

Representations of Emergent and Marginalised Identities in *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*

Rebecca Agar BA. MRes.

PhD in the Arts

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Ulster University

A thesis submitted for the fulfilment of the degree of

Doctorate in Philosophy

Submitted: August 2017

I confirm that the word count of this thesis is less than 100,000 words.

Contents

Acknowledgments	ii
Abstract	iii
Access to contents	iv
Introduction: Making History	1
Chapter 1.	28
<u>Secular Miracles: The Birth and Evolution of the English History Play</u>	
Legendary History	30
Medieval Beginnings	35
The Birth of a Genre	52
Chapter 2.	66
<u>The People's History: Popular Representation and Comedic Critiques</u>	
An Inclusive History	68
Society's Mirror	85
Behind the Laughter	93
Chapter 3.	110
<u>Tyrannical Youth: Fears for a Young King</u>	
One Legacy, Two Princes	111
A Lively Youth	122
The Fear of False Friends	131
Youthful Transgression as a Phase	136
Chapter 4.	145
<u>The Taming of the King: Patriarchal Nostalgia and Evolving Masculinity</u>	
Opposition to Female Rule	147
Female Erasure	152
Patriarchal Nostalgia	159
Evolving Masculinity	176
Chapter 5.	189
<u>Theatrical Identity: Historicising the Actor and the Performance of Identity</u>	
The Transformative Power of the Theatre	191
The Performance of Identity	200
The Theatricality of Rule	204
Doubleness and Fixed Identities	209
The King's Speech	216
Conclusion: The Power of Historical Representation	227
Bibliography	235

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the aid and support of the following people.

I am extremely thankful for the financial support of the Department of Education and Learning who funded my postgraduate education and the resources that aided my research. I also wish to thank the University of Ulster's research department for their assistance and patience over the years. In particular I would like to thank Dr Kevin de Ornellas whose guidance and support throughout this project has been very much appreciated and Dr Frank Ferguson who has offered invaluable advice and support. I couldn't have asked for two better supervisors and, naturally, any errors or inaccuracies that remain in this work are mine alone.

I also wish to thank my family for the immense love that they have shown me during this process and the abundant encouragement that they have offered me time and time again. They have listened with patience when I have rambled on about this obscure little Elizabethan play, and have always made time for me when I have felt lost or overwhelmed. They have been so supportive throughout this entire process and I am eternally grateful for all that they have done for me.

I am extremely lucky to have so many loyal friends that have been at my side throughout this process and I cannot offer them enough thanks for their love and support. I truly believe that I would not have been able to get this far without them. I would like to thank Carolann and Ryan who have been there from the very start of this project and have patiently listened to my many history play 'rants'. They have always been ready with supplies of chocolate and a sympathetic ear to hear out my research woes. I also wish to extend the greatest of thanks to my beautiful girlfriend, Jaren, who helped me to regain my 'kattobingu' and reminded me to 'have hope'. She has been there for me through the ups and downs, cheering me on and inspiring me every single day.

Last, although certainly not least, a final thanks is owed to my two fluffy research assistants, Riley and Heidi. Although their insistent demands for ear scratches and tummy rubs meant that certain parts of this thesis had to be typed one-handed, their companionship and company during the research and writing of this thesis was nonetheless greatly appreciated.

Abstract

The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth has been neglected by academics over the years due to its ‘crude’ prose, repetitive structure and stigmatised status as a ‘bad quarto’. However, *Famous Victories* is thought to be the first English history play to have been performed on the commercial stage and, as such, launched an influential genre that would only grow in popularity throughout the Elizabethan period.

This thesis will argue that *Famous Victories* has more value than its current reputation as a ‘worthless’ play, and that it holds merit as a literary work in its own right. To achieve this I will support the argument that *Famous Victories* was the first English history play to be performed on the commercial stage and that its evolution from the medieval morality play tradition was a particularly significant one. Just as the Tudor morality play, *King Johan*, appropriated the legacy of a historical figure to create a ‘Protestant’ martyr and a desirable historic tradition for the new faith, so too was *Famous Victories* able to use Henry V’s legacy to a similar effect.

This thesis will highlight four key emergent and marginalised identities that had been minimised by the Tudor chronicles or developed too recently to be included in such historic works. I will argue that *Famous Victories* was able to retroactively include these marginalised groups, some anachronistically, in their own national history and, by transposing many of these emergent identities onto the heroic figure of Henry V, was able to provide them with a historic legacy, and, with it, a tradition that offered these groups a perceived legitimacy and acceptance that they had previously lacked.

Note on access to contents

I hereby declare that with effect from the date on which the thesis is deposited in Research Student Administration of Ulster University, I permit

1. the Librarian of the University to allow the thesis to be copied in whole or in part without reference to me on the understanding that such authority applies to the provision of single copies made for study purposes or for inclusion within the stock of another library.
2. the thesis to be made available through the Ulster Institutional Repository and/or EThOS under the terms of the Ulster eTheses Deposit Agreement which I have signed.

IT IS A CONDITION OF USE OF THIS THESIS THAT ANYONE WHO CONSULTS IT MUST RECOGNISE THAT THE COPYRIGHT RESTS WITH THE AUTHOR AND THAT NO QUOTATION FROM THE THESIS AND NO INFORMATION DERIVED FROM IT MAY BE PUBLISHED UNLESS THE SOURCE IS PROPERLY ACKNOWLEDGED.

Introduction: Making History

The Elizabethan history play is a genre that has attracted significant academic interest over the years, particularly William Shakespeare's own history plays which have been extensively researched and written on. *Richard III* (c.1593) and *Henry V* (1599) are both household names that have inspired numerous cinematic interpretations, from Laurence Olivier's films to the famous adaptations in more recent years featuring celebrity actors such as Kenneth Branagh, Tom Hiddleston and Ian McKellen. These works themselves have even sparked further academic discussion and analysis of the films themselves.¹ Although the history plays outside of Shakespeare's canon do not get adapted or performed as regularly, they still attract scholarly interest and are frequently printed in academic editions, making them more accessible for research, study and teaching. Whilst great attention is paid to these 'established' history plays, with the bulk of this focus given to those from Shakespeare's own quill, the first example of this genre has received very little attention from academics, and is often relegated to footnotes or endnotes where it is only mentioned briefly, if at all.

The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth (c.1586) was first performed in the period between 1583 and the summer of 1587, making it one of the strongest contenders for the first example of the English history play to be performed on the commercial stage.² In spite of its honoured status, the play has very rarely been published in critical editions and has had a rocky relationship with academics since

¹ See Robert F. Willson's 'War and Reflection on War: The Olivier and Branagh Films of *Henry V*', Peter S. Donaldson's 'Cinema and the Kingdom of Death: Loncraine's *Richard III*' and Ramona Wray's 'The Shakespearean Auteur and the Televisual Medium' as examples.

² All dates provided for the plays within this thesis have been sourced from Martin Wiggins' catalogue of early modern English drama. Wiggins' best estimation for the date or composition of the play will be used where the date of first performances have been recorded. For pamphlet literature the publication year is used instead: Martin Wiggins, *British Drama, 1533-1642: A Catalogue*, 7 vols, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012-6).

the nineteenth century. Although there have been many attempts and hypotheses put forth to identify the author of the work, no definitive answer has been found and the play remains anonymous to this day. The play was first entered into the Stationer's Register in 1594, although there is no evidence to suggest that an edition was printed in that particular year. Instead it is theorised that the play was first taken with the Queen's Men when they toured the country, before being printed at the end of the sixteenth century in an attempt to cash in on the popularity of Shakespeare's *Henriad* plays.³ The *Famous Victories* has survived in two editions, one from 1598 and the other from 1618, with each naming the Queen's Men and the King's Men respectively to be the acting troupes that first performed the play. Whilst the legitimacy of the claim that the King's Men performed the play at a later date has generally been rejected by academics, the suggestion that the Queen's Men originally performed the play has more evidence to support it. *Famous Victories* fits neatly within their existing catalogue of plays alongside *King Leir* (c.1589) and *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England* (c.1589). A notable anecdote within *Tarlton's Jests* features an audience member's account of watching Richard Tarlton, the famous clown of the Queen's Men, acting within one of the play's famous scenes.⁴ Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean in *The Queen's Men and Their Plays*, their detailed study of the Queen's Men's repertoire and performance practices, take note of this extract and claim that '[t]he anecdote seems to be generally reliable' and is therefore a valuable tool when attempting to date the play.⁵

The plot of *Famous Victories* is concerned with the life of Henry V, who ruled England from 1413 until 1422, and follows his development from a young,

³ Janet Clare, 'Medley History: *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth to Henry V*', *Shakespeare Survey*, 63 (2010), 102-113 (p. 104).

⁴ Anon., *Tarlton's Jests*, ed. John Haviland (London, 1638; STC: 23684), sig. C2v.

⁵ Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 90.

rebellious prince to the triumphant king of England who leads his men to victory in the Battle of Agincourt. The play borrows heavily from chronicles as its source material, and stages famous events from these on the commercial stage. However, it should be noted that *Famous Victories* does not offer a truly faithful adaptation of these historic tales. There is ‘a mingling of Kings and Clowns’ within *Famous Victories*, and non-historical characters of the playwright’s own creation are included within the play and dominate half of the scenes. This has led Janet Clare to refer to the play as a ‘medley history’ whilst Nicholas Grene describes it as ‘a characteristic hybrid history in its mixing of styles and subjects’; Iving Ribner, however, has stated that it should be considered as a ‘non-didactic heroic folk play’ instead.⁶

Nonetheless, *Famous Victories* continues to be categorised as a history or chronicle play by the majority of academics, and many arguments have been made to establish or defend its status as the first example of an English history play.⁷ Karen Oberer argues that the infamous derision that Philip Sidney levelled at the medley characteristic of this work was actually a strength. She argues that ‘Sidney did not recognise the dramatic potential of hybridity, unlike the Queen’s Men, whose history plays deftly interweave the serious and the comic, the “high” and the “low”’.⁸

In spite of this particular point of academic interest, which would allow critics to view the emergent tropes of the genre and suggest why and how these evolved within this particular time period, *Famous Victories* has been largely dismissed as a work of little merit. Richard Dutton notes that in editions of

⁶ Clare, ‘Medley History’, p. 104; Nicholas Grene, *Shakespeare’s Serial History Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 192; Irving Ribner, *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 1965), p. 76; it should be noted that plays that have been established as examples of the history genre still have their identity questioned from time to time, and that even Shakespeare’s *Henry V* has been argued to be a romance by Cyrus Mulready.

⁷ These critics include, but are not limited to: Larry S. Champion, Janet Clare, Scott McMillan and Sally-Beth MacLean.

⁸ Karen Oberer, ‘Appropriations of the Popular Tradition in *The Famous Victories of Henry V* and *The Troublesome Raigne of King John*’, in *Locating the Queen’s Men, 1583-1603*, eds. Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Griffin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp.171-82 (p. 171).

Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Parts One and Two* (c.1597) or *Henry V* this earlier play was very rarely mentioned as a source at all:

Actually, so many editors until the last quarter century were so embarrassed that Shakespeare might have had anything but the remotest connection with either FV [*Famous Victories*] or Q [The 1600 quarto of *Henry V*] that they never paused to acknowledge the resemblance at all.⁹

Although its connection to Shakespeare was the factor that generated the most academic interest in *Famous Victories*, works that focused on the plays of the *Henriad* largely ignored its connection to this earlier play. Some academics went even further and ignored all histories that came before Shakespeare's own; F.P. Wilson's claim that Shakespeare wrote the first history play is a particularly noteworthy example.¹⁰

Although works focused on Shakespeare's histories regularly omitted information on this source, editions of *Famous Victories*, or the works that analyse it, have often contained a preoccupation with Shakespeare's work that overshadows the merits of the earlier play. An early edition of the play, edited by Charles Praetorius in 1887, contains an extremely dismissive introduction to the text by P.A. Daniel, who finds the work to be of very little academic value. When describing the basic premise of the play, he refers to how it 'shadows' the events of Shakespeare's 'superb trilogy' and dismisses the claim that the King's Men had once performed the play as he is sceptical that the 'king's company, now long in possession of Shakespeare's *Henry IV* and *V*, would have retained this *poor stuff* in their repertoire'.¹¹ Instead, P.A. Daniel's introduction to the play marvels at the

⁹ Richard Dutton, 'The Famous Victories and the 1600 Quarto of *Henry V*', in *Locating the Queen's Men, 1583-1603*, eds. Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Griffin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 135-144 (p. 138).

¹⁰ F.P. Wilson, *Marlowe and the Early Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 106.

¹¹ P.A. Daniel, 'Introduction', in *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, ed. P.A. Daniel (London: C. Paertorius, 1887), pp. iii, v (emphasis added).

transformative power of Shakespeare's genius, and finds very little of interest in the original anonymous play. Daniel's opinion is not atypical within the field of early modern drama and, in a more forgiving introduction to a later edition of the play, A.F. Hopkinson acknowledges the critical infamy that the play has received over the years:

Certain critics have alluded to this play in terms of unqualified disparagement. Capell wrote of it as "a very medley of nonsense and ribaldry" a "miserable performance," and "its fate, which was damnation;" Dyce calls it a "worthless play," and Mr. Halliwell-Phillips applies to it the epithet "contemptible."¹²

Such criticism of *Famous Victories* typically occurs whilst the academic compares the play to the 'far superior' works of Shakespeare, and, because of this, attention is focused on the play's unsophisticated and repetitive prose. As such, many of these arguments have survived into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries where, for example Ribner described it as 'formless and incoherent and, in general, worthless', and James Shapiro claimed that 'the prose was workaday and its characters two-dimensional – more a series of skits than a coherent play'.¹³

Hopkinson, however, after listing the numerous complaints made against the quality of the play continues, '[t]his censure seems to me too severe'.¹⁴ Although he notes that the play is 'certainly' inferior to the other Queen's Men's histories, he makes the bold, although not unfounded, claim that:

perhaps no other play exercised more influence in fixing the form of our national historical drama than did this one. There is so much in it superior to anything that had appeared prior to its production.¹⁵

¹² A.F. Hopkinson, 'Introduction', in *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* (London: M.E. Sims & co, 1896), p. xii.

¹³ James Shapiro, *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare* (Faber and Faber, 2011) (original work published in 2005), p. 99.

¹⁴ Hopkinson, 'Introduction', p. xii.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Whilst other critics dismissed the work as worthless and, in some cases questioned if such a poor play could even be a source for Shakespeare, Hopkinson notes that *Famous Victories* suffers greatly from its static place on the page. With this acknowledgment he invites his readers to imagine the staging of the play in order to understand its contemporary attraction:

The words, which appear to us “stale, flat and unprofitable,” coming from [Tarlton’s] lips and animated by his masterly genius, must have had an instantaneous and electrifying effect upon the audience; an effect such as would leave scarcely a face in the theatre undistended by jocund merriment.¹⁶

In his attempt to understand the appeal and popularity of *Famous Victories*, Hopkinson breaks from the trend, to expect the same quality and poetry of verse as can be found in Shakespeare’s work, to instead consider the play on its own terms. This approach certainly supports the observations of Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, who claim that the storytelling of the Queen’s Men extended beyond the page and was tied very closely to their skills in visual spectacle and staging.¹⁷ Therefore, an attempt to compare the play to Shakespeare’s work will always ensure that the earlier play appears to be severely lacking by comparison. Unfortunately, whilst Hopkinson’s introduction notes that the play itself deserves some merit, he reverts back to the traditional critical narrative that surrounds *Famous Victories* when he refers to the metamorphosis of the early play into Shakespeare’s trilogy after his previous defence: ‘Shakespeare followed in the track of his humble precursor, but his superior genius enabled him to give the character a more consistent and profound development’.¹⁸ Although Hopkinson offered such a promising defence of the play at first, he ends his introduction to *Famous Victories* with the

¹⁶ Ibid., p. ix.

