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## Shakespeare's *Henriadic* Monarchy and Chaucerian/Elizabethan Religion

Paul A. Olson

Shakespeare, interpreting late medieval English history from the ages of Geoffrey and Thomas Chaucer, gives us a second tetralogy (1595–99) that less defends the “Tudor myth” than creates a lens for viewing the formation of a unitary religious/political culture. Writing near the end of Elizabeth’s reign, after serious Catholic insurrection had quieted, he examines how Act of Supremacy sacerdotal monarchy eschews rebellion and decadence, creating eidola paralleling Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* ones. In the latter, Chaucer presented, to the court, narratives of Catholic clerical failure, Jovinian decadence, and the possibility of reformed penance. However, Shakespeare turns, for his salvific, from honest penance—Chaucer’s solution—to royal contrition and honest action. The second *Henriad* debunks old polarities of conformity and non-conformity by celebrating the monarch’s sense of national religion and recapitulating unifying themes about celibacy, repentance, and rebellion from the age of Chaucer, bringing Elizabethan religious polemics to the stage in a fashion that emulates Chaucer’s dramatic court readings in his time and place.

Shakespeare’s England was religiously polarized in the 1580s and 1590s with a polarization more complex than that in Chaucer’s time of conforming Catholicism and non-conforming Lollardy. By the performance of the second *Henriad*, three competing parties struggled: Low Church Protestants who had made a failed attempt in the Parliament of 1587 to introduce Presbyterian government (“Cope’s Bill and Book”) but still had a hold in some London parish churches; Catholics who had mounted a series of armed rebellions and plots to take over the government in 1569, 1571, 1583, 1586, and possibly in 1594, and, the monarch’s and Church of England’s establishment. The *Henriad* focuses on these divisions through the lens of the Chaucer’s times’ Plantagenet and Lancastrian/Yorkist divisions. Chaucer worked for the king’s Chamber and Shakespeare’s Lord Chamberlain’s Men received the supervision and patronage of the monarchy’s Chamber. As Dr. Samuel Johnson observes, speaking to an age when popular approval counted for what court approval meant to Shakespeare’s company: “The drama’s laws the drama’s patrons give. / For we that live to please must please to live.”<sup>1</sup>

Elizabeth liked the history plays—for at least Falstaff—and putatively asked for another play with Falstaff in love in it, eventually the *Merry Wives of Windsor* (Dennis, A2; Scoufos, 23–24). She probably wanted more than a jolly old man in love since one central work of her administration was image making, and The *Henriad* does legitimize the centrism of the Protestant Elizabethan Settlement and the queen's theory of rulership through the presenting a time mirroring the 1590s, rendering eicastically the effects of non-conforming Protestantism, rebellious Catholicism, and monarchy as a sacred office.<sup>2</sup>

The second tetralogy's Falstaff and company glance at non-conforming Protestantism's potential decadence.<sup>3</sup> Critics generally agree that Falstaff critiques such Protestantism, an insight deriving most obviously in conventional criticism from the first tetralogy's *Henry VI, Part 1*, where the fat knight's equivalent was at first Sir John Oldcastle, the Wycliffite early 15th century knight. Textual critics agree that, when Sir John Oldcastle's descendant, Sir John Cobham, objected to the Oldcastle figure as maligning his ancestor, the name of Sir John Fastolf—not so clearly a nonconformist but also without powerful censoring Cobham descendants—was substituted.<sup>4</sup> Gairdner alleges that Fastolf was supposed in Shakespeare's time also to have been a Lollard, and thus became a convenient substitute name for Oldcastle.<sup>5</sup> Fastolf becomes Falstaff in the Henry IV plays, suggesting the 15th century knight and old age's impotence, but the text still contain traces of the Oldcastle name in puns and the like that appear to be editorial lapses, and *Henry IV, 2's* epilogue contains a “protesting too much” indication that Falstaff has in him an Oldcastle element:

If you be not too much cloyed with fat meat, our humble author will continue the story with Sir John in it . . . with fair Catherine of France; where, for anything I know, Falstaff shall die of a sweat—unless already a be killed with your hard opinions. For Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man.<sup>6</sup>

In mentioning Oldcastle's martyrdom, Shakespeare asks his audience to recall Fox's *Acts and Monuments* Oldcastle while ignoring—and not ignoring—the possibility that Falstaff may be mistaken for him.<sup>7</sup> That Oldcastle had been a Lollard and Fastolf possibly one were known in Shakespeare's time; yet, little in *Henry VI's* Fastolf character suggests nonconformity save that he fails in a soldier's duty (Lollards had taken pacifist, antiwar positions).<sup>8</sup> A coward, he deserts Talbot at Satay, leading to the latter's imprisonment by the French and the former's loss of his Order of the Garter sash. That the historical Fastolf owned the Boar's Head Inn suggests that both “Fastolf” and Oldcastle metamorphosed into Falstaff.

The Lollards were regarded in Elizabethan times as the first Protestants,<sup>9</sup> and the Sir John of the second tetralogy is a satiric image of vices attributed

to Lollardry in Chaucer's day and belonging to non-conforming Protestantism in Shakespeare's time. Though we may think of low church Protestants as rigid and abstemious in their consumption of sex, food, and alcohol and see the John Aldens and Priscilla Mullinses of our childhood picture books in black clothes and righteous chastity, Protestantism had received a Jovinian reputation. Those many who have suggested that Falstaff satirizes Low Church Protestants generally do not offer compelling reasons beyond Oldcastle for saying so,<sup>10</sup> though Kirsten Poole has made a case for Falstaff as Protestant by examining how he derives from the carnivalesque anti-Marprelate representations from the late 1580s.<sup>11</sup>

Brilliant as Poole's argument is, it does not refer to the grand tradition of representing Protestants as sensualists, the Jovinian one, and fails to describe why a putative Protestant constantly quotes and inverts the Bible, makes his life with prostitutes and procurers while he thinks of penance and marrying "wives," and offers disrespect to pilgrimages and dishonesty in battle. An old soldier, he is supposed to be defending the realm but he mostly brags, souses, and prevaricates. He is the living image of the view, originating in the 14th century with Gower and Chaucer's *Wife of Bath*, that the Lollards of the 14th century and their patristic antecedents, the Jovinians, are libertines.

Falstaff and Chaucer's *Wife* come together as figures of Bakhtinian carnival in modern criticism,<sup>12</sup> but they came together otherwise in Shakespeare's time. The earliest non-conformity to have traction in England, that of Wyclif and his Lollard descendants in Chaucer's time, proposed to substitute subjective sorrow for sin for the institutionalized steps—contrition, confession and satisfaction—of the penitential system developed by Innocent III in the 13th century. Wyclif's opponents averred that his new contritionism would be a manufacturing of "cheap grace" while Innocent's system required a confrontation of the individual with the social order in the expiation of evil. Contritionism meant that the "satisfaction" imposed for confessed sins—pilgrimages, armed pilgrimages (or crusades), purchased indulgences, forms of self-mortification such as those described in Dante's *Purgatorio*—no longer counted. In turning to contrition from institutionalized, temporal recompense for sin, Lollards, advocating the abolition of monasteries that required a celibacy unjustified by the New Testament and charging that, by owning property, their houses improperly conflated the spiritual and temporal, seemed to the orthodox to advocate a monastic abolition that meant penitential laxity and the leveling of the hierarchy of sexual statuses—namely marriage, widowhood, and virginity—such as that advocated by the 4th-century Jovinian. (Shakespeare understood that Lollard monastic positions anticipated Henry VIII's seizure of them; in *Henry V*, act 1, 1–2 the monarch, seeming to move toward the Lollard-leaning Commons, extracts a just war approval of his French invasion from the Archbishop of Canterbury by inti-



mating that he might support the parliament's desire to seize monastic lands if the archbishop does not give him his sanction.)

