

***Shakespeare and
the Weight of the
Crown
(Part 1)***



VANDERBILT OSHER
LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE

READING SHAKESPEARE WITH FILM
Russ Heldman – heldman.russ@gmail.com
(*The Complete Pelican Shakespeare, Eds. 2002; 1997*)

November 7, 2023 (“The Weight of the Crown – Part 1”)

Richard II, The First Part of Henry IV, The Second Part of Henry IV, Henry V

Films: BBC – Derek Jacob / John Finch (1978)

Film: Sir Laurence Olivier (1944)

Film: Chimes at Midnight (1965)

Film: Kenneth Branagh (1989)

Film: Neal Street / BBC - Ben Whishaw / Patrick Stewart / Tom Hiddleston /
Simon Russell Beale / Jeremy Irons (2012)

Clips from:

Pages

Henry V

Act IV, Scene 1, lines 275 – 292

8

Richard II

Act II, Scene I, lines 1 – 223

10-21

Act III, Scene 2, lines 143 – 177

22-23

Act IV, Scene 1, lines 162 – 317

24-32

Henry IV – Part I

Act II, Scene 4, lines 355 – 457

35-39

Henry IV – Part II

Act V, Scene 5, lines 41 – 97

40-43

Henry V

Act IV, Scene 3, lines 17 – 127

44-50

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Excerpts:

“Shakespeare’s English Kings – History, Chronicle, and Drama” (**2000**) Peter Saccio

“Our Island Story: A History of Britain” (2014) H.E. Marshal

”This is Shakespeare” (2019) Emma Smith

“Kingship As Divine Right in Shakespeare’s *Richard II* ” (2016) Shamsi Farzana

Shakespeare and the Weight of a Crown (Part I):

“For within the hollow crown
That rounds the mortal temples of a king...
There the antic sits...”

King Richard II

“Are you contented to resign the crown?”

Ay no; no, ay; for I must nothing be;
Therefore no no, for I resign to thee.”

King Richard to Bolingbroke

“Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.”

King Henry IV

“My due from thee is this imperial crown,
Which, as immediate from thy place and blood,
Derives itself to me.”

King Henry V

Monarchs of England

From the last Wessex kings through Shakespeare's lifetime.
(Dates in parentheses are regnal, not birth and death.)

Edward *the Confessor* (1042–66)

Harold II (1066)

William I *the Conqueror* (1066–87)

William II *Rufus* (1087–1100)

Henry I *Beauclerc* (1100–35)

Stephen (1135–54)

Empress Matilda (1141)

Henry II *Curtmantle* (1154–89)

Richard I *the Lionheart* (1189–99)

John *Lackland* (1199–1216)

Henry III (1216–72)

Edward I *Longshanks* (1272–1307)

Edward II (1307–27)

Edward III (1327–77)

Richard II (1377–99)

Henry IV *Bolingbroke* (1399–1413)

Henry V (1413–22)

Henry VI (1422–61, 1470–1)

Edward IV (1461–70, 1471–83)

Edward V (1483)

Richard III *Crookback* (1483–5)

Henry VII *Tudor* (1485–1509)

Henry VIII (1509–47)

Edward VI (1547–53)

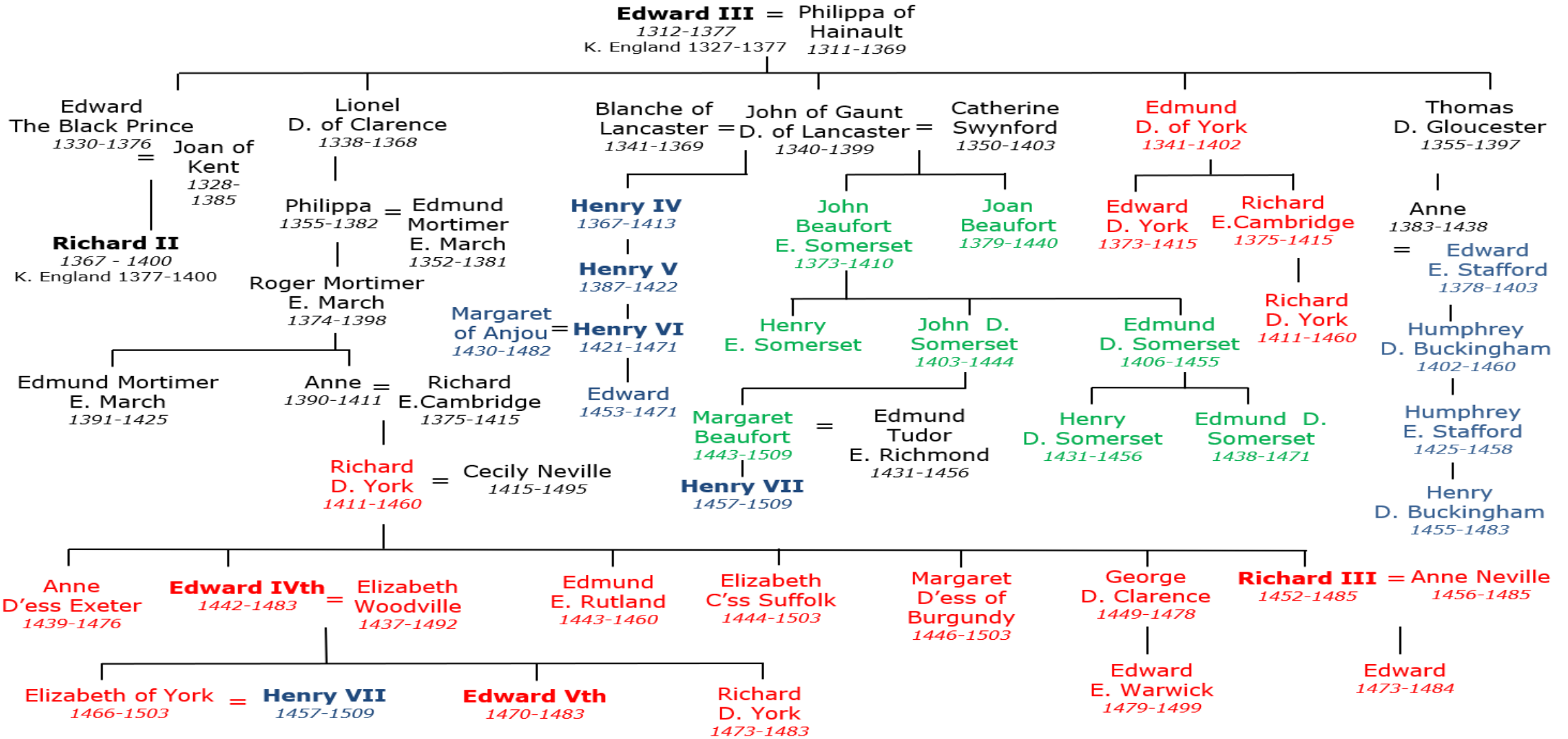
Lady Jane Grey (1553)

Mary I *Tudor* (1553–58)

Elizabeth I (1558–1603)

James I (1603–25)

The History of England Podcast Family Trees
The Wars of the Roses: Descendants of Edward III (simplified)



The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[NAMES OF THE ACTORS

CHORUS

KING HENRY THE FIFTH

DUKES OF GLOUCESTER AND BEDFORD, *brothers to
the king*

DUKE OF EXETER, *uncle to the king*

DUKE OF YORK, *cousin to the king*

EARLS OF SALISBURY, WESTMORELAND, WARWICK,
AND CAMBRIDGE

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

BISHOP OF ELY

LORD SCROOP

SIR THOMAS GREY

SIR THOMAS ERPINGHAM

GOWER, FLUELLEN, MACMORRIS, JAMY, *English officers*

JOHN BATES, ALEXANDER COURT, MICHAEL WILLIAMS,
English soldiers

PISTOL, NYM, BARDOLPH

BOY

AN ENGLISH HERALD

CHARLES THE SIXTH, *King of France*

LEWIS, *the Dauphin*

DUKES OF BURGUNDY, ORLEANS, BOURBON,
AND BRITAINÉ

THE CONSTABLE OF FRANCE

RAMBURES, GRANDPRÉ, *French lords*

GOVERNOR OF HARFLEUR

MONTJOY, *a French herald*

AMBASSADORS TO KING HENRY

ISABEL, *Queen of France*

KATHERINE, *daughter to the French king and queen*

ALICE, *an attendant to Katherine*

HOSTESS QUICKLY OF AN EASTCHEAP TAVERN, *wife
to Pistol*

LORDS, LADIES, OFFICERS, SOLDIERS, CITIZENS,
MESSENGERS, AND ATTENDANTS

SCENE: *England and France*

*

KING HENRY V

Act IV.1

ERPINGHAM: I shall do't, my lord.

KING:

O God of battles, steel my soldiers' hearts,
Possess them not with fear! Take from them now
The sense of reck'ning, if th' opposed numbers 277

Pluck their hearts from them. Not today, O Lord,

O, not today, think not upon the fault

My father made in compassing the crown!

280

I Richard's body have interred new;

281

And on it have bestowed more contrite tears

Than from it issued forced drops of blood.

Five hundred poor I have in yearly pay,

Who twice a day their withered hands hold up

Toward heaven to pardon blood;

286

And I have built two chantries,

287

Where the sad and solemn priests sing still

288

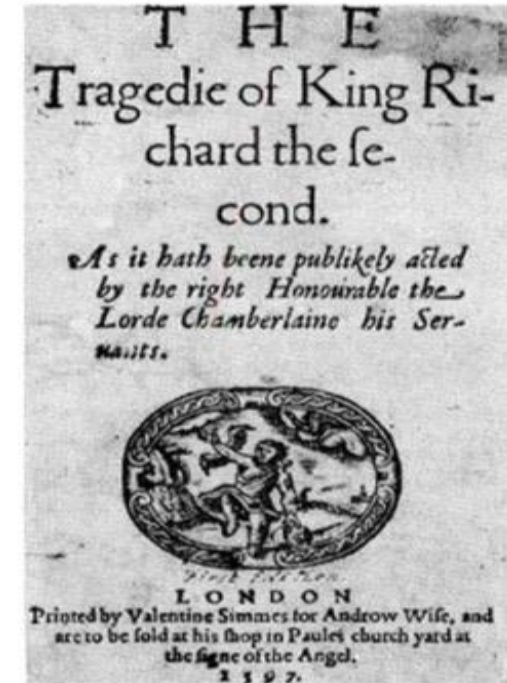
For Richard's soul. More will I do:

Though all that I can do is nothing worth,

Since that my penitence comes after all,

291

Imploring pardon.



