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"We in it shall be remember'd."

Communal Thought in Shakespeare's Henriad

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Abstract

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Katie O'Hare

Departing from a generation of scholars who have read Shakespeare's *Henriad* plays severally, I argue that they should be read as a coherent work of art. Despite the fact they were not originally performed or written together, only a holistic study of the plays can uncover the instructive nature and educational potential of these historical dramas. When read individually these plays are often understood to be about explorations of kingship, but read as a sequence, the *Henriad* plays also encourage communities to think about the theater as a place where they can take collective ownership of history. My dissertation, *"We in it shall be remember'd." Communal Thought in Shakespeare's Henriad,* offers a reconsideration of *Richard II*, *1 & 2 Henry IV*, *Henry V*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Reading these plays together, I argue that we can see how Shakespeare becomes visible to us, not only as an artist interested in monarchy and power, but as a writer who understands the metacognitive capacities of his audiences. The plays in sequence create a buckling effect of multiple layers of history imprinting themselves onto and over the previous plays, both in the sequence of Shakespeare's tetralogy and in relation to earlier plays of the chronicle tradition by other writers.

In the late 1500's, when the history play genre flourished, the activity of playgoing was a new one. The separation between spectators and players was less

distinct than it is today: for one thing, they could see each other clearly in the shared light of the outdoor playhouse. Shakespeare's *Henriad* reflects the arc of this emerging distinction, situating the audience in the position of historical agents. Chapter One explores the way Shakespeare challenges audiences, both with anachronisms, and crowd scenes that engage the playgoers as co-creators by describing historical events as a form of theater that echoes the conditions of the drama's performance. These moments serve to begin the distancing effect on the audience that the rest of the tetralogy pursues. Chapter Two examines how spectators are forced to question historical truth in *1 & 2 Henry IV*, through the ways the reign of Richard II is surfaced as the subject of motivated reflection by a range of characters. Observing these characters misremembering events in the earlier play puts spectators in the position of impartial historial intermediaries. Chapter Three considers the connection between *Henry V* and Virgil's *Aeneid*, and the impact of the epic genre on playgoers, who must become historical agents involved in doing the imaginative work of the play. That the audience is so explicitly referred to puts them in a unique position in the play as co-creators of its outcome. A Coda on *The Merry Wives of Windsor* sutures the three chapters, in order to point the way to what the dissertation will become as a book, presenting *Merry Wives* as a folkloric, pastoral denouement to the *Henriad*. The ritualistic mocking of Falstaff by the wives and the community documents a form of domestic history that is cyclical, enabling him to live on in our imaginations, in an alternative ending to the one he receives in *Henry V*. The design of these plays is to educate audiences on how to participate in history

plays, and adapt them for their own uses. Achieving this, Shakespeare supersedes the earlier chronicle historiographical tradition, demonstrating that playing and play texts can dominate historical narratives. I contend that these plays facilitate the development of a new kind of historical lens through which audiences and readers of any era can view and experience history not merely as cyclical but as always emerging, constantly imprinting itself on what has come before.

The unity of the plays is demonstrated by modern performances that take on the cycle as a whole. This unity, however, is a porous one, since the "intertheatricality" of the plays extends to other non-Shakespearean history plays and public entertainments that helped shape the public sphere that Shakespeare was engaged in. The plays demonstrate an historical layering in which earlier periods of time are brought into creative contact with each other and with the moments of composition and performance, both in Shakespeare's lifetime and in subsequent centuries.

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To Journeys in the Green World. May there be many more.

Introduction

The Chorus of *Henry V* insists on the centrality of the audience in the creation of the play: " 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings, | Carry them here and there; jumping o'er times." (*HV, 29*) Audiences at plays in the late sixteenth century had immense power. The actors were mere "ciphers to this great accompt" (*HV*, 17), and the making of history depended on the imaginary forces of the audience. Spectators had the power to stop plays by booing them off the stage, as the famous instance of *Sejanus* (1603) demonstrates, or even to overrun them, as Thomas Heywood explains in an *Apology for Actors* (1612), when a play in Perin in Cornwall featuring a "battle on the stage with their drum and trumpets" received the panicked response of a "few idle shot in a bravado" from a group of unknown invading Spaniards, resulting in the audience surging out from the play and defeating the enemy.[1] In *The Gull's Hornbook* (1609), Thomas Dekker attests to the power of spectators at plays, particularly those who are sitting on the stage. "By sitting on the stage, you may lawfully presume to be a girder, and stand at the helm to steer the passage of scenes. [...] by being a justice in examining of plays, you shall put yourself into such true scenical authority that some poet shall not dare to present his muse rudely upon your eyes."[2] Dekker lists some of the ways that spectators can impact

[1] Heywood, *Apologie for Actors* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A03185.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext> Web. Accessed February 26, 2024.
[2] Thomas Dekker, *The Gull's Hornbook* ed. R. B. McKerrow, (New York: AMS Press, 1971) original published in London, 1609. <https://archive.org/details/gullshornbook00mckegoog/page/n92/mode/2up> Web. Accessed February 26, 2024. p. 66.

plays: they can distract other audience members by "tickling them with rushes, mew at passionate speeches; blare at merry; find fault with the music; whew at the children's action; whistle at the songs and above all curse the sharers."[3] The vicious behavior of the groundlings who throw dirt at the stage results in a "quaking Prologue", scared of being hooted, hissed or spat at.[4] Tiffany Stern notes that "whenever Shakespeare writes a scene for staged spectators, he always adds in their interaction with the performers [...] he was used to a visible, audible audience that insisted on being part of the performances they watched. He needed, then, texts that could control them."[5] The *Henriad* plays do just that by directly implicating and appealing to audiences, thereby achieving a project that develops a sustained relationship with spectators.

When the *Henriad* plays are appreciated holistically, it is possible to gain insight into the ways that Shakespeare was learning from the experience of playmaking by writing the plays, by aiding in the production of his works, and by responding both to the consciousness of spectators at live performances of his plays, as well as to his own play texts, as the *Henriad* sequence progresses. These plays have an epic quality to them, not only because of their concerns about the rise and fall of kings, but because of the role of the spectators when they are presented as a set by modern productions, such as the 2024 Guthrie Theater History Plays Marathon Days,

[3] Ibid.
[4] Dekker, p.62.
[5] Tiffany Stern, "Blackfriars Then and Now: Appearance, Actors, Audience" in *Shakespeare in the Light: essays in honor of Ralph Alan Cohen* ed. Paul Menzer and Amy R. Cohen (Madison NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2019) pp.1 – 9. (p. 8).

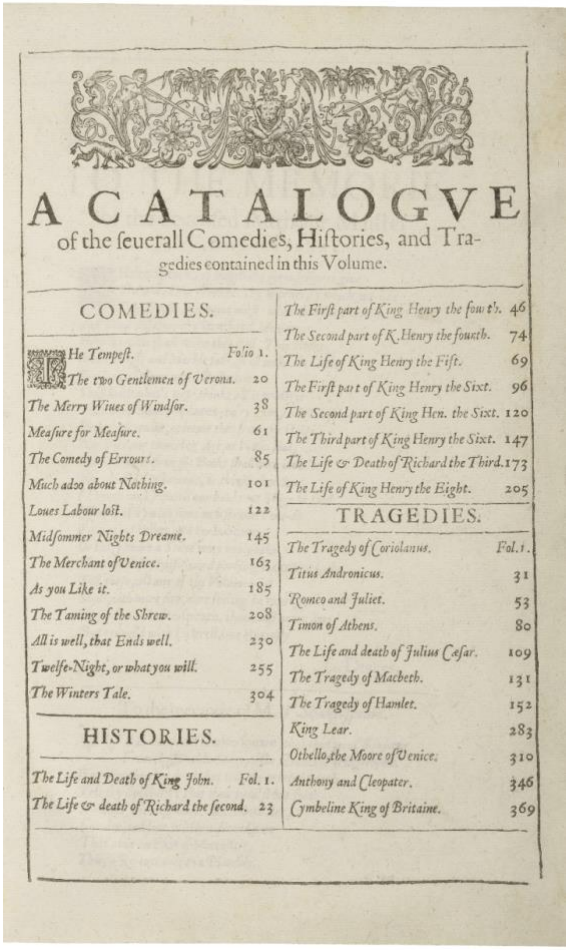
in Minneapolis which was described as "An Epic Experience."[6] In their epic quality, these history plays – especially *Henry V* – stir in spectators a belief of their capacity for action, to alter situations, and educate themselves in how to be active participants in their own history.[7] The *Henriad* plays reflect the ways a diverse community is not passive, or indoctrinated into believing an ideology, but rather by using their "working-house of thought" (*HV*, 5.23), as the Chorus of *Henry V* instructs, theater can be used by communities to develop a shared vision of reality. These plays demonstrate that the theater has the power to show people that the responsibility for deciding what it means to be members of a community lies with them.

Scholars of Shakespeare who are familiar with his history plays know the two main historical cycles he wrote as the First Tetralogy – featuring *1, 2 & 3 Henry VI* and *Richard III* – and the Second Tetralogy, or *Henriad*, written between 1595 and 1599 and comprising *Richard II*, *1 & 2 Henry IV*, and *Henry V*. The events of the *Henriad* predate the first sequence of plays by approximately twenty-three years, beginning with the death of Thomas of Woodstock in 1397, and ending with Henry V's marriage to Princess Katherine of France in 1420. Because the First Tetralogy was written earlier than the *Henriad*, audiences were already familiar with the story of the reluctant and weak Henry VI (the son of Henry V) and the tyranny that ensues with *Richard III*. The *Henriad* plays therefore serve as a "prequel," beginning in

[6] Shakespeare's History Plays | An Epic Experience. Guthrie Theater. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?utm_source=wordfly&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=FY24DEVO_HISTORY_Appeal_Final&utm_content=version_A&promo=44726&v=I4qSK_8RRXE&feature=youtu.be> Web. Accessed June 1 2024.
[7] Edward Bond, *Lear* (London: Methuen, 1983) p. xvii.

tragedy with *Richard II* and building towards epic with *Henry V*. When considering the education and participation of audiences in the creation of plays, the *Henriad* is the more interesting tetralogy, because it consistently involves its audience in doing the work of the play, while the plays of the First Tetralogy do not. These labels for the two major historical groupings of plays Shakespeare wrote did not exist in his lifetime; they are editorial impositions from the eighteenth century.[8] The term *Henriad* comes from a tradition that connects Shakespeare's plays to his classical sources, in particular Virgil's *Aeneid*. Emma Smith calls it a "commonplace of historical serial narrative to put the two parts of *Henry IV* together with *Henry V*, perhaps with *Richard II*, to produce a narrative of historical and character development that we might call the *Henriad*."[9] Although *The Merry Wives of Windsor* features seven of the *Henriad's* characters, with an emphasis on Falstaff, this play is even less likely to be considered alongside the history cycle, largely thanks to the editors of the First Folio of 1623 (Figure 1), who organized the history plays according to their genre and listed them chronologically, while also omitting Falstaff's name from all of the titles, thereby erasing the unifying feature they achieve in their quarto playbook forms.

[8] Mary Thomas Crane, "The Shakespearean Tetralogy" *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 36.3 (1985), pp. 282- 299. (p. 282).
[9] Emma Smith, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* Approaching Shakespeare Podcast, (University of Oxford, 2017) <https://media.podcasts.ox.ac.uk/engfac/approachingshakespeare/2017-10-23-the-merry-wives-of-windsor.srt> [Web. Accessed May 12, 2023].



A CATALOGVE
of the ſeuerall Comedies, Hiſtories, and Tragedies contained in this Volume.

COMEDIES.

HISTORIES.

TRAGEDIES.

Figure 1: First Folio Catalog Page.

The *Henriad* plays are often studied individually, and less frequently considered as one aesthetic whole, partly because of their vast divergence in style, and individual coherence, which means each play can easily be read or performed separately. There is no way to know if Shakespeare began writing *Richard II* with an arc of development toward *Henry V* in mind, and it is likely the *Henriad* plays were probably never performed as a sequence during the 1590's: with the exception of

Marlowe's two parts of *Tamburlaine* in 1594, plays in the sixteenth century were rarely performed on consecutive days.[10] While the *Henriad* plays stand on their own merit and do not need to be read together, I adopt the strategy of reading them sequentially in this dissertation because I believe that there is much to be gained from doing so. Shakespeare clearly wrote the plays in response to each other, and this is evidenced in the continuity of the historical narrative, as well as the appearance of the same characters, either in person or expressed through people's memories, and recurrent themes such as sovereignty, community, nationhood, and the idea of who should have the right to rule.

The unity of the *Henriad* plays is demonstrated on occasions when modern repertory theater companies take on the cycle as a whole. The RSC had a full day of *Henry IV/Henry V* as part of its 2006-08 "Glorious Moment" cycle. Shakespeare's Globe had a single ensemble performing these three plays in repertory in 2019 directed by Sarah Bedi.[11] There were special "trilogy days" throughout the summer

[10] Crane, "The Shakespearean Tetralogy" Crane examines Elizabethan attitudes to multiple part drama; Elizabethan dramatic traditions; and draws from evidence in Henslowe's diary. The reasons Crane identifies for two and three part plays being written in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were for the following reasons: "(1) in order to observe the unity of time (Richardus Tertius), (2) so that a sequel might capitalize on the success of a popular play (Tamburlaine), (3) in order to imitate Tamburlaine (Selimus), or (4) because the playwright wanted to tell a story that was too long to be shown in one play-a story that was almost always defined by the life of the title character." p. 294.

[11] The Globe's productions did not include *Richard II* at all in its cycle, which one reviewer claimed shifted the focus "away from the troubles of having and holding on to power" instead, focusing on the "education of a king," as the plays track the development of the young Prince of Wales from Hal, rebellious son and barfly extraordinaire, to Harry, the warrior-hero of the Battle of Agincourt." The Globe's productions wanted to "redeem *Henry IV Part 2*, by far the least popular of the three plays and often considered to be too much of a sequel to be staged by itself, and to give it a life of its own." and gave each play subtitles: "*Henry IV-1* becomes "Hotspur", *Henry IV-2* is subtitled "Falstaff", and *Henry V* is now

when all of the plays were performed, with *1 Henry IV* at noon, *Henry IV Part 2* at 4:00 p.m, and *Henry V* at 8:00 p.m.[12] Similarly, the "History Plays Marathon Days" at the Guthrie Theater were performed by the same cast of twenty-five actors, and showed *Richard II* at 10:00 a.m, the two parts of *Henry IV* adapted into one play at 3:00 p.m, and *Henry V* at 8:30 p.m.[13] Because each *Henriad* play is so memorable and distinct, they do not need to be performed one after another, but when they are, marketing for the plays makes it clear that something extra special is being offered. The three-part theatrical event at the Guthrie Theater was described as a momentous and historic occasion that was meaningful to the Minneapolis community: the "dramatic feat marks a return to a historic moment for the Guthrie, as it was performed in rotating repertory on our stage more than thirty years ago."[14] Studying these plays as a comprehensive, linear project that seeks to create community, in line with recent performance initiatives at theaters works to demonstrate the capabilities these plays have in achieving communal identities with audiences from different backgrounds, in specific locations.

One of the most important effects of the *Henriad* is the co-creation of meaning in live theater with spectators who interact with the drama. Shakespeare

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called "Harry England". Eva de Valk. "The Henriad": Shakespeare's Globe. Plays International and Europe. <https://playsinternational.org.uk/the-henriad-shakespeares-globe/> Web. Accessed May 31, 2024.

[12] 'Henry IV Part 1 or Hotspur' Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, London. <https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/whats-on/henry-iv-part-1-2019/> Web. [Accessed January 23, 2024].

[13] Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis. <https://www.guthrietheater.org/shows-and-tickets/2023-2024-season/richard-ii/> Web. Accessed 23 January, 2024].

[14] <https://www.guthrietheater.org/shows-and-tickets/2023-2024-season/>

achieves this by the layering multiple playtexts, and collapsing or buckling time periods across plays inter-theatrically. With the *Henriad*, as with other history plays Shakespeare wrote, he is not concerned with temporal fidelity. As James Shapiro remarks about *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare appears to have "cared little about historical accuracy, [and] wanted to collapse the difference between classical Rome and Elizabethan London."[15] When appreciated in its entirety, it is apparent that Shakespeare is both learning how to develop the tetralogy as a self-contained series, as well as a project that challenges audiences to think of different texts and time periods, and plays by other writers. Doing this, Shakespeare encourages spectators to validate or make judgements about actions characters make later on, drawing from their knowledge of earlier plays. The idea that Elizabethan audiences needed to see the plays on consecutive days in order to come to an understanding about them underestimates the capacity of these spectators' memories. Spoken verse was "a feature in the literate memory" of the period.[16] Early modern actors in repertoire were skilled at remembering "up to eight-hundred lines for each play in a repertory presenting more than a dozen different plays each month."[17] Playgoers too, were likely to have been skillful, as learning by rote was a widespread practice in schools. They could rely on their memories of previous iterations of earlier plays and they could also buy playtexts to consult in the playhouse, as these spaces were populated

[15] James Shapiro, *A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare: 1599* (New York: Harper Collins, 2005) Shapiro comments on Julius Caesar. p. 158.
[16] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) p. 97.
[17] Ibid.

by salespeople who sold food, drink and tobacco as well as "printed entertainments in the form of pamphlets and books."[18] Spectators could therefore potentially hold copies of earlier tetralogy plays in their hands at the time of watching another, and were therefore able to cross-check characters' speeches across plays. This might have been done before the play began. Book-owners would arrive early to a play, and "hoping to draw attention to themselves, would recite and analyze the texts in their hands."[19] Aided by printed playtexts and by their exposure to other performances, playgoers were the co-creators of meaning. The plays at some moments — such as the narrated crowd scenes of *Richard II* and with the iconic Chorus of *Henry V* — encourage the audience to think metacognitively. These moments call attention to the thought processes, perception, and understanding of the audience, and function as opportunities for learning and reflection on what it means to be part of historical drama.

The set of methodologies that inform my approach in this project are interdisciplinary, combining theater history, performance studies, book history, and literary analysis to offer a rereading of the *Henriad*. I employ analysis of other early modern historical plays and forms in which the past was represented to reconstruct the *Henriad's* historical background. Other texts I explore include the chronicle

[18] Tiffany Stern, 'Theatre' and 'Play+House': Naming Spaces in the Time of Shakespeare from Part III - Playhouses, in Simon Smith and Emma Whipday (eds.) *Playing and Playgoing in Early Modern England: Actor, Audience and Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022) pp. 181-261.
[19] Tiffany Stern, 'Watching as Reading: The Audience and the Written Text in Shakespeare's Playhouse' in *How To Do Things With Shakespeare: New Approaches, New Essays* ed. Laurie Maguire (New Jersey: Wiley Blackwell, 2008). pp. 136-159.

history plays *The Life and Death of Jack Straw* (1593), *Cambises , King Of Persia* (1584), *The Famous Victories of Henry V* (1583), George Puttenham's *The Art of English Poesy* (1589), and Virgil's *Aeneid* (30 to 19 BCE). Alongside this, I offer analysis of the *Henriad* plays themselves in order to explore their unique nature. I adopt approaches from early modern theater historians who have recently expanded our understanding of what playgoing entailed and revised the term "playgoer," questioning what the difference was between attending a play and participating in other popular forms of entertainment in early modern London, from bear baiting to bowling. Throughout, I draw on different fields of study to explore how Shakespeare transformed the didactic vernacular history play genre of the 1590's into a more fluid genre with dialogic capabilities that give rise to moments of teaching and training for playgoers.

The premise of this project is that through *Richard II*, *1 & 2 Henry IV*, and *Henry V,* Shakespeare develops a technique of historiographical layering.[20] The *Henriad* plays generate an experience for spectators of witnessing multiple layers of time at once, that are written over what came before, for example, in *Richard II,* biblical postlapsarian history is written onto medieval English history, which in turn is transcribed onto the Elizabethan moment. At the same time, the audience are also

[20] Murat Öğütcü, in an examination of liminal time and space in *Richard II,* uses the word "palimpsest" to explain the same effect. Öğütcü also describes the Elizabethan stage as a "heterotopia." "Elizabethan Audience Gaze at History Plays" Liminal Time and Space in Shakespeare's Richard II." *Audience and Reception in the Early Modern Period,* ed. John R. Decker (New York: Routledge, 2022) pp 54-80. A palimpsest can be a "multilayered record; reused or altered while still retaining traces of its earlier form" (*OED, n,* 2.b)

called upon to witness characters in the plays making inter-theatrical references, such as with characters in *Henry IV* self-consciously quoting from *Richard II*, or misremembering events in that play. By doing this, Shakespeare educates the audience to become historical intermediaries – as they are situated as the conscious recipients of these multiple historiographical layers – and communal thinkers, as they are participating collectively in the histories they are witnessing, yet are also at a remove, which enables them to set themselves at a critical distance from what they are seeing.

The vernacular history play genre and tradition: 1530s-90s

In early modern England, the vernacular history play arose out of multiple native traditions such as "the saints' lives or the Vice character in the medieval morality plays."[21] The *Corpus Christi* procession tradition was a key part of the origins of plays concerned with Tudor providentialism and the notion of an "unbroken line of rule by divine right"[22] John Bale's *Kynge Johan* (1536) has been noted as "our first history play because it deliberately uses chronicle material in order to accomplish several legitimate historical purposes."[23] This play also incorporates morality elements side by side with chronicle sources.[24] Irving Ribner identifies the

[21] Ton Hoenselaars, (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Contemporary Dramatists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) p. 2.
[22] David Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Shapes of Time*, (New England: University Press of New England, 1982) p.45
[23] Irving Ribner, *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957) p. 39.
[24] Ribner, p. 37.

roots of the history play as being in "the morality play, the conqueror play and Senecan tragedy, [with] the providential view of history found its fullest earlier embodiment in the guild cycles."[25] Thomas Legge's three part Latin play, *Richardus Tertius* (1579) is an early British history play that imitates Seneca's style.

Countryside folk traditions and festivities that presented plays perennially also fulfilled the conditions of national historical drama in the early sixteenth century. Ribner and Benjamin Griffin explore folk plays such as those featuring Robin Hood, and the extraordinary example of the lost play, *Hock Tuesday* (1575), of which only a description from a pamphlet is extant.[26] The play was part of the perennial festivities for Hocktide in Coventry and required the participation of the community in a battle of the sexes over two days: "On Hock Monday the men were entitled to 'hock,' or catch and bind, the women and extort money from them; on Tuesday the women practiced the same upon the men."[27] There followed a "Hocktide sword dance and free-for-all fight between the Danes and English", to commemorate the massacre of the Danes by King Ethelred on St. Brice's night in 1002. Commercial theater was therefore, as Erika Lin articulates, "fully imbricated in the representationally porous and generically hybrid forms of entertainment that characterized seasonal events" – those such as May games, morris dances, and Robin Hood plays. Callan Davies explains that the experience of playgoing was tied to a "vast network of historically

[25] M. C. Bradbrook Reviewed Works. *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 1967, (18. 2) pp. 188-189. (p. 189).
[26] Ribner, p. 33.
[27] Benjamin Griffin, "The Breaking of the Giants: Historical Drama in Coventry and London" *English Literary Renaissance* , (29. 1) Archival Studies (1999), pp. 3-21. p. 6.

specific, habitual modes of thinking and feeling" so that the category of 'theatre' as a 'negotiation' with other forms of entertainment, including a game culture that [...] extends to bowling.[28]

These kinds of "storial shows" or plays that include games and other forms of folk and traditional entertainment indicate that "the history play is not a development out of either the tragic or the morality form, as has generally been held."[29] Some scholars argue that the history play is a more independent genre, separate from comedy and tragedy, having derived from local European traditions, and is not so much rooted in the classical tradition. Griffin's example, *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* is a play that participates in this cyclical tradition, but which also begins to incorporate "the nascent permanent theater repertoire" due to its situation within the Reformation.[30] While European traditions clearly played a part in the development of the vernacular history play genre, by the 1590's the styles and genres of the ancient classical writers were adopted by playwrights and combined with the medieval historical chronicles to create the new play form. The history play is a development of the sixteenth century: while Aristotle's *Poetics* (330 BCE) is often used as a frame of reference for early modern tragic and comic play genres, he did not write about a chronicle history play genre, although some tragedies were considered historical, or to be about history. Aristotle provided the Renaissance with "what the

[28] Callan Davies, citing Erika Lin 'Festivity', in *Early Modern Theatricality*, ed. Henry S. Turner (Oxford, 2013), 212–29, in his article "Bowling Alleys and Playhouses in London, 1560–90." *Early Theatre*, 2019, (22. 2) pp. 39-66. (p. 42).
[29] Griffin, *Playing the Past*, p. 62.
[30] Ibid.

poet shared with the historian, despite the avowed differences [...] historical narrative and poetic fiction can intersect, one with a factual, another with a moral claim to truth."[31]

Playwrights crafting history plays for the commercial stage in London developed the genre from the cyclical perennial festivities of the countryside, drawing on chronicle history source texts. David Kastan points out the "formal link between history and drama," reminding us that "the medieval cycles have been shown to be a complex and sophisticated imitation of *historia sacra*, drawing shape and significance from the playwright's understanding of the shape and significance of history."[32] The purposes or uses of history for Elizabethan writers can be understood in literature such as the *Defense of Poetry*. Here, Sidney protests against the inaccuracies of historical poetic writing: "the many particularities of battles which no man could affirm, or [...] long orations put in the mouths of great kings and captains, which it is certain they never pronounced."[33] Thomas Heywood's *Apology for Actors* shows that some playwrights thought plays should be didactic, and teach lessons to spectators. Antiquarian research and investigation of sources is also discussed as a driving motive for writers.[34] E. M. W. Tillyard's influential *Shakespeare's History Plays* (1944) argues that the intention of Shakespeare's history plays was to keep the past

[31] Teresa Grant and Barbara Ravelhofer, (eds). *English Historical Drama, 1500-1660: Forms Outside the Canon* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) pp. 2-3.
[32] Kastan, *Shapes of Time*, p. 4.
[33] Sidney *Defense of Poetry*, Penguin. p. 6.
[34] Warren Chernaik, *The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare's History Plays*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) p. 5.

alive as well as to teach the virtues of order and degree, the evils of disorder and disobedience."[35] In 1989, G.K. Hunter defined the history play genre as plays about barons which appealed to patriotic audiences while highlighting government weaknesses."[36]

The main focus of playwrights using chronicle sources was to condense and adapt historical material from works such as Holinshed's *Chronicles*, Samuel Daniel's *Civil Wars*, and sometimes also the content of other chronicle plays. "The history play as Shakespeare, Marlowe, and others developed it made use of certain formal conventions and a structure which ranged from the tightly controlled to the episodic and expansive. Each of Shakespeare's history plays can be thought of as an experiment in scope and form."[37] The careful line playwrights had to tread when dealing with history is noted by critics, particularly with plays like *Henry VIII*, which crept only a generation away from Shakespeare's own time period. David Bevington notes that Thomas Preston's *Cambises* flatters Queen Elizabeth I by "the contrast between her and the conventional tyrant."[38] Meanwhile, *Jack Straw* echoes the Tudor regime, exemplifying what he coins "historical whitewash" and avoiding the "real problems of injustice under monarchical government."[39] While many scholars see

[35] Chernaik, p. 6.
[36] Grant and Ravelhofer, p. 1.
[37] John Margeson (ed.) 'Introduction' in William Shakespeare, *King Henry VIII*. *The New Cambridge Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). pp. 1-60. (p. 37).
[38] David Bevington *Tudor Drama and Politics* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1968) p. 156
[39] Bevington, *Tudor Drama and Politics,* p. 238.

John Ford's *Perkin Warbeck* (1633) as the last great history play, Ribner sees this as a "revival of a dramatic type which had been dead for some decades."[40]

While the First Folio's Catalog, with its prescriptive headlines – COMEDIES. HISTORIES. TRAGEDIES. – gives the impression of strict genre divisions that categorize the plays, these genres are fluid, and the history play made it possible to incorporate both comedy and tragedy. Sidney was not comfortable with the way playwrights merged genres, calling the mingling of kings with clowns "mongrel tragicomedy."[41] Stephen Orgel explores examples in Heywood's *Apology for Actors* that show the therapeutic and *cathartic* qualities of playgoing, particularly with tragedies. The example of *intermezzi* between the acts of tragedy, interspersed with comedy, "to satisfy a taste for variety" shows how early modern writers "recommended that the emotional impact be mitigated, lest the spectators be utterly overwhelmed."[42] Even within the structure of plays themselves, then, comedy was usually interspersed to provide relief from the tragic moments.

The anonymous true-crime historical domestic play *A Warning For Fair Women* (1599), is a good example of a history play that combines the comic and tragic genres.[43] The tone of *A Warning* sets out as comic but quickly darkens as Mistress

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[40] Ribner, p. 3.
[41] Ibid. p. 46.
[42] Stephen Orgel, "Shakespeare and the Kinds of Drama" *Critical Inquiry*, 1979, 6.1 (1979), pp. 107-123. (p.117-18).
[43] The quarto title pages of *A Warning, Richard II, 2 Henry IV,* and *Henry V* and *Merry Wives* all attest that these plays were in the repertory of the Lord Chamberlain's Men. This demonstrates that when each of these plays were first performed, it was by the same group of actors and could well have been within the same season. Ann C. Christenen provides the 'immediate known repertory context for *A Warning* is William Shakespeare's *1 and 2 Henry IV* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and a two- part play, *The Seven Deadly Sins,* which is no

Drurie encourages Browne to murder Anne Saunders' husband, a real-life historical tragedy. The play features an Induction with a dispute between personifications of Tragedy, History, and Comedy.[44] Although the play is based on a true story, when History enters the stage, and later sees the heavens hung with black, she realizes there is no space for any genre but Tragedy:

> **HISTORY** My meaning was to have been here today, [*to Comedy*]
> But meeting with my Lady Tragedy,
> She scolds me off.
> And, Comedy, except thou canst prevail,
> I think she means to banish us the stage.
>
> **COMEDY** Tut, tut, she cannot: she may for a day
> Or two perhaps be had in some request,
> But once a week if we do not appear,
> She shall find few that will attend her here.
>
> (*A Warning for Fair Women,* 32-40)

While Comedy and History say that they cannot coexist in a tragic play, they also acknowledge the need for a variety of play genres for audiences. Comedy and History plays should appear at least once a week on stage, or else the spectators will soon get bored and stop attending. Ironically, the uncompromising view the Induction of *A Warning* attempts to express does not actually fit with the structure of the play itself,

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longer extant.' Christenen, *A Warning for Fair Women: Adultery and Murder in Shakespeare's Theater*. (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2021). p. xxiv.

[44] Ribner, p. 28. See also Grant and Ravelhofer, who disagree with Ribner's point - using this play to argue that "the drum and ensign carried by History imply that she is a solder, offering a clear distinction…" They claim that this play, published in 1599, actually emphasizes the growing distinction between the three genres, and that in fact, this play demonstrates that Shakespeare's history plays had been "hogging the stage" at this point. *English Historical Drama, 1500-1600: Forms Outside the Cannon* (New York: Palgrave Macmillain, 2008) pp. 12- 13.

which has three parts that each have a different tone: dark comedy for the first segment, tragedy for the second part, and history for the final portion of the play.[45] All three genres are present in this play, and they are blended together still more in Shakespare's histories. The line 'Hung be the heavens with black' (*1 HVI*, 1.1.1), opens Shakespeare's first history cycle with an indication of tragedy to the audience, and is evidence that Shakespare saw tragedy as part of history, just as he incorporates Falstaff in the comedic Eastcheap tavern scenes in the two parts of *Henry IV*.

Most scholars agree on a narrative that documents the "rise and fall" of the history play genre, with Shakespeare as the master playwright, which peaked toward the end of the 1590's. Scholars have sought to distinguish between Shakespeare and other playwrights in style, and to emphasize Shakespeare's unique contribution to the genre. Features like "Englishness" and "pastness" are noted to be particularly Shakespearean, and many see his work as the pinnacle of the genre by contrasting his plays with their source texts.[46] Griffin, for example, discusses of Shakespeare's "more romantic treatment" of the plot of *The Famous Victories*, which does the work of "bridging the gap of what we term popular and official cultures," noting the way Shakespeare uses and supersedes *The Famous Victories* in the *Henriad*, thereby "retaining some close links to festive drama," while simultaneously offering something new.[47] Exploring other early modern history or chronicle plays that deal

[45] Ann C. Christensen 'Introduction' *A Warning for Fair Women: Adultery and Murder in Shakespeare's Theater*, (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2021) p. xxvi-i.
[46] Griffin, *Playing the Past*, p. 21.
[47] Ibid. p. 62.

with the same events that Shakespeare's histories explore, such as *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England* (c. 1589), *Woodstock* (1592–3) and *The Famous Victories* can help us to understand how different in style Shakespeare was from many of his contemporaries. Ton Hoenselaars explains that that Shakespeare was "less concerned with the self-image of Protestant England as the Elect Nation than were a number of his contemporaries," and that, while Elizabethan Robin Hood plays were popular, which celebrated a nation of yeoman and good fellows, Shakespeare was more interested in monarchy, and "Shakespeare-the-Historian seems to have had little interest in the merry members of this community [...] in the Shakespearian histories there is little room for the suffering commoner."[48] In his exploration of the motif of disguise in history plays, Richard Helgerson agrees, commenting that in plays by contemporaries, when kings are in disguise, they achieve fellowship, but in *Henry V*, this does not work out: "The meeting in *Henry V* does just the reverse. It reveals an unbridgeable gulf, a gulf no good fellowship could ever span, between commoner and king."[49]

Some scholars in recent decades have committed to focusing on other history play writers and to broaden their approaches to the genre. They deconstruct the "rise and fall of the history play" narrative by decentering Shakespeare, and question the notion that he was the "perfecter" of the history play, instead examining the radically

[48] Hoenselaars, *Cambridge Companion*, p. 10.
[49] Richard Helgerson, "Shakespeare and Contemporary Dramatists of History" in *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works. Volume II, The Histories* ed. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard. (2003) pp. 26-47 (p. 33).

different views of Kings and of England that are presented by other playwrights, and "consider any play, irrespective of its formal shape or fictional element, which represents or purports to represent, a historical past, native or foreign, distant or recent."[50] Critics who challenge the narrative of "Shakespeare the history-play-perfecter" instead suggest that readers should explore other plays and texts of the period by different writers that depict or stand in for alternative historical events. Paulina Kewes insists that history plays do not have to be "English" but can be about any nation or ethnicity. She points out the sheer variety of plays that exist alongside Shakespeare's, and how history in these plays represents a much broader genre. According to Kewes, Elizabethan history plays were about so much more than what we find depicted in Shakespeare's histories, as they are not only about kings and royal families but feature so many common people and are set in many different countries. Kewes suggests "rather than comparing one history play with another, might we not do better to set historical drama alongside other forms in which the past was represented and with which it so often overlapped?"[51] Some examples provided are "other modes of staging history such as coronation pageants, mayoral pageants, Accession Day tilts and other martial games, installations in the Order of the Garter, [and] royal progresses and entertainments mounted by local authorities."[52] The recent coronation of King Charles III provides an interesting glimpse of history from our

[50] Paulina Kewes "The Elizabethan History Play: A True Genre?" in *A Companion to Shakespeare's works. Volume II, The histories* ed. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard. (2003) p. 188.
[51]Kewes p. 189.
[52] Ibid.

modern perspective, a moment that witnessed traditions continued across the centuries, that makes use of some relics from the medieval period, such as the coronation chair, which dates back to 1308, and can be helpful in visualizing moments of ceremony in history plays.