Geoffrey and Thomas Chaucer's times, the *Henriad*'s time, knew the Lollards as Jovinians: Gower makes them Jovinians;<sup>13</sup> Chaucer has his "carnival" Wife of Bath act as a full-fledged follower of the sect without yearning for monastic perfection, without need for penance, and with a "contrition" that brags of wrongdoing.<sup>14</sup> The Wife comes from the West Country where Wyclif was strong, and preaches—as Wycliffite women sometimes did—but sermonizes in behalf of officially heretical Jovinian doctrine. Fulfilling St. Jerome's warning, she makes marriage an excuse for relations with "sundry other company" and perhaps even for murder.<sup>15</sup> Since she is flattered and courted by the conventional clerics appointed to represent the penitential disciplines, in her "confession," she rejects the need for any penance, contrition, or even remorse.<sup>16</sup> Falstaff does the same kinds of things, but no penance-offering clergymen flatter his wrongs since his plays are written for a Reformation England where the sinner controls his own contrition and grace alone produces reformation. In Falstaff's world, the call to repentance has to come from a state figure, King Henry V in *Henry IV, Part 2*, not from a perfect Parson (5.5.48ff.). The state has become all in all.

To understand what is happening with Falstaff as Jovinian, as opposed to the Wife, one must understand the role that Jovinian played in 16th century religious controversy. Though Jerome's *Adversus Jovinianum*, the source of most of what we know of the "heretical" church father, was not published in England or translated into English in his time, Shakespeare would have known of his controversial positions from the Wife of Bath's sermon, from other references in the *Canterbury Tales*, and from contemporary polemics either claiming Jovinian as the righteous ancestor of Protestants or as their perverse ancestor in Catholic polemics. Shakespeare had Speght's 1598 Chaucer for the later part of the tetralogy and, before that, Stow's 1561 one for *A Midsummer's Night's Dream* (c. 1595).

As summarized by David Hunter in his *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity: The Jovinianist Controversy* and as explained by the Wife of Bath in her prologue, Jovinian's principal arguments were that: "1. Virgins, widows, and married women, once they have been washed in Christ, are all of the same merit, if they do not differ in other works; 2. Those who have . . . full faith cannot be overthrown by the devil; 3. There is no difference between abstinence from food and receiving it with thanksgiving; 4. There is one reward in the kingdom of heaven for all who enter it."<sup>17</sup> Jerome, satirically making Jovinian into a hedonist licensed to act so by his leveling of sexual statuses, calls Jovinian as the "Epicurus of the Christians"—essentially a libertine:

The Apostle has described Jovinianus speaking with swelling cheeks and nicely balancing his inflated utterances, promising heavenly liberty, when he himself is

the slave of vice and self-indulgence, a dog returning to his vomit. For although he boasts of being a monk, he has exchanged his dirty tunic, bare feet, common bread, and drink of water, for a snowy dress, sleek skin, honey-wine and dainty dishes, for the sauces of Apicius and Paxamus, for baths and rubbings, and for the cook-shops . . . And yet that handsome monk so fat and sleek, and of bright appearance, who always walks with the air of a bridegroom, must either marry a wife if he is to show that virginity and marriage are equal: or if he does not marry one, it is useless for him to bandy words with us when his acts are on our side.<sup>18</sup>

Jerome portrays a Jovinian theology that, in that it allows for successive marriages upon widowhood, licenses presumption and sexual conduct indistinguishable from whoring.

Chaucer's Wife of Bath turns Jerome's satiric presentation of his fellow monk's positions into rationalizations of her practice—overturning the sexual hierarchy, turning multiple marriages into whoring, and explaining the New Testament by the Old.<sup>19</sup> She seems to have no fear of losing salvific rewards, drinks wine with gusto as her "food," and is unconcerned that representatives of the hierarchy who accompany her on the pilgrimage, especially the Pardoner, Summoner, and Friar, might reproach her. These corrupt penitential system workers do flatter her efforts and, without attacking the Wife, the Summoner's Friar uses a Jovinian representation to attack monks' gluttonous belches:

Me thynketh they been lyk Jovinyan,  
Fat as a whale, and walkynge as a swan,  
Al vinolent as botel in the spence.  
Hir preyere is of ful greet reverence,  
Whan they for soules seye the psalm of Davit . . .  
Lo, 'buf!' they seye, '*cor meum eructavit!*'

(*Canterbury Tales*, D, 1929–4)<sup>20</sup>

The Summoner's Friar makes the monks into fat "vinolent" whales, praying belches, and Falstaff's similar fat marks him as a kind of Protestant equivalent of Jovinian,<sup>21</sup> as do his contempt for pilgrimages, sexual hierarchies, ruling hierarchy, and serious repentance.

Protestant leaders of the 16th century recognized that their emphasis on marriage, and their effort to abolish the monastic orders, shared much with 14th–15th century Lollardry and patristic Jovinianism and attacked Jerome's *Adversus*. Martin Luther, in 1521 in his *Judgment on Monastic Vows*, says:

These ungodly people will shout that I'm a Jovinian and they will bring Jerome's argument against Jovinian in which he defends celibacy to bear against me. They will think that I have never read Jerome. . . . I myself did not know what Jovinian really meant. Perhaps he did not handle the argument properly. What I do know, however, is that Jerome has not handled [the argument] properly. He treats virginity

as a thing existing in its own right. He neither relates it to faith nor uses it to build up faith.<sup>22</sup>

Melanchthon, somewhat similarly, asserts that Jerome disparages marriage and abuses passages such as, "If you live according to the flesh, you shall die," making second marriages and prostitution equivalent; and insinuating that God did not will marriage.<sup>23</sup> Calvin also attacks Jerome for his denigration of Jovinian and marriage.<sup>24</sup> Continental reformers commonly saw themselves in Jovinian's shadow in defending marriage in general and priestly marriage specifically. On the Catholic continent, Erasmus edited Jerome in such a way as to make a moderate defense of him,<sup>25</sup> and the authoritative Council of Trent in 1588 condemned Protestants as Jovinians while Cardinal Caesar Baronius equated the fourth century sect with 16th century Protestants.<sup>26</sup>

England mirrored the continent in that English published books from the period contain numerous references to Jovinian that cite him as a Protestant precedent, the more extreme Protestants noting that, though he had been accused of being the Epicurus of the Christians and of lacking a proper theology of marriage when he made it equal to virginity, what he argued for is what they support.<sup>27</sup> They want an end to the privileging of celibacy and a return to assigning dignity to marriage, including marriage for priests. They want a positing of equality in afterlife rewards. Jovinian's positions received praise from those Protestants who strongly rejected the ascetic disciplines, modification from those who had a somewhat positive view of celibacy and Jerome's hierarchy of sexual estates, and rejection by Catholic apologists. The Jovinian "once saved by baptism, always saved" argument appeared to non-Calvinists to lead to presumption and misbehavior—Thomas Rogers attributes the doctrine to Jovinian in his 1585 exposition of the "Thirty Nine Articles."<sup>28</sup>

