DIZERTAČNÍ PRÁCE

David Livingstone

Univerzita Palackého

Olomouc

2011

Prohlašuji, že předložená práce je mým původním autorským dílem, které jsem vypracoval samostatně. Veškerou literaturu a další zdroje, z nichž jsem při zpracování čerpal, v práci řádně cituji a jsou uvedeny v seznamu použité literatury.

V Olomouci.....

podpis

Department of English and American Studies
Philosophical Faculty
Palacký University in Olomouc

David Livingstone

Subversive Characters and Techniques in Shakespeare's History Plays

Dizertační práce

Supervisor: prof. PhDr. Michal Peprník, M.Phil., Dr.

Olomouc 2011

Table of contents

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Department of English and American Studies, Philosophical Faculty, Palacký University and first and foremost my wife and children.

Annotation

A Note on the Text:

Unless stated otherwise, I will be making use of *The Norton Shakespeare* edition of the plays, edited by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard and Katharine Eisaman Maus. I will only include the Act, Scene and Line in the text of the work.[1] I will be using the MLA bibliography standard, 6th edition.

[1]Greenblatt, Stephen, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus, eds., *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1997).

Preface

My interest in this topic grew out of a number of points of interest. I have been teaching Shakespeare's history plays to Czech students for almost nineteen years. In order to prepare for my lessons, I read as much as I could get my hands on, however, this was somewhat limited back in 1993. My approach in this dissertation has therefore been, primarily hands-on, gradually developed over years of teaching and re-reading the texts, along with watching the film versions of the plays. I have continually found them engrossing, multi-faceted, relevant—the list could go on and on.

Introduction

Shakespeare more than any other writer continues to be reinterpreted due to the fact that the Keatsian "negative capability"[2] of the plays makes for an abundance of possible readings and interpretations. In the history plays, in particular, Shakespeare was dealing with controversial material as the events of the previous centuries were still very much relevant to the questions of the legitimacy of the present rulers, Queen Elizabeth and later James I. He had to toe the party line or risk censorship or even something more serious from the authorities. In my reading, Shakespeare provides alternative subversive perspectives through the mouths of 'strangers' of various sorts, to employ the terminology of Leslie Fiedler[3]. The key to these possible alternative readings will be the various techniques which I believe Shakespeare consciously or unconsciously introduced in order to provide a critique of the main ideology of his day. Thus, I will argue that Shakespeare provided 'hidden' clues in his plays subverting the mainstream "Elizabethan order."[4] I will be examining Shakespeare's history plays in an attempt at discovering possible subversive perspectives.

The subversive techniques employed are numerous. They include the introduction of so-called lords of misrule, villains, saintly figures, strong 'masculine' women, various kinds of minor characters; the use of asides and soliloquies, the use of parallelism where scenes mirror one another and the employment of seemingly unimportant episode scenes.

The concept of a lord of misrule has been taken from the festive theory ideas of Bakhtin, Barber and Frye who will be discussed in more detail in the chapter dealing with literary criticism on the subject. Falstaff in the *Henry IV* plays and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* perfectly fits the description.

The villain type is a more serious threat to social order being willing to use violence in order to achieve his goals. Although, they are particularly common in

[2] John Keats, "Letter to George and Thomas Keats", *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. M. H. Abrams, et. al. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1974) 705. My understanding of the concept of "negative capability" is the manner in which great art is not didactic but instead primarily concerned with aesthetic pleasure.
[3] Leslie Fiedler, *The Stranger in Shakespeare* (London: Croom Helm,1972).

the *Tragedies*, the Histories have arguably the worst villain in all of Shakespeare in the character of Richard II.

I include the category of a saint in relation to the character of Henry VI in the three plays dealing with his reign. This pious king spends most of his time in the plays as a passive bystander commenting on the wicked ways of his subjects.

By strong 'masculine' women, I am referring to female characters who refuse to accept the gender norms of their day and instead seize control over their own lives. They are often demonized by the male characters who feel threatened by their 'unnatural' behaviour.

I have divided the ‘minor’ characters into the following categories: mockers, characters who take every opportunity to ridicule what has been said previously; punsters, characters playing with the meaning of words often introducing a bawdy[5] element into the proceedings; characters tending towards malapropism, garbling their words with often unintentional ludicrous results; religious hypocrite types, characters feigning piety in order to advance their fortunes; silent or silenced women, female who are not allowed to express their voices by the male-dominated society; foreigners, characters who speak poor English with comic results; children, who are often older in terms of their insights than they look; elderly bores, self-important older men who continually boast about their glorious past; servants, clerks and gardeners; commoners; and certain minor characters who are impossible to easily categorize, for example Pistol in *Henry IV part 2*, *Henry V* and T*he Merry Wives of Windsor* who consists of a one-of-a-kind bragging thespian type.

Many of these types understandably overlap and a number of the characters exhibit features of several categories. Falstaff, for example, embodies a number of these tags: ridiculer, punster, lord of misrule and religious hypocrite. These types, I would argue, are part of Shakespeare's array of tools to call into question the primary 'orderly' reading of the plays. They are subversive agents generating an alternative view of the affairs of the rich and powerful.

---

[4] E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (New York: Macmillan, 1944).
[5] Eric Partridge, *Shakespeare's Bawdy* (London: Routledge, 1955).

The minor characters are often introduced in scenes placed between more dramatically important sections, providing an alternative perspective on the events on stage. The critic Dennis R. Preston has a similar reading of this phenomenon, applying it in this case, however, to *Twelfth Night*:

> …all the minor figures perform essential services, all the speaking parts can be dramatically justified. Although at times some minor characters fall below the expected Shakespearean mark of characterization or consistency, all contribute vitally to the contrapuntal weaving of people, events, and ideas that is the basis of *Twelfth Night*.[6]

This musical metaphor "contrapuntal weaving" captures the multi-layered character of the histories as well, wherein the alternative voices contribute to the overall song. I refer to this technique as parallelism where a particular scene mirrors another scene occurring right before or after. I call this technique 'foreshadowing' when it occurs beforehand and 'echoing' when it occurs afterwards.

Shakespeare also employs asides and soliloquies in subversive fashion allowing certain characters to share their intentions incognito with the audience. Asides are often the speciality of villains, accompanied by a wink to the audience. Soliloquies are employed most famously in the tragedies, but also play a key role in the history plays, providing access to the characters' psychologies.

I have taken the term episode from the critic Hereward T. Price quoted in more detail below. Episodes are short scenes often sandwiched between other major scenes more instrumental to the plot. These, at first glance, seem to have been included merely for comic relief. A closer look, however, reveals more going on than initially meets the eye. Price, argues as follows:

> Apparently loose detachable scenes, so-called episodes, are frequent in Shakespeare. They vary in function as well as in techniques, but

[6] Dennis R Preston, "The Minor Characters in Twelfth Night", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 21.2 (Spring 1970): 169.

> certain features tend to recur. Many of them are ...mirror scenes, reflecting in one picture either the main theme or some important aspect of the drama. Others offer some kind of contrast to the general run of the action...Others again affect the plot by keying down the suspense.[7]

I will begin with an overview of developments in critical approaches to the history plays with a particular focus on the order/disorder dichotomy arising out of E. M. W. Tillyard's ideas and terminology. I then move to a description of the various techniques of subversion providing brief examples from outside of the history plays. I consequently provide a brief discussion of Shakespeare's sources for the history plays, followed by an analysis of both his predecessors and contemporaries in the field of historical drama. I will include a short chapter on *The Merry Wives of Windsor* as it deals with Falstaff the anti-hero of the *Henry IV* plays and as serves as an excellent case study as to how these subversive techniques are employed. The individual discussions of the history plays will follow.

My Mgr. thesis, *Dissident Voices: Minor Characters and 'Throwaway' Scenes as Critiques of Order in Shakespeare's Plays: The Hal/Henry Plays, a Case Study* was completed in 2004. The work focused on three plays: *Henry IV part 1*, *Henry IV part 2* and *Henry V* with the addition of a brief shorter chapter on *Midsummer Night's Dream* as a test model for my approach. My interpretation of the plays was more political than the present dissertation arguing that a consistent alternative reading was possible. In the present work I do not attempt to provide an all-encompassing approach but instead would like to push for a more open-ended reading. I have included a brief summary of this work as an addendum.

With this doctoral dissertation at present I have undertaken a more systematic study of the literary theory concerned with the history plays, expanded my analysis to the remaining history plays along with *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. In my wide reading of critical theory dealing with the history plays, I was

[7] Hereward T. Price, "Mirror Scenes in Shakespeare," J*oseph Quincy Adams Memorial Studies*, ed. James G. McManaway (Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1948) 102. 15 September

particularly surprised to see some of my own ideas employed by the Cultural Materialist/Marxist/Queer theorists of the likes of Alan Sinfield and Jonathan Dollimore in their joint works *Political Shakespeares*[8] or *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading*[9]. I have no interest in adjoining myself with their school of thought, but do find myself sharing a number of their interests, namely, a focus on the, to use their term, "marginalized voices"[10] in Shakespeare. Additionally, I came across various collocations with the word "voices" in an influential feminist analysis of the plays, *Engendering A Nation: A Feminist Account Of Shakespeare's English Histories* by Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin, namely, "subversive voices," "disorderly voices," "unauthorized voices," "irreverent voices" and finally "sceptical voices."[11] Howard and Rackin are making reference here to specifically female characters whereas I will have a wider focus; we are on the same page it would seem, however.

These voices or subversive techniques and characters provide alternative perspectives on the plays. At times, the picture provided of English society is so bleak, however, that the subversive voice can actually arise from the side of order.

2009. <www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2868402.pdf?acceptTC=true>.

[8] Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, eds., *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism (*Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).

[9] Alan Sinfield, *Faultlines Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1992).

[10] Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, *"History and Ideology: the instance of Henry V" Alternative Shakespeares*, ed. John Drakakis (London: Methuen, 1985) 214.

[11] Jean E. Howard and P. Rackin, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories (*New York: Routledge, 1997).

Critical Approaches to the History Plays

I would like to limit myself in the following discussion to literary criticism and scholarship which touches on the history plays specifically. In light of the fact that the 20th and 21st century scholarship is so extensive, I will focus on criticism which is particularly relevant to my argument.

The first reference to Shakespeare in print was from Robert Greene in his posthumous *Greene's Groat's Worth of Wit* published in 1592 where he refers to his younger colleagues as "an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you."[12] This indicates, amongst other things, that Shakespeare had achieved a certain renown which invoked the ire of his older, more 'learned' peer. The reference contains a partial citation from Shakespeare's history play, *Henry VI pt. 3*, "O tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide!" (1.4:138) spoken by York to Queen Margaret.

The initial critical and editorial problem involved defining which of the plays actually fit the designation of history plays to begin with. Both Richard plays were originally entitled *The Tragedy of King Richard II* and *The Tragedy of King Richard III*. *Macbeth* is of course also a historical play in a definite sense. What about the Roman plays: *Julius Caesar*, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus?* What about the plays dealing with early English history cloaked in mystery and myth: *King Lear*, *Cymbeline?* Shakespeare himself, of course, seemed to have little interest in definitions of this kind, even going as far as to ridicule those with an obsession with defining genres through the person of the pompous Polonius.[13] The first folio prepared by John Heminges and Henry Condell and published in 1623 divided the plays into genres thereby establishing the tradition of the history plays being the ten plays dealing with English history listed here in historical order, not

[12] Robert Greene, *Greene's Groat's Worth of Wit* 10 July 2010. <www.exclassics.com/groat/groat/html>.

[13] "The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastorical-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable or poem unlimited." (Hamlet, 2.2:379-382)

in terms of date of composition: *King John*, *Richard II*, the two *Henry IV plays*, *Henry V*, the three *Henry VI* plays, *Richard III* and finally *Henry VIII*.

Ben Jonson voiced mixed opinions regarding Shakespeare in the preface to the First Folio both criticising his lack of classical learning, "thou hadst small Latin, and less Greek", but nevertheless venerating his genius, "He was not of an age, but for all time!"[14] He would seem to be ridiculing Shakespeare and his colleagues who wrote history plays in a cutting remark in the prologue to *Every Man In His Humour*: "with three rusty swords / And help of some few foot-and-half-foot words / Fight over York and Lancaster's long jars".[15]

The Neo-Classical period with its firm adherence to Classical models tended to undervalue the histories in favour of the comedies and tragedies which revealed affinities with Aristotle's *Poetics*. The first half of the 18th century saw Nicholas Rowe publish the first critical edition of the plays actually dividing all of the plays into acts and scenes in 1709. John Dryden in his *Essay of Dramatic Poesie* clearly admired Shakespeare, "the largest and most comprehensive soul"[16] of all writers, but criticised the histories for their failure "to imitate or paint nature"[17], this being a key concept at the time. He also felt the need to produce new versions of a number of the plays, including his own version of *Antony and Cleopatra, All For Love*. He viewed Shakespeare's faults as a result of the backward time he was living in. Alexander Pope produced the second scholarly edition of Shakespeare' works in the year 1723. He is credited with a number of positive steps in the editorial process, namely correcting the rhythm of certain lines in the plays. On the negative side, he had a tendency to take liberties with the texts in an interest in improving on the Bard.

The first significant criticism dealing with the history plays arose in the second half of the 18th century with Samuel Johnson praising Shakespeare's "just representations of general nature."[18] His edition of 1765 with its invaluable preface became the basis for the consequent editions of George Steevens. Johnson

[14] Qtd. in Emma Smith, ed., *Shakespeare's Histories* (Malden: Blackwell, 2004) 3.
[15] Qtd. in Smith, (Malden: Blackwell, 2004) 2.
[16] Qtd. in Smith, (Malden: Blackwell, 2004) 6.
[17] Qtd. in Smith, (Malden: Blackwell, 2004) 6.

criticised the rules of Neo-Classical criticism arguing against too large an emphasis on unity of time and space. In a contrasting approach, Johnson, called for an attempt at contexualizing Shakespeare's art within the time he wrote. He was critical, in particular, of Shakespeare's supposed overfondness for puns or quibbles: “A quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it”.[19] Although at times Shakespeare arguably overdoes it, in for example, the notorious scene in *Romeo and Juliet* when Juliet thinks Romeo has died in the fight with Tybalt:

> Hath Romeo slain himself? Say thou but 'Ay',
> And that bare vowel 'I' shall poison more
> Than the death-darting eye of cockatrice.
> I am not I if there be such an 'Ay'. (3.2:45-48)

Juliet's use of three quibbles 'I', 'Ay' and 'eye' at a moment when she believes her beloved has been killed seems odd to say the least. These puns and word plays, however, are often instrumental in my own subversive readings and interpretations of the plays. Johnson also, perhaps recognising some physical parallels, took an enthusiastic interest in Falstaff.

Maurice Morgann was one of the first, if not the first, to focus on the history plays, in particular, writing an entire piece on Falstaff published in 1777: “An Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff”. This was the first narrowly focused criticism of a particular area of a play opening the door to 20th century Character criticism.[20] Morgann anticipated the Romantic approach to Falstaff arguing against previous accusations of cowardice.

The early 19th century romantics, Samuel Coleridge and William Hazlitt, in particular, also took a great interest in the plays. Coleridge produced his highly influential lectures on Shakespeare over the years 1802 to 1814, finally published in the year 1849. Coleridge's ideas were also indebted to Germanic Romantic

---

[18] Samuel Johnson, Preface to *The Plays of William Shakespeare* viii. 10 August 2011. <http://books.google.com/books?id>.
[19] Samuel Johnson, Preface to *The Plays of William Shakespeare* xxiii. 10 August 2011. <http://books.google.com/books?id>.

criticism. Coleridge tended to praise Shakespeare's language and poetry as opposed to merely focusing on practical issues of theatrical production or historical aspects. His comments on *Richard II*, in particular, have remained relevant up to the present day. His own summary of the aim of the history plays is as follows:

> Shakespeare avails himself of every opportunity to effect the great object of the historic drama, that namely, of familiarizing the people to the great names of their country, and thereby of exciting a steady patriotism, a love of just liberty, and a respect for all those fundamental institutions of social life, which bind men together.[21]

William Hazlitt published the ground-breaking work *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* in the year 1817. Hazlitt was instrumental in focusing attention on actual live performances and how this might contribute to an understanding of the plays. Hazlitt took a passionate interest in the history plays and also evidenced an interest in the minor characters, often in opposition to the rich and powerful ones reflecting, of course, his Romantic era political sympathies. Hazlitt's Shakespeare criticism was also an inspiration for the second generation Romantic poet John Keats whose concept of "negative capability" in relation to Shakespeare has also been of use for my own approach.

The German critic August von Schlegel established the influential concept of Shakespeare's works having an "organic unity"[22]; in other words an all encompassing meta-structure. He applied this concept to the history plays in particular, arguing that "the poet evidently intended them to form one great whole".[23] I will attempt to demonstrate something similar in my reading of the plays.

---

[20] By character criticism I am referrring to the approach of early 20th critics such as A. C. Bradley and later Derek Traversi, John Dover Wilson and E. M. W. Tillyard.
[21] S.T. Coleridge, "Marginalia and Notebooks" *Shakespeare:Richard II; A Casebook*, ed. Nicholas Brooke (London and Basingtoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973) 27, 28.
[22] Qtd. in Emma Smith, ed., *Shakespeare's Histories* (Malden: Blackwell, 2004) 19.
[23] Qtd. in Emma Smith, ed., *Shakespeare's Histories* (Malden: Blackwell, 2004) 19.

A contemporary of the romantic essayists Thomas Bowdler published censored versions of the plays even going so far as to expurgate the character of Doll Tearsheet from *Henry IV pt 2* due to supposed vulgarity and immortality. The editor thereby immortalized himself through introducing the verb 'bowdlerize' into the English language. This practice predominated, unfortunately, throughout the Victorian period both in published versions and in performances.

The Victorian age was known for a quirkiness and eccentricity in Shakespeare studies with a proliferation of studies speculating as to Shakespeare's true identity and culminating with Oscar Wilde's "The Portrait of Mr. W. H." and G. B. Shaw's self-aggrandizing arrogant attacks on "Bardolatry."[24]

The first major Shakespeare critic of the 20th century is A. C. Bradley and his seminal work *Shakespearean Tragedy* published in 1904. This was a compilation of a series of lectures carrying out close textual readings of the major tragedies. Bradley steered away from the ethereal Romantic approach and instead, employing a character study approach, looked for 'clues' in the texts in order to decipher Shakespeare's meaning. Bradley contributed to the Falstaff debate with an essay in his equally influential *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* published in 1909.

Bradley's contemporary Walter Raleigh published the classic work *Shakespeare* in 1907 which met with a great deal of attention at the time, but has failed to generate the same ongoing responses. T. S. Eliot produced occasional writings on Shakespeare criticising the Romantic view of 'the Bard' as an unlearned genius and instead focusing on the knowledge he undoubtedly did have.[25] Regarding the histories, he wrote, for example, that Shakespeare had obtained "more essential history from Plutarch than most men could from the whole British Museum."[26]

Caroline Spurgeon with the publication of her influential *Shakespeare's Imagery and What it Tells Us* in 1935 heralded a new lexical approach to

[24] Coined by G. B. Shaw in the preface to his *Three Plays for Puritans*.
[25] See T. S Eliot, "Shakespearean Criticism: From Dryden to Coleridge," *A Companion to Shakespeare Studies*, eds., Granville-Barker, H. and G.B. Harrison (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1960).

Shakespearean criticism. This exhaustive study catalogued the most common metaphors and similes in the plays and attempted to reach conclusions based upon them. Although, this does go too far at times, it has undoubtedly contributed to an understanding of the plays. Her approach, for example, inspired me to examine references to illnesses and disease in *Henry IV part 2*.

Of particular importance in the study of the history plays, and the *Henry IV* plays in particular was the publication of John Dover Wilson's *The Fortunes of Falstaff* in 1943. Wilson took umbrage with Bradley's interpretation of the plays, particularly his defence of Falstaff. Wilson argues forcibly that we are meant to recognise Falstaff's dark side as he becomes less charming and likeable over the course of the second part. By the end we are, in his view, prepared for the rejection seeing it as appropriate for Hal/Henry's move into the role of King.

His contemporary E. M. W. Tillyard is arguably the most influential critic to have dealt with the history plays. His ground-breaking work *The Elizabethan World Picture* published in 1943 was hugely influential and consequently widely derided. Of particular significance for the present thesis was the publication of *Shakespeare's History Plays* in 1944. Both works established a number of critical concepts, namely, the concepts of order vs. disorder, the Tudor myth and the hierarchy structure embodied in the plays. Tillyard's works are understandably influenced by the war-time spirit of patriotism and nationalism.

I would like to focus on Tillyard's theses in more detail as practically all consequent criticism of the history plays stands on his shoulders, be it acclamatory or derisive.

The Elizabethan World Picture begins with a discussion of the key concepts of 'order'.[27] Tillyard makes use of a long speech by Ulysses in Shakespeare's play set in ancient Troy *Troilus and Cressida* in order to bolster his argument*:*

> The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre,
> Observe degree, priority, and place,
> Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,

[26] T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed., M. H. Abrams, et. al. (New York. W. W. Norton and Company, 1974) 2201.

Office, and custom, in all line of order;
And therefore is the glorious planet Sol
In noble eminence enthron'd and spher'd
Amidst the other, whose med'cinable eye
Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil,
And posts, like the commandment of a king,
Sans check, to good and bad. But when the planets
In evil mixture to disorder wander,
What plagues and what portents, what mutiny,
What raging of the sea, shaking of earth,
Commotion in the winds! Frights, changes, horrors,
Divert and crack, rend and deracinate,
The unity and married calm of states
Quite from their fixture! O, when degree is shak'd,
Which is the ladder of all high designs,
The enterprise is sick! How could communities,
Degrees in schools, and brotherhoods in cities,
Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,
The primogenity and due of birth,
Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,
But by degree, stand in authentic place?
Take but degree away, untune that string,
And hark what discord follows! Each thing melts
In mere oppugnancy: the bounded waters
Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores,
And make a sop of all this solid globe;
Strength should be lord of imbecility,
And the rude son should strike his father dead;
...
This chaos, when degree is suffocate,

[27] See E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (New York: Macmillan, 1944) 17-25.

Follows the choking. (1.3:85-115,125-126)

Thus this veneration for order and hierarchy, from the heavens to earthly kingdoms to small communities or even the family, underpins the world view of not only Elizabethan society in general, but the workings of Shakespeare's plays. The book develops these ideas further with the concept of the chain of being, this consisting of a hierarchy reflected all around us which depends upon a respect for degree: in the heavenly kingdom with God at the top and various kinds of angels below in descending values; in the earthly kingdoms with the monarch at the top down to the nobility and finally ending with the peasantry; in the animal kingdom with the lion at the top; the bird world with the eagle at the top; the plant world with the rose at the height.[28] Tillyard argues convincingly how these parallels or correspondences between the various worlds are employed metaphorically.[29] The final conversation between the freshly deposed Richard II and his wife makes mention of both the rose and the lion as metaphors for the royal person. Upon first catching glimpse of the king she laments, "But soft, but see – or rather do not see--/ My fair rose wither" (5.1:7-8). Although Richard is resigned to his fate, the Queen tries to appeal to his royal pride:

What, is my Richard both in shape and mind
Transformed and weakened? Hath Bolingbroke
Deposed thine intellect? Hath he been in thy heart?
The lion dying thrusteth forth his paw
And wounds the earth, if nothing else, with rage
To be o'erpowered; and wilt thou, pupil-like,
Take the correction, mildly kiss the rod,
And fawn on rage with base humility,
Which art a lion and the king of beasts? (5.1:26-34)

[28] See E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (New York: Macmillan, 1944) 37,38.
[29] See E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (New York: Macmillan, 1944) 39.

Her efforts are to no avail in the end as Richard meekly admits defeat, “A king of beasts indeed! If aught but beasts,/ I had been still a happy king of men” (5.1:35-36).

Finally, Tillyard discusses various correspondences which the Elizabethans would have recognised readily, the most interesting of these being the correspondence between the Macrocosm and the Body Politic.[30] This means as Tillyard writes, “the correspondence between disorder in the heavens and civil discord in the state.”[31] This is richly dramatised in Shakespeare’s plays, the most renowned being the horses devouring one another prior to Duncan’s murder in Macbeth or the storm on the heath when King Lear has been rejected by his daughters.

Shakespeare's History Plays begins with a chapter on the cosmic background which, more or less, summarises the ideas of *The Elizabethan World Picture.* This is followed by a chapter on the historical background, namely the sources for the plays, which I am greatly indebted to. Of particular significance is the discussion concerning the 'Tudor myth”. This is worthy of a lengthy citation:

> Not too happy about his title to the crown, Henry VII fostered two historical notions that became great national themes. The first was that the union of the two houses of York and Lancaster through his marriage with the York heiress was the providential and happy ending of an organic piece of history. The second was that through his Welsh ancestry he had a claim to the British throne unconnected either with his Lancastrian descent or his Yorkist marriage. Not only did he claim through his ancestor Owen Tudor, husband of Henry V's widow, direct descent from Cadwallader, last of the British kings, but he encouraged the old Welsh superstition that Arthur was not dead but would return again, with the suggestion that he and his heirs were Arthur incarnate.[32]

[30] See E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (New York: Macmillan, 1944) 96-99.
[31] E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (New York: Macmillan, 1944) 98.
[32] E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare’s History Plays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1944) 29-30.

This myth accordingly formed the chronicles used as sources, primarily Hall and Holinshed, and subsequently helped shape the writing of Shakespeare's history plays. In his view the usurpation of the throne by Bolingbroke, later Henry IV, throws everything off kilter, Richard II being the last king directly descended from William the Conqueror. Richard III is depicted as the ultimate tyrant in order to consequently justify the actions of Henry VII at the Battle of Bosworth, supposedly restoring the throne to the rightful hands.

Tillyard consequently analyses the literary background to the plays and finally moves to an analysis of the individual plays, differing from my own approach in that he includes Macbeth in a separate chapter and does not involve himself with *Henry VIII* or *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. He primarily focuses on the second Tetraology, in particular the *Henry IV* plays and *Henry V*.

Almost every critic interested in the history plays uses Tillyard as a starting point and I will be no exception.

Eric Partridge's *Shakespeare's Bawdy* published in 1947 takes a lexicological approach analysing Elizabethan slang and usage in the plays, of primarily a sexual character. Much of this language no longer makes sense to native speakers of English. He draws attention to Shakespeare's propensity for puns, the title of the book itself being one of them, and quibbles. This approach has been particularly useful in my own readings of the plays as puns are often employed by the minor characters in the play in order to mock the solemnity of the high and mighty.

I am greatly indebted to the approaches of what could be called Festive criticism drawing from the ideas of C. L. Barber, Northrop Frye and Mikhail Bakhtin. All three of them have developed approaches to literature, and Shakespeare in particular, employing the influential notions of the lord of misrule, order vs. disorder, topsy-turvydom, the green world and carnival. I find these approaches relevant, not only to the histories, but to Shakespeare's plays in general, particularly the comedies.

C. L. Barber's groundbreaking work *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* was published in 1959 with a primary focus, as the title suggests, on the genre of the comedy. Barber argues for the relevance of holidays, or days of misrule, to

reaching an understanding of the comedy. He also analyses the importance of the clown or fool in these proceedings.

> In the theatrical institution of clowning, the clown or Vice, when Shakespeare started to write, was a recognized anarchist who made aberration obvious by carrying release to absurd extremes. The cult of fools and folly, half social and half literary, embodied a similar polarization of experience. In social life, folly was customarily cultivated on traditional holidays such as Shrove Tuesday, Hocktide, May Day, Whitsuntide, Midsummer Eve, Harvest Home and the twelve days of Christmas ending with Twelfth Night.[33]

This theory is used to explain why the comedies are often connected with certain days of the year, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Twelfth Night*, for example. Barber argues that these topsy-turvy days, days of disorder, temporarily ruled over by a clown or lord of misrule, allowed society to let off steam only to be reincorporated into the social order after the day had passed. The comedies thus evince a movement from order to disorder and back to order once again crowned by three marriages,[34] this perhaps being a symbol of the perfect order of the trinity.

Barber additionally makes mention of parallelism in the texts in connection with the clown figure.

> The tradition of clowning has been from long before Shakespeare integrally related to the use of double plots...It was of course a practice… for the clowns to present a burlesque version of actions performed seriously by their betters. At the simplest levels the clowns were foils...[35]

---

[33] C. L. Barber, "From Ritual to Comedy: An Examination of Henry IV," *Shakespeare Modern Essays in Criticism*, Leonard F. Dean (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) 146.
[34] This is the case in the majority of the major comedies, *Twelfth Night*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Midsummer Night's Dream, Taming of the Shrew*; *As You Like It* actually has four.
[35] C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and Its Relation to Social Custom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959) 18.

This concept of a foil, heavily made use of by Shakespeare himself[36], is akin to my own approach with an emphasis on the existence of mirroring or parallelism.

Barber does not limit himself, however, to the Comedies, but also applies his approach to the Histories.

> Shakespeare used this movement from release to clarification with masterful control in clown episodes as early as *Henry VI, Part II*. The scenes of the Jack Cade rebellion in that history are an astonishingly consistent expression of anarchy by clowning: the popular rising is presented throughout as a Saturnalia, ignorantly undertaken in earnest.[37]

Barber has been criticised by later critics[38] for not going far enough, in other words, not celebrating disorder as an end in itself.

> My own view... is that the dynamic relation of comedy and serious action is saturnalian rather than satiric, that the misrule works, through the whole dramatic rhythm, to consolidate rule.[39]

He in contrast argues that the misrule is a temporary aberration, which though it serves a social purpose, must be eventually subdued.