The Tragedy of King Richard the Second

[NAMES OF THE ACTORS

KING RICHARD THE SECOND

JOHN OF GAUNT, *Duke of Lancaster* } *uncles to*

EDMUND OF LANGLEY, *Duke of York* } *the king*

HENRY, *surnamed BOLINGBROKE, Duke of Hereford,*

son to John of Gaunt; afterward KING HENRY

THE FOURTH

DUKE OF AUMERLE, *son to the Duke of York*

THOMAS MOWBRAY, *Duke of Norfolk*

DUKE OF SURREY

EARL OF SALSBURY

LORD BERKELEY

BUSHY

BAGOT } *servants to King Richard*

GREEN }

EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND

HENRY PERCY, *surnamed Hotspur, his son*

LORD ROSS

LORD WILLOUGHBY

LORD FITZWATER

BISHOP OF CARLISLE

ABBOT OF WESTMINSTER

LORD MARSHAL

SIR STEPHEN SCROOP

SIR PIERCE OF EXTON

CAPTAIN OF A BAND OF WELSHMEN

GARDENER AND HIS MEN

QUEEN TO KING RICHARD

DUCHESS OF YORK

DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER

LADIES *attending on the queen*

LORDS, HERALDS, OFFICERS, SOLDIERS, KEEPER,

MESSANGER, GROOM, SERVINGMAN AND

OTHER ATTENDANTS

SCENE: *England and Wales*

Richard II
Act II.1

Enter John of Gaunt, sick, with the Duke of York

GAUNT:
Will the king come, that I may breathe my last
In wholesome counsel to his unstaid youth?

YORK:
Vex not yourself nor strive not with your breath,
For all in vain comes counsel to his ear.

GAUNT:
O, but they say the tongues of dying men
Enforce attention like deep harmony.
Where words are scarce, they are seldom spent in vain,
For they breath truth that breath their words in pain.
He that no more must say is listened more
Than they whom youth and ease have taught to glose. 10
More are men's ends marked than their lives before. 11
The setting sun, and music at the close,
At the last taste of sweets, is sweetest last, 13
With in remembrance more than things long past.
Though Richard my life's counsel would not hear, 15
My death's sad tale may yet undeaf his ear. 16

Richard II

Act II.1

YORK:

No; it is stopped with other, flattering sounds,
As praises, of whose taste the wise are fond, 18
Lascivious metres, to whose venom sound 19
The open ear of youth doth always listen;
Report of fashions in proud Italy,
Whose manners still our tardy apish nation 22
Limps after in base imitation.
Where doth the world thrust forth a vanity
(So it be new, there's no respect how vile) 25
That is not quickly buzzed into his ears?
Then all too late comes counsel to be heard
Where will doth mutiny with wit's regard. 28
Direct not him whose way himself will choose.
'Tis breath thou lack'st, and that breath wilt thou lose.

GAUNT:

Methinks I am a prophet new inspired

And thus, expiring, do fortell of him:
His rash fierce blaze of riot cannot last,
For violent fires soon burn out themselves;
Smal show'rs last long, but sudden storms are short;
He tries betimes that spurs too fast betiesm; 36
With eager feeding food doth choke the feeder;
Light vanity, insatiate cormorant, 38
Consuming means, soon preys upon itself.
This royal throne of kings, this scept'red isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,

Richard II

Act II.1

This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the had of war, 44
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands;
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
Feared by their breed and famous by their birth
Renowned for their deeds as far from home,
For Christian service and true chivalry,
As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry 55
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's son'
This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land
Dear for her reputation through the world,
In now leased out (I die pronouncing it)
Like to a tenement or pelting farm. 60
England, bound in with the triumphant sea,
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege
Of wat'ry Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
With inky blots and rotten parchment bonds. 64
That England that was wont to conquer others
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.
Ah, would the scandal vanish with my life,
How happy then were my ensuing death!

Richard II
Act II.1

YORK:
The king is come. Deal mildly with his youth;
For young hot colts, being raged, do rage the more,

QUEEN:
How fares our noble uncle Lancaster?

KING:
What comfort, man? How is't with aged Gaunt?

GAUNT:
O, how that name befits my composition!
Old Gaunt indeed, and gaunt in being old.
Within me grief hath kept a tedious fast;
And who abstains from meat that is not gaunt? 77
For sleeping England long time have I watched;
Watching breeds leanness, leanness is all gaunt.
The pleasure that some fathers feed upon
Is my strict fast – I mean my children's look –
And therein fasting hast thou made me gaunt.
Gaunt am I for the grave, gaunt as a grave,
Whose hollow womb inherits naught but bones. 83

KING:
Can sick men play so nicely with their names?

Richard II
Act II.1

GAUNT:
No, misery makes sport to mock itself. 85
Since thou dost seek to kill my name in me,
I mock my name, great king, to flatter thee.

KING:
Should dying men flatter with those that live? 88

GAUNT:
No, no! men living flatter those that die.

KING:
Those, now a-dying, sayest thou flatterest me.

GAUNT:
O, no! thou diest, though I the sicker be.

KING:
I am in health, I breathe, and see thee ill.

GAUNT:
Now, he that made me knows I see thee ill;
Ill in myself to see, and in thee seeing ill.
Thy deathbed is no lesser than thy land,
Wherein thou liest in reputation sick;
And thou, too careless patient as thou art,
Comitt' st thy anointed body to the cure
Of those physicians that first wounded thee.
A thousand flatterers sit within thy crown,
Whose compass is no bigger than thy head;
And yet, incaged in so small a verge, 102
The waste is no whit lesser than thy land.

Richard II

Act II.1

O, had thy grandsire, with a prophet's eye,
Seen how his son's son should destroy his sons,
From forth thy reach he would have laid thy shame,
Deposing thee before thou wert possessed, 107
Which art possessed now to depose thyself.
Why, cousin, wert thou regent of the world,
It were a shame to let this land by lease;
But, for thy world enjoying but this land,
Is it not more than shame to shame it so?
Landlord of England art thou now, not king. 113
Thy state of law is bondslave to the law. 114
And thou –

KING:

A lunatic lean-witted fool,
Presuming on a ague's privilege, 116
Darest with thy frozen admonition 117
Make pale our cheek, chasing the royal blood
With fury from his native residence. 118
Now, by me seat's right royal majesty,
Wert thou not brother to great Edward's son,
This tongue that runs so roundly in thy head 122
Should run thy head from thy unreverent shoulders.

Richard II

Act II.1

GAUNT:

O, spare me not, my brother Edward's son,
For that I was his father Edward's son!

That blood already, like the pelican, 126
Hast thou tapped out and drunkenly caroused.

My brother Gloucester, plain well-meaning soul –
Whom fair befall in heaven 'mongst happy souls! –

May be a precedent and witness good 130
That thou respect'st not spilling Edward's blood.

Join with present sickness that I have,
Any thy unkindness be like crooked age, 133

To crop at once a too-long-withered flower.

Live in thy shame, but die not shame with thee!

These words hereafter thy tormenters be!

Convey me to my bed, then to my grave.

Love they to live that love and honor have.

Exit [borne off by Attendants].

KING:

And let them die that age and sullens have; 139
For doth hast thou, and both become the grave.

YORK:

I do beseech your majesty impute his words
To wayward sickliness and age in him.

He loves you, on my life, and hold you dear

As Harry Duke of Hereford, were he here.

Richard II

Act II.1

KING:

Right, you say true! As Hereford's love, so his;
As theirs, so mine; and all be as it is!

145

[Enter Northumberland.]

NORTHUMBERLAND:

My liege, old Gaunt commends him to your majesty.

KING:

What says he?

NORTHUMBERLAND:

Nay, nothing; all is said.

His tongue is now a stringless instrument;
Words, life, and all, old Lancaster hath spent.

YORK:

Be York the next that must be bankrout so!
Though death be poor, t ends a mortal woe.

151

Richard II

Act II.1

KING:

The ripest fruit falls, and doth he;
His time is spent, our pilgrimage must be. 154
So much for that. Now for our Irish wars.
We must supplant those rough rug-headed kerns, 156
Which lie like venom where no venom else 157
But only they have privilege to live.
And, for those great affairs do ask some charge, 159
Towards our assistance we do seize to us
The plate, coin, revenues, and moveables
Whereof our uncle Gaunt did stand possessed.

YORK:

How long shall I be patient? Ah, how long
Shall tender duty make me suffer wrong?
Not Gloucester's death, nor Hereford's banishment,
Nor Gaunt's rebukes, nor England's private wrongs, 166
Nor the prevention of poor Bolingbroke
About his marriage, nor my own disgrace,
Have ever made me sour my patient cheek
Or bend one wrinkle on my sovereign's face.
I am the last of noble Edward's sons,
Of whom thy father, Prince of Wales, was first.
In war was never lion raged more fierce,
In peace was never gentle lamb more mild,
Than was that young and princely gentleman.
His fact thou hast, for even so looked he,
Accomplished with the number of thy hours; 177
But when frowned, it was against the French
And not against his friends. His noble hand

Richard II
Act II.1

Did win what he did spend, and spent not that
Which his triumphant father's hand had won.
His hands were guilty of no kinred blood,
But bloody with the enemies of his kin.
O Richard! York is too far gone with grief,
Or else he never would compare between.

185

KING:
Why, uncle, what's the matter?

YORK:
O my liege,
Pardon me, if you please; if not, I pleased
Not to be pardoned, am content withal.
Seek you to seize and gripe into your hands
The royalties and rights of banished Hereford?
Is not Gaunt dead? And doth not Hereford live?
Was not Gaunt just? And is not Harry true?
Did not the one deserve to have an heir?
Is not his heir a well-deserving son?
Take Hereford's rights away, and take from Time
His charters and his customary rights;
Let not to-morrow then ensure to-day
Be not thyself – for how art thou a king
But by fair sequence and succession?
Now, afore God (God forbid I say true!)
If you do wrongfully seize Hereford's rights,
Call in the letters patents that he hath

188

190

196

197

202

Richard II

Act II.1

By his attorneys general to sue
His livery, and deny his off' red homage, 204
You pluck a thousand dangers on your head,
You lose a thousand well-disposed hearts,
And price my tender patience to those thoughts
Which honor and allegiance cannot think.

KING:
Think what you will, we seize into our hands
His plate, his goods, his money, and his lands.

YORK:
I'll not be by the while. My liege, farewell.
What will ensure hereof there's none can tell;
But by bad courses may be understood 213
That their events can never fall out good. *Exit.* 214

Richard II

Act II.1

KING:

Go, Bushy, to the Earl of Wiltshire straight.

215

Bid him repair to us to Ely House

To see this business. To-morrow next.

217

And we create, in absence of ourself,

218

Our uncle York Lord Governor of England;

For he is just and always loved us well.

Come on, our queen. To-morrow must we part.

Be merry, for our time of stay is short.

[Flourish.] Exeunt King and Queen.