The High Church or prelatical Protestant side took a more "Jeromian" view since apologists for Elizabeth I and the Elizabethan settlement could hardly entirely denigrate a celibacy that the "Virgin Queen" made essential to her *mythos*. She also preferred celibate clerics, especially bishops; and though her church's mainstream inherited modified Lollard contritionist positions that abandoned reliance on auricular penance and canon law courts, it still was Romish enough to find use for these courts and for confession to the priest.<sup>29</sup> Though most penance was to be replaced by preaching, the Eucharist and a contrition of heart not feigned or superficial,<sup>30</sup> even this turn toward subjectivity was not without its critics. More conservative clergy, such as Richard Hooker, created a theology that allowed for some reliance on confession and satisfaction without assigning significant salvific power to the Church of England's bishops or priests.<sup>31</sup>

The new regime for turning to God could lead to cynicism, and cynicism in

regret for sin seems to me to be central to the *Henriad* plays. Falstaff speaks constantly of reforming his ways but does nothing, and no clergyman demands from him a serious change of heart—only Henry V when he becomes king. The Falstaff story indeed represents a “High Church” view of the Jovinian leveling of sexual estates and contritionist repentance, Falstaff himself, seen from the perspective of court or standard Church of England doctrine, appearing both morally presumptuous and self-deluded, albeit endlessly charming. His whole circle presents a comic picture of how one manipulates—or avoids—remorse when one is outside any system that resembles the Chaucerian clerical penance-marketing circle about the Wife of Bath. In Shakespeare, the moral loopholes derive less from corrupt clergy such as Chaucer’s Friar, Summoner, and Pardoner and more from cynical individuals feigning sorrow and a condoning Eastcheap community. The sources of moral authority have changed with the Reformation.

In Act 1, scene 2 of *Henry IV, Part 1*, Falstaff first appears as a drunk and indolent glutton, contemptuous of an aspect of the traditional penitential system that the Lollards attacked: the pilgrimage. After Poins tells us that Falstaff has sold his soul to the devil for a capon and Madeira, and from the old man himself that he is thinking, rather casually, of repenting, we learn from Poins of a plot to steal loot from a thief who commonly steals from Canterbury pilgrims and London traders. He says:

But my lads, my lads, tomorrow morning, by four o’clock early at Gad’s Hill, there are pilgrims going to Canterbury with rich offerings, and traders riding to London with fat purses. I have visors for you all; you have horses for yourselves. Gadshill lies tonight in Rochester. I have bespoke supper tomorrow night in Eastcheap. We may do it as secure as sleep. If you will go, I will stuff your purses full of crowns. If you will not, tarry at home and be hanged.

(2, 1. 111–18)

In planning the theft, the lowlifes never think of restoring their riches to the pilgrims or traders. Lollard-like, they do not regard pilgrimage or honest trade as holy—one indication of their penitential position. When Sir John, just after cynically speaking of reforming, switches suddenly to the planned thievery, the Prince, perhaps unconsciously lampooning Henry IV’s contemporaneous search for an amended life at Christ’s sepulcher, tells Falstaff that he observes his good amendment of life from “praying to purse-taking” (1. 3. 103) and plans meeting at Eastcheap to undertake the theft. Immediately thereafter, we see Gadshill’s thievery from traders who use pious language (2. 2. 819–30), the Falstaff group’s theft from Gadshill, and that of Poins/Hal from a Falstaff become horseless soldier-thief.

The next Falstaff scene at a tavern in Cheapside—near where non-conformists had tried to get rid of the Cheapside cross in the very period of

the play<sup>32</sup>—includes “Jovinian” drinking, ribaldry, and abuse of Hotspur’s reputation in conversations among Poin, Prince Hal, and Francis the Drawer until Falstaff arrives with his *miles gloriosus* story of defeating hundreds of thieves that set upon him. He plays the “Puritan” card, talking like Abraham counting good men before the destruction of Sodom while decrying the evils of his apocalyptic age—“a bad world”—evils evidencing themselves in his being counter-robbed by the Prince and Poin, both of whom he has not recognized:

There lives not three good men unchanged in England, and one of them is fat and grows old, God help the while. A bad world, I say. I would I were a weaver—I could sing psalms, or anything. A plague of all cowards, I say still.

(2. 5. 117–21)

Psalm-singing weavers are Low Country Protestants living in London, often anti-royalist ones. Falstaff wishes to be one of them, and his leveling instincts move him from insouciant communal partying in a whorehouse setting to a mock-dramatic attack on the symbolism of kingship and hierarchy in the remainder of act 2. 5, and then to its actual undermining through military corruption in the remainder of the *Henriad*. Jovinian had theoretically leveled the sexual and the afterlife hierarchies of differentiated rewards and punishments, but Low Church Protestants sought the actual leveling in secular government as the Puritan Revolution of the 1640s made abundantly clear. Even in Shakespeare’s age, John Knox’s *First Blast* had raised a Calvinistic attack against Queen Elizabeth’s place in the hierarchy as a female ruler (<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/9660/9660-h/9660-h.htm>);<sup>33</sup> throughout Elizabeth’s reign there were nonconforming Protestants who sought changes in her rule through abolishing ecclesiastical grades and imposing a presbyterian system of church governance.

This kind of leveling appears later in the scene in the mockery of kingship. After the Prince and Falstaff’s fellow rogues reveal Falstaff’s account of the battle with the many thieves for the lie that it is, the fat knight claims to have been cowardly on intuition to protect the heir apparent. Thereupon, Mistress Quickly, the “doll” with the sexually charged name who owns the Boar’s Head and procures for Doll Tearsheet, announces messengers from the court who ask the prince to go to speak with the king, preparing for the parodic scene in which Falstaff inverts authority by playing the king speaking to Hal:

FALSTAFF Well, thou wilt be horribly chid tomorrow  
When thou comest to thy father. If thou love me,  
Practise an answer.

PRINCE HARRY Do thou stand for my father, and examine me upon the particulars of my life.

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

PRINCE HAL Thy state is taken for a joint-stool, thy golden sceptre for a leaden dagger, and thy precious rich crown for a pitiful bald crown.

(2.5.342–48)

The regalia of kingship mocked by Falstaff are, in their courtly liturgical context, important in the second tetralogy; indeed, when Richard II puts them off, he gives away his sacred state:

I give this heavy weight from off my head,

[BOLINGBROKE *accepts the crown*]

And this unwieldy sceptre from my hand,

[BOLINGBROKE *accepts the sceptre*]

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. . . .

(*Richard II*, 4.1.194–200)

To Elizabeth and to most persons in 16th-century England, accustomed to seeing the monarch as a kind of sacral figure, the paraphernalia had a sacramental aspect. When Falstaff assumes the semblances of the royal sacred objects, he defiles them, making a dagger his scepter, a pillow his crown, and omitting the anointment altogether. The king's concerns for his heir become comic when Falstaff plays Henry, reddening his eyes with sack to appear to have been weeping and speaking in "King Cambyse's" ranting "vein" (2.4.380; whatever Shakespeare's Henry IV's faults, he is no sentimentalist or ranting Cambyse), and when Prince Hal genuflects before monarch Falstaff, he ironically reminds Hal of his kingly duty and future monarchic kinship with the sun (he has earlier reminded him, as a thief, of his own affiliation with the moon):

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, and 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 writers do report, doth defile. So doth the company thou keepest.