The enormously influential Canadian critic Northrop Frye can by no means be simplistically categorised as a festive critic, however, I would like to focus on his ideas which are specifically relevant to my reading. In *Anatomy of Criticism* he develops the idea of a 'green world', a pastoral landscape, and the movement from order to disorder to order once again.[40] This is connected with the changes in the seasons and, as was the case with Barber, primarily applied to Shakespeare's

---

[36] Shakespeare thinks of a foil as a mirror and makes use of it most famously in *Richard II* discussed below.
[37] C. L. Barber, "From Ritual to Comedy: An Examination of Henry IV," *Shakespeare Modern Essays in Criticism*, Leonard F. Dean (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) 148.
[38] Alan Sinfield and Jonathan Dollimore in *Faultlines* for example in their discussion of *Henry V*.
[39] C. L. Barber, "From Ritual to Comedy: An Examination of Henry IV," *Shakespeare Modern Essays in Criticism*, Leonard F. Dean (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) 150.

Comedies. “The green world charges the comedies with a symbolism in which the comic resolution contains a suggestion of the old ritual pattern of the victory of summer over winter”[41] His analysis continues with a reference to the order disorder dichotomy.

> Shakespeare's type of romantic comedy... has affinities with the medieval tradition of the seasonal ritual-play. We may call it the drama of the green world, its plot being assimilated to the ritual theme of the triumph of life and love over the waste land...Thus the action of the comedy begins in a world represented as a normal world, moves into the green world, goes into a metamorphosis there in which the comic resolution is achieved, and returns to the normal world.[42]

The normal world, however, is often perceived in a fresh light due to the experiences obtained in the green world.

He also applies his theories to the histories, referring to Falstaff as “a mock king, a lord of misrule, and his tavern is a Saturnalia...”[43] Like Barber he does not view this misrule as a desirable state of being, but instead “a temporary reversal of normal standards, comic 'relief' as it is called, which subsides and allows the history to continue.”[44]

The Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin has taken things further exploring its subversive possibilities. Although primarily focused on the French writer in his most influential work *Rabelais and His World*, Bakhtin does apply his methods to Shakespeare.

> The analysis we have applied to Rabelais would also help us to discover the essential carnival element in the organization of

---

[40] Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism, Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957) 182-184.
[41] Northrop Frye, “The Argument of Comedy,” *Shakespeare Modern Essays in Criticism*, Leonard F. Dean (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) 86.
[42] Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism, Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957) 182.
[43] Northrop Frye, “The Argument of Comedy,” *Shakespeare Modern Essays in Criticism*, Leonard F. Dean (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) 87.

> Shakespeare's drama. This does not merely concern the secondary, clownish motives of his plays. The logic of crownings and uncrownings, in direct or in indirect form, organizes the serious elements also. And first of all this 'belief in the possibility of a complete exit from the present order of this life' determines Shakespeare's fearless, sober (yet not cynical) realism and absence of dogmatism. This pathos of radical changes and renewals is the essence of Shakespeare's world consciousness. It made him see the great epoch-making changes taking place around him and yet recognize their limitations.[45]

The Polish critic Jan Kott revolutionized theatre production, instigating attempts at up-dating Shakespeare, employing contemporary costumes and settings and exploring previously regarded taboo topics, with the publication of *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* in 1964. His ideas had a major influence on avant-garde production of Shakespeare's plays in the 1960s by Peter Brook in particular. Kott also saw parallels between the dynamics of Shakespeare's plays and the current political reality. "There are no bad kings, or good kings; kings are only kings. Or let us put it in modern terms: there is only the king's situation and the system."[46] His readings are extremely dark and pessimistic if not nihilistic.

> The implacable roller of history crushes everybody and everything. Man is determined by his situation, by the step of the grand staircase on which he happens to find himself.[47]

Stuart Hampton Reeves discusses the impact of Kott on Shakespeare performance and interpretation.

---

[44] Northrop Frye, "The Argument of Comedy," *Shakespeare Modern Essays in Criticism*, Leonard F. Dean (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) 88.
[45] Qtd. in Ronald Knowles, ed., *Shakespeare and Carnival After Bakhtin* (London: Macmillan, 1998) 7.
[46] Jan Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (London: Methuen, 1967) 32.
[47] Jan Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (London: Methuen, 1967) 14, 39.

> Kott interpreted the plays as studies in power politics, in which 'history' emerges as a dark, oppressive, intractable, and inhuman force. Productions in the 1960s developed Kott's thesis into an anti-establishment critique, as dramatic meditations on the nature of history became, by deduction, meditations on the relationship between rulers and ruled.[48]

Kott would consequently find the 'orderly' interpretations of the politics of Tillyard naïve and insufficient and I would share his opinion to a certain extent.

Leslie Fiedler's influential *The Stranger in Shakespeare* published in 1972 was also radical for its day with its exploration of controversial subjects focused on four characters: Joan in *Henry VI pt. 1*, Shylock in *Merchant of Venice*, Othello and Caliban in *The Tempest*. His analysis thus revolved around issues of sexism, racism towards both Jews and Blacks, or North Africans to be precise, and colonialism. The first chapter focuses on *Henry VI pt. 1* with a discussion of hitherto taboo subjects of rape and female sexuality. Fiedler anticipates and influences later trends in the approaches of Cultural Materialism, New Historicism, Feminism and Post-Colonialism.

New Historicism has an interest in the wider picture. Stephen Greenblatt is the main protagonist of the recent New Historicist school of thought which has a penchant for selecting an obscure historical text from Shakespeare's period in order to draw ideological parallels. New Historicism attempts to place the plays within the wider historical picture. Greenblatt's influential essay, "Invisible Bullets", draws a parallel between the play *Henry V* and the subversion of Native American culture and their consequent conversion to Christianity by European colonists. His argument runs as follows: "Shakespeare's plays are centrally and repeatedly concerned with the production and containment of subversion and disorder."[49]

---

[48] Stuart Hampton Reeves, "Theatrical Afterlives," *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*, ed. Michael Hattaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 235.
[49] Stephen Greenblatt, "Invisible Bullets," *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, eds. *Jonathan* Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985) 31.

While New Historicism is primarily a North American phenomenon, Cultural Materialism, although sharing many similar concerns, mainly finds its practitioners in the U.K. The term itself comes from the influential cultural studies critic Raymond Williams in his *Marxism and Literature* published in 1977. The previously mentioned critics Sinfield and Dollimore are the most prominent advocates of this approach. They define their approach as follows in their seminal work *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading*: "Cultural materialism seeks to discern the scope for dissident politics of class, race, gender, and sexual orientation, both within texts and in their roles in cultures."[50] This is obviously a far cry from the conservative Elizabethan order of Tillyard.

They are not satisfied, however, with those who advocate a knee-jerk reaction to Tillyard's notions of 'order' only to find themselves trapped in a similar closed system.

> We shall argue initially that even criticism that has sought to oppose the idea that Shakespeare believed in and expresses a social hierarchy whose rightness is guaranteed by its reflection of a divine hierarchy is trapped nevertheless in a problematic of order, one which stems from a long tradition of idealist philosophy.[51]

They are implicating here, in my opinion, critics of the festive school, amongst others. Their approach does, however, share many of the concerns of additional recent schools of criticism with an interest in Shakespeare including Marxism, Feminism, Post-Colonialism and Queer.

> One concern of a materialist criticism is with the history of such resistance, with the attempt to recover the voices and cultures of the repressed and marginalized in history and writing.[52]

---

[50] Alan Sinfield,*Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) 10.
[51] Sinfield. *Faultlines* 109.
[52] Alan Sinfield and Jonathan Dollimore, "History and Ideology: The Instance of Henry V," *Alternative Shakespeares*, ed. John Drakakis (London: Methuen, 1985) 214.

Although I do not share their ideological outlook, I nevertheless value their emphasis on "marginalized voices", many of which coincide with my own interests in the present work.

One of these areas of shared affinity is the role of female characters in Shakespeare's plays. Initial feminist criticism of the 20th century tended to focus on the comedies, in particular on those involving cross-dressing which provided ample material for discussion of gender issues. The history plays, which contain, not necessarily the fewest female characters, but the fewest lines spoken by females, were initially ignored.

More recent criticism, however, has found in them fruitful material for analysis. *Engendering A Nation* by Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Racken provides a feminist perspective on the history plays.

> What is most important about these plays from a feminist standpoint, however, is not primarily the images of women they construct (which are relatively few and often sketchy), but rather the impact the plays have had on the ways we imagine gender and sexual difference, the institution of marriage, and the gulf between "public" and "private" life.[53]

They are particularly interested in how strong female characters subvert the traditional masculine hierarchy of order. They provide examples from the early history plays: "In the first tetralogy and King John, characters like Joan and Margaret and Lady Faulconbridge register masculine anxiety about female sexual independence."[54]

Additionally, they demonstrate how these strong, 'masculine' females are controlled through demonic labelling serving to justify their suppression. Here they are once again referring to three strong women from the Henry VI plays:

> Their power to undermine patriarchal authority (here meaning the authority of the father) is indirectly registered in the degree of

[53] Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Racken, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories (*New York: Routledge, 1997) 20, 21.

> demonization attending their representation. Joan is accused of being a witch; Eleanor Cobham of consorting with conjurors; and Margaret of being a cursing shrew.[55]

In the interest of space, I will not touch on the contributions of other critical approaches such as Textual criticism, Post-Colonial, Structuralism, Post-structuralist, Performance oriented, Psychoanalytic criticism, Transversal, etc.

Cedric Watts succinctly summarises the plethora of possible approaches:

> It begins to look as though Shakespeare can't lose. Whereas conservative critics may praise him for the messages of patriotism, piety, unity, harmony and reconciliation which he proclaims to them, and middle-of-the-road critics may applaud his 'infinite variety', complexity and ambiguity, left-wing critics may commend him for the messages about ideological obfuscation which he smuggles.[56]

I would like to make use of a number of critical approaches in my own analysis. I am indebted to the character criticism approach of critics such as Bradley and Wilson. I will depend on Tillyard's foundation as many have done so before. I will thus be speaking of the Elizabethan order although aware that his analysis has certain shortcomings. I would also like to employ the readings of Barber, Frye and Bakhtin, festive criticism, in order to provide an analysis of 'disorder' and 'misrule'. Spurgeon and Partridge's linguistic approaches will also be of use in order to demonstrate how the language provides keys to opening up new interpretations. Fiedler's interest in the stranger, the cultural materialist emphasis on 'marginalized voices' and the feminist analysis of 'silenced' women will serve to throw light on how minor characters give alternate readings of the plays. Finally, Goddard and Price with their emphasis on episode scenes will allow me to read between the orderly lines. Finally, on a more practical level I am indebted to the various editors of the histories, particularly the discussions of the sources in John Dover Wilson's Cambridge editions. Stuart Gillespie's *A Dictionary of*

---

[54] Howard and Racken, *Engendering a Nation* 26.
[55] Howard and Racken, 29.

Shakespeare's Sources has also been of great help in this area. I have also benefited from the discussion of Shakespeare's contemporaries by Richard Helgerson.

[56] Qtd. in Christopher Ricks, *English Drama to 1710* (London: Penguin Books, 1988) 285.

Subversive Techniques, Sweet, sweet, sweet poison for the age's tooth (King John 1.1:213)

The 'subversive' techniques will be examined in more detail providing examples of their employment outside of the history plays. My intention is to establish this as a widespread strategy throughout the Shakespearean oeuvre.

The lord of misrule is epitomised by Falstaff, of course, along with Sir Toby in *Twelfth Night* in his bantering argument with the kill-joy Malvolio, one of the classic religious hypocrite types: "Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale" (2.3:110-111). In other words, why spoil the pleasure of others just because you experience difficulty enjoying yourself. The inebriated Christopher Sly from the Induction to *The Taming of the Shrew* provides alternative readings of this seeming misogynist, slap-stick comedy of wife-beating. This concept of the Lord of Misrule is borrowed from Bakhtin, Frye and Barber. The last of these discusses the type as follows:

> So a Lord of Misrule figure, brought up, so to speak, from the country to the city, or from the traditional past into the changing present, could become on the Bankside the mouthpiece not merely for the dependent holiday scepticism which is endemic in a traditional society, but also for a dangerous self-sufficient everyday scepticism.[57]

Villains are obviously often major characters in Shakespeare's plays. Edgar, Iago, Don John from *King Lear, Othello* and *Much Ado About Nothing* respectively, provide a fierce Machiavellian perspective in contrast to the main-stream moral picture. These villains are particularly fond of employing the aside technique or even the soliloquy where they gleefully share their evil plotting with the audience. David Punter's entry in *Fowler's Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms* elaborates as follows:

[57] C. L. Barber, "From Ritual to Comedy: An Examination of Henry IV," *Shakespeare Modern Essays in Criticism*, Leonard F. Dean (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) 158.

> Clowns and villains are inclined to this mode of address: the clowns because they stand on the periphery of the plot and so invite the audience to join them in ridiculing situations in which they are not directly involved, and the villains (like Shakespeare's Richard III or Iago) because their awareness of the audience's presence adds to their stature as clever rouges in charge of events.[58]

This strategy was taken over from the mystery play and has continued up until the present day in the traditional English pantomime. It was also famously employed by Christopher Marlowe with the character of Barabas in *The Jew of Malta*. The audience experiences a certain pleasure in sharing the villainous scheming with the plotter. Richard III in the play of the same name makes use of a range of these features, thereby, charming the audience while loathing him at the same time.

The saint category has been created specifically for the person of Henry VI. His native belief in the good, and unwillingness to compromise and get his hands dirty, serves to bring about his own downfall. Perhaps the closest in typology to Henry would be Cordelia in *King Lear* whose purity and goodness contribute to her demise.

The history plays contain a number of particularly strong female characters who threaten the masculine position of authority and call into question gender norms. They are often referred to as 'Amazons', this being a stock derogatory label for a female who oversteps the proper bounds of her gender. The comedies are particularly known for their cross-dressed heroines who adopt a male persona in order to survive in the male, patriarchal society. These characters: Rosalind, Viola, Portia are arguably the most interesting protagonists of their respective plays.

As concerns the minor characters, I will begin with mockers, these being individuals who comment on the words or behaviour of another character in an ironic, jibing fashion often in the form of an aside or soliloquy. This serves to reveal the main-stream discourse in a different light, providing a farcical if not

[58] Roger Fowler, ed., *A Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms* (London: Routledge, 1987) 227.

satirical perspective. Edmund in *King Lear*, although not exactly a minor character, embodies this type when after tricking his father into suspecting his brother Edgar of treachery he is left on stage alone. His father has just attributed this behaviour to the concept discussed by Tillyard of the relationship between the macrocosm and the body politic. Edmund comments as follows:

> This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when, we are sick in fortune, often the surfeit of our own behaviour, we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars; as if we were villains by necessity... Fut! I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing. (1.2:109-113,120-122)

Punsters are characters continually playing on words often with sexual connotations. A classic example would be Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* whereby his continual mocking of Romeo's love throes deflates the seriousness of the elevated passions. One recalls the interchange in 1.4 directly prior to the Capulet masked ball where Romeo spies Juliet for the first time. At this point Romeo is still convinced he will never love again having been rejected by Rosaline. Romeo and Mercutio are bantering back and forth in an interchange packed with puns and quibbles.

Romeo responds to Mercutio's use of the phrase tender thing, "Is love a tender thing? It is too rough/ Too rude, too boist'rous, and it pricks like thorn" (1.4:25-26). Romeo's Petrarchian clichés are countered by Mercutio's earthy mocking tone, "If love be rough with you, be rough with love./ Prick love for pricking and you beat love down" (1.4:27-28). In other words, when the love pangs come on, find sex as fast as possible or merely masturbate and thus relieve the pressure. Mercutio's crudeness in contrast to Romeo's sensitivity serves to enrich the overall atmosphere of the play serving as a foil or mirror where Romeo must prove the worthiness of his love.

In contrast Shakespeare is fond of characters who commit verbal malapropisms.[59] These persons tend to garble their words and say something unintentionally grotesque or bawdy, often in the form of what we would today call a Freudian slip. This is employed by Shakespeare most memorably with Mistress Quickly in the *Henry IV* plays, for a period of time coining the word 'quicklyism', and the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*. These individuals mix up their words, apparently unintentionally, but with at times seemingly subversive results cutting the ice of the main high-brow proceedings.

Both villains and lords of misrule are also fond of playing the religious hypocrite role, the more sinned against than sinning type. These types are particularly enamoured with quoting scripture for their own twisted purposes, with both Falstaff and Richard III being prime examples.

Silent or silenced women refers to those female characters who often merely appear on stage and look pretty. These stifled voices, however, do provide fruitful alternative readings, particularly of interest for feminist critics. An example, from outside the histories would be Hippolyta in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, originally an Amazon at war with Theseus and Athens, only to be defeated and made his obedient wife in the play. The most horrific example of the silenced voice of a woman occurs in *Titus Andronicus* when Lavinia is not only raped by the sons of Tamora, but actually has her tongue cut out to prevent her from revealing the perpetrators.

Shakespeare is fond of foreign characters whose idiosyncratic pronunciation of English provides not only comic relief but also possible alternative perspectives. This is only represented in two plays, most succinctly in *Henry V* with the group of four soldiers representing the four parts of the United Kingdom and again in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* with the Welsh parson, Hugh Evans and his French adversary Caius.

Children occasionally appear in the plays, often exhibiting wisdom beyond their years. The boy in *Henry IV part 2* and *Henry V* fits this description as does

[59] The word malapropism originated in Richard Brinsley Sheridan's play *The Rivals* from 1775 specifically from the character of Mrs. Malaprop who continually garbled her words with comic results. The word malapropism consequently found its way into the English language.

Macduff's son who is brutally murdered by Macbeth. The discussion he holds with his mother, Lady Macduff, regarding the disappearance of his father who has been labelled a traitor is full of weighty insight.

> Macduff's Son: Was my father a traitor, mother?
> Lady Macduff: Ay, that he was.
> Macduff's Son: What is a traitor?
> Lady Macduff: Why, one that swears and lies.
> Macduff's Son: And be all traitors that do so?
> Lady Macduff: Everyone that does so is a traitor, and must be hanged.
> Macduff's Son: And must they all be hanged that swear and lie?
> Lady Macduff: Every one.
> Macduff's Son: Who must hang them?
> Lady Macduff: Why the honest men.
> Macduff's Son: Then the liars and swearers are fools, for there are liars and swearers enough to beat the honest men and hang up them.
> (4.2:44-58)

These children utter barbed comments which belie the appearance of their innocent faces. They also often put the adults in the play to shame exhibiting much more wisdom than their supposed elders.

The classic elderly bore character regaling his audience with his past exploits is Capulet in *Romeo and Juliet* constantly repeating himself and telling anyone within reach of the wild days of his youth. Justice Shallow, “Jesu, Jesu, the mad days that I have spent!” (3.2:29-30) in *Henry IV pt. 2* is a man of the same mould. The cliché mill of the busy body Polonius and his tiresome, “Neither a borrower nor a lender be,” (Hamlet, 1.3:75) would also be apt here.

Servants, clerks and gardeners are used to cast a different light on the behaviour of the main protagonists.[60] They often 'ape' the actions of the higher class characters, thereby revealing the latter for what they actually are. The most

[60] For a lengthier discussion of the role of servants in Shakespeare's plays see Linda Anderson *A Place in the Story: Servants and Service in Shakespeare's Plays* (Newark: University of Delaware Press).

famous of these is the opening of *Romeo and Juliet* where the servants from the respective camps begin quarrelling over questions which actually have nothing to do with them personally: “My naked weapon is out. Quarrel I will back thee” (1.1:30). Their language is loaded with double entendres of a violent sexual nature serving to reflect the brutal atmosphere of Verona when the story begins. The tenderness of the burgeoning love between Romeo and Juliet is consequently intensified by this foil.

Commoners, often unnamed, at times provide a commentary on the events of the plays. They serve to reveal public opinion regarding the fluctuations within the higher political circles. They at times have a choral function filling in background details in the plot. M. M. Mahood refers to this as a “choric part” in her insightful book *Playing Bit Parts in Shakespeare*.[61]

Pistol from *Henry IV pt 2*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry V* is a category in and of himself, namely the swaggerer and the thespian type continually ranting and raving in theatrical fashion. Here Shakespeare, as Stephen Greenblatt argues in *Will of the World,* seems to be enjoying ridiculing a number of his less successful predecessors and colleagues in the London theatre world.[62] Both of these characters also fit the label of the comic old soldier, 'miles gloriosus', dating back to Classical Roman comedy.[63]

Asides are made use of throughout the Shakespearian canon as are soliloquies. Parallelism amongst scenes can be seen most prominently in *King Lear* when the Gloucester sub-plot mirrors the primary travails of the King. The so-called episode scene or, mere episode if it does not take up the entire scene, is also a common occurrence, one of the most renowned being the amusing gate-keeper scene in Macbeth placed between the dramatically tense scenes of the murder of Duncan and the discovery of his body.

Margot Heinemann describes these techniques as follows:

---

[61] M. M. Mahood, *Playing Bit Parts in Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 1998) 72.
[62] Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World (*New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2004) 216.
[63] For an insightful discussion of this, see John Dover Wilson, *The Fortunes of Falstaff* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1953).82-88.

> More often than not, in the popular theatres, the splendour is distanced, shown as threatened, hypocritical or hollow. Unlike coronations and royal weddings presented live on TV, these shows usually have a built-in alienating commentary. The stately rhetoric of court scenes (say the openings of King John (1596), Richard II, King Lear (1605), even The Maid's Tragedy (1610)) is continually undercut by cynical colloquial asides and soliloquies or by contrasting naturalistic scenes, revealing the grim realities of the power-game and the competition in flattery.[64]

The last mentioned play is, of course, not by Shakespeare, but by Beaumont and Fletcher.

Julius Caesar contains an example of this in 3.3 when the poet Cinna makes a brief appearance out of nowhere only to disappear once more. The scene is preceded of course by the famous speeches of first Brutus and then Antony culminating in a riot against the conspirators. It is immediately followed by 4.1 the meeting of the second triumvirate of Antony, Octavius and Lepidus where in true Stalinist fashion they cynically negotiate who is to be rubbed out. These two major scenes surround this seemingly insignificant episode scene.

Cinna the poet has left his house against his own judgement and comes across a mob of plebeians inspired to violence by Antony's high rhetoric. The scene is initially absurd, obviously commenting on the fickle crowd mentality of the Roman population.

> First Plebian: What is your name?
> Second Plebian: Whither are you going?
> Third Plebian: Where do you dwell?
> Fourth Plebian: Are you a married man or a bachelor?
> Second Plebian: Answer every man directly?
> First Plebian: Ay, and briefly.
> Fourth Plebian: Ay, and wisely.

[64] Margot Heinemann, "Political Drama," *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama*, eds. A.R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 178.

Third Plebian: Ay, and truly, you were best. (3.3:5-12)

Shakespeare masterfully captures the gang mentality wherein anything the poor victim says will be wrong.

> Cinna: What is my name? Whither am I going? Where do I dwell? Am I a married man or a bachelor? Then to answer every man directly and briefly, wisely and truly: wisely, I say, I am a bachelor. (3.3:13-16)

He cannot win of course.

> Second Plebian: That's as much to say they are fools that marry. You'll bear me a bang for that, I fear. Proceed directly. (3.3:17-18)

Cinna's luck turns for the worse, however, and instead of a mere blow, he is brutally murdered for sharing the same name as one of the conspirators.

> Third Plebian: Your name, sir truly.
> Cinna: Truly, my name is Cinna.
> First Plebian: Tear him to pieces! He's a conspirator.
> Cinna: I am Cinna the poet, I am Cinna the poet.
> Fourth Plebian: Tear him for his bad verses, tear him for his bad verses.
> Cinna: I am not Cinna the conspirator.
> Fourth Plebian: It is no matter, his name's Cinna. Pluck but His name out of his heart, and turn him going.
> Third Plebian: Tear him, tear him! (3.32:5-34)

The plebeians proceed to dismember him and move on to hunt down the actual conspirators. The absurd viciousness of the crowd throws light upon the cynical manoeuvrings of the previous scene where Brutus and Antony whip up support for their side. The crowd is seen as eminently pliable and brutal in the extreme, a theme shared throughout Shakespeare's plays, most classically in *Coriolanus*. In 4.1 the new triumvirate send their own relatives to their death as the three jostle for power. The overall effect of the episode scene is to emphasise

the viciousness of the population and the cynicism of the political leaders; with the victim being the poet, the artist.

I am not, of course, arguing that Shakespeare was isolated in his use of these subversive techniques. Certain parallels, whether they be in his sources, predecessors, contemporaries or successors, do undoubtedly exist.

Predecessors, Contemporaries and Successors

I will limit my discussion here to sources relevant to the history plays. There is no way to state with certainty what Shakespeare actually read and consulted. Having said that, scholars have reached some consensus as to the most likely candidates. I would like to go backwards starting with the most contemporary of the sources since the chroniclers tended to 'plagiarise' from one another extensively. Comparing Shakespeare's plays with the sources is often like detective work and has been carried out with great erudition by numerous scholars in various critical editions. I will consequently only summarise the main sources and attempt to formulate certain general conclusions as to how Shakespeare differed in terms of his employment of subversive techniques.

Samuel Daniel (1562-1619) was a contemporary of Shakespeare, fellow playwright and poet. His epic poem *A History of the Civil Wars* between the two Houses of York and Lancaster was published in 1595-1609. Only half of it had actually been written by the time Shakespeare could have possibly made use of it. For this reason scholars are divided as to who was influenced by who. Tillyard argues for Daniel's influence on the second tetralogy exclusively, specifically in terms of his selection of material for emphasis.

The primary source for the history plays was the second edition of Raphael Holinshed's (1528-1580) *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* which is actually a compilation of several authors, William Harrison, Richard Stanyhurst, Edmund Campion and Richard Hooker. The chronicle was published in two editions, 1577 and 1587, drawing extensively from Hall's *Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of York and Lancaster*. Holinshed is more readable than his predecessor and less preachy. This is the most complete version of English history available in a chronicle, stretching from all the way from Brutus, the legendary founder of Britain up to his own day. It is a huge volume consisting of 3,500,000 words, originally published in three volumes. Holinshed and his colleagues were writing in the spirit of the nationalism of the time and were undoubtedly influenced by the Tudor myth espoused by Tillyard. Stuart Gillespie concurs:

> The importance of Holinshed (and other chronicles) as a source of material for Elizabethan playwrights must be seen generally as a result of the nationalistic spirit promoted by Elizabeth in the country at large, which was at its height following the defeat of the Armada in 1588.[65]

Shakespeare drew from Holinshed for all of his history plays as well as for *Macbeth*, *King Lear* and *Cymbeline*. Shakespeare used plot details, character descriptions and even paraphrased entire speeches. He relied more on Holinshed in the earlier histories (Henry VI plays) and less on the later plays (Henry IV) and only sketch-like for the great tragedies, having logically developed more confidence and experience.

Richard Grafton (1512-1572), an early publisher of the Bible in English, was also an editor of Hall's chronicle only to later publish his own version with the lengthy title *A Chronicle at Large and Meere History of the Affayres of England and Kinges of the Same, deduced from the Creation of the Worlde, unto the First Habitation of this Island: and so by Continuance unto the First Tere of the Reigne of our Most Deere and Sovereigne Lady Queene Elizabeth* in 1568-1569. Opinion is fairly unanimous as to its minimal influence on Shakespeare it being to a great extent rehashing of Hall once again in the sections covering the relevant history.

*The Mirror for Magistrates w*as a collection of moralizing verse biographies of acclaimed historical persons, tracing their rise and fall, starting with the period around Richard II, published by William Baldwin in 1559 and later in an expanded version in 1563 with contributions from Baldwin himself, George Ferrers, Thomas Phaer, John Skeleton, Thomas Sackville and others, some of them anonymous.

This was followed by further editions with additional contributions. The contributors drew once again from Hall's chronicle. Many of the prominent characters in Shakespeare's histories are also examined in *The Mirror*. The work was extremely popular during Shakespeare's lifetime and would have been difficult to ignore.

---

[65] Stuart Gillespie, *Shakespeare's* Books*: A Dictionary of Shakespeare Sources* (London: The Athlone Press, 2001) 242.

John Foxe's (1516-1587) *Book of Martyrs* was published in an English edition in 1563 it having been originally written abroad during the Catholic reign of Queen Mary. This obviously heavily biased account of Protestant martyrs was extremely popular and influential. Argument has been made for its influence on the religious issues dealt with in *King John* and to a greater extent in *Henry VIII*. One of the martyrs is actually Sir John Oldcastle supposedly the inspiration for Falstaff. Jan Hus also has a chapter dedicated to him.

Edward Hall's (Halle) (1498?-1547) *Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of York and Lancaster,* published in 1548 was heavily indebted to, or at times even translated from, *Historia Anglica* written in Latin by the Italian historian Polydore Vergil and published in 1534. It was also influenced by Sir Thomas More's *History of Richard III* from 1543. It focuses on the period covered in Shakespeare's main history plays, from Henry IV to Henry VIII. Hall tended to strictly toe the Tudor party line bending the facts, or better said details, to fit the politically correct picture. Tillyard states this with this usual eloquence:

> Hall's chief importance is that he was the first English chronicle- writer to show in all its completeness that new moralising of history which came in with the waning of the Middle Ages, the weakening of the Church, and the rise of nationalism.[66]

Hall has a definite Protestant slant and undisguised veneration for Henry VIII, half of his book being dedicated to this monarch. The majority of critics are convinced that Hall served as a direct source for Shakespeare, it is certain, however, that he, at a minimum, influenced the histories through the filter of Holinshed.

Sir Thomas More's (1478-1535) *History of King Richard III* originally written in both Latin and English, but finally published completely in English in 1543 established the tradition of demonizing Richard in order to justify the Tudor claim and Henry VII's victory at Bosworth. This work consequently had a major

[66] E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1944) 42.

influence on the portrayal of Richard in both Hall and Holinshed.[67] More's interpretation thus directly or indirectly influenced Shakespeare. Stuart Gillespie is in agreement: "Centrally, Shakespeare presents a witty villain in ironic terms, as More had been the first within the tradition of historical writing on this figure to do.[68] In an interesting paradox scholars have argued for the participation of Shakespeare on the writing of the history play *Sir Thomas More*.