Mean Northumberland [with Willoughby and Ross].

NORTHUMBERLAND:

Well, lords, the Duke of Lancaster is dead.

The Tragedy of King Richard II
Act III Scene 2

AUMERLE:

Where is the duke my father with his power?

KING

No matter where. Of comfort no man speak!

Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs,

Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes

Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth.

Let's choose executors and talk of wills.

And yet not so – for what can we bequeath,

Save our deposed bodies to the ground?

Our lands, or lives, and all are Bolingbroke's,

And nothing can we call our own by death

And that small model of the barren earth

153

Which serves as paste and cover to our bones.

For God's sake let us sit upon the ground

And tell sad stories of the death of kings!

How some have been deposed, some slain in war,

Some haunted by the ghosts they have deposed,

158

Richard II

Act III.2

Some poisoned by their wives, some sleeping killed –
All murdered; for within the hollow crown
That rounds the mortal temples of a king
Keeps death his court; and there the antic sits, 162
Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp;
Allowing him a breath, a little scene, 164
To monarchize, be feared, and kill with looks;
Infusing him with self and vain conceit, 166
As if this flesh which walls about our like
Were brass impregnable; and humored thus, 168
Comes at the last, and with a little pin 169
Bores through his castle wall, and farewell king!
Cover your heads, and mock not flesh and blood
With solemn reverence. Throw away respect,
Tradition, form, and ceremonious duty;
For you have but mistook me all this while.
I live with bread like you, feel want, taste grief,
Need friends. Subjected thus, 176
How can you say to me I am king?

Richard II

Act IV.1

RICHARD

Alack, why am I sent for to a king
Before I have shook off the regal thoughts
Wherewith I reigned? I hardly et have learned
To insinuate, flatter, bow, and bend my knee.
Give sorrow leave a while to tutor me
To this submission. Yet I well remember
The favors of these men. Were they not mine? 168
Did they not sometime cry "All hail!" to me?
So Judas did to Chris; but he, in twelve,
Found truth in all but one; I, in twelve thousand none.
God save the king! Will no man say amen! 173
God save the king! Although I be not he;
And yet amen, if heaven do think him me.
To do what service am I sent for hither?

YORK

To do that office of thine own good will
Which tired majesty did make thee offer – 178
The resignation of thy state and crown
To Henry Bolingbroke.

Richard II

Act IV.1

RICHARD

Give me the crown. Here, cousin, seize the crown.

Here, cousin.

On this side my hand, and on that side thine.

Now is the golden crown like a deep well

That owes two buckets, filling one another,

The emptier ever dancing in the air,

The other down, unseen, and full of water.

That bucket down and full of tears am I,

Drinking my griefs whilst you mount up on high.

185

BOLINGBROKE

I thought you had been willing to resign.

Richard II

Act IV.1

RICHARD

My crown I am, but still my griefs are mine.
You may my glories and my state depose,
But not my griefs. Still am I king of those.

BOLINGBROKE

Part of your cares you give me with your crown.

RICHARD

You cares set up do not pluck my cares down.

My care is loss of care, by old care done; 196

Your care is gain of care, by new care won. 197

The cares I give I have, though given away;

They tend the crown, yet still with me they stay. 199

BOLINGBROKE

Are you contented to resign the crown?

Richard II

Act IV.1

RICHARD

Ay, no; no, ay; for I must nothing be; 201
Therefore no no, for I resign to thee.
Now mark me how I will undo myself. 203
I give this heavy weight from off my head
And this unwieldy scepter from my hand,
The pride of kingly sway from out my heart.
With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
With mine own hands I give away my crown,
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,
With mine own breath release all duteous oaths. 210
All pomp and majesty I do forswear;
My manors, rents, revenues I forgo;
My acts, decrees, and statutes I deny.
God pardon all oaths that are broke to me!
God keep all vows unbroke are made to thee! 215
Make me, that nothing have, with nothing grieved,
And thou with all pleased, that hast all achieved!
Long mayst thou live in Richard's seat to sit,
And soon lie Richard in an earthy pit!
God save King Henry, unkinged Richard says,
And send him many years of sunshine days!
What more remains?

Richard II

Act IV.1

NORTHUMBERLAND: No more, but that you read
These accusations and these grievous crimes
Committed by your person and your followers
Against the state and profit of this land. 225
That, by confessing the, the souls of men
May deem that you are worthily deposed. 227

RICHARD: Must I do so? And must I ravel out
My weaved-up folly? Gentle Northumberland,
If thy offenses were upon record,
Would it not shame thee in so fair a troop
To read a lecture of them? If thou wouldst, 232
There shouldst thou find one heinous article,
Containing the deposing of a king
And cracking the strong warrant of an oath, 235
Marked with a blot, damned in the book of heaven.
Nay, all of you that stand and look upon
Whilst that my wretchedness doth bait myself, 238
Though some of you, with Pilate, wash your hands,
Showing an outward pity, yet you Pilates
Have here delivered me to my sour cross, 241
And water cannot wash away your sin.

NORTHUMBERLAND:
My lord, dispatch. Read o'er these articles. 243

Richard II

Act IV.1

RICHARD:

Mine eyes are full of tears; I cannot see.
And yet salt water blinds them not so much
But they can see a sort of traitors here.

246

Nay, if I turn mine eyes upon myself;
I find myself a traitor with the rest;

For I have given here my soul's consent
To undeck the pompous body of a king;
Made glory base, and sovereignty a slave,
Proud majesty a subject, state a peasant.

250

NORTHUMBERLAND:

My lord –

RICHARD:

No lord of thine, though haught, insulting man,
Nor no man's lord. I have no name, no title –

254

No, not that name was given me at the font –

256

But 'tis usurped. Alack the heavy day,
That I have worn so many winters out
And know not now what name to call myself!

O that I were a mockery king of snow,
Standing before the sun of Bolingbroke
To melt myself away in water drops!

Good king, great king, and yet not greatly good,
An if my word be sterling yet in England,

264

Let it command a mirror hither straight,
That it may show me what a face I have
Since it is bankrout of his majesty.

BOLINGBROKE:

Go some of you and fetch a looking glass.

Richard II
Act IV.1

NORTHUMBERLAND:
Read o'er this paper while the glass doth come.

RICHARD:
Fiend, thou torments me ere I come to hell! 270

BOLINGBROKE:
Urge it no more, my Lord Northumberland.

NORTHUMBERLAND:
The commons will not then be satisfied.

RICHARD:
They shall be satisfied. I'll read enough
When I do see the very book indeed
Where all my sins are writ, and that's myself.
Enter one with a glass
Give me the glass, and therein will I read.
No deeper wrinkles yet? Hath sorrow struck
So many blows upon this face of mine
And made no deeper wounds? O flattering glass,
Like to my followers in prosperity,
Thou dost beguile me! Was this fact the fact
That every day under his household roof
Did keep ten thousand men? Was this the face
That like the sun did make beholders wink? 284
Was this the face that faced so many follies
And was at last outfaced by Bolingbroke? 285
A brittle glory shineth in this face.
As brittle as the glory is the face,
[Dashes the glass to the floor]
For there it is, cracked in a hundred shivers.
Mark, silent king, the moral o this sport –
How soon my sorrow hath destroyed my face.

Richard II

Act IV.1

BOLINGBROKE:

The shadow of your sorrow hath destroyed
The shadow your face.

292

RICHARD:

Say that again.

The shadow of my sorrow? Ha! Let's see!

Tis very true: my grief lies all within;
And these external manners of laments
Are merely shadows to the unseen grief
That swells with silence in the tortured soul.
There lies the substance; and I thank thee, king,
For thy great bounty that not only giv'st
Me cause to wail, but teachest me the way
How to lament the cause. I'll beg one boon,
And then be gone and trouble you no more.
Shall I obtain it?

300

302

BOLINGBROKE:

Name it, fair cousin.

RICHARD:

For cousin? I am greater than a king;
For when I was a king, my flatterers
Were then but subjects; being now a subject,
I have a king here to my flatterer.
Being so great, I have no need to beg.

308

Richard II

Act IV.1

BOLINGBROKE:
Yet ask.

RICHARD:
And shall I have?

BOLINGBROKE
You shall.

RICHARD:
Then give me leave to go.

BOLINGBROKE:
Whither?

RICHARD:
Whether you will, so I were from your sights.

BOLINGBROKE:
Go some of you, convey him to the Tower. 316

RICHARD:
O, good! Convey? Conveyers are you all, 317

The First Part of King Henry the Fourth

[NAMES OF THE ACTORS

The court:

KING HENRY THE FOURTH
(formerly Henry Bolingbroke)
HENRY, PRINCE OF WALES
PRINCE JOHN OF LANCASTER } *the king's sons*
EARL OF WESTMORELAND
SIR WALTER BLUNT

The rebel camp:

THOMAS PERCY, *Earl of Worcester*
HENRY PERCY, *Earl of Northumberland*
HENRY PERCY ("HOTSPUR"), *his son*
EDMUND MORTIMER, *Earl of March*
RICHARD SCROOP, *Archbishop of York*
ARCHIBALD, *Earl of Douglas*
OWEN GLENDOWER
SIR RICHARD VERNON
SIR MICHAEL, *a friend of the Archbishop of York*
LADY PERCY, *Hotspur's wife and Mortimer's sister*
LADY MORTIMER, *Glendower's daughter*

The tavern:

SIR JOHN FALSTAFF
POINS
GADSHILL
PETO
BARDOLPH
VENTNER *of an Eastcheap tavern*
FRANCIS, *a waiter*
MISTRESS QUICKLY, *hostess of an Eastcheap tavern*

Others:

CHAMBERLAIN *of an inn at Rochester*
OSTLER
MUGS AND ANOTHER CARRIER
TRAVELERS *on the road from Rochester*
to London
SHERIFF
HOTSPUR'S SERVANT
MESSENGER FROM NORTHUMBERLAND
TWO MESSENGERS *(soldiers in Hotspur's army)*

SCENE: *England and Wales*

The Second Part of King Henry the Fourth

THE ACTORS' NAMES

RUMOR, <i>the Presenter</i>		
KING HENRY THE FOURTH		
PRINCE HENRY, <i>afterwards crowned King Henry the Fifth</i>		
PRINCE JOHN OF LANCASTER	} <i>sons to Henry IV and brethren to Henry V</i>	
HUMPHREY OF GLOUCESTER		
THOMAS OF CLARENCE		
[EARL OF] NORTHUMBERLAND		
[RICHARD SCROOB,] THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK	} <i>against King Henry IV</i>	
[LORD] MOWBRAY		
[LORD] HASTINGS		
LORD BARDOLPH		
TRAVERS		
MORTON		
[SIR JOHN] COLEVILLE		
[EARL OF] WARWICK	} <i>of the king's party</i>	
[EARL OF] WESTMORELAND		
[EARL OF] SURREY		
[SIR JOHN BLUNT]		
GOWRIE		
HARCOURT		
LORD CHIEF JUSTICE		
[HIS SERVANT]		
[ROBERT] SHALLOW	} <i>both country justices</i>	
SILENCE		
		DAVY, <i>servant to Shallow</i>
		FANG AND SNARE, <i>two sergeants</i>
		[RALPH] MOULDY
		[SIMON] SHADOW
		[THOMAS] WART
		[FRANCIS] FEEBLE
		[PETER] BULLCALF
		POINS
		[SIR JOHN] FALSTAFF
		BARDOLPH
		PISTOL
		PETO
		[FALSTAFF'S] PAGE
		HOSTESS QUICKLY
		DOLL TEARSHEET
		NORTHUMBERLAND'S WIFE
		PERCY'S WIDOW [LADY PERCY]
		[A DANCER AS] EPILOGUE
		[FRANCIS AND OTHER] DRAWERS, BEADLE
		[AND OTHER OFFICERS], GROOMS
		[, PORTER, MESSENGER, SOLDIERS,
		LORDS, ATTENDANTS]

[SCENE: *England*]

*

Henry IV – Part 1

Act II.4

FALLSTAFF:

Well, thou wilt be horribly child to-morrow
When thou comest to thy father. If thou love me,
Practise an answer.