(2.4.399–406)

This is not all tomfoolery. Kingship that was, in reality, a dramatic "solar" role played for the common profit of the realm becomes here *only* a costume

and a posture—for Falstaff's unique profit as the putative good old man who cleanses from pitch.<sup>34</sup>

Seeing his father's kingship metamorphosed to a silly stage role, Hal, playing his father, turns Falstaff's humanity into equally comic stage roles: devil, humors character, Vice, Father Ruffian, and Vanity:

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 humours, that bolting-hutch of beastliness, that swollen parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard of sack, that stuffed cloakbag of guts, that roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in his belly, that reverend Vice, that gray Iniquity, that father 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 cunning but in craft? Wherein crafty but in villainy? Wherein villainous, but in all things? Wherein worthy, but in nothing?

(2.5.406–18)

The Prince remakes Falstaff as the stage Satan of the craft cycles and of *Dr. Faustus*, what he almost is.

Play-acting further, Falstaff defends himself as aged but no whoremaster, a drinker of sack and fat but fat only in the sense of Pharaoh's fat kine's prosperous years. To escape the sheriff, he disappears behind the arras and falls asleep from drink, to be pickpocketed by Hal and Peto who find (as act 3.3 tells us) nothing in his pockets beyond candy and bills from taverns and whorehouses—fat kine indeed.

In act 3.3, Falstaff, promising to pay Mistress Quickly for her bounty, finds he cannot, and, though a mountain of fat, for a second or two fancies himself thin and needing contrition (3.3.2008–27):

FALSTAFF Bardolph, am I not fallen away vilely since this last action? Do I not bate? Do I not dwindle? Why, my skin hangs about me like an old lady's loose gown. I am withered like an old apple-john. Well, I'll repent, and that suddenly, while I am in some liking. I shall be out of heart shortly, and then I shall have no strength to repent. . . . The inside of a church! Company, villainous company, hath been the spoil of me.

BARDOLPH Sir John, you are so fretful you cannot live long.

(3.3.1–10)

Quickly as he vows, the cynical knight becomes again the Epicurus of the Christians; living "out of all order" now means not doing enough in the arts of swearing, dicing, whoring, and excessive spending. No surprise then that, Nicholas Rowe, in his 1709 *Life of Shakespeare*, reports that the Queen "was so well pleased with that admirable character of Falstaff in the two parts of *Henry IV* that she commanded him to continue it for one play more, and to show him in love,"<sup>35</sup> a command that reminds us that Falstaff altogether



lacks love and knows only relations that center in self-love, commerce, and parasitism.

When the soldier of Venus rather than Bellona (in the 14th century Walsingham's phrase) with his old man's fallen staff, goes to war, he accepts bribes from relatively affluent citizens who wish to avoid impressment and recruits prodigals who have not left swine keeping—the wretched of the earth:

[S]laves as ragged as Lazarus in the painted cloth, where the glutton's dogs licked his sores—and such as indeed were never soldiers, but discarded unjust serving-men, younger sons to younger brothers, revolted tapsters and ostlers trade-fallen, the cankers of a calm world and a long peace, ten times more dishonourable-ragged than an old feazed ensign, and such have I to fill up the rooms of them as have bought out their services, that you would think that I had a hundred and fifty tattered prodigals lately come from swine-keeping, from eating draff and husks. A mad fellow met me on the way and told me I had unloaded all the gibbets and pressed the dead bodies.

(4. 2. 23–34)

Those who have received profit from the commonwealth do not fight for it, and the Lazarus-soldiers of the world, the starving prodigals, the gibbet ready, legion in 1590s England, defend Dives for a weal that they cannot possess.<sup>36</sup> The bitter joke of Shakespeare's gradual revelation of the egocentrism of the "carnival" non-conforming worlds of Henry and Falstaff is its inverse relationship to the sacred king's supposed concern for the common weal.<sup>37</sup> After Falstaff's Act V speech reducing "honor" to the meaningless abstraction (5.1.127ff.) that he has acted on throughout the play, the low life plot contains no further surprises—the fat knight's mock/meaningless death and resurrection, his pretend killing of Hotspur depriving the heir apparent of victory credit, and his once-more feckless vow of repentance and slimming if rewarded for his fake feats.

The Falstaff plot's continuation in *Henry IV, Part 2*, turning from the Jovian man's abuse of arms, focuses on the creation of ineffective justice through his actions and the monarchy's justices. The Chief Justice, a normative figure, regards no private citizen as above the law and so carefully administers punishment that he has punished the Prince for striking him (5.2.79). At play's beginning, Shakespeare creates a scene (1.2), paralleling Gadshill's in *Henry IV, Part 1*, where Chief Justice reproves Falstaff for his Gadshill crimes and for misleading the Prince. Falstaff pretends to be deaf, as the Wife of Bath is deaf, so that he need not hear the voice of the Chief Justice (or justice itself). He then asserts that he must so hasten to the wars that he cannot listen to the Chief Justice' call, playing a war hero card that invokes his putative role at Shrewsbury to obtain indulgence. His mock heroic Eastcheap world grants him a page after his "victory" at Shrewsbury, a fashionable satin short coat, and galligaskins to celebrate his importance. A *chevalier*, he



delays for Bardolph to obtain his Smithfield horse and for his page to bring his London stew's wife. Mistress Quickly, whomistress, accuses him of falsely promising to marry her (2.1.812–30), and he himself says that he has promised to marry Mistress Ursula, perhaps the given name for Mistress Quickly or perhaps a “marriage” of stew's necessity—certainly not to the Ursula who led the 11,000 virgins martyred by the Huns. Falstaff, as a creature of Shakespeare's time and not of the 15th century, embodies the culture of organized crime and prostitution that so afflicted the rapidly expanding population of London in the late 16th century,<sup>38</sup> but he cannot admit his decadence to the Justice. Returning to non-conforming rhetoric, he treats the goods given to “youth,” including him, as goods turned aside from true goodness in these end-time money-grubbing “costermongers' times.” The aged, such as the Justice, cannot understand the gifts:

FALSTAFF Not so, my lord; your ill angel is light, but I hope he that looks upon me will take me without weighing. And yet in some respects, I grant I cannot go. I cannot tell, virtue is of so little regard in these costermongers' times that true valor is turned bear-herd; pregnancy is made a tapster, and his quick wit wasted in giving reckonings; all the other gifts appertinent to man, as the malice of this age shapes them, are not worth a gooseberry. You that are old consider not the capacities of us that are young. You do measure the heat of our livers with the bitterness of your galls, and we that are in the vanguard of our youth, I must confess, are wags too.

(1.2.152–62)

Unheroic evil is everywhere as it is supposed to be in end times. As the Eastcheap circus ends, we learn that the King has severed Hal from Falstaff and sent the latter to serve Prince John as he again turns his “talents” to begging from the Chief Justice.

In act 2.1–4, we learn that the cost of buying silks and saddles in moneyed Lombard Street, of recruiting musicians to entertain at the Boar's Head, of eating, whoring, and promising to marry at Mistress Quickly's impels the begging. We learn of sexual conquest with fallen-Falstaff “weapons,” of diseases acquired from Doll Tearsheet, meaningless altercations with a swaggering Pistol with his mock epic simulation of the epic underworld, and even the whore of the place has a more personal sense of her end than does the Epicurean Falstaff with all of his willy-nilly talk of apocalyptic evils:<sup>39</sup>

DOLL TEARSHEET I' faith, and thou followedst him like a church. Thou whoreson little tidy Bartholomew boar-pig, when wilt thou leave fighting o' days and foining o' nights, and begin to patch up thine old body for heaven?

(*Enter, PRINCE [HARRY] and POINS [as drawers]*)

FALSTAFF Peace, good Doll, do not speak like a death's-head, do not bid me remember mine end.