As well as research into other historical ceremonies, other scholars look into other, more commonplace activities such as that occurred simultaneously with history playgoing, such as spectator sports and ball games. Callan Davies explains that other activities were taking part alongside the theaters, for example "to the area north of Moorgate, there were Bowyers, Fletchers, Bow-string makers and such like, now little occupied; Archery giving place to a number of bowling Alleys, and Dicing houses, which in all places are increased, and too much frequented"[53] These kinds of activities can be found in the history plays: Isabel's serving lady suggests playing bowls in *Richard II* (3.4.3), Falstaff says he has "not diced above five times a week" (*1HIV*, 3.3.17) and Hal is known to enjoy tennis, evident from the Dauphin's gift of a box of tennis balls. Bear baiting, too occurred in the playhouses these history plays were performed, and moments such as Slender's mention of the famous bear, Sackerson, in *Merry Wives*, are reminders of this. These kinds of activities and games should be taken into consideration when reconstructing the conditions that gave rise to the history play genre, not only because the plays feature characters engaging in or discussing these types of pastimes, but because audiences were standing in close

[53] Davies, p. 41.

proximity to houses that hosted them, and probably also took part in the traditions themselves.

Textual Memorabilia, Playhouses and Spectators

The very nature of a play itself as an historical event and the playhouse as a space in which spectators can watch a version of history unfolding has led scholars to focus on the impact on audiences and to question rigid chronologies in the history play genre. With the chronicle sources, historical events were recorded selectively, but drama is able to "attempt a mimesis of the process [...] of history itself."[54] Lucy Munro has questioned the uses of nomenclature surrounding the field in general, and suggests that we "resist separating the aesthetic into a distinct field of enquiry [...] Rather than insisting on rigid chronologies or temporalities, it may be more productive to explore the multiple and fractured relationships between various temporalities, and between multiple versions of the past, present and future; to acknowledge, in Kathleen Biddick's phrase, a ''temporality that is not one'' (104).[55] Griffin uses the example of the "real time" festivities of Henry VIII's court in the 1520's as enacting an historical event while simultaneously memorializing it. Public entertainments could also memorialize the event at the very moment they were taking place, so when spectators attended a play, there was a sense that what they witnessed was history taking place before their eyes. Lord Mayor's shows, royal

[54] Kastan, *Shapes of Time* p. 3.
[55] Lucy Munro, citing Kathleen Biddick, *The Typological Imaginary: Circumcision, Technology, History* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013) in *Shakespeare and the uses of the past: Critical approaches and current debates* (2011) p. 120.

entries or masques not only reflect and represent history but also *make* history, thereby adding an extraordinary dimension to the historical characters and themes represented in the fiction. These kinds of entertainments, plays included, were subsequently printed with commentary available for wider public consumption. Printed editions commemorating the occasion would frequently state that they were mementos of history. Ben Jonson's masques in quarto frequently functioned as textual commemorations, such as the 1608 quarto of *The Masque at Lord Haddington's Marriage containing The Hue and Cry after Cupid*. The title page advertises it as "THE DESCRIPTION of the Masque. *With the NUPTIAL Songs*. Celebrating the happy Marriage of JOHN, *Lord* RAMSEY, *Vicount Hadington*, with the Lady ELIZABETH RATCLIFFE, Daughter to the right Honor: ROBERT, Earle of *Sussex*." Here the quarto attempts to stand in for the historical event, offering as much as possible a remembrance of it through a description of the occasion, and by documenting the songs. Quarto title pages of plays had a similar purpose. The first quarto of *Richard II* states: "The tragedie of King Richard the second. As it hath been publikely acted by the Right Honourable the Lord Chamberlain his servants."[56] In this case, the play's title page is advertising past public performances in a playhouse. Readers are encouraged to imagine or to recall a historical time this play was performed, by a particular acting troupe.

[56] "Shakespeare Quartos" British Library, <https://www.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/richard2bibs.html> [Web. Accessed 13 October 2021].

While readers may purchase the text of a play and think of it as a witness to the history of that play taking place, audiences at the theater watching a history play are drawn in to the fabric of the play (and therefore also to history itself) through metatheatrical moments or crowd scenes that require the audience stand in for the historical crowds or witnesses to events depicted in the play. Grant and Ravelhofer suggest that real historical events can work as sources for historical drama, even "a city teeming with people and [...] Communal memory."[57] When *Henry V's* Chorus speaks directly to the audience of the wooden O of the cockpit, we understand that on some level, these history plays are both for and about the present in which they occur. Revisionist scholars of theater history have revealed recently that playhouses, previously thought of as "permanent" buildings, were in fact the opposite: temporary, multipurpose, some even dangerous, considered by the authorities easy to pull down and having a tendency to collapse.[58] With this in mind, the Chorus's description of the location where the play is being performed can be read anew to better understand the demands being made of an early modern audience.

CHORUS Suppose within the girdle of these walls
Are now confined two mighty monarchies,
Whose high upreared and abutting fronts
The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder.
(*Henry V*, Prologue. 19-22)

[57] Grant & Ravelhofer, p. 16.
[58] Andy Kesson, "Playhouses, Plays and Theater History: Rethinking the 1580's" in *Shakespeare Studies Vol. XLV*, ed. James R. Siemon and Diana E. Henderson (New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 2017) pp. 19-40. (p. 32). Kesson responds to the previously agreed notion championed by scholars like Herbert Berry, that Burbage's Theatre was a "permanent" playhouse.

The "unworthy scaffold" might indicate a stage that is scruffy or flimsy, or in a state of disrepair, inside a "wooden O" vulnerable to fires, as we know from the fire at the Globe playhouse in 1613, during a performance of *All Is True*.[59] The "high upreared and abutting fronts" could be read both as the faces of the two monarchies of England and France, but understood doubly as part of the architecture of the playhouse, a part of the building, perhaps the pillars propping up the heavens that project, touching, or leaning against each other "at one end for rest or support."[60] This definition of abutting does not paint a very sturdy picture of the playhouse, adding to the general idea of the interior being a temporary structure that is not necessarily architecturally sound, possibly even "perilous," like the narrow ocean we are invoked to imagine. If the first spectators of this play in 1599 were watching inside a playhouse of a risky, temporary condition, the imperative of the Chorus to "work" their imaginations on the play emphasizes their experience as contingent historical beings. While the playhouse is pointed out to them to be old and run down, the phenomenological experience of being made acutely aware of their own bodies in that particular space and time would enhance their own historical consciousness and their understanding that it is their role to do the historiographical work on this history play.

Scholars not only question our assumptions about playhouse buildings, like the "wooden O" or "cockpit" the Chorus describes; they also revise our understanding

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[59] "What Happened to the First Globe?" Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. <https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/discover/shakespeares-world/the-globe/#:~:text=Disaster%20struck%20the%20Globe%20in,down%20in%20about%20an%20hour.> Web. Accessed Jan 19 2023.

[60] *OED*, v, 3.a.

of early modern audiences. Michael West has revisited Andrew Gurr's notion of the term "playgoer." He establishes that in the 1580s there was no noun that described people who habitually attended plays while they were not in the very act of attending one. There was no term corresponding to Gurr's term "playgoer." West instead lists other descriptions such as "assemblies, auditors, multitudes, beholders, hearers or spectators."[61] These people could be known to frequent a play. From the 1580s onward, "Londoners were actively learning how to speak and think about the new activity of playgoing."[62] Moreover, the activity of playgoing and play performances may have been far more "scrappy" than we previously thought. Playhouse spectators may have used playhouses to enjoy elements other than the play. Visitors might "enjoy parts of the play, some enjoy the social space, some enjoy the food, and some the dancing [...] certain scenes or set-pieces might be desired without care to the coherency of a whole play."[63] Throughout the 1580's then, and indeed, midway through the 1590's, playgoing was not understood to be a coherent activity. "The play event was not always conceived as one group selling a product to another, but instead as an activity in which all of those present – both players and playgoers – participated."[64] With this in mind, plays like *Henry V,* that refer to the playhouse and directly address the audience, can be understood as Shakespeare training what were

[61]Michael West, "Were there Playgoers During the 1580's?" in *Shakespeare Studies Vol. XLV*, ed. James R. Siemon and Diana E. Henderson (New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 2017) pp. 68-76. (p. 68).
[62]Ibid. p. 69.
[63] Davies, p. 43.
[64] West, p. 70.

already newly conceived groups of spectators to understand themselves in relation to history and to his specific tetralogy. *Henry V* repeatedly insists that playhouse audiences are instrumental in historiographical meaning making, and in order to help them do this work, the play makes spectators of their own historical consciousness.

The folkloric traditions of the history play, such as the *Corpus Christi*, medieval guild cycle plays, were elements Shakespeare was influenced by, and may have even participated in as a child. He evidently used classical works and chronicles to select and compress historical events into play form. Meanwhile, the specific playing conditions that the London playhouses provided inspired Shakespeare to develop the unique project of educating his audience through the *Henriad* plays. While other history plays and royal pageants or mayoral shows might achieve a similar effect of layering time for audiences so they feel that history is being made in that particular moment, Shakespeare's *Henriad* goes one step further: to use the theater itself as a new location in which history is made, and to educate audiences on options for participating in it.

Critical Receptions of the *Henriad*

The reputation of the *Henriad* in the critical tradition has largely been overshadowed by the way critics have responded to *Henry V*. One element that has prevented scholars from seeing the *Henriad* holistically is because *Henry V* is so different from the three earlier plays. Many scholars have expressed disappointment

with *Henry V*, a play they view as lacking in elements the *Henry IV* plays provided.[65] Alison M. Jack track's Hal's prodigal behavior and eventual redemption in *Henry V*, considering a prodigal narrative to be the cohesive factor that unites the plays, explaining that this revelation comes through in live performances: "The focus on Hal did not come until all four plays began to be staged in sequence, and his rise to political power was perceived to be a thread running through them all, with Falstaff's descent as a counterbalancing movement."[66] While Hal's behavior certainly plays into and complicates the prodigal trope, other characters share prodigal characteristics too, including Richard, Falstaff, and Fenton. Viewing *Henry V* as the final play of the *Henriad* and reading it alongside *Richard II* and *1 & 2 Henry IV* helps us to understand why this play might feel lacking when read individually. Yet this play is arguably more compelling when understood as the culmination of a project in which Shakespeare steadily requires more from his audience, and hands them the greatest agency. In the previous *Henriad* plays, the audience have been impressed upon to process multiple temporal ideas at once, both drawing on their own shared history, as well as to think about intertextual connections with other plays, and as having to reconsider *Richard II*. *Henry V* is the play that finally overtly hands over the agency to the audience to do some of the imaginative "work" on the play themselves so that

[65] Warren Chernaik, *The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare's History Play*s, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). (p. 147). Chernaik has surveyed the unpopularity of *Henry V* with critics, pointing out that it has been an unpopular play, with many disliking the king in comparison with his complexity as Hal in the *Henry IV* plays. Some scholars that have expressed dislike for the play include Gary Taylor, John Masefield, Mark Van Doren; and even Tillyard.

[66] Alison M. Jack, *The Prodigal Son in English and American Literature*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) p. 56.

they are now fully aware of themselves as historical intermediaries. Antony Hammond sees the audience as paying customers who are losing out by having to participate and do work on the play – but I do not see audience engagement in a play as either a negative nor an economic action.[67] The play fully immerses and hands over agency to spectators, insisting that they pause and philosophically observe their historical moment, whether that be at the end of the 1590's, when audiences and acting companies were evolving to become understood as distinct from one another for the first time, or staged during the Jacobean era after courtly audiences had recently witnessed the grandeur of their new king's coronation (or even when performed today).[68]

From the eighteenth century until the 1960's critics of *Henry V* have expressed mixed responses that mainly focused on King Henry's character; the figurative diction of the Chorus, and the absence of Falstaff. Many critics of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries shared the view that the scenes with Princess Katherine should be omitted. In 1714, Charles Gildon called the love scenes "betwixt Henry V and Catharine extravagantly silly and unnatural [...] it adds no Beauty, but gives a patch'd and pye-bald Dialogue of now Beauty or Force."[69] In 1765, Samuel

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[67] Anthony Hammond, 'It must be your imagination then": The Prologue and the Plural Text in Henry V and Elsewhere' in *Fanned and Winnowed Opinions: Shakespearean Essays* ed. John W. Mahon and Thomas A. Pendleton (London: Methuen, 1987), 133-50. (p. 135).
[68] West notes that "playing and playgoing were only hazily distinguished in the 1580's. In the 1590's, print was something that helped to distinguish a separation: "During the 1580's these distinctions that we now take for granted - between play text and performance, playgoer and player, were only hesitantly beginning to emerge." (p. 71-2).
[69] From Charles Gildon, *Remarks on the Plays of Shakespeare. Works of Shakespeare IX*, 1714. Cited in Michael Quinn (ed.) *Shakespeare: Henry V A Casebook*.(Bristol: Macmillan, 1969).

Johnson mourned the loss of Falstaff from *Henry V,* and felt that "the poet's matter failed him in the fifth act, and he was glad to fill it up with whatever he could get."[70] In 1817, William Hazlitt listed King Henry V's many negative traits, and wondered what makes him compelling: "he was careless, dissolute, and ambitious; – idle, or doing mischief [...] How then do we like him? We like him in the play. There he is a very amiable monster, a very splendid pageant. As we like to gaze at a panther or a young lion in their cages in the Tower [...] we take poetical delight in the boasts and feats of our young Harry."[71] G.G. Gervinus in 1863 noted the importance of the Chorus in encouraging us to rally behind King Henry, whose "elevated poetry places the hero of his poem in the splendid heroic light in which from his unassuming nature he cannot place himself."[72] In contrast to Hazlitt, A.C. Swinburne expressed in 1880 that "no completer incarnation could be shown us of the militant Englishman [...] with the highest, the purest, the noblest quality of English character that his just and far-seeing creator has endowed him."[73]

At the turn of the century, some scholars saw Henry as more favorable. In 1909, A. C. Bradley, while acknowledging that Henry had lost much of the wit he had from previous plays, noted that he is "deservedly a favorite, and particularly so with English readers, being, as he is, perhaps the most distinctively English of all

[70] Anthony Brennan Harvester *New Critical Introductions to Shakespeare: Henry V* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992) p. xxxv.
[71] Quinn, *Casebook*, quoting William Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, 1817. P. 36-7.
[72] Quinn, quoting G.G. Gervinus, Shakespeare Commentaries, trs. 1863). pp.40-41.
[73] Quinn, quoting A.C.Swinburne, A Study of Shakespeare 1880) pp. 47-48.

Shakespeare's men. In *Henry V* he is treated as a national hero."[74] In his survey of the critical reception of *Henry V* in 1992, Anthony Brennan offers an explanation for the negative judgements of the eighteenth century, arguing that critics objected to the "confused uneven texture of the comic sequences in the play, which were seen as no more than course, episodic ornament inserted for the pleasure of the groundlings."[75] With more clear cut critical movements at the turn of the century, scholars like E. M. W. Tillyard in 1944 examined passages with the intent of evaluating their written quality: "the battle of Agincourt evokes no correspondence in the heavens or elsewhere. A second sign of slack construction is the unevenness of the verse. There are passages of flatness among the rhetoric. The rhetoric has been better remembered than the flatness. Take the opening of Act Two, Scene Four (the first scene showing the French court up to the arrival of Exeter. It is written in the flattest verse.)"[76] As well as making judgments on the way the play was written, post-war critics were anxious to provide explanations for the barbarous propositions such as the one Henry makes at the gates of Harfleur. Many scholars focus on what *Henry V* says about Shakespeare's views on nationhood and foreign policy. Gerald Gould argued that because Shakespeare was patriotic he must have been revolted by Henry's brutal and degrading militarism and that the play is a satire on war."[77] Una Ellis Fermor

[74] Quinn, quoting A.C.Bradley, p. 59.
[75] Brenann, p. xxxvi.
[76] Quinn, Quoting E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays*, 1944, p. 71
[77] Brenann, p. xxxix.

imagines Shakespeare "recoiling from" Henry, a "figure he has built with such care, out of the cumulative experience of eight plays."[78]

With the New Critical movement, C. L. Barber in *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (1959) traces genre connections of *Henry V* to folk rituals. Formalist scholars like William Empson honed in on specific passages such as the honey bee passage of Act 1 Scene 2, drawing a comparison to Virgil. In "The Formalism of Henry V" (1964), Rose A. Zimbardo considers that the play is not the narrative progression of epic, but "rather the design and movement of the play are better understood when we think of them in rhetorical terms than when we think of them in generic terms. *Henry V* is an almost perfect realization of meaning in form. Its thematic essence is to be found in the formalism of its style and architecture. In movement the play resembles a stately, ceremonial dance."[79] Meanwhile, In the 1950's and 1960's, psychoanalytical scholarship proved an illuminating approach for Shakespeare's *Henriad*. Norman N. Holland regarded Hal's rebellion against Henry IV as an Oedipal one, and his choice of Falstaff, associated with fertility rituals and the pleasure principle, as a release from the parental demands of his father.[80] Bernard J Paris used 'Third Force psychology' to make sense of Henry's sudden and often perplexing rushes of piety after he has behaved aggressively."[81]

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[78] Ibid.
[79] Rose A. Zimbardo, "The Formalism of Henry V (1964)" in Michael Quinn (ed.) *Shakespeare: Henry V, A Casebook*.(Bristol: Macmillan, 1969). pp. 163-170. p. 163.
[80] Norman N. Holland's Psychoanalysis and Shakespeare, (1964) cited in Joan Lord Hall, *Henry V: A Guide to the Play* (Westport, Greenwood Press, 1997) p. 96.
[81] Karen Horney, Neurosis and Human Growth" the Struggle towards self realization 1950 , cites Bernard J. Paris, Character as a Subversive force in Shakespeare: the History and the Roman PLays (Rutherford, N.J. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1991) p. 23.

For audiences of the 1980's, Brennan notes *Henry V* became more popular, encouraging patriotic feeling as well as offering a complexity, sharing "a quality of all the history plays" no longer thought to be ill constructed and episodic, the audience oscillates between attraction to and repulsion from the central characters."[82] In 1988, Harold Bloom continued to lead with views from the nineteenth century, citing Rudyard Kipling as viewing Henry V as a "demigod of war, victory, splendor, and British superiority.[83] In the same collection, Anne Barton notes that the play "does not enjoy much critical esteem in comparison with Shakespeare's other mature histories."[84] Harley Granville-Barker sees the play as "second rate."[85] Hammond has also expressed the ways in which the Chorus is "a barrier to audiences deriving satisfaction from the play, because it misdescribes the actions that follow, building an expectation of grandiose events and then presenting us with lowly tavern scenes such as that featuring Nym, Pistol and the Hostess."[86]

In the early 2000's, critics began to move away from the character of Henry, to thinking about the impact of the play on its audiences. In 2002, Pamela Mason reflected on critics like Fermor, who concluded that Henry is a "dead man walking"; and Michael Billington's comment in 1994, that Henry V's undeniable patriotism

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[82] Ibid. p. xxxvii.
[83] Bloom (ed.) *Modern Critical Interpretations of William Shakespeare's Henry V* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1988) p. 3
[84] Anne Barton 'The King Disguised: the Two Bodies of Henry V' in Bloom, (ed) *Modern Critical Interpretations of William Shakespeare's Henry V* pp. 5-21. (p. 16).
[85] See James C. Bulman (ed.) Shakespeare, William, *King Henry IV Part 2: Arden Shakespeare* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016) pp. 69-80.
[86] Benjamin Griffin, *Playing the Past: Approaches to English Historical Drama, 1385-1600* (Woodbridge: St Edmundsbury Press, 2001) p. 122. Citing Anthony Hammond, 'It must be your imagination then".

embarasses us: “Discussion of Henry V is too often concerned solely with the character of its eponymous hero. Buoyed by the rich psychology of the resembling contrasts that infuse pairs of characters in *1 and 2 Henry IV*, critics may be disappointed by the transmutation from prince to king.”[87] Mason instead directs us away from Henry toward the “choric architecture’ which insists upon an intellectual engagement with the process whereby a creative partnership can be forged between stage and audience.[88]

The revival of familiar characters from the cherished *Henry IV* plays could be the reason that *Merry Wives* has received some negative reviews from scholars. It has been described as the “stray offshoot” of the Second Tetralogy – despite it being a popular play in performance.[89] Others see it as occupying an isolated place in Shakespeare’s canon, as the only play that is “set in or near contemporary London.”[90] In a book dedicated entirely to Falstaff, Harold Bloom dismisses *Merry Wives* in one sentence as a “ghastly comedy that is an unacceptable travesty of Falstaff.”[91] Samuel Johnson said of *Merry Wives* that the “conduct of this drama is deficient” and pondered that Shakespeare may have been one of the first to explore “the effect of

[87] Pamela Mason, “*Henry V*: ‘the quick forge and working house of thought’” in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakepseare’s History Plays,* ed. Michael Hattaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). pp. 177-193. (p. 177).
[88] Mason, p. 177.
[89] Giorgio Melchiori (ed.) ‘Introduction’ in William Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, (London: Arden, 2000) p. 3.
[90]John Turner, ‘Introduction’ in *Shakespeare: The Play of History* ed. Graham Holderness. (London: Macmillan Press, 1988) p. 1.
[91] Harold Bloom, *Falstaff, Give Me Life* p ? (request in process)

language distorted and depraved by provincial or foreign pronunciations."[92] Since Johnson, many scholars have continued to explore the portrayal of language and strong accents in the play, observing comic abuses of the English language, or "various linguistic puddings" including a diverted duel-turned-verbal-fight to "hack our English" (*MW,* 3.1.42) between the French doctor and Welsh parson, and the schoolboy's Latin lesson.[93] I would like to challenge these settled convictions, instead considering *Merry Wives* as part of the design of the *Henriad* – as there are many instances of consistency in characters' speech mannerisms and vocabulary, which are carried over from the history plays – and to consider what the play tells us about the way that history works, or does not work in the comic mode.[94]

Chapter Summaries

Chapter One is entitled "*Richard II,* the fall and the playhouse." Here, I establish *Richard II* as the play the *Henriad* draws from. I argue that in this play, Shakespeare constructs an analogy between the deposition of the divinely anointed medieval British monarch, King Richard, and the fall of humankind from innocence in *Genesis,* to consider the influence of the ancient, biblical past on the context of Elizabethan London in the 1590's.[95] *Richard II* works as a touchstone for the

[92]Samuel Johnson, in William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works Dramatic and Poetic from the corrected copy of George Steevens* (New York: 1860) p. 71.
[93] Nick de Somogyi (ed.) 'Introduction' in William Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor: The Shakespeare Folios,* (London: Nick Hern Books) p. xlv.
[94] Some examples of consistencies in language, or turns of phrase carried over from the Henriad into *Merry Wives* are: Quickly: 'Sea-coal', (*MW*, 1.4.8) and Quickly: 'Sea Coal' (*2HIV*). Quickly: 'breed-bate' (*MW*, 1.4.11) and Falstaff: 'breeds no bate' (*2HIV,* 2.4.249-50); Pistol: 'perpend' (*MW*, 2.1.104) and Pistol: 'perpend' (*HV*, 4.4.8)
[95] Stephen Greenblatt refers to this tendency as "buckling" or "surging up." He writes: "time has a strange way of buckling, with the present seeming to collapse into the past or the past

audience, both drawing on, and departing from earlier, familiar pageant plays like *The Life and Death of Jack Straw,* while also projecting ahead to the rest of the tetralogy. I explore how Shakespeare employs biblical themes such as rebellion and loss of innocence, to demonstrate a transition from sacred to human history. Intertextuality with *Jack Straw,* and moments that refer directly to the playhouse are crucial in engaging readers and audiences. Through metatheatrical moments, the audience are required to create the shared experience the play affords, and to participate in a world whose inhabitants believe in the Fall enough to invoke it constantly.

Chapter Two, "Historical Revisionism & Intertheater in *1 & 2 Henry IV*" explores how in *1 & 2 Henry IV*, the reign of King Richard II – and more specifically, Shakespeare's account of that reign in the first play of the tetralogy – becomes the subject of motivated reflection and misremembering by a range of characters. In this way, Shakespeare invites his audience to participate in the consolidation of a communal bond around a number of historical "truths" that they construct together by watching and commenting upon the play. The audience is asked to recognize that a collective history is a construct that arises from the interplay of different interpretations of the past, including the interpretation of the past in Shakespeare's own drama. This chapter also examines Shakespeare's use of the ubiquitous prodigal

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bursting its containment and inhabiting the present. It was not only biblical figures who suddenly became contemporaries. In the wake of the Renaissance in Italy, it was often the classical, pagan past that surged up. [...] in the overheated religious climate of seventeenth-century England, a culture of ardent Bible readers, it was above all the story of Adam and Eve that seemed close." Stephen Greenblatt, *The Rise and Fall of Adam and Eve*, (New York: Norton, 2017) p. 190.

son paradigm, adopted and altered from the source play, *The Famous Victories of Henry V,* considering how Oldcastle is developed from a simplistic sidekick into Falstaff, who shares Hal's prodigality yet is simultaneously a father figure. This is played out most clearly in the play extempore scene, which contains the inter-theatrical mention of an older play: *Cambises, King of Persia*. I explore how the evocation of this play, along with the metatheatrical nature of the play-within-the-play prompts audiences to consider the artifice of theater.

Chapter Three is called "Playing with Virgil, Acting like Aeneas" With the culminating play of the tetralogy, the audience is told by the Chorus that they must participate in the creation of the play they are watching by allowing their imagination to be the lifeforce of *Henry V's* vision of England. Here, I argue that *Henry V* is Shakespeare's play version of an epic. Virgil's *Aeneid* echoes throughout this play and haunts the character of King Henry, as well as the narrative style of the Chorus. *Henry V* is the play in which Shakespeare educates his audience on how to use their imaginations to do the "work" of elaboration that it requires, and to become historical agents of this play. Spectators are fully immersed and called upon to get involved directly with the play, generating an "interiority effect," as the playhouse itself becomes a miniature version of the realm, and the audience becomes the nation, warping the theatrical space of the play so that spectators can understand their present moment.

A Coda, Sir John Falstaff in Windsor, considers the connection between *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and the *Henriad*. *Merry Wives* has much to offer people

studying Shakespeare's histories. This is apparent in the rich textual complexity of the two variant quarto and folio editions of the play, as well as the restitution of history characters into an entirely comic genre. *Merry Wives* shows us something about how comedy can function to create an anti-historical effect, a presentist flattening out of history, thereby serving as a contrast to the layered effect the *Henriad* plays create holistically. An examination of the quarto title pages of the plays of the *Henriad,* along with *Merry Wives* show that this play may have been thought of as part of the design of the tetralogy. Falstaff is banished from history play genre itself at the end of *2 Henry IV* and propelled into the comic, Elizabethan world of Windsor in *Merry Wives*. This late-sixteenth century world is exemplified by Mistress Quickly's scene setting and historical cataloging. Meanwhile, the ritualistic mocking of Falstaff by the wives and the community documents a form of domestic history, enabling him to live on in our imaginations, in an alternative ending to the one he receives in *Henry V*. This play presents audiences with a conversion of the *Henriad's* historical drama into pastoral comedy, reviving popular characters from *Henry IV* and *Henry V*. *Merry Wives* relocates audiences to a liminal space in the English countryside, at the edge of history. In contrast to *Henry V*, where the audience must do the work of the play, in *Merry Wives*, the audience can rest from their labor and enjoy a version of the past that never occurred at all.

Chapter One
Richard II, the Fall, and the playhouse

Richard II is the first play of the *Henriad* play cycle, and is set apart from the subsequent plays by its style, with rhyming couplets and verse employed throughout, as well as an atmosphere of nostalgia for a golden age before Richard came to the throne. Elizabethan anachronisms along with biblical allegorical scenes situate the late medieval historical setting between its audience's present and an ancient, indeed pre-Christian past. References to contemporary Elizabethan sports and methods of torture, for example, parrallel references to the book of *Genesis*. These temporal layers highlight for audiences their current moment in history in relation to the medieval and ancient pasts depicted in the play. *Richard II* establishes a strategy present in the entire tetralogy for an approach to showing the audience what it means both to witness history and participate in it. This dual effect is achieved through the use of metatheatricality, which is at the center of Shakespeare's effort to engage the audience in thoughts of what they can do with the past in the theater. The play signifies through the multiple layered temporality it employs: biblical allegory in a medieval time period is also layered onto Shakespeare's own period moment and the playhouse itself.

As *Richard II* layers history in this way, the play also incorporates the audience into the world of the play – especially doing so with an audience witnessing the play on a thrust stage like that of the Globe playhouse – through semi-public ceremonial scenes that require crowds and spectators, such as the canceled joust tournament of Mowbray and Bolingbroke (1.3); the arrival of Richard to Barkloughly

castle (3.2); and the deposition scene (4.1). Other moments in the play that describe crowds, such as Bolingbroke's exile (1.4); and York's speech recounting the pageant entrance of the two cousins into London (5.2), engage playgoers as co-creators of the play when crowds at historical events are aligned with spectators in a theater, provoking the effect of the audience of the play standing in for or supplanting the historical crowd itself. The self-conscious metatheatrical nature of these crowd scenes work to comment on the superficiality of playgoing itself and to educate and provoke the audience to reflect on its capacity to effect historical change. By invoking the playhouse and its audience, and drawing attention to the character of Richard himself, who we are reminded is a mere actor imitating a king, Shakespeare provides the audience with a new idea of monarchy as a symbol of Englishness, rather than that of divine right to rule. Taken together, the crowd scenes in *Richard II* emphasize the role of the masses in the unfolding of the past into the present. Finally, the end of the play provokes the audience to become aware of the small, box-like nature of the theater they are in, through the farcical scenes with Aumerle and his parents, which function to draw attention to stagecraft, and shrink the play down, anticipating the claustrophobic prison scene at the end, in which the audience must become the metacognitive spectators to Richard's populating of his cell.

This Other Eden

King Richard's reign functions nostalgically in the memory of some characters in the later *Henriad* plays as a "golden-age" point in time that can never be recuperated. At the beginning of *Richard II*, this same notion – that the past is a

moment to be yearned after – is expressed through characters like Gaunt, and the Duchess, who mourn for the sons of the previous king Edward, whose "sacred blood" is glorified: "seven fair branches springing from one root" (*RII*, 1.2.12-13). John of Gaunt further establishes the nostalgic tone for the past early on in *Richard II*, with his view of England as "this other Eden, demi-paradise." (*RII*, 2.1.42) Graham Holderness observes that Gaunt's famous speech has come to be thought of as "the very heart of the traditional discourse of British nationalism, which [...] provided subsequent ages with a basic vocabulary of patriotic rhetoric."[96] Gaunt is nostalgic for a time in England that was dear to him, before Richard's misrule, and before his brother, Thomas of Woodstock was murdered.

The equivalence of the reign of the historical king Richard II with that of a golden era was established by Holinshed, whose *Chronicles* Shakespeare used as a source text for his play. Richard II's coronation is depicted in Holinshed as belonging to an ancient golden age. On the day of his coronation, Holinshed describes the king riding through the city to Westminster, in a very reciprocal relationship with his citizens, who created "pageants and shewes [...] set foorth in honour of their new king."[97] and in a manner reminiscent of ancient Bacchanalia:

> The water conduits ran with wine for the space of three houres togither. [...] In the towers were placed foure beautifull virgins, of stature and age like to the king, apparelled in white vestures, in euerie tower one, the which blew in the

[96] Graham Holderness, "Shakespeare and National Identities" in Emma Smith (ed.) *Shakespeare's Histories* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004) pp. 225-246. (p. 228).
[97] Holinshed, Raphael, *Chronicles*, (1587) "Richard the second, the second sonne to Edward prince of Wales" > Volume 6 > Body Text: Section 12 of 24: (Volume 6, p. 416) <https://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/texts.php?text1=1587_4383> Web. Accessed June 6, 2024.

> kings face, at his approching néere to them, leaues of gold and as he approched also, they threw on him and his horsse florens of gold counterfeit.[98]

As well as establishing Richard's reign in a mode reminiscent of an ancient golden age, Holinshed draws attention to the personality and power of the citizens during this king's reign, portraying the relationship between the Richard and his people as reciprocal one: after the king made his oath that he would obey all his commandments, "the people with a lowd voice had answered that they would obeie him."[99] Holinshed also details the uprising of the citizens with Jack Straw and the Peasants Revolt, and the eventual deposition of the King. While Holinshed makes extensive use of official documents, such as articles drawn up by Parliament and orations, and may therefore appear impartial, Annabel Patterson points out that Holinshed does ultimately side with Richard in the following line: But if I may boldlie saie what I thinke: he was a prince the most unthankefullie used of his subjects, of any one of whom ye shall lightlie read [1587: III, 508].[100] Shakespeare adopted many aspects from Holinshed, including the idea that the deposition is unlawful, as expressed through the Bishop of Carlilsle's speech in 4.1. Richard's relationship with his citizens, and the association of his reign with the golden age "keeps its reader in touch with a prelapsarian Richard", as Harry Berger explains, while also transferring onto Richard a set of biblical values that both sharpens the

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[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Annabel Patterson, cited in Jennifer Richards, 'Rhetoric' in Felicity Heal (ed.) et al. *The Oxford Handbook of Holinshed's Chronicles*, (Oxford: 2012) <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199565757.013.0017> Web. Accessed June 6, 2024. Pp. 285-302 (p. 286).

focus of his being infallible, and makes him "perform not only before others but also before himself."[101]

These biblical values are central to the play and also to the way the entire *Henriad*, especially when read together, can provide a way of seeing historicity, through a temporal layering. The association of the rule of the historical King Richard II with original sin reflects a widely held belief by early modern people: that the Fall reverberated across history and was being re-lived and re-enacted on a daily basis. Stephen Greenblatt refers to this tendency as time buckling, or surging up: "time has a strange way of buckling, with the present seeming to collapse into the past or the past bursting its containment and inhabiting the present. It was not only biblical figures who suddenly became contemporaries. In the wake of the Renaissance in Italy, it was often the classical, pagan past that surged up. [...] in the overheated religious climate of seventeenth-century England, a culture of ardent Bible readers, it was above all the story of Adam and Eve that seemed close."[102] Religious works of the time, such as *An Homily Against Disobedience and Willful Rebellion* (1571), detail the early modern concern with "our first parents Adam and Eve" who were brought in "high displeasure with God, wrought their exile and banishment out of Paradise, a place of all pleasure and goodness, into this wretched earth and vale of misery." The idea that the sin of rebellion was the cause of "all worldly and bodily miseries" is emphasized in the *Homily*: that the rebellion of Adam and Eve is "the

[101] Harry Berger, *Harrying: Skills of Offense in Shakeseare's Henriad*. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015) pp. 23-4, p. 24.
[102] Stephen Greenblatt, *Rise and Fall of Adam and Eve*, p. 190.

first and the greatest, and the very foot of all other sins."[103] The *Homily* constructs an argument about the continuity of the presence of the fall in the present moment, reminding readers of "what an abominable sin against God and man rebellion is, and how dreadfully the wrath of God is kindled and inflamed against all rebels, and what horrible plagues, punishments, and deaths, and finally eternal damnation doeth hang over their heads."[104] The *Homily* also explores the role of "Kings and Princes" in implementing "god's ordinance" – a topic reflected in the chronicle history plays of the 1590's, and expresses prayers to "our sovereign and gracious Queen" Elizabeth I.