¹⁷ McMillin and MacLean, *The Queen’s Men*, p. 128.

¹⁸ Hopkinson, ‘Introduction’, p. xiii.

assurance that this work, although imperfect, does not detract one iota from ‘Shakespeare’s immortal hero’.¹⁹

Even in its own edition, and when defended by the editor, *Famous Victories* appears fated to be forever trapped within Shakespeare’s shadow. It is regularly compared unfavourably to Shakespeare’s work, regarded as a mere source and has been largely forgotten in the canon of Elizabethan literature. At the beginning of the twentieth century, *Famous Victories* held a poor reputation and carried the stigma of poor writing, with the suggestion that the play was of such low quality that it must be a ‘bad quarto’. This particular argument is indeed a damaging one and, as Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge observe:

Recently it has been suggested that the use of the label ‘bad’ quarto as applied to Renaissance drama texts may be indicative of the prejudices and assumptions of scholars regarding the quality and social level of performance as of inherent deficiencies in the text in question.²⁰

However, in 1928 Bernard M. Ward provided one of the first articles to truly consider the worth and importance of this early history play. Ward states that ‘*The Famous Victories of Henry V* owes any notoriety that it may have achieved to the fact that Shakespeare based upon it some of the best-known scenes in his trilogy *1 & 2 Henry IV* and *Henry V*’. In his article Ward highlights that the full extent of the ‘immense debt’ that Shakespeare owes to *Famous Victories* had gone unacknowledged at that point.²¹ Ward’s article, ‘*The Famous Victories of Henry V: Its Place within Elizabethan Literature*’ states its purpose clearly in the title and does not seek to discredit the earlier work, but rather explore and argue for its academic

¹⁹ Ibid., p. xiv.

²⁰ Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge, ‘Introduction’, in *The Oldcastle Controversy: ‘John Oldcastle’ and ‘The Famous Victories of Henry V’*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 1-35 (p. 21).

²¹ Bernard M. Ward, ‘*The Famous Victories of Henry V: Its Place in Elizabethan Dramatic Literature*’, *The Review of English Studies*, 4 (1928), 270-94 (p. 270).

value whilst revealing its original context. Through a lengthy examination and comparison of scenes, Ward concludes that Shakespeare took the structure of his play from *Famous Victories*, and suggests that it may even have been a greater source of inspiration than the chronicles themselves.²² The remainder of his article is focused on the topic of authorship, another issue that dominates the research and writings on *Famous Victories*. Ward offers an extremely early date for the play's composition, 1577, and proposes that the play was written by 'a whole-hearted supporter of the House of Oxford', even going so far as to suggest that the play was most likely written by the Earl of Oxford himself.²³

Although the bulk of his article is mainly concerned with demonstrating the extent of *Famous Victories*' influence on Shakespeare's later plays and arguing his own case for Edward de Vere's authorship, Ward notes with disappointment that nearly every critic who has written on *Famous Victories* has used the term 'worthless'. As Hopkinson noted before him, Ward states that *Famous Victories* may hold great academic interest as a landmark text at a pivotal point of literature and dramatic history:

Scholarship today recognises three main landmarks in the transition from the medieval miracle play to the late sixteenth-century comedy. These are *Ralph Roister Doister* (c. 1553); *Cambyzes* (c. 1569); and *Gammer Gurton's Needle* (c. 1575). Is it not among these that the *Famous Victories* really belongs?²⁴

Ward's significant assertion, much like Hopkinson's, is provided almost as an afterthought, a fleeting glimpse into what might be in academic criticism without offering a thorough examination, or even support, for his claim. Although these two studies are short, and are far from exhaustive in their scope, both provide an important framework for the future study of *Famous Victories*; Ward's article in

²² Ibid., p. 279.

²³ Ibid., pp. 281, 284, 287.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 294.

particular has had a significant impact on the shape and direction of the criticism that surrounded *Famous Victories* in the twentieth century.

Inspired by Ward's article, William Wells undertook an intensive study of the play to produce '*The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth: A Critical Edition*', an unpublished thesis that provides an edited transcript of the 1598 edition of the play with a discursive introduction that Terence P. Logan and Denzell S. Smith noted to be '[t]he only extended treatment of the play'.²⁵ Wells rejects Ward's argument for the Earl of Oxford's authorship as he finds the play to be either a memorial reconstruction after the fact or an abridged and edited copy. Wells notes that a common source is unlikely and suggests that the playwright, Samuel Rowley, may have had some part in the writing of the clowning scenes.²⁶ Wells' thesis also provides a thoughtful argument on the source material for *Famous Victories* itself, and agrees with Ward that Holinshed's *The Firste Volyume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande* (1577) were unlikely to have been used. In particular, Wells responds to the one passage in *Famous Victories* that Ward was able to identify in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, but could not find an example of in Hall's. This example is dismissed by Wells when he notes that:

Under ordinary circumstances these verbal parallels would be sufficient to establish a source – derivative relationship between the two passages, but the oath of allegiance is given in a more or less stereotypical form.²⁷

As such, Wells claims with confidence that 'Hall is indisputably the principal source...[and] Stow clearly serves as the basis for several scenes'.²⁸ As with other critics, Wells acknowledges that '[i]t is a commonplace in criticism of Elizabethan

²⁵ Terence P. Logan, Denzell S. Smith, *The Predecessors of Shakespeare* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973), p. 165.

²⁶ William Wells, '*The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth: A Critical Edition*', PhD Thesis, Stanford University (1935), pp. xli, xlvii.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. xix.

drama to refer casually to *The Famous Victories* as a crude old play without intrinsic merit'.²⁹ However, he continues that *Famous Victories* holds *historical* importance as it 'exemplifies the early chronicle play' and is 'generally regarded as one of the sources of Shakespeare's trilogy'.³⁰ It should be noted that in this instance Wells finds historic interest in the play as a textual artefact, rather than a work of literary merit. Although he notes that critics have previously discussed the play as one of poor quality, he agrees with this reading of the text and turns from the historic points of interest that he had highlighted to offer a discussion of the 'awkwardness', 'glaring defects' and 'impoverished ideas' that suggest a corrupted script.³¹

Whilst some worth of the play is acknowledged by these critics, in particular Hopkinson and Ward, this argument is never acted upon; it is instead merely left as a suggestion and then ignored in favour of dissecting the text on a technical level. Indeed, academics instead build their arguments by scouring the text to find evidence of inspiration from historical sources and examine the writing style of the prose to find points of verbal similarities in order to attach an author to the anonymous play. Others hunt out these lexiconic echoes to attempt to determine the nature of the printed playbook and whether it was written from memory or was instead a play of two parts condensed into one text.³² Whilst critics were beginning to realise the importance of the play, they were not moving forward from a technical examination of the book as a literary artefact to provide a textual analysis of the work itself.

²⁹ Ibid., p. xx.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., pp. xx- xxi.

³² Of these theories concerning the text's 'corruption' it should be noted that the theory McMillin and MacLean put forth proves to be the most convincing as they argue that the texts 'carry an extra element of error introduced by transcription from dictation, which, we propose, was one way the company put together a new book when they divided into some units', McMillin and MacLean, *The Queen's Men*, p. 119.

From this early stage of apologetic criticism new arguments and research focuses began to develop in regards to *Famous Victories*. This second wave of criticism offered an examination of the text itself that extended beyond verbal comparisons. Although previous critics had noted that *Famous Victories* was a primordial history play, this point of academic interest remained to be neglected in favour of its relationship to Shakespeare's work. Later criticism of the play as a whole is more forgiving and generous to *Famous Victories* than previous academics have been; however, a thorough examination of the play's themes and content is yet to be undertaken. The few academic works that were written during this second period of *Famous Victories*' study often focus on three key debates that dominate current criticism. These are mainly bibliographical in nature, and all too often distract from an examination of the worth of the play itself that Ward and Hopkinson had previously suggested. These three debates are: the nature of the text, the question of authorship and its use by Shakespeare as a source or the sources used for the work itself. C.A. Greer noted that *Famous Victories* was often ignored in favour of the chronicles in writings about Shakespeare's sources and called for a greater acknowledgement of 'the great dependence of Shakespeare upon the *Victories* for plot, order, thought, incident, [and] phraseology' suggesting that 'Shakespeare used the *Victories* for more than he did Holinshed'.³³ This suggestion would be taken even further by Seymour M. Pitcher who edited an edition of *Famous Victories* with a focused introduction that focused on the question of authorship once more. The edition was titled *The Case for Shakespeare's Authorship of The Famous Victories*, placing the key point of interest, Shakespeare himself, at the forefront of the work, while the text itself is included almost as an afterthought. Pitcher's argument is far

³³ C.A. Greer, 'Shakespeare's Use of "*The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*"', *Notes and Queries*, 1 (1954), 238-240 (pp. 239-240).

from convincing, and is comprised of a number of inconclusive verbal parallels and echoes of thematic similarities. He suggests that, as a Prince, Henry V holds the same youthful innocence that is characteristic of the young male protagonists in Shakespeare's works, such as Romeo, an argument that does not hold up to an examination of Henry V's character.³⁴

One need only look at the titles of further articles to see that *Famous Victories* has had difficulty breaking free of comparisons to Shakespeare's work. Article titles such as '*The Famous Victories* and the 1600 Quarto of *Henry V*', 'Thomas Creede, *Henry V* Q1, and *The Famous Victories of Henrie the Fifth*' and 'Medley History: From *Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* to *Henry V*' stress the value that is placed upon the play as a source. In addition to this, the continued publication of the play in anthologies such as *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* and *Shakespeare's Library* suggests that it may never escape the dreaded 'Shakespeare's shadow' that threatens to hide the literary potential of other Elizabethan plays. Revels Plays, an imprint of Manchester University Press, publishes non-Shakespearean works with full introductions and annotations, to provide a more inclusive understanding of Elizabethan and Jacobean literature which allows these plays to be understood within their own contexts. The series has published many non-Shakespearean history plays over the past fifty years including *Edward II* (c.1592), *Edward IV, Parts One and Two* (1599) and *Thomas of Woodstock* (c.1592). In 1991, *Famous Victories* was selected by Revels Plays to be published alongside *Sir John Oldcastle, Part One* (1599) in a volume entitled: *The Oldcastle Controversy: 'Sir John Oldcastle' and 'The Famous Victories of Henry V'*. Although this promised to be a vital edition for both research and study, the title

³⁴ For a more detailed examination of why Pitcher's argument does not provide a convincing comparison between these characters see the third chapter of this thesis.

soon fell out of print and has become extremely difficult to find outside of specialised academic libraries. This edition focuses on the characterisation and controversy surrounding John Oldcastle, a figure common to the two plays. Although there is little space reserved for the discussion of *Famous Victories*, the two editors, Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge, implore the reader to forget the old prejudices that have become attached to the play due to the critical consensus that it is indeed a bad quarto. Corbin and Sedge lament that this stigma ‘has had the unfortunate effect of obscuring the very real virtues that a study of this text reveals’ and state that this ‘should not blind us to the merits of this anonymous piece’.³⁵ Corbin and Sedge do not concern themselves with debating the authorship or nature of the text and its sources but instead analyse the play, however briefly, as a literary work, even with an acknowledgement of the flawed nature of the text:

The play as it stands, though its verbal texture is often very thin and repetitious, nonetheless demonstrates considerable virtues of dramatic structure and popular stage technique which make it worthy of study for its own sake, and the clown role of Derick gives a valuable example of the repertoire of the famous clown, Richard Tarlton.³⁶

Corbin and Sedge do not exaggerate the merits of the play and observe that the language is simple and flat. However, they note the merits of *Famous Victories*’ dramatic structure and the opportunities for physical and improvised comedy by Tarlton that are written into the play.

It should be noted that, as with Hopkinson and Wells, Corbin and Sedge do not fully demonstrate the value that they hint at. However, this edition, although it did not prove as popular as the other histories in the Revel Plays series, appeared at the turning point of academic writing surrounding *Famous Victories* as a third wave

³⁵ Corbin and Sedge, ‘Introduction’, p. 21.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 21-22.

of criticism may be identified. This new wave focuses less on the tired, old debates of authorship and nature of the text, and only notes Shakespeare's association briefly; instead the academic criticism of this period finally began to analyse the play as a literary work in its own right. The very first of these publications was an article by Larry S. Champion in the *South Atlantic Review* in 1988, "What prerogatives means": Perspective and Political Ideology in *The Famous Victories of Henry V*. The article, although brief, discusses the play's own literary merits and begins a conversation about its structure, themes and intention. Champion focuses on the political ideology of the play, noting that criticism surrounding it, at the time he was writing, 'fails to address the fact that the early audiences apparently responded quite enthusiastically to the political issues central to the play'.³⁷ Champion's argument is formed in opposition to those who have approached the play as a jingoistic piece of propaganda to merely inspire national pride in the face of threats from Catholic Europe. To do so Champion offers a more insightful analysis of Henry V's character that notes his flaws and the play's ability to highlight the double standards and privileges that he is able to enjoy due to his nobility. Champion does not support attaching one ideological viewpoint to the play itself and suggests that a more accurate reading of the play will acknowledge that the political morality will be read differently by each individual within the audience. He concludes:

...however crude by later dramatic standards [*Famous Victories*] stands as evidence that the history play from the beginning could appeal to some as a ratification of monarchism and the privileges of class and to others as an instrument of criticism and agitation.³⁸

Champion defends the literary worth of the play and acknowledges that it must be examined with fair consideration of its early date and the fact that it created a

³⁷ Larry S. Champion, "What Prerogatives Means": Perspective and Political Ideology in *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, *South Atlantic Review*, 53, 1988, 1-19 (p. 1).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

significant precedent. His conclusions open up the play for further analysis and highlight the key theme of social class relations that pervade the play and would be discussed in Oberer's later essay.³⁹

Champion's research sets a significant precedent for future analysis of the play as a literary work; however, it would not be until the very end of the twentieth century that more thoughtful criticism on *Famous Victories* would be published with greater frequency. It was at this time that two important books were published that would have a deep impact on the research culture surrounding *Famous Victories*. The first of these was McMillin and MacLean's *The Queen's Men and their Plays*, first published in 1998. *The Queen's Men and their Plays* was the first book to be solely dedicated to the Queen's Men and their history, and it provided a detailed account of the unique characteristics of the playing company, the actors, staging practices and their repertoire whilst providing a compelling argument for their study and performance.

The second of these books was *Other Voices, Other Views: Expanding the Canon in English Renaissance Studies*, published in 1999. *Other Voices, Other Views* contained a series of essays that aimed to challenge the infamously narrow canon of Renaissance academia and broaden the scope of scholarship in this field. One of these essays was Louise Nichols' "My Name was Known Before I Came: The Heroic Identity of the Prince in *The Famous Victories of Henry V*". Nichols provides a study of the Prince Henry's characterisation within *Famous Victories* in an essay that demonstrates the literary merits of the text and its thoughtful self-reflection on the process of making history, highlighting the play's concern with the real people behind the legend. Nichols argues that as an early history play, *Famous*

³⁹ As a social hierarchy and class relations prove to be such a key theme of the text, the second chapter of thesis will be dedicated to exploring this issue further.