(2.4.205–10)

Though Falstaff does not wish Doll to speak as a death's head, even royalty in its private body was not exempt from death's heads in Shakespeare's time. A few years after her death, Queen Elizabeth was herself painted, in the Corsham Court portrait, surrounded by Time and Death as a skull and skeleton.<sup>40</sup>

Soon after Falstaff's evasive remonstrance, we learn what death's heads hover about as King Henry approaches death's gate, and, though nearly dead, rehearses diseases of the realm correlative to his and to Eastcheap's:

KING HENRY IV Then you perceive the body of our kingdom,  
How foul it is, what rank diseases grow,  
And with what danger near the heart of it.

(3.1.37–39)

What is enacted in Eastcheap and the other low life scenes contains a contagion dangerous to the body of the realm as self-indulgence leads to injustice; the next Falstaffian scene, 3.2, gives us the great Gloucestershire tableau where Justices of the Peace Shallow and Silent reflect with Falstaff on their youthful "Jovinian" Inns of Court days, briefly object to the quality of the recruits Falstaff chooses from those they bring to him—Mouldy, Shadow, Wart, Feeble, and Bullcalf—and to his accepting bribes to deliver the wealthy from war service.<sup>41</sup> But, seeing crime, the justices do not act. The scene, veiled by "reveling in olden days" contretemps and carnality, indicts Falstaffian corruption and justice of the peace incompetence while indirectly pointing to the crown for tolerating such "diseases."

After Prince John defeats the northern rebels through parsed promises to work with their grievances and then arrests them for treason, Falstaff returns to Gloucestershire to the semi-senile Shallow where the latter's care for his servants, the "semblable coherence of his men's spirits and his," appears laughable matter for Prince Hal's—King Henry V's—future amusement:

If I were sawed into quantities, I should make four dozen of such bearded hermits' staves as Master Shallow. It is a wonderful thing to see the semblable coherence of his men's spirits and his. They, by observing him, do bear themselves like foolish justices; he, by conversing with them, is turned into a justice-like serving-man. . . . I will devise matter enough out of this Shallow to keep Prince Harry in continual laughter the wearing out of six fashions . . . !

(5.1.53–73)

The comic coherence of Shallow's household and sense of common purpose undercuts Falstaff's exclusive dedication to his own advantage, but this disappears in Judge Silence's bawdy songs and Shallow's contingent loans. Shallow, as judge, should not lend to Falstaff any more than should a Chief Justice (and the latter doesn't).<sup>42</sup>

When Henry V finally becomes king, legitimate law immediately

reemerges. Mistress Quickly and Doll Tearsheet are hauled off to prison for murder, their world of organized vice no innocent Saturnalia. The Chief Justice receives reward for his equal administration of justice at Henry's expense, and Falstaff and his thieves go to prison. In a world without a penitential system, Henry V plays the priest-king/reformer:

KING HARRY I know thee not, old man. Fall to thy prayers.  
 How ill white hairs become a fool and jester!  
 I have long dreamt of such a kind of man,  
 So surfeit-swelled, so old, and so profane;  
 But being awake, 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.  
 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. . . .  
 . . . [A]s we hear you do reform yourselves,  
 We will, according to your strengths and qualities,  
 Give you advancement.

(5.5.45–68)

King-borne contrition here replaces medieval auricular penance; the sacral state, the church.

Throughout the *Henry IV* plays, Falstaff has spoken of repentance in a half-hearted way and but also talked of the present as if they were end times. At his death in *Henry V*, Mistress Quickly and the attendant boy tell of his babbling of green fields and Arthur's bosom, as if he has repented to enter some Celtic military paradise;<sup>43</sup> crying out against women, he also has visions of hell fires and of end time with a Whore of Babylon correlative to his whores:

BOY A said once the devil would have him about women.  
 HOSTESS A did in some sort, indeed, handle women—but then he was rheumatic, and talked of the Whore of Babylon.

(2.4.31–35)<sup>44</sup>

Jovinian Falstaff dies with the Lollard and non-conforming Protestant motif of the Whore of Babylon on his lips. Curtis Bostick, in *The Antichrist and the Lollards: Apocalypticism in Late Medieval and Reformation England*, traces the extent to which Apocalyptic thought dominated the Lollard movement; however, the Whore is also a late 16th-century icon: Spenser had made the Catholic Church and Mary, Queen of Scots, into a Duessa/Whore of Babylon figure in *Faerie Queen*, Books 1 and 5, and the Whore commonly

figures forth Catholic abominations in reformer rhetoric. Falstaff dies repudiating the eschatological whore that his cult has feared, but his real whores are no polemical Biblical image.<sup>45</sup>

Changes in political and moral assumptions from the 16th to the late 18th century and after have changed Falstaff from Sir Richard James' "buffoon" of 1624 to Maurice Morgann's 1777 Falstaff-the-brave to the superhero Falstaffs of Harold Bloom and Orson Welles.<sup>46</sup> Falstaff has not changed but post-17th-century responses to what medieval times called "the voluptuous life" have, and the Wife of Bath has similarly changed.<sup>47</sup>

On the other side from non-conforming Protestantism in Elizabeth's and Shakespeare's world stands the Catholic rebellion that also has a place in the *Henriad* though, as with Protestant non-conformity, not an explicit one.<sup>48</sup> If Falstaff and Eastcheap lampoon a failed contritionist Protestantism, the *Henriad's* North and West Country rebellions, while mirroring 15th-century North and West Country's unease with the Lancastrians, shadow North and West Country Catholic sedition against Elizabeth,<sup>49</sup> Shakespeare characterizes Catholic military rebellion as cynical as Falstaff's moral one, governed by superstition, factionalism, and usurpations of second estate military roles by first estate prelates, all without contrition or sense of guilt,

History in Shakespeare's time was written to create exemplars, and the *Henriad's* 15th-century North and West Country leaders image putative late 16th-century Catholic recusant noble misconduct in Norfolk, Lancashire, Cumbria, Yorkshire, and the locations listed in the register of recusant families,<sup>50</sup> locations broadly the places where the *Henry IV* rebels come from—the Percies from Northumberland; the Douglas's from Scotland; the Mortimers from the Welsh borderlands; and the Glendowers from Wales; in *Part 2*, the Scropes, especially the Archbishop of York, from Yorkshire; the Mowbrays from estates centered near Yorkshire's Thirsk and from Norfolk; and the Northumberlands from that province. Of course there were recusants with scattered estates in other parts of the English countryside, but it is no accident that the battle in *Henry IV, part 1*, is fought in Shrewsbury and the never-occurring one in *Part 2* gathers in North Yorkshire's Forest of Galtres, northern and western England being historically centers of rebellion against Henry and Elizabeth.

Lack of remorse and resort to occult powers supposedly belonged to Catholics. Though the Northern rebels lack devotion, one, namely Glendower, claims occult allies, an accompaniment by signs and wonders that make his birth simulate Nativity and Crucifixion:<sup>51</sup>

I cannot blame him. At my nativity  
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,  
Of burning cressets; and at my birth  
The frame and huge foundation of the earth

Shaked like a coward. . . .

The heavens were all on fire, the earth did tremble—

. . . . Give me leave

To tell you once again that at my birth

The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,

The goats ran from the mountains, and the herds

Were strangely clamorous to the frightened fields.

These signs have marked me extraordinary . . .

I am not in the roll of common men.

(3.1.12–41)

He claims have familiars in league with devilish powers:

I can call spirits from the vasty deep. . . .