The earlier pageant play, *The Life and Death of Jack Straw* (1593) also equates the reign of the historical King Richard II with the postlapsarian state, as Holinshed does, and Shakespeare may have been influenced by this play when writing *Richard II.*[105] In *Jack Straw*, Parson John Ball – one of the leaders of the peasants revolt – gestures to the story of creation with the motto: "when Adam delved, and Eve span, | Who was then a gentleman?" (*Jack Straw*, 1.52-3). Like Gaunt in *Richard II*, who complains that Richard has become "landlord of England,

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[103] *An Homily Against Disobedience and Willful Rebellion,* (1571). Internet Shakespeare Editions. <https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/doc/Homilies_2-21_M/index.html> Web. Accessed 13 June 2022.

[104] *The third part of the Homily against Disobedience and Willful Rebellion*. <https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/doc/Homilies_2-21_M/section/The%20third%20part%20of%20the%20Homily%20against%20Disobedience%20and%20Willful%20Rebellion./index.html> Web. Accessed 8 June 2024.

[105] *The Life and Death of Jack Straw* is a short history play featuring Richard II as a child king. It was first published in 1593 by the stationer Willaim Barley, four years before *Richard II* was published. *Jack Straw* features the Peasants revolt of 1381, and how the young King Richard dealt with the rebels. At the end of the play, Jack Straw is killed by London's mayor. For this reason it was often performed as part of a pageant series to celebrate the city of London and its government.

not king" (2.1.19) Parson Ball regrets the loss of a golden age of England, complaining: "England is grown to such a pass of late, | That rich men triumph to see the poor beg at their gate" (*Jack Straw*, 1.48-9). While in *Jack Straw* Eden is evoked through this well-known motto about Adam and Eve as a rallying cry against social inequality for the rebels, Shakespeare evokes the golden age of Eden to create a sense of nostalgia, provoking his audience to perceive the way that historical readings of the Bible are subject to change, and giving this play the biblical weight it requires, as the foundation for the *Henriad.*

The garden scene of 3.4 further establishes the connection to Eden in *Richard II*, while also juxtaposing this with anachronisms. Queen Isabel furiously calls the head gardener "old Adam's likeness" (*RII*, 3.4.75), and accuses him of speaking of "a second fall of cursed man" in his discussion of Richard's situation."What Eve, what serpent hath suggested thee" (3.4.77) she interrogates him. The garden is explicitly employed here as an extended metaphor for the commonwealth. "Like an executioner" the gardener "cuts off the heads of too fast-growing sprays" (*RII*, 3.4.35). The labor of the Gardener and his two men in this scene serves to draw out a distinction between the hard work they are doing and Richard's negligence to his duties. Robert Alter notes that "the biblical imagination is equally preoccupied with the theme of exile [...] and with the arduousness or precariousness of agriculture, a blessing that easily turns into blight."[106] While this allegorical garden scene works to

[106] Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible - A Translation With Commentary* (Vol 3) (W. W. Norton & Co, 2018) p. 18.

connect the medieval characters of the play with the original sinners of *Genesis*, it also establishes the royal garden as specifically Elizabethan.

In the garden, three different layers of time are being played out at once, as we are also provided with an overwriting of Eden with Elizabethan objects. Isabel's First Lady suggests that they "play at bowls" (*RII*, 3.4.3), a common Elizabethan game, and the Queen refers to an Elizabethan instrument of torture when she exclaims that she feels "pressed to death | Through want of speaking" (*RII*, 3.4.71-2). These two references are examples of moments editors of Shakespeare point out as anachronism. Margreta de Grazia has pointed out that perceived anachronisms like this are deliberate: "The semantics of Shakespeare's plays is generally modern, that is, indexed to the time of their writing. If that is the norm, how can any instance of it be taken to be error? […] Furthermore, plays are keyed to the "now" of their composition and always open to updating at any subsequent staging. The dramatist's commitment is to his present audience rather than to any earlier historical context."[107] What editors have been calling anachronisms should be no longer thought of as mistakes or inaccuracies but instead deliberate modern semantics. Moments like this, where the Queen and her ladies-in-waiting discuss playing bowls and mention Elizabethan forms of torture were incorporated to engage Shakespeare's own audience and would have brought a present-moment feel to Elizabethan playgoers. Colloquial inclusions incorporated into play texts to engage the live audiences of the

[107] Margreta de Grazia, *Four Shakespearean Period Pieces*, University of Chicago Press, 2021. p. 23.

1590's are part of what makes the vernacular history play genre so drastically different from other forms of historical text circulating in the period. The juxtaposition of anachronisms in a medieval era they do not belong to are examples of Shakespeare retelling history as a cultural product of his own time.

While characters like Gaunt and Isabel adopt biblical metaphors and the image of the garden of Eden to express nostalgia and regret, Shakespeare demonstrates how the interpretation of biblical texts can also be subject to change through powerful characters like Henry Bolingbroke, who understands the relevance of *Genesis* for his circumstances differently at the beginning and end of the play. In the opening scene Bolingbroke accuses Mowbray of having "Sluiced out his [Gloucester's] innocent soul through streams of blood - | Which blood, like sacrificing Abel's, cries | Even from the tongueless caverns of the earth | To me for justice and rough chastisement" (*RII*, 1.1.103-106). The crime is magnified here with the image of rivers of blood pouring from Gloucester's body, as though he was a giant. Gloucester's head seems to have been decapitated, "sluiced off," and "streams" of blood fill up caves deep underground, presenting us with an image of blood that cannot be steeped. The earth's caves, deep underground, evoking the ancient underworld and pagan rivers like Styx or Lethe, are personified as mouths without tongues, that are striving to cry out to Bolingbroke and inform him about the crime so that he will do justice upon Mowbray. Here, Gloucester is the innocent victim, like Abel, and Mobray is the murdering Cain, and Bolingbroke is appealing for vengeance. That Abel's fate is equated with cries from a pagan underworld

demonstrates a surging up of the classical world, alongside a closeness of the *Genesis* story.

The audience may be reminded of Bolingbroke's use of the story of Cain and Abel in his accusation of Mowbray at the beginning of *Richard II*, when at the end of the play, as Henry IV he again invokes the story of the first murder in a different vein, when he tells Richard's murderer: "With Cain go wander through shades of night | And never show thy head by day nor light" (5.6.43-4). At this moment, Bolingbroke equates Exton with Cain, and Richard by extension has become the sacrificed Abel. This shifting use of a biblical story applied to current events encourages the audience to be critical of Henry IV, because they are witnessing him making use of biblical stories to suit his needs in the present moment. The audience are also now able to hold him accountable for his promise to make a voyage to the Holy Land, which he fails to do in *1 Henry IV*. The king will easily 'brake off our business for the Holy Land' (*1HIV*, 1.1.47) upon hearing of the troubles in Wales.

After Bolingbroke accuses Mowbray of plotting the Duke of Gloucester's death in 1.1, and invokes the story of the first murder from *Genesis* to do so, Richard responds with a comment that could potentially be uttered as an aside to the audience: "How high a pitch his resolution soars" (1.1.109). This response describes Bolingbroke's acting style, and is imitative of the way a spectator might privately respond. This both gives the audience some private access to Richard's thoughts while also alerting them to their own role as spectators of the play. Richard is a character who has mastered "the art of representing self-representation," as Harry

Berger notes, and his language shows him to perform not only before others but for himself. “Richard works to make himself appear contemptible by treating his onstage audience with a degree of contempt guaranteed to alienate them and weaken his position.”[108] Although Richard already knows what the dispute is between Mowbray and Bolingbroke, he positions himself as their spectator, a “speaker who obviously enjoys visualizing the ritual display of aggression and imagining the passion it symbolizes.”[109] Richard calls the pair “to our presence. | Face to face, | and frowning brow to brow, ourselves will hear | The accuser and the accused freely speak.” (1.1.14-17). This ceremonial show of the gauntlets, and the manner that Richard is performing and playing out his role as King in front of a group of spectators, paves the way for other crowd scenes in the play, that engage the playgoers as co-creators by describing historical events as a form of theater that echoes the conditions of the drama’s performance.

As in a Theater

Speeches that draw attention to the theatricality of the play or that describe crowds inadvertently implicate spectators of *Richard II,* drawing playgoers into the making of the play. When Aumerle has described Bolingbroke’s departure for exile in Act 1, Richard, obsessing over Bolingbroke’s successful behavior with a large crowd, describes a group of “common people” that might well have evokes the kinds of auditors of an Elizabethan playhouse in Shakespeare’s day:

[108] Berger, pp. 23-4.
[109] Berger, p. 39.

KING RICHARD Ourself and Bushy, Bagot here and Green
Observed his courtship to the common people;
How he did seem to dive into their hearts
With humble and familiar courtesy,
What reverence he did throw away on slaves,
Wooing poor craftsmen with the craft of smiles
And patient underbearing of his fortune,
As 'twere to banish their affects with him.
Off goes his bonnet to an oyster-wench;
A brace of draymen bid God speed him well
And had the tribute of his supple knee,
With 'Thanks, my countrymen, my loving friends;'
As were our England in reversion his,
And he our subjects' next degree in hope.

(*RII*, 1.4.23-36)

Here, Richard re-enacts the historical Bolingbroke leaving in exile through his retelling of the scene. This speech incorporates exactly the kind of people that would have been in a playhouse in Shakespeare's day. The *OED* lists the first ever reference to an "oyster wench" from the year 1597, in *Richard II*, demonstrating that girls selling oysters may have been a fairly new trade, similar to that of fish-wives and apple-wives, who would trade at the Fortune and Red Bull playhouses before 1600.[110] Similarly, "draymen" were men who drove brewer's drays or carts around, and the first mention of such tradesmen is in 1581. All of these kinds of people, along with the "poor craftsmen" Richard speaks of resonate as a group of common people found at the London playhouses in the Elizabethan era. Plenty of tradesmen came into the

[110] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) p. 71.

playhouses to sell food and drink, such as apples, nuts and bottled ale to the audience.[111] This is a moment where the spectators of the playhouse are directly drawn into the fabric of the play. In this metatheatrical description of Bolingbroke's behavior with a crowd similar to the one in an Elizabethan London playhouse, Richard is recognizing that a secular community with secular rituals is emerging right before him in the playhouse, and this layers history onto the present moment for the audience. Shakespeare is making use of the playhouse audience to demonstrate how the status of the monarchy is becoming more secular – as even the actor playing Richard is imitating a king himself. This is not to suggest monarchy is necessarily in decline but rather that Shakespeare is giving the monarchy a new role, that of historical and cultural symbol rather than purely a religious one. The king becomes a symbol of Englishness, not of holiness. The audience are simultaneously witnessing a version of history, while their physical presence in the playhouse helps to create it.

Richard orchestrates his own destruction, beginning with his descent into the base court at Flint Castle in Act 3.3, followed by the deposition scene in Westminster Hall in Act 4.1. These are two of the most theatrical scenes of the *Henriad*, in which all the actors are present on stage to witness the gradual transition of power. Richard appears above on the walls of Flint castle "as doth the blushing discontented sun" (3.3.62-3). As he descends, Richard demonstrates contempt both for himself and for those around him, playing the role of "a Faustus forced to stage-manage his own

[111] Gurr, p. 43.

secular damnation."[112] The audience would probably have experienced genuine shock witnessing this taboo scene. The two monarchs shared some arguable parallels: both were heirless, and surrounded with questionable advisors. Because of the known equation of Elizabeth and Richard, the deposition scene was not printed in quarto, or staged in the queen's lifetime. In 1601, the Earl of Essex's uprising against Elizabeth attempted to incorporate a revival of *Richard II* to stoke anger against Elizabeth's advisor in the crowd watching the play. Soon after, Elizabeth I admitted that she was equated with the medieval king, when she famously said "I am Richard II, know ye not that?"[113] The connection between Richard and Elizabeth is part of what establishes this play with a sense of modern historical progress for audiences: that the kind of Fall that gave rise to the *Henriad* might now be avoided. The equation of the two monarchs was also clearly part of Elizabeth's own performance as a queen, and the connection also secures her as connected to this great line of medieval monarchs.

In Act 5 of *Richard II,* the play presents a vision of history where the present is continually written on and over the past, with theatrical anachronisms unfolding so that the medieval historical setting gives way to the physical location of the playhouse. Act 5 provides a stark tonal difference to the rest of the play that offers a glimpse for the audience of what is to come in the *Henry IV* plays, where lofty scenes

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[112] Berger, p. 31.

[113] Stephen Orgel, citing the royal archivist William Lambarde's well-known account of his interview with Queen Elizabeth in August, 1601, seven months after the Essex rebellion and Essex's execution for treason, in "Prologue: I am Richard II" in *Representations of Elizabeth I in Early Modern Culture,* ed. Alessandra Petrina and Laura Tosi, (London: Palgrave Macmillian, 2011) pp. 11-43. (p.11).

at court are juxtaposed against the comedy of domestic scenes at Eastcheap in order to challenge the audience to engage in historical revision or criticism. Act 5, scene 2 opens with the Duchess prompting York to describe his melancholy eyewitness account of seeing the entrance of the two cousins into London. Here, the situation of the theater is employed to stand in for the actual crowd York is describing. York's regretful picture of the deposed king Richard is swiftly followed by a farcical domestic scene, including a servant who is beaten, and York struggling to get his boots on after he discovers and condemns his son Aumerle's plan to betray King Henry IV. Through these two scenes the audience are provided with sympathetic perspectives of Richard as a pervasive emblem that will carry over into the *Henry IV* plays. The audience witnesses the way historical figures can become powerful symbols after they die, that live on and effect change in unexpected and uncontrollable ways.

Bolingbroke's official pageant entry to the city of London for the first time as King Henry IV, followed by the deposed King Richard, is recounted in an intimate conversation between the Duchess and Duke of York.[114]

DUKE OF YORK Then, as I said, the duke, great Bolingbroke,
Mounted upon a hot and fiery steed
Which his aspiring rider seem'd to know,
With slow but stately pace kept on his course,

[114] David M. Bergeron, Pageants, masques and history in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*, ed. Michael Hathaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp. 41-56 (p. 41-2). Bergeron notes that while pageants could be as elaborate as Lord Mayor's Shows, which consisted of developed dramatic scenes, events such as royal summer progresses or tours of the sovereign were also considered pageants, as were royal entries into a city.

Whilst all tongues cried 'God save thee, Bolingbroke!'
You would have thought the very windows spake,
So many greedy looks of young and old
Through casements darted their desiring eyes
Upon his visage, and that all the walls
With painted imagery had said at once
'Jesu preserve thee! welcome, Bolingbroke!'
Whilst he, from the one side to the other turning,
Bareheaded, lower than his proud steed's neck,
Bespake them thus: 'I thank you, countrymen:'
And thus still doing, thus he pass'd along

DUCHESS OF YORK Alack, poor Richard! where rode he the whilst?

DUKE OF YORK As in a theatre, the eyes of men,
After a well-graced actor leaves the stage,
Are idly bent on him that enters next,
Thinking his prattle to be tedious;
Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes
Did scowl on gentle Richard; no man cried 'God save him!'
No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home:
But dust was thrown upon his sacred head:
Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off,
His face still combating with tears and smiles,
The badges of his grief and patience

(*RII*, 5.2.8-36)

The word "theatre" in York's speech has been highlighted as "an obvious anachronism" (along with *apricocks* and *rapier's point*) since "public theatres did not exist in 1399 and only came into being in London about 1575."[115] The direct reference to the theater in a play about a medieval king affords the audience the chance to think communally about their role in the making of history. York's speech uses this theater anachronism partly to evoke a wide cross-section of society. Those watching are "young and old" and from all levels of society, just like the audience at

[115] Forker, Charles R. (ed.) William Shakespeare. *King Richard II*. Arden Third Series. (Bloomsbury: London, 2002) 5.2.23n.

a playhouse, which has the effect of equalizing spectators because of the shared light of the sun. York's invocation of the theater to describe the spectacle in this set piece aids and embellishes the audience's collective imagination: they are implicitly encouraged to substitute the playhouse and the spectators around them with what is being described.

Shakespeare's deliberate choice to have York recount the spectacle, rather than try to depict it on stage echoes a moment audiences may have been familiar with, in *Jack Straw,* which similarly contains an eyewitness account of an entrance of Richard II into London before a crowd, although under completely different circumstances, as a courageous fourteen-year-old king "but young of age" (*JS*, 2.17), facing the Peasants Revolt, rather than as a recently deposed king. Sir John Newton in *Jack Straw* recounts the moment a child King Richard is confronted in a different manner with another multitude:

NEWTON 'Twas thus: the king and all his company
Being row'd with oars as far as Greenwich town,
It was a world to see what troupes of men
Like bees that swarm about the honey hive,
Gan strew the gravel ground and sandy plain
That fill'd the air with cries and fearful noise.
(*JS*, 3.15-20)

Like York's speech, this crowd scene is recounted, rather than depicted, probably because the number of actors needed to depict a mob or large crowd on stage in a playhouse would be impractical. In *Jack Straw,* crowds of citizens are described negatively as "the multitude, a beast of many heads, | Of misconceiving and

misconstruing minds" (*JS*, 2.21-2) and the "blind unshamefac'd multitude" (*JS*, 2.60). These crowds would have resonated with the playgoers' own situations, particularly geographically – next to the river Thames; outside the walls of the city; close to the Tower of London; and not far from Greenwich – all of which would incorporate a strong sense of playgoers' location in relation to the past. However, in earlier chronicle plays like the above example in *Jack Straw*, playgoers are never explicitly conveyed as potential substitutions for crowds, as York's speech achieves. When Shakespeare evokes a pageant-like entrance to London like the one in *Jack Straw*, in York's speech the effect is to juxtapose the experience of seeing the chronicle pageant play with that of spectating *Richard II*. Shakespeare engages spectators with the notion of time as cyclical, as he is imitating the previous cycle of history from *Jack Straw*, and engaging with the traditional idea of Richard confronting a mob of citizens. But by developing the image of Richard facing a crowd in London, Shakespeare provides an opportunity for audiences to reflect on the mechanics of theater going itself, requiring them to supplant the crowd.

In *The Gulls' Hornbook* (1609), Thomas Dekker provides some insights into what the inside of a playhouse was like, which is helpful contextualizing what the playhouse spectators York refers to might have been like:

> Whether you be a fool, or a justice of peace; a cuckold, or a captain; a Lord Mayor's son, or a dawcock; a knave, or an under-sheriff; of what stamp soever you be; current or counterfeit; the stage, like time, will bring you to the most perfect light, and lay you open.[116]

[116] Dekker, p. 62.

Dekker makes clear that anyone from any level of society can make up part of the audience of a play, and the shared light lays spectators open, both to each other, and to the players. By catching and exchanging glances with one another, in the equalizing setting of shared light, the playgoers, while sometimes distracted, may also gain a sense that what they are experiencing is both a version of history as it was, as well as a kind of history that is happening now. The playhouse therefore becomes a space where both history is made and also where historical events can be reflected upon and evaluated. Where one may stand or sit in the playhouse is determined by what kind of payment one can afford to make: therefore "ragamuffins that stand aloof gaping at you" are in the cheaper upper gallery seats, while gentlemen could afford to pay more to sit on the stage.[117] The easy distraction of spectators is attested to, as those sitting on the stage who talked and laughed loudly would cause "all the eyes in the galleries [to] leave walking after the players, and only follow you."[118] The standing groundlings exhibited the worst behavior, and all those on the stage would have to suffer it: "the scarecrows in the yard hoot at you, hiss at you, spit at you, yea, throw dirt even in your teeth: 'tis most gentlemanlike patience to endure all this, and to laugh at the silly animals."[119] Dekker's description of a playhouse's audience is illuminating not only because it demonstrates the absent-minded nature of the spectators in "this distracted globe" (*Hamlet* 1.5.104), but because it reveals that

[117] Dekker, p. 65.
[118] Ibid. p. 63-4.
[119] Ibid. p. 62.

audiences could also be unkind, unthoughtful, and even aggressive, just like the crowd described by York.

If spectators at the open air playhouses in London threw dirt and spat at players, the crowd watching Richard were equally cruel during his riding into the city: “Rude misgoverned hands from windows’ tops | Threw dust and rubbish on King Richard’s head.” (5.2.5) York’s description draws a striking similarity between the crowd watching the pageant and the playgoers themselves. The people in windows high up in buildings on a London street, trying to catch a glimpse of their new king, with “darting desiring eyes,” evokes the way those in the upper galleries of the playhouse all gazing “greedily” down at York and his wife onstage before them, captivated by York’s poetic description. The equation of pageant crowd with playgoers is then fully realized with the lines: “As in a theatre, the eyes of men | After a well-graced actor leaves the stage, | Are idly bent on him that enters next” (5.2.23). Here, the play shifts the audience from witnesses to history toward emphasizing them as participants in its making. The audience are fickle, and quick to judge the next actor, “thinking his prattle to be tedious” (5.2.28), after a popular player has exited. York’s speech bestows on the audience their status as participants in theatrical history, as a vulgar crowd is described. Having been manipulated by Bolingbroke, they are fully in support of him. Yet through York’s oration and perspective, as the uncle of both Bolingbroke and Richard, who has torn allegiances between them both, the audience can see that this scene has been stage-managed by Bolingbroke, and York stirs up sympathy in the audience for Richard. Spectators of this speech

therefore can both feel a sense of responsibility: that they are equated with or supplant the crowd that defiles Richard—and therefore feel as though they are participating in the play—but are also shown that they have the capability to be morally superior to the vulgar crowd.

In *Richard II* Shakespeare shows audiences that they can function both as puppets to playmaking and manipulation, but also have the potential to be active critical participants. Through York's perspective, spectators of the play can realize that the London crowd's judgment of Richard might be wrong, and that they should strive to do better, and to make more informed critical decisions. York describes the crowd as preferring Bolingbroke to Richard, even though Richard throughout the play has been the better actor, while Bolingbroke has been largely mute, particularly in the deposition scene. Frustrations with the groundlings are echoed elsewhere in Shakespeare's canon, as when Hamlet insults the groundlings, describing them as uniting a "capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise" (*Hamlet,* 3.2.12-13). Dekker's notion that the stage is "like time" might converge with the historical meaning Hamlet evokes when he describes the players as the "abstract and brief chronicles of the time" (2.2.550). In *Richard II,* the audience aid in the creation of the chronicles of the time, as it is they make the historical moment happen, and they judge the historical actors just as they become judgemental toward actors that come on stage. Placing the audience in a more critical position involves them in the creation of history that anticipates the demands the Chorus will make of them in *Henry V*.

York's speech about the cruel behavior of the common people toward their former king therefore works duly as a protest about the the crowd's behavior to Richard, as well as about the behavior of common playgoers in a theater, and their easy capacity to be bored, distracted, and even to express contempt for what they see on stage. York's repetition of Richard as now "gentle" conveys that he now thinks of him as no longer royal, but humble, and there is already a sense of sorrow with the loss of his nobility, with "His face still combating with tears and smiles, | The badges of his grief and patience" (*RII,* 5.2.32-3). As the audience of the play are standing in for the crowd that threw dust on Richard's head, this is a moment where the spectators should be feeling a collective sense of sorrow, remorse and even some responsibility for Richard's downfall, as many of them may have thrown dirt and dust at those players on stage themselves. In this moment, Shakespeare underscores that the theater has a role to play in showing us how we make sense of, and change our minds about, historical figures. The audience are simultaneously shamed and feel regret for Richard's situation, while also feeling an elevated piety through York's narration that can enable them to feel superior to the crowd that attacked Richard. The audience of the playhouse is invoked in history plays that describe the behavior of crowds, to comment on the nature of collective memory and its relationship to historical truth.

The impact of this critical scene is felt in the *Henriad's* next two plays. Both plays contain scenes where similar pageant-like moments from *Richard II* are recollected by a character and described in a different way from its original iteration,

thereby being overwritten. The Archbishop in *2 Henry IV* directly references the same moment in his frustration with the "over-greedy commonwealth", expressing his disgust with the fickle nature of the same people that threw the dust "upon his goodly head | when through proud London he came sighing on … now cry O earth, yield us that king again" (*2HIV,* 1.3.90-114). By referencing the same moment York recounts, audiences are impressed upon to remember that moment from a previous play in the tetralogy, and to call up the emotions they felt when they heard York's speech in *Richard II*. In these moments, Shakespeare seems to be commenting on the way the shape of history can change through collective memory, and even incorporating classical concepts such as the *historia magistra vitae est* (Cicero, *the treatise,* II:36) or history as the teacher of life.[120] When Shakespeare uses the "anachronism" of the playhouse and draws our attention to the theatricality of the *Henriad,* he develops a concept of history which is not linear or necessarily chronological, but layered, with the past existing as a kind of foundation. This heightens our attention to the way the *Henriad* resonates with its audiences across time, and to give the impression of multiple layers of temporality at once. When characters like the Archbishop in *2 Henry IV* remember the entrance of the two cousins into London with a different outlook, Shakespeare demonstrates how history can be altered according to the needs of those in the present.

York's speech clarifies his wishful thinking that the circumstances are providential rather than driven by the mob behavior of the citizens, with the lines:

[120] James C. Bulman, Arden *2HIV*, Note 80-5 p. 290.

"heaven hath a hand in these events" (37) and "To Bolingbroke are we sworn subjects now" (39), preparing the way for his conflict with Aumerle. After York's sad eyewitness account of the two cousins entering London, the tone of Act 5 scene 2 shifts to domestic comedy, and works to challenge and shift the audience's response to events on stage. The scenes are "fully intended farce, [...] to distress the taste for pageant, pathos, and elevated death the play otherwise appeals to."[121] These scenes are between Richard's parting from his queen and the announcement of Exton's plot to assassinate the king, and therefore are required for Shakespeare's management of the pace of the play.[122] A letter imprinted with a seal signifying Richard is discovered in Aumerle's pocket by his father. The plot of Aumerle and some of Richard's other remaining followers is an obscure moment lifted from Holinshed, that depicts the conspirators' plan to assassinate Henry and bring Richard back to the throne. Sheldon Zitner notes that Shakespeare makes the discovery depend on Aumerle's carelessness, which follows the chronicles, but "Hall and Holinshed do not suggest the farce or pathos that follow, and they give little warrant for the sudden veering of the play from the political to the domestic."[123] The wax seal that carries the emblem of Richard is imprinted onto a document stuffed into Aumerle's doublet and functions as a visible prop, probably with a bright red imprint on it, that everyone in the audience is straining to see, along with York, who, in a move that anticipates a similar scene with

[121] Sheldon P. Zitner, 'Aumerle's Conspiracy' in *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's Richard II*, ed. Kirby Farrell, (New York: G.K. Hall, 1999) pp. 172-188. (p. 175).
[122] Zitner, p. 174.
[123] Ibid. p. 178.

a letter between Edmund and Gloucester in *King Lear*, "*plucks the letter out of his bosom*", as the stage directions indicate, and reads it (5.2.72). York's immediate rage expressed in the next lines: "Treason, foul treason! Villain, traitor, slave!" (5.2.73) coupled with the ridiculous master and servant episode that follows, with York's servant rushing off to saddle the horse, then running in with his boots, along with the suggestion of the Duchess that Aumerle hit the servant: "Strike him, Aumerle!" (5.2.85), all indicate a farce that works to shrink the action of the play down to a domestic setting. The Duchess of York, who does not feature in the chronicle sources, plays a key role in the scene. The presence and prominence of the Duchess is a sign that the play is drifting toward the comedy we will find in the future *Henry IV* plays – indicating that history includes this generic register as well as tragedy. The Duchess functions as a witness to the true historical event of a father prepared to betray his son to stay loyal to the king. The historical Duchess of York was Aumerle's stepmother, but Shakespeare makes it clear that in the play she is his mother: "Hadst thou groaned for him | As I have done, thou wouldst be more pitiful" (5.2.103-4). As an incredulous observer of the almost unbelievable preparedness of York to betray his son to the King and risk his execution, the Duchess defaults to a stereotype and trope common in plays: "Thou dost suspect | That I have been disloyal to thy bed, | And that he is a bastard, not thy son." (5.2.104-6) As a witness to the scene, she functions as a representative for reactions of some of those in the audience, and in the begging scene to follow, she – as the character that opposes York's desire to have Aumerle killed – makes it possible for the action to turn to comedy.

The domestic, comic atmosphere of Act 5 scene 2 is carried over into scene 3, which although set at court, is markedly scaled down in comparison to the grandiose court scenes earlier in the play that feature Richard. Comedy yields to tragedy again by the end of this scene, when Richard's coffin is hauled in. The scene opens with King Henry worrying about his domestic affairs, with the line "can no man tell me of my unthrifty son" (5.3.1), and only Harry Percy and a few Lords present to indicate they are at court. The smallness of the space they are in is emphasized when Aumerle asks to have an audience alone with the king and then asks to lock the door: "give me leave that I may turn the key, that no man enter till my tale be done"(5.3.35-6). The king allows Aumerle to lock the door, but this is immediately followed by the stage direction: "*The Duke of York knocks at the door and crieth*." This locking of the door – probably one of the doors to the tiring house – coupled with the sound of the knocking and muffled shouting from behind the stage of York and then the Duchess provides a sonic experience for playgoers, as well as drawing their attention to the physical space of the playhouse. Kurt A. Schreyer has shown that the knocking at the gate of the castle in *Macbeth* recalls for audiences an earlier stage tradition: the knocking "prompts the Porter of *Macbeth* to tell jokes and ask questions in the manner of traditional devil-porter behavior in the mysteries. In this way, the re-creation of a sound from an outlawed stage tradition brings the pre-Reformation theatrical past into the present."[124] Sounds in plays, like thunder rolls, cannon fire,

[124] Kurt A. Schreyer, *Shakespeare's Medieval Craft Remnants of the Mysteries on the London Stage* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2014) p. 137

and knocking highlight the musical quality of the playhouse space for audiences: "the London playhouses were instruments for producing, shaping, and propagating sound. The timbers, plaster, lath, and joists effectively transformed the stage into a gigantic sounding board."[125] Just as the sound of knocking in *Macbeth* might evoke devil porter scenes from mystery plays, the knocking in *Richard II* might call up for audiences other such scenes that make use of this for comic effect such as in *Taming of the Shrew*, when Grumio mistakenly punches Petruchio instead of knocking at a gate. There is a fleeting moment of genuine fear from Henry when he realizes he is locked in a room with a traitor that could attempt to murder him. This is an echo of Woodstock's murder from before the play: a suggestion that this cycle of crime and punishment could begin again – but also serves to foreshadow Richard's murder by Exton in his cell. The tone quickly returns to a comic one when the Duchess arrives behind the door, shouting and presumably also knocking, although there is no stage direction "open the door! | A beggar begs that never begged before." (5.3.74-5), to which the King responds with the quip:

KING HENRY Our scene is altered from a serious thing
And now changed to 'The Beggar and the King'. -
My dangerous cousin, let your mother in.
I know she's come to pray for your foul sin.
(*RII*, 5.3.78-81)

[125] Ibid. p. 138.

The Beggar and the King was a well known ballad: *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid* (1612) and it has been suggested that it may have been performed as part of an interlude in playhouses of the period. This potential reference to the idea of an interlude, along with the direct comment from Bolingbroke, that their situation is a "scene" so swiftly after York's anachronism of the theater, and also after the sound effects of the knocking that emphasize to audiences the sonic capabilities and the physicality of playhouse structure, all serve together to emphasize at the end of *Richard II* that what we are watching is players inside a wooden box, and paves the way for the greater claustrophobia of the scene in which Richard is imprisoned.

In Richard's final speech in Act 5, he is in prison, and attempts to recreate the world, his kingdom and a crowd of people through and as his thoughts and in doing so further elevates the status of the audience as a key to historical development. In this scene, the spectators are implicated metacognitively in the cognitive populating of his cell. The "generation of still-breeding thoughts [...] people this little world" (5.5.8-9). This mirrors the cognitive capacities of everyone in the audience and the thoughts they are having about the play. Within Richard arise a multitude of different thoughts, that each have different humors, just like the people of the world, who are "all uncontented." Just as the spectators themselves represent a vast mixture of people, in Richard's head there are "thoughts of things divine, thoughts tending to ambition, thoughts that plot, thoughts of pride, thoughts of flattery. These types of thoughts both represent the spectators in the audience and himself as an actor showing that he encompasses and is capable of acting out any of these emotions:

"Thus play I in one person many people, | And none contented. | Sometimes I am king, | Then treasons make me wish myself a beggar, | And so I am." (5.5.31-2) Richard becomes like all the people in the audience now he is stripped of his role as king. He is able to see in himself all of his subjects. Here the spectators witness a further fracturing of Richard's self, as "although the actor knows he is playing to the audience in the theater, the character doesn't know he is a fictional character being performed by an actor on stage [...] Is he imagining or constructing the audience he wants to be heard by, the audience he wants to persuade or be judged by, an audience that may include (or consist entirely of) himself?"[126] That the audience have been distilled and diminished into the thoughts of Richard by the end of the play reflects the introspective nature of Richard. In the cell, "treasons make me wish myself a beggar, | And so I am" (5.5.33-4) Without his kingship, he is reduced to the lowest in society: a simple man that "live with bread like you, feel want, | taste grief, need friends" (3.2.175-6), who greets the groom of the stable as "noble peer" (5.5.67). Here, Richard realizes how much he needs the people of his kingdom, as he finds himself conjuring up the people in his thoughts, and it also has a humbling effect, through which he can become a subject, on a level with the groundlings. Richard's final monologue seems a counterpart to the deposition speech. There, he becomes nothing, while in the cell he becomes Everyman, and the embodiment on stage of every person in the audience.

[126] Berger, p. 50.

A reading of Richard's famous exhortation in Act 3 might encapsulate what this chapter has worked to show. Hearkening to folkloric customs of oral storytelling, Richard anticipates his own doom, telling his followers: "For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground | And tell sad stories of the death of kings – how some have been deposed" (3.2.155-7). He refers to his own state as the actor in his own play, that requires "a little scene | to monarchize." (3.2.164-5). Here, Richard calls on the audience not only to witness but also to participate in the telling of these "stories" and even to catalog them, saying which came first and which came after. Richard calls on his audience to see the fall, and all the kings that have followed after in the postlapsarian state as reiterations of the same story. The "hollow crown" serves here for audiences to anticipate a miniature version of the "wooden o" of *Henry V*; the crown becomes a little playhouse, and within its circle, tiny imaginary actors playing the stock characters Death and an Antic or Jester, are acting out a little scene that mocks the state of the monarchy. These metatheatrical images remind the audience to think about the relationship between playgoing and history. The poetry contains echoes of the biblical and recalls the "antics" of Elizabeth's court, "buckling" the layers of history. The metatheatrical imagery here, along with the layering of history work together as an invitation to the audience to reflect on their role of agents of historical change. These strategies provoke audiences to think about themselves as witnesses to history and also agents of historical change are further developed in the subsequent *Henriad* plays. The *Henry IV* plays develop these ideas but also warn

audiences of some of the pitfalls that aspiring agents of historical change might fall victim to if they are not studious, or critical thinkers.

Chapter Two
Historical Revisionism & "Intertheater" in *1 & 2 Henry IV*.

In *1 & 2 Henry IV*, the reign of King Richard II — and more specifically, Shakespeare's account of that reign in the first play of the tetralogy — becomes the subject of motivated reflection and misremembering by a range of characters. Shakespeare invites his audience to participate in the consolidation of a communal bond around a number of historical "truths" that they construct together by watching and commenting on *Henry IV*. The audience are asked to recognize that the notion of collective history is a construct that arises from the interplay of different interpretations of the past, including in Shakespeare's own drama.