Victories plays with the idea of how history is created and demonstrates that behind the legendary figure was a very human character, one that could be witnessed on the stage, who made mistakes and was not as infallible as many of his legends suggested. Nichols focuses on how the play self-consciously stages history and depicts a legend on the stage, one of the first plays to do so within this particular genre. As such, when *Famous Victories* is analysed with reference to its role as the first history play, such valuable findings can be placed within the appropriate context allowing for further arguments to be built, concerning the nature of history plays, why they might have emerged during this time period and how history was viewed and adapted within this genre.

Following this, a number of short essays focusing on the themes and structure of *Famous Victories* have appeared in various books and journals. Brian Walsh's 'Theatrical Temporality and Historical Consciousness in *The Famous Victories of Henry V*' further explores how time and the temporal nature of history were staged in the first history play, setting a precedent for the works that would follow. Janet Clare's 'Medley History: *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth to Henry V*' provides a general overview of the history of the play, including the most recent, accepted explanations of its odd publication history and offers a fresh approach to considering the genre. Whilst the blending of comedy and history had attracted harsh criticisms in the past from previous critics, Clare praises the structure and finds it to be a strength of the play instead, allowing for the thematic mirroring that is to be found in the text itself. Although the scope for analysis and discussion is wide, within the space of an article Clare is unable to fully expand on the interesting ideas that she puts forward. However, the commentary Clare provides offers a fresh perspective on the tired technical debate from much earlier criticism, demonstrating

that such issues can, and should, be explored when discussed in a literary context by working with the text rather than against it.

Ten years after the publication of *Other Voices, Other Views*, Ostovich, Syme and Griffin published a second collection of essays, *Locating the Queen's Men, 1583-1603: Material Practices and Conditions of Playing*. Although it was not stated as explicitly as in their first collection, this work pushed to open the canon up further and provided a collection of varied criticism that focused on the repertoire of the Queen's men. Within this collection of essays, Richard Dutton's 'The Famous Victories and the 1600 Quarto of *Henry V*', takes a more traditional approach to the play that ties in with the methodology of earlier criticism. Discussing the links between the play and the later quarto of Shakespeare, the article is more strongly focused on Shakespeare's work, with *Famous Victories* being used to offer new light and a different perspective on the later play instead of the other way around. *Locating the Queen's Men* contained a second essay that focused on *Famous Victories*, Oberer's 'Appropriations of the Popular Tradition in *The Famous Victories of Henry V* and *The Troublesome Reign of King John*', which took a more thematic and attentive approach to the text of the play. In her essay, Oberer discusses the use of popular staging and characters within the play, and notes the significance of the introduction of popular characters and entertainments, such as Tarlton's clowning, within the history play. As with Clare, the question of genre is approached in a nuanced and thoughtful way that explores the thematic structure and staging, and how this bears on its overall classification as a popular entertainment.

The emergence of these recent essays demonstrates good progress within the niche field of *Famous Victories*' criticism and provides an indicator of the readiness of critics to take a literary approach to the text and to begin to explore the work with

regards to its own structural and thematic value. The importance of *The Queen's Men and their Plays*, cannot be overlooked as it is a seminal text in its own right and paved the way for later explorations of the Queen's Men's repertoire, almost certainly including *Locating the Queen's Men*. McMillin and MacLean provide a persuasive case for the study and performance of the Queen's Men plays, as a means to help increase contextual awareness of famed Elizabethan writers like Shakespeare, and to ensure that they are not forgotten.

McMillin and MacLean certainly achieved this goal when *The Queen's Men and their Plays* inspired The Shakespeare and the Queen's Men (SQM) project. The SQM project has a web-based output and aims to make its research, and the plays themselves, accessible to students, researchers and teachers, as well as generating knowledge through the creative research of performing the plays through original practice. On the project's website they state:

We believe producing plays gives a particular insight into theatrical process and dramatic text... Created in the spirit of scholarly enquiry, our productions are arguments of a kind—ones we hope will generate further debate.⁴⁰

Although the SQM team are careful to avoid the terms 'recreation' or 'replication', noting that an accurate recreation of performance is impossible with so little evidence to work from, by staging *Famous Victories* they bring a new level of interaction and experience to the play. One way that they are able to do this is by identifying moments for extra clowning and physical improvisation in the text and bringing it to life on the stage. These moments can be seen when Tarlton provides the audience with a knowing smile after he assures John Cobbler that he won't hit him too hard or when Derick and John appear from their household ready to go to

⁴⁰ 'Project Overview', Performing the Queen's Men (2007)
[Available: <http://thequeensmen.mcmaster.ca/about/aboutSQM2.htm>, accessed on 13/05/2017]

war, not only armed with the potlid that the wife notes in her dialogue, but pan helmets and wooden spoons too. Although these actions are not included within the stage directions their inventive inclusion creates a moment of instant visual comedy that celebrates the vibrancy of a play which is lost when it is only read on the page.⁴¹

As part of the SQM project a website of online editions of the Queen's Men plays was created, called the Queen's Men Editions (QME). The aim of the project is to publish all nine of the plays identified by McMillin and MacLean as those that were known to have been performed by the Queen's Men. At the time of writing, six of the nine plays have been published on the website, including *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* which is published in both the original spelling of the 1598 quarto and a modernised version of the text. The edition contains a full introduction by Mathew Martin which offers insight into the context of the play and its performance. The topics from old debates are brought forth and explained simply with as much commitment as should be expected for these areas. Sources are discussed briefly and matter of factly and the matter of genre, which Clare and Oberer have previously examined, is approached in an inquisitive and helpful manner that does not immediately use the medley genre of the play as a means to discredit it as a low mongrel work.⁴² Instead, Martin stresses that a dismissive approach to the play is harmful, and even notes that criticism linking *Famous Victories* to Shakespeare's work can be helpful, '[i]f the impulse to assert Shakespeare's superior art is set aside, though, comparisons between the plays can

⁴¹ *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth, Performing the Queen's Men*, dir. Peter Cockett, University of Toronto, 2007, DVD.

⁴² Indeed it has been noted by Grene that this complaint is more likely to come from Sidney's neo-classical sensibilities and that it was not a typical reaction to this genre, suggesting that it 'probably caused their audience no problems' suggesting that this complaint is based more in modern tastes than contemporary ones; Grene, *Serial History Plays*, p.192.

be instructive'.⁴³ Martin finishes the introduction with a reflective account of the modern performance and once again highlights the importance of the Queen's Men as a visual theatre troupe. In this way he reminds the reader that it was the performance and staging by the Queen's Men that made up for the lack of poetry in their earlier plays as they included visual spectacle, clowning and interacted with their audience to build excitement.

Although infrequent, and all too brief where it appears, the criticism surrounding *Famous Victories* has seen great growth and development over the years which has only rapidly improved and journeyed towards creating a collection of criticism that does not treat the text as a mere source play or worthless bad quarto. Growing academic interest in the Queen's Men provides a starting place for criticism to evolve and appreciate the actors' repertoire and, with it, provides more resources and exposure for their plays. This allows them to gain more recognition as literary works and, in the case of *Famous Victories*, discourage text-only readings of the play that dismiss it based on the quality of the prose instead of imagining the staging or offering a critical reading of its structure and themes. Whilst these pieces of criticism on *Famous Victories* denotes a positive trend in thoughtful research towards the play, the topic is only being discussed in introductions, book chapters and articles without the full scope to offer a full and thorough discussion of the play and its significance. Appreciating this work based on its own merits is certainly a positive step; however, a crucial point of academic interest that was mentioned only in passing by the older critics, Hopskinson and Wells, still awaits further discussion: the significance of *Famous Victories* as the first example of the history genre. Martin

⁴³ Matthew Martin, 'Introduction', *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth, Queen's Men Editions* (2010)
[Available:
<http://qme.internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Annex/Texts/FV/intro/GenIntro/section/Famous%20Victories%20and%20Shakespeare> , Accessed on: 15/05/2017]

laments the fact that, '[t]he play, then, stands at the beginning of an impressive dramatic tradition that includes the plays for which it is often treated as merely the source.'⁴⁴ However, recent developments in the study of the play have challenged this idea to examine it as a literary work in its own right, even if the importance of the play as the seminal example of such a popular genre has been overlooked.

This thesis aims to build on the existing framework of criticism that is slowly developing around *Famous Victories*, and provide a detailed study of the text as the first example of the English history play on the commercial stage. To do so I will examine the structure of the play with reference to four key themes that I have identified as particularly prominent throughout the text: these are youth, social hierarchy, masculinity and the performance of identity. Some discussion of social class and the question of identity in *Famous Victories* has been started by Oberer and Nichols respectively in their articles, whilst *Famous Victories'* treatment and portrayal of history has also been examined by Walsh, Nichols and Clare. These essays will provide a starting point for the discussion of its themes and will be referred to throughout the course of this thesis. This thesis will undertake a New Historical reading of *Famous Victories* to understand the work within the contexts of its own time period and to better understand the issues and events that influenced the creation of the history play genre. To do so, I will examine the *Famous Victories'* place in dramatic literature and observe how it developed from the last Tudor remnants of the medieval morality play.

Through an examination of *Famous Victories'* evolution from this genre, I will demonstrate how the playwright of *Famous Victories* was able to use history in a similar way to its morality play predecessors, which were used to grant legitimacy

⁴⁴ Ibid.

to the new Protestant religion. History is always constructed, and the chronicle texts held a bias to glorify the acts of kings and the nobility whilst ignoring marginalised groups. G.K. Hunter notes that the chronicles were constructed with the hopes of arranging events and accounts to make an 'explanatory connection'.⁴⁵ Hunter continues that the playwright, when creating the history play, 'had to achieve his design by means of rigorous exclusion and reshaping'.⁴⁶ Although Hunter refers to two different processes here, it should be noted that there is a similarity between the two as both the chronicler and playwright are selective in their choice of sources and both are working to construct a linear narrative from these. Although one is ultimately considered more factual than the other, it should be noted that both processes reveal that history is manmade and constructed according to the desires of the writer. The staging of a history play, then, allowed for the reclamation of the nation's history which could be rewritten to include these groups once again. However, when history is the subject of a play that is half informed by the chronicles and half formed by the playwright's own imagination, the reverence of historical accuracy is non-existent and the historical scenes may be played with anachronistically to include the contemporary details of the playwright's own society. Andrew James Harley notes that history is not about historical accuracy, but about our own present time and, in spite of its historical material, *Famous Victories* must be considered first, and foremost, an Elizabethan play.⁴⁷ As such, while it can be seen that the history play allows for history to be 'corrected' by reintroducing members of the lower social tiers back into the history books, it also allows for the anachronist inclusion of emergent groups and identities within the past as well. By

⁴⁵ G.K. Hunter, *English Drama 1586-1642* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 160.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Andrew James Harley, 'Page and Stage Again: Rethinking Renaissance Character Phenomenologically', in *New Directions in Renaissance Drama and Performance Studies*, ed. Sarah Werner (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 77-93 (p. 93).

doing this the playwright is able to invent a tradition and set a historical precedent for such identities within his society, granting them a fictional legitimacy. Just as the weighty tomes of chronicles were constructed to justify the dominant ideologies of the times, the humble history play put history in the hands of the people and allowed them to subtly rewrite and reclaim their own past in a way that could challenge the very ideologies that the chronicles upheld.

In order to fully discuss and analyse how this is achieved in the first example of the English history play, this thesis will be divided into five chapters: the first chapter to explore the history and development of the chronicle play with the remaining four chapters dedicated to each of the key themes of *Famous Victories* that I have identified and the emergent and marginalised identities represented by each of these.

The first chapter will focus on the turning point in Renaissance religious and literary culture. It will argue that the history play genre evolved from the religious miracle and morality plays of the medieval period. In this chapter I select two late morality plays that were composed during Henry VIII's reign, *Magnyfycence* (c. 1519-20) and *King Johan* (c.1538), which I argue had a great structural impact on how drama developed to allow for the history play to emerge. As *King Johan* contains a historical figure, it could be considered the first example of a chronicle play instead of *Famous Victories*, indeed within the Penguin *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Theory* J.A. Cuddon cites *King Johan* as the very first example of this genre in his entry for the chronicle play.⁴⁸ This chapter provides a classification of the history play genre and uses this to build an argument to support previous

⁴⁸ J.A. Cuddon, *Dictionary of Literary Terms & Literary Theory* (London: Penguin, 1999), p. 136.

academics' claims that *Famous Victories* is indeed the first history play, while suggesting reasons for the appearance and purpose of the genre at this time.

The second chapter of this thesis is concerned with the theme of social hierarchy and depictions of 'popular' characters and their culture. This chapter argues that *Famous Victories* created an accessible history for the common man that was affordable to witness and did not require literacy skills to enjoy. Further to this, *Famous Victories* includes the everyday lives of the labourers within this historic period and alternates their scenes with those of the nobility providing them with a voice and representation from within this living history book. The inclusion of labouring characters in a society that largely tended to ignore them is not the only subversive action of this play, and I will offer a Marxist reading of this work to examine how the subplot satirises the romanticising of the lives of the lower tiers of society. In particular I will be arguing that the subplot of *Famous Victories* was a reaction to the traditional 'King and Commoner Encounter' ballads which transform Derick into a comic reflection of Henry V in the second half of the play to critique the actions of the nobility by proxy.

The third chapter of this thesis is concerned with depictions of rebellious young men in *Famous Victories* and how and why Prince Henry's rash and troublesome youth might have been depicted in this way. This chapter will note the Elizabethan concept of night-walking as a concerning behaviour of young men and the fears towards their excessive and quarrelsome nature. I will argue that this particular behaviour of the Elizabethan youth was fixed to the heroic character of Henry V to provide legitimisation and hope; as the prince can be seen to grow and learn self-control, his previous transgressions are soon forgotten as the troublesome youth matures into the legendary figure from the history books. In this chapter I will

compare the characterisation of Prince Henry to that of Shakespeare's Prince Hal, to challenge the idea that has appeared in *Famous Victories*' criticism that Prince Henry is a character who carries far more transgressive traits than Shakespeare's hero, and compare how each character grows out of the folly of their youth.

The fourth chapter of this thesis will focus on the role of gender within this history play. It is noteworthy that even with this 'accessible' history the role and importance of female historical figures is actually reduced to two characters: the cobbler's wife, a comedic figure, and the Princess Katherine, the ultimate goal for Henry V to win in his negotiations with France. This chapter will employ Timothy Francisco's description of the evolution of acceptable masculinity through the ages. Francisco identifies three major stages of development in the shifting attitudes towards the perceived ideal state of masculinity which was first symbolised by the warrior, the soldier and, finally, the courtier, as society evolved. I will argue that Henry V can be seen to progress through each of these stages in turn throughout the course of the play as he learns the discipline of the soldier in war and then must adapt to learn the restrained and artful nature of the courtier that was exemplified in Elizabethan society. By the play's end he must prove that he has reached this final stage of development by successfully wooing Katherine and securing a promise of marriage. By successfully transforming himself into the figure of an Elizabethan gentleman, the character of Henry V provides an example of positive representation for this emergent mode of identity and thus grants it legitimacy.