PRINCE:

Do thou stand for my father and examine me
Upon particulars of my life.

FALSTAFF:

Shall I? Content. This chair shall be my state, 360
This dagger my sceptre, and this cushion my crown.

PRINCE:

The state is taken for a joined-stool, thy golden 362
Sceptre for a leaden dagger, and thy precious rich crown
For a pitiful bald crown.

FALSTAFF:

Well, an the fire of grace be not quite out of
Thee, now shalt thou be moved. Give me a cup of sack o
Make my eyes look red, that it may be thought I have
Wept; for I must speak in passion, and I will do it in
King Cambyses' vein. 369

PRINCE:

Well, here is my leg. 370

FALSTAFF:

And here is my speech. Stand aside, nobility.

Henry IV – Part 1

Act II.4

HOSTESS:

O Jesu, this is excellent sport, i' faith!

FALSTAFF:

Weep not, sweet queen, for trickling tears are vain.

HOSTESS:

O, the Father, how he holds his countenance!
For tears do stop the floodgates of her eyes.

374

HOSTESS:

O Jesu, he doth it as like one of these harlotry
Players as ever I see!

377

FALSTAFF:

Peace, good pinpot. Peace, good tickle –
Brain. – Harry, I do not only marvel where thou spend –
Est thy time, but also how thou art accompanied. For
Thoug the chamomile, the more it is trodden on, the
Faster it grows, yet youth, the more it is wasted, the
Sooner it wears. That thou art my son I have partly thy
Mother's word, partly my own opinion, but chiefly a
Villainous trick of thine eye and a foolish hanging of thy
Nether lip that doth warrant me. If then thou be son to
Me, here lies the point: why, being son to me, art thou
So pointed at? Shall the blessed sun of heaven prove a
Micher and eat blackberries? A question not to be
Asked. Shall the son of England prove a thief an take
Purses? A question to be asked. There is a thing, Harry,
Which thou hast often heard of, and it is known to many
In our land by the name of pitch. This pitch, as ancient

386

387

390

394

Henry IV – Part 1
Act II.4

Writers do report, doth defile; so doth the company thou
keepest. For, Harry, now I do not speak to thee in
Drink, but in tears; not in pleasure, but in passion; not
In words only, but in woes also: and yet there is a virtuous
Man whom I have often noted in thy company, but
I know not his name.

PRINCE:
What manner of man, an it like your majesty?

FALSTAFF:
A goodly portly man, i' faith, and a corpulent; 401
Of a cheerful look, a pleasing eye, and a most noble
Carriage; and, as I think, his age some fifty, or, by'r
Lady, inclining to threescore; and now I remember me,
His name is Falstaff. If that man should be lewdly given, 405
He deceiveth me; for, Harry, I see virtue in his looks. If
Then the tree may be known by the fruit, as the fruit by 407
The tree, then, peremptorily I speak it, there is virtue in 408
That Falstaff. Him keep with, the rest banish. And tell
Me now, thou naughty varlet, tell me where hast thou 410
Been this month?

PRINCE:
Dost thou speak like a king? Do thou stand for
Me, and I'll play my father.

FALSTAFF:
Depose me? If thou dost it half so gravely, so
Majestically, both in word and matter, hang me up be 415
The heels for a rabbit-sucker or, a poulter's hare.

Henry IV

Act II.4

PRINCE:

Well, here I am set.

FALSTAFF:

And here I stand. Judge, my masters.

PRINCE:

Now, Harry, whence come you?

Falstaff:

MY NOBLE LORD, FROM EASTCHEAP.

PRINCE:

The complaints I hear of thee are grievous.

FALSTAFF:

'Sblood, my lord, they are false! Nay, I'll
Tickle ye for a young prince, i' faith.

422

PRINCE:

Swearest thou, ungracious boy? Henceforth
Ne'er look on me. Thou art violently carried away from
Grace. There is a devil haunts thee in the likeness of an
Old fat man; a tun of man is thy companion. Why dost
Thou converse with that trunk of hours, that bolting

423

Hutch of beastliness, that swoll'n parcel of dropsies, that
Huge bombard of sack, that stuffed cloakbag of guts,
That roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in his
Belly, that reerend vice, that grey iniquity, that father

429

Ruffian, that vanity in years? Wherein is he good, but to
Taste sack and drink it? Wherein neat and cleanly, but to
Carve a capon and eat it? Wherein worthy, but in nothing?

432

433

Henry IV
Act II.4

FALSTAFF:
I would your grace would take me with you. 437
Whom means your grace?

PRINCE:
That villainous abominable misleader of youth,
Falstaff, that old white-bearded Satan.

FALSTAFF:
My lord, the man I know.

PRINCE:
I know thou dost.

FALSTAFF:
But to say I know more harm in him than in
Myself were to say more than I know. That he is old (the
More the pity), his white hairs do witness it; but that he
Is (saving your reverence)) a whoremaster, that I utterly 446
Deny. If sack and sugar be a fault, God help the wicked!
If to be old and merry be a sin, then many an old host
That I know is damned. If to be fat to be hated, then
Pharaoh's lean kine are to be loved. **No, my good lord: 450**
Banish peto, banish Bardolph, banish Poins; but for
Sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff,
Valiant Jack Falstaff, and therefore more valiant being,
As he is, old Jack Falstaff, banish not him thy Harry's
Company, banish not him thy Harry's company. Banish
Plump Jack, and banish all the world!

PRINCE:
I do, I will.

Henry IV – Part II

Act V.5

FALSTAFF:

God save thy grace, King Hal, my royal Hal!

PISTOL:

The heavens thee guard and keep, mist royal imp of
Fame!

42

FALSTAFF:

God save thee, my sweet boy!

KING:

My lord chief justice, speak to that vain man.

CHIEF JUSTICE:

Hae you your wits? Know yoy what 'tis you speak?

FALSTAFF:

My king! My Jove! I speak to thee, my heart!

KING:

**I know thee not, old man. Fall to thy prayers.
How ill white hairs become a fool and jester!
I have long dreamed of such a kind of man,
So surfeit-swelled, so old, and so profane,
But, being awaked, I do despise my dream.
Make less thy body hence, and more thy grace.
Leave gormandizing. Know the grave doth gape
For thee thrice wider than for other men.**

53

Henry IV – Part II
Act V.5

**Reply not to me with a fool-born jest.
Presume not that I am the thing I was,
For God doth know, so shall the world perceive,
That I have turned away my former self.
So will I those that kept me company.
When thou dost hear I am as I have been,
Approach me, thou shalt be as thou wast,
The tutor and the feeder of my riots.
Till then, I banish thee, on pain of death,
As I have done the rest of my misleaders,
Not to come near our person by ten mile.
For competence of life I will allow you,
That lack of means enforce you not to evils.
And, as we hear you do reform yourselves,
We will, according to your strengths and qualities,
Give you advancement. Be it your charge, my lord,
To see performed the tenor of our word.
Set on. *[Exeunt the King and his Train]***

67

72

FALSTAFF:
Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pound.

Henry IV – Part II

Act V.5

SHALLOW:

Yea, marry, Sir John, which I beseech you to
Let me have home with me.

FALSTAFF:

That can hardly be, Master Shallow. Do not
You grieve at this. I shall be sent for in private to him.
Loo you, he must seem thus to the world. Fear not
Your advancements; I will be the man yet that shall
Make you great.

SHALLOW:

I cannot well perceive how, unless you should
Give me your doublet and stuff me out with straw. I
Beseech you, good Sir John, let me have five hundred of
My thousand.

FALLSTAFF:

Sir, I will be as good as my word. This that
You heard was but a color.

87

SHALLOW:

A color that I fear you will die in, Sir John.

FALSTAFF:

Fear no colors. Go with me to dinner. Come,
Lieutenant Pistol, come, Bardolph. I shall be sent for
Soon at night.

89

91

*Enter [the Lord Chief] Justice and Prince John [of
Lancaster, with Officers].*

Henry IV – Part II

Act V.5

CHIEF JUSTICE:

Go, carry Sir John Falstaff to the Fleet.
Take all his company along with him.

92

FALSTAFF:

My lord, my lord. –

CHIEF JUSTICE:

I cannot now speak. I will hear you soon.
Take them away.

PISTOL:

'Si fortuna me tormenta, spero contenta.'

*Exeunt [all but Prince John and the
Chief Justice].*

97

Henry V
Act IV.3

*Enter Gloucester, Bedford, Exeter, Erpingham with
all his Host, Salisbury, and Westmoreland.*

GLOUCESTER:
Where is the king?

BEDFORD:
The king himself is rode to view their battle. 2

WESTMORELAND:
Of fighting men they have full three-score thousand.

EXETER:
There's five to one; besides, they all are fresh.

SALISBURY:
God's arm strike with us! 'Tis a fearful odds.
God bye you, princes all; I'll to my charge.
If we no more meet till we meet in heaven,
Then joyfully, my noble Lord of Bedford,
My dear Lord, Gloucester, and my good Lord Exeter,
And my kind kinsman, warriors all, adieu!

BEDFORD:
Farewell, good Salisbury, and god luck go with thee!

EXETER:
Farewell, kind lord: fight valiantly to-day;
And yet I do thee wrong to mind thee of it,
For thou art framed on the firm truth of valor. 14
[Exit Salisbury.]