With *Richard II*, Shakespeare creates his own version of history that functions as the underlying source text the rest of the tetralogy draws from. In this chapter, I examine moments in *1 & 2 Henry IV*, when the experience of remembering or misremembering events from *Richard II* are dramatized, and the audience are required to reflect on the nature of their relationship to the plays. As characters engage in historical revisionism of events in *Richard II*, I speculate that a skepticism builds in the audience about our capacity to learn from history or to become objectively knowledgeable of historical truth, both collectively and as individuals. By having characters in the subsequent plays reference elements from *Richard II* inaccurately, Shakespeare shows that the past cannot be remembered objectively and exposes the difficulties people have learning from history, at times even provoking his audiences to correct and perceive characters' tendency to misread.

As well as considering historical revisionism as an act of writing over the past, this chapter also explores another kind of overwriting or layering effect created by the use of sources Shakespeare draws on, particularly with the earlier chronicle history plays *Cambises, King of Persia* and *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, which makes use of biblical narrative; as well as the incorporation of specific Elizabethan "anachronisms" from his own moment in the tavern scenes.[127] These "intertheatrical" play allusions, along with metatheatrical appeals to the audience in scenes such as that of the play extempore, could provoke the audience to think about the artifice of drama and the way historical events are represented in the theater, overwriting and even substituting the real historical events themselves. These aspects of the plays have the potential to create heightened critical engagement among the audience, allowing them the space to feel as though they are coming to original responses about the plays, and are even participating in them. Alongside this, the plays also remind us that they themselves are artificial creations, looking at the past and shaping it according to our own desires.

Historical Revisionism of Richard II

In contrast to chronicle history plays of the earlier sixteenth century, which promote an idea that the modern political order is superior to its more ancient counterparts, Shakespeare's *Richard II* takes place in a world characterized by a yearning for the past. The decision to incorporate nostalgia contrasts with one of

[127] Margreta de Grazia, *Four Shakespearean Period Pieces*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021). p. 23.

Shakespeare's source plays, *Famous Victories*, that staged the past as something problematic and undesirable, orienting audiences instead toward the future. It appears from the Queen's Men's repertoire that it was a deliberate decision to portray history in a way that prevented audiences from desiring that the past would return.[128] Conversely, in *Richard II,* Shakespeare not only establishes the past as something desirable and better than the present moment, he also uses this play as a touchstone for the other plays in the tetralogy to draw from, and for characters to be nostalgic about.

The tendency of characters to look back on the past with nostalgia is carried over into *1 Henry IV* from *Richard II*. Gaunt in *Richard II* expresses longing for England's imagined prelapsarian, golden age before what he sees as Richard's corrupting rule, but ironically for spectators of *1 Henry IV*, they are met in this play with characters who cannot forget Richard's rule, and who even glorify him. The rebels Hotspur and Worcester refer to the years of his reign as "in Richard's time" (*1HIV,* 1.3.240 & 5.1.35). Assigning Richard as the owner of a period of time works to re-establish his authority, legitimizing his reign, despite the rebels' previous involvement with his deposition. The preoccupation with Richard's rule, and sadness for his loss is also reworked in a vulgar key with the decline of an inn after its owner's death, as expressed by the second Carrier: "This house is turned upside down

[128] Kristine Johanson, *Shakespeare's Golden Ages: Resisting Nostalgia in Elizabethan Drama,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022) p. 35. Johanson catalogs other earlier chronicle plays in the Queen's Men's repertoire, including *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third, Selimus* and *Tamburlaine,* asking, "why is there no past to the past in these plays?"

since Robin Ostler died" (*1HIV,* 2.1.10). Robin Ostler here functions as a signifier for the late king, indicated by the metaphor of the "house" carried over from *Richard II,* when the Queen refers to Richard as "a most beauteous inn." (*RII,* 5.1.13) Robin Ostler's "house" — synonymous with "inn" — has now become "the most villainous house in all London road for fleas" (*1HIV,* 2.1.14-15): a metaphor perhaps for the state of the kingdom since Richard's death. After Hotspur's death in *Part 2*, Morton tells of how "the blood | of fair King Richard" (*2HIV,* 1.2.205) has been scraped from Pomfret stones by the Bishop and used as a kind of relic in order to sanction by god further rebellion against Henry IV. This apparent consensus of regret for the loss of Richard during the reign of Henry IV demonstrates for audiences divergent and unreliable memories. These nostalgic attitudes to Richard revise and recast his character in a favorable light, and conflict with his portrayal in *Richard II* — when audiences witnessed his abuse of power, and his betrayal of his duty to office, his country, and his kin. Presenting these contrasting views, Shakespeare invites playgoers to approach history as a collective project requiring active evaluation and adjudication among competing narratives in order to arrive at some kind of shared meaning that will help ground and orient a community of citizen-playgoers.

The abdication scene marks a turning point in the *Henriad*, as from this moment, there is never a divinely appointed king again, only arguments about who has a legitimate claim to the crown and what legitimacy means. From the moment the looking-glass is shattered in *Richard II*, the king's character and the nature of his reign become objects of dispute, beginning with Richard's own questioning of

himself in an inter-theatrical reference to the appearance of Helen of Troy's "face that launched a thousand ships" in Marlowe's *Dr Faustus:*

RICHARD Was this face the face
That every day under his household roof
Did keep ten thousand men? Was this the face
That like the sun did make beholders wink?
(*RII*, 4.1.281-4)

The reference to Faustus's response to what is in fact an illusion and a devil, makes this a fitting choice for a connection to Richard's selfhood. The reflection he sees in the mirror is something illusory that he can no longer believe in. It is easily breakable and fractured, having a "brittle glory" shining in it (*RII*, 4.1.287).[129] Richard's symbolic shattering of the looking-glass invites disaster and he is metaphorically separated from his soul, now "cracked in an hundred shivers" (*RII*, 4.1.289). This is the original moment that Richard becomes the object of disagreement and material for others' individual projects of historical revisionism. Once the looking-glass lies cracked in pieces it becomes a metaphor for the multiplicity of responses to Richard after his fall, evolving and mutable, his memory is used by people for different purposes.

Queen Isabel is the first to comment on the change in Richard. Predictive of his downfall, having already imagined "some unborn sorrow, ripe in Fortune's womb […] coming towards me" (*RII*,2.2.10), Isabel calls Richard a withered "rose" (*RII*, 5.1.8); "King Richard's tomb, | and not King Richard" (*RII*, 5.1.12-13), and accuses

[129] *OED*, "Brittle" a. Hard but liable to break easily; fragile, breakable. See also William Shakespeare, *Richard II* (Arden Shakespeare, third series.) n. 289 (p. 409).

him of being "pupil-like" (*RII,* 5.1.31) and submissive, to "kiss the rod" (*RII,* 5.1.32). The Queen's motives in these readings of him as a withered rose, a tomb and a school boy are to express her shock in how altered he is and to shame him into action against Bolingbroke, to put up more of a fight for the crown. Another fractured view of Richard follows swiftly after the Queen's, when York recounts to his wife the pitiful entrance of the broken Richard into London, riding in shame behind Bolingbroke in Act 5.

The multiplicity of cracked and contradictory revisions and readings of Richard and his reign becomes clear to a literate audience of the first part of *Henry IV,* when characters spend time dwelling on the past and his reign. While the audience remembers Northumberland in *Richard II* as the "ladder wherewithal | The mounting Bolingbroke ascends [Richard's] throne (*RII,* 5.1.55), we see Northumberland in *1 Henry IV* with other former co-conspirators that previously helped Henry IV to the throne now plotting against him.[130] Worcester, Northumberland and Hotspur each use Richard as a blank canvas, reinventing him to create an honorable pretext for their rebellion against Henry IV. Worcester recalls that Mortimer was "he proclaim'd | By Richard that dead is the next of blood" (*1HIV,* 1.3.144-5). The literate audiences of early modern London sometimes brought personal copies of play quartos they owned into the playhouses and read them aloud before the play began, and they could also purchase playbooks inside the theaters from the mixed-goods trays of merchants and

[130] Hotspur's speech in the plotting scene echoes Richard's accusation that Northumberland is the ladder Bolingbroke uses to get the throne: "you [...] Being the agents or base second means, | The cords, the ladder, or the hangman rather?" (*1HIV,* 1.3.164-5).

pamphlet-sellers.[131] Audience members in the first showings of *Henry IV, Part 1* in 1597, with Richard Burbage playing Prince Hal, and William Sly playing Hotspur, may have held copies of the 1597 first quarto of *Richard II* in their hands.[132] Playgoers were potentially aware that the account of Richard proclaiming Mortimer as heir may have existed in books like Holinshed and other Elizabethan chronicles, but cross checking in a printed play text of *Richard II* proves the proclamation was never made.[133] In fact, the only moment in the play that Richard names an heir is the Duke of York's report that Richard, "with willing soul | Adopts thee heir, and his high sceptre yields | To the possession of thy royal hand (*RII*, 4.1.109-111). Here Richard is not naming Mortimer, but Bolingbroke as heir. As this proclamation is reported at a moment when Richard is a prisoner, it evidently was not what he truly desired. The impact these moments have on the audience is to encourage us to realize that we cannot assume that what we see and hear, or what other people report having seen or heard, is actually the truth, and that characters have the power to re-write historical events in their favor, according to their desires.

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[131] Tiffany Stern, "Watching As Reading, the Audience and Written Text in Shakespeare's Playhouse" in Laurie Maguire (ed.) *How To Do Things With Shakespeare,* (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2008). pp. 136-160 (p. 141). Stern explains, "published plays anticipate being read by spectators [...] players may deliberately have released scripts into the market for publicity or advertising [...] a theater audience might be partly shaped to and by printed play texts that they bought in the theater. Moreover, if playbooks were sold in playhouses then the paper potential of the performed text will always have been felt by the audience. The "book" will have seemed what the play was likely to become next.``

[132] See British Library Treasures. Shakespeare Quartos. *Richard II* <https://www.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/richard2.html> *Henry IV Part 1* <https://www.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/henry4p1.html> [Web. Accessed November 10, 2022].

[133] See William Shakespeare, *King Henry IV Part One* (Arden Shakespeare, third series.) n.144-5.

Hotspur's reaction to the proclamation that Mortimer was named heir is to assert a newly revised memory of Richard that serves his current need: to motivate a rebellion against Bolingbroke. Hotspur, revealing his gullible nature, thinks he has heard a credible possibility that Richard had named an heir. He immediately reacts by expressing his regret at the loss of Richard, remembering him as a "sweet lovely rose" (*1HIV*, 1.3.174), which contrasts with Henry IV as "this thorn, this canker, Bolingbroke" (*1HIV*, 1.3.175). If the audience are familiar with the earlier play, they might question whether Richard was actually a lovely rose. To persuade his father and Worcester further, Hotspur conjures up an image of them being described in future history books. "Shall it for shame be spoken in these days, | Or fill up chronicles in time to come | That men of your nobility and power | Did gage them both in an unjust behalf" (*1HIV*, 1.3.169-172). As well as being made aware of this discrepancy on Richard's character, Hotspur's reference to future "chronicles" draws attention to the play itself as a form of chronicling. When the chronicles are directly mentioned by characters, Shakespeare seems to be asking his audience to reflect on the difference between his artform and its source material.

The provision of Worcester and Northumberland as supporters of and participants in Hotspur's rewriting of the past is a model for the audience to imitate. If they allow themselves to become swept up in Hotspur's rhetoric and wild imagination, which "drives him beyond the bounds of patience" (*1HIV*, 1.3.198-9), Hotspur's eventual death by the play's end at the battle of Shrewsbury demonstrates that this is clearly the wrong path. On the other hand, Worcester and

Northumberland's support of Hotspur also creates a distancing effect for the audience, in that they are watching people act as a sympathetic audience to Hotspur, rather than being directly carried along with him. This scene is comparable to that in Act 5 of *Richard II*, when the play's spectators watch the Duchess witnessing a historical moment unfold: York's anger at Aumerle's treason and resolve to tell the king. Seeing the Duchess leap to a stereotype about suspicious men thinking their wives have been unfaithful provides spectators with an option of a reaction to the historical event. In this comparable scene in *1 Henry IV*, the audience is also free to either adopt the sympathies of Worcester and Northumberland to the charismatic Hotspur; or they can observe and reject them, and interpret the past differently. The audience see that history is constantly being misused or altered due to the needs of those in the present, and that rebels like Northumberland and Worcester strive to make it legitimate or chronicle history by formally pronouncing it in official places, as the king comments later at Shrewsbury: "These things indeed you have articulate, | Proclaimed at market crosses, read in churches" (*1HIV*, 5.1.72-3). By providing Worcester and Northumberland as witnesses who are in agreement with Hotspur's plan, the audience realizes they are set at a remove from the plot, enabling them to feel skeptical of these revisions of the past.

Hotspur's reference to the "chronicles" has a distancing effect on the audience, as we are compelled to think about the play itself as a kind of historical text, and one which even has the capabilities to subsume its sources. Metatheatrical moments that refer to the layering effect of chronicling that plays are capable of

achieving, happens elsewhere in Shakespeare's Roman history plays. In *Julius Caesar,* Cassius wonders, "'how many ages hence | Shall this our lofty scene be acted over | In states unborn and accents yet unknown!" (*Julius Caesar*, 3.1.124-6). Similarly, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Cleopatra predicts that "The quick comedians | Extemporally will stage us and present | Our Alexandrian revels. | Antony shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see | Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness | I' th' posture of a whore" (*Antony and Cleopatra,* 5.2.263-9). These examples show that Shakespeare had an awareness that the kind of drama he was writing was bound to become a rival for other forms of historical writing, even ultimately overwriting them, perhaps because his plays, unlike chronicle books, could bring history to life in the bodies of actors. Ironically now, most people know historical personages such as Hotspur from Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV,* rather than any other kind of historical text. Shakespeare therefore draws attention to his own history plays as a form of chronicling, underscoring not only the uniqueness of his writing but also its superiority to its sources in the chronicle tradition. The notion that a play could overwrite texts that are supposedly more historically factual puts readers of chronicles — including the audience, and characters like Hotspur, under scrutiny, as we must consider how and why history is being manipulated.

Hotspur's obsession with the notion that there should be accurate historical stories in chronicles to come is made ironic when we consider that in the very same scene he completely forgets important details about his pivotal first meeting with Henry Bolingbroke in *Richard II*:

HOTSPUR In Richard's time,—what do you call the place?—
A plague upon it, it is in Gloucestershire;
'Twas where the madcap duke his uncle kept,
His uncle York; where I first bow'd my knee
Unto this king of smiles, this Bolingbroke,—
'Sblood!—
When you and he came back from Ravenspurgh.

NORTHUMBERLAND At Berkeley castle.

(*1HIV*, 1.3. 240-246)

Hotspur's forgetfulness further emphasizes how unreliable memory is in the recounting of historical events. If important people who were present at key historical events have trouble remembering correctly, then how reliable were the sources historians such as Holinshed were using? Forgetfulness is clearly part of Hotspur's character.[134] A comparable moment is his meeting with Mortimer and Glendower, when he believes he has forgotten the map that serves as the focal point of their meeting (*1HIV*, 3.1.5). Hotspur's forgetfulness breaks down the fourth wall, prompting the audience to remember the name of the location from *Richard II*, and to call out the answer themselves before Northumberland does, as though the actor playing Hotspur has forgotten his lines. This exchange shows how unstable the memories of individuals can be. The potential implications of forgetfulness in the hands of powerful people is shown when Hotspur not only forgets important historical locations, but when he incorrectly recalls what was said in the past.

[134] See also in 2.3 *Richard II*, Northumberland accuses Hotspur of forgetting the Duke of Hereford (ll. 36-39) — meaning that he has forgotten to pay him the appropriate courtesy. Hotspur responds that he could not forget what he never remembered.

Hotspur, apparently recounting a scene in Act 2 of *Richard II*, quotes Bolingbroke as having previously called him "gentle Harry Percy", and "kind cousin" (*1HIV*, 1.3.251). Playgoers consulting their quarto playbooks of *Richard II* at a showing of the first part of *Henry IV* would note that while Bolingbroke in *Richard II* does call Hotspur "gentle Percy" (*RII*, 2.3.45), nowhere in the text of *Richard II* does he call him "kind cousin." Hotspur not only remembers Bolingbroke's expressions imprecisely but he misrepresents the situation: "It is Northumberland who fawns, Bolingbroke being merely diplomatic with his supporters."[135] If Hotspur had remembered the scene correctly, it was his own father, not Bolingbroke, who was a "fawning greyhound" (*1HIV*, 1.3.249), and who spoke with a "candy deal of courtesy" (*1HIV*, 1.3.248). Northumberland overtly flatters Bolingbroke, telling him that his travels have been made pleasant by his companionship with him: "And yet your fair discourse hath been as sugar, | Making the hard way sweet and delectable" (*RII*, 2.3.6-7). Admittedly, Hotspur is not yet present at this point in the scene, and therefore may not remember, or have been aware of his father's flattery to Bolingbroke in the earlier play. However, Hotspur's description of the flattery he claims to have received from Bolingbroke as saccharine invites the audience to remember Northumberland's sugary words. All of these details Hotspur calls up and either remembers correctly or misremembers serve as Shakespeare demonstrating to us that desire shapes the way we understand the truth and that there can only be

[135] Charles R Forker n. 45-50. in William Shakespeare, *Richard II* (Arden Shakespeare third series) p. 295.

descriptions of facts, rather than objective facts. In this case, flattery — from Northumberland to Bolingbroke — occurred, but according to the way Hotspur needs to understand and read the past, he tells himself he was being flattered by Bolingbroke. Convincing himself of this functions to increase Hotspur's confidence and belief in himself and the rebellion. The audience, witnessing Hotspur's selective memory in this scene, learn that the cognitive bias of individuals shapes how they look back on events.

Reformation of the prodigal son narrative from *Famous Victories*

While the *Henriad* plays invite audiences to notice that all historical interpretation involves a reimagining of the past in terms of present needs and desires, the plays also purport to discern in the reigns of these kings a pattern set forth in the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15. Richard, a prodigal figure in his own right, spends his wealth rashly, and coldly betrays his cousin Bolingbroke, disinheriting him and then spending that inheritance on a war in Ireland.

KING RICHARD II Now put it, God, in the physician's mind
To help him to his grave immediately!
The lining of his coffers shall make coats
To deck our soldiers for these Irish wars.
(*RII*, 1.4.60-5)

Richard's prodigality is evident in this speech as he ruthlessly hopes that Gaunt will die sooner so that he can use his money for his own ends. The fallen state Richard finds himself in at the end of the play represents both the prodigal son narrative gone

wrong, and the fall of man, with the allegory of England as an "other Eden" or "World's best garden" running throughout the *Henriad.*

In *Henry IV* we see the prodigal son narrative in another iteration: the audience are aware that Hal is playing a prodigal, although no other characters understand this. Falstaff is aware that his own behavior is also prodigal, but relies on the parable as a truth that will secure him acceptance and forgiveness by Hal when he becomes king, and a place at court. However, this expectation is undercut when Hal and Falstaff switch roles in the play extempore. Falstaff's description of biblical scenes and the story of the prodigal he is familiar with from wall tapestries in ale houses: "slaves as ragged as Lazarus in the painted cloth" (*2HIV,* 4.2.13), projects the story in a literal sense. Falstaff cannot believe or accept that Hal will cast him off, but ultimately does not gain the forgiveness the prodigal in the parable receives, and therefore cannot reintegrate once Hal becomes king. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* Falstaff is provided with the forgiveness Hal refuses him however, and he is given another life, but again takes the place of scapegoat for yet another prodigal figure: Fenton, who is able to get away with all of the kinds of behaviors Falstaff is initially despised for by the Windsor community.

Just as the reign of Richard II is equated with *Genesis* through the tradition of connecting Richard's reign to the fallen, postlapsarian state in both *Jack Straw,* and *Richard II,* Shakespeare draws on the tradition that connects Prince Hal to the Gospels for the *Henry IV* and *Henry V* plays. An earlier play, *The Famous Victories of Henry V,* establishes the tradition of Prince Hal as prodigal, and Shakespeare draws

on *Famous Victories* as a source text for *Henry IV* and *Henry V*.[136] This historical layering of the present on the past here differs or represents a development from *Richard II* in that we are further encouraged to think critically about how the past is being used. Although we learn Shakespeare's Hal is prodigal even before we meet him in *Richard II,* in *1 Henry IV* we quickly discover he is simultaneously a far more complex, "seemingly" prodigal son, very different from both the version in the Bible and from Prince Henry in *Famous Victories*.[137] In the *Henry IV* plays, unlike in *Famous Victories,* the audience is prompted to be critical about the veracity of Hal's status as a prodigal son, as he reveals in a rare soliloquy that he is in fact planning his own reformation: "herein will I imitate the sun | Who doth permit the base contagious clouds | To smother up his beauty from the world." Currently he is only falsifying "men's hopes," preparing to throw off his "loose behavior"(*1HIV,* 1.2.198) to amaze everyone with a reformation that will be "glittering o'er my fault" (*1HIV,* 1.3.203). Thus Hal reveals early on to the audience that he is only putting on a show of prodigality as a political tactic to gain power, and is therefore not truely prodigal.

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[136] David Bevington has shown through his study of the entries in Henslowe's Diary that "harey the v" or the play we now know as *The Famous Victories of Henry V,* was acted around thirteen times at the Rose playhouse, so Shakespeare "clearly had the opportunity to see some version of the Henry V story in 1595-6." David Bevington, *Tudor Drama and Politics* (Michigan: University of Michigan, 1968) p. 19. See also Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge (eds.) The Oldcastle controversy: Sir John Oldcastle, Part I and The Famous Victories of Henry V (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991) p. 28, n 82.

[137] Hal is described in *Richard II* as an "unthrifty son" (*RII*, 5.3.1) and a "young wanton and effeminate boy" (*RII*, 5.3.10) who behaves in a manner unsuitable for a prince, as he "daily doth frequent" (*RII*, 5.3.5) taverns in London "with unrestrained loose companions" (*RII,* 5.3).

This is most unlike the son in the biblical story, who spends all his money without any kind of plan, and then is left to fate, falling victim to a famine.

Famous Victories was performed in the Queen's Men repertoire of the late 1580s, alongside other non-Shakespearian chronicle history plays such as *The True Tragedy of Richard III* and *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England*. These plays integrated "themes that reflect the topical issues and concerns of Elizabethan England during the 1580's and 1590's."[138] *Famous Victories*, like the other plays the Queen's Men performed are present and future oriented, fantasizing "about the reign of Henry V [...] they also demonstrate either no or very limited knowledge of the past. Their sense of the future is grounded in their present. This idea is one that Shakespeare will largely reject."[139] *Famous Victories* in particular, in contrast to Shakespeare's *Henry IV* and *Henry V* plays, offers a triumphal vision of the present Shakespeare counters in his treatment of the same historical events. The sensibilities of the Queen's Men chronicle play repertoire encouraged attachment to the present, specifically to the present regime and its political authority. In the *Henriad*, Shakespeare evokes a backward-looking, even nostalgic view of the past even as he provokes spectators to be critical of characters engaging in such nostalgia, epitomized by the Archbishop in *2 Henry IV:* "Past and to come seems best; things present worst" (*2HIV*, 1.3.108). At this point in the 1590's, when audiences began to

[138] Charles R. Forker, 'Introduction' in George Peele, *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011) p. 1.
[139] Kristine Johanson, Against Nostalgia: Looking Forward to the Future in the Queen's Men's Playsand Marlowe's Tamburlaine in *Shakespeare's Golden Ages: Resisting Nostalgia in Elizabethan Drama*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022) p. 39.

distinguish the history play from biblical cycle plays, saints, morality plays and pageants, Shakespeare developed historical play writing by engaging in historical re-writing — both on the level of his characters, and the way he himself employed source materials.

The continued enfolding of these medieval kings' histories together with biblical references — first to the Old Testament in *Richard II*, followed by the gospel parable in *Henry IV* — insists to spectators their deeply rooted commonality with these kings. These biblical stories were popular and kept current in people's minds due to mandatory church going in the period, which was an "age of faith."[140] Each of these biblical stories and Shakespeare's application of them concern a fall from grace, from a position of extravagance: living in Eden, where no labor is required, followed by toiling in the fields — or in Richard's case, enjoying material wealth and majesty as King, to his murder in a barren cell. Richard's spending of the wealth is also somewhat prodigal behavior: as he recklessly seizes John of Gaunt's money, property, and lands to travel abroad to Ireland for war. Hal's excessive behavior in the taverns also sets up an expectation that he will fall into extreme wretchedness, as Orlando expresses in *As You Like It*: 'Shall I keep your hogs and eat husks with them? What prodigal portion have I spent, that I should come to such penury?' (*AYLI,* 1.1.32–5) Orlando's use of the prodigal son parable to express the disaster that befalls the son after he has spent all his money.

[140] Jame Shapiro, *A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare*, 1599 (New York: Harper Collins, 2005) p. xv

The biblical parable opens making it clear that there are two sons, as it ends with the conflict of the eldest's anger over his younger brother's behavior: "A certain man had two sons: | And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." (Luke 15.11-12). In the biblical text, the word "prodigal" is never actually mentioned, but we learn that the son "wasted his substance with riotous living" (15.13), and his older brother complains to their father that he "devoured thy living with harlots" (15.30). The father, who loves his son for who he is, demands nothing from him, and forgives him eagerly when he seeks forgiveness, telling his servants to "bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet" (Luke, 15.22). The elder son, meanwhile, cannot forgive. Shakespeare draws on this theme of brotherly rivalry in other plays and focuses on the dynamics of the brothers with Edmund and Edgar in *King Lear* and Oliver and Orlando in *As You Like It*.

Building on the biblical parable from Luke 15.11-32, the prodigal son of the sixteenth century "engaged in financial excess and misuse [...] wasting his father's Patrimony."[141] The parable transferred well to drama of the period because it contains comic and tragic dramatic elements in a very compact form: "the 'prodigal plot' is marked by conflict, recognition, discovery, and resolution. It embraces several distinctive "Shakespearean" motifs: "the conflict of generations (youth and age), sibling rivalry (old and younger brothers), ungrateful children, the conflict of justice and mercy, love and law, the loss and restoration of community, and the archetype of

[141] Ezra Horbury, *Prodigality in Early Modern Drama* (Boydell & amp; Brewer, 2019) p. 2.

death and rebirth ("this my son was dead and is alive again"). It encompasses the crisis of a soul-stripping catastrophe."[142] The catastrophic state is in the same vein of the philosophically lost state of Lear in the storm, or Edgar as the naked Poor Tom.

The prodigal son parable was enormously popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. More than fifty known prodigal dramas surviving from the period, and one play about the prodigal son, *Acolastus*, went through forty eight editions in sixty years and was incorporated as an essential text in the humanist education system under Henry VIII.[143] Alison M. Jack argues that Shakespeare offers various commentary on the Bible through his appropriation of the prodigal son story, both in *Henry IV* and *King Lear*, which she likens to " 'midrash': a 'rabbinic approach to the reading of scripture which seeks to elaborate on the biblical text, explaining lacunae and seeking answers to new questions through playful, creative exegesis."[144] With a focus on Hal, who deceives those around him, not only through his impersonation of the prodigal son, but in his contrived reformation, Mack concludes that Shakespeare offers a new interpretation of the parable, that questions "the motives of the younger son in his leaving home and returning to it; and offers two opposing models for understanding the father figure, either as harsh maintainer of a potentially corrupt system, or an anarchic tempter away from duty."[145]

[142] Tippens, p. 60.
[143] Tippens, p. 59.
[144] Jack, p. 54.
[145] Jack, p. 64.

Shakespeare's adoption and alteration of the prodigal son narrative both from the biblical parable and from its presentation in *Famous Victories* functions as instructive and educational for audiences. James Shapiro reflects that when Shakespeare wrote *Henry V,* he set one of the most challenging tasks for his audience: that they keep the two plays, old [his source play, *The Famous Victories of Henry V*] and new, simultaneously in mind."[146] William N. West has coined this kind of dialogue between plays: "intertheatricality," or "understanding theatre as made out of other performances [...] a horizontally organised repertoire."[147] For the early modern audience, Prince Hal re-enacts and replays new iterations of the earlier prodigal Prince Henry from *Famous Victories,* thereby revising history before the eyes of the audience, in the playhouse. These elements allow us to understand the ways in which the *Henry IV* plays express ideas about memory, nostalgia, and historical drama, and what we seek from them in our own moment.

In *Famous Victories* and *Henry IV,* the emphasis of the prodigal narrative is focused on the relationship between father and son rather than a relationship between brothers. In *Famous Victories*, Prince Henry enters the king's presence dressed strangely in a cloak full of needles and eyelets, and holding a dagger, which his father conjectures the Prince means to use to take his life (*FV,* VI.13). Despite this treacherous appearance, after a slight pause and exit, he is called back by his father

[146] James Shapiro, *A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare: 1599* (New York: Harper Collins, 2005) p. 87.
[147] William N. West "Intertheatricality" in *Early Modern Theatricality* ed. Henry S. Turner. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) pp. 151-173. p. 154.

and easily forgiven: “at the request of thee, my son, I will pardon thee. And God bless thee” (*FV*, VII, 34). The King in *Famous Victories* is pitiful, begging to know, “What cause hath ever been that thou shouldst forsake me, and follow this vile and reprobate company [..] Oh, my son, thou knowest that these doings will end thy father’s days” (*FV*, VI.2-5). In *Famous Victories* the father is forgiving, like the father in the biblical parable, but in *Henry IV*, there is “little of the humility of the Prodigal Son’s repentant return, or of the father’s unhesitating and generous welcome.”[148] Hal’s behavior is so shameful as to make the king wish that Hotspur were his son in his place: “That some night-tripping fairy had exchanged | In cradle clothes our children where they lay, | And called mine ‘Percy’, his ‘Plantagenet’” (*1HIV*, 1.1.86-70). Shakespeare’s king has a far angrier attitude toward his son, attributing Hal’s actions to something God is bestowing on him as a punishment: God “will have it so | for some displeasing service I have done” (*1HIV*, 3.2.4-5). The king, plagued by the guilt he feels for what he did to Richard, does not consider Hal as a person in his own right but rather an extension of himself, created out of his blood, sent by “the rod of heaven | To punish my mistreadings” (*1HIV*, 3.2.10-11). The audience witnesses an attempt by King Henry to apply the prodigal son parable to events in his own life to make sense of Hal's behavior, but this fails, because as spectators are aware, Hal is not truly prodigal.

The King, like Hotspur, presents a revised impression of Richard as a prodigal character to make Hal fear for his future as king if he continues to behave recklessly:

[148] Mack, p. 60.

"the skipping King, he ambled up and down | With shallow jesters and rash bavin wits" (*1HIV*, 3.2.60-1). In the biblical parable, the father does not say anything to make his son feel guilty about what he has done, but he does say explicitly that he was "dead" and is alive again. While Hal does have a rebirth of sorts in *Henry V* in that his character changes, at the end of *2 Henry IV* Falstaff pretends to be dead and is dramatically resurrected on the battlefield at Shrewsbury, signaling that he too, is a prodigal figure that can be reborn.

The prodigal son story featured not only in the plays and literature of the early modern period, but in visual culture: in "stained glass windows, illuminated manuscripts, woodcarvings, etchings, and paintings."[149] This kind of material presence of the parable occurs in association with Falstaff, both in *2 Henry IV* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.[150] When the Hostess says she will have to "pawn both my plate and the tapestry of my dining chambers" in the Boar's Head Tavern, Falstaff advises her: "Glasses, glasses is the only drinking. And for thy walls, a pretty slight drollery, or the story of the prodigal, or the German hunting in waterwork" (*2HIV*, 2.1.140-144). In *Merry Wives*, when Simple is searching for Falstaff, the Host of the Garter notes that Falstaff's chamber has been "painted about with the story of the Prodigal, fresh and new" (*MW*, 4.5.6). If "fresh and new" is taken to refer to the painting of the prodigal, this could imply that Falstaff has requested his room to be decorated in such a way, reflecting that he enjoys the story and relates to it, or still

[149] Darryl Tippens, 'Shakespeare and the Prodigal Son tradition', Explorations in Renaissance Culture; (1988, 14), p. 57.
[150] Mack, p. 50.

harbors hopes of being taken back into the fold at court after his banishment. Falstaff represents for the audience a traditional reader of the prodigal son story, evidenced in his enactment of the father figure in the play extempore, when Falstaff "berates his son for his rebellion, but his tears speak of compassion for him."[151] This traditional reading of the story was beginning to shift in plays of the period however, and this was due to changing economic forces that made "filial rebellion, associated with foreign travel, less uniformly unwelcome."[152] Falstaff functions both as an alternative father figure to Hal, and also as a prodigal figure, with his excessive behavior. Ford in *Merry Wives* expresses this understanding of Falstaff as prodigal when he calls him "Youth in a basket" (4.2.111). Having Falstaff as the father figure behaving even more prodigally than Hal further complicates audiences' understanding of the way this parable is projected onto the *Henry IV* plays.

From Oldcastle to Falstaff: father and prodigal

Falstaff is modeled after a character from *Famous Victories*, Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, (c. 1378-1417) an historical figure, who for Catholics was viewed as a traitor and an outlaw, but whom Protestants considered a martyr. *Famous Victories* presents Oldcastle and Prince Henry as a pair associated with riot and misrule, although "Oldcastle is a minor character most frequently referred to by the nickname Jockey."[153] Falstaff's name was originally Oldcastle, but in the 1630s, the

[151] Mack, p. 59.
[152] Ibid., p. 48.
[153] Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge, *The Oldcastle Controversy*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991) p. 12.

scholar Richard James noted that the name was changed, because it caused offense to William Brooke, the tenth holder of the Lord Cobham title.[154] The precedent of Oldcastle adds to the complexity of Falstaff's character and comparing Falstaff to Oldcastle in *FV* reveals something about Shakespeare's decision making, as some of the prodigal characteristics of Prince Henry of *FV* are distilled into Falstaff, which functions to secure a clear path for Hal's redemption and character shift as he assumes the role of king in *Henry V.* Falstaff is a larger than life physical personage symbolizing riot and misrule that upon whom Hal can make decisive action and banish; a physical embodiment of prodigality symbolized by his obesity, which is evidence he is a "pampered glutton" (Prologue, *Sir John Oldcastle*). Traces of Oldcastle haunt the *Henriad*: when Hal refers to Falstaff as "my old lad of the castle" (1.2.40); the speech prefix "*Old.*' for '*Falstaff*' at 1.2.114 in the first quarto of *2 Henry IV*; and the Epilogue's assertion that "Oldcastle died a martyr and this is not the man" (29-30).[155] The residue of Oldcastle both shows how Shakespeare develops the character from *Famous Victories*, but also serves to work as a hybrid throughline that is both historical and fictional, and which connects the *Henriad* with *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. The name choice of Brooke, for the pseudonym the jealous Master Ford decides to adopt to outwit Falstaff, could be an ongoing allusion to Sir William Brooke, Lord Cobham who held the post of Lord Chamberlain from 1596-7, and that,

[154] David Scott Kastan, 'Introduction' in Willaim Shakespeare, *King Henry IV Part 1*, (London: Bloomsbury Arden, 2002) pp. 1-132 (p. 52).
[155] Kastan, 'Introduction' p. 53-4.

— like Oldcastle to Falstaff — again had to be changed to "Broome" to pacify his family.[156]

Shakespeare's complex development of Falstaff from the Oldcastle of *Famous Victories* can be seen in a comparison of the first lines of each character. Prince Henry and Oldcastle are not on equal footing in the way Falstaff is with Hal. Oldcastle enters on horseback and his function immediately is as a messenger, and he is prompted to inform news to the prince:

> **PRINCE** How now, Jockey, what news with thee?
> *Enter Jockey*
> **OLDCASTLE** 'Faith my lord, such news as passeth; for the town of Deptford is risen with hue and cry after your man which parted from us the last night and has set upon and hath robbed a poor carrier.
> (*FV*, 1.16)

This exchange contrasts with Falstaff's first entrance in *1 Henry IV*, which is at the same time as the Prince of Wales. The dominance of Falstaff's character is established, as he speaks first: "Now Hal, what time of day is it, lad?" (*1HIV*, 1.2.1). Unlike Oldcastle, he is not a messenger to the prince, and he talks to the Prince using the diminutives "Hal" and "lad" which do not indicate respect or rank, as "my lord" does.