Finally, the fifth chapter of this thesis will examine the role of theatricality and the performance of identity within the play. Self-fashioning, although an old idea that was praised in the classical tradition, had been viewed with suspicion by the Catholic Church that valued an honest singularity of spirit over the deceit of

doubleness. Contemporary reactions to doubleness and self-fashioning will be analysed in the light of anti-theatrical discourse which discouraged the masking of one's true self. The ideologies surrounding identity within the play will be analysed and I will demonstrate that the character of Henry V, particularly within the second half of the play, is best understood as an actor who employs the theatricality of rule to his advantage and understands the importance of performance within the court. Although Henry may mature throughout the course of the play, he is still clearly coded to be the same character, a fact that is reflected in the thematic mirroring of the sub-plot and general consistencies of his character. Henry V is every bit the actor within *Famous Victories* and, as such, transposing these qualities onto an already well-liked and famed historical figure, offers a chance to alleviate the stigma towards theatricality and the self-fashioning of an external identity.

Using this structure I will provide a close reading of the play that will take the contexts of its Elizabethan period into consideration and maintain a mindfulness of its literary significance as the first history play. In doing this I will put forth an argument for why this play developed into a genre that would only increase in popularity during the Elizabethan era. With the luxury of a larger word count than previous articles or introductory notes can afford, this research is able to cover a greater scope, and is able to track how the history genre developed and what elements of the morality play tradition survived into this first history play, including the elements that were unique to the genre. Whilst previous studies have briefly discussed how history and the process of recording the past is represented on the stage, this thesis will not focus as much attention on whose chronicle was adapted, or even which playwright penned the play, but will instead discuss how this history was appropriated for the popular stage. This study's primary interest will thus be

concerned not with the playwright's adherence to the chronicles, but rather their departure from them to dress the heroic figure of Henry V with Elizabethan identities of the night-walking youth, the new Elizabethan courtier and the actor himself.

Chapter One

Secular Miracles: The Birth and Evolution of the English History Play

The English history play is a well-known and respected genre of Renaissance drama, which has been the focus of much academic research and writing, the majority of which ‘naturally’ surround William Shakespeare’s own plays.⁴⁹ Indeed, Shakespeare’s first folio has been extremely useful in identifying the genres of both his plays and those of other playwrights as each example of his work is clearly identified as either Comedies, Tragedies or Histories, although some of these would be contested by critics later. Works by other playwrights were not always so clearly categorised in their own time, which has led to disagreement between modern critics who are unable to settle on one definitive definition of the English history play, which plays should be included in the canon or when it began.⁵⁰ *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* (c.1586) is an Elizabethan history play that follows the mischievous actions of the young Prince Henry as he robs his father’s tax receivers with his rowdy men, disrespects the authority of the Chief Justice and finally repents as he is reconciled with his father. Alongside this, John Cobbler befriends Derick the Clown and the two of them go to war together when the newly crowned Henry V rejects his previous companions and turns his attention to wars in France, winning the day and claiming Princess Katherine’s hand in marriage as part of the negotiations. Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean note that ‘[t]he date of *The Famous Victories of Henry V* is important, for it may be the earliest of extant English

⁴⁹ See Nicholas Grene’s *Shakespeare’s Serial History* (2002); Michael Hattaway’s *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare’s History Plays* (2002); Graham Holderness’s *Shakespeare’s History Plays: ‘Richard II’ to ‘Henry V’* (1992); R.J.C. Watt’s *Shakespeare’s History Plays* (2002); and for examples.

⁵⁰ For example, Irving Ribner claims that the term ‘history play’ did not exist in the Elizabethan era with little distinction between the genres of Tragedy and History. Other critics who offer conflicting definitions for the history play will be discussed later in this chapter.

history plays among the professional companies'.⁵¹ The title page of *Famous Victories* states under the title 'As it was plaide by the Queenes Maiesties Players'⁵² meaning that the play must have been written and performed before the early 1590s when the company disbanded. A famous anecdote from *Tarlton's Jests* (1638) describes the antics of Richard Tarlton, a member of the Queen's Men, in 'a Play of Henry the fift', which is extremely likely to be *Famous Victories*.⁵³ This account not only confirms that Tarlton performed in this play, but it also notes that William Knell, the Queen's Men's famous character actor, played Prince Henry. As Knell died prematurely in a bar brawl on 13th June 1587,⁵⁴ this dates public performances of the play between 1583-1587, earlier than its nearest competitor, *Edmond Ironside* (c.1588).⁵⁵ This means that if *Famous Victories* was a solid example of an Elizabethan history play it would secure its place as the first play of the history genre. Yet, while a small number of critics acknowledge the play's status as the first English history play,⁵⁶ it is very often left out of the conversation altogether, receiving only a fleeting mention in works dedicated to the development of Renaissance drama, such as Peter Happé's *English Drama Before Shakespeare*, Teresa Grant and Barbara Ravelhofer's *English Historical Drama, 1500-1660: Forms Outside the Canon* and Eric Sterling's *The Movement Towards Subversion: The English history play from Skelton to Shakespeare*.

⁵¹ Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and Their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 89.

⁵² Anon., *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, (London, 1598; STC: 13072), sig. A1r.

⁵³ Anon., *Tarlton's Jests*, ed. John Haviland (London, 1638; STC: 23684), sig. C2v.

⁵⁴ Peter Thomson, 'Knell, William (d. 1587)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15705, Accessed on: 20 May 2014]

⁵⁵ *Edmond Ironside*, or *War Have Made All Friends* is an anonymous, unpublished manuscript written on the life of Edmund II and commonly attributed to Shakespeare. As Eleanore Boswell notes, the nature of the manuscript makes it extremely difficult to date; however, most agree with E.B. Everitt and Eric Sams's date of 1588.

⁵⁶ For example this is noted by Larry S. Champion in "'What Prerogatiues Meanes": Perspective and Political Ideology in *The Famous Victories of Henry V*", Janet Clare in 'Medley History: *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth to Henry V*' and Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean in *The Queen's Men and their Plays*.

This chapter will explore the origins of the English history play, beginning with late medieval contenders to observe how the genre evolved, shifting from primarily religious concerns to focus on political themes and question the very nature of history itself. Taking *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* as the first English history play, I will suggest why this is the case by looking at the morality and miracle plays that *Famous Victories* borrowed from and how it separated away from these. In order to do so I will be working closely with Sidney M. Clarke's *The Miracle Play in England: An Account of the Early Religious Drama* and Robert Potter's *The English Morality Play: Origins, History and Influence of a Dramatic Tradition* to analyse this medieval religious drama, as well as Benjamin Griffin's important article 'The Birth of the History Play: Saint, Sacrifice, and Reformation'. The works of historians John Burrow and Alexandra Walsham are particularly significant and I will be referring to these in relation to the historical context of the history play. Using these critics I will demonstrate why John Skelton's *Magnyfycence* (c.1517) and John Bale's *King Johan* (c.1538) may not be considered as examples of the English history play and, by doing so I will trace the evolution of late medieval religious drama into a new genre that was distinctive of the Elizabethan era.

Legendary History

Before the question of 'How did the first English history play genre begin?' is posed, we must first ask, 'What is an English history play?' Critics have often managed to contradict each other in their attempts to select suitable criteria; Dermot Cavanagh,

for example, claims that the only true history plays were those written by Shakespeare himself and that ‘any substantive concept of the genre originates with his work.’⁵⁷ Cavanagh’s understanding of the genre proves to be too narrow, excluding such classic examples of the history play as Christopher Marlowe’s *Edward II* (c.1592) and the anonymous *Edward III* (c.1593). However, some definitions prove to be too broad, for example, Janette Dillon considers any political play, even allegories on present or future events, to be considered a part of the genre.⁵⁸ In between such extremes lies uncertainty, as Teresa Grant and Barbara Ravelhofer attempt to describe the genre by noting the traditional association between the history plays and warfare; however, they find that they must also acknowledge that the exploration of morality is just as important to the genre.⁵⁹ Grant and Ravelhofer question if ‘chronicle play’ and ‘history play’ are interchangeable terms,⁶⁰ whereas J.A. Cuddon’s *Dictionary of Literary Terms & Literary Theory* provides this definition under the heading ‘Chronicle Play’, ‘[a]lso known as a history play, and therefore based on recorded history rather than on myth or legend.’⁶¹ Nevertheless, this definition comes the closest to a satisfying definition, although the vagueness of ‘recorded history’ raises a new question: What classifies as ‘history’ in this context?

‘What is history?’, is the first question Dominique Goy-Blanquet poses in her introduction to *Shakespeare’s Early History Plays*, although, ‘What did ‘history’

⁵⁷ Dermot Cavanagh, *Language and Politics in the Sixteenth Century History Play* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), p. 1.

⁵⁸ Janette Dillon, ‘The Early Tudor History Play’, in *English Historical Drama, 1500-1600: Forms Outside the Canon*, eds. Teresa Grant and Barbara Ravelhofer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 32-57 (pp. 33-34).

⁵⁹ Teresa Grant, Barbara Ravelhofer, ‘Introduction’, *Ibid.*, pp.1-31 (p. 14).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶¹ J.A. Cuddon, *Dictionary of Literary of Terms & Literary Theory*, ed. J.A. Cuddon (London: Penguin, 1999), p.136.

mean in Renaissance England?’ may be a more accurate question for her answer.⁶²

Goy-Blanquet tracks the progress of the Reformation alongside the people’s growing freedom from oppressive religious ideology, as the country moved towards more individual thought and a desire for evidence to prove knowledge.⁶³ Goy-Blanquet’s observation, however, is not a universally accepted one and John Burrow and Alexandra Walsham both disagree with this reading of history. Walsham contests that such a straightforward and critical approach to history developed at this time, and Burrow notes that legal humanism, which began to question and regulate the integrity of history, would not reach England until the seventeenth century.⁶⁴ Indeed G.K. Hunter also notes that ‘the word “history” as it appears in Elizabethan play titles shows us that the age had no clear generic definition in mind’, and even suggests that at this time that the term history may have been interchangeable with ‘story’.⁶⁵ While Walsham’s observation that history throughout the early modern era, and indeed our own time, is far from unbiased, there are signs of historical development during the Tudor period, although not quite as refined as Goy-Blanquet describes. One significant example of such a development can be found in the critiques of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *The History of the Kings of Britain* (c.1136) that emerged at this time. Containing descriptions of the legendary King Arthur’s reign, Monmouth’s text had been previously accepted as having a historical authority; however, as Burrow notes, Tudor historians began to doubt its reliability as a source, if it had existed at all:

⁶² Dominique Goy-Blanquet, *Shakespeare’s Early History Plays: From Chronicle to Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 8.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

⁶⁴ Alexandra Walsham, ‘History, Memory, and the English Reformation’, *Historical Journal*, 55 (2012), 899-938 (p. 907); John Burrow, *A History of Histories* (London: Penguin, 2009), p. 313.

⁶⁵ G.K. Hunter, *English Drama 1586-1642: The Age of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 155.

William of Newburgh, half a century after Geoffrey, said that *The History of the Kings of Britain* was all made up, “either from an inordinate love of lying or for the sake of pleasing the Britons”.⁶⁶

Newburgh was not the only sceptic of Monmouth’s work, and other Tudor historians, such as Polydore Vergil, questioned the authenticity of the account. As William J. Connell notes, Vergil ‘showed a sophisticated critical intelligence in his researches’ especially in ‘[h]is destructive analysis of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and in particular his denial of the historicity of King Arthur’.⁶⁷ However, while Newburgh and Vergil were investigating the integrity of history, a desire for these ‘historical’ legends persisted; John Leland replied to Vergil’s ‘fond fables’ which dismiss ‘the chiefest ornament of Brittain’ with his own work to provide evidence for King Arthur’s reign, *Assertio inclytissimi Arturii regis Britanniae* (1544).⁶⁸ Leland, however, was not exceptional in this case and, in spite of these emerging perspectives, Arthur remained England’s great heroic king.⁶⁹

As can be seen, the lines between history and legend were blurred, and Cuddon’s definition fails to take this into account. It would seem, then, that the more accurate term for these plays is, perhaps, ‘chronicle play’, considering that they were based on the popular chronicles, with their grand speeches and spectacle, instead of the more accurate accounts of Vergil. These chronicles would describe the history of England through the rule of each king, whether real or fictional. Raphael Holinshed’s *The Firste Volyume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande* (1577) recorded the legendary King Leir’s reign as earnestly as Henry V’s, and, even in

⁶⁶ Burrow, *A History of Histories*, p. 238.

⁶⁷ William J. Connell, ‘Vergil, Polydore (c.1470–1555)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28224>, Accessed on: 8 June 2014].

⁶⁸ John Leland, *A learned and true assertion of the original life, actes, and death of the most noble, valiant, and renowned Prince Arhure, King of great Brittain*, trans. Richard Robinson (London, 1582; STC: 15441), sig. C1r.

⁶⁹ Burrow, *A History of Histories*, p. 231.

their treatment of known historical kings, the chronicles contained much myth and invention. Such chronicles often began with a list of previous chronicles that had served as source material for their text. Select passages from these sources were replicated word for word within the work, which served as an amalgamation of the recorded tales and events concerning each king, rather than providing a critical analysis of original source material and evidence.⁷⁰

It must then be asked that when such chronicles were considered historical sources, could the religious medieval plays depicting biblical miracles and saints be considered histories also? Benjamin Griffin implies that the Bible itself could be considered a 'chronicle source' when he suggests that the numerous mystery plays depicting Saint Thomas Becket's story were technically England's first history plays.⁷¹ Indeed the chronicles of the Early Middle Ages began with a preface discussing universal history, including biblical events. The Reformation and its aftermath, however, would be an extremely significant event that would mark a move towards a more secular, national history as England experienced drastic changes to its religious and political landscape. As will be demonstrated later in this chapter, the more secular tone was an extremely significant and defining feature of the Elizabethan history play, by creating a genre where its audience was able to learn about their own past, identity and politics, albeit with mythical details from the chronicles to keep them entertaining. Therefore, for the purposes of this thesis, plays considered to be a part of the English history play genre will be those that centre on a historic period of time within England's past, i.e. not set during the reign of the current monarch. They must also portray a number of real people or events alongside

⁷⁰ It can be seen that Holinshed attempts some analysis of the chronicle sources, suggesting where legends may be fictional but such analysis is sparse within the text.

⁷¹ Benjamin Griffin, 'The Birth of the History Play: Saint, Sacrifice, and Reformation', in *SEL: Studies in English Literature*, 39 (1999), 217-237 (pp. 222-3).

fictional invention or display some use of artistic licence, contain political themes or intentions and be heavily inspired by chronicle or historical sources. Therefore this thesis will exclude plays based on true events which do not have historic settings (*Arden of Faversham* (c.1590), *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621), *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (c.1605)), plays adapted from chronicle tales and legends where the main characters are fictional, (*King Lear* (c.1605), *The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington* (1598), *Nobody and Somebody* (c.1605)) and history plays that are not set in England (*The Scottish History of James the Fourth* (c.1590), *The Valiant Welshman* (c.1611), *The Courageous Turk* (1619)).