Henry V
Act IV.3

BEDFORD:
He is as full of valor as of kindness,
Princely in both.
Enter the King.

WESTMORELAND:
O that now had here
But one ten thousand of those men in England
That do not work to-day!

KING:
What's he that wishes so?
My cousin Westmoreland? No, my fair cousin.
If we are marked to die, we are enow 20
To do our country loss; and if to live,
The fewer men, the greater share of honor.
God's will! I pray thee wish not one man more.
By Jove, I am not covetous for gold,
Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost; 26
It yearns me not if men my garments wear;
Such outward things dwell not in my desires:
But if it be a sin to covet honor,
I am the most offending soul alive.
No, faith, my coz, wish not a man from England. 30
God's peace! I would not lose so great an honor
As one man more methinks would share from me
For the best hope I have. I, do not wish one more!
Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,
That he which hath no stomach to this fight,
Let him depart; his passport shall be made,
And crowns for convoy put into his purse. 37
We would not die in that man's company
That fears his fellowship to die with us 39

Henry V
Act IV.3

This day is called the Feast of Crispian. 40

He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a-tiptoe when this day is named
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.

He that shall see this day, and live old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbors
And say, 'To-morrow is Saint Crispian.'

The will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
[And say, 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.']

Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember, with advantages, 50

What feats he did that day. Then shall our names,
Familiar in his mouth as household words –
Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester –
Be in their flowing cups freshly rememb'ed.

This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remembered –

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother. Be he ne'er so vile 62

This day shall gentle his condition;
And gentlemen in England now a bed 63

Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

Enter Salisbury.

Henry V
Act IV.3

SALISBURY:

My sovereign lord, bestow yourself with speed.
The French are bravely in their battles set
And will with all expedience charge on us.

70

KING:

All things are ready, if our minds be so.

WESTMORELAND:

Perish the man whose mind is backward now!

KING:

Thou dost not wish more help from England, coz?

WESTMORELAND:

God's will, my liege! Would you and I alone,
Without more help, could fight this royal battle!

KING:

Why, now thou hast unwished five thousand men!
Which likes me better than to wish us one.
You know your places. God be with you all!

Henry V

Act IV.3

MONTJOY:

Once more I come to know of thee, King Harry,
If for thy ransom thou wilt now compound, 80

Before thy most assured overthrow;

For certainly thou art so near the gulf

Thou needs must be englutted. Besides, in mercy, 83

The Constable desires thee thou wilt mind 84

Thy followers of repentance, that their souls

May make a peaceful and a sweet retire

From all these fields, where (wretches!) their poor bodies

Must lie and fester.

KING:

Who hath sent thee now?

MONTJOY:

The Constable of France.

Henry V

Act IV.3

KING:

I pray thee bear my former answer back:
Bid them achieve me, and then sell my bones 91

Good God! Why should they mock poor fellows thus?

The man that once did sell the lion's skin
While the beast lived, was killed with hunting him.

A many of our bodies shall no doubt
Find native graves; upon the which, I trust, 96

Shall witness live in brass of this day's work'
And those that leave their valiant bones in France,

Dying like me, though buried in your dunghills,
They shall be famed; for there the sun shall greet them 101

And draw their honors reeking up to heaven,
Leaving their earthly parts to choke your clime,

The smell whereof shall breed a plague in France.
Mark then abounding valor in our English,

That, being dead, like to the bullet's crasing,
Break out into a second course of mischief, 107

Killing in relapse of mortality.
Let me speak proudly. Tell the Constable 109

We are but warriors for the working day.
Our gayness and our gilt are all besmirched 111

With rainy marching in the painful field.
There's not a piece of feather in our host - 112

Good argument, I hope, we will not fly –
And time hath worn us into slovenry.

But, buy the mass, our hears are in the trim;

Henry V

Act IV.3

And my poor soldiers tell me, yet ere night
They'll be in fresher robes, or they will pluck 117

The gay new coats o'er the French soldiers' heads
And turn them out of service. If they do this, 119

As, if God please, they shall, my ransom then
Will soon be levied. Herald, save thou thy labor. 121

Come thou no more for ransom, gentle herald.
They shall have none, I swear, but these my joints;
Which if they have as I will leave 'em them
Shall yield them a little, tell the Constable.

MONTJOY:

I shall, King Harry. And so fare thee well.
Thou never shalt hear herald any more.

Shakespeare's English Kings

By: Peter Saccio

(pages 21-32)

There is some evidence that Richard was very briefly deposed between the battle of Radcot Bridge and the trial of the favorites. If such an attempt was made, it foundered upon the Appellants' own failure to agree upon a successor. The king was carefully kept in the background during the parliamentary proceedings, and remained quiet during the Appellant's ascendancy. In 1389, now twenty-two years old, he announced his intention to rule on his own. The coalition of Appellants broke up, Gaunt returned from Spain, and a reasonable harmony prevailed for seven years, the brightest stretch of the reign. Richard carried out worthwhile projects with the help of a royal council that included Gaunt, friends of the king, and some of the former Appellants. In 1394 he achieved a pacification of Ireland that ranked as his most notable accomplishment since the Peasants' Revolt. Pursuing a peaceful foreign policy, he arranged in 1396 a long truce with France and cemented it dynastically by marrying the French king's daughter Isabel, then a child of seven. (Shakespeare's mature queen and her moving farewell to Richard in Act V of the play are unhistorical inventions.)

In 1397, however, the struggle between the king's friends and the nobles broke out again. This time the king played a larger role, and the personnel of the parties was slightly rearranged. The king's friends now included the duke of York's son Edward earl of Rutland, soon to be made duke of Albermarle (Shakespeare's Aumerle); Thomas Mowbray, reconciled with Richard since the Appellants crisis and soon to be made duke of Norfolk; and two of Richard's maternal relatives, his half-brother John Holland duke of Exeter and his nephew Thomas Holland duke of Surrey. (Richard's fondness for giving his friends ducal titles excited some ridicule: these four men became known as the *duketti*, or dukelings.) Also close to him were three members of parliament, Sir John Bushy, Sir William Bagot, and Sir Henry Green, and the subchamberlain of the royal household, Sir William Scrope. (Bushy and Green were Lancastrian officials, Bagot a dependent of Norfolk's. All three were respectable knights, but they received a bad press from subsequent chronicles. By the time they reached Shakespeare, they had already been turned into what the playwright calls "the caterpillars of the commonwealth." Scrope, under his later title of earl of Wiltshire, is frequently mentioned but never appears in Shakespeare's play.) Bolingbroke's position at this time was vague. He had been pardoned by Richard, had sat briefly on the king's council, and would soon be given the duchy of Hereford, but he had had

The immediate cause of the crisis of 1397 is obscure. By some means Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick once again offended the king: tales are told of refused royal summonses, of speeches disparaging Richard's foreign policy, and even renewed plotting by three lords. However incited, Richard suddenly arrested all three. Richard's motives at this point are also disputed. The occasion may have provided him with an opportunity for a thought, if belated, revenge upon the Appellants. One of Richard's recent biographers has argued that the king, somewhat unbalanced by his previous misfortunes, had long been revolving plans of vengeance. On the other hand, he may have been moved by a larger, less personal motive: the desire to establish beyond question the indefeasibility of the royal sovereignty. **Richard certainly held a theory of the kingly dignity and power more exalted than that of his predecessors. Shakespeare picks this up from Holinshed and has his Richard express a grandiose notion of monarchy, although it is couched of course in language and concepts developed by Elizabethan political theorists rather than in medieval terms.** Whether historically Richard desired revenge or vindication of his prerogative, he certainly got both. His friends (Aumerle, Norfolk, Exeter, Surrey, and Wiltshire among other) lodged in parliament a bill of appeal against the three senior Appellants in a careful legal parody of the latter's appeal nine years earlier. In a well-planned procedure, with Gaunt as hereditary lord high steward prominent in the accusation and Bushy as speaker of the commons, the three lords were convicted. Warwick, breaking down and confessing, was exiled, and Arundel, defiant, was beheaded. A more mysterious fate befell Gloucester. In the middle of the trial Norfolk, who had been assigned to guard Gloucester in the fortress at Calais, announced that his prisoner had died there. Almost certainly he was murdered. Whether he was murdered at Richard's orders, and if so whether Norfolk was the agent, and if so whether Norfolk obeyed the command willingly or complied with it only after conscience-stricken delay, are questions that have never been satisfactorily settled.

Shakespeare's source, Holinshed, describes Gloucester as "fierce of nature, hasty, willful...and in this greatly to be discommended, that he was ever repining against the king in all things." Although Gloucester had a popular following in the 1390s, and was certainly justified in some of his complaints against the king, Holinshed's judgment is reasonable in light of the historical facts as we presently know them. As the protagonist of the Elizabethan play *Woodstock*, however, he is a plain-spoken, well-intentioned, patriotic counsellor to a wayward young king. This latter conception lies behind all three of the royal uncles in Shakespeare's *Richard II*. In Gaunt such a figure is exalted with passionate eloquence. In York the type has been weakened with indecisiveness and semicomical confusion. Gloucester is of course dead at the curtain's rise, but his ghost, which haunts the opening scenes, is just such a "plain well-meaning- soul." Richard's murder of him, suggested obliquely but never doubted, creates the moral weakness of the king's position in Acts I and II. A youthful, headstrong Richard resists the wisdom of his royal uncles, and his hands are stained with royal blood.

The Bolingbroke – Norfolk Quarrel

Richard's destruction of the three senior Lords Appellant naturally alarmed the remaining two. Norfolk apparently warned Bolingbroke that the king might rescind the pardons they had received and "undo" them because of "the deed of Radcot Bridge." At any rate, Bolingbroke reported such a conversation to his father Gaunt. If this conversation actually occurred, it had an effect opposite to what Norfolk presumably intended. Warning Bolingbroke that Richard was not to be trusted, he failed to consider that Bolingbroke might not be any more reliable. And indeed, he was not. Upon Gaunt's advice, Bolingbroke charged Norfolk with treason before parliament in January 1398. Parliament, then near the end of its session, set up a committee of lords and knights to deal with the charge. The second meeting of this committee, in April, provided Shakespeare with the opening scene of *Richard II*. Bolingbroke elaborated his accusation to include misappropriation of money and complicity in the death of Gloucester, while Norfolk denied all the charges and asked for trial by combat. Since no evidence appeared to support either duke, and since they refused reconciliation, Richard ordered such a trial to take place at Coventry in September. At Coventry, however, Richard stopped the proceedings immediately before battle was joined, conferred with the parliamentary committee for two hours (Shakespeare telescopes this conference into a bit of pantomime covered by a "long flourish"), and issued sentences of banishment: ten years for Bolingbroke, life for Norfolk.