Memories of *Famous Victories'* Prince Henry overlaid onto Hal

In *Famous Victories*, Prince Henry is a more straightforward, villainous rebel, who shows little remorse for his bad behavior. Unlike the biblical prodigal son and

[156] Corbin and Sedge, p. 10-11.

Hal in *Henry IV*, the Prince of *Famous Victories* is outrightly treasonous in the play, fixating on his father's death: "I tell you, sirs, and the King, my father, were dead, we would all be kings" (*FV,* II.79-80). Once his father is dead, Prince Henry envisages what he will do once he obtains the crown: "But, Ned, so soon as I am king, the first thing I will do shall be to put my Lord Chief Justice out of office [...] Then, Ned, I'll turn all these prisons into fence-schools" (*FV*, II.15-20). The unapologetically greedy Prince who boasts shamelessly to Oldcastle about his father that "the breath shall be no sooner out of his mouth but I will clap the crown on my head" (*FV,* V.34-5), orients audiences toward a future world where Henry IV is dead, whereas Shakespeare complicates Hal's prodigality, making it more of a performance than part of his character.Where Prince Henry of *Famous Victories* performs a robbery of the king's receivers and intends to spend the money in Eastcheap, Shakespeare's Hal participates in the Gadshill robbery of the carriers as a practical joke, and to control the events that unfold, returning the money and then tricking Falstaff. The audience, recalling the earlier play, witness this altered, more complex iteration of Prince Henry's character from *Famous Victories,* which encourages them to reflect upon the idea that there cannot be one unified, collective memory.

The popularity of *Famous Victories* can be understood in an examination of a surprising intertheatrical reference to a scene featuring the Lord Chief Justice. West discusses this moment as having the capacity to "thicken" the play: "shared memories of actions can be called up to thicken present performances, like the box on

the justice's ear".[157] This moment attests to Shakespeare's expectation that audiences had knowledge of this play that could be drawn upon while watching the Henriad. When Prince Henry of *Famous Victories* realizes the Justice is about to arrest one of his men, he tries to persuade him to let him go. When he is unsuccessful, the stage direction indicates that the prince beats the Justice: '*He giveth him a box on the ear*.' (*FV*, IV, 69) Although Shakespeare never stages this moment in the *Henriad*, Falstaff refers to it: "For the box of the ear that the prince gave you, he gave it like a rude prince, and you took it like a sensible lord." (*2HIV*, 1.2.196-7) The popularity of this scene is documented in *Tarlton's Jests*, in an anecdote that shows the kind of doubling of roles Tarlton had to do:

> At the Bull at Bishop's Gate was a play of Henry the fifth, wherein the judge was to take a box of the ear; and because he was absent that should take the blow, Tarlton himself, ever forward to please, took upon him t play the same judge, beside his own part of the clown.'[158]

Falstaff's memory of a popular action Prince Henry does in *Famous Victories* prompts audiences to question characters' perceptions of Hal, as he is equated with the earlier iteration of his character: Prince Henry. In *Famous Victories* he is frequently described as "young", and having "wildness", or being young and "wild headed". In *Richard II*, Henry IV calls him a "young wanton and effeminate boy"; In *2 Henry IV* Hotspur calls him "The nimble-footed madcap Prince of Wales" and in *Merry Wives,* Page echoes this depiction of him, calling him the "wild prince" and

[157] West, p. 155.
[158] Corbin and Sedge, p. 26-7.

Falstaff with the "mad Prince". All of these descriptors are more fitted to Prince Henry of *Famous Victories*, rather than Shakespeare's Hal. Because Hal reveals that his prodigality is a pretense in his early soliloquy, the audience are aware of his alternate purpose and motives, but the other characters in the play have no idea of this, and therefore see him as a wild and mad character more accurately embodied in Prince Henry of *Famous Victories*. These intertheatrical moments, where characters equate Hal with Prince Henry from *Famous Victories* then, demonstrate new iterations of the way the prodigal son narrative can be manipulated in the theater, and reveal that theater can be used as a tool to complicate characters.

Henry IV presents another misdirected projection of the prodigal son parable when Hal finally meets with him. Unlike the father of the parable, he is suspicious of Hal and finds it hard to forgive him. After Hal makes his vow to his father that he will "redeem all this on Percy's head" (*1HIV,* 3.2.132), and is born anew with his vow, the audience is provoked to critique the king's understanding of the prodigal son's parable, as he does not understand that Hal is truely redeemed. We see this in *Part 2* when the situation between father and son appears to have reverted back to one of mistrust, when Hal takes away his crown from his chamber, the king is still imagining Hal as a "foolish youth" (*2HIV*, 4.3.226) with "a thousand daggers in thy thoughts" (*2HIV,* 4.3.236). This altering and misreading of the biblical prodigal son parable by Henry IV encourages the audience to consider and question the improper use of the Bible by immoral rulers. The audience are made aware too, that the theater, with its capacity for metatheatricality and thinning out or thickening time, with the developed,

complex version of Hal's character from Prince Henry of *Famous Victories*, has a way of showing us many more angles and versions of people.

Evoking another performance, such as that of *Famous Victories*, has the effect of handing over responsibility to the audience, in an intertheatrical sense: "intertheatrical moments in early modern plays call on their audiences to witness for them, making the audiences, as it were, responsible for elaborations or explanations that the plays omit."[159] This is something Shakespeare does in *Henry IV*, not only implicitly with his source play *Famous Victories*, and the obvious parallel scenes, but also explicitly, as with his unusually overt reference to Thomas Preston's *The Lamentable Tragedy of Cambises , King of Persia.* While in *Famous Victories*, Prince Henry is more overtly prodigal, Falstaff both embodies some prodigal traits himself, and some fatherly traits. His overfamiliar addresses to Hal are like those a father might say to his son, and this is secured in the play within the play episode, where the pair act out a version of the father/son relationship, in the style of the old fashioned play, *Cambises* .

The Play Extempore: "in King Cambises ' vein."

The "play extempore" offers another occasion for audiences to experience history differently. Through a reference to an old play, and an imitation of acting in an old fashioned style, this scene provides a reflection on what it means to encounter or imagine the past through drama. This is a pivotal moment in the first part of *Henry*

[159] West, p. 156.

IV, and one which centers the audience's attention on the capacity of theater to generate radically different interpretations of historical figures and events. Hal discovers he must leave the tavern because of the rebels' uprising, return to court, and speak to his father. Before he leaves, the play extempore with Falstaff will serve as a rehearsal for this conversation, giving Hal the opportunity to "practise an answer" (*1HIV,* 2.4.364-5). Falstaff first plays the role of king/father, and will "speak in passion, and I will do it | in King Cambises ' vein" (*1HIV,* 2.4.368). The mention of the protagonist from Preston's *Cambises , King of Persia,* is a unique moment in Shakespeare's canon, where references to contemporary plays, as explicit as this one, are rarely found.[160] The naming of this play attests to how well known it was, and the expectation that there would be a "response from the audience, especially the groundlings, similar to that of the hostess."[161] The hostess calls Falstaff's acting "excellent sport" and exclaims that he "doth it as like one of these harlotry players as ever I see." (*1HIV*, 2.4.408-9) The *OED* defines "harlotry players" to mean "worthless, contemptible, lowly, as well as "coarse and obscene" (*OED*, adj.1), this description, together with the crude description of props Hal provides: a "joined-stool" for his chair of state; a "leaden dagger for a golden scepter and "a pitiful bald crown" (2.4.392-4) communicates a basic, more melodramatic style of acting, such as

[160] Other moments in Shakespeare when he mentions other contemporary plays include in *Hamlet*, when Rosencrantz mentions the so-called "Wars of the Theatres" with Ben Jonson: **"**an aery of children, little eyases, | that cry out on the top of question, and are most | tyrannically clapped for't: these are now the| fashion, and so berattle the common stages" and also when Polionius references the fact he is played by the same actor who played *Julius Caesar*: "I did enact Julius Caesar: I was killed i' the | Capitol; Brutus killed me."

[161] Robert Carl Johnson *A Critical Edition of Thomas Preston's Cambises* (Salzburg: Universitat Salzburg, 1975) p. 33.

that from the earlier plays. The effect of the mention of a 1560's-era play is both to draw attention to Falstaff's context: he is no longer in the medieval world the play is situated in, but steps "anachronistically" into the Elizabethan audience's present moment, calling their attention to plays of the recent past. This highlights the dramatic form the audience are witnessing, thereby thickening their awareness of their own Elizabethan moment, during a play about the past, and encouraging them to consider the multiplicity of connections and differences *Henry IV* has with *Cambises,* just as they have been doing with *Famous Victories*.[162] When Falstaff states how he will act as the tyrant Cambises , his description indicates that he may himself have been an audience member at a rendition of Preston's play. In order to accurately embody Cambises , Falstaff demands a cup of sack as he remembers Cambises engages in "the vice of drunkenness" (*Cambises,* 481), in particular of drinking wine (*Cambises,* 495). But Falstaff requires the sack "to make my eyes look red, that it may be thought I have wept" (*1HIV*, 2.4.375). Falstaff appears to have been an audience member at plays: in the same way he remembers seeing Prince Henry in *Famous Victories* give the Justice a box on the ear and inserts this notion into *2 Henry IV,* Falstaff seems to be remembering his own experience as an audience member of *Cambises* , and recalls his sorrowful emotion at seeing the multiple horrors King Cambises commits rather than accurately depicting the tyrannical Persian king, as the

[162] West, p. 155.

tyrant is incessantly cruel and unrepentant throughout, and certainly never cries on stage.[163]

Falstaff's mention of *Cambises* anticipates an older style of acting as well as serves to suggest multiple topical parallels with *Henry IV*. Falstaff will "speak in passion" (*1HIV*, 2.4.376) indicating he will use antiquated gestures, such as those pictured in the engravings from Bulwer's *Chriologia* portray. The exaggerated passionating will serve as a clear contrast for the audience that Falstaff is playing an entirely different, "old fashioned" role, "parodying a high tragic ranting style."[164] Scholars have even conjectured that, because Preston's play appears to be quite crudely written, the reference by Falstaff to *Cambises* expresses "Shakespeare's scorn for the popular tragedy printed a generation earlier."[165] Shakespeare may well be mocking his audience's love of this old style of acting, but he might have achieved this by appropriating any number of plays from the 1560's. The choice of *Cambises* in particular seems more deliberate, as it contains many important parallels with *Henry IV*, including topics like the divine right of kings, divine justice, relationships

[163] The shocking horrors committed by King Cambises are as follows: the slaying of his judge Sisamnes in front of his son Otian, and pulling his "skin over his ears to make his death more vile" (*Cambises*, 463); the drunken archery Cambises performs on of the infant son of his counselor Praxaspes, with him present, and subsequent cutting out of his heart, followed by the painful lament of the infant's mother; the order of the death of his brother Smirdis and finally the murder of his own queen. All these, in particular the death of the infant, would cause audience members to cry but not once in the play does Cambises himself show any remorse or tears.

[164] See notes 377 and 381 in William Shakespeare, *Henry IV Part 1* (Arden 3rd Series). p. 228

[165] Howard B. Norland "Lamentable tragedy mixed ful of pleasant mirth": The Enigma of "Cambises" Comparative Drama, 26. 4 (1992-93), pp. 330-343. (p. 330).

between fathers and sons, and - most importantly for Falstaff's allusion to it in play extempore scene - moments of metatheatrical awareness. There are moments in *Cambises* where the stage directions inform us that Ambidexter directly speaks to a person in the audience.[166] *Cambises'* awareness of itself as a play therefore makes it the perfect compliment to Hal and Falstaff's metatheatrical rehearsal, whilst themes of kings and their relationship with their sons in *Cambises* make this all exactly relevant to what Falstaff and Hal explore in play extempore.[167] By invoking *Cambises,* Shakespeare is asking the audience to remember *Cambises* and to think of it as a kind of older, "father play" to his younger, newer and improved history tetralogy. The audience are being asked to meditate on theater history, and plays like *Famous Victories* and *Cambises* are Shakespeare's "inheritance," to which he calls attention to educate spectators on how far the craft of vernacular history play writing has come.

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[166] Scene VI shows Ambidexter alone, speaking as the stage directions instruct [*To the audience*] "In deed as ye say I have been absent a long space. | But is not my cousin Cutpurse, with you in the meantime?" (*Cambises*, 603). Here, Ambidexter acts as a chorus, speaking directly to the audience and also picking out a thief in the audience. Similarly, in Scene X Ambidexter points, [*To a girl in the audience*] "How say you maid? To mary me wil ye be glad?" (*Cambises*, 953).

[167] Falstaff also references a particular scene in which Cambises commands the death of his queen, when he tells Mistress Quickly "Weep not, sweet Queen, for trickling tears are vain" (*1HIV*, 2.4.381), and when he says "For God's sake, lords, convey my tristful Queen." (*1HIV*, 2.4.383). In this scene, as Cambises and his new Queen sit down to eat their wedding banquet, Cambises tells the queen a story of a lion whelp who helps his brother. The queen responds to this tail by weeping: "These words to hear makes stilling teares, issue from Christal eyes" (*Cambises*, 1030). The queen then discloses that she is weeping because the tale the king told showed more brotherly love in the two lion puppies than the king had for his brother, whom he has murdered. The king's response to this is to have her killed, and sends for Murder and Crueltie: "Murder and Crueltie, for bothe of you I sent: | With all festination, your offices to frequent. | Lay holde on the Queen, take her to your power: | And make her away within this hour." (*Cambises,* 1105-7).

Preston's play is not the only gesture to the very recent past of the audience in this scene. Mistress Quickly, who herself embodies the "tristful queen" of *Cambises,* gestures to the "players" (*1HIV,* 2.4.385) of the Shakespearean stage itself.[168] Falstaff continues to draw attention to the play as being situated in the Elizabethan era, and there are moments with phrases such as "memento mori," (*1HIV,* 3.3.30) the reminder of death, prevalent in paintings such as *The Ambassadors* (1533) by Holbein. Falstaff also references Elizabethan stagecraft, like fireworks: "a ball of wildfire" (*1HIV*, 3.3.39); clothing such as the ruff when he calls the Hostess "dame Partlet" (*1HIV,* 3.3.51); and draws attention to the fact that the actor playing the Hostess is male when he calls her "Maid Marian"(*1HIV,* 3.3.114) - a clownish character played by a boy in country morris dances. All of these anachronisms call attention to the Elizabethan moment the play was actually written in, thinning out the biblical and medieval layers in *Henry IV* and transforming it into a play wholly contemporary to Shakespeare's own playgoers. With the attention called to a relatively recent play of the 1560's, as well as the familiar Elizabethan references, and to the stage itself, the audience are prompted to realize they are now watching the people in the tavern watching a performance of a rehearsal of a conversation that historically may have taken place between the prince and King Henry IV. By referencing the contemporary play world in particular, the audience considers that what they are watching is a theatrical spectacle. Whereas the older plays like *Famous*

[168] "Tragic Mirth: King Cambises "
https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/SLT/drama/early%20tragedies/Cambises .html

Victories and *Cambises* captivate audiences, absorbing them in rhetoric and spectacle, *Henry IV* through its allusions to these earlier plays forces the audience to be more critical, keeping them alert and aware they are at a play. This provokes them to conceive of themselves as communally becoming historical intermediaries, allowing the experience of being specifically English, at their specific moment in British history, at the same time as experiencing biblical and medieval histories.

The play sees Hal and Falstaff "practice" the same conversation twice, once with Hal playing himself, and Falstaff as the king, and once with Hal as the king and Falstaff as the prince. By presenting two rehearsals of what might be said, and then providing us with the "actual" conversation between Hal and the King later on in Act 3 Scene 2, in which a completely different conversation is played out, the audience are prompted to acknowledge the artifice of theatrical conversations, and also to reflect on the fact that they are being asked to compare the different versions of the same encounter and form a judgment about them. A further effect of these repetitive iterations of the same conversation is for the audience to realize that none of these conversations can possibly reflect the real historical conversation Henry IV had with his son, if there was one. By providing three versions of the same conversation, the audience comes to understand that each version is directed by the desire of who is playing the king and controlling the argument, thereby showing that "history" is never objective and always steered by the desires of the person in control. Although the content of the play extempore does not exactly help Hal to have his later conversation with his father, the scene is important for the audience to realize the

significance of rehearsal and practice, and the ways in which engaging in the improvisational quality of practice blurs the line between theatricality and the exercise of political power, as in the "real" conversation, Hal performs successfully, and in such a way to his father that works to regain his trust.

In the first conversation Falstaff plays the king. Although ostensibly he says that this rehearsal is for Hal, because he must be "horrible afeard" to go back to court and face up to his father, the reason he should do it is "if thou love me" (*1HIV*, 2.4.364). Falstaff at first does berate Hal a little: "Shall the son of England prove a thief and pick purses?" (*1HIV*, 2.4.399). However, he quickly returns to the real subject he wants to discuss, which is himself: "And yet there is a virtuous man whom I have often noted in thy company but I know not his name." (*1HIV*, 2.4.406-8). Falstaff's anxiety about the uncertain future of his relationship with Hal becomes apparent as the play extempore progresses and the boundary between drama and reality unravels as they draw closer to the truth of what will happen in the near future. With the line "him keep with, the rest banish" (*1HIV*, 2.4.418) the audience start to guess it will be the inverse — Falstaff will be banished from Hal's sight. When Falstaff calls Hal a "naughty varlet" (*1HIV*, 2.4.419) Hal is triggered into flipping the play and trading roles, at which moment Falstaff realizes his influence over Hal is crumbling with the line, "Depose me?" (*1HIV*, 2.4.423). Now it is Hal's turn to play the part of king and it becomes clear that while this conversation was initially about Hal practicing for the real conversation he is about to have with his father, the experience of playing focuses attention on the future of Falstaff and Hal's

relationship. When Hal plays the king he uses it as his moment for a retort to Falstaff's insistence that there is "virtue in his looks" (*1HIV*, 2.4.415). Hal focuses on cruelly firing insults at Falstaff under the guise of the play to warn him that in the future they will no longer be friends. These insults include, "a devil haunts thee in the likeness of an old fat man … that bolting-hutch of beastliness, that swollen parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard of sack" (*1HIV*, 2.4.435-9). This all serves as a way of preparing Falstaff for their later estrangement, which he finally seems to reach an understanding of, with the desperate plea at the end of the play "old Jack Falstaff, banish not him thy Harry's company, banish not him thy Harry's company: banish plump Jack, and banish all the world." (*HIV*, 2.4.465-8). The abrupt stage direction: *Loud knocking within* breaks the spell of the play, signaling the sheriff, the invasion of the serious world of the court into the world of the tavern and the play is ended.[169] It is after the knocking, that Hal, clearly no longer in character as the king, but speaking as himself promises Falstaff: "I do; I will." (*HIV*, 2.4.468). As the crowd breaks up, Falstaff is left still half in character, protesting, "Play out the play. I have much to say in the behalf of that Falstaff." (*1HIV*, 2.4.471). It is unclear which version of himself is speaking here, as Falstaff is clearly advocating for himself despite the fact he was in character as Hal. Similarly to when Richard shatters the mirror in Act 4 of *Richard II*, Falstaff's personality has split in a moment of anxiety for his future. Like Richard, Falstaff is the object of rival memories and

[169] For scholarship on knocking in the playhouse, see Kurt A. Schreyer "Here's a Knocking Indeed!": *Macbeth* and the *Harrowing of Hell.*

interpretations. Falstaff proves himself another site of multiplicity, both from the historical personage Oldcastle, but also from the play *Sir John Oldcastle*.

The play extempore prompts the audience to recognize history as representation, and the theater as a public place where history occurs. This experience is mirrored more widely in the two *Henry IV* plays, in the world of the tavern. Falstaff and the tavern setting work together to represent the vantage point of the audience and place them into history. Falstaff has long been established as a character who is often perceived to be outside of time, and someone to whom time does not apply. He never quite fits into the restrictive frames of the history plays in which he appears. … [H]e is a critic who exists at the margins of historical plot."[170] He has been likened to the "Jaquemart, an amalgam of the moniker 'Jack' with the French word for hammer, 'marteau' — the mechanical automaton or puppet-like figures on clocks."[171] From our very first encounter with Falstaff he is both associated with clock time and outside of it. His first line, "Now, Hal, what time of day is it, lad" (*1 HIV,* 1.2.108) directly connects him to time and prompts Hal to conjure up a list of horological objects or abstractions in association with new symbols pertaining to activities Falstaff enjoys. "What the devil hast thou to do with the time of day?" Falstaff's interests and activities are so antisocial that Falstaff seems to live outside of time, doing things at times that are not considered normal to other people. Being outside of

[170] *1 H1V* Arden Third Series P. 49.
[171] Wendy Beth Hyman, "'For now hath time made me his numbering clock': Shakespeare's Jacquemarts" Early Theatre, 16.2 .(2013) pp. 143-156, (p. 145).

time in a history play places Falstaff more in the present moment than any other character, and the tavern scenes that he occupies are therefore the moments in the tetralogy where the audience feels closest to, and most present with the action of the play. Elizabethan history can be enacted in the tavern, and that is the space where the citizen audience are most frequently created as intermediaries of history. The play extempore serves as a reminder that history is not only something factual that happened in the past, but is also something that we are continually making up, like a play, improvising details as we go along. Like Hotspur and his followers, most people are unable to be impartial about the past and embellish it or alter it when they engage with their memories. In witnessing made-up versions of the past and the power of play and rehearsal to do good or bad, the audiences of *Henry IV* are encouraged to hold themselves accountable for remembering what we, as flawed human beings, can't help doing and act accordingly.

Chapter Three
Henry V: Playing with Virgil, Acting like Aeneas

As the final play of the *Henriad* sequence, *Henry V* is the culmination of Shakespeare's project in which he both demands more engagement from the audience, and educates them on how to become historical intermediaries. As with the previous plays of the *Henriad*, the audience of *Henry V* are impressed upon to process multiple temporal ideas at once. Audiences must again recall *Richard II*, draw on their own shared history, as well as understand intertextual connections with contemporary plays and classical works. The "epic" quality of this play derives in part from its conscious modeling on the *Aeneid*, especially books I-IV, which were taught in school and became a strong part of the narrative architecture of every writer and reader in the period. The audience's job in the interpretation of these multifarious aspects is underscored by the insistent Chorus, who grants them the greatest agency throughout.

Henry V exists in two texts: the much shorter, 1600 quarto, and the 1623 Folio.[172] This chapter is dependent on the Folio play text, but also investigates insertions as additions to the quarto. The most notable differences between the two versions show that the Folio text is more ambivalent to King Henry's skills as a ruler. In the Folio, Henry is referred to as responsible for Falstaff's death, while these speeches are absent from the quarto; as is Henry's speech to the governor of Harfleur,

[172] Andrew Gurr considers the quarto as a radical revision of the Folio's text, "designed to represent the play as it had been seen at the Globe in 1599 and early 1600." Andrew Gurr (ed.) 'Introduction' *The New Cambridge Shakespeare: The Early Quartos*, p. 10.

that reveals a darker side to his character. Importantly in particular for this chapter is the Folio's inclusion of The Chorus, which the quarto leaves out. The Chorus both gives the play its epic quality as well as serves to undercut the image of Henry as a hero, because it points out a disparity between his speeches and the action that follows.

Henry V aspires in its tone to the epic, presenting a moment in England's past when an English monarch achieved the stature of ancient Rome.[173] In the build up to *Henry V*, the previous plays in the sequence emphasize that shared memory of cultural texts is crucial in the writing of history, as audiences are expected to have knowledge of biblical texts as well as earlier stage plays such as the pageant play *Jack Straw*, and chronicle vernacular histories like *Cambises. Henry V* is the culmination of the journey of the *Henriad*, which demonstrates a further example the temporal buckling effect Stephen Greenblatt describes, when the present is "collapsing into the past or the past bursting its containment and inhabiting the present."[174] Spectators of plays were accustomed to witnessing multiple layers of the past interwoven with narratives of their own moment, and this chapter will specifically explore how the story of King Henry V is aligned both with

[173] Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, Vol. IV.* (London: Routledge, 1975), p. 349. Bullough notes that *Henry V* was a king collectively regarded as a hero, so the epic genre lent itself to a play about this King. Hall's chapter heading of this king's "Victorious Acts", and Holinshead's declaration that he was 'a majestie … that both lived and died a paterne in princehood, a lode-starre in honor, and a mirrour of magnificence." As this king's reputation was already established as popular, Shakespeare worked to encourage audiences to participate in the creation of this king – and the final play in his second tetralogy – as epic.

[174] Stephen Greenblatt, *The Rise and Fall of Adam and Eve*, p. 190.

contemporary plays like *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, which this play continues to draw from, but also another adaptation of books I-IV of the *Aeneid*: Marlowe's *Dido, Queene of Carthage*, as well as Virgil's poem. I will show how readers and spectators of *Henry V* are encouraged to recall Virgil's *Aeneid* through the following elements: the Chorus, who is stylistically distinct from the rest of the play, and is comparable to the *Aeneid's* narrator; moments of *ekphrases* by Fluellen and Canterbury; as well as the extent to which King Henry's narrative mirrors that of Aeneas, and how far he is acting like Aeneas.

"This history" — *Feigned matter or altogether fabulous*

When reading historical narratives today, we may hope for or expect veracity from the writer, but during the 1590's, history was frequently blended with the imaginary. The Prologue to *Henry V* defines the play as "this history" (*HV*, Prologue, 32) and the etymology of the word "history" dates back to an ancient distinction between *historia* and *fabulae*.[175] By the thirteenth century, Anglo-Norman and Old French *histoire* could include dramatic or pictorial representation of historical events that could be related to human evolution, science, and which could be a narrative of real or imaginary events after 1462.[176] George Puttenham's discussion of historical

[175] In seventh century classical Latin, *historia* could mean an investigation, inquiry, research, account, description, or a written narrative account of past events. By the twelfth century in France, *histore* was an account of the events of a person's life. The *OED* records the usage of the word in 1155 as more expansive: it could mean a chronicle, or an account of events as relevant to a group of people or people in general.
[176] *OED*, history, *n*. Etymology.

poesy in *The Art of English Poesy* (1589) also demonstrates the centrality of the imagination in regards to history and also to the epic.

Puttenham explains that historical *poesy* does not necessarily need to express the truth, as long as it is used for good. The "feigned matter or altogether fabulous [...] works no less good conclusions for example than the most true and veritable, but often times more, because the poet hath the handling of them to fashion at his pleasure, but not so of the other which must go according to their verity."[177] Puttenham stresses that "feigned matter," or poetry that provokes the imagination, and the poet's "pleasure" — or their poetic license — can provoke the imagination of readers, and therefore can serve as tantamount or even superior to the presentation of historical truth and accuracy. While *Henry V* depicts some historical truths, the First Folio's Chorus makes clear that the play's exemplary purpose is its explicit enlisting of its audiences to imaginatively reconstruct history in the context of a public entertainment. While for Puttenham, the poet is the one actively imagining to bring the truth to light, for Shakespeare, the audience is being asked to do that work in addition to — and even sometimes instead of — the playwright. In *Henry V*, the audience is not being asked only to witness history unfolding on the stage but to make it and, in that way, to situate themselves historically and learn from the past.

Puttenham also writes of the centrality of memory to epic poetry. As well as using our imaginations, Puttenham explains that by employing memory, with our

[177] George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy A Critical Edition* ed. Frank Whigham and Wayne A. Rebhorn (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007) p. 129.

shared experience and understanding of things past, we can better judge how to behave in the present:

> There is nothing in man of all the potential parts of his mind (reason and will except) more noble or more necessary to the active life than memory, because it maketh most to a sound judgment and perfect worldly wisdom, examining and comparing the times past with the present, and by them both considering the time to come, concludeth with a steadfast resolution, what is the best course to be taken in all his actions and advices in this world.[178]

Here, Puttenham advises that we can draw on our knowledge of the past to ensure we are making the best possible decisions for the future. Warwick expresses a similar view in *2 Henry IV*, the classical concept of *Historia magistra vitae*: history as the teacher of life:

WARWICK There is a history in all men's lives,
Figuring the natures of the times deceas'd;
The which observ'd, a man may prophesy,
With a near aim, of the main chance of things
As yet not come to life, who in their seeds
And weak beginnings lie intreasured.
(*2HIV*, 3.1.80-84)

The notion that the observation of the histories of individuals may be used to predict the future is also something that concerns Puttenham. Communal memory and shared knowledge of historical people should be something we can all learn from, and from which our spirits can be revived, by "beholding as it were in a glass the lively image of our dear forefathers" who have come before us, and learning their stories, to help us to make our own decisions in the present.[179] The present moment itself cannot

[178] Ibid. p. 128.
[179] Ibid. p. 129.

teach us these things, because time passes by so quickly. Therefore one function of epic poetry for Elizabethans can be understood to mean material that presents readers with a communal history they can reflect on, so that they can situate themselves historically, and learn from the past. Shakespeare's insight is that the process Puttenham describes is fundamentally communal and performative.

As an epic history play, *Henry V* transforms spectators into active participants in their own history, stirring in audiences a capacity to alter their situation. Bertolt Brecht defines epic drama as narrative that "turns the spectator into an observer but arouses his capacity for action, forces him to take decisions, … he is alterable and able to alter."[180] The *Henriad* plays function in this epic way for spectators. Audiences are empowered through these plays to reflect upon the ways a diverse community is not indoctrinated into believing an ideology, but rather by using "the working-house of thought" (*HV*, 5.023), as the Chorus instructs us, spectators can use the theater to construct a shared perception of reality, and to decide what it means to be members of those communities.

When reading epics such as Virgil's *Aeneid*, readers give their consent to the values of a rulership like that of Aeneas, which include qualities such as devotion, compassion, bravery and sacrifice. In *Henry V*, Shakespeare similarly encourages audiences to consent to King Henry's values, but then problematizes this through Henry's performativity, and the mediating effect of the Chorus. Transposing Puttenham's contemporary notion of the epic genre onto *Henry V*, we can understand

[180] Edward Bond, *Lear* (London: Methuen, 1983) p. xvii.

the play as a response to the *Aeneid*, loosely adopting some of the episodic structure of books 1-4. Shakespeare presents this epic play as a space in which shared cultural identities can evolve, with the Chorus demanding that the audience are involved in the spectacle. As the audience attempts to participate in the creation of Henry as a kind of British Aeneas, they sometimes consent to Henry's performative values but at other times are prompted to critique them. Classical moments from Virgil in *Henry V*, whether they manifest themselves obscurely or are referenced directly, show us Shakespeare's "pragmatic sense of the emotional and theatrical power that is generated by distinct temporal and stylistic layers within his own works."[181] This historical collapsing or layering effect embedded in this play prompts us to experience communal history and also critique its political manipulation.

Rumour and Epilogue of *2 Henry IV*, and Chorus of *Henry V*

The second part of *Henry IV* anticipates the Chorus of *Henry V* with the characters Rumour and the Epilogue, and it is in *2 Henry IV* that Shakespeare begins to directly prompt the audience are to engage in communal historical reflective "work", so it is worth comparing the Chorus's function these two choral characters. Rumour and the Epilogue of *2 Henry IV* serve as mediating figures for audiences, "straddling real and fictional worlds," as James Shapiro notes.[182] While the *Henry V* quarto of 1600 does not feature a Chorus, the 1623 Folio text of the play provides a Chorus who delivers six speeches, before each of the acts, and one Epilogue. The

[181] Colin Burrow, *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity* p. 70.
[182] James Shapiro, *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare*, (New York, 2005) p. 34-5.

Chorus' presence between each of the acts sets it apart from the other plays in the tetralogy, as well as all of the other plays in Shakespeare's canon (except *Pericles*, which has Gower as a Choral figure, and *The Winter's Tale*, which has Time), and creates a unique tone that contrasts with the play's action in each of the acts.

One function critics have observed that these kinds of paratextual characters achieve is economic. The social deference of *2 Henry IV's* Epilogue, who opens with the humble question, "If my tongue cannot entreat you to acquit me, will you command me to use my legs?" (*2HIV*, Epilogue,18), gives way to the idea that the audience and playwright are participants in a business transaction: "And yet that were but light payment, to dance out of your debt." (20) The playwright is depicted here as the debtor, the audience his creditors and the play itself an investment.[183] Similarly, with *Henry V's* Chorus insisting that spectators "work, work your thoughts" to achieve part of the work of the play by imagining it, the audience are considered as being made to "work for its living in *Henry V* along with the author and its actors."[184] These discussions highlight the financial stakes of writing and performing so many plays together as a series, which, as Mary Crane has shown in her study of Elizabethan attitudes to multiple part drama, was an unusual thing to do.[185] The Epilogue to *2 Henry IV* unusually reveals Shakespeare's plan for what he will include

[183] Ibid.
[184] Hammond, p. 135.
[185] Mary Crane, "The Shakespearean Tetralogy" Crane uses Henslowe's diary to debunk the idea that it was common for audiences to return on consecutive days to see a sequel play, although she does note that there might have been a brief fashion for this "between October of 1594 to October of 1596, to attend two-part Tamburlaine-like plays." p. 289. Crane draws on part of *The Downfall and Death of Robert, Earl of Huntingdon* to suggest that audiences "were not particularly fond of sequels" p. 292.

in the play following, and admits he will be influenced by the "hard opinions" of the audience:

> **EPILOGUE** our humble author will continue the story, with Sir John in it, and make you merry with fair Katherine of France; where, for anything I know, Falstaff shall die of a sweat, unless already 'a be killed with your hard opinions; for Oldcastle died martyr, and this is not the man. (*2HIV*, Epilogue, 28-34)

The Epilogue makes clear the crucial role of the audience, and their acceptance of the play. If the audience dislikes *2 Henry IV*, then it may not be financially viable to complete the tetralogy. This demonstrates that pleasure is an important dimension in the project of creating history communally, and that the audience are being made aware of the importance of their monetary role, in addition to their co-creation in the play through their imagination, which places them in the position of historical intermediaries.

The Epilogue to *2 Henry IV* works to establish a set of expectations for the audience of *Henry V*, which the audience can critically reflect on while they watch the sequel. The Epilogue seems especially aware that the early modern audience's enjoyment of these plays was bound up in their desire to see witty banter from characters and so also sets up the audience to think about Falstaff in connection to Katherine. As well as promising that the next play will have "Sir John in it", the Epilogue also makes clear that Falstaff is not the historical figure Oldcastle. The inclusion of this statement is what some scholars suspect to be "an official

announcement made by a stern Master of the Revels," who censored the play.[186] This promise is not fulfilled however, *Henry V* does not directly feature Falstaff, although we hear of him. The Hostess and Falstaff's Boy rush on and off stage in Act 2 to announce his ill health, asking for the company to attend to him: "As ever you come of women, come in quickly to Sir John." (*HV*, 2.1.117). As the Hostess exits, probably into the tiring house, we are left with the impression that Falstaff is very close, just a room or two away, behind the arras, or in a tavern nearby. The Epilogue is therefore not entirely inaccurate, the play in a way does have "Sir John in it," only he is being pushed out to a pastoral world outside of the story, "babbling of green fields," somewhere beyond the margins of the text. The Epilogue also foreshadows Falstaff's death, suggesting he may either die of a sweat, — suggestive of the historical Oldcastle's death by fire — or may be killed already with the "hard opinions" of the audience. The first mention of Henry's courtship of Katherine by the Epilogue prepares the audience for Henry's replacement of Falstaff. The scenes with Princess Katherine in *Henry V* are the first moments we have seen Henry in an intimate and more domestic space since he was in the taverns with Falstaff in the previous two plays.