> Nicolo Machiavelli's (1469-1527) *The Prince* was not published officially in English during Shakespeare's lifetime but it would have been available in Italian editions or various manuscript translations[69]. There is no direct evidence that Shakespeare read the Italian writer, but he does refer to him several times in the plays, in *King Lear*, for example, and most famously for our purposes in *Henry VI part 3* when Richard Crookback claims he can "set the murderous Machieavel to school." (3.2:193) as do his contemporaries, Christopher Marlowe, for example. Machiavelli had thus become a synonym for an evil political tyrant regardless of his actual writings.

The French chronicler Jean Froissart (1338-1410) spent extensive time at the English court of Edward III in the 1360s and later made the acquaintance of Richard II. He wrote a chronicle of the 100 Years' War ending with the deposition and death of Richard. Froissart's Chroniques were published in English in 1523-1525. Shakespeare could have been partially influenced by Froissart for his construction of *Richard II*.

In summary, Shakespeare, although heavily indebted to the sources, particularly Holinshed, took a great deal of liberties with the material. He often altered dates and ages in order to suit his dramatic purposes having Joan of Arc present, for example, at the death of Talbot despite the fact she had been burned at the stake 22 years earlier. He also introduces Richard Crookback into the action as

[67] E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1944) 209.
[68] Stuart Gillespie, *Shakespeare's Books: A Dictionary of Shakespeare Sources* (London: The Athlone Press, 2001) 370.
[69] Stuart Gillespie, *Shakespeare's Books: A Dictionary of Shakespeare Sources* (London: The Athlone Press, 2001) 312.

early as *Henry VI part 2* despite that fact that he would have been a mere child; the same goes for King Henry himself in *part 1*. He left out or expanded segments when needed and emphasised certain characters at the expense of others. Shakespeare often gave increased space to female roles and to minor roles often involving commoners. He created episode scenes out of his own head such as the Horner-Peter conflict of master and servant in *Henry VI part 2*. He practically invented entire characters such as The Bastard in *King John* or formed their personalities in order to fit his dramatic vision, John of Gaunt, for example, in *Richard II* or even Joan in *Henry VI part one*. Shakespeare provides the characters with puns and word play, he provides them with character psychology.

In contrast to what I have just stated regarding Shakespeare's use of the sources, Richard Helgerson, based on an analysis of a wide range of Shakespeare's contemporaries, has surprisingly come to the conclusion that Shakespeare was not particularly interested in portraying commoners in his plays. He argues instead that "no other dramatist shares the singular intensity of Shakespeare's focus on the workings of power at the highest level of the monarchic state."[70] He instead states that "Whatever English history meant to Shakespeare, it did not mean a concern for the fortunes of the common people."[71] He consequently refers to Shakespeare's histories as "king-oriented" plays and to a number of his rivals' plays, or better said successors, as "subject-oriented" ones.[72] He posits a dividing point chronologically with most of the history plays up until 1592 more in the Shakespearian mode and from 1593 on the focus of interest being divided between the two leading theatre troupes of the day, Shakespeare's Lord Chamberlain's men (later the King's men) were thus focused on king-oriented plays and Philip Henslowe's companies being oriented on subject-oriented works. He goes on to persuasively argue for a more elitist position on the part of Shakespeare.

[70] Richard Helgerson, "Shakespeare and Contemporary Dramatists of History," *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works: The Histories*, eds. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2003) 31.
[71] Helgerson, 31.
[72] Helgerson, 44.

> The differences between Shakespeare and the other dramatists of history are, as I have said, systematic and repeated. Where Shakespeare focuses his dramatic attention on what might be called the problematics of early modern kingship, his contemporaries are more interested in the problematics of subjecthood.[73]

The subject-oriented plays would consequently include works such as *Sir John Oldcastle* written by Drayton, Anthony Munday, Richard Hathaway, and Robert Wilson in 1599 and defending the martyr from the perceived slanders of the anonymous play *Famous Victories of Henry V* (1586) and Shakespeare's Falstaff plays. *Sir Thomas More (1592-1595)* by Munday and others, with parts attributed to Shakespeare by certain scholars. *Edward IV parts 1 and 2* (1599) attributed to Thomas Heywood with a particularly positive portrayal of Edward's eventual wife Lady Jane Shore. *The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington and The Death of Robert Earl of Huntington* (1598) by Munday and possibly Henry Chettle which though it takes place during the reign of King John focuses on the person of Huntington, otherwise known as Robin Hood. George Peele's *Edward I* (1593) with its sympathetic treatment of the Welsh leader Llywelyn ap Gruffydd as a Robin Hood type figure as well would also lean more toward this category. This will have to suffice as the majority of these plays are fairly obscure. There is a clear pattern, however, indicating a movement away from an exclusive focus on the monarch to a wider social concern.

I would like to return at this point to the king-oriented plays written by Shakespeare's contemporaries up to 1592 as they evince the closest sympathies with his own plays. The anonymous play *Famous Victories of Henry V* (1586) is viewed by certain critics as the source for Shakespeare's later versions, while others believe that the work, along with Shakespeare's, made use of even earlier, now lost plays. The play covers in much less detail the material dealt with by Shakespeare in the second Henriad. Hal is portrayed in a much more negative light than in Shakespeare's version, although he does repent of his ways in the end and reject his followers.

[73] Helgerson, 44.

The Troublesome Reign of King John (1589) is an anonymous play covering much of the same ground as Shakespeare's King John but with a much stronger anti-Catholic emphasis including, for example, monks engaging in perverted sexual acts. *Troublesome* also presents the poisoning of John by the monk onstage, whereas Shakespeare merely alludes to it and shows John on his deathbed. The play also contains Philip the Bastard but robbed of much of his cheeky pluck and verve.

Although there is increasing support for attributing significant amounts of the text of *The Reign of King Edward III*, written between 1588 and 1595, to Shakespeare,[74] I have not included it in my main analysis. The play contains two main story lines. The first involves Edward's campaign against King David of Scotland where he falls in love with the Countess of Salisbury and even briefly contemplates killing his own wife in order to be freed to marry her. The second consists of an invasion of France accompanied by his son Edward the Black Prince where they emerge victorious. The play evidences a number of parallels with *Henry V* with a young prince defeating the arrogant French despite overwhelming odds. I personally find the play uninspiring with very little differentiation between the characters, the peasants seem to speak the same as the kings. As regards subversive techniques, soliloquies and asides are employed, but with limited ingenuity. There is some punning in the play, but mostly uninspired, "chaste and chased"[75], for example, or "quarter and quartering"[76] There are several short scenes with commoners which could be viewed as episodes, but which fail to contribute or mirror the main plot. There is an amusing scene when Lodowick Edward's servant, referred to as a poet, feigns stupidity when requested to write a poem to the Countess on the King's behalf. After the King describes the depths of his feeling, Lodowick cheekily asks, "Write I to a woman."[77] There are a number of mocking incidents, particularly of the Scots, which some critics

[74] His authorship is further argued due to the use of a quote from the sonnets within the play, specifically the line, "Lilies that fester, smell far worse than weeds". Sonnet 94.
[75] Anonymous, *Edward III*. 9 July 2010. http://www.gutenberg.org.16.
[76] Edward III 38, 3.2
[77] Edward III 15, 2.1

believe might have been the reason for its exclusion from the First Folio.[78] On an off note, Edward the Black Prince kills the King of Bohemia at the Battle of Cressey, historically John of Bohemia who was blind at the time.

The anonymous work *Thomas of Woodstock*, sometimes referred to as *Richard II part 1*, has been dated from 1591 to 1595. Although incomplete, in fragment form, the play deals with the events leading up to the state of affairs in the kingdom when Shakespeare's *Richard II* begins. Here once again, Richard is surrounded by his flatterers, Bushy, Bagot and Greene with the addition of another hanger-on, Tresilian, who is appointed Lord Chief Justice by Richard and who bears a certain likeness to Falstaff. Richard marries Anne of Bohemia, referred to as Anne a Beame in the text, who dies of disease at the end of the play. She is portrayed in a positive light interceding on behalf of the poor[79] and trying to reconcile Richard and his uncles. Mention is also made of her having popularised in England the side-saddle method of riding horses. Woodstock praises her, not only for her virtue, but also her horse-riding fashion:

> Our women, till your coming, fairest cousin
> Did use like men to straddle when they ride,
> But you have taught them now to sit aside.[80]

The King's relationship with his uncles (John Gaunt of Lancaster, Edmund York and Thomas Woodstock Gloucester) is the crux of the play. The last-mentioned, Woodstock, is the Lord Protector at the opening of the play and marked by a genuine modesty and piety with the best interests of the kingdom in mind. He bears a distinct resemblance to the character of his brother John of Gaunt in Shakespeare's Richard II as well as the person of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, the Lord Protector for Henry VI. Woodstock, in vivid contrast to the

---

[78] See Stuart Gillespie, *Shakespeare's* Books*: A Dictionary of Shakespeare Sources* (London: The Athlone Press, 2001) 242.

[79] As Helgerson points out in "Shakespeare and Contemporary Dramatists of History," *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works: The Histories*, eds. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2003) this is almost unheard of behaviour in Shakespeare's history plays where practically all of the nobility seems completely oblivious to the sufferings of the poor.

[80] Anonymous. *Thomas of Woodstock*. ed. A. P. Rossiter. 12 June 2011. <american-shakespeare.com/scripts/Richard2-Woodstock-ASR-Script.pdf> 8.

extravagant King, refers to himself as “Plain Thomas” wearing the most austere of dress even when mocked by his family members. Woodstock is finally murdered for his critical stance regarding the flatterers and their overtaxing of the country.

Certain elements are reminiscent of the subversive techniques analysed in Shakespeare's plays. Tresilan has a bumbling servant, Nimble, who carried out his dirty work and who would not be out of place in the Boar's tavern with Falstaff. This seeming fool captures the treacherous master Tresilan at the end of the play and turns him over to the surviving uncles, thus making his fortune.

Richard, though not as polished and witty as in Shakespeare's version, displays a similar sarcasm and flippancy. He makes use of asides to reveal his murderous intentions, “I'll wring them all for this, by England's crown”[81] and kindred mood swings, repenting of all his misdeeds when Anne passes away. There are even episode scenes involving tradesmen who are exploited by the new blank characters invented by Tresilan.

Apart from these two anonymous works, and several others, the majority of the plays akin to Shakespeare's history plays tend to deal as Helgerson has argued with a wider social strata, veering away from direct presentation of the royalty. The closest play stylistically to Shakespeare's is thus *King Edward II* by Christopher Marlowe.

Marlowe's *Edward II* has often been compared to *Richard II* as certain affinities are apparent. Both kings are misled by their favourites bringing about their downfall. Gaveston and King Edward are foppish and dandy-like, seemingly more concerned with fashion and theatrics then ruling the nation. Both kings are led astray by flatterers, the term employed in both plays. Both kings create civil tension through overspending on lavish parties and occasions. Here Young Mortimer outlines his grievances against King Edward:

> The idle triumphs, masques, lascivious shows,
> And prodigal gifts bestow'd on Gaveston,
> Have drawn thy treasury dry, and made thee weak;

[81] Anonymous. Thomas of *Woodstock*. ed. A. P. Rossiter. 12 June 2011. <american-shakespeare.com/scripts/Richard2-Woodstock-ASR-Script.pdf> 9.

The murmuring commons, overstretched, break.[82]

He continues to lambaste Edward bringing to mind the effete displays of Richard, Bushy, Bagot and Green.

When wert thou in the field with banner spread?
But once, and then thy soldiers march'd like players,
With garish robes, not armour; and thyself,
Bedaub'd with gold, rode laughing at the rest,
Nodding and shaking of thy spangled crest,
Where women's favours hung like labels down.[83]

York's wry comment on Richard II in the abdication scene comes to mind, "Alack, alack, for woe, / That any harm should stain so fair a show!" (3.3:69-70).

Edward II is also subject to mood swings, a manic-depressive so to speak, bearing a great deal of similarities with Richard II. When on the run at the monastery prior to his final capture, he has the set speech spoken by practically all of the kings in Shakespeare's oeuvre, wishing for the quiet contemplative life as opposed to his own. "Father, this life contemplative is heaven: O, that I might this life in quiet lead!".[84] One wonders how long he would actually last if given the opportunity to lead this life. Having said that, however, he surprisingly faces his cruel imprisonment with courage and grit, as does Richard II of course.

Marlowe also extensively employs the technique of the aside in order to provide the audience with access to the protagonist's thoughts. In the opening scene of the play, Gaveston eavesdrops on the proceedings of the King and his lords muttering various poisonous remarks to the audience concerning his numerous enemies. His petulance and spoiled child nature are again reminiscent of the classic type employed by Shakespeare. Thomas Cartelli comments as follows:

---

[82] Christopher Marlowe, *The Complete Plays* ed. J.D. Steane (London: Penguin Books, 1976) 470.
[83] Marlowe, *The Complete Plays* 471.
[84] Marlowe, *The Complete Plays* 504.

> In rendering the lords their due in a series of pointed asides, Gaveston deflates their moral self-righteousness and makes the patriotic positions they assume seem what Marlowe shows them to be in the course of the play, namely, defences of their own prerogatives.[85]

Younger Mortimer, who briefly seizes power only for the Wheel of Fortune[86] to turn, bears a resemblance to Richard III with his semblance of piety and concern for the young Edward III. In similar fashion as Richard III playing the pious saintly type in order to feign lack of interest in the throne, Mortimer in 5.4 plays up his devotion in order to garner political support.

> While at the council-table, grave enough,
> And not unlike a bashful puritan,
> First I complain of imbecility,
> Saying it is onus quam gravissimum;[87]

Marlowe's play bears the closest affinities to Shakespeare's histories, *Richard II*, in particular. The question as to who influenced who is an ongoing debate. John Dover Wilson discusses *the Henry VI* plays and how one can distinguish, amongst other things, Shakespeare's contribution to the genre from his collaborators, and one would assume, his successors as well.

> ...not a line, not a word, is wasted; and every line is full of meaning, even if the meaning be quibble or a conceit that seems a little trivial to the modern sense. I stress this wealth of matter in particular, since it is here that Shakespeare most markedly shows his superiority to his early contemporaries.[88]

---

[85] Thomas Cartelli, "Edward II," *The Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe* ed. Patrick Cheney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 161.
[86] The Wheel of Fortune or Rota Fortuna is a Medieval concept illustrating the random character of fate. Shakespeare also makes use of it several times in Henry V, for example, when Pistol tries to save his friend Bardolph.
[87] Marlowe, *The Complete Plays* 522.
[88] John Dover Wilson, Introduction, *The Third Part of King Henry VI* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952) x.

Shakespeare was certainly not creating his drama in a vacuum, on the contrary, he was very much steeped in the history chronicle tradition and well aware, being an active man of the theatre, of the work being carried out by his contemporaries. The majority of the surviving work, however, in the genre has limited merit. Shakespeare's plays are, in other words, more substantial, he loaded every rift with ore as Keats advised Shelley.[89]

Although I have found Helgerson's distinction between king-oriented plays and subject-oriented history plays helpful, I am not able to fully agree with his conclusions. Shakespeare's history plays contain a rich array of characters, apart from his afore-mentioned kings, with many of them, despite their limited stage time and lower social status, providing a subversive perspective worthy of study.

[89] John Keats, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. M. H. Abrams, et. al. (New York. W. W. Norton and Company, 1974) 717.

The Merry Wives of Windsor

This play has been included in the discussion as it not only deals with a number of characters already present in the history plays, *Henry IV part 1*, *Henry IV part 2* and *Henry V*, but it also displays a number of the subversive techniques which are the subject of this dissertation. The play is plentiful in the subversive devices ordinarily employed in order to call into question the primary 'readings' or dogma of Shakespeare's plays. The play, however, employs these tools openly, explicitly, indicating that the audience would have been sensitive to these clues or hints in the other plays as well. It seems as if Shakespeare were actually showing off his virtuoso skills here, as a wide range of the types of characters or techniques outlined above make an appearance. I would like to employ it as a case study in order to demonstrate how Shakespeare makes use of his subversive techniques.

The play revolves around Falstaff's comic attempts at seducing the two wives of Windsor Mistress Margaret Page and Mistress Alice Ford. The sub-plot involves the courtship of Anne Page, the daughter, by three suitors: Master Abraham Slender, Doctor Caius and Master Fenton. Falstaff fails miserably in his amorous attempts, being thrown into the Thames, beaten brutally while dressed as an old lady and finally pinched and burned wearing antlers in the park. The work ends in classic comedy fashion with the marriage between Ann Page and Master Fenton and the affirmation of the relationships between the Pages and Fords. As with many of the comedies, a scapegoat figure[90] appears, in this case Falstaff himself, and to a lesser extent Master Abraham Slender and Doctor Caius who are both tricked into running off with a young boy thinking mistakenly they have won Ann Page in marriage.

The play contains a lord of misrule, characters prone to malapropism, foreigners speaking English in a comic manner an elderly bore and the inimitable Pistol. The main protagonist of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is of course Falstaff, a lord of misrule who makes use of various strategies in order to survive and prosper: mocking, use of puns, playing up either his youth or old age when the

[90] Scapegoat figures are a common occurrence in the comedies: Malvolio, Shylock, Jaques, to a certain extent.

situation fits and even feigning piety and quoting scripture in order to appear moral. The play also contains example of malapropisms in the persons of Mistress Quickly and Slender, humorous speakers of English in Sir Hugh Evans and Doctor Caius, the tedious Shallow recounting the exploits of his youth and the immortal Pistol with his theatrical rantings and ravings. There is additionally a great deal of parallelism between the various romantic escapades.

Although not considered one of Shakespeare's masterpieces, the play does have a number of points of interest and has always been popular in performance. There was a tradition that the play was actually written at the specific request of Queen Elizabeth herself, first put forward in the year 1709.[91] Amongst its distinctions are the fact that it is for all extents of purposes actually set in Elizabethan England, despite the fact that it should be approximately two hundred years earlier in order to make the characters consistent with the Henry/Hal plays. Falstaff's royal 'pupil' Prince Hal is only mentioned once in the play and strangely enough by Mistress Page in connection with Master Fenton: "The gentleman is of no having. He kept company with the wild Prince and Poins" (3.2:61). Additionally, as Walter Cohen points out in his introduction to the play, it is the work containing easily the highest amount of lines in prose,[92] which once again contributes to its 'contemporary' feel.

The Sir John Falstaff of this play bears a clear physical resemblance to the star of the *Henry IV* plays, but here the similarities mostly come to an end. This Falstaff is a farcical character, ineptly attempting to seduce the merry wives Mistresses Page and Ford. Anthony Burgess in his insightful Shakespeare 'biography' has this to say on the matter. "The Falstaff of the Merry Wives is not sympathetic; lechery does not suit him, and he has played out his wit in a more congenial setting."[93] Certain of Falstaff's cronies make an appearance (Pistol, Bardolph and Nim) but uncharacteristically betray the fat knight. A Mistress Quickly exists, similar in her charming mishandling of the English language, but

[91] See T. W. Craik, preface, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, ed. T.W. Craik (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) 4.
[92] Walter Cohen, "The Merry Wives of Windsor," *The Norton Shakespeare*, eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1997) 1227.

one who initially is a stranger to Falstaff. Finally, Robert Shallow, the Justice, plays his part, with again, however, holding a more distant relationship to the hero.

The glorious malapropisms of Mistress Quickly include accidental sexual innuendos in similar fashion as in *Henry IV pt. 1*. In 2.2. she succeeds in introducing the delightful sounding word 'fartuous' instead of 'virtuous' (2.2:90), 'infection' as opposed to 'affection'(2.2:104) and 'erection' instead of 'direction' (3.5:34-35), to name but a few. She also has the gall to criticise the Frenchman Caius for his use of English, not to his face of course, "...here will be old abusing of God's patience and the King's English" (1.4:4-5). She is also particularly fond of showing off her learned vocabulary even when grossly inappropriate. Her favourite intellectual word in the play is 'notwithstanding' throwing it in whenever she spots a chance.

Quickly has a worthy competitor in skill with malapropisms in the play in the person of Slender, the inept suitor of Anne Page. His speech to his elder friends regarding his interest in the young beauty is wonderfully inept:

> I will marry her, sir, at your request; but if there be no
> great love in the beginning, yet heaven may decrease it upon
> better acquaintance, when we are married and have more occasion
> to know one another. I hope upon familiarity will grow
> more contempt. But if you say 'marry her', I will marry her.
> That I am freely dissolved, and dissolutely. (1.1:206-211)

Here he succeeds in mixing up 'decrease' and 'increase', 'dissolved' and 'resolved' and 'dissolutely' and 'resolutely' as well as inappropriately including the proverb about contempt. Of course, any marriage with him would probably result in the above description, thus there is a great deal of truth unwittingly in what he says. Sir Evans immediately corrects one of his mistakes, the final one, missing out, however, on all of the rest.

---

[93] Anthony Burgess, S*hakespeare* (1970. London: Vintage, 2002) 184.

Foreigners are mocked for their inept pronunciation and mangling of English, specifically with Sir Hugh Evans a Welsh man-of-the-cloth who in similar fashion as Fluellen in *Henry V* pronounces his b like a p, his d like a t and his v like an f. The arguably dirtiest passage in all of Shakespeare revolves around a scene wherein Sir Hugh tests the Latin of the boy William with Mistress Quickly hilariously misconstruing the meaning of the catechism, interpreting 'genetive case' to mean 'Jenny's case' or Jenny's vagina and the Latin words to mean 'whore'[94]

> William: Genetive case?
> Evans: Ay
> William: Genitivo: ‘horum, harum, horum’.
> Mistress Quickly: Vengeance of Jenny’s Case! Fie on her! Never name her, child, if she be a whore. (4.1:50-54)

The Frenchman Doctor Caius is constantly mocked for his specific manner of speaking English and serves as the butt of jokes for the general amusement of the community. He in contrast to Evans, substitutes a w for a v, a th for a d and an f for a v while also adding additional a's at the end of words.

Additionally, there are ethnic insults scattered throughout the play, including an intriguing reference to a “Bohemian Tartar” (4.5:16) applied by the Host to Peter Simple, Slender’s servant. Walter Cohen has this to say on the matter:

> Windsor's sense of community also depends on a cheerfully casual ethnocentrism. Hostility to foreigners is part of the throwaway language of the play...[95]

The racism is fairly innocuous, however, as all in all, one senses that Evans and Caius are recognised as locals, first and foremost, although subject to ridicule for their language gaffes.

[94] Eric Partridge, *Shakespeare's Bawdy* (London: Routledge, 1955) 96.

Three of Falstaff's disreputable cronies appear in this play, Bardolph, Nim and Pistol the last two of which do not appear in *Henry IV pt 1*. Pistol is truly memorable amounting to a unique type: the braggart, the swaggerer and the thespian theatrical type. Some of his speeches are actual parodies of existing lines from Shakespeare's colleagues while others merely sound ridiculously theatrical and over the top. Upon falling out, momentarily, with Falstaff in 1.3 he dramatically sounds the following lines.

> Let vultures gripe thy guts! For gourd and fulham holds,
> And high and low beguile the rich and poor.
> Tester I'll have in pouch when thou shalt lack,
> Base Phrygian Turk! (1.3:75-78)

He almost inevitably speaks or, better said, declaims in verse. His high-brow mannerisms linked with his savoury pick-pocket morals serve to throw light on the more sophisticated 'white collar' crime of his social betters. Stephen Greenblatt in *Will in the World* argues that this might be a form of revenge against the University wits on the part of the country boy Shakespeare. "These parodies only suggest that Shakespeare was, after all, a human being, who could take some pleasure in returning literary insults and mocking rivals, even dead ones."[96]

Shallow whose acquaintance we make once again in *Henry IV pt. 2* is the classic old man buffoon boasting of the exploits of his youth.

> Bodykins, Master Page, though I now be old and
> of the peace, if I see a sword out, my finger itches to
> make one. Though we are justices and doctors and
> churchmen, Master Page, we have some salt of our
> youth in us. We are the sons of women, Master Page. (2.8:38-43)

This bravado is, of course, never brought to the test and one assumes never will be as the elderly judge is less than an imposing physical specimen.

---

[95] Walter Cohen, "The Merry Wives of Windsor," *The Norton Shakespeare* eds., Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1997) 1227.

Northrop Frye views the Falstaff of the play as a type of 'fertility spirit' drawing parallels with the Slavic folk tradition of Marzanna or Morana being banished, burned and drowned at the end of winter.

> In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* there is an elaborate ritual of the defeat of winter, known to folklorists as 'carrying out death', of which Falstaff is the victim; and Falstaff must have felt that, after being thrown into the water, dressed up as a witch and beaten out of a house with curses, and finally supplied with a beast's head and singed with candles...he had done about all that could reasonably be asked of any fertility spirit.[97]

The play ends happily with the true lovers, Anne and Fenton, married off and Falstaff lightly punished for his mischievous schemes. Falstaff, for once, fails to gain the upper hand indicating this is a far cry from the fat knight of the history plays. Even in defeat, however, Falstaff cannot help ribbing the honest clergyman Evans.

> Falstaff: Have I laid my brain in the sun and dried it, that it wants matter to prevent so gross o'erreaching as this?
> Am I ridden with a Welsh goat too? Shall I have a coxcomb of frieze?
> 'Tis time I were choked with a piece of toasted cheese.
> Evans: Seese is not good to give putter. Your belly is all putter.
> Falstaff: 'Seese' and 'putter'? Have I lived to stand at the taunt of one that makes fritters of English? This is enough to be the decay of lust and late-walking through the realm. (5.5:130-137)

Here you have Shakespeare combining the subversive techniques of the punster/mocker/lord of misrule Falstaff and the verbally-handicapped foreigner Evans.

---

[96] Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2004) 216.
[97] Northrop Frye, "The Argument of Comedy," *Shakespeare Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. Leonard F. Dean (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) 86.

Shakespeare makes use of all the possible resources at his disposal in this play, demonstrating the variety of comic, subversive characters and techniques readily available and employed for more serious purposes in the history plays.

Henry VI pt. 1, Saints, Witches and Heroes

The 1st Tetralogy was, of course, written prior to the *Henry IV* plays although it takes place at a later historical date. I am not interested in going into the various theories regarding the authorship of the plays nor the questions concerning the correct names for the plays. For the purposes of this discussion I will stick with the somewhat mundane labelling: *Henry IV pt. 1*, *Henry IV pt. 2*, *Henry IV pt. 3*.

The play focus on two main conflicts, the internal power struggle within England after the death of Henry V with his son Henry VI, historically a mere child, but in the play a young man, on the throne and the external war with France with Talbot leading the English side and Joan of Arc commanding the French. A deepening of the first named crisis is seen with the play documenting the roots of the War of the Roses between the house of Lancaster (the current monarch Henry VI and his family) and the house of York with Richard Plantagenet at the forefront. The second crisis sees the English side temporarily brought low with the death of their leader Talbot, followed, however, by the capture and execution of Joan, turning the tide of events once more. King Henry VI is portrayed as an ineffectual pious ruler unable to tame the raging tempers of his subjects. The play comes to a close with a treaty advantageous to the English drawn up and a bride, Margaret, procured for the King by Suffolk with less than the purest of motives being interested in her himself.

The play contains strong female characters, a lord of misrule, a saintly figure and a number of episode scenes and use of parallelism. Of interest in the play is the character of Joan of Arc certainly fitting the label of a strong female character. She uses an array of subversive methods to disturb the English side and the traditional notions of order. Margaret, crowned Queen in the next play, makes her initial entrance at the end of the play only to assume increased importance over the next three plays chronologically. She is another powerful woman more than willing to speak her mind. Additionally, there is the knight Fastolf, a lord of misrule figure who obviously has affinities with the later, more developed, character of Falstaff. There are several episode scenes of interest involving common soldiers serving to mirror the larger events around them. There is the

minor character of the Mayor who provides certain insight on the action. Last, there is the character of the king himself, Henry VI, who I will argue serves as a saintly figure providing an alternative subversive voice throughout the proceedings.

Despite the fact that Henry was only nine months old when the play opens, Shakespeare portrays him as an adolescent. Henry is a bookish, pious young man of a seemingly asexual character. Throughout all three plays he innocuously observes the goings-on around him occasionally feebly attempting to bring peace to the virulent noblemen, his headstrong wife and the upstart commoners. His contribution often amounts to a wistful plea for good fellowship directed at the audience. The actor, Peter Benson, in the BBC films played him with a particularly milk-livered blandness. Having said that, when one looks past the presentation, his words are the only voices of reason amongst the mayhem. His contribution is thus another subverting voice in relation to the bloody affairs of the War of the Roses which Shakespeare dramatizes.

Henry VI pt. 1 begins with the funeral of Henry V and a definite jockeying for power within the kingdom initially between Henry V's brothers, and uncles to the child king, the Duke of Gloucester, now Lord Protector, and the Bishop of Winchester. The Duke of York, is a force to be reckoned with whose claim to the throne arises from the execution of his father, Richard Earl of Cambridge, by Henry V, dramatised, of course, by Shakespeare in the play of the same name. Cambridge was a supporter of the Mortimer claim, arising from the theory that Roger Mortimer was made heir to the throne by Richard II on his departure to Ireland. Thus the Mortimer/Cambridge/Plantagenet line, later known as the York faction, posed a threat to the Lancaster throne. We are made aware that the actions of Henry V have contributed to the civil strife which erupts after his death.