Medieval Beginnings

To understand the origins of the history play it is first necessary to examine the plays that provided the foundation for this genre; therefore, our search must begin in the late medieval era. Sidney M. Clarke begins *The Miracle Play in England: An Account of the Early Religious Drama* with the observation that ‘the dramas of the world, both ancient and modern, have originated in the religious observances of the people among whom they existed.’⁷² As Clarke continues, Christianity had suppressed the dramatic arts since the birth of the religion.⁷³ However, beginning in the ninth century, the Church came to rely upon drama as a tool to engage with the community and depict biblical passages which would have been unfamiliar to the majority.⁷⁴ To this extent they were successful; however, by the thirteenth century the Church had

⁷² Sidney M. Clarke, *The Miracle Play in England: An Account of the Early Religious Drama* (New York: Haskell House, 1964), p. 1.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷⁴ The medieval Bible was inaccessible to the common people, as were other medieval texts, due to their high cost, low literacy rates, but, in particular, because church services and the text of the Bible itself were written and read in Latin.

lost control of their device and the laity and guilds took over the production of the religious plays in English towns.⁷⁵ These plays would come to be known as miracle plays and, along with mystery and morality plays, made up the three key genres of medieval drama.⁷⁶ All three medieval genres can be seen to provide some foundation for the beginnings of the history play. As Robert Potter notes ‘[t]he great majority of surviving English medieval plays are dramatizations of historical events’ and Benjamin Griffin dedicates a journal article to emphasising the impact of the miracle and mystery plays in response to what he believes to be the popular critical interpretation that the morality plays were solely responsible for the creation of the history play genre.⁷⁷ Griffin argues that, like the Elizabethan histories, the action of miracle and mystery plays are taken from source material and that they break Aristotle’s unity of time, place and action:

Both tend to be loose and rambling, having a tendency toward expansiveness and segmentation that would have staggered Aristotle, let alone his interpreters; taking broad sweeps of time and place that earnestly challenge the ability of the playwrights to create a sense of “beginning” and “ending”.⁷⁸

Just as a mystery play breaks Aristotle’s unities of time and place by ambitiously depicting a lifetime on the stage with scenes set in different locations, or a miracle play will introduce new subplots to a biblical parable, so does an Elizabethan history play often span a reign, or several reigns, with action set in various countries and plots and subplots operating simultaneously. While each of these genres break Aristotle’s laws of unity in the same way and rely on source material for the action,

⁷⁵ Clarke, *The Miracle Play in England*, p. 15.

⁷⁶ Medieval miracle plays re-enacted biblical tales and parables, mystery plays depicted a condensed dramatization of the lives of Catholic saints and morality plays taught its audience moral lessons to advocate Christian morality.

⁷⁷ Robert Potter, *The English Morality Play: Origins, History and Influences of a Dramatic Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1975), p. 6; Griffin, ‘The Birth of the History Play’, p. 225.

⁷⁸ Griffin, ‘The Birth of the History Play’, p. 226.

it must be noted that these similarities also apply to plays from other genres as well.⁷⁹

The most convincing case put forward is a brief observation by Andrew W. Taylor that invites the reader to consider that the Bible itself was used as a chronicle by medieval dramatists.⁸⁰ This is a crucial point, and a fact that previously had only been implied by critics such as Griffin, is stated to be an important fact by Taylor. However, Taylor's observation is a stronger one than he demonstrates. While Taylor observes that both genres use a chronicle of sorts, he fails to note that these sources are utilised in very similar ways. Clarke's work collects surviving plot, staging and performance details of the known plays from the miracle cycles, allowing an insight into how this drama operated. On religious festival days, for example Corpus Christi, the various guilds of the town would produce a biblical story on a portable stage that would travel on a circuit throughout the town.⁸¹ Despite their original religious purpose, the miracle plays maintained a careful balance between original invention and a faithful retelling of key scenes from their source. One example, Clarke notes from the *Chester cycle*, is the exaggerated disobedient actions of Noah's wife who refused to enter the ark without her gossip friends, an element that was not contained within the original biblical story.⁸² Such divergences from the original source tales are extremely frequent in the history plays, and numerous examples may be found in *Famous Victories*. Largely based on the chronicle works of Edward Hall and John

⁷⁹ William Shakespeare's comedy *The Taming of the Shrew* breaks all three of Aristotle's unities and is based on a number of sources including George Gascoigne's *Supposes*.

⁸⁰ Andrew W. Taylor, 'The Reformation of History in John Bale's Biblical Dramas', in *English Historical Drama, 1500-1600: Forms Outside the Canon*, eds. Teresa Grant and Barbara Ravelhofer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 58-97 (p. 62).

⁸¹ Clarke, *The Miracle Play in England*, p. 26, 64.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 36.

Stow the playwright picks scenes from both to adapt, some with great accuracy that go so far as to lift sections of dialogue or speeches directly from the chronicle.⁸³

Other scenes inspired by the chronicle may contain a large element of invention on the playwright's part, such as the redemption scene of *Famous Victories* which originates from a tale related by Holinshed in *Chronicles*. In Holinshed's account the prince gains an audience with his sick father to redeem his good name and to offer the king a chance to kill him for his reported behaviour if it would satisfy him. Both depictions carry the same purpose, have similar structures and retell the same story; however, there are clear differences between the two. In Holinshed's account the court welcomes Prince Henry's men:

...where he being entred into the Hall, not one of his companie darst once aduauunce himselfe further than the fire in the same Hall, notwithstanding they were earnestly requested by the Lordes to come higher: but they regarding what they had in comandement of the prince, woulde nout presume to do in any thing contrary therunto.⁸⁴

This detail is important because it demonstrates the Prince's adherence to court etiquette and respect for his father, while his companions understand to obey the prince and their place within the social hierarchy. Prince Henry's companions in *Famous Victories*, however, do not show such an understanding of their place. Ned threatens to decapitate a Porter and promises that 'I will write him in my Tables, for so soone as I/ am made Lord chiefe Iustice, I wil put him out of his Of-/fice',⁸⁵ swiftly demonstrating the ambitious, reaching nature of Prince Henry's men. This Prince Henry behaves very differently from the prince described in the chronicle as he argues against the wishes of the lords and the king demanding, 'Why I must needs

⁸³ For example, compare Prince Henry's speech on the gift of tennis balls in *Famous Victories* and Hall's account to observe the same wordplay and jests in each.

⁸⁴ Raphael Holinshed, *The Firste Volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande* (London, 1577; STC: 13568), sig. Aaa4v.

⁸⁵ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. C2r.

have them with me'.⁸⁶ Prince Henry's disobedience is further exaggerated as the playwright altered the reason for the Prince's meeting with his father. In Holinshed's chronicle, Prince Henry's name has been slandered with rumours concerning a plot to gain the crown for himself all the sooner. The Prince then travels to the court in order to clear his name and redeem himself. In *Famous Victories*, however, the Prince is summoned to account for his riotous behaviour and, before meeting his father with an ominous dagger, boasts that 'the breath shall be no/ sooner out of his mouth, but I wil clap/ the Crewne on my head'.⁸⁷ Much like the plays from the *Chester Cycle*, here the disobedient element of the famed figure is exaggerated to create new tensions; however, despite changes from the source material, both plays return to their sources' narrative by the scene's end. Noah's wife gets into the ark whilst the sinners drown, and Prince Henry plans to reform his behaviour as the dagger is soon forgotten once more.⁸⁸

Other similar divergences from the original source material occur in both the medieval miracle plays and *Famous Victories*.⁸⁹ However, these medieval plays also set a precedent for complete departures from the 'historical' source material to include comic scenes. Despite the sobriety of the source, Clarke notes that the miracle plays would include comic scenes with popular characters in between the grand biblical events. The shepherds' encounter on Christmas Eve in the *Wakefield cycle* is transformed from a sober religious celebration into, what Clarke describes as, the first farce in the English language: '[i]ndeed, there is but little reverence or feeling in the plays, their feature is the great freedom from restraint, and the

⁸⁶ Ibid., sig. C2v.

⁸⁷ Ibid., sig. C1v.

⁸⁸ The role of the irresponsible, neglectful prince will be explored in the fourth chapter of this thesis.

⁸⁹ Variations occur during Henry IV's death scene, the Dauphin's negotiations and the precautions put in place to defend against Scotland during the French campaign.

boisterousness of the humour'.⁹⁰ Before the angels appear to the shepherds, a thief, Mak, steals one of their sheep while they are asleep. He brings the sheep back home to his wife, where they disguise it as a baby in a cot to hide the evidence of his crime. The farce then plays out as the shepherds awaken and arrive at Mak's house to look for the stolen sheep. The guilty shepherd and his wife thus have to invent various excuses to keep the shepherds from their stolen prize before their deception is revealed and the shepherds return to the hill so that the angels may appear to them. *Famous Victories* appears to take inspiration from this tradition as the play also includes fictional popular characters which serve a comic function. Derick and John Cobbler both act out a comic version of a historical scene they witness, humorously outwit a French soldier and plan to return home safely by following York's funeral procession back to England, with hopes to secure cake and drink in the process. The way both plays use their sources are too similar to be put down to pure coincidence, suggesting the influence that the miracle plays had on narrative structure and use of, or divergences from, the source material in the early history plays. Nicholas Grene, Philip Schwyzer and Eric Sterling, amongst others, look to the morality plays as the beginning of the genre and suggest that the two later plays, Skelton's *Magnyfycence* and Bale's *King Johan*, paved the way to the first English history play, if they were not the first examples themselves.⁹¹

Magnyfycence is a play of the morality tradition which takes place within a court setting. The play contains many characters that Paula Neuss claims an audience would understand as representations of contemporary political figures, and Neuss

⁹⁰ Clarke, *The Miracle Play in England*, p. 28.

⁹¹ Nicholas Grene, *Shakespeare's Serial History Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 192; Philip Schwyzer, 'Paranoid History: John Bale's *King Johan*', in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama*, eds. Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 499-514 (p. 499); Eric Sterling, *The Movement Towards Subversion: The English History Play from Skelton to Shakespeare* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1996), p. ix.

supports the argument that *Magnyfycence* is a satire based on the figure of Thomas Wolsey.⁹² Similar to the medieval morality plays, *Magnyfycence* contains various personifications of vices and virtues as characters within the play, delivering their philosophies and intentions in many stanzas of verse. The play concerns a young king who selects the virtues of Felicity and Liberty as his advisors, provided that he rules them with the wisdom of the virtue Measure. After deciding upon this, a multitude of vices arrive, each disguised as a virtue, and one by one they are accepted as advisors, giving them the influence to turn the prince against Measure. In the absence of Measure the king is brought to financial ruin by his false advisors and considers suicide before Good Hope arrives to remind him that he need only repent and confess to God, which the king does and is saved. The action of the play runs continuously with one character always remaining on the stage and the plot develops slowly with the titular *Magnyfycence* absent for the majority of the action. Until the moment of *Magnyfycence*'s ruin the play concerns itself with introducing each of the vices, their squabbles and plots to separate the Prince from the valuable virtue, Measure, by gaining his trust for themselves. From this loose structure it can be seen that while *Magnyfycence* contains divergences from the usual tropes of the morality play, it still fits too comfortably within the tradition to be considered a history play in its own right. These divergences are particularly important and some suggest influences that would begin to shape the evolution of the history play, for example the, then novel, court setting and characters, who are clearly intended to be members of nobility, and the counsel, reflected the growing national interest of the history chronicles, as well as the ultimate religious and political messages. *Magnyfycence* is known to have been performed in the royal court before Henry VIII, and the titular

⁹² Paula Neuss, 'Introduction', in *Magnificence*, ed. Paula Neuss (Manchester: Manchester Press, 1980), pp. 32-33.

character is specifically created for the king to identify with and to encourage him to project himself into the moral tale of how fickleness and mindless spending can ruin a man.⁹³ Whilst the specific identities of the various vices and virtues may be debated, what is clearly apparent are the parallels between the play's plot and events in the recent past, for example Magnyfycence's dismissal of Measure comes to represent Henry VIII's dismissal of his older, trusted advisors for ones who were younger and seen to be more reckless. On the surface *Magnyfycence* appears to be a typical Catholic morality play, only serving to encourage full engagement within the Catholic faith; however, it specifically contains real people and actual events, although they are veiled in the coded language of the drama.

While some of the events referenced in this play are past events, *Magnyfycence* cannot be called a history play in its own right. These events are from a very recent past which was not to be considered historical when it was written, and the play uses the 'fictional' character of Magnyfycence to represent one who was very much alive and would have been a part of the audience. As the play is constructed to school this real figure in a lesson on morals and government, it looks forward to the future as well, demonstrating the poverty that such foolish actions will eventually lead to, as well as the possible future of redemption if measured council members are selected. Skelton thus begins in the past but his focus is very much on correcting the present by portraying a selection of possible futures; however, as the past is only dealt with briefly, and allusively at best, *Magnyfycence* cannot be classed as a history play. *Magnyfycence* may look towards the future, however, this is not the play's primary concern. As Potter notes in his discussion on the morality play tradition, '[t]he speaker emphasises that the events are contemporary rather than

⁹³ Ibid., p. 42.

historical – they are occurring (as indeed they were, on stage) here and now.’⁹⁴

Magnyfycence may look at both the past and the future, but its true concern is the present. The play makes the audience aware that the events that are currently being performed on the stage are currently occurring in their own time (otherwise the performance would be unnecessary) and that it is in the present that action must be inspired and taken to ensure the optimistic ending that the play presents. This action that the playwright wishes to inspire his audience to take is a specific religious act: confession.

The morality play builds its drama, following many of Aristotle’s laws of tragedy with *Magnyfycence*’s actions creating *peripeteia*, swiftly followed by a moment of *anagnorisis* and leading to suffering in poverty whilst rapidly heading towards the catastrophe as Mischief arrives with a halter and dagger to allow *Magnyfycence* to end his life.⁹⁵ As the king raises the dagger to himself, *Magnyfycence* appears to follow the traditional structure of Greek tragedy by many of Aristotle’s laws from *Poetics*; however this is not the case. At the moment the audience might anticipate *Magnyfycence*’s death, Good Hope interrupts to preach to *Magnyfycence*, saving the hero and essentially switching the genre of the play to a celebration and enforcement of Christian ideology. Without the act of confession and repentance, this play might have been just another tragedy, yet it is Catholic ideology that saves the day. As the suffering of the king has been building over many dialogues and soliloquies, the appearance of Good Hope interrupts the cathartic

⁹⁴ Potter, *The English Morality Play*, p. 32.

⁹⁵ *Peripeteia*, *anagnorisis* and catastrophe are all terms defined by Aristotle in *Poetics* to describe the structure of drama. *Peripeteia* is used to describe a reversal of fortunes, often a fall from prosperity to devastation which, ideally, should occur alongside *anagnorisis*, a moment when ignorance is cast off as a character recognises the truth. The *catastrophe* is the tragic unravelling of the plot, often after the climax of the play.

‘ritual’ to allow the audience release with a new type of relief that is more suited to Tudor sensibilities:

MAGNYFYCENCE: Ye syr nowe am I armyd with good hope
 And sore I repent me of my wylfulnesse
 I aske god mercy of my negligence
 Under good hope enduryng euer styll
 Me humbly commyttyng unto goddys wyll

GOOD HOPE: Then shall you be sone delyuered from
 dystresse
 For nowe I se comynge to youwarde redresse⁹⁶

As can be witnessed here, Potter’s observation of the nature of morality plays also extends to this later example of the genre, to the point of derailing the ‘genre’ of the play:

As communal works of art they are the relatively unpretentious acting out of a theological solution to the problem of evil. In addition, however, the plays are the acting out of a complex psychological experiment aimed at catching the conscience of the audience and evoking the repentance they advocate.⁹⁷

It can thus be seen that each part of the morality tradition, and indeed this play itself, is crafted towards the validation of religious ideology, with everything, including almost secular devices, serving only to build up to the moment of hopeful repentance and the relief of salvation. While critics such as Karuna Shanker Misra may be technically correct in stating that *Magnyfycence* ‘provided a link between plays and politics under allegorical ‘disguisings’’⁹⁸ it can be seen that Skelton’s concern was still solidly grounded in religious themes, allowing him to take control of, and shape, the structure of the play.

