilelessly mistook her brother’s sarcasm for literalism.”

But I see no reason why an increasingly desperate Surrey, having already seen two kinswomen share the king’s bed, could not have stooped to such a suggestion with seriousness. Ironic or not, the very notion again activates the convergence of Howard and Tudor that governed the thematics of “So Crewell prison”; it is yet another permutation by which Surrey symbolically insinuates himself into the Tudor line.

The final major focus of the crown’s investigation was the one that actually secured the earl’s destruction. In an insignia at Kenninghall, it was said, Surrey had “usurped the royal arms of England” by displaying the heraldry of King Edward the Confessor—and to the crown, records a (skeptical) Spanish chronicler, this “was evident proof that he desired to make himself king.” Peter R. Moore, who offers extensive analysis of this deadly charge, concludes that any “argument that Surrey aimed at the throne as the heir to Edward the Confessor . . . verges on the theatre of the absurd”—but the era’s treason trials so often staged such theater, and it was enough to doom both Surrey and his father. (“I have concealed high Treason,” Norfolk confessed in desperate attempt at self-preservation, “in keeping secret the false and traiterous Act, most
presumptuously committed by my Son Henry Howard Earl of Surrey, [of] putting and using the Arms of St. Edward the Confessor.”)\textsuperscript{142} It did not matter that the Howards had long asserted a right to these arms; the family claimed legendary descent from the Saxon warrior Hereward the Wake, a contemporary of St. Edward who resisted Norman rule, while (more concretely) Richard II had bestowed them upon Thomas Mowbray, the first Duke of Norfolk.\textsuperscript{143} It also did not matter that Surrey had earlier consulted with the realm’s garter king of arms about his ancestral rights, and left understanding “that he had the opinion of Heralds therein.”\textsuperscript{144}

What only mattered was that, unlike some of the flashier charges, Surrey could and would not deny this infraction—so when his enemies, with the king’s blessing, dubbed it treason, the die was cast. “For what intent and purpose you put tharmes of St Edward in your cote, armmore, or scochen,” Surrey was asked, and “nowe beare the sayd armes at this tyme more then you or your father have doon at any other tymes before”?\textsuperscript{145} Furthermore, this heraldic crime was of particular interest to Henry. With only weeks left to live, the king personally revised a list of interrogatories that begins as follows:

If a man cumming of the colaterall lyne to the heyre off the crown who ought not to beare tharmes of England but in the seconde quarter with the difference of theyer auncestre doo presume to change his ryght place and beare them in the first quarter, leaving out the true difference of thaunsestre, and in the lieu therof vse only the very plase of the heire masle apparent, how thys mans intent is to be iudgyd and whether thys importe any daunger peril or slandre to the title of the Prince or very heire apparent and howe it wayeth in our lawes.\textsuperscript{146}

Bearing arms in the first or second quarter of his shield—the vital difference between Howard and Tudor, the crux by which Surrey so often seemed confounded, made a matter of geometry. At the residence at Kenninghall, the formal bill of indictment read, Surrey “dared to be fashioned and painted beside his own arms, together with the emblems of Henry Howard himself, the said arms and the said emblems now belonging to our Lord the King,” thus “falsely, maliciously, and treasonously hoping, wishing, and desiring to deprive the most illustrious and serenest Lord our King of the laws, merit, titles, and names of his royal state,” with the purpose of “disrupting our most excellent Lord and disinheriting the said Prince Edward of his true and indubitable title concerning the aforementioned crown.”\textsuperscript{147} At the bar, Surrey vigorously defended
his ancestral rights—and defended himself against the many charges that were not included in the indictment, but that nonetheless were presented at trial. The jury—which, humiliatingly, was “a common Inquest, not of the Peers, because the Earl was not a Parliament Lord”—condemned him to the axe, and on the “nynetenth daie of Januarie the Erle of Surrey was lead out of the Towre to the skaffolde at the Towre Hill and their he was beheaded.” As for Norfolk, “it was thought that the Duke would hardly escape, had not the King’s death, following shortly after, reserved him to more mercifull times.” A survivor to the end, he would outlive Henry’s heir, dying an octogenarian in 1554.