The rights and wrongs of this episode are difficult to disentangle. If the duke genuinely feared revenge from Richard – a reasonable apprehension – it is hard to understand why they allowed a quarrel between themselves to place them at the king’s mercy. Perhaps Bolingbroke was acting as straightforwardly and loyally as he claimed, merely reporting a possible treason. Perhaps he wanted to avenge his uncle upon a man implicated in his uncle’s murder, although there is no particular evidence of close affection between Bolingbroke and Gloucester. Perhaps he wished to strengthen his own relationship with Richard. Norfolk, on the other hand, may have counted upon Richard’s indebtedness to him (both in the murder and in the appeal against Arundel and Warwick) for protection against Bolingbroke’s charges. Yet he may have felt his position to be weak: some accounts report that his hesitation over Richard’s order to murder Gloucester caused him to fear Richard’s displeasure. Here we enter a realm of pure speculation: Norfolk and Richard both presumably knew exactly how Gloucester had died, but since we do not, we can only guess at their motives for their subsequent behavior to each other. That the quarrel furnished Richard with an excellent opportunity to rid himself of both junior Appellants is obvious. That he allowed the affair to drag on for nine months only to abort the duel at the last moment looks like a fondness for theatrical gestures on his part.

Norfolk left England and died at Venice within a year. Bolingbroke, his exile reduced to six years just before his departure, took up residence at the French court. During the time of the quarrel and for six months after its conclusion at Coventry, Richard embarked upon a series of financial exactions. He secured from parliament an unprecedented lifetime grant of the customs on wool and leather. He required men and even counties associated with Appellant’s rising to buy costly pardons. He forced prominent persons to affix their seal to blank charters whose contents he evidently intended to fill in when it suited him. Much of the money thus gained he spent on magnificent living. By way of Holinshed, these activities become the “farming of the realm” and the ostentatious vanities for which York and the dying Gaunt rebuke Richard in Shakespeare’s play. Upon Gaunt’s death in February 1399, the king made his greatest mistake: illegally extending the authority of the parliamentary committee set up to deal with the Bolingbroke-Norfolk quarrel, he had them revoke the license enabling Bolingbroke’s attorneys to claim the Lancastrian inheritance on behalf of the exiled heir. Since in default of heirs property reverted to the crown, Richard had, in one stroke, seized for himself the greatest patrimony in the kingdom, turned Bolingbroke into an irreconcilable enemy, and profoundly alarmed every other magnate in England. If Richard could thus

Shakespeare dramatizes the response of the magnates to this confiscation in the conversation of three lords, Northumberland, Willoughby, and Ross, at the end of II.i. (Again, and more drastically, Shakespeare accelerates the time sequence: the scene begins with Gaunt still alive and ends, impossibly, with the news that Bolingbroke is already returning in quest of his stolen estates. In my experience, however, very few readers, let alone playgoers, notice the sleight-of-hand.) The three lords Shakespeare selects for this conversation are drawn from Holinshed's list of those who flocked to Bolingbroke shortly after his landing in the north of England; all three belongs to prominent northern families. The most distinguished of them, Henry Percy earl of Northumberland, was head of the greatest of the noble families of the north, an indefatigable warrior against the Scots and a former supporter of Gaunt. (Although he was Gaunt's contemporary, he appears in Shakespeare to belong to Bolingbroke's generation. His son, also named Henry, who is introduced two scenes later, is thereby made into a youth and thus prepared for his important role as Hotspur in *I Henry IV*.) A chief agent of the usurpation, Northumberland later rebelled against the king he had made, a betrayal predicted by Shakespeare's Richard in Act. V.

Richard's subsequent departure for Ireland, although not as radical a misstep as his appropriation of the Lancastrian estates, certainly entailed an error of timing. To leave England after so thoroughly antagonizing the magnates was foolish. Yet Ireland required attention. Dominion over Ireland had brought the English a host of problems ever since Henry II conquered the western island in the twelfth century. In 1394, by quelling revolt and reorganizing the relationship between the English overlords and the Irish chiefs, Richard had strengthened English rule there. A new outbreak of rebellion in 1398-1399 threatened to shatter his previous gains. His second Irish expedition constituted reasonable policy, fatally timed.

The Usurpation

In July 1399 Bolingbroke landed near Ravenspur on the Yorkshire coast, an area of strong Lancastrian influence. Servants and retainers of his late father were there to meet him, and as he moved south his following swelled. The alarmed councillors in London sent word to Richard and then travelled west themselves, aiming to join the king upon his return from Ireland. Wiltshire, Bushy, and Green took refuge at Bristol, the duke of York and others at Berkley castle in Gloucestershire. Bagot parted company from his fellow caterpillars and apparently joined Richard, either immediately in Ireland or a little later in Wales. Informed of their moves, Bolingbroke also diverted his march to the west, evidently hoping to prevent Richard from meeting his friends. In this he was successful: at Berkely he secured the submission of the spineless York, and at Bristol he forced the surrender of the caterpillars and had them executed.

We do not know what Bolingbroke's real plans were when he returned from exile. That is, we do not know when he decided to reach for the crown itself. While in Yorkshire, he appears to have proclaimed that he sought merely the restoration of his inheritance (including the post of lord high steward) and the reformation of Richard's government. Yet the executions, and certain appointments that he made, were acts of quasi-regal authority. Possibly he did not know his own purpose for a time: he was testing out difficult situation with a caution and a reserve ingrained in him by his earlier unhappy experiences. In Shakespeare's play, Bolingbroke is likewise noncommittal about his intentions, veiling anything beyond the claim for the duchy Lancaster in ambiguity and silence until the crown is actually handed him in Act IV. Since the playwright does not reveal to us the usurper's mind, the psychological interest of Act III lies in Richard's responses.

Word of Bolingbroke's actions reached Richard late, delayed by adverse winds on the Irish Sea. His measures to meet the crisis were ill judged. He sent some of his soldiers, with orders for further recruitment, to the north of Wales under the leadership of John Montague earl of Salisbury, an experienced commander and faithful royalist. He himself hesitated for a time in Ireland and then crossed to southwest Wales, probably hoping to join his councillors at Bristol. Then, deciding to rely upon Salisbury's men he disbanded his own tired troops and travelled north. Salisbury's army, however, believing a rumor that Richard was dead, melted away into the Welsh mountain. Thus Richard and Salisbury were eventually left in the castle at Conway with about a hundred men. There Northumberland found them. Swearing upon the sacrament, he promised Richard that, were Richard to restore the duchy of Lancaster and surrender certain advisors for trial, Bolingbroke would allow him to retain his crown and power. Thus lured from Conway (whence he could have escaped by sea to find help elsewhere), Richard was ambushed by Northumberland's troops, and taken first to Flint castle and then to Bolingbroke's headquarters at Chester. From here Bolingbroke issued writs for a parliament in Richard's name and then escorted Richard across England to the Tower of London.

Richard himself was not wholly responsible for the mismanaged response to the threat of Bolingbroke. It was his cousin Aumerle, his chief companion in Ireland, who caused him to delay his return and who advised the spitting of the army and the dismissal of the southern troops in Wales. After delivering this disastrous counsel, Aumerle went over to Bolingbroke. Holinshed, however, does not report Aumerle's role here. If, as is unlikely, Shakespeare learned of it from the French chronicle of Jean Creton (whence we know of it), he decided not to use it: his Aumerle is loyal friend trying to support Richard's spirits and urging him to decisive action. Deserting Richard at about the same time as Aumerle was another trusted man, Northumberland's brother Thomas Percy, steward of the king's household and recently the recipient of the earldom of Worcester. Holinshed and Shakespeare do mention Worcester's desertion, but Shakespeare moves it to a less crucial time: his Worcester never goes to Ireland or Wales, but deserts Richard's household in London upon the first news of Bolingbroke's arrival (this is reported in II.ii). Finally, Shakespeare altogether omits Northumberland's perjured promise and the ambush, although Holinshed includes both. Historically, then, Richard was the victim of multiple treacheries in Wales, whereas Shakespeare's Richard, although in a difficult position, is challenged by more honorable opponents and accompanied by more faithful supporters. These supporters (Aumerle, the bishop of Carlisle, Wiltshire's brother Sir Stephen Scrope) exhort him to resourceful action, but he ignores or resists their advice. **First placing an unrealistic faith in the divinity that doth hedge a king, and then despairing prematurely, Shakespeare's Richard falls, almost of his own choice, into the hands of his enemies**

Bolingbroke brought Richard to London in August, and was himself crowned Henry IV on 13 October. In the intervening two months he had to devise a generally acceptable mean for Richard's deposition and his own accession. The second part of this task was more difficult than the first. A precedent existed for deposition in the case of Edward II seventy years earlier, but there the successor was Edward's son. Although a reign was artificially terminated, the natural inheritance of the crown was not tampered with. By contrast, Henry was merely Richard's first cousin, and a closer heir by blood existed in the person of Lionel of Clarence's great-grandson, the seven-year-old earl of March. Commissions of lawyers and officials were set to work to formulate a justification for Henry's accession. For their consideration Henry first advanced a claim to the crown on grounds of lineal descent (through his mother) from Edmund Crouchback, the first earl of Lancaster and younger brother of Edward I. The pertinence of this claim, however, rested entirely upon the fantastic story that Crouchback was really the elder brother, unfairly passed over in the succession. Henry next attempted a claim by conquest, but the implications of this horrified the commissioners. Such a precedent could justify future seizure of the crown by anybody who had the strength to take it. He finally "challenged" the crown "through the right that God of his grace hath sent me, with the help of my kin and friends to recover it," a magnificently ambiguous formula.

The formulation of the claim, however, was only half the matter; the claim also had to be generally acknowledged as persuasive. For this action the best instrument was parliament. But the parliament called by Richard's writs in August technically ceased to exist the moment that Richard ceased to be king. The lords and commons who met on 30 September 1399 to hear the formal charges against Richard, to approve of Richard's deposition, and to accept Henry's "challenge" were in fact the people called by Richard's writs who would normally constitute a parliament, and who under fresh writs did constitute Henry's first parliament a week later, but they were not a parliament on that day. Further, it is questionable how far Henry wished to rely on a title granted by parliament, since what a parliament had enacted it could presumably later reverse.

Henry had to be speedy, had to get the crown securely on his head before the momentum of his success slackened, before significant opposition formed or other candidates put themselves forward, and before the French king intervened on behalf of his son-in-law Richard. He was successful, of course, and the ground and validity of his claim have remained stubbornly ambiguous, a fruitful subject for controversy among his own lords within a few years and among constitutional historians ever since. The official account of the proceeding in the Parliamentary Roll, supplemented by chroniclers who favored the Lancastrian claim, attempted to seal his success by omitting to report dissident voices. In particular, these accounts pretended that at Conway Richard had promised Northumberland to abdicate, and that in the Tower he cheerfully carried out his promise, naming Henry as his heir. Coerced in the Tower, Richard in fact finally set his crown upon the floor and resigned it to God, a striking and characteristic last gesture.