Magnyfycence was still far from the fully developed Elizabethan history play; however as Misra continues, ‘[t]his concept led to the presentation of the life-

⁹⁶ John Skelton, *Magnyfycence* (London, 1533; STC: 22607), sig. G4r.

⁹⁷ Potter, *The English Morality Play*, p. 35.

⁹⁸ Karuna Shanker Misra, *The Tragic Hero Through Ages* (New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 1992), p. 39.

histories of kings and then to the idea of tragedy since the ‘fall of the eminent’ constituted the theme of these plays.’⁹⁹ Misra’s observation reveals that she considers *Magnyfycence*’s influence on the English history play genre to have popularised the narrative of the tragic falls of kings. This suggestion, however, fails to account for the hopeful repentant ending of *Magnyfycence*, thus excluding it from this genre, as well as works such as *Famous Victories*, which does not contain the tragic fall Misra identifies as an integral aspect of the fully developed history play. This, however, also ignores other established Elizabethan history plays that end with a victorious historical figure, for example *Edward III* and *Henry V* (1599). Both of these works end with a king who has gained great lands in France with very few casualties on their side, both plots that are very similar to that of *Famous Victories*. Contrary to Misra’s observation, a history play may contain a strong, victorious king that brings England glory by the play’s end; however, the fact that religious intervention supplies England’s victory in *Magnyfycence*, and not human agency, betrays its true genre. Although *Magnyfycence* may not fit explicitly within the criteria of the history play, it does share some key traits with the history play genre in that it is focused on the reign of a king, and provides a powerful patriarch as the ‘hero’ of the play. It could even be argued that *Magnyfycence* may have begun the trend for male dominated history plays with court settings that would increase with the development of the genre and political messages that would grow in subtlety over the years.¹⁰⁰ *Magnyfycence*’s religious concerns and medieval morality structure means that it is undeniably a part of the Catholic religious tradition, especially with its function to call the people to confession. While Skelton updated the traditional

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ This would only be furthered by the uncertainty of the future as the Catholic Mary I succeeded the throne from Edward VI only to be succeeded herself by the Protestant Elizabeth I. The role of the successful patriarchal ruler in English history plays will be discussed further in the fourth chapter of this thesis.

form to suit his purpose, the play still remains too typical of the morality genre to be considered a history play.

Written after Henry VIII's break from Rome in 1533, John Bale's *King Johan* edges closer towards the category of history play genre than *Magnyfycence*; however, unlike *Magnyfycence*, *King Johan* focuses on the reign of a historical king from England's past instead of a particular vice or virtue. The play focuses on King John who is approached by the personification of England who seeks help after the Pope's control has banished her husband, God. King John looks to Nobility, Civil Order and the Clergy for support and tells them of his right alone to rule the land, a right that is supported by the Bible. However, his allies are quickly convinced of the Pope's power and abandon their king, leaving him with no choice but to swear allegiance to Rome, to the dismay of England, pay the Church an extortionate amount and allow them more control than ever in running the land. Finally, after these exercises of power the Church poisons King John and the virtue of Verity arrives to defend his true character. The play, then, looks towards the present where, similar to *Magnyfycence*, a personified virtue intended to represent the contemporary figure of Henry VIII, in this instance Imperial Majesty, mercilessly slaughters the allies of the Catholic Church, and Henry VIII's new daughter, Princess Elizabeth, is described to symbolise a secure and hopeful future for England. In this way *King Johan* offers a more overt representation of past, present and future with the past represented by the historical King John, the present by Imperial Majesty (Henry VIII) and the future by Elizabeth, Henry VIII's legitimate heir at this time. The plot of the play is concerned with the distant past, and not living memory as the events of *Magnyfycence* were, meaning that a historical source would have been relied upon to provide the plot of King John's excommunication by Pope Innocent III. A need for

historical source material already begins to set this play apart from others in the morality tradition, although the playwright takes little else from the chronicles after it has provided the main plot points. Whilst credited as the first history play by some critics, it is only the basic plot and a small number of historical characters that appear to secure this claim. King John, Stephen Langton and the Pope appear as characters in the play; however, they appear amongst a more traditional cast of morality vices and virtues, such as Verity, Sedition and Dissimulation, with even a widowed England approaching the king to ask for help.¹⁰¹ The play demonstrates a heavy intolerance of Catholicism and it can be seen that Bale was attempting to use the play to persuade his audience to be ruthless against the Catholic Church, a course of action that Imperial Majesty is praised for when he orders Sedition to be hung and quartered despite his promise of mercy.

Bale began his career as a friar but was converted to Protestantism by Thomas Wentworth when England split from Rome. Having been converted to the Protestant cause, Bale soon became dissatisfied with the extent of the Reformation, feeling that it had not come far enough and turned to drama to demonstrate his beliefs.¹⁰² Yet, despite his purpose, it was Catholic drama that Bale appropriated for his own use, in particular the morality play. This ‘conversion’ of the dramatic form may have been chosen to symbolically reflect the country’s Reformation, or perhaps Bale’s own religious conversion. Catholic pageants and ‘poppetly plays’ are referenced and mocked in the text alongside other Catholic beliefs and traditions such as purgatory, tithes and devotions. However, Bale borrows heavily from the very tradition that he is reacting against, lifting the structure and tropes directly from

¹⁰¹ Stephen Langton was the archbishop of Canterbury (c.1150-1228) during the reign of King John.

¹⁰² John N. King, ‘Bale, John (1495–1563)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2009 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1175>, Accessed on: 10 June 2014]

morality plays and fitting them to a new Protestant context. Following the traditional Catholic morality play plot, Bale adds a Protestant twist by using the new structure to satirically attack the very acts the genre was written to promote. Just as *Magnyfycence* followed Aristotle's laws of tragic structure only to save its hero through the act of repentance, Bale uses the morality play structure in the same way, subverting it to suit Protestant ideology. King John begins the play with an innocent naivety about the influence and corruption of the Pope, but because he underestimates his power he is excommunicated, abandoned and stripped of his royal title. During his period of suffering the Catholic Church offers him the act of repentance and confession, a redemptive act that would save the hero in a traditional morality play. Due to Bale's Protestant sensibilities this is depicted as a method of control, 'ye shall repent./ Down on your marybones, and make no more ado!'¹⁰³ Unlike Good Hope's gentle advice, this act of repentance is demanded, not as an act of salvation but one of submission. As Potter notes, '[t]he act of confession, which once led the sinner to salvation, is now the prelude to an execution.'¹⁰⁴ As soon as King John swears his obedience to the Pope he is forced to pay the Church an extortionate amount of money, release a traitor and forfeit his sceptre and crown, each act representing denounced Catholic practices and rites as well as demonstrating the Pope's complete power over the king. Yet despite King John's cooperation in these acts he is poisoned and proclaimed a tyrannical ruler for his previous sins. The trait of Verity arrives too late to save King John's life; however it is Verity that offers words of hope at this bleak point:

I assure ye, friends, let men write what they will,
King John was a man both valiant and godly.
What though Polydorus reporteth him very ill

¹⁰³ John Bale, *King Johan*, in *The Dramatic Writings of John Bale*, ed. John S. Farmer (London: Traylen, 1966), p. 251.

¹⁰⁴ Potter, *The English Morality Play*, p. 104.

At the suggestions of the malicious clergy?
 [...]

Of his godliness thus much report will I.¹⁰⁵

Verity's actions cannot save the king's life, but instead saves his reputation and reveals his true nature, constructing him as a Protestant martyr. *King Johan* thus demonstrates some basic interest in the construction of history, by not only depicting the life of King John but offering discussion of his legacy too.

As can be seen, *King Johan* questions the popular Renaissance theory of time, that history was a cyclic process that degraded with each turn,¹⁰⁶ and demonstrates that this cycle can be broken, suggesting that the flow of time may become a linear one if the audience are willing to look to the past and learn from previous mistakes. By learning from their history, the cycle may be broken to allow for progression. This is exactly what Imperial Majesty does in his ruthless treatment of the Catholic Church, an attitude Bale wished to encourage in his audience. In this way, *King Johan* offers a basic exploration of the nature of time and the concept of history. These themes, combined with the historical title character, has led critics to suggest that *King Johan* is first English history play. However, Bale provides all the ingredients for a morality play, although he subverts the pinnacle repentance act and anti-Catholicism, suggesting this play is instead a jingoistic, mock-morality play for a Protestant audience. Only two historical events are re-enacted, King John's excommunication by the Pope and his death. These events are *very* loosely adapted for the stage, with each twisted for Bale's own cause. Chroniclers offered many tales of King John's death, ranging from gluttony to disease; however Bale seems to have been inspired by William Caxton's *Chronicles of England* (c. 1482) as he depicts the

¹⁰⁵ Bale, *King Johan*, , p. 272.

¹⁰⁶ Dominique Goy-Blanquet, 'Elizabethan historiography and Shakespeare's sources', in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*, ed. Michael Hattaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 57-70 (pp.59-60).

same manner of death, a poisoned drink. Similar to the play, the poisoned drink is offered to the king by a member of the Catholic Church, in this account a monk, who drinks from the cup himself to ensure the king would trust him, before both die from the poison. The motive for this murder that Caxton puts forward is changed completely and a critical detail from this account, that the king had been enraged by the cheap grain at the monastery and declares he will implement a steep increase in its price, is removed from the story completely. In Caxton's version the monk then poisons the king to free his country from oppressive measures; this is reversed in *King Johan* where it is the 'oppressive' Church that poisons King John for their own corrupt ends. The remaining scenes are entirely fictional, and saturated with speeches and monologues establishing the vices of the Catholic clergy, stressing the 'superstitious' and 'corrupt' nature of Catholic ritual and advocating the infallibility of kings as the embodiment of the true order of the world. King John's character could even be considered a fictional creation as so little of his character or story is based on historical truth.

These weak historical links within the morality play, however, were necessary to give Bale's play the needed weight in the nationwide debate between Catholicism and Protestantism. The establishment of the Protestant church was a difficult one and created nationwide unrest throughout the kingdom as Catholic and Protestant supporters struggled to defend and validate their religion. As a relatively new and different religion, Protestantism attracted suspicion, and, as Walsham observes, concerns over history became a key topic in the Reformation:

Martin Luther and other Protestant reformers vociferously denied that they were guilty of devising a new-fangled religion; they retorted to this charge by turning it back against their polemical enemies, whom

they in turn accused of inventing traditions to keep the laity in subjection and thralldom.¹⁰⁷

With Protestants having to defend this lack of established tradition, and Catholics accused of corrupting it, history became the battlefield for the Reformation, leading to developments in the recording and understanding of history at the time. As

Walsham continues:

They gave rise to empirical inquiry as well as to myth-making and forgery. It was the urgent need for the sanction of history that sent both Protestants and Catholics scurrying into the archives and that propelled the antiquarian endeavours that created the great libraries of books and manuscripts in Cambridge, Oxford, London, and across the continent.¹⁰⁸

History became a tool to be used in passionate defence of religion and not pursued for its own sake. It was referred to, twisted and invented to support each cause and, as Walsham concludes, writers, such as John Bale and John Foxe, had a great output of literature to create a history for Protestantism.¹⁰⁹ *King Johan* is one example of this literature, as Bale attempts to strengthen the position of Protestantism by converting King John into a proto-Protestant to give his religion the historical roots it was accused of lacking. History is only invoked in this play as scaffolding to support a greater religious argument and is not the main focus or interest in its own right.

As with *Magnyfycence*, despite occasional allusions to the concept of history, the play's religious focus is unwavering with very little to be said on the politics of the Court, the nature of leadership or the correct terms of succession, which the later history plays would begin to concern themselves with. The plot is a power struggle between what Bale considers to be Protestantism's righteous interpretation of religion and the wrongful deeds of the Catholic Church. Religious imagery and language is consistently used throughout to emphasise the religious morality as King

¹⁰⁷ Walsham, 'History, Memory, and the English Reformation', p. 902.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 907.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 903.

John is repeatedly compared to great Christian kings such as Solomon, and the Pope is described as the Anti-Christ. Bale maintains a strong focus on the play's religious themes and King John consistently discusses what God's will is, never allowing the audience to forget that this is the key question. The play asks how religion defines people, positions and fears that the personified character of England has been cruelly 'divorced' from God. What Bale has created in this case is not the first history play but a new Protestant morality play that would provide an important stepping stone for the anonymous author of *Famous Victories* to use in creating a new genre.

The Birth of a Genre

It has been demonstrated that these medieval genres and Tudor plays do not contain the necessary qualities to be considered definitive English history plays; however, the similarities that exist between these genres of work lay a foundation for the historic tradition to begin. *Famous Victories* builds upon this, changing aspects of the formula to fit within its own contexts and purposes. This evolution includes considerable changes to the staging, themes and structure, fitting the play to its new purpose. One of these changes was a movement away from generic 'fits all' characters to a specific, historical context. This reflected changing attitudes towards the individual as medieval concepts of defining identity through social groups began to shift to a concept of individualism. As Stephen Greenblatt observes 'in the sixteenth century there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process',¹¹⁰ while John Jeffries Martin notes that the questions which surround the identity of the self are to be found

¹¹⁰ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005) (original work published in 1980), p. viii.

amongst more general questions of group identity.¹¹¹ It is the inclusion of this fledgling sensibility that sets *Famous Victories* apart from plays such as *King Johan*. Both plays contain two sets of kings; however in *King Johan* the two characters could be interchangeable except in one detail, Imperial Majesty escapes the same fate as King John due to his ruthless handling of the Catholic Church. This is a completely intentional move by Bale as this device serves the purpose of the play perfectly. As Potter observes, '[m]orality characters are often perceived to be 'wooden', but this quality is not so much a matter of abstraction as of relentless determinism'.¹¹² In the case of these plays, the vices and virtues remain to be characters, as opposed to abstract qualities; when King John talks to Nobility, he speaks to a nobleman who embodies the typical opinions and character of the nobility, and not the quality itself.

Potter goes on to note that J. Dover Wilson 'identified Hal with the prodigal Youth, the Court and the Lord Chief Justice with sober virtue, Falstaff with the Vice, and the plot with the prodigality of a young prince leading logically to a welcome repentance, evidenced by a rejection of vice' in *Henry IV, Part One* (c.1597) agreeing that it demonstrates the strong influence of the morality genre in the evolution of the history play.¹¹³ This proves to be a very simple reading as the characters in *Famous Victories* who prove to have more complexity than their morality 'counterparts'. This relentless determinism that Potter observes is diffused in these characters as they are often conflicted between many choices, actions or even states of being. The 'birth of the individual' that Fox observes in this period begins to reveal itself in this play as it looks beyond the titles of each figure to depict more complex characters. Henry IV is at once both father and king, he attempts to

¹¹¹ John Jeffries Martin, *The Myth of Renaissance Individualism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006), p. 19.