Why, I can teach you, cousin, to command the devil. . . .

(3.1.51–54)

Later, Hotspur tells us that Glendower's blather about the occult irritates him:

. . . Sometime he angers me

With telling me of the mouldwarp and the ant,

Of the dreamer Merlin and his prophecies,

And of a dragon and a finless fish,

A clip-wing'd griffin and a moulten raven,

A couching lion and a ramping cat,

And such a deal of skimble-skamble stuff

As puts me from my faith. I tell you what,

He held me last night at least nine hours

In reckoning up the several devils' names

That were his lackeys. I cried 'Hum,' and 'Well, go to!'

But marked him not a word.

(3.1.144–55)

Playing a dark Prospero with devils defeating the monarchy, as opposed to the Prospero/Ariel of *The Tempest* that guard monarchy, Glendower claims to command far more familiars than does the Prospero who usually uses only Ariel and a few spirits that guard the throne.<sup>52</sup> Occultism in figures standing for Catholic powers goes beyond Shakespeare; Spenser, for example, made his two main symbols for Catholicism, Duessa and Archimago, practitioners of occult dark powers.<sup>53</sup>

The rebels who are beheaded by Prince John reflect a common treatment of Elizabethan Catholics, especially recalling the execution of Mary Queen of Scots. The Scots seemingly makes other quiet appearances. In the *Henriad*, the Earl of Northumberland, ostensibly an ally of the rebels, supports the rebellions in principle but abstains from them in action. Shakespeare's

audience may have recalled that, in real history, Northumberland allied with the Scots in a third rebellion against the Lancastrians, his beheading recalled when a Northumberland knight is caught as part of a treasonable plot and ordered executed in *Henry V* (2.2). Indeed, the *Henriad's* Earl of Northumberland had a descendant, the seventh Earl of Northumberland, who allied himself with Mary and the Spanish in 1569, fled to Scotland, and was beheaded in 1572.

Finally, Catholics from the 14th to 16th centuries were accused of confusing the spiritual and military swords. When the Archbishop of York, in history named Richard le Scrope, purposes to lead troops into the second northern rebellion in *Henry IV, Part 2*, he violates canon law and confirms the Lollard charge that Catholic bishops beginning with Bishop Henry Despenser, in the disastrous 1383 Flanders Crusade, violated church law in leading troops into war,<sup>54</sup> the criticism directed against the 16th century's Pope Julius II and leveled by Prince John, in the play, against an unrepentant Archbishop of York:

*Prince John.* . . . My Lord of York, it better show'd with you  
When that your flock, assembled by the bell,  
Encircled you to hear with reverence  
Your exposition on the holy text  
Than now to see you here an iron man,  
Cheering a rout of rebels with your drum,  
Turning the word to sword, and life to death. . . .  
Who hath not heard it spoken  
How deep you were within the books of God?  
To us the speaker in His parliament,  
To us th' imagin'd voice of God himself,  
The very opener and intelligencer  
Between the grace, the sanctities of heaven,  
And our dull workings.

(4.2.2445–67)

The speech recalls problems in relationships between the first and second estates before the 1559 revised Act of Uniformity made Elizabeth the Supreme Governor of the Church. Though no Catholic bishops existed in England to take the battlefield, the Roman church's emissaries from Ridolfi to Fawkes turned—or endeavored to turn—the word to sword.

At the end of *Henry IV, Part 2*, and the beginning of *Henry V*, the new monarch, suddenly given grace and piety when he puts on royalty (and also reflecting Elizabeth's 1559 Act of Supremacy making her the governor of the church), begins to act like a bishop. He demands repentance of Falstaff, apparently coaches the Archbishop concerning what he should say about the justice of the war in France (while appearing to query him about primogeni-

ture rights), prays for his company of troops privately as if they were diocesan charges, and orders the singing of the *Non Nobis*, and *Te Deum* after Agincourt as if his troops' liturgist. He is an Act of Supremacy monarch/priest.

Caught between Falstaff's Eastcheap and the Galtres Forest of the rebels, the monarchy works to create a totalized religious society. To the Eastcheap forces, it provides discipline with the threat of, and actual execution; to the rebels, military defeat. Much has been made of Richard II's and Henry V's employment of the fiction of the king's two bodies where the monarch mediates between natural and positive law, applying the former to statecraft for the common benefit of the realm even as the bishop or pope acted as a mediatory Christlike figure translating eternal law into divine and canon law for the growth of charity. A monarch, who did not serve the common benefit, preferring his own private benefit, became a tyrant—to be removed from the royal role. However, after the English Reformation, and especially after Elizabeth I declared herself governor of the church, the mediatory roles of bishop and king collapsed into one. When the monarch became the church's governor, as Elizabeth did, she accepted both priestly *and* royal functions so that all rulership comes directly from God, and no mediatory prelate remains to announce divine law to the ruler. He or she has self-ratifying moral and political authority as Luther's (and much Protestant) theory of government also implies.<sup>55</sup> At the same time, as Carole Levin has carefully demonstrated, Elizabeth was willing to take the title of supreme governor of the church rather than supreme head, to leave doctrinal squabbles to her prelates while emphasizing her participation in the sacred and non-Jovinian mediatory role of the Virgin Mary and the healing functions of the divine monarch.<sup>56</sup> Extending Elizabeth's positions, *Henry V* explores what, granted 16th-century prejudices against female rulers, Elizabeth could have been as a male head of the church.

The investigation of kingship in the *Henriad* progresses from an examination of a king who observes the forms of sacred kingship without its substance—Richard II—to one who possesses some of its ruling substance without its priestly form—Henry IV—to one possessing both form and substance: Henry V. Part of the concern of Shakespeare's *Richard II* is whether the monarch has become a tyrant and deserves to be deposed or forced to abdicate; Richard plays the Christ role to the hilt when he learns of the putative Judas betrayal of Bushy, Bagot, and Green in 3.2.8. In 4.1., taking off his royal paraphernalia, he elaborates the theology of sacred kingship in the fullest possible way commensurate with stage performance. Still he is removed from kingship but the rightness of that removal is not clear.<sup>57</sup> He seems to rule as *rex imago Christi* but never performs royal miracles. On the other side, Falstaff imitates the rites of assuming the royal role in his *comic blasphemy* against the rites of kingship, Hal assumes the role from Falstaff

in an equally parodic vein while Henry's usurps and suggests the murder of Richard in *serious blasphemy* against both of the king's bodies, one of which is supposed to be godlike. Perhaps reflecting the uncertainty of his usurpation and complicity in Richard's death, Henry finds little comfort in the royal role. He is shown in act 4, seizing the crown in a powerful stage gesture responding to Richard's initiative:

KING RICHARD II [to an attendant] Give me the crown. [To BOLINGBROKE] Here, cousin [in reference to Bolingbroke], seize the crown.  
Here, cousin. On this side my hand, and on that side thine.  
Now is this 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.  
BOLINGBROKE I thought you had been willing to resign.  
KING RICHARD II 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.