Two centuries later Holinshed, more sympathetic to Richard than the Lancastrian chroniclers had been, judged him to be “a prince the most unthankfully used of his subjects, of any one of whom you shall lightly read.” Holinshed also had access to more than the official account. He stresses, for example, the protest of the bishop of Carlisle. This was Thomas Merke, a Benedictine monk who had received his bishopric in reward for long and faithful administrative service in Richard’s reign. During the proceedings of September and October 1399, Carlisle argued stoutly in defense of Richard that subjects had no right to judge their king. From Holinshed’s long account of the transfer of power, rich in incidents such as this of Carlisle, Shakespeare created the splendid quite unhistorical scene of Richard’s public deposition before parliament, complete with Carlisle’s protest, York’s assent (York clearly standing here for the lords as a body), and Northumberland’s attempt to make Richard read aloud a formal list of his misdeeds. Henry obviously could not have permitted Richard a public hearing of this or any other kind. Indeed, Shakespeare’s theatrical scene, composed two centuries after the event was thought so inflammatory that it was censored out of the earliest editions of *Richard II*.

OUR ISLAND STORY: A HISTORY OF BRITAIN (2014)

H. E. Marshall – Chapter 52 “ Henry IV”
(pages 118-220)

Prince Hal was clever and brave, but he was so wild and fond of fun that he was called ‘Madcap Hal’. He spent a great deal of time with merry companions and often got into mischief.

Towards the end of his troubled reign, Henry IV was often ill, and although very unwilling to do so, he was obliged to allow Prince Hal to help in ruling the kingdom. Once, while the King was ill, Prince Hal came into his room, and finding him lying very still and quiet, thought that he was dead. The crown was beside the King’s bed and the Prince lifted it, put it on his own head, and went away.

But the King was not dead, and when he awoke and found that the crown was gone, he was greatly alarmed. He called to his nobles, who were in a room near, ‘Why have you left me alone? Someone has stolen the crown.’

The nobles came running to the King. ‘The Prince was with you, my lord, while you slept,’ they said; ‘he must have taken the crown.’

‘The Prince took it?’ said the King. ‘Go bring him here.’

When he was told that the King was not dead, Prince Hal returned at once. With tears in his eyes he knelt beside his father’s bed. ‘I never thought to hear you speak again,’ he said.

And the King replied sadly:

The wish was father, Henry, to that thought:

I say too long by thee, I weary thee;

Dost thou so hunger for my empty chair,

That thou wilt needs invest thee with mine honours

Before thy hour is ripe? O foolish youth!

Thou seek’st the greatness that will overwhelm thee.

‘Oh, pardon me, my liege,’ said Prince Hal, weeping; and the King pardoned and blessed him before he died.

How I came by the crown, O God, forgive,

And grant it may with thee in true peace live.

OUR ISLAND STORY: A HISTORY OF BRITAIN (2014)

H. E. Marshall – Chapter 52 “ Henry “V”
(pages 221-224)

When Prince Hal came to the throne in 1413, he gave up all his wild ways and tried to rule as a wise king should.

Henry came peacefully to the throne, but he had no better right to it than his father had. There were many people who could not forget that, and it was not long before plots were formed. But Henry put down these plots, and then he thought of fighting with France.

You remember how Edward III had claimed to be King of France as well as King of England, and who he did indeed conquer a great part of France. But at the end of his reign, and during the reigns of Richard II and Henry IV, all that he had conquered had again been lost. Of the many French lands which had at one time belongs to England, only the town of Calais remained.

Henry V made up his mind to try and win back these lands. He thought that if the plots against him became too strong, and he were driven from the throne of England, he could then still be King of France.

The eldest son of the King of France was called the Dauphin, just as the eldest son of the King of England is always called the Prince of Wales.

At this time the King of France was mad, so the Dauphin ruled. When he heard that the Henry V was coming to fight against him, he sent him a present of some tennis balls.

‘Tell the English King,’ he said to his messenger, ‘that he is too young and foolish to claim dukedoms here. It will be better for him to amuse himself at home with these balls.’

Henry laughed when he received the present, and sent back this message:

And tell the pleasant prince, this mock of his
Hath turned his balls to gun stones.

Henry gathered his army and, landing in France, laid siege to the town of Harfleur, The town held out bravely for a long time, and, when at last it fell, the English army was so worn out, so many of them had been killed and wounded, that they were not strong enough to fight any more. Yet Henry did not want to return to England having only taken one French town. He resolved to march from Harfleur to Calais, and sail home from there. He would show the French that the English were not afraid of them.

So the army left Harfleur and, day after day, ragged, hungry and worn, they marched along the weary way towards Calais. Day after day passed, but no French soldiers ever came in sight, till one evening, when they had gone about half the long journey, the enemy appeared. Even then, weary and worn though the English were, the French did not think themselves strong enough to attack, and fell back before them. But about forty miles from Calais, Henry found the French army right across his path. If Calais was to be reached, the French must be beaten. And Calais had to be reached, as it was the only way home, and Henry's men were utterly weary and almost starving.

On the morning of the battle, Henry rode along the lines, cheering his poor tired soldiers. He had a gold crown upon his helmet, and the coat which he wore over his armour was embroidered with the leopards of England and the lilies of France, for already he called himself King of France and England.

As Henry rode along he heard one of his nobles say, 'I would that some of the thousands or warriors, who lie idle this day in England, were here to aid us.'

'Nay,' replied the King, 'I would not have one man more. If we win, the greater is the glory God gives to us. If we die, the less is the loss to England.'

When Henry had ridden all along the lines, he got off his horse and took his place among his soldiers, with the royal standard waving over him.

The fight began, and a terrible fight it was. It seemed as if it were the story of Crecy and Poitiers over again. The French had an army ten times greater than that of the English; many of the English, too, were sick and ill, weary, ragged and half fed, and yet they won the battle.

When it was over, Henry, riding across the field, met one of the French heralds. 'To whom does the victory belong?' he asked.

'To you, sire,' replied the man.

'Nay, said the King, 'but to God. We English made not this great slaughter. What fortress is that?' he added, 'for it is fitting that the battle should have a name.'

'That is the castle of Agincourt, sire,' replied the herald.

'Then Agincourt shall this battle be called' said Henry. And by that name we know it

“This is Shakespeare” Emma Smith

“I Henry IV”

(pages 114-124)

In the history of Shakespearean character study – even of Shakespearean criticism altogether – Falstaff is the weighty foundation stone. In 1777 Maurice Morgann’s *An Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff*, the first book-length study of Shakespeare, was published. Morgann attempted to defend his subject against Dr. Johnson’s withering moral judgement: ‘[T]he fat knight has never uttered one sentiment of generosity, and for all his power of exciting mirth, has nothing in him that can be esteemed’ (1765). In responding to this character assassination, Morgann inaugurated an interpretative tradition that has inforded actors from Henry Irving to Laurence Olivier and implicated critics from William Hazlitt to Harold Bloom. Claiming that Shakespeare invents what it is to be human, Bloom develops two characters as extended examples. Hamlet is a predictable enough choice, but the other is Falstaff. In an interview about his work, Bloom describes Falstaff as ‘the most intelligent person in all of literature’, but he also suggests something less personal and more general: ‘Falstaff is life! Falstaff is the blessing.’

Falstaff’s fatness is less an individualizing characteristic of his personality and more metaphorical, as if his bulk makes him exceed the individually human, and take on a kind of symbolic function. That expensive meaning is something Falstaff, himself aspires to. As he and Hal each pretend to be the disapproving King, they brandish different meanings. Is Falstaff ‘reverend Vice...grey Iniquity’ (2.5.458-9), the ‘abominable misleader of youth’ (467-8), or is he simply ‘old and merry’ (476)? Does he love the prince – once reading of the play sees him as an alternative father-figure providing the human affection so lacking from the cold, troubled king – or is he merely exploiting him in expectation of later preferment and advantage? Falstaff-playing-Hal defends Falstaff against the charges: ‘sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff....Banish not him thy Harry’s company. Banish plump Jack, and banish all the world’ (2.5.480-85).

Falstaff's claim to Hal's – and our – affections here is in the claim that he is representative of 'all the world.' No wonder then, in that age newly fascinated by globes, that he is fat. The suggestion that Falstaff represents a physical, self-centered enjoyment of existence identifies him with popular archetypes such as the Lord of Misrule or the embodiment of carnival. These operate within structures of inversion or excess that challenge normal hierarchies and protocols of self-discipline. An analogy with Homer might be helpful. Not, on this occasion the epic author, but the cartoon figure Homer Simpson. We all know that Homer Simpson is a loser, wastrel, and inadequate father and positively dangerous worker at the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant. Here's a few choice Homerisms: 'Lisa, if you don't like your job you don't strike. You just go in every day and do it really half-assed. That's the American way'; 'Son, when you participate in sporting events, it's not whether you win or lose: it's how drunk you get. If something's hard to do, then it's not worth doing'; 'Kids, you tried your best and you failed miserably. The lesson is, never try.'

These are funny because they are counter-cultural. Their rhetoric is to set up a statement that seems to demand a pious answer. We have all heard – perhaps even heard ourselves delivering – the standard line: it's not the winning, it's the taking part. If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again. Homer's rhetoric is funny because it is anti-climactic. He sets up a cliché morality, but completes it with his own realist, bathetic conclusion. That makes him attractive, precisely because he is not up to the ideals with which our culture bombards us, and because he therefore allows us, too, the leeway to fail. Now let's compare those with one of Falstaff's musings at the end of Act 5.1 Amid the chaos of the battle between the forces of the king and the rebellion of Hotspur and his associates, Falstaff is alone for a brief soliloquy. We are prepared. This is the point heavily cued by a structure of repentance elsewhere in the play, when we expect that the nomark, the selfish, the drunk is going to come good. Falstaff is going to find reserves of honour, courage, nobility. He will be like that alcoholic Vietnam vet pilot who takes the suicide mission in *Independence Day* (directed by Roland Emmerich, 1996): a man who grasps a final chance at redemption when he realizes what's really important, sets aside his selfishness and narcissism, and goes out in a blaze of glory.

‘What is honour?’ asks Falstaff rhetorically, at this moment of anticipated moral renewal. And then the bathos. ‘Can honour set-to a leg? No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honour hath no skill in surgery, then? No. What is honour? A word. What is in that word “honour”? What is that “honour”? Air’ (5.1.131-5). Falstaff ends this manifesto by describing it as his ‘catechism’ – a nicely ironic and subversive use of a statement of belief to puncture pious and cliched definitions of honour and replace them instead with the pragmatic and selfish concerns of the vulnerable body. Like Homer, Falstaff sets up a rhetoric of piety and draws on our familiarity with the way we know we ought to behave; and like Homer again he deflates that expectation and tells the self-interested, taboo truth. Since this pragmatism would be so offensive to the martyr Sir John Oldcastle’s memory, it is easy to see how his family took exception.