It is notable that, like *Henry V's* Chorus, Rumour and the Epilogue speak to the audience directly in the second person, with the opening and closing lines of *2*

[186] James C. Bulman (ed.) Shakespeare, William, *King Henry IV Part 2: Arden Shakespeare* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016) p. 145. Bulman cites Robert J. Fehrenbach 'When Lord Cobham and Edmund Tilney "were att odds": Oldcastle, Falstaff, and the date of 1 Henry IV', SSt, 18 (1986), 87-101.

Henry IV: "Open your ears" (*2HIV*, Induction 1.1.) and "I bid you goodnight" (*2HIV*, Epilogue, 34). The Epilogue prepares the audience of *Henry V* to continue engaging in this kind of comparison. As they recall scenes such as those between Petruchio and Kate in *Taming of the Shrew*, as well as Lady Percy and Hotspur's domestic scenes in *1 Henry IV*, they may well make the audience "merry," but also to keenly feel the loss of Falstaff, as William Hazlitt notes in *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (1817) "the truth is, that we never could forgive the Prince's treatment of Falstaff."[187] No scenes can replace the wit and humor of Falstaff, and the audience are left having to work to make use of their own memories of him from the previous two *Henry IV* plays to finally bid farewell to him in *Henry V*.

Henry V's Chorus continues this tradition of engaging the audience directly, but has a more prominent and consistent role. The Chorus frequently functions to set the scene with description, summarize backstory, inform us of geographical settings, and tell us what we should think about king Henry. Usually what the Chorus describes to us is in stark contrast with the scenes that follow, which has the effect of making audiences question the truth about what they are seeing. The Chorus often presents images in quick succession, so that spectators are impressed upon to hold all more than one idea in their minds at once. The addition of the Chorus to the Folio text of *Henry V* helps to emphasize the seriality of the history genre, which the Folio syndicate establish, as well as the interconnectedness of the history plays, particularly with the Epilogue's reference to the previous cycle of history plays, concerning

[187] Arden *Henry V,* P. 71.

"Henry the Sixth, in infant bands crown'd King" and its invocation of the hard work the previous plays have tasked over the 'fair minds' of the audience. Jeffery Knapp explains that "the Epilogue makes the thought of England's bleeding the occasion to bring the cycle to life again in the imagination of the audience, just as the cycle appears to be ending: 'which oft our stage has shown.' This emphasis on previous plays seems to mark a victory for the author over his kingly rival, insofar as Henry's 'small time' is lengthened into a durative triumph for Shakespeare."[188] Shakespeare's audiences, and their knowledge of his tetralogies as a set of plays, are what make the ongoing staging of them possible, immortalizing the genre of the vernacular history play of the 1590's.

The Chorus/Prologue's opening apostrophe "O for a muse of fire" establishes the play in the realm of the epic genre, or at least its appeal to a muse demonstrates that the play strives to be or to become epic in the minds of its audience. This opening is in contrast to the more direct and confident first line of Virgil's *Aeneid*: "I sing of arms and a man." Here, no muses need to be invoked in order to tell the epic tale, whereas *Henry V's* Chorus uses the apostrophe to self-consciously acknowledge the play genre's apparently inferior position in dramatic form, and seeks inspiration from the audience to complete the imaginative work of the project. The Prologue feels its lack of epicness, and must appeal to spectators by demanding that they take action on the play, to begin the process of a "creative partnership" between themselves and the

[188] Jeffery Knapp, *Shakespeare Only*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009)

stage.[189] By drawing attention to the craft of playwriting and the material structure of the playhouse with the mention of the "cockpit", "Wooden O", and the "scaffold", the audience are invited implicitly to think of other plays performed in that same space; *Cambises* being one such example referenced by Falstaff in *1 Henry IV*.

The audience are addressed deferentially as "gentles all," and are requested twice to "pardon" the uninspired actors and playwright who dare to put on this play. They must "linger their patience on" while the actors "force a play" and imagine that what they are seeing is the story of the medieval king Henry V, and must also "jumping o'er times" (29) condensing what they see into the short period of time that the play is enacted for. The Chorus later urges the audience to do some of the dramatic "work" (*HV*, 3.0.25) to achieve or realize the various oscillating geographies of England and France that *Henry V* demands, and to imagine events that the play requires.[190] "Follow! Follow! | Grapple your minds to sternage of this navy, | And leave your England" (*HV*, 3.0.17-19). The Chorus makes it clear that the audience are relied on as the "working-house of thought" (*HV*, 5.0.23) and that spectators' imaginations in the present moment — rather than their memories of historical verisimilitude — are the true location of where the play is being enacted. By Act 3, The Chorus hopes the spectators will 'Still be kind, | And eke out our performance [of

[189] Mason, p. 177.
[190] Pamela Mason, "*Henry V*: 'the quick forge and working house of thought' in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*, ed. Michael Hattaway, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp.177-192. Mason writes that the experience of *Henry V* in performance is a "process in which its audience is invited, even urged, to think, judge and assess." (p. 180). Also, that the Chorus requires that the audience are at "work in the 'quick forge and working house of thought' that is theater." (p. 192).

the siege of Harfleur] with your mind." In Act 4 the Chorus is anxious how much the play will disgrace and make ridiculous the name of Agincourt:

CHORUS …we shall much disgrace
With four or five most vile and ragged foils
Right ill-disposed in brawl ridiculous,
The name of Agincourt. Yet sit and see,
Minding true things by what their mock'ries be.
(4.0.49-53)

As well as functioning to apologize for insufficient costumes and props, the Chorus also explains moments where time has been compressed. In Act 5, the audience must "grant the king" toward Calais, and simultaneously, having seen him there in their imagination, they must "Heave him away upon your wingèd thoughts | Athwart the sea." (5.0.6-9). In the same speech, as soon as the King's ship lands in England, the audience must "solemnly see him set on to London" at "So swift a pace hath thought that even now | You may imagine him upon Blackheath" (5.0.13-16). A few lines later, the audience are encouraged to conflate this historical memory of a medieval king returning to London with two more ideas: they must hold in their minds an image of a more ancient past with "senators of th'antique Rome | With the plebeians swarming at their heels" as well as a topical event from their own time in 1599, when Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, left to suppress the rebellion in Ireland in March: "Were now the General of our gracious Empress, | As in good time he may, from Ireland coming, | Bringing rebellion broached on his sword" (*HV*, 5.0.30-32). While the multiple demands being made upon the audience here may communicate the inadequacies of the play itself, and lead us to question Henry's performative

nature, the Chorus also emphasizes the importance of the audience, and their role throughout the *Henriad* sequence. It is through the collective memory of the audience that the play can really take shape.

The speeding up of time in *Henry V* is presented humbly, and as a deficiency that only the spectators can remedy:

CHORUS Vouchsafe to those that have not read the story
That I may prompt them; and of such as have,
I humbly pray them to admit th' excuse
Of time, of numbers, and due course of things
Which cannot in their huge and proper life
Be here presented.

(*HV,* 5.0.1-6)

In *The Winter's Tale*, Time's speech before Act 4 is a comparable passage. Time expresses a much more assertive attitude, and command over the narrative of the play:

TIME …I slide
O'er sixteen years, and leave the growth untried
Of that wide gap, since it is in my power
To o'erthrow law and in one self-born hour
To plant and o'erwhelm custom

Winter's Tale, (4.1.7-9)

In *Winter's Tale,* The Chorus Time has "power" to speed things up in the play. Time states what is happening, and doesn't apologize for it. Contrastingly in *Henry V*, The Chorus's tone when directly addressing the audience is consistently self-deprecating across each of the six speeches. it apologizes for the shortcomings of the author, the

actors, and the theater space. By the time we reach the Epilogue we are even presented with a picture of Shakespeare himself as a "bending" bowing or humble author, with a "rough and all unable pen". Throughout the play, the Chorus contrasts the deficiencies of the wooden O playhouse, the actors and author with the audience's imagination, their "fair minds", likened to a blacksmith's fiery forge.

With the artifice of *Henry V* acknowledged from so early on by the Chorus, the audience's attention is drawn to the playhouse itself, heightening their awareness that what they are watching is not a truthful representation of history, but something which they can in fact participate in. This is to be the kind of historical *poesy* Puttenham acknowledges as not either wholly true, or wholly false, the third kind he sets out: "holding part of either, but for honest recreation and good example they were all of them."[191] Shakespeare pushes us toward a conclusion in *Henry V* that the play's spectators are necessary to the making and the writing of history in play form. The layers of history in the *Henriad* are contained within the playgoers, and each member of the audience can, and must do "work" to participate in bringing the past to life, and creating history inside the playhouse. The function of the theater in this play is to prompt the audience to do this work rather than prescribing how it must be done or what the outcome should be. Shakespeare therefore shows us in *Henry V* that his conception of the theater is a place where history is made by the shared collective identity of an audience and their common understanding of their own history.

[191] George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy A Critical Edition* ed. Frank Whigham and Wayne A. Rebhorn (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007)

If the First Folio's Chorus makes clear that spectators of *Henry V* are not only the recipient of the play but also a resource, and must use their imaginations to depict in their minds what the Chorus is describing, then what might this mean that the audience are expected to do during all the other scenes of *Henry V* when they are not being directly addressed but must watch the play? Are the audience only supposed to be actively engaging in the play during the act intervals? As Emma Smith has discussed, examples such as that of John Manningham's diary tell us that early modern playgoers enjoyed the gratification of making connections across plays and other texts.[192] Manningham recounts, "with the enjoyment of narrative familiarity and pride at his own ability to recognize precedents" how he went to see *Twelfth Night*, at a private performance of the play at the Middle Temple, observing that it resembled *The Comedy of Errors*, a Roman play by Plautus and an Italian play.[193] This evidence informs us that spectators made connections across texts just as they do today. When classical works such as those by Virgil are evoked, and language from contemporary plays is echoed in *Henry V*, delving into what these might mean to spectators adds another dimension to how these plays work on playgoers, and provides space for speculation as to what their role might have been.

[192] Emma Smith, *This Is Shakespeare*, (London: Penguin, 2019) p.49.
[193] 'John Manningham's Diary: earliest mention of *Twelfth Night* and a Shakespeare anecdote', February 2 and March 13, 1602. Folger Documented. <https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/resource/document/john-manninghams-diary-earliest-mention-twelfth-night-and-shakespeare-anecdote> Web. Accessed September 6, 2023.

Virgil in Schools: Canterbury's honey bees and Fluellen's wheel of Fortune

Two moments in *Henry V* appear to directly reference Virgil. The Archbishop of Canterbury offers a philosophy of government to King Henry that draws on the *Georgics,* and the soldier Fluellen recollects a line concerning the widow Dido, from book four of the *Aeneid.* These moments are examples of characters drawing on their memories of classical works to make use of him in the ways Puttenham suggests, for personal moral use and advice. They indicate to audiences that Virgil's works are a component of some of Shakespeare's characters' mental worlds, and serve as a lens through which they are able to view and interpret what happens.

Epic and historical poetry were a popular part of Elizabethan school curriculum. Selections from classical works such as Virgil's *Georgics* and the first four books of the *Aeneid* were popular Latin texts taught in grammar schools of the sixteenth century, and appeared printed in heavily annotated, academic looking editions.[194] The *Georgics* was considered a useful poem for teaching in schools, "full of practical judgments on everything from grains and herbs to horse trading and astronomy."[195] John Brinsley considered book four of the *Georgics* "the most familiar of all Virgils workes, and fittest for childrens capacities."[196] While classical works like Virgil's contained engaging passages on a broad variety of topics, the methods for learning in early modern classrooms were repetitive; involving copying, memorizing, and imitating. This meant that reading was not extensive, but rather

[194] Burrow, p. 53 and 56.
[195] Andrew Wallace, *Virgil's Schoolboys*, p. 127.
[196] Ibid. p. 128.

intensive: focusing on "careful, meticulous study of a small number of texts that were held in great esteem."[197] An insistence on rote repetition at times highlighted the "impossible expectations placed on students, and the unsoundness of memory, and even the fact that Virgil's epic itself inquires into the conditions and necessity of forgetting."[198] Virgil's poetry was considered part of English common classical heritage. Virgil's language and sentiments "encoded power and privilege" and to imitate the *Aeneid* was to embody *pietas* and Roman virtue. However, for critical students like Shakespeare and Marlowe, casting themselves in the role of Aeneas and the conquering Trojans was fraught with complexity, as they "were able to see that Virgil presented both what is lost as well as what is gained in conquest."[199] The first four books of the *Aeneid* were attractive to young scholars especially because they feature such extreme losses: the loss of Troy, as well as the dramatic and doomed Dido. "Immersion and luxuriating in the pain of literary characters allowed schoolboys to experience varieties of emotion not encouraged or even tolerated outside the classroom, and these created memories that could last a lifetime."[200] Despite the draw of Virgil's poetry, and the pervasive influence it had on the playwrights of the Elizabethan period, Colin Burrow explains that full adaptations of Virgil like Marlowe's *Dido Queene of Carthage,* were rare. The style of Virgil's

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[197] Craig Kallendorf, *The Other Virgil : 'Pessimistic' Readings of the Aeneid in Early Modern Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) p. 3.
[198] Andrew Wallace, Forgetting Epic, in *Virgil's Schoolboys, The Poetics of Pedagogy in Renaissance England* p.184-5.
[199] Craig Kallendorf, p. 15.
[200] Marjorie Curry Woods, *Weeping for Dido: The Classics in the Medieval Classroom* (Princeton University Press, 2019) p. 22.

work was not favorable for assimilation into theatrical texts, as the narrative is focalised on the experiences of one particular person, in long, "set piece declamation[s], the performance of rhetorical artistry rather than of exchanges between people," such as Aeneas' story of the fall of Troy.[201] However, the impact of Dido's story reverberates across Shakespeare's canon; she is mentioned directly in *Hamlet, Antony and Cleopatra, The Tempest,* and *Titus Andronicus.* Emma Smith and Laurie Maguire have also argued that Shakespeare was influenced by Marlowe's children's play, *Dido, Queene of Carthage,* which stages books 1-4 from a notably un-Virgilian perspective, favorable to Dido.[202]

Canterbury demonstrates his scholarly inclinations, making use of the audience's collective historical imagination, deliberately tying his rhetoric to the *Georgics,* to add weight and import to his argument, and revealing that Virgil is very much a component of his mental world:

CANTERBURY …so work the honey-bees,
Creatures that by a rule in nature teach
The act of order to a peopled kingdom.
They have a king and officers of sorts;
Where some, like magistrates, correct at home,
Others, like merchants, venture trade abroad,
Others, like soldiers, armed in their stings,
Make boot upon the summer's velvet buds,
Which pillage they with merry march bring home
To the tent-royal of their emperor;
Who, busied in his majesty, surveys
The singing masons building roofs of gold,
The civil citizens kneading up the honey,

[201] Colin Burrow, p. 55.
[202] Maguire, Laurie, and Emma Smith, "What is a Source How Shakespeare Read his Marlowe" (Oxford, Bodleian Library, 2020)

The poor mechanic porters crowding in
Their heavy burdens at his narrow gate,
The sad-eyed justice, with his surly hum,
Delivering o'er to executors pale
The lazy yawning drone.

(*HV*, 1.2.187-204)

Canterbury's imagery offers readers a wide ranging variety of different personifications of bees, as well as demonstrating a the many tasks bees can engage in: "The older ones take care of the hive, | and building the comb, and the cleverly fashioned cells. | But at night the weary young carry back sacs filled with thyme [...] all have one labor" (*Georgics*, 4.178-184). The framing device for this section of the *Georgics* is as an instruction manual, entitled "Location and Maintenance of the Apiary:" and the beekeeper must "first look for a site and position of your apiary." (*Georgics*, 4.8) A literate audience, understanding we are to think of King Henry as the beekeeper, would witness the effect of the reference to a classical work for strengthening Canterbury's argument.

Fluellen also appears to be the product of the early modern school system, although perhaps with not such an accurate memory as Canterbury. In the heart of the play during the third act, Fluellen is with Gower at a bridge in France, and provides what appears to be a direct translation from a passage of the *Aeneid's* book four in his *ekphrasis* on the goddess Fortune:

FLUELLEN By your patience, Aunchient Pistol. Fortune
is painted blind, with a muffler afore her eyes, to signify
to you that Fortune is blind; and she is painted also
with a wheel, to signify to you, which is the moral of it,
that she is turning, and inconstant, and mutability,

> and variation: and her foot, look you, is fixed upon a spherical stone, which rolls, and rolls, and rolls: in good Truth, the poet makes a most excellent description of it: Fortune is an excellent moral.
>
> (*HV*, 3.6.29-37)

Literate audience members of Shakespeare's plays, like Manningham, would have connected to Fluellen's line "she is turning, and inconstant, and mutability, and variation" (*HV*, 3.6.33-34).[203] It may serve as a moment spectators would find humorous, confer with one another, and even check in pocket editions they might have on their person of Virgil, to correct Fluellen's misremembered line. Fluellen incorrectly attributes the motto on mutability and variation to Fortune, whilst in the *Aeneid* it concerns the popular character, Queen Dido. In the *Aeneid*, the passage is from the moment Aeneas is sleeping on a boat, and woken by Mercury, who urges him not to delay his departure from Carthage: "Come then! No more delay! Women are unstable creatures, always changing."[204] This passage is an expression of anxiety that by delaying at Carthage, Aeneas will not be able to fulfill his destiny to found Lavinium.

Fluellen attempts to establish himself as learned in classical literature, and enjoys displaying his knowledge in similes that collapse the distance between ancient historical figures and those soldiers around him fighting in France. Pistol is "as valiant a man as Mark Antony" (*HV*, 3.6.13-14), while the Duke of Exeter is "as

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[203] Raymond Chapman, "The Wheel of Fortune in Shakespeare's Historical Plays," *The Review of English Studies,* 1. 1 (Oxford University Press, 1950), (pp. 1-7). p. 5. The line Fluellen remembers is "varium et mutabile semper | Femina," — "Women are unstable creatures, always changing,"

[204] Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. David West, (London: Penguin Books, 1991) p. 85.

magnanimous as Agamemnon" (*HV*, 3.6.6-7). Fluellen seems typical of someone who has experienced a grammar school education, eager to show off what he knows, and who is able to remember a Latin motto but is unable to recall exactly which famous poet wrote it (*HV*, 3.6.36), or who the phrase is referring to specifically. Fluellen's error may be an example, as Burrow suggests, of Shakespeare trying to avoid exposing the fact that he did not have a Master of Arts, like most of his contemporary playwrights, therefore "making fun of his characters' 'small Latin' in order to avoid being made fun of himself."[205] The presentation of a character who embellishes or misremembers classical works may also be an instance of Shakespeare encouraging and challenging audiences to think about what is wrong and why, and to remember their own education and use their imaginations while watching *Henry V*.

Fluellen's misquotation, which really concerns the widow queen Dido, is particularly curious because it is evocative of other moments where Dido seems to have a "covert presence throughout the Shakespeare canon."[206] Some examples of Dido appearing in other plays include Hamlet's lines: "One speech in't | I chiefly lov'd. Twas Aeneas' tale to Dido," as well as Antonio in *The Tempest*, irritated with Gonzago's reminiscing of "Widow Dido's time" and snaps, "Widow! a pox o' that! How came that Widow in? Widow Dido!" There are about six other direct references to Dido across the canon, and there are probably also more implicit references like Fluellen's. The impact of this line from the *Aeneid* on the audience is intertheatrical

[205] Burrow, p. 46.
[206] Maguire, Laurie, and Emma Smith, "What is a Source How Shakespeare Read his Marlowe" (Oxford, Bodleian Library, 2020). p. 30.

and associative, both across Shakespeare's own plays, with Virgil, and it also connects to Marlowe's *Dido,* which interrogates and also mocks Virgil's classical epic vision of history in the classical epic genre.[207] Marlowe's play, probably written in the early 1590's, features an Aeneas that is effeminate, childish — amplified by the fact this is a children's play performed by young boys — and quite unlike the heroic Aeneas of Virgil's epic, and who is in turn unlike Shakespeare's Henry V, as he "abounds with examples of Aeneas's unfitness to be a hero, many of them comic."[208]

As the Chorus tells the audience to do "work" on *Henry V,* the imaginary forces of spectators may spill over into the larger play as a whole, manifesting in intertheatrical and intertextual connections. As well as having the previous plays in the sequence in mind when watching *Henry V,* when audiences hear Fluellen's translation of a line from the *Aeneid,* it could function to provoke them into making a larger connection between *Henry V* and books 1-4 of the *Aeneid,* as well as Marlowe's *Dido.* With these connections to these other texts, Shakespeare is challenging his audiences to do the collective work of thinking about what kind of a version of King Henry we want to see.

Fluellen's quotation about Queen Dido calls up Marlowe's earlier children's play, and this in turn alerts audiences and readers to other moments in *Henry V* where Shakespeare seems to be directly drawing from Marlowe's play. One such example

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[207] Ibid.

[208] Stephen Guy Bray, "Source" in *Early Modern Theatricality*. p. 137. Guy Bray points out other plays in the tradition that also "take a critical view towards Aeneas's treatment of Dido: Lodovico Dolce's *Didone* and Etienne Jodelle's *Didon se sacrifiant*. P. 140. "less than heroic and even villainous."

when Marlowe's effeminate Aeneas describes how he witnessed the destruction of Troy from a turret.

AENEAS By this the Camp was come unto the walls,
And through the breach did march into the streets,
Where meeting with the rest, kill kill they cried.
Frighted with this confused noise, I rose,
And looking from a turret, might behold
Young infants swimming in their parents' blood,
Headless carcases piled up in heaps,
Virgins half dead dragged by their golden hair,
And with main force flung on a ring of pikes,
Old men with swords thrust through their aged sides,
Kneeling for mercy to a Greekish lad,
Who with steel Pole-axes dashed out their brains.
(*Dido,* sig.C1r)

This passage can be directly compared to in the folio text of *Henry V,* when the bellicose King Henry seems to adopt Aeneas' narrative recounting of his traumatic experience as a soon-to-be refugee of Troy. Henry is not adopting Aeneas' imagery to recount something that has happened, however, but as a sinister promise that he will massacre the people of Harfleur, in order to threaten the Governor of the town.

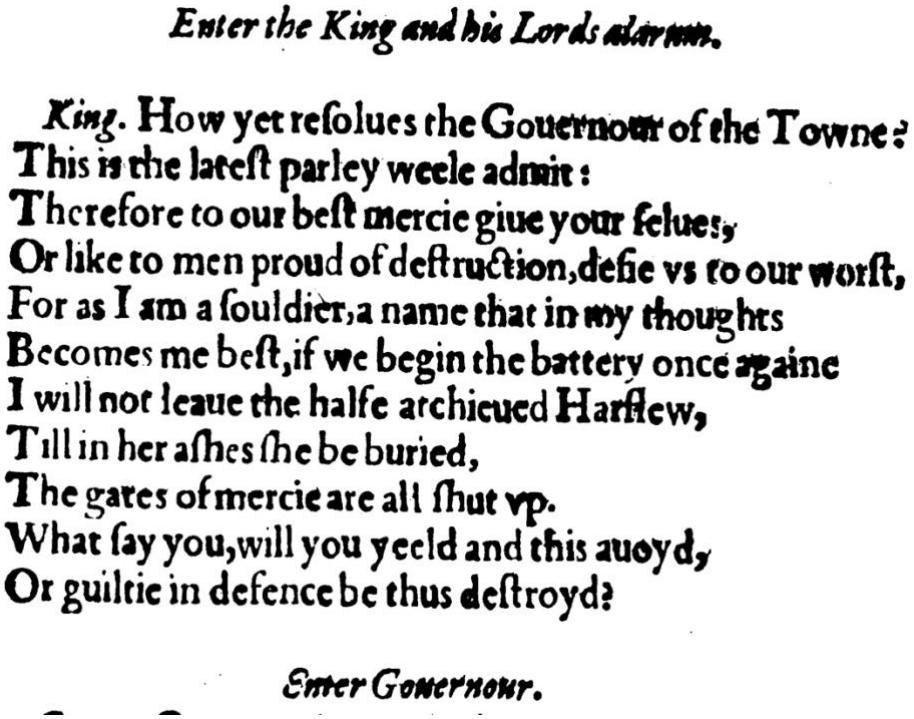
KING Therefore, you men of Harfleur,
Take pity of your town and of your people,
Whiles yet my soldiers are in my command;
Whiles yet the cool and temperate wind of grace
O'erblows the filthy and contagious clouds
Of heady murder, spoil and villainy.
If not, why, in a moment look to see
The blind and bloody soldier with foul hand
Defile the locks of your shrill-shrieking daughters;
Your fathers taken by the silver beards,
And their most reverend heads dash'd to the walls,
Your naked infants spitted upon pikes,
Whiles the mad mothers with their howls confused
Do break the clouds, as did the wives of Jewry
At Herod's bloody-hunting slaughtermen.

> What say you? will you yield, and this avoid,
> Or, guilty in defense, be thus destroy'd?
> (*HV*, 3.3.27-43)

Here we can see language that might be drawn from Marlowe's play, particularly as the *Aeneid* does not contain these same generalizations about what happened in Troy in the equivalent passage. Much brutality is described, but it is anchored in the specific details of the impact of the invasion on individuals, which has the effect of humanizing the atrocity. For example, "Cassandra, the maiden daughter of Priam, being dragged from the temple of Minerva, from her very sanctuary, with hair streaming and her burning eyes raised in vain to heaven."[209] But in Marlowe's rendition of the *Aeneid,* we are presented with a much more general picture of the war, which Shakespeare then appears to adopt for Henry's speech. Both speeches establish the location in a town besieged. In *Dido,* Aeneas is above Troy, looking down from a turret, and speaks of the walls and streets, and in *Henry V,* king Henry stands at the gates of Harfleur. Aeneas describes the unspeakable perils of "young infants swimming in their parents blood," while Henry brutally envisages the unimaginable "naked infants spitted upon pikes." Aeneas recalls "Virgins half dead dragged by their golden hair", while for Henry the same image includes the "bloody soldiers" who "with foul hand | Defile the locks of your shrill-shrieking daughters." Aeneas remembers 'Old men with swords thrust through their aged sides,' while Henry threatens that the elderly fathers of Harfleur will be "taken by the silver beards, | And their most reverend heads dash'd to the walls." Both descriptions focus on

[209] *Aeneid*, p. 36.

virgins, infants, beheaded corpses, girls being dragged around by their hair, bloody soldiers, and the use of pikes. The audience are being challenged to hold in their minds Virgil's Aenas, Marlowe's Aeneas and Henry V simultaneously. They must remember Marlowe's play, in which Aenas is reporting the terrifying scene he witnessed as a refugee, to make a direct comparison with Henry's use of the speech as a threat, to make a communal assessment about the epic hero, what the epic genre means in vernacular play form, and whether or not Henry is a desirable leader at all, despite the cherished cultural myth that the British empire was directly descended from Aeneas, via Brutus.



Enter the King and his Lords alarum.

King. How yet reſolues the Gouernour of the Towne?
This is the lateſt parley weele admit:
Therefore to our beſt mercie giue your ſelues;
Or like to men proud of deſtruction, defie vs to our worſt,
For as I am a ſouldier, a name that in my thoughts
Becomes me beſt, if we begin the battery once againe
I will not leaue the halfe archieued Harflew,
Till in her aſhes ſhe be buried,
The gates of mercie are all ſhut vp.
What ſay you, will you yeeld and this auoyd,
Or guiltie in defence be thus deſtroyd?

Enter Gouernour.

Figure 2. The King's speech from the 1600 Quarto of *Henry V*.

Figure 3. The King's expanded speech in the 1623 Folio of *Henry V*

Enter the King and all his Traine before the Gates.

King. How yet reſolues the Gouernour of the Towne?
This is the lateſt Parle we will admit:

Therefore to our beſt mercy giue your ſelues,
Or like to men prowd of deſtruction,
Defie vs to our worſt: for as I am a Souldier,
A Name that in my thoughts becomes me beſt;
If I begin the batt'rie once againe,
I will not leaue the halfe-atchieued Harflew,
Till in her aſhes ſhe lye buryed.
The Gates of Mercy ſhall be all ſhut vp,
And the fleſh'd Souldier, rough and hard of heart,
In libertie of bloody hand, ſhall raunge
With Conſcience wide as Hell, mowing like Graſſe
Your freſh faire Virgins, and your flowring Infants.
What is it then to me, if impious Warre,
Arrayed in flames like to the Prince of Fiends,
Doe with his ſmyrcht complexion all fell feats,
Enlynckt to waſt and deſolation?
What is't to me, when you your ſelues are cauſe,
If your pure Maydens fall into the hand
Of hot and forcing Violation?
What Reyne can hold licentious Wickedneſſe,
When downe the Hill he holds his fierce Carriere?
We may as bootleſſe ſpend our vaine Command
Vpon th'enraged Souldiers in their ſpoyle,
As ſend Precepts to the *Leuiathan*, to come aſhore.
Therefore, you men of Harflew,
Take pitty of your Towne and of your People,
Whiles yet my Souldiers are in my Command,
Whiles yet the coole and temperate Wind of Grace
O're-blowes the filthy and contagious Clouds
Of headly Murther, Spoyle, and Villany.
If not: why in a moment looke to ſee
The blind and bloody Souldier, with foule hand
Deſire the Locks of your ſhrill-ſhriking Daughters:
Your Fathers taken by the ſiluer Beards,
And their moſt reuerend Heads daſht to the Walls:
Your naked Infants ſpitted vpon Pykes,
Whiles the mad Mothers, with their howles confus'd,
Doe breake the Clouds; as did the Wiues of Iewry,
At *Herods* bloody-hunting ſlaughter-men.
What ſay you? Will you yeeld, and this auoyd?
Or guiltie in defence, be thus deſtroy'd.

When comparing the versions of Henry's speech to the Governor of Harfleur in the quarto and folio texts of *Henry V,* we can see that the quarto is much shorter, suggesting that more language was inserted after 1600, and is therefore probably Jacobean. Gary Taylor and others have debunked the myth that the quarto text of *HV* is a memorial reconstruction, and have established that 'rather than the quarto being an abridgement, the folio must be an expansion.'[210] In this passage we see an expansion in the 1623 folio text, from the line "the gates of mercy are all shut up," until the lines "what say you." It may appear to be somewhat surprising that Marlovian-looking language describing the death of innocent citizens has been incorporated into a later, Jacobean version of the play. Ruth Lunney has noted that there is only one early edition of *Dido* (1594), and that performances of the play probably ceased before its publication, as "the Chapel Children ceased playing at some time in the early 1590's."[211] For this reason, we might expect that Marlowe-like additions would appear in the 1600 quarto, which was printed closer to the time of *Dido's* performance and print, and closer to the time of Marlowe's death, in 1593. However, as Gary Taylor explains, some expanded folio speeches are examples of "copybook *amplificatio*" in Richard Dutton's phrasing—enlargements or embellishments to the plot of the play, to achieve the status of "classic rhetorical fare

[210] Gary Taylor, One Book to Rule Them All, The King James Version of Shakespeare's Plays DOI: 10.1080/17450918.2023.2251940.
[211] Ruth Lunney, (ed.) Christopher Marlowe, *Dido, Queene of Carthage*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2023), p. 24.

for the courtly stage."[212] As we know from *Dido's* title page, this was a courtly play in queen Elizabeth's time. The initial effect of incorporating the folio's addition to Henry's speech makes the play feel new and updated, but as the Jacobean courtly audience recognise the recycled Marlovian material and perhaps even feel nostalgia for an Elizabethan children's courtly play, the shift from Aeneas' traumatized refugee narrative to Henry's invading assailant projection leads the audience to question Henry's morals and ethics, as well as to consider whether he truly intends to carry out these threats, or if it is all a performance by a player.

While scholars have compared Virgil's *Aeneid* to works by Shakespeare such as *Troilus and Cressida,* or *Lucrece,* the *Aeneid* is not often discussed in a sustained way in relation to *Henry V*.[213] Aside from the two examples discussed above that seem to cite Virgil, there is no evidence that Shakespeare was using Virgil's works as a direct source text. However, thinking of books 1-4 of the *Aeneid,* as well as Marlowe's *Dido* as influential background material for *Henry V,* exemplifies the way that the *Henriad* as a whole works to situate Shakespeare's audience as communal readers and thinkers. As they are addressed and even implored to be active thinkers by the Chorus, audience members can be both individually historically critical — able to perceive multiple layers or versions of epic texts interacting with one another — but also can participate collectively in experiencing the power of being part of the body politic when witnessing *Henry V.* Arguably, the plot of the first four books of

[212] Taylor, 'One Book to Rule Them All, The King James Version of Shakespeare's Plays' . p. 15.
[213] Burrow, p. 61.

Virgil's *Aeneid* is a backdrop against which Shakespeare invites his audience to take the measure of Henry V's development from Prince Hal.

Henry's Performativity

The *ekphrases* of Canterbury and Fluellen signal early on to the audience that Virgil's poetry is utilized by characters in *Henry V* to make sense of events. In addition to this, the plot of the *Aeneid* can be loosely tracked onto the events of the *Henriad*, if we understand Henry to be acting like Aeneas. Alvin B. Kernan briefly establishes the similarity of the arc of the tetralogy to the *Aeneid* in an essay on the *Henriad*, reflecting that Aeneas must ascend to the higher purpose of the establishment of New Troy and the Augustan order, which "requires the absorption of the man Aeneas into the role of the founder of Rome, and the destruction of such turbulent energies as Dido and Turnus."[214] In the same way, Henry must undergo his reformation from his identity as Hal in the *Henry IV* plays, and banish and destroy the energy of Falstaff, to have "all such offenders so cut off" (*HV*, 3.6.106), even when a reminder of his tavern days is represented in someone as harmless as Bardolph. I have developed Kernan's idea to loosely map events from the *Aeneid* onto Shakespeare's *Henriad* as follows:

[214] Alvin B. Kernan "The Henriad: Shakespeare's Major History Plays" in Kernan (ed.) Modern Shakespeare Criticism, Essays on Style, Dramaturgy and the Major Plays New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970) pp. 229-245. (p. 274).

Table 1. Comparison of events from the *Aeneid* and the *Henriad*

Event	**The *Aeneid***	**The Henriad**
Cultural catastrophe	The fall of Troy, retold in books I-IV.	The loss of an Edenic England with the deposition of King Richard, in *Richard II*.
The hero has a period of extended delay, due to hospitality	Aeneas' delay at Carthage with Dido in books I-IV.	Hal's prolonged hours spent with Falstaff in the taverns in *1 & 2 Henry IV*.
Defeats a rival	Aeneas defeats Turnus, his rival to Lavinia, in book X.	Hal defeats Hotspur - the rebel his father admires - in *1 Henry IV*, and absorbs Hotspur's qualities of honor.
Commission from a dead / dying father	Aeneas travels to the underworld to speak with his dead father Anchises, who advises him about Roman *pietas* in book VI.	Hal is chastised and advised by his father in *2 Henry IV* shortly before his death.
Foreign war	War in Italy in books VIII and IX	War in France in *Henry V*
Marriage to a foreign princess	Marriage to Lavinia, to whom he is promised in book VII.	Marriage to Princess Katherine of France in *Henry V*.
Founds a lasting dynasty	Founds the Roman empire.	Founds Britain's empire.