(4.1.171–83)

Though Henry refers to his coronation ritual at the end of this act, his royal anointing is never shown or recounted—though Froissart, one of Shakespeare's main sources, elaborately describes the religious and civic ceremony of Henry's ascent, potential great stage spectacle. Indeed, Shakespeare gives us no listing of the bases of Henry's legitimacy such as Chaucer's conquest, lineage, and election in his *Complaint to His Purse*:

O **conquerour** of Brutes Albyon,  
Which that by **lyne** and free **eleccion**  
Been verray kyng,  
(*Complaint to his Purse*, 21–23 [bolding mine])

Bolingbroke's conquest seems little better than the Northern rebellions as a basis for succession; Mortimer has good alternative lineal claims, and there is no Shakespearean "free eleccion." If Queen Elizabeth saw herself as Richard, perhaps Shakespeare's Richard II, Shakespeare prudently does not give much space to the justice of the deposition of his monarch's stage counterpart. Though some scholars have argued that Shakespeare gives parliament an important role in the deposition scene, that scene was not published in Elizabeth's lifetime, as Cyndia Susan Clegg has written, "When read carefully, the parliament/deposition scene actually argues that Richard's abdication does not clear suspicion and therefore legitimize Bolingbroke's actions."<sup>58</sup>



Whether or not this scene was ever censored in Elizabeth's time (as has been sometimes claimed), it gives little comfort to the idea that Richard was appropriately dethroned. Henry and not parliament deposes Richard (4.1.200–202),<sup>59</sup> and the coerced character of Richard's speeches in the deposition scenes make plausible Henry IV's guilt about his occupying the throne and Henry's prayers before Agincourt.

What then does the stage spectacle offer as the basis of Henry V's legitimacy? Miracle, I believe. Uncertainly established on the throne, Henry IV knows that his is a crooked rule that may, at best, provide the prelude to a straight one; he tells the Prince that God knows

. . . By what by-paths and indirect crook'd ways  
I met this crown; and I myself know well  
How troublesome it sat upon my head:  
To thee it shall descend with better quiet,  
Better opinion, better confirmation, . .  
. . . For all my reign hath been but as a scene  
Acting that argument. And now my death  
Changes the mood, for what in me was purchased!  
Falls upon thee in a more fairer sort,  
So thou the garment wear'st successively . . .

(4.3.312–29)

Henry has no faith that divine blessing or popular approval will crown his heir's days; spin will be required:

. . . Therefore, my Harry,  
Be it thy course to busy giddy minds  
With foreign quarrels, that action hence borne out,  
May waste the memory of the former days . . .  
How I came by the crown, O God forgive,  
And grant it may with thee in true peace live!

(4.3.340–47)

In dying, Henry IV acknowledges that he has done wrong in deposing Richard, but the cynically proposed penance and pilgrimage to the site of Christ's life<sup>60</sup>—where he could truly take on the *rex imago Christi* role—is a *satisfaction* for sin that never takes place because of the preoccupations of his rule. Henry seems to be a half-legitimate king—Shakespeare does not make that clear, probably because of the politics of deposition in the Elizabethan time<sup>61</sup>—but he possesses no inner assurance of legitimacy. He believes in *satisfaction* to pay for his sins through a crusade, but he only knows *contrition* in the Jerusalem Chamber. Shakespeare rarely shows him exercising successful and just kingship, and his rule is never validated by royal miracles.

The fully legitimate ruler in Elizabeth's time is validated by miracles like those assigned to King Edward the Confessor in *Macbeth* or to Prospero in the *Tempest*; Henry V also creates constant miracle.<sup>62</sup> How he becomes a legitimate king is not fully clear, but he does. One cannot easily present the legal arguments for royal legitimacy, such as Henry claimed, on the stage when those evidences are lineage, conquest, and election in some combination. Miracle is used as a stage proxy to certify the legitimacy of the king, and it is easy to speak of (Elizabeth herself claimed the healing touch of the monarch as had Mary before her).<sup>63</sup> Henry V achieved miraculous powers, according to the Archbishop, immediately upon being crowned, powers in philosophic and theological debate and in policy a little like those attributed to Elizabeth in consequence of her study with Ascham and evidenced in her translation of Boethius:<sup>64</sup>

Never came reformation in a flood  
 With such a heady currance scouring faults;  
 Nor never Hydra-headed wilfulness  
 So soon did lose his seat—and all at once—  
 As in this king.  
*Bishop of Ely.* We are blessed in the change.  
*Archbishop of Canterbury.* Hear him but reason in divinity,  
 And, all-admiring, with an inward wish  
 You would desire the King were made a prelate;  
 Hear him debate of commonwealth affairs,  
 You would say it hath been all-in-all his study:  
 List his discourse of war, and you shall hear  
 A fearful battle rendered you in music:  
 Turn him to any cause of policy,  
 The Gordian knot of it he will unloose,  
 Familiar as his garter . . .

(*Henry V*, 1.1.34–48)

This is all a miracle to the prelate:

. . . a wonder how his grace should glean it,  
 Since his addiction was to courses vain,  
 His companies unletter'd, rude and shallow,  
 His hours fill'd up with riots, banquets, sports,  
 And never noted in him any study,  
 Any retirement, any sequestration  
 From open haunts and popularity.

(1.1.52–60)

The miracles include philosophy and theology, but also the unlikely victory at Agincourt.

The critics have the proposed various ways in which Henry V, as a legitimate monarch, can combine the roles of *Rex Christus* and Machiavellian pragmatist.<sup>65</sup> The debate is a nugatory in that Machiavelli was not what widely read in England, the stage "Machiavels" of the time show no knowledge of *The Prince*, and Shakespeare needed no Italian treatises to tell him that ruthless statecraft existed. Moreover, a divine king at war was licensed to go beyond the usual. Though Henry asks for an unbiased judgement from the Archbishop, he does, by threatening the monasteries, extort from the prelate his decision that the Salic law legitimizes pursuit of the throne of France, a territory where Essex carried out Protestant campaigns until into the 1590s. Once the war effort is under way, he rules by the laws of war, and these are – under the logic of divinely sanctioned rulership—little different in their allowance for expediency from those elaborated in *The Prince*. Henry executes men apparently guilty of treason without trial at Southampton. He promises massacres and massive rape at Harfleur; apparently executes Bardolph for the stealing of a *pax*; kills French prisoners because of the French murder of the luggage boys, and pursues victory in battle and internal social order ruthlessly and with a priestly sanction, all of his actions that Meron argues to be justified under the time's laws of war.<sup>66</sup> In summary, Henry defeats the two forces hindering just rulership in his realm: the northern and French external enemies and the lowlives preventing internal order. The companion of Jovianians becomes the master of theology, paramount in contemplation, and the defender of a true church. His sudden development of a capacity for discerning philosophic argument both in matters of statecraft and of theology certifies his legitimacy in the same way the King Edward's healing powers in *Macbeth* certify his; so do his victories. The fiction of Henry V as realm-creating monarch prepares the way for the long-lived female monarch who sits on Shakespeare's England's throne and rules, or prepares that country to rule Scotland, Ireland, and Wales as well as France—areas adumbrated by Henry's conquests or the regional soldiers who fight with him.<sup>67</sup> The ending of the play, with Henry's innocent courtship of Katherine of France—suggests the new sexual ethic. Shakespeare's speaking of Henry's short life perhaps reminds the audience of the contemporary monarch's long one as queen and 'defender of the faith.' She, we are to believe, has rendered the Falstaffs of her time harmless, defeated the Northern rebels, defanged the Catholic powers in France and lived a virginal life of philosophy, theology, and pageant.

Of course, this is all theatrical image. We are more in Byzantium than in history's world of "whatever is begotten, born and dies." The *Henriad*'s metaphoric presentation of the settling of the woes of Elizabeth's late reign and the creation of a holy nation pays tribute to monarchic myth from Chaucer's time and after, while raising the possibility that a Protestant contrition demanded by the monarch will work toward a good society. The world envis-

aged is not an Enlightenment or post-Enlightenment one but a plausible Elizabethan mockup of the ages of the Chaucers and of Elizabeth.