The various Dukes seemingly try to outdo each other in acclamatory praise of the deceased, Henry V. The Duke of Bedford, Regent of France piously calls upon dead Henry's assistance, "Henry the Fifth, thy ghost I invocate: / Prosper this realm; keep it from civil broils;" (1.1:52-53). Henry's invasion of French, placating "giddy minds / With foreign quarrels…" (*Henry IV pt. 2*, 4.3:341-342)

has merely postponed the inevitable civil strife put into motion by the usurpation of the rightful King Richard II by Henry IV.

Aged Mortimer on his death bed relates the entire history to his nephew Richard Plantagenet in 2.2. Upon hearing the story, Richard goes as far as to refer to Henry V as a tyrant, "But yet methinks my father's execution / Was nothing less than bloody tyranny" (2.5:99-100).

Henry VI's first appearance in the play brings a breath of fresh air into the suffocating atmosphere of plotting and squabbling. His first words set the tone for his personality throughout the three plays.

> Uncles of Gloucester and of Winchester,
> The special watchmen of our English weal,
> I would prevail, if prayers might prevail,
> To join your hearts in love and amity.
> …
> Civil dissension is a viperous worm
> That gnaws the bowels of the commonwealth. (3.1:66-69,73-74)

Henry is arguably subversive in a positive sense, preaching peace and tolerance to the quarrelling factions. Practically everything he says falls into line with the Elizabethan order outlined by Tillyard. His insights fall on deaf ears, however. This particular speech is interrupted by an uproar caused by stone throwing between the followers of Gloucester and Winchester. The servingmen's declarations of loyalty to their respective sides is portrayed in absurd fashion, "Ay, and the very parings of our nails / Shall pitch a field when we are dead" (3.1:105-106), reminiscent of the mindless feuding even touching the servants of the Montagues and Capulets in the opening scene of *Romeo and Juliet*. The lower classes aping or parroting of their social 'betters' draws attention to the inanity of the situation. When 'peace' is finally made between the uncles, the serving men genuinely leave in a spirit of Christian "forgive and forget" while the nobility merely feigns reconciliation. Exeter's soliloquy drawing a close to 3.1 hits the nail on the head.

This late dissension grown betwixt the peers
Burns under feigned ashes of forged love,
And will at last break out into a flame. (3.1:193-195)

Similar absurd confrontations take place in 3.8 and 4.1 between two members of the opposing York and Lancaster camps, Vernon and Basset, again mirroring the main plot. This finally prompts King Henry to assert himself providing another opportunity to abuse the French in order to point out the pettiness of their quarrel.

Henceforth I charge you, as you love our favour,
Quite to forget this quarrel and the cause.
And you, my lords, remember where we are--
In France, amongst a fickle wavering nation.
…
Besides what infamy will there arise
When foreign princes shall be certified
That for a toy, a thing of no regard,
King Henry's peers and chief nobility
Destroyed themselves and lost the realm of France! (4.1:135-138,143-147)

His noble words, however, only add fuel to the fire when he dons the red rose in good faith. Henry's fault is a naive belief in essential human goodness, failing to take into account the depths of rancour dwelling in the peerage.

Another minor character, this time, with a number of astute observations is the Mayor of London who briefly makes an appearance in 1.4 trying to placate the warring factions of the noblemen Gloucester and Winchester. His frustration with the hot-blooded lords is pragmatically poignant "See the coast cleared, and then we will depart.-- / Good God, these nobles should such stomachs bear! / I myself fight not once in forty year" (1.4:86-88). This aside to the audience may be read as an acknowledgement of his cowardice, but does evince a more responsible approach on the part of a government officer than the self-serving noblemen.

The majority of the play juxtaposes scenes involving the French forces led by Joan of Arc, scenes with Talbot and finally various quarrelling segments between Gloucester and Winchester as well as between the York and Lancaster factions. The battle scenes hold little interest. Suffice it to say that Talbot emerges as the warrior consummate, exempt from the petty power mongering of his peers back home. Tillyard emphasises the singularity of his character in the play:

> If the other chief men of England had all been like him, he could have resisted and saved England. But they are divided against each other and through this division Talbot dies and the first stage in England's ruin and of the fulfilment of the curse is accomplished.[98]

He dies heroically with his son in his arms, seemingly the last of the old school types willing to selflessly risk life and limb for their King.

The French scenes are mainly of interest due to the personage of Joan of Arc, referred here to as Joan la Pucelle, who Shakespeare portrays in an evil light, sexually promiscuous, conversing with ghosts; a threat to male patriarchal order. David Bevington sums up her role succinctly:

> Joan Pucelle fascinates most critics who come to this play, partly because of the character assassination and more importantly because of the deep anxieties about gender that her presence generates.[99]

Although this picture of the Saint was in accordance with the chronicle sources, Shakespeare portrays her with much verve and vim supplying her with a foul mouth worthy of a London tavern. She thus embodies several of the subversive types outlined in my thesis. She is a mocker par excellence often quibbling on the words of her male colleagues or adversaries almost inevitably with sexual undertones. She frequently speaks in asides to the audience ridiculing the pretensions of the puffed male egos surrounding her. Tillyard discusses the dainty reluctance by certain critics to assign this play to Shakespeare's pen due to

[98] E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1944) 163.
[99] David Bevington, "I Henry VI," *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works: The Histories*, eds. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2003) 312.

the fact that he portrays her in such an uncouth fashion.[100] The passages involving her are packed with lewd, bawdy double entendres such as the reference to her in 2.1 as "Holy Joan" (2.1:50) with the pun on hole, e.g. vagina.[101] Joan also provides occasional adroit commentary on the goings on such as, for example, her aside after successfully luring Burgundy back onto the French side, "Done like a Frenchman – [aside] turn and turn again" (3.7:85). Stanley Wells puts it succinctly, "Theatrically, however, she is a vivid character, often undercutting pomposity with language of colloquial directness."[102] She sometimes serves the function of Richard III, openly exhibiting the vices of the society in general.

Shakespeare's Joan serves as a cynical, taunting critique of male chivalrous pretensions. Her femaleness only increases the barbs of her sarcastic comments. A classic example of this is on the occasion of Talbot's death when Lucy pays homage to the fallen warrior with a long-winded naming of his various titles. Joan retorts:

> Here's a silly stately indeed.
> The Turk, that two-and-fifty kingdoms hath,
> Writes not so tedious a style as this.
> Him that thou magnifi'st with all these titles
> Stinking and fly-blown lies here at our feet. (4.7:72-76)

Joan's disrespectful rudeness is actually refreshing after being forced to listen to the continual pompous male pretensions of the English quarrelling gentry. K. A. Ewert has this to say on the subject drawing a parallel here with the famous speech by Philip the Bastard in *King John* with its references to "commodity":

> Talbot may be a terror to his French foes, but to the competing factions of his English friends he is a commodity among others, a useful but expendable article of exchange in the larger process of the pursuit of power and advantage at home...Joan best recognizes the end result of

[100] E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1944) 162.
[101] Eric Partridge, *Shakespeare's Bawdy* (London: Routledge, 1955) 156.
[102] Stanley Wells, *Shakespeare The Poet and his Plays*. (1994. London: Methuen Publishing Limited, 2001) 91.

> the use that is made of Talbot, his used-up-ness after he is abandoned by his superiors. Talbot's death scene may be "heroic," but the process Shakespeare dramatizes leading up to his death is anything but. The history that is bodied forth here speaks viscerally not of triumphs but of the terrible reality and the terrible costs of war, where the body as commodity is expended and wasted.[103]

Thus Joan, though a peace-maker by no stretch of the imagination, has insights, perhaps due to her marginalized status as both a woman and a commoner, which the male upper class knights on both sides of the conflict are oblivious to. Fiedler is particularly relevant here with the following commentary on the scene:

> Joan, however, is given the last word, allowed to undercut—with a kind of ironic realism not unlike Falstaff's in his famous reflections on honor—the code by which Talbot lived and died...for one instant the balance of Shakespeare's sympathy (along with ours) tilts in her direction. For the first time in his career, perhaps, he betrays his ambivalence about the reigning values of his time, his suspicion, later expressed in certain speeches of Shylock and Caliban, that by virtue of his strangeness the stranger in our midst can sometimes see the silliness of the games we play in deadly earnest.[104]

A description of a battle led by heroic, larger-than-life Talbot against the French forces makes mention of a minor character of Sir John Fastolf who " He, being in the vanguard placed behind, / With purpose to relieve and follow them, / Cowardly fled, not having struck one stroke" (1.1:132-135). This Fastolf obviously bears a resemblance to the more renowned figure Falstaff from the Henry IV plays, though little similarity to the actual historical figure who served

[103] K. A. Ewert, "Commodification and Representation: The Body in Shakespeare's History Plays" 24 July 2005.
<http://www.marshall.edu/engsr/SR1998.html#Commodification%20and%20Representation>.
[104] Leslie Fiedler, *The Stranger in Shakespeare* (London: Croom Helm, 1972) 56.

bravely in Henry IV's army in the French Wars.[105] In act 3 scene 6 he actually utters several lines when addressed by his commanding officer while running from the scene of the battle "Whither away? To save myself by flight./ We are like to have the overthrow again" (3.6:64-65). He is scolded roundly by the Captain, "What, will you fly, and leave Lord Talbot?" (3.6:66). Fastolf's answer though certainly dishonourable provides an alternative pragmatic view of the otherwise jingoistic events, "Ay, and all the Talbots in the world, to save my life" (3.6:67). Fastolf appears briefly once again in 4.1 when delivering a message to the King only to be publicly humiliated and stripped of his knighthood. The appearance, however, of this cowardly knight is the first glimpse of a chink in the armour, so to speak, of the, up until now, deeply serious narrative.

The play comes to a close with Joan's death, a truce between the French and English and Suffolk's plan to marry Margaret off to King Henry. Joan goes to her death in character, denying her father, claiming to be a virgin only to change her tune quickly in order to save her skin by pretending to be pregnant with three different lovers. The truce is obviously tenuous, to say the least, and once again Henry is the only one to even question the moral justification for a war of this sort.

> …I always thought
> It was both impious and unnatural
> That such immanity and bloody strife
> Should reign among professors of one faith. (5.1:11-14)

These peaceful words remain unheeded and in the succeeding play, Henry's moral dissenting becomes increasingly drowned by the added addition of his bloodthirsty wife Margaret who from the moment she is introduced displays a sharp wit and ambitious nature. Her chafing banter with her eventual lover, Suffolk, in 5.5 is full of barbed asides and flirtatious puns.

> Suffolk (aside) I'll win this Lady Margaret. For whom?
> Why for my king – tush, that's a wooden thing.

[105] I am referring here to Sir John Oldcastle, the follower of Wycliffe.

Margaret (aside) He talks of wood. It is some carpenter. (5.5:44-46)

She will consequently assume the mantle from Joan of Arc over the next three plays of a strong woman refusing to be silenced by the men around her.

Henry VI pt. 2—Wavering Loyalties

The second play begins with Margaret's arrival in England and the consequent wide-spread disapproval on the part of the nobility of the King's choice of a Queen, or Suffolk's choice to be exact. The wheel of fortune sees several figures reach their height only to plunge rapidly downward, namely Gloucester and his wife, Cardinal Beaufort and finally Suffolk. With their removal from the halls of power, the figure of York starts to take more and more prominence with the play including two of his sons, Edward (later Edward IV) and Richard (later Richard III). King Henry tries to assume more responsibility mostly with less than satisfactory results. Margaret begins to express frustration with her husband's lack of gumption and seems to be carrying on an affair with Suffolk behind her husband's back. Cade's rebellion is a key event in the play here instigated by York in order to create instability. Open warfare finally breaks out between the two sides and the play comes to an end with a victory by the York faction at the Battle of Saint Albans.

The second work in the Henry VI trilogy has the richest tapestry of subversive voices and techniques with again a lord of misrule, a saint figure, strong female persons, a villain, a mocker, silenced women, commoners, episode scenes and parallelism. Henry continues his role as a practically passive moral commentator on the political intrigue raging around him. Margaret, in contrast, begins to take an active role in politics provoking antagonism amongst her male adversaries. Gloucester's wife, the Duchess, is silenced for involving herself with witchcraft. York anticipates the genius of his son, Richard III, in his employment of asides and soliloquies often at odds with his public voice. The Horner and Peter episodes followed by their fight to the death provide a mirror for the ongoing political bickering amongst the nobility. The Simpcox episode could also serve as a metaphor for the declining morale at court. The pirates who execute Suffolk are also of symbolic significance commenting on the foibles of the nobility. The Cade rebellion episodes, particularly with the person of Jack Cade himself, provide rich opportunities for subversive techniques, embodying a lord of misrule. One of his followers, Dick the Butcher puns and ridicules Cade's obvious lies concerning his

background. The episode where Iden, the country squire, kills Cade also has rich metaphorical connotations. Finally, Richard Crookback begins to establish himself as a villain and lord of misrule in his own right.

The first scene ends with a soliloquy by York revealing his plans to achieve the crown. “And force perforce I'll make him yield the crown,/ Whose bookish rule hath pulled fair England down” (1.1:237-238). York's soliloquies and asides voicing his royal ambitions followed by feigned loyalty serve to indicate where his son, the eventual Richard III, studied his art. This reference to Henry IV's bookishness establishes the King's supposed feminine nature unable to deal with the manly concerns of state and war.

Margaret raises her voice throughout the play determined to wrest power from both the King's uncles and his enemies. She not only lashes out at the male characters, but makes it clear to Duchess Gloucester that she is the one in charge now when slapping her in 1.3 only to feign innocence, “I cry you mercy, madam! Was it you?” (1.3:143). She is also in the thick of the plot to murder Gloucester. Her behaviour is reminiscent of the consummate deception of Lady MacBeth the night of King Duncan's murder or Richard III after assassinating his brother Clarence when she feigns Christian charity toward her enemy knowing full well he has already met a bloody end.

> God forbid any malice should prevail
> That faultless may condemn a noble man!
> Pray God he may acquit him of suspicion! (3.2:23-25)

After a momentary failing of spirits when she morbidly cradles the head of her dead Suffolk killed by the pirates, she resumes her commanding role leading the Lancaster army into battle against the York contingent. The feminist critics Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin provide insight into her character and role.

> By the end of this play, which clearly looks ahead to its sequel,
> Margaret has grown into the first tetralogy’s most sustained example

> of the danger which ambitious and sexual women pose to English manhood and to English monarchy.[106]

Apart from Margaret, that "...tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide!" (Henry VI pt. 3, 1.4:138), another strong, ambitious female character comes to the forefront, Duchess Eleanor of Gloucester who urges her husband, the Lord Protector, in a manner particularly reminiscent of Lady Macbeth, to seize the throne from his pusillanimous nephew Henry. "Put forth thy hand, reach at the glorious gold./ What, is't too short? I'll lengthen it with mine;" (1.2:11-12). Her scheming is all for naught, however, when she is caught indulging in witchcraft, another parallel with Macbeth, and banished for her sins. Her silencing for demonic involvement additionally links her with Joan of Arc in the previous play.

Henry continues his role as the saintly do-gooder in 2.1 when various members of the court are in the country hawking and a quarrel breaks out. Henry's commentary on their behaviour is particularly astute but once again goes unheeded.

> The winds grow high; so do your stomachs, lords.
> How irksome is this music to my heart!
> When such strings jar, what hope of harmony?
> I pray, my lords, let me compound this strife. (2.1:58-61)

Henry's language draws from the metaphor of the music of the spheres or the cosmic dance, a symbol of order, so famously elaborated by Tillyard[107]. Here, however, Henry is the dissenting voice in the midst of the continual quarrelling.

An odd episode scene occurs in 1.3 when the working-class characters Horner and Peter quarrel over talk of treason connected with York. The resulting trial by combat in 2.3, with Horner so drunk he can barely stand serves to mock the squabbles of the aristocracy. These two scenes surround, foreshadowing and consequently echoing, the above-mentioned scene where the two elderly government dignitaries Cardinal Beaufort and Gloucester arrange to meet like two

[106] Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (New York: Routledge, 1997) 82.

schoolboys "...this evening on the east side of the grove" (2.1:47) to settle their differences through violence. Peter's victory and Horner's death 'prove' the former's innocence with even King Henry going along with this mockery of justice. This duel is interestingly preceded by Gloucester resigning his staff as Lord Protector and handing over full power to Henry. The feminist critic Jean E. Howard has this to say on the events:

> As it is dramatized, the trial by combat becomes a parody of justice. Rather than fighting with swords, the two contestants appear with sandbags attached to poles, and Horner is so roaring drunk that he reels. It is under these conditions that the apprentice kills his master, and the King, who has now taken Gloucester's staff of office from him as the result of Eleanor's treason, seems satisfied that justice has prevailed. But the ludicrous nature of the drunken encounter threatens to empty such traditional rituals of their meaning and legitimacy.[108]

None of the noble protagonists, however, seem to pick up on these implications although the audience surely would.

Another seemingly meaningless episode scene involving the hoaxster Simpcox and his wife in 2.1. seems at first glance to have been included merely for comic relief. It does, however, provide us with an example of Gloucester's sound judgement and additionally provides a poignant glimpse of the sufferings of the poor when after Simpcox is shown to be perfectly healthy, his wife gives the excuse "Alas, sir, we did it for pure need" (2.1:157). This does her no good, however, as she is led off for flogging by a beadle.

The various quarrelling factions gradually fall by the wayside; Gloucester is murdered, Suffolk is banished to Queen Margaret's great dismay and Cardinal Beaufort dies suddenly. This serves to open up more room for conspiring York who prior to heading out with an army to Ireland instigates a rebellion under the leadership of Jack Cade, "under the title of John Mortimer" (3.1:359) arguably the

---

[107] E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (New York: Macmillan, 1944) 109-114.

true heir to the throne after Richard II's death. York intends to destabilize the kingdom and set the stage for his own ascent of the, less than stable, throne.

Suffolk's death is documented in a surprisingly long scene on a pirate ship where the Captain and his men are depicted in a fairly positive light in contrast to the arrogant haughtiness of Suffolk. The Captain ransoms one of his captives, frees another and executes Suffolk of course. The Captain also employs a punning technique in reference to Suffolk's last name Pole which was apparently pronounced like 'pool', "Ay, kennel, puddle, sink, whose filth and dirt/ Troubles the silver spring where England drinks," (4.1:72-73). These pirates, usually thought of as social pariah, are provided with a definite dignity contrasting with the corrupt nobility.

The Jack Cade episodes, though based on historical facts, are carried out with great vigour and enthusiasm. These parts in the BBC production are much more entertaining than the 'serious' sections. The constant quarrelling amongst the factions is paralleled by the unrest among the lower levels of society. Above and beyond this, the scenes are priceless for anticipating Communist propaganda of the 20th century:

> *Cade*: There shall be in England seven halfpenny
> loaves sold for a penny, the three-hooped pot shall have
> ten hoops, and I will make it felony to drink small beer.
> All the realm shall be in common, and in Cheapside
> shall my palfrey go to grass. And when I am king, as
> king I will be—(4.2:67-72)

Shakespeare brilliantly satirizes the naive communist promises of equality for all, only to have their leader adopt the same privileges of the system they are supposedly fighting against. Soon after in the same scene, a clerk is arrested by Cade's followers and accused of being literate and an intellectual.

> *Cade*:…Dost thou use to write

---

[108] Jean E. Howard, "The First Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster," *The Norton Shakespeare*, eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard,

> thy name? Or hast thou a mark to thyself like an
> honest plain-dealing man?
> *Clerk*: Sir, I thank God I have been so well brought up
> that I can write my name.
> *All Cade's Followers*: He hath confessed—away with
> him! He's a villain and a traitor.
> *Cade*: Away with him, I say hang him with his pen and
> inkhorn about his neck. (4.2:101-108)

This bears parallels with the Cissa the poet episode already-mentioned in *Julius Caesar* and is moreover disturbingly reminiscent of the Maoist cultural revolution or the extremes of the Khmer Rouge.

Howard raises the question of a correspondence between these somewhat crude scenes of violence and the more underhand schemings of the aristocracy.

> Does Shakespeare create this character simply to discredit popular rebellion, or does he use Cade to articulate the legitimate grievances of the common people and employ Cade's brutality as a disquieting mirror of the brutality of the ruling classes?[109]

Howard obviously implies the latter and I would go along with it to a certain extent. Anthony Davies has a similar view of the matter at hand:

> The commoners' petitions and Cade's rebellion, although simultaneously comical and brutal, vividly express 16th-century traditions of popular radicalism and political protest against real social inequality and economic hardships.[110]

Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1997) 206.
[109] Jean E. Howard, "The First Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster." *The Norton Shakespeare* eds., Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1997) 206.
[110] Anthony Davies, "First Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster," *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare,* eds. Michael Dobson and Stanley Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 142.

The rebel dialogue earlier in 4.2 most certainly humorously mirrors the constant arguing over who is the legitimate heir to the throne.

> Cade: My father was a Mortimer--
> Butcher: (to his fellows) He was an honest man and a good bricklayer.
> Cade: My mother a Plantagenet--
> Butcher: (to his fellows) I knew her well, she was a midwife.
> Cade: My wife descended of the Lacys--
> Butcher: (to his fellows) She was indeed a pedlar's daughter and sold many laces. (4.2:33-38)

This is masterful social satire employing quibbling (Mortimer in connection with mortar used by bricklayers; Plantagenet with its implications of conception; and finally the obvious pun on Lacys) anticipating the bantering between Falstaff and Hal wherein one never knows if the former actually believes his own outrageous assertions or not. Cade's preposterous assertions of noble blood also echo the pompous convoluted speech by York in 2.3, almost equalling the Archbishop of Canterbury's sermon 'justifying' Henry V's invasion of France (*Henry V* 1.2:33-95), for obfuscation. Back to the matter at hand, York's firmest ally at the time Warwick responds, perhaps with a wink at the audience, with "What plain proceedings is more plain than this?" (2.3:53). This cynical assertion must be tongue-in-cheek and aimed at provoking laughter at their cheeky audacity.

In the midst of all this strife, Henry maintains a Christ-like stance concerning the rebels, echoing here the words of Jesus on the cross, "O, graceless men; they know not what they do" (4.4.37).

In contrast, Cade initially fighting for the people and against the abuses of the aristocracy, begins to quickly adopt the language of a dictator. "Burn all the records of the realm. My mouth shall be the Parliament of England" (4.7:11-12). Sinfield points out the fact that Shakespeare seemingly deliberately portrays Cade

in an unattractive light in contrast to his primary source Hall.[111] Soon after, his followers forsake him and Cade runs off, only to be killed in Iden's garden, a symbol if there ever was one. Immediately prior to this, the audience hears Iden, a country squire, talking to himself in another episode scene meant to provide a vivid contrast with the turmoil abounding throughout the rest of the country.

> Lord, who would live turmoiled in the court
> And may enjoy such quiet walks as these?
> This small inheritance my father left me
> Contenteth me, and worthy a monarchy.
> I seek not to wax great by other's waning.
> Or greater wealth I care not with what envy;
> Sufficeth it that I have maintained my state,
> And sends the poor well pleased from my gate (4.9:14-21)

The speech is a somewhat heavy-handed commentary on the ideal attitude towards one's place in life pressing all the right buttons concerning the orthodox position towards order, in vivid contrast to Cade of course. It additionally exhibits obvious parallels with the episode garden scene in *Richard II* which will be discussed in more detail below. Henry VI would undoubtedly heartily agree with the sentiments expressed. Tillyard has this to say regarding the passage. “Not only does Iden stand as the symbol of degree; he also indicates the design of the play...These words are a comment by implication on the rise of York at the expense of Gloucester,...”.[112]

In the final act York returns and a full out civil war ensues. Richard Crookback, soon to be Richard III, makes his first entrance and is immediately greeted by Clifford with the virulent words. “Hence, heap of wrath, foul undigested lump,' As crooked in thy manners as thy shape” (5.1:155-156). This helps to establish the villainous psychology of Richard over the next two plays. He immediately displays his knack for quibbling and puns responding with a

[111] Alan Sinfield*, Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) 21.
[112] E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare’s History Plays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1944) 175.

rhyme to Young Clifford's insulting threat. “Young Clifford: Foul stigmatic, that's more than thou canst tell./ Richard: If not in heaven, you'll surely sup in hell” (5.1:213-214).

The victory goes to York and the Lancastrian party is forced to flee. Queen Margaret, very much in the thick of things, calls out in exasperation to her docile husband Henry, “What are you made of? You'll not fight nor fly” (5.4:3). I would view this intended negative barb in instead a positive light; Henry is the voice of reason in the midst of a world of violent hatred. Unfortunately, for him, things turn even worse for him, with the full emergence of Crookback Richard in the final play of the trilogy.

Henry VI pt. 3, Mole-Hills and Murders

Henry VI pt. 3, documenting the raging civil war with the York faction with Crookback Richard at the forefront eventually winning the day, evokes an entire atmosphere of disorder. The balance of power changes several times over the course of the play. The play opens with the York faction seemingly in control, only for a compromise to be reached wherein Henry would remain on the throne for the remainder of his life with the crown to pass on to the York heir after his death. This is, understandably less than tolerable in Queen Margaret's eyes, unwilling to allow her son to be stripped of his royal prerogative. War consequently breaks out once again. York is killed by the Lancaster faction led by Margaret. Henry is, once again as in the previous play, the saintly figure praying for peace and reconciliation in the whirlwind of violence, but to no avail. Richard emerges as the consummate villain by the end killing Prince Edward, the son of Henry and Margaret, with the help of his siblings, allowing his eldest brother Edward to ascend the throne. Richard also murders saintly Henry at the end of the play.

The subversive techniques in the play are not as numerous as in the previous part. There are the continued presences of the villain, the saintly figure and the strong woman. Child characters appear along with episode scenes. Henry becomes more and more saintly, retreating into an almost monk-like existence, with his wife actually refusing to share his bed out of disgust with his lack of fortitude, until his final murder at the hands of the arch villain Richard. Margaret has seemingly given up on her ineffectual husband and taken matters completely into her own hands, defending the royal prerogative of her son to her last breath. She embodies the strong woman type wounding her male adversaries, not only through words, but also with her sword. There is an innocent child character in the play, Rutland, York's youngest son, who reveals wisdom beyond his years prior to his execution. Richard Crookback, the third son of Richard of York, continues to assert himself in the role of a villain and a lord of misrule. There are several episode scenes in the play including an allegorical section during one of the battles when two pairs of anonymous fathers and sons discover they have killed

their own father and son respectively. Another episode scene involves nameless guards around King Edward's tent discussing the tumultuous events around them.

Margaret finally has had enough with her husband at the beginning of the play when he compromises with the York faction, agreeing to hand over the throne to them on his death, thereby bypassing his own son, Edward. She scolds his temerity:

> Had I been there, which am a seely woman,
> The soldiers should have tossed me on their pikes
> Before I would have granted to that act. (1.1:244-246)

She consequently forswears their wedding bed and seizes the initiative for the Lancaster cause. The language her assertiveness evokes in her enemies is remarkable for its level of virulence, proving evidence of the threat she imposes to the traditional male system of values. The speech, “O tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide!” (1.4:138) is the most renowned of these and was consequently maliciously parodied by Robert Greene providing the first news that Shakespeare had become a success. The lines are part of a curse brought down on Queen Margaret by York when she mocks him after a temporary victory by the Lancastrians by placing a paper crown on his head and wiping his face with a handkerchief stained with the blood of his murdered son Rutland. In the feminist reading of the play *Engendering A Nation,* the authors draw an interesting parallel between Shakespeare and Margaret in connection with Greene's attack:

> It is also fascinating that Greene uses this line the way he does, as a description of Shakespeare and not simply as an example of his rival’s high-flown rhetoric. The line in its theatrical context denigrates Margaret for her unnatural and unwomanly behavior; in Greene’s polemical context it denigrates Shakespeare for unnatural ambition. Both are implicitly castigated for “forgetting their places,” Margaret for forgetting her proper

> gender role, Shakespeare for forgetting deference to his supposed betters in wit and education.[113]

In that same speech by York, his speech continually revolves around her unseemly behaviour as opposed to the wider question of the rightful king.

> She-wolf of France, but worse than wolves of France,
> Whose tongue more poisons than the adder's tooth –
> How ill-beseeming is it in thy sex
> To triumph like an Amazonian trull
> Upon their woes whom fortune captivates! (1.4:112-116)

The insulting reference to her as an Amazon is employed once again, "Belike she minds to play the Amazon." (4.1:104) by King Edward upon hearing she is headed back to England from France. This Amazon label, the ultimate threat to male dominance, is another form, like accusations of witchcraft, of demonizing women who refuse to play their traditional role. Kathryn Schwartz also provides insight into the radical nature of her character:

> As many readers have observed, she erupts into this play, at once participating in and threatening to dismantle its masculinist, chauvinist, militarist presumptions. Her martial role makes nonsense of Warwick's distinction between women and warriors; her sexual past violates the property rights of men and kings; her identity as a French woman threatens English maleness...militant female agency detaches such qualities as masculinity, heroism, and sovereignty from any natural connection to men, and that Margaret represents an anxious domestication of that problem, forcing a reconceptualization of the roles of mother, mistress, queen, and wife.[114]

---

[113] Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories (*New York: Routledge, 1997) 95, 96.
[114] Kathryn Schwartz, "Vexed Relations: Family, State, and the Uses of Women in 3 Henry VI" *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works: The Histories*, eds. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2003) 352.

Prior to his death York lists the appropriate attributes of a woman, “Women are soft, mild, pitiful, and flexible --” (4.1:143). Margaret's ladylike response is to stab him to death and order in lines worthy of Richard Crookback himself “Off with his head and set it on York gates,/ So York may overlook the town of York” (4.1:180-181).

With civil war between the Yorks and Lancastrians continuing, King Henry is lambasted yet again for his pacifism, by Clifford and Margaret. This prompts an intertextual reference to the events of *Henry V*, namely the invasion of France, that event so lauded in the annals of English history. Henry provides an alternative interpretation, a subversive voice.