¹¹² Potter, *The English Morality Play*, p. 39.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

maintain a fair rule, but this is compromised by his fatherly role when he berates his Chief Justice for arresting his son and demands his freedom. Prince Henry himself also contains these complexities as he plays the nuanced role of prince, one to be obeyed, but must also play the subject, one to remain obedient to his king, and who plays the reformed man, while retaining the bad habits of his past. While this will be touched upon in greater detail in the third chapter of this thesis, what is of more interest here is the thematic changes that occurred as the genre evolved.

The world had changed considerably from the time of the miracle play pageants; *Famous Victories*, and the history plays that would succeed it, were played out on, and written specifically for, the public stage, although, like *Magnyfycence* and *King Johan*, it is likely to have received a court performance as it was performed by the Queen's own acting troop. In the period between the performance of these moralities and the writing of *Famous Victories*, England had been transformed through the Reformation. The political and religious reforms suggested that the people could question and remove their monarch if they were considered unsuitable, a topic that was hotly debated in its day and was inspired by Henry VIII's reasons for refusing to recognise the Pope.¹¹⁴ The established, traditional religion of the country had been reformed, altering religious ideologies, and, through the destruction of churches, images and libraries large portions of Catholic history were lost.¹¹⁵ Saints and their relics and shrines were destroyed as part of Henry VIII's attack on the 'cult of saints'. As Doreen Rosman observes:

Since divine power was channelled through holy objects, the burning or desecration of relics and images seemed to confirm their impotence. Reliance on saints for aid, a major feature of traditional

¹¹⁴ John Guy, 'Monarchy and Counsel: Models of the State', in *The Sixteenth Century 1485-1603*, ed. Patrick Collinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.113-144 (p. 124).

¹¹⁵ Walsham, 'History, Memory, and the English Reformation', p. 908.

faith, gradually became less feasible as shrines were destroyed and images removed.¹¹⁶

This naturally created distress amongst devotees and independence from these practices meant that the people needed a new way to understand themselves and their world, and therefore began to look to their past to do so.

The English history play was born from the ideas of the Reformation, which had provided a precedent that established ideas and practices could be questioned and even replaced; a radical concept that could not be ignored. The English Catholic Church had shattered, the saints were not to be prayed to and the miracle plays were dead; a void had been created that needed to be filled. The Catholic Churches were replaced with what would become the Protestant Church, the Pope with the model of ‘imperial monarchy’, and the miracle and saint plays would become the histories.¹¹⁷ As has been argued earlier in this chapter, *King Johan* serves as a Protestant morality play, which attempted to fill this void by adapting the traditional form of the Catholic morality play. However, the aftermath of the Reformation and turbulent succession of Tudor monarchs meant that at the point that the question of individuality and identity were being raised by its people, the identity of England itself was uncertain. Playwrights brought forth the kings of the past in answer, whether victorious warriors or fallen martyrs, these rulers became akin to secular saints in the cult of England, celebrating the true England, crying ‘for England,/ Cry S. George, and God and S. George helpe vs’ and replacing the Catholic martyrs of the old regime.¹¹⁸ As Richard Dutton notes, *Famous Victories* was performed before the defeat of the Spanish Armada ‘in a moment of looming crisis to stir up patriotic

¹¹⁶ Doreen Rosman, *The Evolution of the English Churches, 1500-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 31.

¹¹⁷ The model of ‘imperial’ monarchy was based on the power enjoyed by Roman emperors and preventing the Pope from legislating for the kingdom as he had no *dominium*; Guy, ‘Monarchy and Counsel’, pp. 117-118.

¹¹⁸ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. F1r.

fervour and maintain morale by reminding audiences of past glories.’¹¹⁹ *Famous Victories* reminded the audience of a time when England was powerful and successful, and retold the stories of the great rulers of the past, or invented a legacy for them. The time of the miracle and morality plays, which had taught the people about Christian morality and the lives of biblical figures, had ended and the reign of the history plays had begun. These plays brought interpretations of the history chronicles to life and taught the people the names of kings instead of saints and, thus, a new genre emerged.

It is no coincidence that Henry V was the king to spark this genre. While Henry V may not have engaged himself with particularly religious acts, such as King John’s conflict with the Pope, his figure still carried some religious significance for an Elizabethan audience. Hall begins his accounts of Henry V’s reign by describing his almost Reformation-like policies to redistribute church funding into charitable causes and notes that he assigned a day for the celebration of Saint George.¹²⁰ The woodcarving images that are used to depict Henry V on the title page of Hall’s *Union of the Two Noble Households of York and Lancaster* depicts him in full battle armour with a cross on his breastplate, the only king on the page to have one. Henry V was known to be a Christian king, but mentions of religion in the play are brief and fleeting: God is offered the victory of the battle, it is suggested that God’s providence ensures the succession of the crown, and Henry V calls out to God in a patriotic war cry before the battle. Instead the audience are offered political tales of a prince who comes to power and wins his claimed land in France through battle and

¹¹⁹ Richard Dutton, ‘*The Famous Victories* and the 1600 Quarto of *Henry V*’, in *Locating the Queen’s Men, 1583-1603*, eds. Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Griffin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 135-144 (p. 143).

¹²⁰ Edward Hall, *The Vnion of the Two Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancastre and Yorke* (London, 1550; STC: 12723), sig. F2r.

political tactics. The play, however, does not open with King Henry V, but instead begins in Henry IV's reign, when the young Henry was a prince.

This allows the playwright to provide the foundation for one of the 'miracles' of Henry V's reign. The first miracle is the transformation of a prince, who might have become a tyrant, into one of the most successful rulers. One need only look at Hall's contents page to see how he was considered. Henry V's chapter; 'The victorious actes of kyng Henry the v' reveals Henry V's positive legacy, situated between the more negative: 'The unquyete tyme of kyng Henry the fowerth' and 'The troubleous season of king Henry the vi'.¹²¹ The second miracle is England's great victory whilst they were so outnumbered in France. However, even these 'miracles', though reminiscent of the Christian medieval plays are not holy in origin, these acts are very much the secular miracles of England. While Henry V offers his victory to God there is enough evidence to subtly suggest that God's hand was not as directly involved as his speech suggests. Louise Nichols suggests the juxtaposition of the battle with the French army's dice game and Henry V's consideration of the battle's odds as 'ten to one' is intended to hint that the English victory was purely down to chance and not divine approval as Henry V claims:

The play's suggestion that fortune is a factor in Henry's success contrasts with the providential view of the chronicles that sees victory for Henry as God's plan. Suddenly an alternative possibility comes to light, and it is one that presents Henry with much less power.¹²²

The miracle of the Prince's conversion from rebellious youth to obedient son has caused critics to note that it carries obvious parallels to the New Testament parable of the prodigal son, suggesting that *Famous Victories* may have more in common

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, sig. A5v.

¹²² Louise Nichols, "'My name was known before I came": The Heroic Identity of the Prince in *The Famous Victories of Henry V*" in *Other Voices, Other Views: Expanding the Canon in English Renaissance Studies*, eds. Helen Ostovich, Mary V. Silcox and Graham Roe (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999), pp. 154-75 (p. 168).

with the miracle play tradition and is a continuation of that genre. However, apart from the event of a 'lost' son returning to his father's love, the two stories share little else in common. The parable is about the unconditional joy and forgiveness of the father at the return of his son, promising that any who return to God will be treated in the same way. However, in *Famous Victories*, the son is not immediately welcomed back to his father but instead condemned for his behaviour and only forgiven when he offers a long speech and promises to earn his inheritance, although this process repeats itself after his 'theft' of the king's crown. *Famous Victories*, then, does not contain a retelling of the prodigal son parable, in the style of the miracle plays, and even the validity of Prince Henry's miraculous transformation can be called into question.

It is debatable that Prince Henry's behaviour changes in any significant way over the course of the play and Karen Oberer even suggests that he does not truly transgress in the first place as this would have involved associating with those wholly socially distant from himself.¹²³ As the company the Prince keeps is made up of those from the middling classes such as John Oldcastle, unlike the common characters of Derick and John the Cobbler who are well beneath him, the Prince does not fully transgress, therefore, he does not need to be forgiven, and, as such, there is no miracle. Even the 'devastating' behaviour that the prince engages in may be less troubling than first supposed and even expected for his age, as a necessary phase. This suggests that the power of transformation was always within the prince and that it only took a realisation of the gravity of his actions to cause him to realise that he must mature and take responsibility. Just as Shakespeare's Prince Hal reveals to the audience that he is only having fun in order to subvert expectations later on, and the

¹²³ Karen Oberer, 'Appropriations of the Popular Tradition in *The Famous Victories of Henry V* and *The Troublesome Raigne of King John*', in *Locating the Queen's Men, 1583-1603*, ed. Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Griffin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp.171-82 (p. 174).

prince that Hall describes is revealed to have only played a few comic jests in good sport, so too may *Famous Victories*' Prince Henry be less 'lost' than first supposed. This subverts the usual dramatic medieval formula which begins with an innocent that is led astray into a fall which is then resolved through repentance; however in this case as there is no stage of innocence there is no devastating fall.¹²⁴ The prince may have fallen from his father's grace, although this occurred before the start of the play, but it is into a state of naïve boisterousness, and not into a weak helpless state of intense suffering, as is typical of fallen characters.

Henry V's character arc does not follow this development, freeing the play to create its own structure. What is particularly interesting, however, is that the structure of innocence, fall and redemption appear in a short, self-contained confrontation with his father. Armed with a dagger, that the Prince boasts is to kill his father, Prince Henry sees his father moved to tears and provides a speech in his own defence. Portraying himself as innocent, by claiming that he had never intended to make an attempt on his father's life, Prince Henry casts himself in a short morality play for the king's benefit, to sway him to his cause. From a state of innocence, he suffers a fall into intense suffering and claims that suicide will be his only hope, 'I wil go take me into some/ solitarie place, and there lament my sinful life, and when/ I haue done, I wil laie me downe and die'.¹²⁵ This hopelessness after the protagonist's realisation that their sinful life has led to this suffering is very similar to *Magnyfycence*'s almost tragic end when he is offered the dagger in his grief. Just as Good Hope did for *Magnyfycence*, at the last moment the king calls him back, pulling the prince back from the darkness of his despair to restore his repenting son. The short morality is thus completed with the son's relief, reunion with his father

¹²⁴ Potter, *The English Morality Play*, p. 8.

¹²⁵ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. C3r.

and a reference to rebirth, an important image in the tradition: 'Thanks good my Lord, no doubt but this day,/ Euen this day, I am borne new againe'.¹²⁶ The theatricality and fabrication of the little scene suggests a talent of Prince Henry's for self-construction and manipulation through its suddenness, his lies about the dagger's purpose and the drama of the moment, complete with the casting off of the symbolic cloak. Douglas Sedge and Peter Corbin both note that in this scene Prince Henry carrying the dagger betrays his 'positively parricidal intent' and even suggest that 'there is no basic change of character with the Prince's conversion'.¹²⁷ Corbin and Sedge doubt the legitimacy of the prince's transformation and, by extension, suggest the fabrication of his redemptive speech. Indeed this speech helps to feed the construction of a moment, suggesting to the audience that it all could have been fabricated, even Prince Henry's behaviour with his followers. He himself stages and creates the miracle that is wondrous to all, placing himself in the role of a secular saint, the intention of his 'morality play'. Every act he makes, from the moment the crown is set upon his head, is for the good of England and its people, carefully constructing his image to the point that he would soon become praised in legends and the history books as an ideal king. From the English saints whose goodly deeds are recorded in the medieval plays and saintly kings such as King John whose religious battle was depicted at the end of the genre, rises Henry V whose devotion is far more secular. This king is not a martyr, nor does he need to die for his cause. The play ends with a king who is very much alive, betrothed to a French princess and through negotiation is able to secure his claim to the French throne with agreeable terms: the very image of success.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge, 'Introduction', in in *The Oldcastle Controversy: 'John Oldcastle' and 'The Famous Victories of Henry V'*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 1-35 (p.23).

The play also muses on the themes of justice, privilege and the qualities of a good king. These are themes that, by themselves, are not so removed from the morality play tradition; however, unlike the moralities there is a lack of closure and no definite answer to the questions the play poses. The Chief Justice is rewarded for applying justice to all people, even the prince, yet, despite this arrest it is made clear that the Prince Henry's status allows him certain privileges. As he is taken away for violently attacking the Chief Justice, Derick and John Cobbler both wonder at the scene and note that if either of them had beaten the Chief Justice, 'we should haue bene hangde', an issue that is given no resolution.¹²⁸ During his youth Prince Henry's rash and violent tendencies are shown to be shocking behaviour and the audience is encouraged to judge such behaviour as inappropriate, guided by the honourable worries of Henry IV and Chief Justice, yet it is this rashness and quick anger that send Henry V to France. Just as his anger provoked the Prince to beat the Chief Justice to save 'his man' and crudely assert his authority, so later does he exhibit quick anger at the Dauphin's jest which rashly persuades him to form a military campaign on France to secure 'his right'. The scene begins with a civil and rational discussion of Henry V's right to France, and opposing courtiers debating the extent of the threat Scotland poses and whether leaving now will either risk leaving territory exposed or whether the rebellion will naturally fall after France does. The debate continues until the Dauphin's message is related to the Prince and then all tactics are forgotten. In his rash rage he bids his messenger to deliver the declaration of war to the Dauphin in haste, 'Therefore get thee hence, and tel him thy message quickly,/ Least I be there before thee', and discussion ends.¹²⁹ The rash choice has no consequences for the young king and is soon forgotten as the battle approaches.

¹²⁸ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. B4r.

¹²⁹ Ibid., sig. D3v.

Whether this is appropriate behaviour for a king or not is left open-ended; however, it should be noted that as Henry IV dies he states that Henry V will be a good king, something that the Lords of Exeter and Oxford agree to: 'His former life shewes no lesse.'¹³⁰ Up until this point of the play, Prince Henry's behaviour has been rash and full of anger, so perhaps this suggests that he will be a good king regardless, or that all kings contain such an element of rashness, and that risk-taking itself may even be necessary for such leaders. However, it should be noted that such a risk leaves Henry V at an extreme disadvantage. He is left outnumbered while fighting a war on foreign soil. Perhaps if he had conquered Scotland first he would have been able to obtain men from a new ally to even the odds, or at least reduce the risk of Scotland invading England; however, in his present state it is only by the grace of God, or pure luck, that the day is won with so few losses and the resolution to the Scottish debate is unresolved.

Ultimately, *Famous Victories* sets itself apart in its obsession with the topic of history. *Famous Victories* demonstrates an awareness of its own purposes and sources with many metatheatrical elements that point directly to the fact that history is being performed on the stage itself. With its freedom from religious content, *Famous Victories* was able to subtly invite the audience to question its chronicle sources and the concept of a history play itself. Pitcher suggests that this first history play was written to 'transcend the chronicles by reconciling in fiction their various reports'.¹³¹ Pitcher could be correct as aspects of each chronicle are incorporated into the one play, a play where Stow's fond account of the prince's jests may be followed by Hall's sober reconciliation scene within the same text. Yet even as the play provides a cohesive narrative it also points to the inconsistency of history. As

¹³⁰ Ibid., sig. D1r.

¹³¹ Seymour M. Pitcher, *The Case for Shakespeare's Authorship of 'The Famous Victories'* (London: Alvin Redman, 1962), p. 102.