Like the Archbishop of Canterbury and Fluellen, Henry also appears to think about events in the play in Virgilian terms and the ways in which Henry understands the arc of his own development from Hal to Henry V can be read both as Virgilian, and yet also different from Aeneas, drawing on Marlowe's play, *Dido*. This journey the audience travels on with Henry ultimately provides a new version of an epic hero, in play form. In books I-IV of the *Aeneid,* the cultural catastrophe of the fall of Troy is recounted in Aeneas' tale to Dido, and we hear how Aeneas performed his filial duty by physically carrying his father Anchises out of Troy on his shoulders. In *Richard II*, Richard's usurpation and the fall of England, an "other Eden" and loss of the golden age of Richard's innocent realm serve as an equivalent catastrophic cultural loss to that of the fall of Troy.

Hal's first important step on the path to kingship is in *2 Henry IV,* when he receives a commission from his dying father, a moment that mirrors Aeneas' journey to the underworld to speak to the soul of his father Anchises. Prince Henry attends his father to fulfill his filial duty alongside his brothers, who are gathering at their dying father's bedside. In the *Aeneid,* Aeneas travels to Erebus to visit the soul of Anchises. King Henry IV is sick and on the brink of death, imagining himself "sleeping with his ancestors" (*2HIV,* 4.3.61). When Henry enters and finds his father asleep, he mistakens his sleep for death: "This is a sleep that from this golden rigol hath divorced | So many English kings." (*2HIV,* 4.3.166-168). Prince Henry, speaking of

"filial tenderness" and "lineal honor" is attempting here, unknown to the King, to begin his redemption and fulfill a duty that is more in line with the kind Aeneas achieves in the *Aeneid*. When Anchises sees his son in the underworld, he immediately stretches out both his hands in eager welcome, saying "I knew your devotion would prevail over all the rigor of the journey and bring you to your father."[215] When Aeneas finally meets Anchises, he tells him that his task will be to govern the peoples of the world in his empire, with the arts of *pietas*; to "impose a settled pattern upon peace, to pardon the defeated and war down the proud."[216] Anchises' expression of Aeneas' *pietas* here demonstrates that Aeneas is the paradigm of Roman virtue, better than the Homeric world of romance poetry he emerges from. Although King Henry IV does not have the same belief in his son, and Henry V's character may not be described exactly as having *pietas,* Henry V is more insightful than the other kings before him in the *Henriad*, and he is a more successful king than his son Henry VI — from the first tetralogy.

In *1 Henry IV,* Hal's father is anxious about his son loitering in the taverns. As a consequence of his time spent there is that he has lost his place in the council at court to his brother: "thou has lost thy princely privilege | with vile participation." (*1HIV,* 3.2.86-7), and Hal's behavior is therefore delaying his education on how to become a good king. As Hal prepares for kingship, despite the worries his father has that the English court under his son's rule will be assembled with "from every region

[215] Virgil, *Aeneid*, p. 134.
[216] Ibid., p. 138.

apes of idleness" (*2HIV*, 4.3.252), we see the prince preparing for the serious duty ahead of him. Hal's defeat of Hotspur and absorption of his honor mark the beginning of his adherence to his father. In *Henry V*, as Kernan explains, the "all demanding sense of duty" that King Henry V achieves are the result of a progression in his character development from the Hal of the taverns, accompanied by Falstaff, to the more serious King Henry V. As a king, Henry's character develops into becoming unknowable, while with "a thinness of personal feeling, there is at the same time a sure political sense of what is required of a king and the leader of a great army engaged in the conquest of a kingdom."[217]

On his journey to found Lavinium, Aeneas must overcome several obstacles in order to grow into the ideal ruler, such as his instinct for revenge in favor of leaving Troy and saving his family, and the sacrifice of abandoning Dido. In *1 & 2 Henry IV*, Hal must also make the sacrifice of giving up Falstaff and the hospitality of the tavern, mirroring the way Aeneas gives up Dido. While in *2 Henry IV* Falstaff was cast aside in favor of the Lord Chief Justice, in *Henry V*, Princess Katherine becomes his counterpart, taking his place in the domestic scenes of comedy in this play, and the happy ending in marriage. Just as Aeneas' fate can never be as Dido's consort in Carthage, Hal's destiny cannot be as king of the thieves, alongside Falstaff.

While Hal's prodigality in *1 Henry IV* does not stem from Aeneas' character, but is adopted from Prince Henry's characterization in *Famous Victories*, Shakespeare borrows from Virgil the anxiety readers have over Aeneas' delay to

[217] Kernan, p. 270.

found Rome, when he loiters in Carthage, when we see over the two *Henry IV* plays Hal's delay to adopt the appropriate behaviors on his path to kingship. Just as Aeneas is not a model from which Hal's early behavior is imitated, Aeneas' father, Anchises, may be old and infirm but is certainly not corrupt, like King Henry IV. However, in places where delay occurs in the plot of an epic poem, the very form of the poem appears to express anxiety about the romance structure imposing itself onto the genre. Writing on the relation of Circe to the form and teleology of Virgil's epic, Sean Keilen explains that in book 7, the *Aeneid* "appears to turn away from the Odyssey, the model for its first six books [...] Circe's song and tapestry are precisely the path that Virgil would forbid himself, Aeneas, and us to take."[218] While the romance is a form that relishes digressions and delays, Virgil's epic sees any deviation that Aeneas chooses as a threat to the very form of the poem — and *Henry V* inherits this problem. In fact, the line Fluellen quotes from the *Aeneid* is from Mercury's speech to urge Aeneas not to delay his departure from Carthage for the sake of Dido, an "unstable creature, always changing."[219] This passage is an expression of anxiety that by delaying at Carthage, Aeneas will not be able to fulfill his destiny to found Lavinium.

Henry V is the play in which we see a King from the *Henriad* attempting to act or perform most similarly to Virgil's epic hero. This play achieves the culmination of the creation of the collective sense of self and shared history with its readers and

[218] Sean Keilen, *Vulgar Eloquence: On the Renaissance Invention of English Literature*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006) pp. 156-157.
[219] Virgil, *Aeneid*, p. 85.

audience members, by building belief in King Henry, by stressing his legitimate ancestry. We witness him striving to be a great political ruler, with the qualities of filial devotion and *pietas*. Like Aeneas, he engages in a foreign war, gives up a loved one, establishes a great empire, and marries a foreign princess to strengthen his rule. In this way, Aeneas's narrative can be loosely traced onto Henry's to understand how Shakespeare might have used Virgil's epic poetic hero as an outline for his own epic British king, in his attempts to adopt some of the same qualities of leadership, such as courage, decisiveness, loyalty as well as humility, expressing concern for the future of his nation, and for men in his army. As Burrow concedes, Shakespeare's "Virgilianism" is "seldom explicitly Virgilian", and this may be why few scholars have considered the Aeneid alongside Henry V — more scholarship has been done on the Aenid's influence on the Tempest, for instance.[220] (58)

While King Henry V is unlike Marlowe's childlike Aeneas in *Dido*, a reading of this play alongside the *Henriad* is helpful in understanding how an early modern audience might understand the significance of Hal's receipt of hospitality, as Dido is emphasized as being the ideal hostess. Hal loiters in the tavern, enjoying the hospitality of the Hostess, and the company of Falstaff. In the hospitable scenes of the tavern, the play feels the most Elizabethan, closest to the moment in time of the audience themselves. Julia Lupton explains that "The rituals of hospitality incubate the theatricality incipient in all human exchange, and do so in a manner that remains close to bodily wants and the comportments and technologies that accompany them:

[220] Burrow, p. 58.

in hospitality events, life manifests itself as theater [...] hospitality gathers together a diverse yet coherent repertoire of narrative scenarios, physical routines, and comic musings."[221] In the tavern, where the characters spend time enjoying themselves, eating and drinking, playing practical jokes on each other, putting on improvisational plays, for the Elizabethan audience witnessing these hospitable acts, the world of the play blurs into their own hospitable environment around them, where they were also able to consume food and drink.[222]

In Marlowe's *Dido,* immediately before we meet Dido, her servitors "pass through the hall | Bearing a banquet" (2.1.70-1) and Aeneas is welcomed by Dido with generosity. She encourages him to sit in her place at the table, (2.1.91) and asks one of her servants to "fetch the garment Sichaeus wore" (2.1.80) so that he may be dressed in the robes of her deceased husband. Marlowe's adaptation of books 1-4 of the *Aeneid* instructs us by the name of the play: *The Tragedy of Dido Queen of Carthage*, to focus on Dido, as Marlowe intends it not as a history play, but as a tragedy, from the Queen's perspective. The title enlarges Dido's role in the play, placing her in the center of his play about the *Aeneid*, which has the similar effect of drawing greater focus on her character. Emma Smith has argued, in her investigation of the question "why is Falstaff fat?" that one of the reasons Falstaff is characterized as fat is because it makes him literally bigger, more compelling, and harder to turn

[221] Julia Lupton, Hospitality in *Early Modern Theatricality* p. 423-4.
[222] See Callan Davies, "Bowling Alleys." Visitors might "enjoy parts of the play, some enjoy the social space, some enjoy the food, and some the dancing [...] certain scenes or set-pieces might be desired without care to the coherency of a whole play." (p.43).

away from, and that his function is to "impede the patterns of succession that structure historical progress."[223] Although Dido is neither described as fat nor a comedic character, by bringing attention to this character, Marlowe's play instructs us of Dido's role delaying Aeneas' historical progress to found Lavinium, just as Falstaff delays Hal's progress toward kingship across the *Henry IV* plays.

While the tavern scenes do not directly evoke Aeneas' stay in Carthage with Dido, Falstaff's love for Hal is as strong as Dido's is for Aeneas, and both Dido and Falstaff die shortly after being rejected and abandoned. The effect of Hal's delay of his transformation into King Henry V is to bring the play world into the Elizabethan moment and to stop the progression of the narrative. Falstaff, like Dido, must be sacrificed in order for events to progress. King Henry's rejection of Falstaff is viewed with relief by Canterbury, who explains early on in the play how, once his father died, his behavior completely altered, in a Christianized version of Mercury's embassy to Aeneas: "Consideration like an angel came | And whipped th'offending Adam out of him" (*HV,* 1.1.29-3). Fluellen equates this change in the king's behavior with that of Alexander the great, making a comparison to Alexander's killing of his friend Clytus: "so also Harry Monmouth, being in his right wits and good judgments, turned away the fat knight with the great belly doublet." (*HV,* 4.7.45-9). Now that Falstaff is gone, the king is purified, his body "as a paradise" (*HV,* 1.1.30), and he can be compared to figures from antiquity. Henry has surprisingly become a "sudden scholar" with

[223] Emma Smith, *1 Henry IV* Approaching Shakespeare Podcast.00:41:22,420 --> 00:41:29,500. <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/henry-iv-part-1> [Web. Accessed September 8, 2023].

"honeyed sentences," which Canterbury wonders at, as his hours were "filled up with riots, banquets, sports, | And never noted in him any study" (*HV,* 1.1.56-7). What Canterbury does not understand, is that it is through Hal's rehearsals in the tavern with Falstaff, in moments such as the play extempore in *1 Henry IV,* and the tapster disguise in *2 Henry IV,* that he is acquiring his education, teaching himself about the common people, learning from them, and learning rhetoric and wit from Falstaff. As Warwick explains to the dying King Henry IV in *2 Henry IV*, "the Prince but studies his companions, [...and] will in the perfectness of time | Cast off his followers" (*2HIV,* 68-75). These "scholarly" acquisitions from the earlier plays in the *Henriad* carry over into *Henry V* in Henry's performative speeches to the men in his army, in speeches such as "once more unto the breach" and "band of brothers" as well as his disguise and philosophical dialog with Williams. The Folio's Chorus of *Henry V* wants the audience to love King Henry, despite his brutality and immoral nature. The play asks us to bond with Henry V in the same way we bond with Aeneas, and in this way, Shakespeare is showing his audiences that sometimes the optimal person to rule is not the most likable, because he must be performative.

Henry makes his decision before he sees the Dauphin's tennis balls that he is resolved to invade France. He makes it clear that this is for "our history," to expand his empire, and is unapologetically aggressive in his approach: "France being ours, we'll bend it to our awe | Or break it all to pieces." (*HV,* 1.2.225-6). Provided he has the support of the nobles and archbishops, Henry V is much more eager for war than Aeneas. Aeneas is a refugee from a catastrophic war and so very reluctant to start a

new war with Turnus, but following the advice Henry V got from his father on his deathbed, he sees foreign war not as a past to be transcended or a future to be avoided but as a tool for fulfilling his practical goals to end violence in England that seems to be verging on civil war by distracting the nation with a war abroad. Henry's reaction to the Dauphin's delivery of tennis balls is therefore to escalate their conflict in a performative speech that imagines women and children suffering:

KING many a thousand widows
Shall this his mock mock out of their dear husbands;
Mock mothers from their sons, mock castles down;
And some are yet ungotten and unborn
That shall have cause to curse the Dauphin's scorn.
(*HV*, 1.2.284-9)

This speech is shocking because it curses innocent people in France — widows and unborn babies — rather than the Dauphin himself. It seems an impulsive, almost juvenile reaction or arrogant performance reminiscent of Hotspur's behavior. It anticipates his speech at Harfleur, and again echos Aeneas' description of the massacre he witnesses from the turret in *Dido*. The audience at this moment, are again reminded of the intertheatricality between the two plays, whilst also witness the reactions of those at court who hear this speech. Everyone present except the French ambassadors are of course in favor of the king and therefore would not show any disgust for this speech. The audience are therefore in a position to feel either drawn in to Henry's determination, or to feel shocked at his words, while they also witness courtiers accept the king's violent threats.

Henry's experiences disguising himself during the Gads Hill robbery in *1 Henry IV* and with Poins as a drawer to spy on Falstaff in *2 Henry IV* are experiences

he employs in a serious tone, the night before the battle of Agincourt. Disguising himself as a soldier enables him to be around his men anonymously and equally, so that he can discover how they feel about the battle. This desire to be among his men and to hear Williams' mistrust of him is somewhat admirable, as he is unable to truly defend himself without revealing his true identity. If Henry may have understood the arc of his fortunes as Aenean up until this moment, this is where he most clearly departs from the *Aeneid.* Whereas Aeneas frequently receives direct help from the gods, in particular his mother, Venus, and where battles in the *Aeneid* are depicted with triumphant warriors who fight bravely, the characters in *Henry V* are concerned for themselves individualistically. Whereas the quarto text simply names these soldiers with the tags soldier 1, 2 and 3, the Folio text calls attention to the men as individuals by giving them the very distinctive names *John Bates*, *Alexander Court*, and *Michael Williams*. These name tags in the Folio text contrast starkly with the tag *King.*, which points to his status as a monarch and does not identify him as individualistic, rather as a trope. The impact of the names would have been to draw the audience to more closely identify with the soldiers. Many men in the playhouse audience of *Henry V* would have experienced the battlefield, being conscripted for Essex's Irish war campaign.[224] As well as identifying him as an individual, the name Williams, like the Will of sonnet 135, represents a plurality of people. Shakespeare makes use of the commonality of this name across his canon. As Knapp points out, in renaissance England, the name William belonged to nearly a quarter of all

[224] Altman, p. 273.

Shakespeare's male contemporaries, and Shakespeare presents himself as the embodiment of the audience's commonness, the one of their many: Think all but one, and me in that one Will."[225] Similarly to the country boy William in *As You Like It*, or the young schoolboy William Page in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Williams in *Henry V* represents a common citizen. Williams expresses his concern of war as a very real thing the masses experienced. He anticipates the next day's battle, imagining "some swearing, some crying for a surgeon, some upon their wives left poor behind them, some upon the debts they owe, some upon their children rawly left." (*HV*, 4.1.139-141). Here we are presented with the true casualties of war, and the men, reluctant to die, express their wish that the King should be ransomed, "and many a poor men's lives saved" (*HV*, 4.1.122), While Williams discusses the king's responsibility in bringing all these men to war, Henry pushes back with the argument that "Every subject's duty is the King's, but every subject's soul is his own." Once he is alone, Henry express his dismay over these soldiers willingness to hold the king responsible:

KING HENRY Upon the king! let us our lives, our souls,
Our debts, our careful wives,
Our children and our sins lay on the king!
We must bear all

(*HV*, 4.1.226)

The disguise sequence, in which Henry draws on his previous patterns of behavior in the two *Henry IV* plays, serves to prove his version of "scholarly" learning as it triggers a dark and philosophical musing that echoes Richard's decoronation scene in *Richard II*.

[225] Knapp, *Shakespeare Only*, pp. 48-52.

Figure 4. Henry's speech on ceremony from the 1623 Folio

What drink'ſt thou oft, in ſtead of Homage ſweet,
But poyſon'd flatterie? O, be ſick, great Greatneſſe,
And bid thy Ceremonie giue thee cure.
Thinks thou the fierie Feuer will goe out
With Titles blowne from Adulation?
Will it giue place to flexure and low bending?
Canſt thou, when thou command'ſt the beggers knee,
Command the health of it? No, thou prowd Dreame,
That play'ſt ſo ſubtilly with a Kings Repoſe.
I am a King that find thee: and I know,
'Tis not the Balme, the Scepter, and the Ball,
The Sword, the Maſe, the Crowne Imperiall,
The enter-tiſſued Robe of Gold and Pearle,
The farſed Title running 'fore the King,
The Throne he ſits on: nor the Tyde of Pompe,
That beates vpon the high ſhore of this World:
No, not all theſe, thrice-gorgeous Ceremonie;
Not all theſe, lay'd in Bed Maieſticall,
Can ſleepe ſo ſoundly, as the wretched Slaue:
Who with a body fill'd, and vacant mind,
Gets him to reſt, cram'd with diſtreſſefull bread,
Neuer ſees horride Night, the Child of Hell:
But like a Lacquey, from the Riſe to Set,
Sweates in the eye of *Phebus*; and all Night
Sleepes in *Elizium*: next day after dawne,
Doth riſe and helpe *Hiperio* to his Horſe,
And followes ſo the euer-running yeere
With profitable labour to his Graue:
And but for Ceremonie, ſuch a Wretch,
Winding vp Dayes with toyle, and Nights with ſleepe,
Had the fore-hand and vantage of a King.
The Slaue, a Member of the Countreyes peace,
Enioyes it; but in groſſe braine little wots,
What watch the King keepes, to maintaine the peace;
Whoſe howres, the Peſant beſt aduantages.

Enter Erpingham.

Erp. My Lord, your Nobles iealous of your abſence,
Seeke through your Campe to find you.

King. Good old Knight, collect them all together
At my Tent: Ile be before thee.

Erp. I ſhall doo't, my Lord. *Exit.*

King. O God of Battailes, ſteele my Souldiers hearts,
Poſſeſſe them not with feare: Take from them now
The ſence of reckning of th'oppoſed numbers:
Pluck their hearts from them. Not to day, O Lord,
O not to day, thinke not vpon the fault
My Father made, in compaſſing the Crowne.
I *Richards* body haue interred new,
And on it haue beſtowed more contrite teares,
Then from it iſſued forced drops of blood.
Fiue hundred poore I haue in yeerely pay,
Who twice a day their wither'd hands hold vp
Toward Heauen, to pardon blood:
And I haue built two Chauntries,
Where the ſad and ſolemne Prieſts ſing ſtill
For *Richards* Soule. More will I doe:
Though all that I can doe, is nothing worth;
Since that my Penitence comes after all,
Imploring pardon.

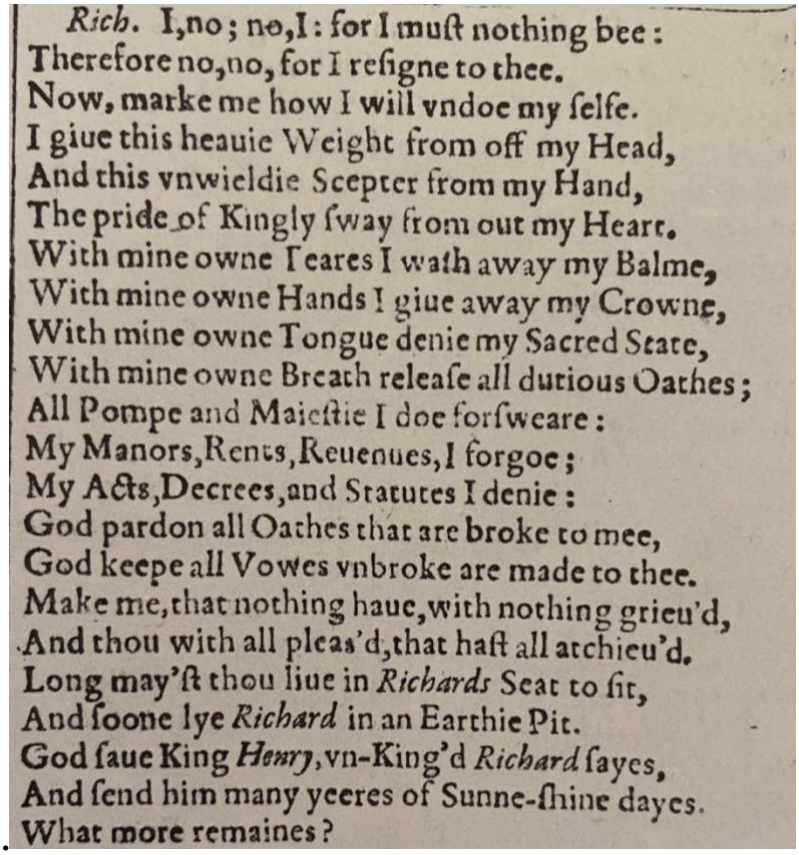
Bates. [illegible] you Engliſh fooles, be friends, wee haue French Quarrels enow, if you could tell how to reckon. *Exit Souldiers.*

King. Indeede the French may lay twentie French Crownes to one, they will beat vs, for they beare them on their ſhoulders: but it is no Engliſh Treaſon to cut French Crownes, and to morrow the King himſelfe will be a Clipper.

Vpon the King, let vs our Liues, our Soules,
Our Debts, our carefull Wiues,
Our Children, and our Sinnes, lay on the King:
We muſt beare all.
O hard Condition, Twin-borne with Greatneſſe,
Subiect to the breath of euery foole, whoſe ſence
No more can feele, but his owne wringing.
What infinite hearts-eaſe muſt Kings neglect,
That priuate men enioy?
And what haue Kings, that Priuates haue not too,
Saue Ceremonie, ſaue generall Ceremonie?
And what art thou, thou Idoll Ceremonie?
What kind of God art thou? that ſuffer'ſt more
Of mortall griefes, then doe thy worſhippers.
What are thy Rents? what are thy Commings in?
O Ceremonie, ſhew me but thy worth.
What? is thy Soule of Odoration?
Art thou ought elſe but Place, Degree, and Forme,
Creating awe and feare in other men?
Wherein thou art leſſe happy, being fear'd,
Then they in fearing.

Figure 5. The equivalent passage from the 1600 quarto, without the speech on ceremony

K. O God of battels ſteele my ſouldiers harts,
Take from them now the ſence of rekoning,
That the appoſed mulitudes which ſtand before them,
May not appall their courage.
O not to day, not to day ô God,
Thinke on the fault my father made,
In compaſſing the crowne.
I *Richards* bodie haue interred new,
And on it hath beſtowd more contrite teares,
Then from it iſſued forced drops of blood:
A hundred men haue I in yearly pay,
Which euery day their withered hands hold vp
To heauen to pardon blood,
And I haue built two chanceries, more wil I do:
Tho all that I can do, is all too litle.



Rich. I,no; no,I: for I muſt nothing bee:
Therefore no,no, for I reſigne to thee.
Now, marke me how I will vndoe my ſelfe.
I giue this heauie Weight from off my Head,
And this vnwieldie Scepter from my Hand,
The pride of Kingly ſway from out my Heart.
With mine owne Teares I waſh away my Balme,
With mine owne Hands I giue away my Crowne,
With mine owne Tongue denie my Sacred State,
With mine owne Breath releaſe all dutious Oathes;
All Pompe and Maieſtie I doe forſweare:
My Manors,Rents,Reuenues,I forgoe;
My Acts,Decrees,and Statutes I denie:
God pardon all Oathes that are broke to mee,
God keepe all Vowes vnbroke are made to thee.
Make me,that nothing haue,with nothing grieu'd,
And thou with all pleas'd,that haſt all atchieu'd.
Long may'ſt thou liue in *Richards* Seat to ſit,
And ſoone lye *Richard* in an Earthie Pit.
God ſaue King *Henry*,vn-King'd *Richard* ſayes,
And ſend him many yeeres of Sunne-ſhine dayes.
What more remaines?

Figure 6. Passage on ceremony from the folio text of *Richard II*

KING HENRY I am a king that find thee, and I know
'Tis not the balm, the sceptre and the ball,
The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,
The intertissued robe of gold and pearl,
The farced title running 'fore the king,
The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp
That beats upon the high shore of this world
(*HV*, 4.1.256-262)

The listing of material coronation objects by Henry would resonate with audiences memories of King Richard II, who similarly mentions royal artifacts in Act 3: his ‘jewels’, ‘gorgeous Pallace,’ ‘gay Apparrell,’ ‘figur'd Goblets, and ‘Scepter’ (*RII,* 3.3.147-151), as well as the ‘balm’, crown’ ‘sacred state,’ ‘duteous oaths,’

'pomp and majesty' and everything else pertaining to the office of kingship. The rich material objects in both of these speeches would have made for a perfect compliment to a monarch and a courtly audience, resonating with the court's wonder over the alluring spectacle of the regal objects used in coronation ceremonies, as Henry also lists them: the balm, the scepter, the ball, the sword, the mace, the crown, the intertissued robe of gold and pearl and the throne.

The connection between the two speeches of Richard II and Henry V are further solidified when considering the print history of the two plays. Just as *Richard II's* 1597 quarto is devoid of Richard's decoronation dramatization, *Henry V's* 1600 quarto does not feature Henry's soliloquy on ceremony. Both speeches on ceremonial objects are later additions. According to the critical tradition exemplified by scholars such as Janet Clare in the 1980's, the version of Act scene 1 in *Richard II* that appears in the First Folio does not appear in the 1597 quarto because it was censored by the Master of the Revels, as it was judged too dangerous "in the last decade of Elizabeth's reign, when the question of the succession loomed large but became a prohibited area of discussion."[226] Many editors take Abbot's line, which appears in both quarto and folio: "A woeful pageant we have here beheld" to refer to the performance of Richard's self-dramatizing resignation, therefore justifying that the deposition was written and performed in the Elizabethan period, but censored for the 1597 publication. However, David M. Bergeron counters this view, arguing that the

[226] Janet Claire, 'The Censorship of the Deposition Scene in Richard II' *The Review of English Studies,* 1990, 41. 161, pp. 89- 94. (p. 90).

quarto's "woeful pageant" could refer to "the arrest of Carlisle, the announcement of Richard's abdication and Bolingbroke's ascent to the throne and announcement of his coronation."[227] Adopting this explanation for the Abbot's words, Richard's dramatic de-coronation sequence through Act 4 scene 1 can be reconsidered, not as an omission from the quarto *Henry V*, but as a newly constructed, Jacobean passage inserted into the folio play text. Gary Taylor has noted the oddity of King Henry's speech on ceremony in *Henry V* the night before a battle, but explains that when considered in light of King James' Coronation, it would have been the perfect compliment to the king, as this was "the first English coronation in Shakespeare's lifetime; public audiences in 1599 would not have seen one in four decades."[228] In the quarto of *Henry V,* the soldiers exit at the line "the king himself will be a clipper" and then Henry delivers his prayer to the "God of battles" in front of Gloucester, Erpingham and Attendants — in contrast to the folio, when he is alone on stage. The Folio interpolates the ceremony speech in between these lines, indicating that like Richard's language on the same subject, they are Jacobean additions for courtly audiences who would have recently enjoyed the spectacle of King James' coronation.

The connection between King Henry's speech on ceremony and Richard's deposition speech is further emphasized when Henry explicitly mentions King Richard when he begs to God that he will not be punished for his father's usurpation of Richard's throne, his prayers — unlike Aeneas' prayers to the gods — are met by

[227] David M. Bergeron, cited in "Appendix 1" by Charles R. Forker (ed.) in William Shakespeare *Richard II* (London: Arden Shakespeare Third Series, 2002) p. 516. n. 1.
[228] Taylor, p. 19.

silence, and though he refers to what his father has done, there is no opportunity to travel to the underworld to speak to his father, as Aeneas did with Anchises.

KING HENRY Not to-day, O Lord,
O, not to-day, think not upon the fault
My father made in compassing the crown!
I Richard's body have interred anew;
And on it have bestow'd more contrite tears
Than from it issued forced drops of blood:
Five hundred poor I have in yearly pay,
Who twice a-day their wither'd hands hold up
Toward heaven, to pardon blood; and I have built
Two chantries, where the sad and solemn priests
Sing still for Richard's soul.

This is the moment in the *Henriad* where the audience are reminded of its beginning with *Richard II*, and is suggestive that the tetralogy cycle is about to be complete.

The reason additional text exists in Folio *Henry V* may be, as Gurr argues, a result of the Folio text being cut for performance or censored. Following Taylor's argument, the additions in the Folio texts could be later, Jacobean insertions. Regardless of the reason for the differences between the two texts, they are each witnesses to their own historical period, and a testament to the historical distance between the two versions. The quarto of *Henry V* lends itself toward a more pro-Tudor reading, as it is more positive about Henry, a distant relation to Elizabeth herself. The Folio *Henry V*, whose Chorus highlights the ironic contrast between Henry as a noble, just monarch or dubious war-mongerer, and which contains a speech idealizing the ceremonial rites of coronation, are suggestive of a Jacobean king styling himself as an emperor, and uniting an imperial empire.

The existence of more than one text for *Henry V* means that, just as spectators could have made connections to other texts like the *Aeneid*, and *Dido*, that *Henry V* draws upon, playgoers and readers would have the opportunity to watch or read differing versions of *Henry V* itself, and to compare the differences and reflect upon them intertheatrically, in the same way they would between *Jack Straw* and *Richard II*, or *Famous Victories* and *1 Henry IV*. These textual differences between two versions of *Henry V* may be due to their relation to the politics of the time period — for example, a cut for Queen Elizabeth, or an addition for King James — due to desire for a performative text as Gurr argues, or the differences could even be an effort to create a certain aesthetic experience. Playgoers had the opportunity to hold a quarto copy of *Henry V* in their hands at performances from 1600 onwards, and to see it updated, comparing contemporary performances of the play to its original form in print. If they were seeing something that didn't exist in the playbook they held, what did this mean? Just as other texts by other writers work to shape audiences' experiences of their present moment, differing versions of the same text can add to the layers of histories that separate the audience from the plays, and also the layers of history on top of which the plays are written. The audience is thus provoked to think about their relationship to history and to community. If we are to believe the title page statement, however, this version of the play is: *"As it hath bene sundry times playd by the Right honorable the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants*," and the Folio's claim that the editors offer "the plays cur'd, and perfect of their limbes; and all | the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceived them." Then perhaps the Chorus and other

elements are indeed later additions, and therefore a deeper, and more complex layer of history has been developed from the earlier, shorter *Henry V*.

"World's Best Garden"

In the final act of *Henry V,* Shakespeare presents his audience with comedy. If the hard working audience has critically perceived the ancient layer of the *Aeneid* beneath the battle of Agincourt, then they might expect a triumphant ending, a symbolic killing of Turnus, that might lay the groundwork for the founding of a great kingdom. Instead the plot centers on the comedic wooing of Katherine that leads to an alliance of England and France rather than further scenes of Henry brutally conquering France on the battlefield. This unsettling alliance is exemplified by the French King's ironic "Right joyous are we to behold your face, | Most worthy brother England; fairly met" (*HV*, 5.2.9-10). The audience cannot accept this as his interiority after Henry's slaughter of so many French citizens. Perhaps the true emotions of the French are betrayed briefly by the Queen, who expresses that Henry's eyes were "like the fatal balls of murdering basilisks." (*HV*, 5.2.17). Audiences and productions often don't know what to make of this comic ending. It is here most emphatically that a reading of the play as the culmination of a tetralogy in the Folio is useful, particularly because the Folio provides us with at least two important additions missing from the quarto: the Epilogue and a speech from Burgundy.

Burgundy gives voice to the audience's unsettled expectations and expresses the damage war has inflicted on the country. His speech that serves to reinforce the connection with the ending of *HV* with *RII*, this time through agricultural imagery,

describing France as “best garden of the world” (*HV*, 5.2.36). The phrase “best garden” also appears in the folio’s Epilogue: “Fortune made his Sword; | By which, the Worlds best Garden he achieved” (*HV*, Epilogue, 7). The repetition of the phrase “best garden”, along with “peace” as a “Dear nurse of arts, plenties and joyful births” (*HV,* 5.2.34-5) reminds a reader of the *Henriad* plays of Gaunt’s description of England as an “other Eden, demi Paradise [...] This nurse, this teeming womb of royal Kings” (*RII,* 2.1.42,51). Burgundy’s speech departs from the play’s earlier connections to Virgil, collapsing time back to the garden of Eden, just as Gaunt does in *Richard II,* which circles audiences back to the beginning of the *Henriad* cycle. Burgundy employs farming metaphors to describe the state of the agricultural systems in a speech that recalls the way the Gardeners in *Richard II* use gardening as a synecdoche for rulership: “O, what pity is it | That he had not so trimmed and dressed his land | As we this garden!” (*RII*, 3.4.55-7). In *Richard II*, the language of gardening works to demonstrate how an individual sovereign king should control his nation: “I will goe root away | The noisome Weedes, that without profit sucke | The Soyles fertilitie from wholesome flowers.” (*RII,* 3.4.37-9). But in *Henry V*, the state of France is figured in a more communal mode. In Burgundy’s vision, there is no mention of monarchy in France, only the corruption to the land left from the war. Images of fields and “fallow leas” overgrown with weeds: “Darnel, hemlock and rank fumitory” while the farm machinery lies disbanded: “the coulter rusts” and other fields “want the scythe, all uncorrected, rank” (*HV*, 5.2.44-50). Burgundy’s focus is very much on the impact of the war on the common people, and unlike the Head

Gardener, he does not attempt to give advice on how to rule: “even so our houses and our selves and children | Have lost, or do not learn for want of time” (*HV,* 5.2.56-7). He is more concerned with the impact war has had on the county’s productivity: “Her vine, the merry cheerer of the heart | Unpruned dies” (*HV,* 5.2.41-2). With this speech so close to the end of the play, the audience are encouraged to remember *Richard II* and also to compare the difference. At the beginning of the *Henriad* sequence, the kingdom was idealized and mythologized as Edenic, and pictured by the Gardeners as being misruled by a tyrant who was inept at pruning. In contrast, by the end of *Henry V* Burgundy expresses an economic vision of France that is plentiful in agricultural resources that are going to waste, and citizens that are not focusing on farming because of the war.