> Full well hath Clifford played the orator,
> Inferring arguments of mighty force.
> But, Clifford, tell me—didst thou never hear That things ill got had
> ever bad success?
> And happy always was it for that son
> Whose father for his hoarding went to hell?
> I'll leave my son my virtuous deeds behind,
> And would my father had left me no more. (2.2.43-50)

Although there is a great deal of quiet dignity and wisdom here, it serves little purpose with war raging around him.

During the battle near York Henry is sent to sit on a mole-hill, one of the several peculiar references to these locales in the play, so as not to get in the way of the manly battle proceedings. This provides him with the opportunity to meditate on a range of topics. He has his version of the traditional pastoral speech rendered by all of the kings in the plays, with the exception of Richard III, wherein he envies the rural shepherd tending his flocks. This is followed by an odd symbolic episode, drawings its imagery from the *Book of Matthew*[115] where he is direct witness to a son who has unknowingly killed his own father, fighting on opposite sides of the battle, and a father who has killed his son. The formulaic

character, in such vivid contrast to the antics of Richard and Margaret, serves to enhance the otherness of Henry, his distinct position in respect to the others. Henry's heart-wrenching sympathies, though ineffectual, provide an alternative moral voice. “Was ever king so grieved for subjects' woe?/ Much is your sorrow, mine ten times so much” (2.5:111-112).

Richard's star begins to rise in the play as Henry's wanes. His diabolic soliloquy in 3.2. is according to Stanley Wells, the “longest uninterrupted speech in the whole canon”[116] Here Richard declaims on his deformities and reveals his ambition to acquire the throne by hook or by crook.

> Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile,
> And cry 'Content!' to that which grieves my heart,
> And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
> And frame my face to all occasions
> …
> I can add colours to the chameleon
> Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
> And set the murderous Macheavel to school.
> Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?
> Tut, were it further off, I'll pluck it down (3.2:182-185,191-195)

This speech is often included in film versions of the play *Richard III* as its manic enthusiasm provides an excellent introduction to his character. Richard's unique charm is evident here in full force. One cannot help admiring his audacity, complete lack of scruples and will to power. Richard, in contrast to his father, brother or Bolingbroke for that matter (later Henry IV), is completely honest with himself and with the audience, if not with his colleagues, of course, understandably. We cannot help being swept up in the pure energy of Richard's plotting and machinations.

---

[115] Matthew 10:21, “And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.”
[116] Stanley Wells, *Shakespeare The Poet and his Plays* (1994; London: Methuen Publishing Limited, 2001) 100.

The child character of Rutland, the youngest son of York, is murdered by Clarence in 1.3. The Lancaster supporter justifies his actions by his right to revenge since his own father was killed by the York faction. The young boy recognises the futile nature of this endless bloodshed and appeals to the older man for mercy, not only for himself, but for the aggressor.

> Thou hast one son – for his sake pity me,
> Lest in revenge thereof, sith God is just,
> He be as miserably slain as I.
> Ah, let me live in prison all my days,
> And when I give occasion of offence,
> Then let me dies, for now thou hath no cause. (1.3:41-46)

Their dialogue has much in common with the scene between Hugh and Prince Arthur in *King John* when the would-be assassin finally does not have the heart to carry out the execution. Clarence, however, is blinded by his rage and takes the boy's life, only to be killed himself soon after in battle. Once again the child in his innocence has deeper insight than the adults entrenched in their petty power struggles.

Of interest is the brief episode scene of 4.3 involving a discussion between three watchmen outside King Edward's tent on the battle field. It bears parallels with the more famous night-before-the-battle scene in *Henry V* where we are also provided with an alternative subversive point-of-view on the political affairs from the common soldiers' perspective. The third watchman asks the others why Edward insists on sleeping in this field instead of enjoying the comforts of a nearby town. The second watchman replies, "'Tis the more honour, because more dangerous." (4.3:15), prompting the matter-of-fact, void of rancour, comment by the third watchman once again, "Ay, but give me worship and quietness--/ I like it better than a dangerous honour" (4.3:16-17). The words of this simple man put the bravado of the quarrelling nobility to shame.

Henry, Earl of Richmond, later Henry VII, makes a brief appearance in the play when King Henry VI prophecies over him.

If secret powers
Suggest but truth to my divining thoughts,
This pretty lad will prove our country's bliss.
His looks are full of peaceful majesty,
His head by nature framed to wear a crown,
His hand to wield a sceptre, and himself
Likely in time to bless a regal throne. (4.7:68-74)

Shakespeare obviously knows what he is doing here, trying to win points with the reigning monarch, Elizabeth, Henry VII's granddaughter. This is a classic example of the Tudor myth, as outlined by Tillyard,[117] wherein Henry VII restores the rightful line interrupted by Henry Bolingbroke, Henry IV, on his usurping of Richard II.

The play comes to a close with the complete victory of the York faction and the murders of both King Henry and his son Prince Edward. The former is killed with great gusto by Richard, very much in character, mocking poor Henry even while stabbing him to death.

What -- will the aspiring blood of Lancaster
Sink in the ground? I thought it would have mounted.
See how my sword weeps for the poor King's death. (5.6:61-63)

Richard thus emphasises Henry's saintly nature and his own uncompromising villainy. This is followed by a repetition of his dark plans to achieve the throne, starting with his brother Clarence. The play ends with the calm before the storm with the oldest son of York, Edward IV, crowned.

The saintly Henry advocates an ideal order which can never be realised this side of heaven. Richard, in contrast, is a blood-thirsty lord of misrule prepared to destroy everything in order to seize power.

[117] E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1944) 29-31.

Richard III, The Bottled Spider

Richard III starts up where *Henry VI part 3* leaves off, with Edward on the throne and Richard scheming to wrest it from him. Richard begins his campaign by contributing to the arrest of his the middle brother Clarence and later instigating his execution in prison. He seduces Lady Anne, the wife of Edward, Henry VI's son, and marries her. He also generates tension amongst the King's wife, the former Lady Gray, and her relatives. After Edward IV's death of illness, he casts doubts on the legitimacy of Edward's sons allowing him to ascend the throne; the two boys are consequently murdered in the tower. His greatest ally throughout his rise to power is the Duke of Buckingham. As soon as Richard obtains the throne, his fortunes begin to wane with the consequent rise of Henry Earl of Richmond, the later Henry VII. Henry's forces defeat Richard's army at the Battle of Bosworth ushering the Tudor monarchy.

As numerous authors have shown starting with Tillyard, Richard was demonized in the chronicles and most influentially in Sir Thomas More's version *The History of Richard III* in order to justify Henry VII's insurrection and victory at the Battle of Bosworth. Dominique Goy-Blanquet explains the nature of the Tudor myth and the consequent demonization of Richard:

> It is now well known that representations of the last Plantagenet were deliberately distorted by propaganda. Whatever could be urged against him, Richard's death and destitution needed special treatment if his victor was to escape the fate of former rebels. It was not enough for a conquering Richmond to inherit the Lancaster claim. His historiographers were required to trace his ascendancy back to the primitive Celtic kings, and beyond them to the first Trojan settlers.[118]

Richard II contains a villain and lord of misrule, strong female characters, silenced women, children, a clerk and several episode scenes. Richard is

[118] Dominique Goy-Blanquet, "Elizabethan Historiography and Shakespeare's Sources" T*he Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*, ed. Michael Hattaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 61.

subversion personified, a villain through and through. The play is organised in an entirely different fashion than the previous works. While up until now a main 'orderly' narrative has existed, here Richard takes over and turns everything on its head; nothing is sacred, not marriage, filial love or religion. In addition, the plot almost exclusively revolves around Richard himself. Richard is the self-proclaimed chameleon employing a wide range of subversive techniques (asides, soliloquies, feigned piety, mocking, puns) to undermine his brother's rule and seize power himself. The play also contains a number of interesting female characters both of the strong and silent type. Margaret, though stripped of her royal title, refuses to keep quiet and hurls curses down on everyone, but in particular on Richard himself. Lady Anne briefly speaks up for herself only to be quickly silenced and wed by Richard. The two young princes also provide an interesting new perspective as children critiquing and ridiculing Richard under the guise of naïve youth. Lastly, there are several episode scenes, one involving commoners debating about the state of the kingdom and a second involving a scrivener pointing out the uses of political propaganda.

Richard could be viewed as an evil Falstaff, a lord of misrule, acting out our hidden fantasies. Both characters have been compared to the traditional Vice character in the medieval morality play who employs, as Greenblatt in his introduction to the play states,

> ...a jaunty use of asides, a delight in sharing his schemes with the audience, a grotesque appearance, a penchant for disguise, a manic energy and humor, and a wickedly engaging ability to defer though not finally escape well-deserved punishment.[119]

Another apt comparison is made by Anthony Hammond drawing parallels with Marlowe's most renowned villain, Barabas, from *The Jew of Malta*.

> In Richard III we find Shakespeare making use of Barabas's form of self-incriminating monologue, in which the villain who conceals his

> nature from the other characters invites the audience to share his delight in his villainies, an invitation that the audience in turn anticipates.[120]

Is Richard, however, all that much worse than the people surrounding him? His brother Edward is in just as deeply involved as he is in terms of usurping the throne from saintly Henry. In addition, Edward also marries beneath him taking as his bride a widow Elizabeth Woodeville thereby committing a similar act as when Henry married Margaret; a decision which brought about so much tension in the previous plays, specifically raising the ire of their father, Richard of York. Additionally, he is carrying on with a mistress Lady Shore. The middle brother George, or Clarence, is a turncoat and an opportunist, having changed sides twice in the last play *Henry VI part 3*. Lady Anne is easily seduced by Richard into marrying him despite knowing he has cold-bloodedly murdered both her husband and her father-in-law. I would argue then that Richard does openly, at least for the audience not in front of the other characters, what the rest of society is actually doing in secret.

The picture of Richard as pure wickedness, and hunchbacked in addition, arises out of political propaganda for the Tudor cause in order to justify the final defeat at the hands of Henry VII. Tillyard has this to say on the matter:

> In spite of the eminence of Richard's character the main business of the play is to complete the national tetralogy and to display the working out of God's plan to restore England to prosperity.[121]

I fully agree with this. Having said that, one gets the sense that Shakespeare enjoyed the excesses of Richard to a much greater extent than the actual completion of the plot details, in a similar fashion as with the above-mentioned Cade scenes.

---

[119] Stephen Greenblatt, "Richard III," *The Norton Shakespeare*, eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1997) 510.
[120] Anthony Hammond, introduction, *Richard* III, ed. Anthony Hammond (1981; Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1997) 91.
[121] E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1944) 199.

The opening soliloquy presents Richard as the outsider, unable to enjoy the pleasures of peace. He seems to blame his deformities for his hatred, though his realization that he is able to win over Lady Anne does nothing to change his views. Richard gleefully ridicules everything and everyone and initially has things all his own way. Richard's discussion with his brother Clarence is full of sexual puns with reference to both the Queen and the King's mistress Lady Shore. When Blackenbury, who is guarding Richard's brother Clarence, attempts to diplomatically avoid the thorny subject of the King's mistress, “With this, my lord, myself have naught to do” (1.1:98). Richard immediately quibbles on the word 'naught' ignoring the primary meaning, nothing, and emphasizing the slang meaning, sexual intercourse, “Naught to do with Mrs. Shore? I tell thee fellow:/ He that doth naught with her—excepting one--/ Were best to do it secretly alone” (1.1:99-101).

Richard feigns deep concern for his brother's plight only to change his tune completely when left alone on the stage. “Simple plain Clarence, I do love thee so/ That I will shortly send thy soul to heaven, (1.1.119-120).

Richard's seduction of Lady Anne can be seen as a parody of the sentiments of courtly love. When she threatens to scratch his face in order to prevent him from being attracted to her, Richard counters in Petrarchian fashion:

> These eyes could not endure sweet beauty's wreck.
> You should not blemish it if I stood by.
> As all the world is cheered by the sun,
> So I by that: it is my day, my life. (1.2:127-130)

This only to be followed, on Anne leaving the stage, by the horrible, but amusing, self-satisfied lines,

> Was ever woman in this humour wooed?
> Was ever woman in this humour won?
> I'll have her, but I will not keep her long. (1.2:215-217)

He marries her, but little is heard from her again, only to silently pass away, seemingly through foul play, conveniently allowing Richard to set his sights on his next victim, his niece Elizabeth.

Richard is in excellent form in 1.3 playing the role of the world-weary naïve innocent again very much reminiscent of Falstaff in the *Henry IV* plays.

> I would to God my heart were flint like Edward's,
> Or Edward's soft and pitiful like mine.
> I am too childish-foolish for this world (1.3:140-142)

The last line is delightful in its cheeky outrageousness. The scene ends with another short soliloquy wherein Richard reveals his political strategy and his employment of Biblical iteration to further his ambitions,

> But then I sigh, and with a piece of scripture
> Tell them that God bids us do good for evil;
> And thus I close my naked villiany
> With odd old ends, stol'n forth of Holy Writ,
> And seem a saint when most I play the devil. (1.3:332-336)

Here he explicitly admits of using the pious religious persona to further his political agenda. This is a wonderful commentary on the behaviour of politicians throughout history and particularly relevant to the invoking of God as a partisan supporter by Henry V at Agincourt.

He briefly meets a worthy adversary when Queen Margaret, the widow of Henry VI arrives on the scene. She appears while the others are bickering amongst themselves and calls down curses, in the form of asides to the audience, on one and all. Her primary scorn, understandably, is reserved for Richard.

> Out, devil! I remember thee too well.
> Thou killed'st my husband Henry in the Tower.
> And Edward, my poor son, at Tewsesbury. (1.3:118-120)

Margaret finally comes forward and shows herself eventually working herself into a state of fury while hurling insults and curses. She is far from silenced but ready and willing to engage in a war of words with all comers. She once again keeps her gems designated for Richard.

> Thou elvish-marked, abortive, rooting hog,
> Thou that was sealed in thy nativity
> Thou slave of nature and the son of hell,
> Thou slander of thy heavy mother's womb,
> Thou loathed issue of thy father's loins,
> Thou rag of honour, thou detested-- (1.3:225-230)

Her inventiveness is truly remarkable and Richard actually seems to be enjoying it with a childish interjection as she pauses to draw another breath, “Margaret.” (1.3:231). They continue to bicker with Margaret issuing a warning to Queen Elizabeth in particular, “Why stew'st thou sugar on that bottled spider” (1.3:240). Apart from brilliance of the image, Margaret is the only one to realize the true extent of the danger Richard poses for the others. “The day will come that thou shalt wish for me/ To help thee curse this poisonous bunch-backed toad” (1.3:243-245).

Richard's rhetoric reaches new depths of inanity in 2.1 when he parodies the holy rhetoric of Henry VI amongst others.

Amongst this princely heap if any here,

> By false intelligence or wrong surmise,
> Hold me a foe,
> If I unwittingly or in my rage
> Have aught committed that is hardly borne
> By any in this presence, I desire
> To reconcile me to his friendly peace.
> 'Tis death to me to be at enmity.
> I hate it, and desire all good men's love.--
> …

I do not know that Englishman alive
With whom my soul is any jot at odds
More than the infant that is born tonight.
I thank my God for my humility. (2.2:54-62,70-73)

All this of course immediately following the murder, at his instigation, of his own brother Clarence. His audacity is breath taking.

The following scene with his own mother mourning the loss of her son is more of the same.

Duchess of York: God bless thee, and put meekness in thy breast,
Love, charity, obedience, and true duty,
Richard Gloucester: Amen. (aside) 'And make me die a good old man'
That is the butt-end of a mother's blessing
I marvel that her grace did leave it out (2.2:95-99).

His cheek generates a mixture of horror at his depths of depravity and admiration at his wit and gall.

Shakespeare introduces an episode scene in 2.3 in order, one assumes, to provide the audience with the mood of the populace regarding the developments in court. Three citizens discuss King Edward's death and the ramifications for the kingdom. In the later plays Shakespeare has the commoners speak in prose as opposed to verse providing a welcome contrast stylistically. Here, however, the citizens speak in an unnatural stilted manner although their comments are to the point, “Woe to that land that's governed by a child” (2.3:11). This episode scene juxtaposed between the main action once again provides an alternative perspective on the events.

At a later point, Richard makes a direct reference to the Vice parallel mentioned earlier by Barber when quibbling with the word 'live' with his nephew Prince Edward who he will soon make short work of. “Thus like the formal vice, Iniquity,/ I moralize two meanings in one word” (3.1:82-83). They are joined on stage by Edward's younger brother York and Buckingham. Here York, in

particular, subtly insults his uncle, making reference not only to his character, but also his appearance. The boy asks if he can borrow Richard's sword.

> Richard Gloucester: What, would you have my weapon, little lord?
> York: I would that I might thank you as you call me.
> Richard Gloucester: How?
> York: Little.
> Prince Edward: My lord of York will still be cross in talk. --
> Uncle, your grace knows how to bear with him.
> York: You mean to bear me, not to bear with me. –
> Uncle, my brother mocks both you and me.
> Because that I am little like an ape,
> He thinks that you should bear me on my shoulders. (3.1:122-131)

He refers here, in seeming innocence, to his uncle's notorious hunchback which both Buckingham and Richard are well aware of. The child characters again provide a critical point-of-view with their youth serving, at least temporarily, as an excuse for their verbal attack. There is also a scene involving the children of murdered Clarence in 2.2 which lacks, however, the cutting subversive tone.

As the play progresses Richard seems to be able to do no wrong. He actually gets away with the cartoonish theatrics of 3.4 when he accuses Hastings of treason and of assisting Lady Shore in deforming his arm. This does not make all that much sense, but everyone is swept before him.

After his brother King Edward's death and the imprisonment of the princes in the tower, Richard urges Buckingham to spread rumours regarding the illegitimacy of his sons and even the unfaithfulness of his own mother, adding as if an afterthought, the amusing lines, “Yet touch this sparingly, as 'twere far off,/ Because my lord, you know my mother lives” (3.5:91-92). This is as close as Richard gets to showing some feelings and consideration.

Another episode scene immediately follows where a scrivener speaks alone on stage having just completed the official press release for the public concerning

the latest executions. The scrivener is doing his job, but is obviously struggling with his conscience and wondering how Richard and Buckingham will once again pull the wool over the eyes of the masses.

> Here's a good world the while! Who is so gross
> That cannot see this palpable device?
> Yet who so bold but says he sees it not? (3.6:10-12)

In other words, although obviously a con-job, who would have the audacity to say so and risk losing their head. As King Lear says to Gloucester, “Get thee glass eyes,/ And, like a scurvy politician, seem/ To see the things thou dost not” (King Lear, 4.6.164-166).

The following scene is once again genius in terms of its portrayal of political manipulation of the public. Buckingham serves as Richard's campaign manager creating an image of a pious, devout, Henry VI like, type whose last thought would be to ascend the throne. He tells Richard “...look you get a prayer book in your hand,/ And stand between two churchmen, good my lord...Play the maid's part: still answer 'nay' – and take it.” (3.7:47-48, 51). The scene continues with Richard playing hard to get in a manner strikingly reminiscent of Malcolm when Macduff urges him to launch a campaign to remove Macbeth from the Scottish throne. Richard, however, is only pretending, of course:

> Alas, why would you heap this care on me?
> I am unfit for state and majesty.
> I do beseech you, take it not amiss.
> I cannot, nor I will not, yield to you. (3.7:194-197)

He yields.

As soon as Richard obtains the throne, the wheel of fortune begins to turn. He seems to flourish more in the role of underdog and now that he has obtained the crown, he finds himself at a loss. He immediately has a falling out with Buckingham over eliminating the princes and begins to panic. Tillyard holds similar views regarding the turnaround in his character:

> His irony forsakes him; he is unguarded, not secretive in making his plans; he is no longer cool but confused in his energy, giving and retracting orders; he really does not sleep;[122]

The princes are dispatched, along with Queen Anne, and Richard sets his sights on his niece, Elizabeth, in order to solidify the throne. He engages in a long discussion with her mother Queen Elizabeth, Edward's widow on the topic. At one point she suggests he send a bloody valentine to her daughter in order to win her heart and for once Richard seems unable to produce a witty retort. “You mock me, madam. This is not the way/ To win your daughter” (4.4:270-271). Despite this momentary set-back, Richard, in one of the most inexplicable scenes in all of Shakespeare, seems to win her over despite having murdered the rest of her family. Productions have presented this in various ways in order to explain this extremely problematic decision. He does not marry her, of course, in the end.

When Queen Elizabeth leaves the stage, Richard ridicules her with the vicious lines, “Relenting fool, and shallow changing woman!” (4.4:362) only to immediately afterwards behave in the manner he has mocked when speaking to Ratcliffe, “My mind is chang’d” (4.4:387). The mirroring technique is thus in evidence once again. Richard's iron will to power is waning quickly.

The night before the battle of Bosworth Field, Richard is visited by the ghosts of his numerous victims and seemingly, for the first time in his life, experiences the pangs of a guilty conscience behaving in a very Richard unlike fashion. “Have mercy, Jesu—Soft! I did but dream./ O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me (5.5:132-133).

Though the play ends on a happy note with Henry VII the victor, one ironically always remembers the loser, namely Richard and his contagious demonic energy. Richard is a villain and lord of misrule who must be defeated in the end in order to pave the way for the ascension of the Tudor dynasty.

---

[122] E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare’s History Plays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1944) 211.

King John, “Mad world, mad kings, mad composition!” (2.1:562)

The play *King John* is an anomaly of sorts, chronicling events almost two hundred years prior to Richard II’s reign. Shakespeare’s choice of subject matter is surprising to say the least. Instead of focusing on potentially interesting topics such as the Magna Carta or Robin Hood and his merry men, he concentrates on the struggle over the throne between his own party and the backers of his nephew Arthur, supported by the King of France and Austria. John accompanied by his army commanded by his half-brother, the Bastard, Philip Falconbridge, invade France and after various attempts at reaching a treaty, wage war and capture Arthur. John is also in conflict with the Catholic Church, being excommunicated at one point, only to be reconciled with the Pope in exchange for support against the French. One of John's men Hubert is sent to kill Arthur, but does not have the heart. Arthur dies anyway, however, trying to escape from prison and many of the nobility blame John. At the end of the play John is poisoned by a monk dying at the same moment that the enemy French are defeated while trying to invade England.

The plays contains a lord of misrule, strong female characters and in contrast a silenced woman and a child character. Of highest interest in the play is the person of Philip Falconbridge the Bastard, Richard the Lion Hearted’s illegitimate son, a character mostly of Shakespeare's own imaginings. He is another of what I like to call lords of misrule employing numerous asides and soliloquies to reveal his ambition. Unlike previous examples, however, he uses his subversive status for the good of the country, often in contrast to King John. There are also a number of strong female characters, namely Queen Eleanor and Lady Constance, along with the submissive 'silenced' Lady Blanche. A child character also appears, Arthur, the rival to the English throne.

Virginia Mason Vaughan actually claims this is “Shakespeare’s postmodern history play,”[123] going on to point out the key roles played here, not only by Philip

[123] Virginia Mason Vaughan, “King John,” *A Companion to Shakespeare’s Works: The Histories*, eds. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2003) 380.

but by several prominent female characters: Queen Eleanor, Lady Falconbridge, Lady Blanche and Lady Constance:

> Moreover, in 1.1, as in later scenes before the gates of Angers, Shakespeare's decision to make room in the historical narrative for the voices of women and a bastard suggests a more inclusive view of the body politic than is found in other history plays.[124]

Their prominence is also partially due to the fact that the main character, supposedly King John, lacks substance.

The character of King John is particularly distasteful, evincing a range of unsavoury character traits: cowardice, pettiness, jealousy and passivity. Although initially seemingly villainous, the Bastard ends up being a largely positive character remaining loyal to his King and looking out for the best interests of his country. Stanley Wells puts it well:

> If all Shakespeare's history plays were named after their most vigorous, interesting, and theatrically attractive characters (and those that have the longest role in the play), King John would be called The Bastard.[125]

The Bastard is a likeable practical unpretentious type in contrast to the wavering, conniving aristocratic characters. His ongoing critical commentary on the various events, often in the form of soliloquies or asides, is at times reminiscent of Falstaff's role in the *Henry IV* plays, though of a much less debauched nature. In his first soliloquy he states:

> But this is worshipful society,
> And fits the mounting spirit like myself;
> For he is but a bastard to the time
> That doth not smack of observation;

[124] Virginia Mason Vaughan, "King John" *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works: The Histories*, eds. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2003) 382.
[125] Stanley Wells, *Shakespeare The Poet and his Plays* (1994; London: Methuen Publishing Limited, 2001) 109.

> And so am I – whether I smack or no,
> And not alone in habit and device,
> Exterior form, outward accoutrement,
> But from the inward motion – to deliver
> Sweet, sweet, sweet poison for the age's tooth;
> Which, though I will not practice to deceive,
> Yet to avoid deceit I mean to learn;
> For it shall strew the footsteps of my rising. (1.1:205-216)

Philip thus embraces his 'bastard' status and resolves to make his way up the social ladder using whatever means necessary. He immediately attracts the attention of both the King and Queen Eleanor, John's mother, Philip's grandmother and the one who actually seems to be pulling the strings at least in the first half of the play. Walter Cohen sums up Philip's role succinctly.

> An almost entirely unhistorical personage in the least historical of Shakespeare's history plays, the Bastard is the most prominent character in the work but arguably less a coherent fictional figure than a series of discontinuous theatrical functions. ..the Bastard speaks to and for the audience in asides and soliloquies, denouncing the moral failings of the rich and powerful while cheerfully conceding that he too is out for himself.[126]

When England prepares to attack France backed by the Duke of Austria, the latter of which supposedly killed Richard I in battle, Philip quickly assumes informal command although accompanied by an entourage of the nobility. When the sides begin an ongoing quarrel over the question of whose claim to the throne, John's or Arthur's is more legitimate, Philip comments on the absurd character of the negotiations in a series of amusing asides. When John pompously declaims, "Doth not the crown of England prove the king?/ And if not that, I bring you witnesses:/ Twice fifteen thousand hearts of England's breed--" (2.1:273-275),

Philip interjects immediately in a witty aside, “Bastards and else” (2.1:276). The French King, also named Philip, counters with his own claims, “As many and as well-born bloods as those--” (2.1.278) which Philip responds to with “Some bastards too” (2.1:279). These asides cut through the pomp of the self-important monarchs calling into question the whole concepts of legitimacy and illegitimacy, this being particularly relevant since both John and Arthur are accused of having been bastards by the opposing sides. The famous court scene in *The Merchant of Venice* comes to mind when Portia arrives in disguise as a male lawyer and says, “Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?” (Merchant of Venice, 4.1:169) thereby, casting doubts on the entire scheme of Venetian society.

After another round of ranting and raving from both sides, Philip interjects another comic dig again touching on the illegitimacy issue, “Zounds! I was never so bethumped with words/ Since I first called my brother's father Dad” (2.1:467-468).

This extremely long scene ends with a soliloquy by Philip beginning with the lines, “Mad world, mad kings, mad composition!” (2.1:562) and further developing into an insightful commentary on the economic factors underlying all of the manoeuvrings, not only in *King John*, but all of the history plays.

> …
> That smooth-faced gentleman, tickling commodity;
> Commodity, the bias of the world,
> The world who of itself is peisèd well,
> Made to run even upon even ground,
> Till this advantage, this vile-drawing bias,
> This sway of motion, this commodity,
> Makes it take head from all indifferency,
> From all direction, purpose, course, intent;
> And this same bias, this commodity,
> This bawd, this broker, this all-changing word,

[126] Walter Cohen, “King John” *The Norton Shakespeare* eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1997)

> Clapped on the outward eye of fickle France,
> Hath drawn him from his own determined aid,
> From a resolved and honourable war,
> To a most base and vile-concluded peace.
> And why rail I on this commodity?
> But for because he hath not wooed me yet –
> …
> Since Kings break faith upon commodity,
> Gain be my lord, for I will worship thee. (2.1:574-589, 598-599)

The key word here is 'commodity' which Harold Goddard glosses as follows, "Worldliness, compliance, compromise, policy, diplomacy, casuistry, expediency, opportunism: they all are somehow comprehended under the one name."[127] After all the chest-thumping and talk of honour and rights, the struggle has been temporarily solved by a pragmatic marriage between members of both sides, saving both money and face. Philip is receiving a crash course in real politik and resolves to learn the ropes as fast as possible. His cynical conclusion with his ambition to look out for his own interests, is, as Wells emphasises, actually "belied by his later behaviour".[128]

The female characters are amongst Shakespeare's fieriest, exchanging blows on both sides of the conflict. Phyllis Rackin and Jean E. Howard point this out:

> Speaking with strong, irreverent voices, these women claim a place in the historical narrative and challenge the myths of patriarchal authority that the men invoke to justify their actions.[129]

1019.
[127] Harold Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare*, vol. 1 (1951; Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1967) 42.
[128] Stanley Wells, *Shakespeare The Poet and his Plays* (1994; London: Methuen Publishing Limited, 2001) 111.
[129] Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (New York: Routledge, 1997) 121.

Lady Constance, rarely allowing herself to be silenced in the play, mourning the treatment of her son, makes an acute comment on the arbitrary nature of the law.

> …When law can do no right,
> Let it be lawful that law bar no wrong.
> Law cannot give my child his kingdom here,
> For he that holds his kingdom holds the law.
> Therefore since law itself is perfect wrong,
> How can the law forbid my tongue to curse? (3.1:111-116)

She can curse with the best of them evoking parallels with Margaret. When scolding Austria for not defending her son's royal claim she lets out all the stops:

> War, war, no peace! Peace is to me a war.
> O Limoges, O Austria, thou dost shame
> That bloody spoil. Thou slave, thou wretch, thou coward!
> Thou little valiant, great in villainy; (3.1:39-42)

The child Prince Arthur's innocence contrasts vividly with the cynical machinations of those around him. He is reminiscent of a saint or Christ figure at times lamenting the shedding of blood which takes place in connection with his royal claims, “Good my mother peace./ I would that I were low laid in my grave./ I am not worth this coil that's made for me” (2.1:163-165). When Hubert is supposed to put out his eyes, Arthur melts his heart with his guileless pleading: “Will you put out mine eyes,/ These eyes that never did, nor never shall,/ So much as frown on you?” (4.1:56-58). The child is one again here the voice of reason saving the soul, in a sense, of the adult Hubert.