Though Henry’s agents would loudly decry “the moste execrable and moste abominable entent and entreprise of the said Erle of Surrey and his Father the Duke of Norffolke,” not all observers were convinced: Van Der Delft, for example, duly informed the emperor of the alleged Howard plot to “usurp authority by means of the murder of all the members of the Council, and [gain] control of the prince by them alone,” but equally noted that because “the Earl of Hertford and the Lord Admiral . . . have obtained such influence over the King as to lead him according to their fancy,” it was suspected that “the misfortunes that have befallen the house of Norfolk may well have come from the same quarter.” (When told the news, Francis I of France was said to have “wondred moche, and sayed that he knewe the Duke of Norffolke for he had been with hym, and . . . wolde never haue thought enye syche thynge yn hym.”) Indeed, it seems that Hertford and the lord admiral, backed by a court party full of similar “new men,” found it convenient that the highest pillar of the English nobility should crumble in the weeks before Henry gave up the ghost, and before a new regime would be installed to guide the boy king. (That the Howards were also associated with the old faith did little to endear them to this largely reformist clique, despite Surrey’s own apparent evangelical leanings.) As we have seen, Surrey’s struggle to parse his own aristocratic identity had long been intensified by the advancement of such men, and his antipathy helped further underpin his fall; “the Earle of Surrey,” one deposition reports, fumed that “those men which are made by the Kings Majestie of vile birth hath been the distraction of all the Nobilitie of this Realm,” while Lady Richmond similarly informed investigators that “her Brother hated them all since his being in custody in Windsor Castle.” At Windsor he had sought the ghost of Richmond, robbed of him too soon; now, in his final time on earth, he found himself robbed not only of his own life, but of reaffirming and realizing his role as preceptor and tutor to the Tudor heir, in the form of Richmond’s half-brother.
On January 19, 1547, nine days before King Henry VIII himself would
die, the Earl of Surrey became the final broken pillar that would adorn
the ruins of Henrician England. (His father’s life was spared only by the
loss of the king’s own.) This classical image is a fitting enough one for the
man whose translation of Virgil would forever turn the course of English
poetry, and whose lifelong commitment to the betterment of his nation,
so argues his biographer, emulates “Aeneas’ epic quest, at least in inten-
tion if not achievement.” It is thus also fitting, I think, to conclude this
chapter with three remarks upon the earl written in Latin.

The first is a letter composed by Surrey’s children in the spring of 1546,
with the guiding hand of their Latin tutor, to welcome their father home
on his unhappy return from France. Though formal in tone and construc-
tion, there is nonetheless, as Childs notes, “a child-like sweetness to the
letter and a touching reverence undiminished by recent events.” (That
is, the defeat at St. Etienne and the disgrace of his recall.) What interests
me the most is the children’s concluding statement, which expands the
epistle’s scope considerably:

We also congratulate the whole Kingdom, because, resting as it
does on the shoulders of Henry, our invincible and greatest King,
and defended by his arms, it appears to have won a most illustrious
name among foreign nations thanks to the efforts of you, a second
Henry, whilst leaving nothing for the French except envy, lamenta-
tion, and a dread of yourself.

Alterius Henrici. In his brief life, Surrey so often was—and so often wanted
to be—a second Henry; a second Henry Fitzroy, a second Henry Tudor.
And while perhaps Surrey did inspire invidiam among his French adver-
saries, his maddening status as a second Henry, we have seen throughout,
ocasioned no small envy in himself.

The second is an excerpt from Sir Thomas Chaloner’s De Republica
Anglorum Instauranda, a ten-book Latin epic on English themes pub-
lished in 1579. Although perhaps best remembered today as the first
English translator of Erasmus’s The Praise of Folly, Chaloner was (like
Norfolk) a notable survivor of his tumultuous age, variously serving as
soldier, diplomat, and courtier in the reigns of Henry, Edward, Mary, and
Elizabeth. Named clerk of the Privy Council in December 1545, he had
close affinity with the men who would destroy Surrey—and when reflect-
ing upon that act from the safety of Elizabeth’s reign, could not help but
mourn the life cut too short. In the midst of an encomium on the “vener-
able race of Norfolk”—described as “great in learning, greater in arms,
and greatest in faithful counsel”—Chaloner bestows particular praise on the poet earl, framing his downfall in a telling way:

There was one hero, but alas he was taken by cruel fates!
Surrey could have been placed first before all others
If wild Lachesis had not stripped away his mounting honors,
Envy harming (him) with a sideways ax and heedless deeds.\textsuperscript{157}

With “two envious hands,” he continues, “jealous Nemesis extracted punishments with blood not long ago.”\textsuperscript{158} Surrey was struck down by the fates, envious of his virtue—and though not a novel trope, we nonetheless again find envy and Surrey connected in the elegiac context. But Chaloner goes further when addressing Envy more precisely, declaring it “so often fatal to the British court”: “are you not able,” he continues, “to pluck the nation’s hoped for fruits before they are ripe?”\textsuperscript{159} In this recollection, the whims of fate become coequal with the whims of the men (like Hertford) who wielded Henry’s axe—each poisoned with an envious breast. But through Chaloner’s pen, the nobility that Surrey embodies becomes the founding verse of a new, corrective prophecy: “it would be worthy,” he prays, “that an emulative nation spring forth with appropriate zeal, to lead them in imitating their noble heroes in action.”\textsuperscript{160} Envy, emulation, and imitation—the affective nodes so active in Surrey’s memory of Richmond, here helping to define his own legacy.

I lied about the third. It was not originally composed in Latin, and is not a reflection specifically about the earl—but given what we’ve seen in this chapter, it might as well have been. “Above all,” Francis Bacon suggests, “those are most subject to envy, which carry the greatness of their fortunes in an insolent and proud manner.”\textsuperscript{161} Bacon here explicitly describes those who elicit envy—but the splendid ambiguity of \textit{subject} cuts both ways. Despite his bloody end, fortune shone on Henry Howard from birth—and it should come as no surprise that in 1539, only two years after Richmond’s death, the 22-year-old earl was famously described as “the most folish prowde boye that ys in England.”\textsuperscript{162}