While the Folio text encourages the audience of *Henry V* to make connections back to *Richard II,* the Chorus turns away from the centrality of the audience working on the play in their imaginations, toward an acknowledgement of the story in written form: “Vouchsafe to those that have not read the story | That I may prompt them” (*HV,* 5.0.1.). This suggestion of the possibility that the stories of these kings can be read in a book is taken further by the Epilogue, who goes further to depict Shakespeare himself with the lines: “Thus far, with rough and all-unable pen, | Our bending author hath pursued the story” (*HV,* Epilogue, 1-2). All that is required of the audience now, is to observe and remember, to think back to Shakespeare’s First Tetralogy, featuring an inadequate king who “lost France and made his England bleed” (12), and “in your fair minds let this acceptance take” (14). While the audience

are what bring these plays to life in performance, the ending of *Henry V* acknowledges the immortality of the *Henriad's* life on the page in the Folio text, and in the mention of best garden comes the notion of the pastoral, gesturing toward a green world of countryside pursuits such as hunting and birding, and domesticity, where Falstaff can also be located, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Coda: Sir John Falstaff in Windsor

A famous apocryphal legend symbolizes the extent to which *Merry Wives* could be viewed as part of the aesthetic vision and design of the *Henriad.* Falstaff's story was loved so much by Queen Elizabeth I that she "commanded Shakespeare to continue it for one play more, and to show him in love."[229] The 1602 quarto playbook title page of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* demonstrates that this was the play Queen Elizabeth may have asked for:

> A Most pleasant and excellent conceited Comedie, of Syr *Iohn Falstaffe,* and the merrie Wives of *Windsor*. Intermixed with sundry variable and pleasing humors, of Syr *Hugh* the Welch Knight, Justice *Shallow,* and his wise Cousin M. *Slender*. With the swaggering vaine of Ancient *Pistoll,* and Corporall *Nym*.

The quarto's title states the play is The "Comedy of Sir John Falstaff" first, followed by "the Merry Wives of Windsor." Falstaff's name on the quarto playbook in the title functions to unify *Merry Wives* with the first and second parts of *Henry IV,* because these plays in their first editions also included Falstaff's name. The 1599 edition of *1 Henry IV* features "the humorous conceits of Sir John Falstalffe" and the 1600 edition of *2 Henry IV* has "the humours of sir John Fal*staffe*" (see also Appendix). These early quarto plays, printed in Shakespeare's lifetime, demonstrate that he probably approved of the title incorporating Falstaff's name, and therefore saw him as a central

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[229] Giorgio Melchiori, *Shakespeare's Garter Plays: Edward III to Merry Wives of Windsor* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994) Melchiori notes that the legend was first reported by John Dennis in a preface to his adaption of *Merry Wives*: *The Comical Gallant*, published in 1702, that the comedy was written at Elizabeth's command, which Nicholas Rowe elaborates in his edition of Shakespeare in 1709 p. 79.

figure. If the play's title was abbreviated in its quarto form it would simply read: the "Comedy of Sir John Falstaff."

With the First Folio of 1623, the names of these plays were changed by the Folio's editors, and are different from their titles in quarto format. By privileging the quarto's secondary title: "the Merry Wives of *Windsor"* and omitting the "Comedy, of Sir *John Falstaffe*," the character connection between *1 & 2 Henry IV* and *Merry Wives* is lost. Instead, the play titles on the First Folio catalog page privilege the monarchs. Falstaff's name on the catalog page is also omitted from the *Henriad* plays. The Folio's editors may have done this simply to shorten the play's title for brevity, or they may have been trying to construct a more clearly historical sequence for the history plays, that policed the boundary between history and comedy more clearly for readers.

Although Shakespeare may have written *The Merry Wives of Windsor* around the same time as he wrote *Henry V,* in 1599 or 1600, there are certain plot points from which we can infer where the comedy might belong in the fictional chronology of the *Henriad*. According to the circumstances of many of the revived characters, the imagined setting of *Merry Wives* could be after Falstaff's banishment at the end of *2 Henry IV* and before the French wars of *Henry V*.[230] But as we know from Falstaff's

[230] At the end of *2 Henry IV* Falstaff is in debt to both Shallow and Pistol, and they are accompanied by Bardolph and the page boy, and they are all banished together. In the opening of *Merry Wives*, Falstaff is still in trouble: Shallow is searching for him, complaining that he has caused havoc at his lodge, and when Falstaff appears he is with Pistol and Bardolph, as well as Nim - these choices of circumstance and company for the opening of *Merry Wives* therefore provide some continuity from the banishment scene at the end of *2 Henry IV*. In *Merry Wives,* Mistress Quickly and Pistol do not know each other. At the end of the play when Pistol is dressed as Hobgoblin and Quickly is queen of the fairies, they are partnered off in the revels, and Pistol exclaims 'she is my prize' - which seems to

"resurrection" in the battle of Shrewsbury at the end of *1 Henry IV*, this is a character that has the ability to come back to life, so *Merry Wives* could also be set after the *Henriad* altogether.

If we think of *Merry Wives* as the fifth part of the quartet of the *Henriad*, it can be read as bringing home to Windsor some of the central concerns of these plays through Falstaff, with the play performing the process of domesticating him. In the *Henriad*, Falstaff represents a risk to the monarchy, as he functions to embody the danger that Henry V will be lewd, profligate, and lascivious, favor low-born companions, and become a bad king, like Richard II. By banishing Falstaff, Henry V rescues himself and the monarchy. While *Merry Wives* is not concerned with the monarchy, there are other institutions in this play that Falstaff poses a threat to. These are domestic concerns: family and marital relationships, fidelity, and female chastity. This play is also very interested in class, and the relationships between aristocrats and merchants. By bringing Falstaff into the world of Windsor, these issues are worked out through domesticating and disciplining him, and ultimately processing him as an insubordinate woman. Instead of being banished as he is from the history plays, Falstaff in *Merry Wives* is enfolded into an enjoyable, humorous folklore. *Merry Wives* brings the *Henriad* movement to its conclusion by taking its characters out of the political and historical mode and inserting them into a domestic one, and in doing

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anticipate their future marriage in *Henry V*. In *Henry V*, Falstaff's death is reported by Quickly; Nym and Bardolph are hanged, and the page boy is massacred at the hands of the French, indicating that the timeframe of *Merry Wives* is after Falstaff has been rejected by Hal but before the French war in *Henry V*. See also the table in the appendix, and Giorgio Melchiori. *Garter plays*, p. 99-111.

so the play helps its audience think about the relationship between the domestic and the historical.

In his speech at the end of *2 Henry IV*, Hal completes his glittering reformation, becoming King Henry V, and disposing of Falstaff, whose disreputable behavior of frequenting taverns and stealing now presents a threat or potential distraction to Hal's kingship. The King's second person pronoun switch from the intimate "thou" to the formal and distant "you" when addressing Falstaff completes the searing downfall of the knight from Henry's affections, as well as the king's resolve to become a formal figurehead and orator:

KING HENRY Presume not that I am the thing I was;
For God doth know, so shall the world perceive,
That I have turn'd away my former self;
So will I those that kept me company.
When thou dost hear I am as I have been,
Approach me, and thou shalt be as thou wast,
The tutor and the feeder of my riots:
Till then, I banish thee, on pain of death,
As I have done the rest of my misleaders,
Not to come near our person by ten mile.
For competence of life I will allow you,
That lack of means enforce you not to evil:
And, as we hear you do reform yourselves,
We will, according to your strengths and qualities,
Give you advancement.

(*2 HIV,* 5.5.55-69)

Here, the King makes it clear there can be no space for individuals like Falstaff at court, although if he can reform himself, he might receive "advancement." But Falstaff, with his wholehearted belief in the prodigal parable which ends with forgiveness and acceptance, is unable to reform, and cannot even at this moment of total rejection accept what his former companion is saying, telling Shallow: "I shall

be sent for in private to him" (5.5.78) repeating in denial: "I shall be sent for soon at night." (5.5.91) There is no trace of humiliation at the end of *2 Henry IV*, even though he is led off stage by the king's officers and the Lord Chief Justice. In *Henry V*, Falstaff is disposed of in an offstage death, reported by Mistress Quickly, who says he has gone to "Arthur's Bosom" which may be a nod to the pastoral green world of the Windsor countryside. We know from Falstaff's soliloquy at the battle of Shrewsbury that Falstaff does not value honor at all, it is "a word", "air" or "a mere scutcheon" (*1 HIV* 5.2.127-140), and this attitude is incompatible with the world of *Henry V*. The Chorus seeks to elevate *Henry V* to the status of an epic, encouraging the audience to undergo the same ennoblement the soldiers of Henry V achieve at Agincourt, so there is no place for a dishonorable knight in this play. Although Falstaff could not feature in the noble world of *Henry V*, he is allowed to live on in *Merry Wives*, perpetually humiliated in a communal mockery that disposes of him in a way everyone can enjoy. With this play, Shakespeare brings the *Henriad* cycle full circle — both achieving in it a purely Elizabethan play, but also a play with close ties to the cyclical folk traditions of the earlier period. Falstaff must be reintegrated into this version of history because, through a character who comes from history plays, we are alerted to a different kind of history represented in this domestic comedy play: this is a history more closely connected to the cyclical folk traditions and festival plays of the early sixteenth century, such as the *Hocktide* and Robin Hood festivities. In metatheatrical moments where characters call attention to the fact they are in a play, *Merry Wives* is also situated as part of a history of theatricality. While the *Henriad* works to teach its

audience how to be historical members of a community, *Merry Wives* shows history on a different scale, prompting audiences to understand that even without political historical inquiry in the public sphere, participating in the public theater is an act of remembrance, a kind of memorial commemoration of plays enacted in the past.

The world of Windsor is a domestic Elizabethan one, and contrasts the worlds of the *Henriad* plays with the effect of a flattened, presentist impression perhaps inherent to comedy. Unlike the history plays, in *Merry Wives*, none of the characters discuss past events. Windsor has distinctly Elizabethan elements, such as folkloric tales of fairies, witches, and the Hunter of Herne Hill; community shaming punishments such as public beatings, and use of the stocks; and Windsor citizens like Master Ford are concerned with men being cuckolded. Knowledge is obtained through gossip and contemporary news delivered by messengers who are often deceitful, of potential duels and petty disagreements within the community. The play has thus been described as presenting the "impression of life in an English provincial town as it is being lived at the moment of the play's first performance."[231] Just as the tavern scenes in the *Henriad* plays containing these characters felt Elizabethan, by transposing these characters into Windsor devoid of their courtly counterparts such as Prince Hal and Poins, *Merry Wives* becomes entirely Elizabethan, and therefore contemporary to the first audiences of the play.

[231] Melchiori, Giorgio, ed. "Introduction," in William Shakespeare, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, (London: Arden Third Series, 2000) p. 4.

Objects and other matters tied to the late sixteenth century abound in *Merry Wives*, which suggests that the play is not set in the reign of a Plantagenet king. Whereas in the history plays these elements would be pointed out by scholars as anachronisms, most people accept that these items show that *Merry Wives* is indexed to Shakespeare's own time period. Slender mentions bear baiting, and the famous bear Sackerson, of Paris garden, (1.1.269), and makes an old-fashioned request for Totell's *Songs and Sonnets* (1.1.183), first published in 1557, which demonstrates his lack of charm when he attempts to woo Anne Page. Both Mistress Ford and Falstaff mention the popular love ballad from the 1580's, *Greensleeves* (2.1.56, & 5.5.19). A coat of arms with a "dozen white luces" (1.1.14) is suggestive of the Lucy family from Stratford, contemporaries to Shakespeare, who also attempted to obtain gentlemanly status for his own family. The trick on the Host of the Garter, concerning the German noblemen who steal the Host's horses to go to court to meet the Duke (4.3.2) is a topical reference with "an element of satire that only a court audience in the know could fully appreciate."[232]

Mistress Quickly's language also serves to set the scene and ground it firmly in Shakespeare's era, when she guesses at who Master Slender is: "Does he not wear a great round beard, like a glover's paring knife?" Here she evokes one of the tools of a leather worker, the trade of Shakespeare's father. Mistress Quickly ties the world of *Merry Wives* to the Elizabethan moment through her careful itemizing of material objects. Her vivid description of the riches at court is striking for Falstaff in its

[232] Melchiori, p. 26.

repetition "knights, and lords, and gentlemen, with their coaches, [...] coach after coach, letter after letter, gift after gift, smelling so sweetly, all musk, and so rushling, [...] in silk and gold." The repetition serves to underscore how highly she values these material riches. Quickly is also very interested in imported goods that have come from abroad. She catalogs foreign imports: sea coal, musk, silk, gold, wine and sugar. Her interest in items of material quality and goods from abroad is carried over from in her opening line when she tells servant John Rugby she will prepare a "posset for't soon at night in faith, at the latter end of a sea-coal fire" (1.4.7-8). Sea-coal was high quality coal, mined in the north of the country, such as Newcastle, and was brought in by sea to London. The only other mention of sea-coal in Shakespeare's canon is also by Quickly in *2 Henry IV*.[233] The setting of the play has a distant feel from the rule of medieval kings, and a distinct lack of a deep past, giving it a more Elizabethan feel than the *Henriad* plays.

Quickly's striking speech about Mistress Ford as a woman fit for court clearly serves as inspiration for Falstaff when he comes to woo her. Adopting language from Sir Philip Sydney's courtly poem *Astrophil and Stella*, Falstaff calls Mistress Ford a "heavenly jewel" (3.3.38) and goes on to say that she would be a lady to match those

[233] In *2 Henry IV*, The Hostess has officer Fang arrest Falstaff for stealing her money and reveals in a rambling speech that Falstaff obtained thirty shillings from her after he promised to marry her. In a passage that demonstrates her attention to detail, photographic memory, and vast capacity for cataloging, Quickly conjures up a convincing intimate scene in her desperation to emphasize to the Lord Chief Justice officer the truth of her accusation. She claims Falstaff swore he would make her "my lady thy wife" (2.1.91) and recalls the exact room of the tavern they were in: the "Dolphin-chamber," the date: "Wednesday in Wheeson week" (87-8) and certain objects and specifics of the room: "upon a parcel-gilt goblet [...] at the round table, by a sea-coal fire." (87) Quickly also notes a witness: "goodwife Keech the butcher's wife" (92) who entered the chamber to ask for "a mess of vinegar" (94), and who then offered Falstaff some prawns.

at the court of France, who could wear such beautiful head-tires as the European courtly women do:

FALSTAFF Let the Court of France shew me such another:
I see how thine eye would emulate the Diamond: Thou
hast the right arched-beauty of the brow, that becomes
the Ship-tyre, the Tyre-valiant, or any Tire of Venetian
Admittance. [...] Thou woudst make an absolute courtier.
(3.3.48-56)

The extravagance of the kinds of head-dresses Falstaff is describing here are of the kind that would be worn by nobility at court, and were designed in the form of a ship's sails, flaring or floating about the head.[234] These kinds of head-tires were accessories contemporary to the Elizabethan moment — as Charles Nicholl notes: "plays were not fully costumed according to their fictional period and setting. Even in historical dramas much of the apparel onstage was contemporary Elizabethan-Jacobean wear. [...] The look of the plays is duplicitous, as the texts themselves are — we are at once somewhere else, and in the here and now."[235] As the play moves closer to its conclusion, it appears to pursue more and more emphatically the Elizabethan contemporary moment, and even — as some scholars have noted, to a particular occasion or ceremony to honor the Order of the Garter.

While these contemporary features of the play situate an Elizabethan audience comfortably in its own time, Falstaff's presence in the play is jarring in this context, partly because he is a history play character who evokes a medieval historical world, which may lead to audiences questioning how he belongs in Windsor, but also

[234] Nicholl, *Lodger Shakespeare*, p. 155.
[235] Nicholl, p. 150-1.

because Falstaff's behavior still presents a threat to social hierarchies, similarly to the way he did in the *Henriad*. Falstaff's persistent pursuit of Mistresses Page and Ford, for example, threatens their marriages. The knight consistently appears in a liminal position in society and poses a threat to different classes of people in the plays he features in. In the *Henry IV* plays he is of a lower status than Hal but as a knight he has access to the court, and represents the dangerous temptations of the brothels and taverns, where Hal spends the riotious days of his youth. When Hal becomes king, Falstaff must be banished and with him any temptation to return to these places. In the Windsor community, Falstaff is of a higher status than the merchant classes in the town, yet he is still a disturbance to the Windsor residents, because he has no money, and he attempts to have affairs with the wives. Fenton meanwhile represents a version of Hal: he is wanton but ultimately honorable, in contrast to Falstaff, who appears to be honorable — because he is a knight — but is ultimately wanton. Fenton is "of great birth" but like Falstaff, he has spent all his money "in riots past, my wild societies" (3.4.9). We learn from Master Page that Fenton also "kept company with the wild Prince and Poins" (3.2.65-6), as Falstaff did, although Fenton does not feature in the *Henry IV* plays. Fenton also represents a young version of Falstaff, as he too seeks a relationship with a woman in the town, and the communal shaming punishment Falstaff receives ultimately enables Fenton to elope with Anne and get away with it.

The name Fenton indicates that, like Falstaff, he is coming from outside of Windsor, perhaps from a town in the fen districts of Cambridgeshire or

Lincolnshire, but the word "fen" also connotes mire and filth (*OED, n,* 2.), suggestive also, of the disease ridden state Falstaff is in at the opening of *2 Henry IV*. Fenton is a gentleman, with courtly mannerisms, as the Host describes: "he capers, he dances, he has eyes of youth, he writes verses, he speaks holiday, he smells April and May." But as he has lost all his money, he seeks a rich wife in Windsor to rectify this. Fenton even confesses to Anne that her "father's wealth | Was the first motive that I woo'd thee" (3.4.13-14). Page is suspicious of him, both because he is of a higher class status, and because he knows Fenton seeks Annes dowry. Falstaff similarly sees the wives as a source of money, comparing them, in an analogy to Sir Walter Raleigh's discovery of Guiana in the late 1590s, to "a region in Guiana, all gold and bounty [...] They shall be my East and West Indies and I shall trade to them both" (1.3.51-53). While both men are posing similar threats to a society that has a great deal of anxiety about social status and behavior, and tries to maintain fixed class boundaries so that everyone remains at their correct station, Fenton is able to woo Anne in secret and successfully elope with her during the Hunter of Herne Hill scene, while Falstaff — whom the wives ensure from the outset will be outwitted by them — is repeatedly punished and shamed for similar behavior. Falstaff is punished for the same things Fenton wants, and it is Falstaff's status as scapegoat that allows the community to accept Fenton.

Falstaff's status as the person who will be repeatedly mocked and shamed in *Merry Wives*, both for his own behavior and for others like Fenton,

provokes audiences to think of the play as a kind of domestic history of community shaming ceremonies that achieve *catharsis*. It is fitting that Falstaff should be the character through which this societal transformation takes place, as he has been the victim of Hal's practical jokes in the *Henry IV* plays, as with the outcome of the Gads Hill robbery in *Part 1*, and when Hal and Poins spy on him and Doll Tearsheet in *Part 2*, disguised as drawers. Falstaff has an awareness, that he is both witty in himself, and the cause of wit in other men:

> **FALSTAFF** Men of all sorts take a pride to gird at me: the brain of this foolish-compounded clay, man, is not able to invent anything that tends to laughter, more than I invent or is invented on me: I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men. I do here walk before thee like a sow that hath overwhelmed all her litter but one. If the prince put thee into my service for any other reason than to set me off, why then I have no judgment.
>
> (*2HIV*, 1.2.6-14)

It is possible to both laugh at Falstaff and to laugh with him, and this makes him the perfect target for the three shaming rituals he undergoes at the hands of the wives. As these rituals are usually reserved for women. Falstaff is therefore both emasculated and enfolded in a historical process of folk tradition that takes the history play back to its original roots. The first trick Falstaff undergoes is his escapade in the buck basket which is thrown into the Thames. This resembles ducking, a shaming punishment usually reserved for scolds.

The second shaming ritual Falstaff undergoes is to dress in the clothes of the old Woman of Brentford, to disguise himself and leave the house when Ford arrives.

Ford, whose suspicions of his wife have been raised by Pistol and Nim, reveals his worry of what people will think of him: "See the hell of having a false woman: my bed shall be abused, my coffers ransacked, my reputation gnawn at; and I shall not only receive this villainous wrong, but stand under the adoption of abominable terms" (2.2.276-80). Ford is concerned almost as much with the potential betrayal of his wife as with the terms and names he will be called by his neighbors in Windsor, and cannot bear to think of himself called a cuckold. Ford's fear stems from his lack of knowledge of what is going on around him, and he is suspicious of the power that women have. Mistress Ford tells Mistress Page "He cannot abide the old woman of Brentford; he swears she's a witch, forbade her my house and has threatened to beat her" (4.2.81-3). These folkloric beliefs were accompanied with traditional punishments that used gendered clothing to make clear what the perpetrator had done. An example of this is recorded in 1519: "three common strumpets, who had cut their hair like men in order to dress in male garments were for this 'abhomynacion' sentenced to be paraded with white wands in their hands, ray hoods about their shoulders, and 'mennes bonett[es] on their hed[es] w[i]t[h]out eny kercher, their hed[es] kemte."[236] Here, women are punished by putting on headgear that men would wear, and in *Merry Wives* we see a reversal of this idea when Falstaff is thrown into the Thames in a basket full of women's dirty clothing, as well as when he is made to actually put on women's clothing, and is then beaten for it. Falstaff's cross-dressing

[236] Martin Ingram, in Paul Griffiths and Simon Devereaux (eds.) Punishing the English: Penal Practice and Culture, 1500–1900 (2003) p. 43.

as a woman also seems to emphasize this point: it is one of only two instances in Shakespeare's canon when a male character dresses up as a woman in disguise — the other is Balthazar in *The Taming of the Shrew*, who dresses up as Christopher Sly's fictional wife in the Induction, which also happens to be set in the contemporary English countryside.

Ford's fear of the woman of Brentford is reflective of a traditional view of the period. Women of the period who were cooks, healers and midwives were sometimes seen as witches, especially if any of these practices went wrong and the patient died suddenly. "Often known as 'wise women' these persons used a variety of folk remedies like herbs and ointments in their work and many of the treatments were considered as magical. They also were considered as morally weaker than men, and more carnal and sexually indulgent."[237] Ford first expresses his view of the old woman as a witch and 'quean' or prostitute:

> **FORD** A witch, a quean, an old cozening quean! Have I not forbid her my house? She comes of errands, does she? We are simple men; we do not know what's brought to pass under the profession of fortune-telling. She works by charms, by spells, by the figure, and such daubery as this is, beyond our element we know nothing. Come down, you witch, you hag, you; come down, I say!
>
> (*MW*,4.2.162-9)

Ford's immediate fear seems to be of the woman's sexual appetite, followed by the magic she might do, of which he and others of his household do not understand, and which he superstitiously fears. The symbolism of Brentford also communicates

[237] Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-hunt in early modern Europe* (Essex: Longman Group, 1987) P. 126-7

something lurid: Brentford had a reputation as a place of resort for Londoners, accessible by a journey on the river Thames, and had numerous prostitutes: "a place of amorous truancy, and escape into illicit pleasure; a place where no questions are asked, because everyone else is up to much the same thing, and where suitable accommodation is ready and waiting — private rooms, scented linen and winking attendants."[238] Ironically, it is the extremity of Ford's fear for the Woman of Brentford that allows Falstaff to escape in such a hurry after he is beaten. On Falstaff's way out of the door, Evans engages in yet another stereotypical view of witches: "I think the 'oman is a witch indeed. I like not when a 'oman has a great peard; I spy a great peard under his muffler" (4.2.182-4). The minister John Gaule in 1646 criticized those who saw a witch in every old woman with "a wrinkled face, a furr'd brow, a hairy lip, a gobber tooth, a squint eye, a squeaking voyce, or a scolding tongue.''[239]

Falstaff's final punishment is a communal shaming ritual performed before the entire community in Windsor Forest, where he is pinched by children dressed as fairies and burned by their tapers until he tells the truth about his behavior. Mistress Quickly, dressed as Queen of the Fairies delegates the instructions to the children in an unusual verse speech that evokes the Order of the Garter, a courtly occasion when knights are awarded honors by the monarch:

QUICKLY About, about:

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[238] Charles Nicholl, *Lodger Shakespeare* p. 234.

[239] Malcolm Gaskill, 'Witchcraft in Early Modern Kent: Stereotypes and the Background to Accusations' in *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* ed. Jonathan Barry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) p. 260.

> Search Windsor Castle (Elues) within, and out. [...]
> The several Chaires of Order, look you scour
> With juice of Balme; and every precious flower,
> Each faire Installment, Coate, and sev'ral Crest,
> With loyall Blazon, evermore be blessed.
> And Nightly-meadow-Fairies, looke you sing
> Like to the Garters-Compasse, in a ring
> (*MW*, 5.5.55-66)

Scholars since Edmund Malone speculate because of this speech that *Merry Wives* may have been commissioned as part of the Garter Feast for Queen Elizabeth I in 1597. This was a festival in which knights are elected and celebrated, with masques, processions and pageants. Part of the Herne Hunter scene in *Merry Wives* may even be an insertion from a masque Shakespeare wrote for the Garter ceremony at Windsor in 1597. This is the moment where the idea of Windsor as a place contemporary to Queen Elizabeth's reign is solidified, with Pistol's reference to "our radiant queen," who "hates sluts and sluttery" (5.5.46). He could be referring to the queen of the fairies, but the lines can also be understood as paying homage to the virgin Queen Elizabeth, and if so, the audience can understand that we are no longer in the realm of King Henry V, but that they are observing part a kind of memorial commemoration of a courtly ceremony that occurred in Elizabeth I's reign. The Order of the Garter was established by Edward III, the father of Richard II, thereby bringing audiences back in circular fashion (like a garter) to the cycle of history plays concerning *Richard II*, *Henry IV* and *Henry V*. The ceremonious throwing down of Mowbray and Bolingbroke's gauntlets at the beginning of *Richard II* and the attempted joust ceremony are recollected slightly in this ridiculous, phantasmagoric mock-garter scene at the end of *Merry Wives*.

Merry Wives ensnares Falstaff into a community shaming ritual, enfolding him in a historical process of folk tradition that takes the history play back to its original roots. Dressed as a deer, he is hunted down and transformed into a seasonal ritual. The children, dressed as fairies make clear what they are punishing Falstaff for, when they sing: "Fie on sinful fantasy | Fie on lust and luxury" (5.5.93-4), and Mistress Page's plan, to "present ourselves, dis-horn the spirit, | And mock him home to Windsor" (4.4.63-4) is repeated later: "he will every way be mocked" (5.3.19). The notion that they will "mock him home to Windsor" because they are against "such lewdsters and their lechery" (5.3.21-2) like Falstaff evokes an early modern *charivari*. These were processional rituals when people of the lower class in a community called out neighbors who violated social and sexual norms. This could be done with or without official sanction, and involved processions and rituals that would make "rough music … the harmony of tinging kettles and frying-pan music were the routine accompaniments to carting or riding or ducking. The ritual provided cathartic release for community tensions, gave its participants a virtuous sense of enforcing moral standards and was for all but the victims an enjoyable, festive occasion."[240] The *charivari* were most commonly used for witches, prostitutes, and women who beat their husbands, who were considered as well as for scolds and

[240] D. E. Underdown 'The Taming of the Scold: the Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England' in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, ed. Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) p. 127-8.

shrews, so to have this as the cumulation of Falstaff's series of punishments in the play seems to take him into a purely Elizabethan present.

The Herne Hunter performance serves as a healing function for the Windsor community, both to accept the elopement of Anne and Fenton, and for Ford to reconcile with his wife after Falstaff has been ultimately humiliated. The community hunts Falstaff, who is dressed as a stag in a forest, and metaphorically stages a sacrifice of him. Interestingly, once Falstaff realizes what they have done to him, he does not desire revenge, as many of the other characters in the play do over petty grievances. Falstaff simply accepts his fate: "I am your theme [...] Use me as you will" (5.5.159-161). At this point he becomes abstracted from the play, a "theme" whose final line in the play sounds more like a proverb that captures a previous definition of himself and his from *1 Henry IV*: "When night-dogs run, all sorts of deer are chased" (5.5.232). Falstaff has been controlled through the ritual and the community will welcome him back now he is tamed. Page tells him to "be cheerful, knight: thou shall eat a posset tonight at my house" (5.5.168-9) and Mistress Page tells everyone to "go home, | And laugh this sport o'er by a country fire, | Sir John and all" (5.5.235-7). Falstaff is now transformed into a story that they will tell over and over around a fire, like the traditional idea of a tale of sprites and goblins told by Mamillius in *The Winter's Tale.* At this point Falstaff becomes a distant but necessary presence that enables Ford and his wife to reconcile: "Let it be so, Sir John. To Master Brook you yet shall hold your word, | For he tonight shall lie with Mistress Ford." (5.5.238-10) At the mention of Master Brook, Ford connects the events of the

play cyclically back to his earlier disguise, suggesting that, like the stories they will share over and over of what has happened with Falstaff around a country fire, so too will the play of *Merry Wives* continue. Comedies featuring the green world in them, like *As You Like It, A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Merry Wives* are those that tend to be picked for summer festival performances of Shakespeare outdoors or in the park, which exacerbates their status as a ritual cyclical tradition, and enables Falstaff to have a perpetual afterlife. The ending of *Merry Wives* then somehow allows Falstaff to live on outside of the *Henriad*, a happy alternative to his sudden reported death in *Henry V*. This might also be read as a comment on the epic, Falstaff's sacrifice is the cost of making Henry V into a heroic king, rather than a man with humility and love for his old friend.

In this project, I have tried to suggest that when we read the *Henriad* plays together, they provoke us to think critically about history: what historical change means, what it means to effect such change, and what barriers to historical change look like — such as Falstaff. By presenting Falstaff in a comedy, Shakespeare offers us another way to perceive historical figures, imagining them as a source for amusement. By including Falstaff in *Merry Wives*, we are prompted to read this play alongside the other histories. The history provided in this play is different — the concerns of *Merry Wives* are contemporary to the first staging of the play, as it is about rising status of the commoner class, and their interactions with aristocracy, represented through Falstaff's knighthood and the references to the Garter festivities of Elizabeth's reign. Reading *Merry Wives* as a history, or alongside the histories

Falstaff and Mistress Quickly are from, we are further prompted to think about the complex relationship between domestic history and political history. Falstaff is a danger to the institutions of monarchy, knighthood, and marriage. Just as Hal is able to reform "like bright metal on a sullen ground" so too do the characters in *Merry Wives* reform. Like Hal, through Falstaff, the characters are able to pretend to be something they are not: Mistresses Ford and Page can play at being unfaithful to their husbands, and then inflict upon Falstaff the very punishments they would have received for doing so. In becoming Brooke, Ford pretends to be a man who seduces wives — a version of Falstaff — and then he punishes Falstaff for behavior he himself pretends to desire to carry out. Through their interactions with Falstaff then, the couples in *Merry Wives* can play at bad behavior and then purge themselves through him, transforming him into a fairytale. *Merry Wives* presents audiences and readers with characters from the *Henriad* so that they can reflect upon the historical material embodied in these characters. Unlike in *Henry V*, audiences are not being asked to imagine or co-create *Merry Wives*, or to become historical agents of change as they are in the *Henriad*, so much as given the opportunity to think critically about their resistance to doing so, and their desire to rather submerge themselves in what often seems like a superficial comedy. Still, the crises that we see in *Merry Wives*, in the institutions of marriage and family, and the threat that Falstaff poses to these are all solved by theatrical or ritualistic solutions. These continue to provoke thought about the ways that theater can be central to both achieving and reflecting upon historical change.

Tables of Illustrations

Table 2. Characters present in *Merry Wives* that feature in the *Henriad*.[241]

Character	***Henriad* Plays they feature in**	**Notes on role**
Sir John Falstaff	*1HIV, 2HIV.*	Falstaff's death is reported by Quickly in *Henry V*.
Mistress Quickly	*1HIV, 2HIV, HV.*	Quickly goes from being a hostess of the Boar's Head tavern in the *Henriad* to becoming a housekeeper and spinster, to Dr Caius. In *Henry V* she is married to Pistol but in *Merry Wives* they barely recognise each other.
Bardolph	*1HIV, 2HIV, HV.*	Bardolph goes from being a corporal to becoming a tapster or drawer for the Host of the Garter in the Garter Inn. Bardolph is hanged in *Henry V* for stealing.
Pistol	*2HIV, HV.*	Pistol goes from Ancient Lieutenant in *2 Henry IV* and *Henry V* to having no rank in *MW*.
Shallow	*2HIV.*	Shallow is a Justice from the county of Gloucester - this character features in *2 Henry IV* and is not a resident of Windsor, but is there visiting as a lodger in the Garter Inn.
Robin (Falstaff's page boy)	*2HIV, HV.*	Featured only as 'boy' in the *Henriad.*
Nym	*HV.*	A Corporal. The word 'nim' means to take or steal. Like Bardolph, Nym was hanged in Henry V for stealing. Characterized by his obsession with the word 'humour'

[241] See also Melchiori's helpful 'Designations of Recurring Characters in the Falstaff Plays,' *Garter Plays*, p. 108.

Table 3. Titles of quarto plays featuring Falstaff before the First Folio

Date	Play	Title	Publisher
1598	*1 Henry IV*	THE HISTORY OF HENRIE THE FOVRTH; with the battell at Shrewsburie, *betweene the King and Lord* Henry Percy, surnamed Henrie Hotspur of the North. *With the humorous conceits of Sir* Iohn Falstalffe.	Andrew Wise
1599	*1 Henry IV*	THE HISTORY OF HENRIE THE FOVRTH; With the battell at Shrewsburie, *betweene the King and Lord* Henry Percy, *surnamed* Henry Hotspur of the North. *With the humorous conceits of Sir* Iohn Falstalffe.	Andrew Wise
1600	*2 Henry IV*	THE Second part of Henrie the fourth, continuing to his death, *and coronation of Henrie* the fift. With the humours of sir Iohn Fals*taffe, and swaggering* Pistoll.	Andrew Wise, William Aspley
	Henry V	THE CRONICLE History of Henry the fift, With his battell fought at *Agin Court* in *France*. Togither with *Auntient Pistoll*.	Thomas Millington, John Busby.
1602	*Henry V*	THE CHRONICLE History of Henry the fift, With his battell fought at *Agin Court* in *France*. Together with *Auntient Pistoll*.	Thomas Pavier
	Merry Wives	A Most pleasaunt and excellent conceited Comedie, of Syr *Iohn Falstaffe*, and the merrie Wiues of *Windsor*. Entermixed with sundrie variable and pleasing humors, of Syr *Hugh* the Welch Knight, Iustice *Shallow*, and his wise Cousin M. *Slender*. With the swaggering vaine of Auncient *Pistoll*, and Corporall *Nym.*	Arthur Johnson
1604	*1 Henry IV*	THE HISTORY OF Henrie the fourth, With the battell at Shrewsburie, *betweene the King, and* L*ord* Henry Percy, surnamed Henry Hots*pur of the North. With the humorous conceits of Sir* Iohn Falstalffe.	Matthew Law
	1 Henry IV	THE HISTORY OF Henry the fourth, With the battell at Shrewseburie, *betweene the King, and Lord* Henry Percy, surnamed Henry *Hotspur of the North. With the humorous conceites of Sir* Iohn Falstalffe.	Matthew Law

1608	*Henry V*	THE Chronicle History of Henry the fift, with his battell fought at *Agin Court* in France. Together with an*cient Pistoll*.	Thomas Pavier
1613	*1 Henry IV*	THE HISTORY OF Henrie the fourth, With the Battell at Shrewseburie, betweene the King, and Lord Henrie Percy, surnamed *Henrie Hotspur* of the North. With the humorous conceites of Sir *Iohn Falstaffe*.	Matthew Law
1619	*Merry Wives*	A Most pleasant and excellent conceited Comedy, *of Sir Iohn Falstaffe, and the merry Wiues of Windsor*. With the swaggering vaine of Ancient *Pistoll*, and Corporall *Nym.*	Arthur Johnson
1622	*1 Henry IV*	THE HISTORY *OF* Henry the Fourth. With the Battell at *Shrewseburie*, betweene the King, and Lord *Henry Percy*, surnamed *Henry Hotspur of the North*. With the humorous conceits of Sir *Iohn Falstaffe*.	Matthew Law

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