Constance's arch-enemy, Queen Eleanor, is also a strong female character, to such an extent that King John is paralysed upon learning of her death having obviously depended upon her for his difficult decision-making. Upon initially hearing of the advance of the French army he states in panic, “Where is my mother's ear,/ That such an army could be drawn in France,/ And she not hear of

it" (4.2:117-119). Upon being informed of her demise he attempts to organise his thoughts only to repeatedly dwell on this overwhelming loss, "What, Mother dead?" (4.2:127) and again, "My mother dead" (4.2:182). His affairs quickly crumble from this point. A. J. Piesse makes a similar point arguing that "Eleanor fights cynically and in a sophisticated, knowing, almost masculine fashion,..."[130] having no choice perhaps due to her son's lack of gumption. The parallel with Henry VI and Queen Margaret comes immediately to mind.

The third female character fits the more stereotypical female stereotype, keeping silent when she is told to. Howard and Rackin point this out as well:

> Blanch is the only woman in the play who is cast in the traditional feminine mold... she is placed in the archetypically feminine role of a medium of exchange between men.[131]

The Bastard's final speech, over the body of the King, critiques the corruption within the state, not the threat from the outside.

> This England never did, nor never shall,
> Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror
> But when it first did help to wound itself.
> Now these her princes are come home again,
> Come the three corners of the world in arms
> And we shall shock them. Naught shall make us rue
> If England to itself do rest but true. (5.7:112-118)

Notwithstanding, this rousing speech by, I would argue, the most dynamic and interesting character, the play somehow leaves one cold. Richard Helgerson states the case succinctly, "Even among Shakespeare's own history plays, *King*

[130] A. J. Piesse, "King John: Changing Perspectives" T*he Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*, ed. Michael Hattaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 132.
[131] Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (New York: Routledge, 1997) 122.

John stands alone, for it does less than any other to engage the emotions of its audience."[132]

With the exception of Philip the Bastard there is little room here for subversive voices as the entire play seems to consist of a satirical picture of politics at its worst. Stanley Wells sums up both the play and the personage of King John in masterful fashion.

> It is the most satirical of Shakespeare's histories in its treatment of political issues, and John, dominated by his mother, Queen Eleanor, and unredeemed by Henry VI's saintliness, is the most wimpish off its kings, the smallest-minded in his pursuit of selfish aims.[133]

The picture provided by Wells is supported by productions of the play wherein John has been depicted in a comic vein. The BBC production directed by David Giles oddly employs the otherwise hilarious comedian Leonard Rossiter in the role of King John. Rossiter appears completely lost in the role uncertain whether to ham it up or play it straight. This may be partially due to the, already discussed, disorderly nature of the character itself.

[132] Richard Helgerson, "Shakespeare and Contemporary Dramatists of History," *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works: The Histories*, eds. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2003) 31.
[133] Stanley Wells, *Shakespeare The Poet and his Plays* (1994; London: Methuen Publishing Limited, 2001) 110.

Richard II, "Stain so fair a show" (3.3:70)

Richard II is a transitional play in a variety of ways. It involves, first and foremost, the removal of the medieval monarch, Richard, in favour of a more Machiavellian ruler, Henry. It sets up the chain of events dramatised in both the *Henry IV* and *V* tetralogy as well as the *Henry VI* tetralogy written earlier and finally *Richard III*. The play begins in the middle of Richard's reign with a conflict between two of his noblemen, his cousin Harry Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford and later Henry IV, and Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk. The anonymous work *Woodstock* which deals with the earlier part of Richard's reign serves to fill in the background. Richard had earlier employed Mowbray to assist in assassinating his uncle Woodstock. Thus the present conflict implicates Richard himself. Richard is an extravagant ruler under the influence of a group of flatterers, unpopular with the nobility.

Richard solves the problem by banishing both protagonists and upon the death of his uncle, John of Gaunt, Bolingbroke's father, confiscating the family property. Richard uses the money to finance a war in Ireland leaving England under the stewardship of another uncle, the Duke of York. While Richard is away, Bolingbroke returns in order to retrieve his fortunes, only to rapidly reveal higher ambitions aided by the influential Percy clan. Richard arrives from Ireland expecting the support of Welsh troops but returns late and has little backing. He consequently meets with Bolingbroke and resigns his throne. After an elaborate official dethronement ceremony, Richard is imprisoned and Bolingbroke ascends the throne as Henry IV. Richard is murdered in prison at Henry's instigation.

Richard II has, once again, a lord of misrule, a villain of sorts, strong female characters and significant episode scenes. There is an extensive use of parallel structures. Richard is in some respects a king of disorder or lord of misrule bringing about his own downfall through his poor decisions and character traits. He combines various subversive techniques within his character. He is a mocker of both his elders and the time-honoured traditions of the state. He is fond of puns and cynical asides ridiculing his elders and enemies. He is a lord of misrule abusing his position of power and more interested in parties and extravagance

than political decision-making. Upon losing power, however, Richard achieves a quiet dignity and grace. Richard is also a poet with a fondness for verbal extravagance. The voice of reason in the plays is once again in the mouths of the minor characters. These subversive voices, in contrast to the Henry plays, come from the mouths of the elderly, primarily the aristocracy: John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster and Edmund of Langley the Duke of York. Also of interest in the play are the female characters, namely Queen Isabella, the Duchess of Gloucester and the Duchess of York, who Shakespeare emphasises in contrast to the chronicle sources. The play also includes key episode scenes, in particular the famous garden scene. There are finally a great deal of parallel structures, scenes which mirror one another, foreshadowing and echoing what has come before or after respectively.

Richard II exhibits a formality which disappears in the following plays. As Stanley Wells has pointed out this is the final play, along with King John, to employ verse exclusively; the consequent plays have the commoners speaking in prose.[134]

The play has also been infamous for its supposed use as a propaganda tool encouraging the Essex cause against Elizabeth. According to legend, the abdication scene was so disturbing that Queen Elizabeth said, "I am Richard II," fumed the queen. "Know you not that?".[135]

The play dramatises on the one hand, the rightful King who abuses his powers and succumbs to flatterers, while on the other hand, we have the wily Machiavellian Henry who claims to have only returned for what is rightfully his, but by doing so destroys Richard's authority and draws the support of the populace behind him, in a fashion at times reminiscent of Richard III.

The Elizabethan party line would have been that Richard II was the lawful, divinely anointed monarch and thus Bolingbroke, the future Henry IV, though unjustly treated, is in the wrong. Richard's removal brings with it chaos. Nothing

[134] Stanley Wells, *Shakespeare The Poet and his Plays* (1994; London: Methuen Publishing Limited, 2001) 134,135.
[135] Qtd. in Katharine Eisaman Maus, "Richard II," *The Norton Shakespeare* eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1997) 944.

is stated explicitly, however, as to who is in the right or wrong. The play opens up with the quarrel between Bolingbroke and Mowbray with Richard seemingly the impartial judge. We only know how deep Richard is involved in these events if we are already familiar with the chronicle accounts or have perhaps seen the anonymous work *Woodstock* which documents Richard's decision to get rid of his uncle the Duke of Gloucester or Thomas of Woodstock. Mowbray, has thus acted upon the King's orders and is now in the classic position of a scapegoat figure having to take a fall for the King. In light of this fact one could interpret Bolingbroke's accusations as an indirect attack on the King himself, lending credence to the theory that Henry is after the throne from day one.

One of Richard's earliest sentences provides insight into his character. When announcing he will hear the complaints of Bolingbroke and Mowbray, he declaims, "Face to face/ And frowning brow to brow, ourselves will hear/ the accuser and the accused freely speak" (1.1:15-17). Richard is a poet, or better said, thinks of himself as one. He likes to hear himself speak, likes the sound of his own voice. He prefers talk to action. He is also an extravagant dandy, fond of ceremony, fashion, pomp and fanfare. Richard loves to speak in rhymed couplets, for example, after hearing both of the lords state their case, he pompously comes out with,

> Wrath-kindled gentlemen, be ruled by me.
> Let's purge this choler without letting blood.
> This we prescribe, though no physician:
> Deep malice makes too deep incision;
> Forget, forgive, conclude, and be agreed;
> Our doctors say this is no time to bleed. (1.1:152-157)

Richard avoids dealing with difficult problems only for them to eventually blow up in his face. Not having been able to reconcile the two lords, Richard sets a date for a public combat only to bring a halt to the proceedings after all of the preliminary ceremonial speeches are concluded, thus satisfying, one assumes, his taste for theatrics.

Up until this point, Richard though flighty is not unlikeable, things change, however, when he hears of the illness of his uncle, John of Gaunt, his closest advisor and supporter. Richard, not even in an aside, but in front of Bushy, Green and Bagot, his so-called 'flatterers' or caterpillars, cynically remarks,

> Now put it, God, in his 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.
> Come, gentlemen, let's all go visit him.
> Pray God we may make haste and come too late! (1:4.58-63)

He mockingly invokes the name of God with the intention of confiscating the dead man's property to finance the invasion of Ireland. This hasty act will have major repercussions.

Upon Richard's arrival with his entourage, Gaunt attempts to steer the wayward King back to the paths of righteousness, but to no avail. Richard's response involves continual cynical mockery, “Can sick men play so nicely with their names?” (2.1:84) culminating with the flippant. “His time is spent; our pilgrimage must be. So much for that.” (2.1:155-156) upon hearing of his uncle's final demise.

At the end of the play, stripped of his crown and pomp, Richard achieves a quiet dignity, lamenting his former doings. “I wasted time, and now time doth waste me” (5.5:49). Now, finally silenced, he actually has something worthwhile to say. Barber explicitly views him as a lord of misrule who, unlike Hal, realises he has gone too far and cannot go back (the his and he in the sentence refer to Hal).

> His energy is controlled by an inclusive awareness of the rhythm in which he is living: despite appearances, he will not make the mistake

which undid Richard II, who played at saturnalia until it caught up with him in earnest.[136]

Queen Isabella, Richard's second wife (Anne of Bohemia was his first) was historically only a girl of eleven. Shakespeare gives here a voice, however, portraying her as older or particularly wise for her age. She is given a marked strength and dignity and even attempts to infuse some backbone into her inept husband. She appears for the first time in 2.2 and from the beginning has an evil premonition that things are not right in the kingdom. Bushy dismisses her worries smugly only to be proved wrong when Green, followed by York, arrive with the bad news of Bolingbroke's return while the King is away in Ireland. The Queen's remark is particularly apt, making reference it would seem to Richard's friends who have led him down this fateful road.

He is a flatterer
A parasite, a keeper-back of death,
Who gently would dissolve the bonds of life,
Which false hope lingers in extremity. (2.2:69-72)

The Queen is a voice of reason, unfortunately unheeded, with insight into the folly of her self-absorbed husband.

The King and Queen meet for the last time in 5.1 and despite her efforts at attempting to encourage him or even convince the powers that be to let them stay together, they are sent their separate ways, Isabella back to France and Richard to prison. Once again Shakespeare juxtaposes a strong female with an ineffectual male.

A key episode scene occurs in 3.4 immediately following the King's informal abdication in 3.3 and the official ceremonial transference of power in 4.1. After the Queen is shown with her ladies in waiting trying to pass the time with various games, several gardeners come on stage and present an obviously allegorical

[136] C. L. Barber, "From Ritual to Comedy: An Examination of Henry IV," *Shakespeare Modern Essays in Criticism*, Leonard F. Dean (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) 149.

commentary on the state of affairs in the political sphere. The master gardener is giving instructions to his assistants.

> Go bind thou up young dangling apricots,
> Which, like unruly children, make their sire
> Stoop with oppression of their prodigal weight.
> Give some supportance to the bending twigs.
> Go thou and, like an executioner.
> Cut off the heads of too-fast-growing sprays
> That look too lofty in our commonwealth.
> All must be even in our government.
> You thus employed, I will go root away
> The noisome weeds which without profit suck
> The soil's fertility from wholesome flowers. (3.4.30-40)

This is obvious allegory with the weeds representing the King's flatterers and the soil the political land. M. C. Bradbrook views this scene as central to an understanding of the play even explicitly referring to it as a 'mirror scene'. "The image of the trampled garden runs through the play and it is embodied in the mirror scene of the gardeners."[137] A few lines later the gardener even expressly draws the obvious comparison only to bring down the wrath of the Queen who has been eavesdropping all the while.

> ….Superfluous branches
> We lop away, that bearing boughs may live.
> Had he done so, himself had borne the crown,
> Which waste of idle hours hath quite thrown down. (3.4.64-67)

The verisimilitude of having gardeners so versed in political affairs has been often called into question. Stanley Wells in his recent work *Shakespeare The Poet and his Plays* draws attention to a production which ingeniously employed monks

[137] M. C. Bradbrook, "Tragical-Historical: *Richard II*" *Shakespeare: Richard II; A Casebook*, ed. Nicholas Brooke (London and Basingtoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973) 152.

in these roles, making the whole proceeding more believable.[138] Harold C. Goddard also makes an acute observation discussing the three gardeners. "The three are clearly put in to contrast with the murderer and his two assistants in the final scene. Gardeners and murderers—agents of life and death."[139]

Immediately prior to Richard's dramatic renunciation of the throne, an odd scene takes place wherein various noblemen accuse Aumerle of treason, only to have all hell break loose, with seemingly everyone accusing everyone else of ill doings. Shakespeare intentionally adds to the confusion, in comparison with the sources, by introducing complete mayhem. In contrast to M. M. Mahood who argues that "the long and rather irrelevant 'gage' scene which precedes the deposition reads like the padding to an abbreviated text--"[140], I would view the passage as a telling description of a ruthless struggle for power. With a new man in charge, everything goes and nothing seems to be sacred.

Richard is a lord of misrule whose demise is understandable, if not justified, due to his abuse of the throne for his own excesses. Henry in the next two plays, *Henry IV part 1* and *Henry IV part 2*, is haunted, however, by his crime. There is thus no ideal order feasible and the focus of attention moves to the underground festive world of Falstaff and his merry men.

[138] Stanley Wells, *Shakespeare The Poet and his Plays*. (1994. London: Methuen Publishing Limited, 2001) 136.
[139] Harold Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare*. Vol. 1. (1951. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1967) 160.
[140] M. M. Mahood, "Wordplay in Richard II," *Shakespeare: Richard II; A Casebook*, ed. Nicholas Brooke (London and Basingtoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973) 204.

Henry VIII, Burning Down the House

Henry VIII or *All is True* deals with a short segment of Henry's reign from approximately 1525 when he first meets Anne of Boleyn to the birth of the future Queen Elizabeth in 1533. The play documents Henry's rejection of Katherine in favour of Anne and the rise and fall of Cardinal Wolsey and his successor Cranmer. It was supposedly a collaborative work with the younger dramatist John Fletcher. Although the play deals with history, the structure bears resemblances to the late romances Shakespeare was writing at the time: *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale*. The subject matter obviously made it a still sensitive topic as it touches on the legitimacy of both Elizabeth and James I. Much of the play takes the form of a pageant, a genre much in vogue at this time. The play is particularly critical of Wolsley, until his seemingly sincere repentance and most laudatory of the dethroned Katherine in contrast to the sources, Holinshed in particular. Also of interest in connection with the play is the fact that a fire broke out during a performance burning down the entire Globe bringing a symbolic close to Shakespeare's playwriting career. The alternative title of the play, *All is True*, would seem somewhat inappropriate or perhaps ironic given the fact that the play focuses on Henry's attempts to rewrite the history of his own marriage to Katherine in order to be freed up to marry Anne

The play contains both strong and silenced female characters. There is a mocker, the appearance of commoners and a number of episode scenes. Although not as numerous as in the previously discussed history plays, *Henry VIII* does display certain mild subversive techniques and dissenting voices. First and foremost, Katherine is provided with dignity and grace despite being pushed aside in favour of Anne by her husband. She is particularly eloquent when defending herself against the insinuations of Cardinal Wolsey and Cardinal Campeius. Anne, in contrast, is more the traditional obedient type or at least pretends to be. The so-called Old Lady, attached to the person of Anne, provides a comic perspective often punning and mocking her charge, revealing the falsity of her feigned innocence. There are several episode scenes with unnamed characters commenting on the events in and around the court. Another episode serves to

ridicule the French love of fashion. An additional puzzling episode scene occurs near the end of the play with the commoners attempting to catch a glimpse of the christening of Elizabeth.

Henry is not pictured in particularly flattering terms, mostly oblivious of the machinations occurring around him. Almost everyone in the play is juggling for power and influence, and it is only a matter of time until the next favourite's fortunes are reversed.

Near the beginning of the piece, in act 1.1., a group of English noblemen ridicule another group of French visitors for their obsession with fashion. Walter Cohen has pointed out that this might actually be a period reference to King James' own penchant for extravagance.[141]

Two unnamed gentlemen appear twice in episode scenes in the play acting as an informal chorus with their, in my view stilted, commentary on the events in court. Although they are incredibly knowledgeable regarding the ins and outs of the members of the court, they never bother to learn one another's name. There are two of them in 2.1 only to be joined by a third halfway through 4.1. Most of what they discuss is fairly innocuous, however, occasionally their commentary has some bite, such as, for example, when commenting on the coronation of Queen Anne.

> Our King has all the Indies in his arms,
> And more, and richer, when he strains that lady.
> I cannot blame his conscience. (4.1:45-47)

This word 'conscience' comes up again in a more explicit critique of King Henry's behaviour in 2.2. involving a hushed encounter between the Lord Chamberlain, Suffolk and Norfolk.

> Suffolk: How is the King employed?
> Lord Chamberlain: I left him private, full of said thoughts and troubles.
> Norfolk: What's the cause?

Lord Chamberlain: it seems the marriage with his brother's wife
Has crept too near his conscience.
Suffolk: No, his conscience has crept too near another lady. (2.2:12-17)

Here one has a blatant statement regarding Henry's hypocritical use of religious trappings in order to justify his own personal interests, in this case, getting rid of Katherine in order to be able to marry Anne Boleyn.

The lady in waiting to Anne, referred to as the Old Lady, present in scene 2.3 and who later announces the birth of Elizabeth to Henry in 5.1 at times resembles a milder version of the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* with her bawdy view of the affairs of the court. Anne is initially either completely naïve or lying to herself as to King Henry's intentions. When expressing her heartfelt concern for the fate of Queen Katherine, Anne in Juliet-like fashion states, "By my troth and maidenhead,/ I would not be a queen" (2.3:22-23). The Old Lady cuts through her feigned modesty with a pragmatic response punning on the meaning of 'queen' and 'quean' the latter being a slang word for a prostitute.[142]

Beshrew me, I would –
And venture maidenhead for't; and so would you,
For all this spice of your hypocrisy. (2.3:24-26)

Her teasing of Anne continues when the younger lady insists she would never take the step, 'not for all the riches under heaven" (2.3:35). The Old Lady's rejoinder is right on the money, "'Tis strange. A threepence bowed would hire me,/ Old as I am to queen it" (2.3:36-37). The Old Lady's seemingly cynical words rapidly come true, of course.

Katherine is portrayed in a positive light bearing up with courage and dignity to her humiliations. She is certainly not silenced by any stretch of the imagination, but is instead ready and willing to take on all comers. When expected to passively

[141] Walter Cohen, "All is True" *The Norton Shakespeare*, eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1997) 3117.

listen to the justification for annulling her marriage, she ignores decorous procedure and defends herself bravely directly to the King and Cardinal Wolsey.

> Sir, I do desire you do me right and justice,
> And to bestow your pity on me; for
> I am a most poor woman, and a stranger,
> …
> ...Alas Sir,
> In what have I offended you? What cause
> Hath my behaviour given to your displeasure
> That thus you should proceed to put me off, (2.4:11-13,16-19)

After speaking her mind she leaves the court room ignoring the commands for her to return and passively participate in the proceedings.

When Wolsey and his colleague Cardinal Campeius later visit her in her chambers in order to bully her into submission, she proves a worthy opponent seeing through their empty rhetoric. She is given an aside, "To betray me." (3.1:67) therein revealing her perceptiveness of the machinations occurring around her. She condemns their false piety punning on the word 'cardinal'

> Holy men I thought ye,
> Upon my soul, two reverend cardinal virtues –
> But cardinal sins and hollow hearts I fear ye.
> Mend em, for shame, my lords! Is this your comfort? (3.1:101-104)

She even anticipates the imminent downfall of Cardinal Wolsey: "Take heed for heaven's sake take heed, lest at once./ The burden of my sorrows fall upon ye" (3.1:109-110).

The Old Lady appears briefly once again in 5.1 announcing the birth of Elizabeth and once again provides an amusing alternative perspective on the events upon taking offence at not being given a bigger tip from the King for flattering him regarding the baby.

---

[142] Julia Cresswell, *The Insect That Stole Butter? Oxford Dictionary of Word Origins* (Oxford:

> An hundred marks? By this light, I'll ha' more.
> An ordinary groom is for such payment.
> I will have more, or scold it out of him.
> Said I for this the girl was like to him? (5.1:172-175)

The second to last scene, 5.3, is another odd episode scene which seems to lend little to the primary narrative. A porter, a man and the Lord Chamberlain discuss the issue of crowd control around the christening of the future Queen Elizabeth. The discussions amongst the first two mentioned, however, have a definite bawdy twist providing an alternative view on the otherwise highly serious events. The Porter is puzzled by the great turnout providing an amusing observation, "Or have we some strange Indian with the great tool come to court, the women so besiege us?" (5.1:32-33). The scene could perhaps be interpreted as a foreshadowing of the commotion to follow during Elizabeth's reign.

The play ends with the christening of Elizabeth and the grand laudatory words predicting her coming greatness. K.A. Ewert acutely points out the significance of Queen Anne's absence at the final celebration of Elizabeth's birth.

> This particular body is, I think, most conspicuously absent from the stage at the baby Elizabeth's christening; Anne's disappearance from the stage here speaks volumes for her commodified body being sold short, in her own soon-to-come long divorce of steel.[143]

Anne has done her job and as Hamlet says with his last breath "The rest is silence" (Hamlet, 5.2:300).

All in all, the play is less than satisfying though certainly aimed at pleasing the powers that be. Cohen points out that: "The overall result is the characteristic national reconciliation of Shakespeare's history plays."[144] The subversive voices

---

Oxford University Press, 2009) 351.
[143] K. A. Ewert, "Commodification and Representation: The Body in Shakespeare's History Plays," 24 July 2005.
<http://www.marshall.edu/engsr/SR1998.html#Commodification%20and%20Representation>.
[144] Walter Cohen, "All is True," *The Norton Shakespeare* eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1997) 3115.

here are fairly subdued, this being understandable considering the historical proximity of the events being portrayed and perhaps also in light of Shakespeare's limited involvement.

Conclusion

Subversive techniques and characters can be found throughout the entire Shakespearian canon. The history plays, however, are of particular interest in this respect as Shakespeare was dealing with controversial material, still very much at issue for the ruling powers of his day. While not questioning the importance of the Tudor myth and Elizabethan order as outlined by E. M. Tillyard, I believe these techniques and characters can open up alternative readings and perspectives on the plays. Instead of trying to argue whether Shakespeare was an early feminist, a Marxist or a Cultural Materialist, to mention only a few of the current schools of Shakespearian criticism, I would like to focus on how the existence of these subversive techniques and characters allows for this remarkable range of perspectives.

The lord of misrule, stemming from festive theory, is one of the most interesting of these subversive types. A number of the kings can arguably fit this role. Richard II with his decadent lifestyle supported by his immoral flatterers refuses to recognise the warning signs offered up by his elders, John of Gaunt and York and finally pays the price. Richard III is the most obvious representative of this type furiously carving his path to the top with no regard for the lives of his own family.

Other characters in the histories also reveal affinities with the lord of misrule. The Bastard in *King John* seems to initially fit the bill, ignoring the societal norms of legitimacy in his quest for power, only to reveal a deep moral concern for the fate of the British nation, in contrast to his ineffectual king. Joan of Arc in *Henry VI part 1* is portrayed as the arch-nemesis to masculine order and propriety in addition to being the general of the enemy French forces. Jack Cade, in the following play, tries to tear down the entire structure of medieval society only to be defeated by the allegorical symbol of order, Iden. Finally, Falstaff from the *Henry IV* plays and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* shares a number of the features of the type.

Villains often overlap with the lord of misrule, although once again Richard III embodies the type to the supreme. He employs many of the stock mannerisms

of the villain made use of elsewhere in Shakespeare's plays, these being the frequent employment of the aside and the soliloquy.

The saint category is specially created in order to describe Henry VI who though often unable to manage the quarrelling noblemen on both sides of the War of the Roses, does maintain an almost unique integrity and moral voice. The *Henry VI* plays are full of violence and hatred from the aristocracy down to the servants on both sides of the debate. Only Henry reveals a genuine concern for the fate of the nation and the general populace. His voice thus calls into question the norm presented in the plays. Henry is a subversive voice calling for an idealised order which can seemingly never be implemented in a society wracked by ambition, jealousy and thirst for power.

Shakespeare's heroines in the comedies, in particular, have garnered a great deal of attention from feminist critics. The female characters in the histories, however, are also worthy of analysis. Often in contrast to the sources, Shakespeare emphasises the voices of strong 'masculine' females. These powerful women threaten the masculine order and traditional hierarchy. As a reward for their pains, they are demonized being referred to as witches in the case of Joan of Arc or the Duchess of Gloucester in *Henry VI part 2* or as Amazons, unruly women, this being Queen Margaret's lot in the *Henry VI* plays and *Richard III*. Ironically, these strong women are often pushed into these roles by necessity due to the lack of masculine leadership by their husbands or sons; Queen Eleanor and King John, for example, or again Margaret and Henry.

In contrast to these 'Amazons', Shakespeare also depicts the more traditional female often silent or silenced by social norms and pressure. A number of the queens and noblewomen in the plays are merely provided with symbolic speeches and expected to look pretty. *Henry VIII*, the final play analysed, comes to an end with the christening of the infant Elizabeth, certainly not a silent woman, with, however, the marked absence of her mother, Anne Boleyn.

A wide range of characters make use of mocking and ridicule in order to provide an alternative view of the proceedings. These jibes are often placed into the mouths of minor characters thus subverting the main discourse provided by the major characters.

Shakespeare is particularly fond of puns and word play, which has not always met with the approval of formidable critics such as Samuel Johnson. I see this technique, however, as an effective means of providing an ironic perspective. The puns are there for a purpose serving to double or even triple the possible interpretations of the given text.

In contrast to puns, another subversive technique consists of the opposite skill, malapropism, the garbling of words with unintentional comic results. The *Merry Wives of Windsor* contains two practitioners of this art, Mistress Quickly and Abraham Slender. These mix-ups anticipate, I believe, the so-called Freudian slip whereby the accidental blunder perhaps reveals more than one realises.

The same play introduces several foreign characters who speak English as a second language with various mistakes in pronunciation and vocabulary. This is also employed in a history play not covered in this dissertation *Henry V*. Again this technique is not merely included in order to make the foreigners appear foolish, but to perhaps, once again, subvert the traditional order.

Shakespeare is fascinated by the manner in which politicians make use of religion in order to further their political agenda. Characters often feign religious piety in order to garner political support from the populace, Richard III, for example. Other characters, such as Falstaff, quote from the Bible and pretend to be shocked by worldly decadence all as part of an ongoing comic game. This theatrical show, however, serves to call into question the authenticity of those politicians who actually believe, or pretend to believe, what they are saying. Falstaff and Richard expose the hypocrisy around them.

Child characters are often a voice of reason in the history plays. Their seeming innocence belies their actual wisdom and insight into the ways of the world. The adults who interact with them are consequently revealed in a different light, often paling morally in comparison with the voice of the child.

The stock type of the old bore was an occasional tool employed by Shakespeare. Justice Shallow in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, once again, and in *Henry IV part 2*, not covered here, is the classic example. This type tends to repeat himself, continually relating stale jokes and celebrating his own mythic past. The listeners understandably find this tedious if not amusing.

The history plays often include minor characters with various menial jobs, be they servants, gardeners or clerks. They often serve as a 'choric voice'[145] commenting on the affairs of the high and mighty and serving to save time by summarizing events so as not to have to show them on stage directly. Their views, however, often throw a subversive light on the events they narrate.

Last, at the bottom of the social order of minor characters, are commoners who occasionally appear and provide an alternative perspective. Although they are not given as much space in the plays as the subject-oriented histories of Shakespeare's contemporaries and successors, as Richard Helgerson has eloquently argued, they do nevertheless occasionally appear and speak up.

Although the use of asides has already been mentioned specifically in connection with the villain type, they are a subversive method used throughout the history plays. The audience is thus given insight into the workings of the characters' heads, with the content of the aside often directly contradicting the sentences uttered out loud in front of the other persons on stage.

Soliloquies are extended examples of this subversive strategy with it often being the favourite approach of lords of misrule. The audience can consequently enjoy the experience of being an accomplice, so to speak, in various diabolical stratagems.

The history plays contain a number of episode scenes[146] or just episodes when they are merely a small sequence within a larger scene. These episodes, although at first glance seemingly insignificant, actually mirror or parallel the larger events at hand. I argue that Shakespeare has included, be it intentional or not, these episodes in order to either foreshadow or echo either the preceding or succeeding scene on stage. The major scene is consequently revealed in a new subversive light. The gardening scene in *Richard II* is one of the most obvious examples wherein the head gardener's instruction of his subordinates obviously parallels the political scene in the nation in general.