## Notes

1. Fox, "Complaint of poetry," 229–57.
2. Strong, *passim*.
3. Non-conforming Protestantism designates Protestantism generally derived from Calvinist, Zwinglian, or Anabaptist sources opposing ecclesiastical hierarchy, liturgy, and "Romish" practices. The Puritan party was quite amorphous in 1595–99.
4. White, 147–64.
5. Gairdner, 55–77.
6. Shakespeare quotations from *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997) based on the Oxford Edition; cf. *Henry IV, part 2*, epilogue. For chronicler reconciling of Oldcastle' Protestant "martyrdom" with his apparent treason, see Patterson, 130–53 and Escobedo, 25–44.
7. Brooks, 333–61.
8. Cronin, 292–304; Lowe, 405–38.
9. Aston, 219–73.
10. Davies, 351–78; Avery, 79–90; Hunt, 176–206; Womersley, 1–22.
11. Poole, 97–122; Hunt, 176–206; Pikli, 86–102.
12. Rogerson, 1–18; Pikli, 86–102.
13. Olson, *Canterbury Tales*, 237.
14. Olson, *Canterbury Tales*, 235–75. Elizabethans believed Chaucer a Wycliffite and Lollard because their editions included the Wycliffite *The Plowman's Tale*.
15. Rowland, 273–82.
16. The Wife of Bath also represents a critique of Wycliffite contritionism: Olson, *Canterbury Tales*, 235–75; Robertson, "And For My Land," 403–20.
17. Hunter, 26.
18. St. Jerome, "Against Jovinianus," 1, 40.
19. Robertson, *Preface*, 317–31; Robertson, "And For My Land," 403–20.
20. *Riverside Chaucer*, 132.
21. Womersley, 1–22.
22. Luther, "Judgment," 305–06.
23. Melancthon, 161.
24. Lane, 220.
25. St. Jerome, *Contra Jovinianum*, 470–9.)
26. Hunter, 7–8.
27. See Buckley, 47–48: "But héereby it doth appéere, that Hierom in that booke against Iouinian, did deale with this place, as he did with many other, which he wrested from the simple sense to serue his owne cause . . . Bonum est, inquit, homini mulierem non tangere. Si bonum est mulierem non tangere, malum est ergò tangere. That is, It is good, saith he, for a man not to touch a woman, then it is euill to touch hir." Cf. Willet, 75–76. Ponet's *A defence*, 124, attributes to the papacy what Catholics attribute to Protestants: "Saint Hierom. calleth Iouinian the Epicure of the Christians.

Whom he so iudgeth because of his wordly pleasures and voluptuose lyfe. But was there euer such voluptuose swynes as the pope and his creatures be? [L]oke upon there fare, there apparel, ther houses, their moyles, there whores, there boyes, there traynes of ruffians, ther dailie carding, dising, swering[,] facing, pouling, theuing, . . . the daylie prouisions made to mayntayne there gluttony, to continew there pryde, to enlarge there pleasures: and Iouinian shal be counted but a counterfect epicure to the most parte of these lordly creatures of the popes generation."

28. Rogers, 277. England crept toward a married priesthood; Carlson, 1–31.

29. Bramhall, 179–250.

30. Ibid.

31. Hooker's position has been obscured by later polemics. Given custom's force, many clerics and parishioners in the post-1535 period probably practiced something like the old forms of penance; Hooker's position, not published in the 1594 and 1597 versions of the *Laws*, was probably a codification of much non-Puritan Church of England practice. See Lee W. Gibbs, "Richard Hooker's *Via Media* Doctrine of Repentance," *Harvard Theological Review* 84 (1991): 66–69.

32. Stow, I, 266–67.

33. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/9660/9660-h/9660-h.htm>.

34. Kantorowicz, *passim*.

35. Rowe, viii–ix.

36. Sharpe, 192–211.

37. Ponet, *Short Treatise*, *passim*.

38. Sharpe, 207.

39. The misunderstanding of Epicurus in non-scholarly circles derived from Cicero's representation including a denial of the afterlife (*De Finibus*, 1, 40); Falstaff speaks of repentance and the afterlife without regarding them seriously until his own Henry V death.

40. See "Allegorical Painting" (1610).

41. Orders to justices of the peace forbad them from accepting bribes for allowing candidates for impressment to escape duty; provincial justices were to report irregularities to the Privy Council. (Lambarde, 381–82).

42. Though Sir John Popham, Essex' opponent, was from 1595–99 Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench, he is probably no referent. Shakespeare's Chief Justice seems an abstract principle, i.e., disinterested justice.

43. "Arthur's bosom," contrary to most editors, seems no mistake. The Hostess hopes that Falstaff, adulterer/knight, knows mercy in the embrace of Arthur, knightly victim of adultery.

44. Epicureans were thought not to believe in an afterlife, and Jovinian was thought to believe in a levelled one; part of the irony of Falstaff's death, seen from a centrist Elizabethan religious perspective, is that, dying, he views an afterlife whose considerations he has always neglected. Falstaff's semblance is Jonson's Sir Epicure Mammon.

45. Coffey, 117ff; Hamlin, 231ff.

46. Sprague, 125–37.

47. Olson, *Canterbury Tales*, 235ff.

48. Guy, 126–49.

49. Waterfield, 168.
50. <https://www.geni.com/projects/English-Recusant-Families/24027>.
51. Maley and Schwyzer, 45ff.
52. Olson, *Beyond*, 120ff.
53. Nohrnberg, 224–56.
54. Despenser's action prompted Lollard criticism of clerical battles and parliamentary impeachment.
55. Luther, "Temporal Authority," 45: 77–143. See Shoenberg, "Luther and the Justifiability of Resistance," 5. After papal efforts to unseat Elizabeth, English theorists shunned justifying tyrannicide, substituting theories similar Luther's; cf. Crompton's *A short declaration*.
56. Levin, 10–38.
57. McCauliff, "Right to Resist" 20ff.; Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, *passim*; Levin, 123. Many Elizabethan political thinkers, especially Hooker (*Laws*, VIII, 2, 8), seem to deny that tyrannicide can be moral.
58. Clegg, 165; Clare, 89–94.
59. The "you" of this passage is Henry and not the parliament as a whole.
60. See Henry's observation on the meaning of a crusade see *Henry IV*, 1 (1, 1, 1–35). The meaning of Henry's proposal of a crusade appears in *Henry IV*, 2 (4, 3, 340–47). Henry's crusading plan continued that of English knights associated with the Order of the Passion of Jesus Christ organized by Philippe de Mézières.
61. For resistance in Tudor times, see Guy, "Tudor Monarchy," *Tudor Monarchy*, 78–104.
62. Sturdy, "Royal Touch," 172–73, 190; Annette Finley-Croswhite, *Princes and Princely Culture*, 142.
63. Deploige and Deneckere, 99–117.
64. Elizabeth I, *passim*; Ascham, 219–20.
65. Bezio, 43–58.
66. Meron, 1–45.
67. Henry V's use of soldiers from Wales, Ireland and Scotland probably appealed to the Cecil's ideology of first strengthening the monarchy's power in the British Isles; Henry's conquests in France would have appealed to the Essex faction. The play was being written in the earlier 1590s when Essex wished to support Henry IV of France as Protestant king but the latter's conversion to Catholicism before the play's publication or playing may have changed the play's resonance. Cf. Hammer, 72–81; Shapiro, 20.

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