Falstaff’s popularity, then, is in part related to the fact that he is unapologetic and unrepentant. He embodies the larger anti-moralistic energy of theatrical production in this period that so annoyed preachers fulminating against theatres as ‘Satan’s synagogue’. But Falstaff also features as one aspect of a structuring principle of repentance, apology and recidivism in the play. **1 Henry IV is organized, like a number of dramatic and prose texts from the 1590s, around the popular biblical theme of the prodigal son. The theme of the prodigal comes from a parable in Luke’s Gospel. Jesus tells how the younger son of a rich man claimed his share of the inheritance before his father’s death and spent it in profligate city living. Brought to absolute penury by his reckless spending, he realizes that his father’s servants have a better life than he, and vows to return and throw himself on his father’s mercy, not as his son but his servant. But on his arrival home his father is so overjoyed to see him that he orders a great feast and the killing of the fatted calf in celebration, much to the chagrin of the older brother, who has had no such reward for his loyalty and consistency. The theme is a prominent one in Henry IV: the prince’s impressive dedication to excess and riot rather than obedience to his father makes the paradigm clear. Implicit in the theme is the expectation of reformation: as in the parable, the prodigal will repent.**

We get an early indication that Hal intends to use this theology entirely strategically. At the end of his first scene (1.2), the prince delivers an unexpected soliloquy. He has been laughing and joking in prose with his tavern companions, particularly Falstaff, their banter in pronounced contrast to the constipated formal verse of the opening court scene. But after the others have left, he stays on stage to deliver a long speech about his intentions:

PRINCE:

I know you all, and will awhile uphold The unyoked humor of your idleness.	184
Yet herein will I imitate the sun, Who doth permit the base contagious clouds To smother up his beauty from the world, That when he please again to be himself Being wanted, he may be more wond' red at By breaking through the foul and ugly mists Of vapors that did seem to strangle him. If all the year were playing holidays, Too sport would be as tedious as to work; But when they seldom come, they wished-for come, And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.	186 188
So, when this loose behavior I throw off And pay the debt I never promised, By how much better than my word I am, By so much shall I falsify men's hopes;	195 199
And, like bright metal on a sullen ground, My reformation, glitt'ring o'er my fault, Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes Than that which hath no foil to set it off.	203
I'll so offend to make offense a skill, Redeeming time when men think least I will.	204 205

(Act I Scene 2,183-205)

It's a wonderful speech, riffing on the contrast between the prince's apparently dissolute lifestyle and his steely determination to change his 'loose behaviour' with the time comes. Like the sun – a traditional symbol of monarchy – he allows clouds to obscure his majesty so that he shines more brightly when people are eager to see him. Like precious metal set off against a dull background of foil to make it look more desirable, his 'reformation' will be all the more attractive. Like a holiday, or other rare occurrence, new Hal will be the more desirable because unusual. The language is part religious: 'reformation', 'redeeming', 'fault', 'offence' – Hal is thinking about the prodigal son narrative. It is also part mercantile: 'debt', 'promised', 'foil', 'attract'; Hal thinks of himself as a commodity needing its value inflating. **It's a masterclass in manipulation. He is stage-managing his reformation for maximum effect, a self-conscious prodigal who knows that the worse his behaviour is now, the greater the sense of welcome when he turns over that new leaf.** And this speech echoes the blank verse world of the court – established in the previous scene and in the scene immediately following this soliloquy – to align Hal with his royal birthright. I'm only slumming it in the tavern. I know my rightful place. In time I will emerge to claim it. **We could read this as successional reassurance: no need to worry about the apparently unregal behaviour of the Prince of Wales; it's all under control; order will be restored. But it also has a chilly quality. The forgivably human element of the biblical prodigal son that's missing here is its authenticity. The original prodigal did both part – the spendthrift years and the humiliating return – sincerely and wholeheartedly. Hal has it all planned out in advance.**

“Kingship as Divine Right in Shakespeare’s *King Richard II*” - Shamsi Farzana

The divine right of kings, or divine-right theory of kingship, is a political and religious doctrine of royal and political arena. It asserts that a monarch is subject to no earthly authority, deriving the right to rule directly from the will of God. The king is thus not subject to the will of his people, the aristocracy, or any other estate of the realm, including (in the view of some, especially in Protestant countries) the Church. According to this doctrine, only God can judge an unjust king. The doctrine implies that any attempt to depose the king or to restrict his powers runs contrary to the will of God and may constitute a sacrilegious act.[2]

The remote origins of the theory are rooted in the medieval idea that God had bestowed earthly power on the king, just as God had given spiritual power and authority to the church, centering on the Pope. The immediate author of the theory was Jean Bodin, who based it on the interpretation of Roman law. With the rise of nation-states and the Protestants, Rory justified the king's absolute authority in both political and spiritual matters. The theory came in to force in England under the reign of James I of England (1603–1625, also known as James VI of Scotland 1567–1625). Louis XIV of France (1643–1715) strongly promoted the theory as well.

The theory of divine right was abandoned in England during the Glorious Revolution of 1688–89. The American and French Revolutions of the late eighteenth century further weakened the theory's appeal, and by the early twentieth century, it had been virtually abandoned. In the sixteenth century, both Catholic and Protestant political thinkers began to question the idea of a monarch's "divine right".

Towards the end of 16th century, Richard II became a legendary figure. His deposition got a mystical significance. To poets and historians both in England and in France, he stood for a supreme example of the tragic fall of the princes. To some people he was a martyr and his abdication was a sacrilege. Those who had a mystical view of this fall, regarded him as Christ. He was a symbol of the instability of human fortune for all. Richard II shows the suffering soul of Richard when he says-
“You may my glories and my state depose
But not my grieves; still am I king of those.”

Literary critic Hugh M. Richmond notes that Richard's beliefs about the Divine Right of Kings tend to fall more in line with the medieval view of the throne. Bolingbroke on the other hand represents a more modern view of the throne, arguing that not only bloodline but also intellect and political wisdom contribute to the making of a good king. [3] Richard believes that as a king he is chosen and guided by God, that he is not subject to human frailty, and that the English people are free to do with as they please. Elliott argues that this mistaken notion of his role as king ultimately leads to Richard's failure. The play contains a number of memorable metaphors, including the extended comparison of England with a garden in Act III, Scene iv and of its reigning king to a lion or to the sun in. In his analysis of medieval political theology, *The King's Two Bodies*, Ernst Kantorowicz describes medieval Kings as containing two bodies: a body natural, and a body politic. The theme of the King's two bodies is pertinent throughout Richard II, from the exile of Bolingbroke to the deposition of King Richard II. The body natural is a mortal body, subject to all the weaknesses of mortal human beings. On the other hand, the body politic is a spiritual body which cannot be affected by mortal infirmities such as disease and old age. These two bodies form one indivisible unit, with the body politic superior to the body natural.[4]

Many critics agree that in *Richard II*, this central theme of the king's two bodies unfolds in three main scenes: the scenes at the Coast of Wales, at Flint Castle, and at Westminster. At the coast of Wales, Richard has just returned from a trip to Ireland and kisses the soil of England, demonstrating his kingly attachment to his Kingdom. This image of kingship gradually fades as Bolingbroke's rebellion continues. Richard starts to forget his kingly nature as his mind becomes occupied by the rebellion. This change is portrayed in the scene at Flint Castle during which the unity of the two bodies disintegrates and the king starts to use more poetic and symbolic language. Richard's body politic has been shaken as his followers have joined Bolingbroke's army, diminishing Richard's military capacity. He has been forced to give up his jewels, losing his kingly appearance. He loses his temper at Bolingbroke, but then regains his composure as he starts to remember his divine side. At Flint castle, Richard is determined to hang onto his kingship even though the title no longer fits his appearance. However at Westminster the image of the divine kingship is supported by the Bishop of Carlisle rather than Richard, who at this point is becoming mentally unstable as his authority slips away. Biblical references are used to liken the humbled king to the humbled Christ. The names of Judas and Pilate are used to further extend this comparison. Before Richard is sent to his death, he "un-kings" himself by giving away his crown, scepter, and the balm that is used to anoint a king to the throne. The mirror scene is the final end to the dual personality. After examining his plain physical appearance, Richard shatters the mirror on the ground and thus relinquishes his past and present as king. Stripped of his former glory, Richard finally releases his body politic and retires to his body natural and his own inner thoughts and grieves.[5] Critic J. Dover Wilson notes that Richard's double nature as man and martyr is the dilemma that runs through the play eventually leading to Richard's death. Richard acts the part of a royal martyr, and due to the spilling of his blood, England continually undergoes civil war for the next two generations.[6]

The play ends with the rise of Bolingbroke to the throne, marking the start of a new era in England. According to historical research, an English translation of Machiavelli's *The Prince* might have existed as early as 1585, influencing the reign of the kings of England. Critic Irving Ribner notes that a manifestation of Machiavellian philosophy may be seen in Bolingbroke. Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* during a time of political chaos in Italy, and writes down a formula by which a leader can lead the country out of turmoil and return it to prosperity. Bolingbroke seems to be a leader coming into power at a time England is in turmoil, and follows closely the formula stated by Machiavelli.[7] At the start of Richard II Bolingbroke accuses Mowbray and ultimately attacks the government of King Richard. He keeps Northumberland by his side as a tool to control certain constituents. From the minute Bolingbroke comes into power, he destroys the faithful supporters of Richard such as Bushy, Green and the Earl of Wiltshire. Also, Bolingbroke is highly concerned with the maintenance of legality to the kingdom, an important principle of Machiavellian philosophy, and therefore makes Richard surrender his crown and physical accessories to erase any doubt as to the real heir to the throne. Machiavelli also states that the deposed king must be killed, and Bolingbroke therefore kills Richard, showing his extreme cruelty to secure his kingly title. Since Bolingbroke is a disciple of the Machiavellian philosophy, he cannot do the killing himself and employs Pierce of Exton for the killing of the deposed king and his ex-friend whose use is no longer needed. Yet, Irving Ribner still notes a few incidents where Bolingbroke does not follow true Machiavellian philosophy, such as his failure to destroy Aumerle. Even Bolingbroke's last statement follows Machiavellian philosophy as he alludes to making a voyage to the Holy Land, since Machiavellian philosophy states rulers must appear pious.[8] Therefore, this particular play can be viewed as a turning point in the history of England as the throne is taken over by a more commanding king in comparison to King Richard II.