[145] This term is taken from M. M. Mahood's insightful book *Playing Bit Parts in Shakespeare.*
[146] I am indebted to Hereward T. Price, quoted above, for this term.

Many of these techniques and strategies are, of course, interwoven or overlap. In other words, minor characters usually appear in these episode scenes since the major characters logically have more extended material dedicated to them.

Recent critical theory has developed an interest in the history plays specifically due to the presence of Sinfield and Dollimore's "marginalized voices". Feminists are similarly drawn to the female voices in the plays where the strong ones are demonized and the weak are silenced. My own interest is less dogmatic and more strategic. Having read and taught the plays intensively before reading much of the current theory on the subject, I became interested in why these characters and techniques were included in the plays. I have no interest in arguing for one consistent reading of the plays, but instead have an appreciation of the multiplicity of alternative readings offered up by the texts.

In contrast to Tillyard, who argues for an all-encompassing order which the Elizabethans and Shakespeare himself would have embraced, or current developments viewing Shakespeare as an early Marxist or Feminist, I view the plays as an ongoing dialogue on politics and the ideal ruler. Shakespeare consistently portrays politics as a dark corrupt business raising many more questions than answers. His picture of an ideal order is embodied in the comedies where Shakespeare moves his focus of interest from the wide societal analysis of the histories to a celebration of marriage while ridiculing its inanities at the same time. It would seem order can only be achieved on a more modest scale between individuals. The tragedies arguably have the last word, however.

Addendum

I would like to present here a brief summary of my previous Mgr. thesis which examined the various means by which Shakespeare introduces critical alternative voices of the mainstream views presented in his plays. These critiques make possible various alternative readings calling into question the primary surface message. These dissident voices come in various forms, but occur consistently through the majority of the plays, to a greater and lesser degree.

The thesis began with an explanation as to my interest in the subject. I then moved on to a summary of various categories of minor characters and the ways in which they make dissident readings of the plays possible. I continued with a summary of the complete oeuvre of Shakespeare examining the manner in which the order/disorder dichotomy is developed in the plays. I then turned to a short analysis of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* making use of it as a case study for the use of minor characters providing a critical alternative to the 'mainstream' apparent message. The final three sections examined what I referred to as the Hal/Henry trilogy, *Henry IV pt. 1*, *Henry IV pt. 2* and *Henry V*. I was interested in giving an underground reading to these plays, attempting to find a consistent line of treatment for this, in my opinion, possibly, Shakespeare's greatest 'tragedy'. In order to do this I made use of the various dissident voices occurring throughout the three plays. The work culminated with an analysis of *Henry V* which is, according to my reading, the most misunderstood play in the entire Shakespearian canon, precisely because these minor characters have been ignored, silenced or minimised.

I attempted to demonstrate that there is an alternative anti-war reading of this Shakespeare's possibly most 'nationalistic' play. I made mention of the film treatments of the plays, *Henry V* in particular, and the manner in which they tended to ignore these dissident voices thereby creating one-sided and jingoistic interpretations. The work concluded with an addendum categorizing the minor characters in the plays.

The Hal/Henry trilogy as I call it: *Henry IV pt 1, Henry IV pt 2, Henry V* are the fullest picture in Shakespeare of the coming of age of a young man, in this

case a king. I argue that the three plays as taken together are a cohesive tragedy wherein Henry becomes the thing he initially despises. Hal, at the beginning of *Henry IV pt 1* has gone underground, become a dissident, so to speak, disillusioned with the dirty politics of the regime, with its constant bickering over power and influence, ruled over by his usurper father Henry IV. Falstaff, a minor/major character or in other words, a minor character who could not be shut up, becomes Hal's foster father in a sense, opening up an alternative underground world to him. This new world often parallels the 'surface' world, offering Hal new ways of looking at politics, nationalism, heroism, honour, etc. Hal begins to see through the system and 'drops out' of society, so to speak. Hal is thus trained to become an alternative type of King, one who understands the various levels of society, but who most of all, understands himself.

In the *Henry IV* plays, Shakespeare created one of his comic masterpieces, Falstaff, who embodies everything disorderly. The scenes with Falstaff often mirror the scenes in the court, providing a satirical disorderly view of the orderly world of politics and power. Falstaff could also be seen as a foster father figure teaching Hal to see through the hypocrisy of the court, ruled over by his usurper father. Falstaff ridicules a number of areas: the legal system, the military, chivalry, honour, marriage, etc.

When Henry IV dies and Hal ascends the throne as Henry V, he is faced with an essential decision. Does he employ the insight and wisdom attained through his 'internship' with Falstaff or does he follow in his father's footsteps of Machiavellian dirty politics? In a sense he does both. He makes use of the lessons learned with Falstaff to become a master of political manipulation and hypocrisy, outdoing his mediocre father and achieving worldly success at the expense of his own soul.

At the end of the second part Hal rejects him and takes upon himself the responsibility of the monarch. The relationship between Hal and Falstaff and the eventual rejection scene rank amongst the most debated areas in all Shakespearian scholarship starting with the groundbreaking work of Maurice Morgann in 1898. My guess is that one's preference depends a great deal on one's own personality.

I, however, lead to the liberal side, mourning the rejection and feeling that something essential is lost in the transformation into the 'hero' king.

Falstaff is rejected and along with him, the humour and irony which made Hal so human in the first two plays. The play *Henry V* chronicles the invasion of a sovereign nation and all the bloodshed which that entails. The play has been lauded as a celebration of English nationalism. A closer look, however, reveals a different story. This alternative, dissident reading is told, once again, by the minor characters. *Henry V* continually employs so-called 'foreshadowing' and 'echoing' which serve to satirize and call into question the rhetoric and values of the mainstream plot, i.e. the defeat of the 'decadent' French by the underdog English, all sanctioned, of course, by God himself.

Henry V, shows where this decision leads him. This is, in my opinion, possibly the most misinterpreted play in the Shakespeare canon having been made into several major film productions celebrating war and English nationalism. This play far from being merely a gung-ho celebration of warmongery and British superiority over the French, can through attention to these minor characters instead be read as a condemnation of war, revealing the hypocrisy behind Henry's attempts at clouding naked aggression with appeals to divine partiality and justification. The minor characters, Pistol, Fluellen and Williams, for example, provide the reader/viewer with a completely different interpretation of the events.

Falstaff's former cronies: Pistol, Nim and Bardolph along with certain new minor characters, Fluellen and Williams, and possibly the Princess Catherine scenes, act as ongoing critical voices of the events of the play, mostly unconsciously I should add. Whether this was Shakespeare's actual intention is debatable. I would argue that it was due to the consistency in which it is employed and because of the overall picture Shakespeare gives us throughout his oeuvre of dirty politics: *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra, Titus Andronicus, Timon of Athens*, the *Henry VI* plays*, Richard II, Richard III*, the list could go on and on.

Hal/Henry had the potential, like Hamlet, to be a different kind of King, a philosopher King, a playful King who could have brought his subjects together and to quote *King Lear* (3.4:33) have shown "the heavens more just" instead of

merely following the advice of his physically and mentally sick father to "busy giddy minds/with foreign quarrels" *Henry IV pt. 2*, (4.3:342-343)

In my reading, this trilogy of plays, can be understood as a tragic coming-of-age novel wherein the King is a success in a worldly sense, but in the process loses his soul.

The plays of William Shakespeare, whoever he may have been, are alive and well. This is due to a number of reasons, among which is the fact that they still speak to the world today, whether that be in terms of politics, love, family relationships, etc. Shakespeare also resists attempts to embody a particular political agenda. Amazingly, his plays continue to generate readings diametrically opposed to each other.

Having said this, I acknowledge that my own reading is merely one of a range of possible interpretations. Nevertheless, I believe it a viable one. Shakespeare rises above national and period prejudices. His plays almost universally seemingly reinforce the system of order as outlined by E. M. Tillyard. When, however, one reads through the lines, alternative interpretations become possible. One means of doing this is to pay attention to the minor characters and so-called throwaway scenes, who and which at first glance seem of little importance. I have attempted to demonstrate that they actually could be comprehended as keys opening up alternative 'dissident' readings.

Resumé

Shakespearovým dílem prostupují podvratné postavy a postupy. Historické hry jsou však v tomto ohledu zvláště zajímavé, neboť v nich Shakespeare pracuje s kontroverzním materiálem, který se bezprostředně dotýká tehdejší vládnoucí moci. Aniž bych chtěl jakkoli zpochybňovat důležitost tudorovského mýtu a alžbětinského řádu, jak jsou vykresleny v díle E. M. Tillyarda, myslím si, že tyto postavy a postupy mohou nabídnout jistý alternativní způsob interpretace a pohledu na tyto hry.

V úvodu své práce podávám krátký přehled vývoje kritických přístupů k historickým hrám se zvláštním zřetelem na dichotomii řádu a chaosu, která vyrůstá z myšlenek a dikce E. M. W. Tillyarda. Čerpal jsem rovněž z tzv. festivní teorie zastupované C. L. Barberem a Northropem Fryem. Ze současných kritických přístupů považuji za nejpřínosnější myšlenky kulturního materialismu, nového historicismu a některých feministických interpretací.

Dále přecházím k popisu různých podvratných technik, přičemž uvádím krátké příklady mimo rámce historických her, čímž chci ukázat, že tyto strategie a přístupy jsou aplikovány soustavně v celém Shakespearově díle.

Následně prezentuji diskuzi o zdrojích Shakespearových historické hry se zvláštním zaměřením na Edwarda Halla a Raphaela Holinsheda. Poté následuje analýza jeho předchůdců, současníků i nástupců na poli historického dramatu. Podrobněji se zabývám hrou *Edward III.*, kterou řada badatelů alespoň zčásti přisuzuje Shakespearovi, anonymním dílem *Thomas of Woodstock*, někdy též nazývaným *Richard II Part 1*. Nakonec rozebírám hru Christophera Marlowa *Edward II.*, v níž spatřuji největší duchovní spřízněnost s Shakespearovými historickými hrami.

Krátká kapitola je věnována *Veselým paničkám windsorským*, v níž se objevuje postava Falstaffa, antihrdiny obou dílů *Jindřicha IV.*, která může posloužit jako skvělá případová studie využívání výše uvedených podvratných postupů. Poté následují diskuze nad jednotlivými historickými hrami. Do této analýzy jsem již nezahrnul tři klíčové historické hry: *Jindřich IV., Díl 1 a 2* a *Jindřich V.*, jimiž jsem se zabýval ve své diplomové práci. Stručné shrnutí této

práce zde uvádím pouze formou přílohy. Chci se zaměřit na fakt, že pouhá existence těchto podvratných postav a postupů přináší pozoruhodnou škálu interpretací ostatních historických her, tj. *Jindřicha VI., Díl 1, 2* a *3*, *Richarda III.*, *Krále Jana*, *Richard II.* a *Jindřicha VIII*.

"Pán anarchie", koncept vycházející z festivní teorie, je jedním z nejzajímavějších podvratných archetypů. Tuto roli plní řada králů. Richard II. se svým dekadentním životním stylem, v němž jej navíc utvrzují jeho amorální pochlebníci, odmítá brát na vědomí veškerá varování svých ujců, Jana Gaunta a vévody z Yorku, a na svou lehkovážnost nakonec doplácí. Richard III., sveřepě si dláždící cestu na královský trůn, bez sebemenšího ohledu na životy svých nejbližších, je asi nejkřiklavějším představitelem tohoto archetypu.

I ostatní postavy historických her vykazují jisté známky spřízněnosti s konceptem "pána anarchie". Levoboček v *Králi Janovi* zpočátku do tohoto obrazu dokonale zapadá, ve svém úsilí o získání moci ignoruje veškeré společenské normy stran legitimity svého původu, na rozdíl od svého bezmocného krále však projevuje hluboký zájem o osud britského národa. Johanka z Arku ve hře *Jindřich VI., Díl 1* je vykreslena jako úhlavní nepřítel maskulinního řádu a způsobů, přičemž zároveň zastává post velitele nepřátelských francouzských vojsk. Jack Cade se v následujícím dílu pokouší svrhnout řád středověké společnosti jako takové, je však přemožen alegorickým symbolem pořádku - Idenem.

Postavy zloduchů se zpravidla kryjí s archetypem pána anarchie, Richard III. však ztělesňuje tento typus v nejvyšší možné míře. Používá mnohé manýry zloduchů, s nimiž se můžeme setkat i v dalších Shakespearových hrách, jako jsou například repliky pronášené stranou nebo samomluvné monologů.

Kategorie světců je vytvořena speciálně pro postavu krále Jindřicha VI., který sice často nedokáže usmířit rozepře šlechticů z obou znesvářených stran války růží, přesto si však uchovává téměř jedinečnou ryzost své povahy a zastává roli hlasatele morálky. Všechny tři díly Jindřicha VI. jsou plné násilí a nenávisti prostupující všemi společenskými vrstvami na obou stranách válečného sporu. Pouze král Jindřich projevuje skutečný zájem o osud národa a lidu. Jeho hlas tak narušuje zaběhanou normu, která je v těchto hrách prezentována.

Velkou pozornost feministických kritiček a kritiků přitahují zejména hrdinky Shakespearových komedií. Hlubší rozbor si však určitě zaslouží také ženské postavy z historických her. Narozdíl od literárních pramenů dává Shakespeare zaznít hlasu silných "maskulinních" žen. Tyto mocné ženy jsou hrozbou maskulinnímu řádu a tradiční hierarchii. Na oplátku za své úsilí jsou pak démonizovány, je jim spíláno do čarodějnic, jako je tomu v případě Johanky z Arku nebo Vévodkyně z Gloucesteru v prvním díle *Jindřicha VI.,* nebo se o nich hovoří jako o Amazonkách či svévolnicích, což je případ královny Markéty v *Jindřichu VI.* a *Richardu III*. Tyto silné ženy jsou však paradoxně do těchto rolí vehnány okolnostmi, nutností převzít tyto role, neboť postavám jejich manželů a synů chybí schopnosti mužného vůdce; viz královna Eleanora a král Jan nebo královna Markéta a Jindřich.

V protikladu k těmto 'Amazonkám' Shakespeare vytváří tradičnější ženské postavy, často mlčenlivé či umlčené společenskými konvencemi a tlaky. Mnoha královnám a šlechtičnám jsou přisouzeny čistě symbolické proslovy a očekává se od nich, že budou dbát o svůj zevnějšek. *Jindřich VIII.*, poslední ze zde analyzovaných her, se uzavírá křtem nezletilé Alžběty, rozhodně nemlčenlivé ženy; křest je však citelně poznamenán nepřítomností její matky, Anny Boleynové.

Mnoho postav užívá zesměšňování a žerty, aby divákovi poskytly jinou perspektivu celého děje. Tyto posměšky jsou často vkládány do úst vedlejším postavám, což jistým způsobem narušuje hlavní diskurz hry, o nějž se starají postavy hlavní.

Shakespeare má v obzvláštní oblibě slovní hříčky a dvojsmysly, což se ne vždy setkává s pochopením u tak obávaných kritiků, jakým byl například Samuel Johnson. Osobně však tuto Shakespearovu techniku vnímám jako velice účinný nástroj k dosažení ironické perspektivy. Slovní hříčky slouží k tomu, aby u daného textu bylo možno použít dvojí až trojí výklad.

Jiná podvratná technika staví – na rozdíl od slovních hříček – na zcela opačné dovednosti. Jedná se o tzv. malaproprismus, tedy o zkomolení slov, které bezděčně vyústí v komickou situaci. Hra *Veselé paničky windsorské* nám představuje hned dva mistry tohoto umění, paní Čipernou a pana Tintítko. Tyto

zmatečné záměny dle mého názoru v podstatě předjímají Freudovy "chybné úkony", neúmyslné chyby, které mohou odhalit víc než si člověk uvědomuje.

Ve stejné hře se objevuje několik cizinců, kteří sice hovoří anglicky, ovšem s různými chybami ve výslovnosti a výběru slov. Podobné postavy najdeme i ve hře *Jindřich V*., která však není předmětem této disertační práce. Tento postup nevolí autor kvůli tomu, aby zesměšnil cizince, spíše jím chce narušit tradiční pořádek.

Shakespeare je fascinován tím, jak politici dokáží využít náboženství k prosazování vlastních politických cílů. Postavy často předstírají zbožnost, aby si zajistili politickou podporu ze strany lidu, například Richard III. Jiné postavy, jako například Falstaff, citují Bibli a následně dávají na odiv svůj šok z morálního úpadku světa, to vše v rámci probíhající žertovné zábavy. Tato teatrálnost však pouze prověřuje věrohodnost politiků, kteří z nich skutečné věří a kteří jen předstírají, že věří tomu, co říkají. Falstaff a Richard odhalují kolem sebe pokrytectví.

Dětské postavy představují v historických hrách často hlas rozumu. Zdánlivá nevinnost zastírá jejich skutečnou moudrost a hluboký vhled do celého chodu světa. Dospělí, kteří se nimi ve hře potýkají, jsou vykresleni v jiném světle, jejich morálka pak tváří v tvář dětským postavám často bledne.

Typus nabubřelého starce používal Shakespeare příležitostně. Soudce Šalba ve *Veselých paničkách windsorských* a v *Jindřichovi IV., Díl 2* (který není předmětem této disertační práce), je klasickým příkladem tohoto typu. Často se opakuje, neustále vytahuje otřepané vtipy a pěje chválu na vlastní smyšlenou minulost. Posluchačům připadají tyto řeči únavné, ne-li trapné.

V historických hrách často vystupují vedlejší hrdinové zastávající různé podřízené funkce, od služebných, přes zahradníky až po písaře. Nezřídka zde představují jistý "chór" (choric voice) [147] komentující děje, jež se odehrávají na nejvyšších místech společenského žebříčku, čímž šetří čas, neboť podávají souhrn událostí, aniž by bylo nutné inscenovat je přímo na jevišti. Jejich pohledy však obvykle vrhají rušivé světlo na události, o nichž vyprávějí.

[147] Tento termín je převzat z knihy profesora M. M. Mahooda "*Playing Bit Parts in Shakespeare"*, která hluboce postihuje danou problematiku.

Na nejspodnější příčce společenského řádu těchto vedlejších postav pak stojí prostí občané, kteří se ve hrách příležitostně objevují a podávají alternativní pohled na děj. Ačkoliv jim není dáván takový prostor jako v tématicky úzce vymezených historických hrách Shakespearových současníků a nástupců, jak tvrdí Richard Helgerson, přesto i oni mají příležitost nahlas projevit své postoje.

Ačkoliv bylo používání replik pronášených stranou již zmíněno ve spojitosti s postavami zloduchů, Shakespeare tuto subversní metodu používá ve všech historických hrách. Divák má tak příležitost sledovat myšlenkové pochody jednotlivých postav, přičemž vlastní obsah těchto replik bývá často v přímém rozporu s replikami, které daná postava pronáší nahlas před ostatními osobami na scéně.

Monology jsou dalším příkladem této subversní strategie, zvláště oblíbeným u "pánů anarchie". Divák má tedy možnost stát se tak říkajíc přímým komplicem zloducha v jeho ďábelských intrikách.

Historické hry obsahují mnoho epizodních[148] scén či epizod, které tvoří pouhou krátkou sekvenci v rámci širšího děje. Tyto epizody, které se na první pohled jeví jako bezvýznamné, ve skutečnosti zrcadlí nebo tvoří paralelu k událostem daného širšího děje. Tvrdím, že Shakespeare – vědomě či nevědomě – zařazoval tyto epizody do svých her proto, aby mohl nastínit či zpětně reflektovat následující respektive předcházející scény. Hlavní děj je tak podán v novém subversním světle. Scéna se zahradníkem a jeho pomocníky v *Richardu II.* je jedním z nejvýraznějších příkladů těchto epizodních scén; pokyny hlavního zahradníka určené jeho pomocníkům zjevně odpovídají politické situaci celého národa.

Tyto techniky a postupy se samozřejmě ve velké míře vzájemně proplétají a překrývají. Jinými slovy, v těchto epizodních scénách obvykle vystupují vedlejší postavy, neboť hlavním hrdinům je zcela logicky věnován podstatně větší prostor.

Historické hry budí u současných kritiků zájem především díky přítomnosti "marginalizovaných postav", jak o nich hovoří Sinfield a Dollimore. Feministická kritika se zajímá o ženské postavy. Silné ženy jsou v těchto hrách démonizovány,

[148] Za tento termín vděčím Herewardu T. Priceovi, citovanému výše.

zatímco slabé ženy bývají umlčovány. Můj vlastní přístup k těmto hrám je spíše strategický než dogmatický. Jelikož jsem hry nejprve intenzívně četl a prezentoval na seminářích a teprve poté se šířeji seznamoval s moderní kritikou, zajímalo mě především, jak tyto postavy a postupy v textech skutečně fungují. Mým záměrem není argumentovat pro jeden konzistentní výklad historických her, naopak si uvědomuji a oceňuji rozmanitost alternativních výkladů, které tyto texty nabízejí.

Works Consulted

Abrams, M. H. et. al. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 3rd edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1974.

Alexander, Peter. *Shakespeare's Life And Art*. 1939. London: James Nisbet and Co., 1944.

Altick, Richard D. "Symphonic Energy in *Richard II*." Brooke. *Shakespeare: Richard II; A Casebook* 101-130.

Anderson, Linda. *A Place in the Story: Servants and Service in Shakespeare's Plays*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005.

Anonymous. *Edward III*. 9 July 2010. <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/1770/pg1770.html>.

Anonymous. *A Mirror For Magistrates*. 15 July 2010. <www.archive.org/stream/mirrorformagist02higggoog/mirrorformagist02higggoog_djvu.txt>.

Anonymous. *Sir John Oldcastle*. 9 July 2010. <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/1788/pg1788.html>.

Anonymous. *The Troublesome Reign of King John*. 10 July 2010. <http://www.archive.org/stream/thetroublesomere00furniala/thetroublesomere00furniala_djvu.txt>.

Anonymous. Thomas of *Woodstock*. ed. A. P. Rossiter. 26 June 2011. <ota.ahds.ac.uk/scripts/download.php?otaid=0007>.

Ashley, Maurice. *England in the Seventeenth Century*. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1952.

Attwater, A. L. "Shakespeare's Sources." Barker and Harrison, 220-243.

Auden, W. H. "The Prince's Dog." Hunter, *King Henry IV* 187-211.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Trans. Hélene Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.

Baldick, Chris. *Criticism and Literary Theory 1890 to the Present.* London: Longman Group Limited, 1996.

Barber, C. L. "From Ritual to Comedy: An Examination of Henry IV." Dean, *Modern Essays* 144-166.

Barber, C. L. “Rule and Misrule in Henry IV.” Hunter, *King Henry IV* 212-230.

Barber, C. L. *Shakespeare’s Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and Its Relation to Social Custom*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959.

Barker, Simon and Hilary Hinds, eds. *The Routledge Anthology of Renaissance Drama*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Berger, Harry. “Psychoanalyzing the Shakespeare Text.” Smith, Emma, 103-122.

Bergeron, David M. “Pageants, masques, and history.” Hattaway, *Cambridge Companion*, 41-56

Bevington, David, ed. *Henry the Fourth Parts I and II: Critical Essays.* New York: Garland, 1986.

Bevington, David. “I Henry VI.” Dutton, *Shakespeare’s Works* 308-324.

Blake, N. F. *Shakespeare's Language: An Introduction*. London: Macmillan, 1984.

Bloom, Allan. *Shakespeare's Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.

Bloom, Harold. *The Western Canon*. London: Macmillan, 1995.

Bluestone, Max and Norman Rabkin. *Shakespeare’s Contemporaries*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1970.

Bowers, Fredson. “The Structural Climax in Henry IV, Part 1.” Sanderson, 309-316.

Boyce, Charles. *Critical Companion to Shakespeare*. New York: Roundtable Press, 2005.

Bradbrook, M. C. “Tragical-Historical: *Richard II*.” Brooke *Shakespeare: Richard II; A Casebook* 152-157.

Bradbury, Malcolm and David Palmer, eds. *Shakespearean Comedy*. London: Edward Arnold, 1972.

Bradley, A. C. *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*. London: Macmillan, 1909.

Bradley, A. C. *Shakespearean Tragedy*. 1904; 3rd ed. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992.

Bradley, A. C. “The Rejection of Falstaff.” Hunter, *King Henry IV* 56-78.

Braunmuller, A. R. “King John and Historiography”. *English Literary History*, 55.2, 309–32. 1988.

Braunmuller, A. R. and Michael Hattaway. *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Brockbank, Philip. “Shakespeare: His Histories, English and Roman.” Ricks, 148-181.

Brooke, Nicholas, “Divine Substitutes and Streams of Blood.” Brooke, *Shakespeare: Richard II; A Casebook* 230-247.

Brooke, Nicholas, ed. *Shakespeare: Richard II; A Casebook*. London and Basingtoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973.

Brooke, Tucker and Matthias A. Shaaber. *The Renaissance*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967.

Brooks, Cleanth and Robert B. Heilman. “Dramatic Balance in Henry IV, Part 1.” Sanderson, 215-229.

Brown, John Russell. “Shakespeare's Text.” Brown, *Studying Shakespeare* 136-152.

Brown, John Russell. *Studying Shakespeare*. Houndsmills: Macmillan, 1994.

Bryant, J. A. Junior. “The Linked Analogies of *Richard II*.” Brooke, *Shakespeare: Richard II; A Casebook*, 186-197.

Bryson, Bill. *Shakespeare*: *The World as a Stage*. London: Harper Press, 2007.

Bulman, James C. “Henry IV Parts 1 and 2.” Hattaway, *Cambridge Companion*, 158-176.

Burgess, Anthony. *Nothing Like The Sun*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966.

Burgess, Anthony. *Shakespeare*. 1970. London: Vintage, 2002.

Burnett, Mark Thompson. *Filming Shakespeare in the Global Marketplace*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Bush, Donald. *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1945.

Cahill, Patricia A. “Nation Formation and the English History Plays.” Dutton, *Shakespeare’s Works* 70-93.

Campbell, Lily. *Shakespeare's 'Histories': Mirrors of Elizabethan Policy*. San Marino: Huntington Library, 1947.

Carroll, William C. "Theories of Kingship in Shakespeare's England." Dutton, *Shakespeare's Works* 70-93.

Cartelli, Thomas. "Edward II." Cheney, 158-173.

Cartelli, Thomas. "Suffolk and the Pirates: Disordered Relations in Shakespeare's 2 Henry VI." Dutton, *Shakespeare's Works* 325-343.

Cavell, Stanley. *Disowning Knowledge in Six Plays of Shakespeare*. Cambridge: 1987.

Charlton, H. B. "Shakespeare, Politics and Politicians." Hunter, *King Henry IV* 81-91.

Cheney, Patrick. *The Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Chimes At Midnight. Dir. Orson Welles. Perf. Orson Welles, John Geilgud. Silvia Films, 1966.

Chudoba, František. *Kniha o Shakespearovi*. Prague: Jan Laichter, 1941.

Clegg, Cyndia Susan. "Censorship and the Problems with History in Shakespeare's England." Dutton, *Shakespeare's Works* 70-93.

Cohen, Walter. "All Is True (Henry VIII)." Greenblatt, *The Norton Shakespeare* 3111-3119.

Cohen, Walter. "The Life and Death of King John." Greenblatt, *The Norton Shakespeare* 1015-1021.

Cohen, Walter. "The Merry Wives of Windsor." Greenblatt, *The Norton Shakespeare* 1225-1231.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. "Marginalia and Notebooks." Brooke, *Shakespeare: Richard II; A Casebook* 27-32.

Colie, Rosalie L. "Studying Shakespeare's Use of Genres." Brown, *Studying Shakespeare* 110-122.

Connolly, Thomas. *British Aisles*. Ostrava: Ostavská Univerzita, 1998.

Coombes, H. *Literature and Criticism*. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1953.

Cowden-Clarke, Mary. *The Complete Concordance to Shakespeare*. London: Bickers & Son, 1894.

Craik, T.W. “Introduction.” *The Merry Wives of Windsor* 1-63.

Crane, Milton. “The Worlds of Prosody and Verse in Henry IV, Part 1.” Sanderson, 349-353.

Cresswell, Julia. *The Insect That Stole Butter? Oxford Dictionary of Word Origins*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Crewe, Jonathan. “Henry IV, Part 2: A Critical History.” Dutton, *Shakespeare’s Works* 432-450.

Daiches, David. *A Critical History of English Literature*. 2 vols. London: Reed Consumer Books, 1994.

Danby, John F. “The Fool and Handy-Dandy.”Dean, *Modern Essays* 377-388.

Davies, Anthony. “First Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster.” Dobson, 142.

Dean. Leonard F. “From *Richard II* to *Henry V*: A Closer View.” Dean, *Modern Essays* 188-205.

Dean, Leonard F. *Shakespeare Modern Essays in Criticism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.

Derdzinski, Mark. “"Invisible Bullets": Unseen Potential in Stephen Greenblatt's New Historicism.” 25 June 2005. <http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/connotations/derdzinski1123.htm>.

Dessen, Alan C. “Stagecraft and Imagery in Shakespeare’s *Henry VI.*” Emma Smith, 272-288.

Dobrée, Bonamy, “Shakespeare and the Drama of his Time.” Barker and Harrison, eds. *A Companion* 244-262.

Dobson, Michael and Stanley Wells, eds. *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Dollimore, Jonathan and Alan Sinfield. “History and Ideology: The Instance of *Henry V*.” Drakakis, 206-227.

Dollimore, Jonathan and Alan Sinfield eds. *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985.

Doran, Madeleine. “Imagery in *Richard II* and in *Henry IV*.” Sanderson, 337-349.

Downer, Alan S. “The Life of Our Design: The Function of Imagery in the Poetic Drama.” Dean, *Modern Essays* 19-36.

Drábek, Pavel. *České pokusy o Shakespeara*. Brno: Tribun E.U. s.r.o., 2010.

Drakakis, John, ed. *Alternative Shakespeares*. London: Methuen, 1985.

Draper, J. W. “Falstaff as an Elizabethan Soldier.” Sanderson, 399-402.

Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*. London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1998.

Dutton, Richard, ed. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. London: Macmillan, 1996.

Dutton, Richard. *William Shakespeare. A Literary Life*. Houndmills: Macmillan, 1989.

Dutton, Richard and Jean E. Howard. *A Companion to Shakespeare’s Works: The Histories.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2003.

Egan, Gabriel. *Shakespeare and Marx*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Eliot, T. S. *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism*. London: Methune, 1920.

Eliot, T. S. “Shakespearean Criticism: From Dryden to Coleridge.” Barker and Harrison, eds. *A Companion* 293-305.

Elsom, John. Ed. *Is Shakespeare Still our Contemporary*. London: Routledge, 2004.

Empson, William. “Falstaff and Mr. Dover Wilson.” Hunter, *King Henry IV* 135-154.

Empson, William. *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. New York: New Direction Books,1966.

Empson, William. *Some Versions of Pastoral*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1935.

Evans, Gareth Lloyd. “The Comical-Tragical -Historical Method—Henry IV.” Sanderson, 194-214.

Evans, Gareth Lloyd. “Shakespeare’s Fools: The Shadow and the Substance of Drama.” Bradbury, 142-159.

Evans, Malcolm. “Deconstructing Shakespeare's Comedies.” Drakakis, 67-94.

Ewert, K. A. “Commodification and Representation: The Body in Shakespeare’s History Plays.” 24 July 2005.

<http://www.marshall.edu/engsr/SR1998.html#Commodification%20and%20Representation>.

Fiedler, Leslie. *The Stranger in Shakespeare*. London: Croom Helm, 1972.

Fields, Bertram. *Players: The Mysterious Identity of William Shakespeare*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers Inc., 2005.

Ford, Boris, ed. *The Age of Shakespeare*. Rev. edn. Harmondworth: Penguin Books, 1982.

Forker, Charles R. *Richard II: Shakespeare The Critical Tradition*. London: The Athlone Press, 1998.

Fowler, H. W. and F. G. Fowler, eds. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*. London: Oxford University Press, 1958.

Fowler, Roger, ed. *A Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms*. London: Routledge, 1987.

Foxe, John. *The Book of Martyrs*. Springdale: Whitaker House, 1981.

Froissart, Jean. *The Chronicles of Froissart*. 25 August 2008. <www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/froissart-full.html>.

Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism, Four Essays*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

Frye, Northrop. "The Argument of Comedy." Dean, *Modern Essays* 79-89.

Frykman, Eric and Göran Kjellmer. *Aspects of Shakespeare*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell Förlag, 1969.

Garber, Marjorie. "Richard III and the Shape of History." Smith, Emma, 42-65.

Garber, Marjorie. *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers. Literature as Uncanny Casuality*. London: 1987.

Gillespie, Stuart. *Shakespeare's* Books*: A Dictionary of Shakespeare Sources.* London: The Athlone Press, 2001.

Goddard, Harold C. *The Meaning of Shakespeare*. vol 1. 1951. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1967.

Goy-Blanquet, Dominique. "Elizabethan Historiography and Shakespeare's Sources." Hattaway, *Cambridge Companion*, 57-70.

Goy-Blanquet, Dominique. *Shakespeare's Early History Plays: From Chronicle to Stage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Grady, Hugh. “New Historicism.” Dobson, 316.

Grady, Hugh, ed. *Shakespeare and Modernity: Early Modern to Millenium*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Gibbons, Brian. “Romance and the Heroic Play.” Braunmuller, *The Cambridge Companion*. 207-236.

Granville-Barker. *Prefaces to Shakespeare*. 2 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946-1947.

Granville-Barker, H. and G. B. Harrison, eds. *A Companion to Shakespeare Studies*. Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1960.

Greenblatt, Stephen. “Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and Its Subversion in *Henry IV* and *Henry V.”* Dollimore and Sinfield *Political Shakespeare.*18–47.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Marvelous Possessions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Greenblatt, Stephen, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus. *The Norton Shakespeare*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1997.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Greenblatt, Stephen. “Richard III.” Greenblatt, *The Norton Shakespeare* 507-512.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Will in the World*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2004.

Greene, Robert. *Greene's Groat's Worth of Wit*. 10 July 2010. <www.exclassics.com/groat/groat/html>.

Gregerson, Linda. “French Marriages and the Protestant Nation in Shakespeare's History Plays.” Dutton, *Shakespeare’s Works* 70-93.

Grene, Nicholas. *Shakespeare’s Serial History Plays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2002.

Guralnik, David B., ed. *Webster's New World Dictionary*. New York: William Collins and World Publishing Co., Inc. 1978.

Hadfield, Andrew. "Henry V." Dutton, *Shakespeare's Works* 451-472.

Hadfield, Andrew. *Shakespeare and Renaissance Politics*. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2004.

Hall, Jonathan. "The Evacuations of Falstaff (The Merry Wives of Windsor)." Knowles, Ronald, 123-151.

Halle, E. *The Union of Two Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancastre & Yorke*. London, 1548.

Harris, Jonathan Gill. *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Harrison, G. B. "The National Background." Granville-Barker, 161-185.

Hart, Jonathan. *Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Hart, Jonathan. *Shakespeare Poetry, History and Culture*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Hartsock, Mildrid E., "Major Scenes in Minor Key." Shakespeare Quarterly, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Winter, 1970), 55-62 25 July 2011.
<www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2868402.pdf>.

Hattaway, Michael, ed. T*he Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Hattaway, Michael, ed. *English Renaissance Literature and Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2000.

Hattaway, Michael. "The Shakespeare History Play." Hattaway, *The Cambridge Companion* 3-24.

Hattaway, Michael, ed. *Shakespeare's History Plays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002

Hazlitt, William. *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*. 1817; 8 July 2011.
<www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/criticism/hazlittw_charsp/charsp_titlepage.html>.

Heinemann, Margot. "Political Drama." Braunmuller, *The Cambridge Companion*. 161-206.

Helgerson, Richard “Shakespeare and Contemporary Dramatists of History.” Dutton, *A Companion to Shakespeare’s Works* 26-47.

Henry IV Part 1. Dir. David Giles. Perf. Anthony Quayle, John Finch, David Gwillim. British Broadcasting Service, 1979.

Henry IV Part II. Dir. David Giles. Perf. Anthony Quayle, John Finch, David Gwillim, Robert Eddison. British Broadcasting Service, 1979.

Henry V. Dir. Laurence Olivier. Perf. Laurence Olivier, Robert Newton, Renee Asherson. Twin Cities Film Ltd, 1944.

Henry V. Dir. David Giles. Perf. David Gwillim, Jocelyne Boisseau, Bryan Pringle. British Broadcasting Service, 1979.

Henry V. Dir. Kenneth Branagh. Perf. Kenneth Branagh, Paul Scofield, Derek Jacobi, Emma Thompson. Renaissance Films plc, 1989.

Henry VI. Part I. Dir. Jane Howell. Perf. Peter Benson, Trevor Peacock, Brenda Blethyn. British Broadcasting Service, 1983.

Henry VI. Part II. Dir. Jane Howell. Perf. Peter Benson, David Burke, Bernard Hill. British Broadcasting Service, 1983.

Henry VI. Part III. Dir. Jane Howell. Perf. Peter Benson, Julia Foster, Ron Cook. British Broadcasting Service, 1983.

Henry VIII. Dir. Kevin Billington. Perf. John Stride, Timothy West, Claire Bloom. British Broadcasting Service, 1979.

Hoenselaars, A. J. “Shakespeare and the Early Modern History Play.” Hattaway, *Cambridge Companion*, 25-40.

Holderness, Graham. “Shakespeare and National Identities.” Smith, Emma, 225-245.

Holinshed, R. *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. London, 1577, 1587. 10 July 2011.
<www.archive.org/stream/holinshedschroni06holi/holinshedschroni06holi_djvu.txt>.

Holland, Norman N. “Hermia's Dream.” Dutton, *A Midsummer* 61-83.

Holston, James. “Damn Commotion: Riot and Rebellion in Shakespeare's Histories.” Dutton, *Shakespeare’s Works* 70-93.

The Holy Bible, King James Version. Lynchburg: The Old-Time Gospel Hour, 1982.

Hopkins, Lisa. "The King's Melting Body: Richard II." Dutton, *Shakespeare's Works* 395-411.

Howard, Jean E. and Phyllis Rackin. *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories.* New York: Routledge, 1997.

Howard, Jean E. "Richard Duke of York." Greenblatt, *The Norton Shakespeare* 291-297.

Howard, Jean E. "The First Part of Henry the Sixth." Greenblatt, *The Norton Shakespeare* 435-441.

Howard, Jean E. "The First Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster." Greenblatt, *The Norton Shakespeare* 203-210.

Howard, Jean E. and Scott Cutler Shershow, eds. *Marxist Shakespeares*. London: Routledge, 2001.

Hubler, Edward. "The Economy of the Closed Heart." Dean, *Modern Essays* 467-476.

Hunter, G. K. "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Dean, *Modern Essays* 90-102.

Hunter, G. K., ed. *Shakespeare: King Henry IV Parts 1 & 2 A Casebook*. London: Macmillan, 1992.

Hunter, William B. Jr. "Prince Hal, His Struggle Toward Moral Perfection." Sanderson, 245-255.

Isaacs, J. "Shakespearean Criticism: 2. From Coleridge to the Present Day." Barker and Harrison, eds. *A Companion* 306-311.

Jenkins, Harold. "The Structural Problem in Shakespeare's *Henry the Fourth*." Holland, *Henry IV, Part Two* 212-233.

Johnson, Samuel. "A Note on Henry IV." Hunter, *King Henry IV* 23-24.

Johnson, Samuel. *The Plays of William Shakespeare*. 10 August 2011. <http://books.google.com/books?id>.

Johnston, Ian. "The Foxes, The Lion, and the Fat Knight: Introduction to *Henry IV, Part 1.* " 24 August 2005.
<http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/eng366/lectures/henry4.htm>.

Johnston, Ian. “The Ironies of Success in Politics: An Introduction to Shakespeare’s Henry V.” 3 August 2004. <http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/eng366/lectures/henry5.htm>.

Jonson, Ben. *Mortimer His Fall.* 10 July 2011. <www.hollowaypages.com/jonson1692mortimer.html>.

Jorgensen, Paul A. “‘Redeeming Time’ in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV*.” Hunter, *King Henry IV* 231-242.

Kamps, Ivo. “The Writing of History in Shakespeare’s England.” Dutton, *Shakespeare’s Works* 4-25.

Kantorowicz, E. H. “From *The King's Two Bodies*.” Brooke, *Shakespeare: Richard II; A Casebook* 169-187.

Kavanagh, James H. “Shakespeare in Ideology.” Drakakis, 144-165.

Keegan, John. *The Face of Battle*. London: Penguin, 1978.

Kennedy, Judith M. and Richard F. Kennedy, eds. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream Shakespeare*. London: Athlone Press, 1999.

Kermode, Frank. *Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971.

Kewes, Paulina. “The Elizabethan History Play: A True Genre.” Dutton, *Shakespeare’s Works* 70-93.

King John. Dir. David Giles. Perf. Leonard Rossiter, Claire Bloom, George Costigan. British Broadcasting Service. 1984.

Knight G. Wilson. *The Crown of Life.* 1947. London: Methuen & Co., 1985.

Knight G. Wilson. *The Wheel of Fire*. 1930. 5th rev. ed. Cleveland: World Publishing, 1962.

Knights, L. C. “Henry IV as Satire.” Sanderson, 331-336.

Knoepflmacher, U. C. “The Humors as Symbolic Nucleus in Henry IV, Part 1.” Sanderson, 354-360.

Knowles, James, “I Henry IV.” Dutton, *Shakespeare’s Works* 412-431.

Knowles, Ric. “The First Tetralogy in Performance.” Dutton, *Shakespeare’s Works* 263-286.

Knowles, Ronald. ed. *Shakespeare and Carnival After Bakhtin*. London: Macmillan, 1998.

Kott, Jan. *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*. Trans. Boleslaw Taborski. London: Methuen, 1967.

Krieger, Elliot. "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Dutton, *A Midsummer* 38-60.

Laroque, François "Shakespeare's 'Battle of Carnival and Lent'. The Falstaff Scenes Reconsidered (1 & 2 Henry IV)." Knowles, Ronald, 83-96.

Leavis, F. R. *The Common Pursuit*. London: Chattus and Windus. 1952.

Leggat, Alexander. *Shakespeare's Political Drama*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Lenz, Carolyn Ruth Swift, Gayle Greene, Carol Thomas Neely, eds. *The Woman's Part. Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*. Urbana: Illini Books,1980.

Levi, Peter. *The Life and Times of William Shakespeare*. Avenel: Random House, 1995.

Levin, Harry. "State Overturned." Bluestone and Rabkin. *Shakespeare's Contemporaries*. 143-160.

Levine, Nina S. *Women's Matters: Politics, Gender and Nation in Shakespeare's Early History Plays.* Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998.

Lloyd Evans Gareth. "The Comical-Tragical-Historical Method—Henry IV." Sanderson, 194-214.

Longstaffe, Stephen. "'A short report and not otherwise': Jack Cade in 2 Henry VI." Knowles, Ronald, 13-35.

Longstaffe, Steve. "What is the English History Play and Why are They Saying Such Terrible Things About it?" 10 July 2005.
<http://www.hull.ac.uk/renforum/v2no2/longstaf.htm>.

Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince*, ed. Q. Skinner and R. Price. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Mack, Maynard. "Rescuing Shakespeare." Brown, *Studying Shakespeare* 66-94.

Mahood, M. M. *Playing Bit Parts in Shakespeare*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Mahood, M. M. "Wordplay in *Richard II*." Brooke, *Shakespeare: Richard II; A Casebook* 198-213

Maley, Wiley. “The Irish Text and Subtext of Shakespeare's English Histories.” Dutton, *Shakespeare’s Works* 94-124.

Mangan, Michael. *A Preface to Shakespeare’s Comedies*. London and New York: Longman, 1996.

Marcus, Leah S. “Elizabeth.” Smith, 147-181.

Marlowe, C. *Edward II*, ed. J.D. Steane *Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Plays. Middlesex*: Penguin Books, 1976.

Marlowe, C. *The Jew of Malta*, ed. J.D. Steane *Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Plays. Middlesex*: Penguin Books, 1976.

Marx, Steven. “Holy War in Henry V.” 24 July 2005. <http://cla.calpoly.edu/~smarx/Publications/henry.html>.

Marx, Steven. “Shakespeare's Pacifism.” 24 July 2005. <http://cla.calpoly.edu/~smarx/Publications/pacifism.html>.

Masefield, John. *Shakespeare*. 1911; London: Williams & Northgate, 1924.

Maus, Katharine Eisaman. “Richard II.” Greenblatt, *The Norton Shakespeare* 943-951.

Maxwell, J. C. “The Middle Plays.” Ford, 300-326.

Maxwell, J. C. “The Plays of Christopher Marlowe.” Ford, 260-276.

McCrum, Robert, William Cran, Robert MacNeil. *The Story of English*. London: Faber and Faber, 1992.

McMullan, Gordon. “‘Swimming on bladders’: the Dialogics of Reformation in Shakespeare & Fletcher’s Henry VIII.” Knowles, Ronald, 211-227.

The Merry Wives of Windsor. Dir. David Hugh Jones. Perf. Richard Griffithes, Judy Davis. British Broadcasting Service, 1982.

Mitchell, R. J. and M. D. R. Leys. *A History of the English People*. London: Pan Books Ltd. 1967.

Montrose, Louis. “Renaissance Literary Studies and the Subject of History.” *English Literary Renaissance* 16.1, 5-12.

Montrose, Louis. “'Shaping Fantasies': Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture.” Dutton, 101-138.

More, Thomas. *History of King Richard III*. 1557. 13 July 2011. <www.r3.org/bookcase/more/moretext.html>.

Morgan, Val "Camusian Revolt and the Making of Character: Falconbridge in Shakespeare's King John." 7 July 2005.
<http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/connotations/morgan1123.htm>.
Morgann, Maurice. "An Essay On the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff." Hunter, *King Henry IV* 25-55.
Morris, Pam. *The Bakhtin Reader*. London: Arnold Publishers. 1994.
Muir, Kenneth. "Changing Interpretations of Shakespeare." Ford, 384-403.
Murphy, Andrew. "Shakespeare's Irish History." Smith, Emma, 201-224.
Murray, Peter B. *Shakespeare's Imagined Persons*. Lanham: Barnes & Noble, 1996.
My Own Private Idaho. Dir. Gus Van Sant. Perf. River Phoenix, Keaunu Reeves, William Richert. 1992.
Ovid. *Metamorphoses*. Trans. Mary W. Innes. 1955; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986.
Palmer, John. *Comic Characters of Shakespeare*. London: Macmillan, 1946.
Partridge, Eric. *Shakespeare's Bawdy*. London: Routledge, 1955.
Patterson, Annabel. "Bottom's Up: Festive Theory." Dutton, *A Midsummer* 172-197.
Peele, George. *King Edward I.* 10 July 2010.
<http://www.ebooksread.com/authors-eng/george-peele/king-edward-the-first-hci/1-king-edward-the-first-hci.shtml>.
Pierce, Robert B. *Shakespeare's History Plays: The Family and the State*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971.
Piesse, A. J. "King John: Changing Perspectives." Hattaway, *Cambridge Companion*, 2002.
Pinciss, Gerald M. and Roger Lockyer, eds. *Shakespeare's World*. New York: Continuum, 1989.
Poole, Kristen. "Facing Puritanism: Falstaff, Martin Marprelate and the Grotesque Puritan." Knowles, Ronald, 97-122.
Potter, Lois. "The Second Tetralogy: Performance as Interpretation." Dutton, *Shakespeare's Works* 287-307.

Preston, Dennis R., “The Minor Characters in Twelfth Night.” Shakespeare Quarterly, Vol 21, No. 2 (Spring 1970) 167-176.

Price, Hereward T. *Construction in Shakespeare.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1951.

Price, Hereward T. "Mirror Scenes in Shakespeare." Joseph Quincy Adams Memorial Studies, ed. James G. McManaway (Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1948), 102. 15 September 2009. <www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2868402.pdf?acceptTC=true>.

Rabkin, Norman. “Meaning and the Merchant of Venice.” Brown *Studying Shakespeare* 39-66.

Rackin, Phyllis. *Shakespeare and Women*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Raleigh, Walter. *Shakespeare*. London: Macmillan, 1907.

Reese, M. M. “Father and Son.” Sanderson, 229-235.

Reeves, Stuart Hampton, “Theatrical Afterlives.” Hattaway, *Cambridge Companion*, 229-244.

Reynolds, Bryan. *Performing Transversally: Reimagining Shakespeare and the Critical Future*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Ribner, Irving. *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare*. London: Routledge. 2004.

Ribner, Irving. “Marlowe's 'Edward II' and the Tudor History Play.” Bluestone and Rabkin. *Shakespeare’s Contemporaries*. 143-160.

Richard II. Dir. Deborah Warner. Perf. Fiona Shaw, Richard Bremmer, Graham Crowden. 1997.

Richard II. Dir. David Giles. Perf. Derek Jacobi, John Gielgud, Jon Finch. British Broadcasting Service, 1978.

The Tragedy of Richard II. Dir. Richard Cottrell and Toby Robertson. Perf. Ian McKellen, Timothy West, Robert Eddison. 1971.

Richard III. Dir. Richard Loncraine. Perf. Ian McKellen, Nigel Hawthorne, Annette Bening. 1995.

Richard III. Dir. Laurence Olivier. Perf. Laurence Olivier, John Geilgud, Claire Bloom. 1955.

Richard III. Dir. Jane Howell. Perf. Ron Cook, Michael Byrne, Zoë Wanamaker, Brian Protheroe 1987.

Richards, I. A. *Practical Criticism*. London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1930.

Ricks, Christopher. *English Drama to 1710*. London: Penguin Books, 1988.

Rossiter, A. P., "Unconformity in *Richard II*." Brooke, *Shakespeare: Richard II; A Casebook* 214-229.

Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

Said, Edward W. *The World, the Text and the Critic*. Boston: 1983.

Salgãdo, Gãmini. "Christopher Marlowe." Ricks, 103-130.

Salingar, Leo. *Shakespeare and the Traditions of Comedy*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1974.

Sanderson, James L. ed. *Henry the Fourth Part 1*. London and New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1969.

Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*. New York: Dover, 1971.

Schwartz, Kathryn. "Vexed Relations: Family, State, and the Uses of Women in 3 Henry VI." Dutton, *Shakespeare's Works* 344-360.

Shaaber, M. A. "The Unity of Henry IV." Sanderson, 298-308.

Shakespeare, William. *The Complete Works*. Eds. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Shakespeare, William. *Falstaffovo Babí Léto*. Trans. Jan Werich, Jan Ladislav. Prague: Svoboda, 1969.

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Ed. G. R. Hibbard. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Shakespeare, William. *Henry IV, Part One*. Ed. Maynard Mack. New York: New American Library, 1965.

Shakespeare, William. *Henry IV Part 1*. Ed. Claire McEachern. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000.

Shakespeare, William. *Henry IV Part One*. Ed. M. A. Shaaber. Baltimore: Penguin, 1966.

Shakespeare, William. *The First Part of the History of Henry IV*. Cambridge: University Press, 1946.

Shakespeare, William. *Henry IV Part Two*. Ed. P. H. Davison. Harmondsworth: Penquin, 1980.

Shakespeare, William. *Henry IV, Part Two*. Ed. Norman N. Holland. New York: New American Library, 1965.

Shakespeare, William. *Henry V*. Ed. John Dover Wilson. 1947; London: Cambridge University Press, 1968.

Shakespeare, William. *Henry V*. Ed. H. M. Hulme. 1963; Harlow: Longman, 1993.

Shakespeare, William. *King Henry V*. Ed. John H. Walter. 1954; London: Methuen & Co., 1965.

Shakespeare, William. *Henry V*. Ed. John Russell Brown. New York: New American Library, 1965.

Shakespeare, William. *King Henry V*. Ed. Evelyn Smith. London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1935.

Shakespeare, William. *Henry V*. Ed. Claire McEachern. New York: Penguin Books, 1999.

Shakespeare, William. *Henry V*. Ed. Gary Taylor. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Shakespeare, William. *Historie 1*. Trans. Josef Václav Sládek, Antonín Klášterský, Jaroslav Vrchlický. Prague: Státní Nakladatelství Krásné Literatury a Umění, 1964.

Shakespeare, William. *Historie 2*. Trans. Josef Václav Sládek, Antonín Klášterský, Jaroslav Vrchlický. Prague: Státní Nakladatelství Krásné Literatury a Umění, 1964.

Shakespeare, William. *King Henry V*. Ed. A. W. Verity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912.

Shakespeare, William. *King Henry VIII*. Ed. John Dover Wilson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962.

Shakespeare, William. *King John*. Ed. John Dover Wilson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954.

Shakespeare, William. *King Richard II*. Ed. Peter Ure. Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1997.

Shakespeare, William. *The Life of Henry V*. Ed. Herbert Arthur Evans. London: Methuen & Co., 1951.

Shakespeare, William. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Ed. T. W. Craik. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Shakespeare, William. *Richard II*. Ed. Frances E. Dolan. New York: Penguin Books, 2000.

Shakespeare, William. *Richard II*. Ed. John Dover Wilson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951.

Shakespeare, William. *Richard III*. Ed. Anthony Hammond. 1981; Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1997.

Shakespeare, William. *Richard III*. Ed. Peter Holland. New York: Penguin Books, 2000.

Shakespeare, William. *Richard III*. Ed. John Dover Wilson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954.

Shakespeare, William. *The First Part of King Henry VI*. Ed. John Dover Wilson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952.

Shakespeare, William. *The Second Part of King Henry VI*. Ed. John Dover Wilson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952.

Shakespeare, William. *The Third Part of King Henry VI*. Ed. John Dover Wilson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952.

Shaw, George Bernard. *Shaw on Shakespeare: An Anthology of Bernard Shaw's Writings on the Plays and Productions of Shakespeare*. New York: Dutton, 1961.

Shewring, Margaret. "In the Context of English History." Smith, Emma, 253-271.

Siemon, James. "'The Power of Hope?' An Early Modern Reader of Richard III." Dutton, *Shakespeare's Works* 361-378.

Sinfield, Alan. *Faultlines Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1992.

Smith, Emma, ed. *Shakespeare's Histories*. Malden: Blackwell, 2004.

Smith, Peter J. "'To Beguile the Time, Look like the Time': Contemporary Film Versions of Shakespeare's Histories." Dutton, *Shakespeare's Works* 70-93.

Sprague, Arthur C. "Gadshill Revisited." Sanderson, 278-295.

Spurgeon, Caroline. *Shakespeare's Imagery*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Stirling, Brents "'Up, cousin, up; your heart is up, I know'." Brooke, *Shakespeare: Richard II; A Casebook* 158- 168.

Stockholder, Kay. *Dream Works. Lovers and Families in Shakespeare's Plays*. Toronto: 1987.

Stoll, E. E. "Falstaff as Coward." Sanderson, 393-399.

Stříbrný, Zdeněk. *Dějiny anglické literatury*. Volumes 1 and 2. Prague: Academia, 1987.

Stříbrný, Zdeněk "Henry V and History." *Shakespeare in a Changing World*, ed. Arnold Kettle. London, pp. 84–101.

Stříbrný, Zdeněk. *Shakespeare and Eastern Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Stříbrný, Zdeněk. *Shakespearovy historické hry*. Prague: Nakladatelství Československé Akademie Věd, 1959.

Tillyard, E. M. W. *The Elizabethan World Picture*. New York: Macmillan, 1944.

Tillyard, E. M. W. *Shakespeare's History Plays*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1944.

Toliver, Harold E. "Falstaff, the Prince, and the History Play." Sanderson, 169-193.

Traversi, D. A. *Approaches to Shakespeare*. London: Sands and Co. 1938.

Traversi, D. A. "Henry IV, Part 1: History and the Artist's Vision." Sanderson, 316-331.

Traversi, Derek. "The Young Dramatist and the Poet." Ford, 277-299.

Trevelyan, G. M. *A Shortened History of England*. Harmondsworth: Penquin Books, 1963.

Turner, Robert Y., "Characterization in Shakespeare's Early History Plays." ELH vol. 31, No. 3 (September 1964) 241-258.

Urbánek, Zdeněk. Preface. *Jindřich Čtvrtý*. By William Shakespeare. Trans. Zdeněk Urbánek. Brno: Atlantis, 1995.

Van Doren, Mark. *Shakespeare*. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1939.

Vaughan, Virginia Mason. "King John." Dutton, *Shakespeare's Works* 379-394.

Vickers, Brian. *Appropriating Shakespeare*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993.

Vodák, Jindřich. *Shakespeare. Kritikův Breviář*. Prague: Melantrich, 1950.

Watt, R. J. C., ed. *Shakespeare's History Plays*. New York: Longman, 2003.

Watts, Cedric. "Recent Developments in Shakespearean Studies." Ricks, 276-288.

Weimann, Robert. *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978.

Wells, Stanley, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Wells, Stanley. *Shakespeare: An Illustrated Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Wells, Stanley. *Shakespeare The Poet and his Plays*. 1994; London: Methuen Publishing Limited, 2001.

Wilde, Oscar. *The Portrait of Mr. W. H*. London: Penguin Books, 1994.

Williams, Philip. "The Birth and Death of Falstaff Reconsidered." Holland, *Henry IV, Part Two* 201-211.

Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Wilson, John Dover. *The Fortunes of Falstaff*. 1943; 3rd edition. London: Cambridge University Press, 1953.

Wilson, John Dover. *Life in Shakespeare's England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926.

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Yeats, W. B. "Ideas of Good and Evil." Brown. 217-220.

Annotations

This dissertation examines subversive characters and techniques in Shakespeare's history plays. These consist of lords of misrule, villains, saints, strong women, various kinds of minor characters, the use of soliloquies and asides and the inclusion of small episode scenes. The aim is to demonstrate how they provide alternative perspectives on traditional readings of the plays. The work begins with an overview of the critical literature on the subject. This is followed by a discussion of Shakespeare's predecessors, contemporaries and immediate successors with special attention drawn to the manner in which they treated the subject. The remainder of the dissertation consists of an analysis of the particular plays using *The Merry Wives of Windsor* as a case study. The history plays examined are as follows: *Henry VI part 1*, *Henry VI part 2*, *Henry VI part 3*, *Richard III*, *King John*, *Richard II* and finally *Henry VIII*.

Die Dissertation behandelt die subversiven Figuren und Techniken in Shakespeares historischen Dramen. Diese setzen sich zusammen aus den Königen der Hofnarren, den Bösewichten, Heiligen, starken Frauen sowie diversen Nebenfiguren und basieren auf dem Gebrauch von Monologen, Nebenbemerkungen sowie der Einbeziehung von kleinen Zwischenepisoden. Das Ziel ist es zu demonstrieren, wie sie alternative Perspektiven zur traditionellen Lesart der Theaterstücke anbieten. Die Arbeit beginnt mit einem Überblick über den Forschungsstand zum Untersuchungsgegenstand. Danach folgt eine Diskussion über Shakespeares Vorgänger, Zeitgenossen und direkte Nachfolger, wobei besondere Aufmerksamkeit der Art und Weise geschenkt wird, wie sie den Untersuchungsgegenstand behandelten. Den abschließenden Teil der Dissertation bildet die Analyse ausgewählter Theaterstücke. Als Fallbeispiel dient das Theaterstück *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor*. Folgende historischen Dramen wurden untersucht: *Heinrich VI Teil 1, Heinrich VI Teil 2, Heinrich VI Teil 3, Richard III, König Johann, Richard II, Heinrich VIII.*