Nichols notes, hearsay and relayed information is a large part of the play and important events such as the coronation, the prince's brawl in Eastcheap and his role in the battle occurring off stage and being related back to the audience by other characters.¹³² Nichols further notes that, 'what the audience sees is not always consistent with what the audience is told.'¹³³ Indeed, it should be noted that a similar structure is observed in the chronicles by Hunter who notes that, 'Holinshed offers us the guidance of "some say", "others allege", "it is reported that", but makes little or no sustained effort to assess accuracy or probability'.¹³⁴ It could be argued, then, that this narrative device within *Famous Victories* reflects the state of the history chronicles, based on loose accounts, sometimes conflicting. However, in *Famous Victories*, it may be that both accounts are true to the people who relate them. To those in the midst of the brawl, the prince was merely engaging in a jest and they themselves have seen no harm in it, whereas the Chief Justice saw it as a breach of peace and understood it was a disturbance to other citizens.

The audience are invited to watch as Henry V's legacy is created and his history is written even in his own lifetime: the prince's past deeds are wiped from the court's memory and they claim his past actions have always proved he will be a great and noble ruler. History is thus shown to be constructed retrospectively and not every account is heard or will make it into the history books. The boy's account of the brawl does not get related back to the king and, because of this, does not find its way into Hall or Holinshed's chronicles. Without witnessing these scenes the audience is forced to question if they can really trust what they hear, or who relates it to them. In this way *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* demonstrates an awareness of its own corruption in staging 'real historical' events from England's

¹³² Nichols, 'The Heroic Identity of the Prince', pp. 156-157.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

¹³⁴ Hunter, *English Drama*, p. 159.

history. Derick and John Cobbler stage a scene they have just witnessed themselves in the hope of understanding it, yet parts are misrepresented, mistakes are made and the play-within-a-play itself loses its historical meaning when it turns into a deliberate clowning event with the popular characters, a mirror of the popular comic scenes in *Famous Victories*. The actors within retain their own individual identities as well as undertaking the roles of the ‘historical figures’ that they have just witnessed, just as the actors who play their parts have done, and this leaks into their performance. These little moments that would have delighted the audience, also sowed the seeds for other history plays to do so too, such as Shakespeare’s prologue by Rumour in *Henry IV, Part Two* (c.1597) hinting at the audience that not everything is to be believed, even the history they read themselves.

While both medieval and Tudor drama provided a strong foundation for the history play, offering inspiration for the use of chronicle sources, the inclusion of comic, popular characters and a simple discussion about the nature of time itself, both eras fail to produce what could be considered a classical English history play. These plays were chiefly concerned with theological matters as the Reformation took a hold on England. It was the void these plays left which allowed for the creation and popularity of the Elizabethan history plays, and it was *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* that first provided the ancient legends, lives of ‘saintly kings’ and ‘secular miracles’ on the stage. This play was performed on the public stage and provided the audience, who were beginning a process of self-questioning and discovery, new perspectives on individual identity, justice and the concept of history itself, as both a constructed chronicle and a means of understanding oneself. Creating a genre and its tropes was the first important task of *Famous Victories* and as such it became an influential work that would set the trends of the history genre in the

Elizabethan era. Thereafter the history plays that would follow, would borrow its themes, structure and methods when they too became inspired to stage their own history.

Chapter Two

The People's History: Popular Representations and Comedic Critiques

History is as valuable as it is elusive. Time destroys, and human selection determines what survives for subsequent generations and what is lost. As a great deal of historical works were recorded on delicate papers, many simply rotted or disintegrated over time due to careless storage or, in many cases, the works were undervalued as records and recycled, e.g. as fire kindling or damask paper. It is impossible to determine the amount of works that have been lost over the course of history; however, famous events such as the infamous fire at the Library of Alexandria and the lists of lost Early Modern plays such as *Ur-Hamlet* (c.1587), Tartlon's works and a small number of Shakespeare's own plays remain lost to time. Guesswork, fictions and mistakes provide the rest, creating an often inaccurate or biased vision of the past, its people and culture. As the previous chapter of this thesis observed, Tudor historians collected and constructed history in chronicle texts, formed from selected accounts of previous chronicles. These texts contained the historic deeds and tales of the nobility for a literate, wealthy audience whilst remaining inaccessible to those from lower social tiers. As the first Elizabethan history play, *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* (c.1586) staged historical events on the commercial stage, a medium that was more accessible for members of the lower classes, and included popular characters that were largely omitted from the history books. Whilst providing entertainment, these plays also held a strong educational and ideological role in society; however, this was provided by a profession that relied on the nobility for continued support and patronage, allowing those of the higher social tiers an element of influence in what was represented on

the stage and which lessons would be taught. If history itself is manmade, as G.K Hunter suggests, then this would only be amplified on the stage which, by necessity, required a more selective representation of the past that would escape censorship and ensure continued support.¹³⁵

This chapter will examine *Famous Victories*' representation and construction of history for the diverse audiences that frequented the Bell Inn where it was thought to have been first performed or who were able to witness the play when it was taken on tour, particularly its representations of each social tier and its inclusion of fictional popular characters. Whilst characters within *Famous Victories* often promise a future where 'all will be kings', this chapter will examine this flawed vision and the strong class distinction that remains throughout the play. It will also analyse how this technique is utilised to demonstrate and critique social hierarchy through appropriation of popular culture and a repetitive structure. To achieve this, I will be using Ralf Hertel's *Staging England in the Elizabethan History Play* and Peter Burke's influential *Popular culture in Early Modern Europe* to undertake a new historical perspective of *Famous Victories*. In addition to this I will also refer to articles by Larry S. Champion, Louise Nichols and Karen Oberer to argue that this play was able to write the labourer class back into the history books whilst offering a subtle critique of the privileges of the elite. Whilst representations of the labouring class within *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* will be the primary focus of this chapter, I will also observe how the play appropriates themes from popular ballads, eventually offering a parody of specific tropes within the genre. To conclude, I will analyse the repetitive structure and doubling within the play's structure, as well as the medley of clowning and history that has often earned

¹³⁵ G.K. Hunter, *English Drama 1586-1642: The Age of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 159-160.

Famous Victories its infamous academic derision, and highlight how these features of the playbook are strengths that allow for a more nuanced reflection on class relations within Elizabethan society.

An Inclusive History

Tudor society obeyed a rigid social hierarchy inherited from the feudal systems of the medieval era which maintained the dominant ideology of divine order and birthright. Works such as Thomas Smith's *De Republica Anglorum* (1583) were written to carefully explain this social structure and justify its existence, often through comparisons to ancient history, nature and religion. Smith notes that 'we in England diuie our men commonly into foure sortes, gentlemen, citizens and yeomen artificers, and laborers', before explaining the individual classes within the nobility itself.¹³⁶ The lowest of the tiers that Smith identifies, the labourers,¹³⁷ are stated to 'haue no voice nor authoritie in our common wealth, and no account is made of them but onelie to be ruled, not to rule other'.¹³⁸ The inequality in Smith's descriptions is overt and assertive as he seeks to normalise a society where an entire grouping of people are exploited. Ralf Hertel tracks the birth of nationhood through Tudor literature in his work *Staging England in the Elizabethan History Play*, noting the close ties between the evolution of national consciousness and changing social structures. One significant change that Hertel identifies is the emergence of the term 'commonwealth' as a replacement for 'realm', a trend that he claims carries

¹³⁶ Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum* (London, 1583; STC:22857), sig. D2v.

¹³⁷ Smith states that this social grouping is 'comprised of 'day labourers, poore husbandmen, yea marchantes or retailers which haue no free lande, copiholders, and all artificers, as Taylers, Shoemakers, Carpenters, Brickemakers, Bricklayers, Masons, [etc]'.
¹³⁸ Smith, *De Republica*, sig. F1r (emphasis added).

connotations of collective authority and a shift in political thought.¹³⁹ In addition to this, Hertel observes that the increasing power of merchants, traders and artisans, as commercialization of agriculture and increasingly available education increased the chances of social mobility and created a new elite of social climbers.¹⁴⁰

Whilst these changes were subtle, they posed a very real threat to the established order of Smith's *De republica Anglorum*. Adding to Marx's social theory, Louis Althusser coined the concept of 'Ideological State Apparatuses', a plurality of invisible systems within the public domain that support the dominant ideology, including education, literature and the arts.¹⁴¹ As such, these aspects of culture must be observed to witness the reaction to such a threat against the established social order. To defend the existence of social hierarchy from such a threat, Thomas Elyot wrote *The booke named the Gouvernour* (1531) with the intent to define the ideal state of England as a 'publike weale':

A publike weale is a body lyuyng, compact or made of sondry astates and degrees of men, whiche is dysposed by the order of equytye, and gouerned by the rule and moderation of reason.¹⁴²

Elyot borrows from the common rhetoric which compares the state to the human body and nature to hide the artificial construction of such a society. This image of natural order becomes an overt claim when Elyot directly addresses the use of the term 'commonwealth' and seeks to demonstrate that 'common wealth' will only cause unnatural suffering:

...take away Order from all thynges, what shulde than remayne?
Certes nothyng finally, except somme man wolde imagine eftsones,
Chaos, whiche of some is expounded, a confuse mixture.

¹³⁹ Ralf Hertel, *Staging England in the Elizabethan History Play* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 10-11.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.159.

¹⁴¹ Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001), pp. 127-86.

¹⁴² Thomas Elyot, *The booke named the Gouvernour* (London, 1537; STC: 7636), sig. A1r.

Also where there is any lacke of order, nedes muste be
 perpetuall conflycte. And in thynges, subiecte to nature, nothyng of
 hym onely mayebe nourysshed: but whan he hath destroyed that,
 wherewith he doth participate, by the ordre of his creation, he hym
 selfe of necessitie muste than perysshe, wherof ensueth vniuersall
 dissolution.¹⁴³

Elyot's projection is a bleak one that paints an image of an apocalyptic landscape as a result of such an 'abnormal concept' and provides examples of societies from classical history that were governed by the people and were destroyed. Here Elyot twists history to serve his purpose, intentionally conflating correlation with causation to justify the status quo, but he was not the only one to do so. Describing Elizabethan representations of the people in history and literature, John Walter observes:

Schooled in a Renaissance education which offered too many
 examples of the disorderly role of the plebs in the classical world, the
 gentry could regard the people with a mixture of condescension,
 contempt and fear.¹⁴⁴

The 'common folk' were perceived as a danger which could not be forgotten and their potential for social mobility posed a threat to social order and, as such, they found themselves excluded from the history of England too. Hertel states that 'history is always a construction, a form of propaganda that ignores certain elements while stressing others. As Eric Hobsbawm translates pointedly from Renan: "[g]etting its history wrong is part of being a nation"'.¹⁴⁵ Elizabethan history was not created for the lower social tiers, and the great chronicle texts remained inaccessible due to their price and the need of literacy skills to read them. The content of the chronicles themselves were focused intently on the deeds of England's nobility and informed the structure of the book. Each chapter was concerned with the reign of a particular king and followed their career, wars and the lives of their popular courtiers

¹⁴³ Ibid., sig. A2v.

¹⁴⁴ John Walter, *Crowds and Popular Politics in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 14.

¹⁴⁵ Hertel, *Staging England*, pp. 16-17.

until their death and the chapter of the next king would begin. Even subheadings within these chapters are divided by year and measured by the length of the monarch's rule, demonstrating the singular focus of the work. These grand chronicles, however, are notable in their lack of popular voice; the 'common man' is not present in the history of England and receives only fleeting mentions as one of the many subjects or soldiers at the king's command. There is no depiction of their own daily struggles and lives when independent of the court; only the deeds of kings make history. As with the lessons of classical history that Walter described, where the voice of the people appears in the chronicles it is as part of dangerous mob that must be appeased. From Jack Straw's rebellion to Jack Cade's, each group was depicted as chaotic and unpredictable, neglecting the elusive popular voice in favour of a greater spectacle piece that allows the lower classes to remain within the narrow parameters set by Elizabethan society as a whole. As Hunter notes, the representation of peasants in historical narratives was extremely limited, and often limited to revolts, knockabout comedy and violence which 'excludes them from history as the record of national development'.¹⁴⁶ With the chronicle texts offering very few, flawed representations of the people in their own history – all whilst remaining inaccessible to them – the birth of the history play thus proved itself to be a necessary genre that marked the beginning of a more inclusive genre of history.

Despite history's use as a propagandist tool by those of the higher social tiers, lack of access to these chronicle texts helped to maintain a strong gap between the classes through the mystification of the court; by allowing the people to see the more 'human' processes of the nobility it becomes less divine and instead something that may be questioned instead. *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, however,

¹⁴⁶ Hunter, *English Drama*, p. 232.

brought these texts to a visual and oral medium that could be accessed by a more diverse audience. *Famous Victories* borrows from a wide range of sources and is thought to have been formed from the differing depictions and accounts of four chronicle texts and accounts.¹⁴⁷ Seymour M. Pitcher suggests that:

It was almost certainly owing to Hall that the playwright of *The Famous Victories* created a Prince Henry who, though he began by outraging ordinary decencies, reformed at last. But he was fully aware that Stow saw Henry as having been consistently a prince. And, Elyot, dismissed by Hall, had testified strongly in Henry's behalf. The playwright, pondering these interpretations, discovered his task: to transcend the chronicles by reconciling in fiction their various reports.¹⁴⁸

By summarising the various, and sometimes conflicting, accounts into one coherent depiction of events, the playwright created the ultimate account of these events. By performing this adaptation on the public stage, a medium that held a strong place in popular culture in London, *Famous Victories* made the chronicle texts available to the lower classes, albeit in a condensed, aural and visual form. While the popular ballad tradition had occasionally incorporated historical figures or events into their verses, they did not provide the ideal medium for an extended depiction of a king's, or even kings', reign. The chronicles contained a whole and linear narrative that, as Hunter notes, often represented the historian's attempt to create one whole narrative with clear cause-and-effect.¹⁴⁹ With a larger period of time to examine, the chronicles were able to offer a demystification of the court and its political processes. As *Famous Victories* was based upon the stories within these chronicles,

¹⁴⁷ These chronicles were written by Raphael Holinshed, Edward Hall and John Stow with descriptions of Prince Henry's youth in Thomas Elyot's *The boke named the Gouernour* offering a final source. It should be noted that the similarity between Hall and Holinshed's Chronicles have led to debates amongst academics as to the extent of the influence of each on the narrative. See the introduction of this thesis for a brief overview of these debates.

¹⁴⁸ Seymour M. Pitcher, *The Case for Shakespeare's Authorship of 'The Famous Victories'* (London: Alvin Redman, 1962), pp. 101-102.

¹⁴⁹ As this perspective on history was often unrealistic, Hunter notes that there are times where the fragmented and conflicting nature of the historical sources and even description of events did not lend themselves easily to this narrative and often resulted in the chronicler using the explanation that it was the 'will of God' to bridge these gaps; Hunter, *English Drama*, pp. 159-160.

and also followed the reigns of these kings for an extended period, although it fell short of depicting the entirety of Henry V's reign, these hierarchies and politics were also contained within this history play too. As Hertel notes:

In its function of rendering political positions and dogmas open to discussion, drama has a subversive potential that goes beyond obviating parallels between theatre and the theatre of state. Through its "demystification" of the mystery of state, it subjects politics to the interpretation of each individual member of the audience.¹⁵⁰

As Hertel has observed, the transparency that history plays provided was vital as it allowed a common audience the chance to see the inner workings of their own state and indirectly facilitated the possibility of critique.¹⁵¹

The surviving published texts provide further evidence that *Famous Victories* was to be considered a chronicle for the people. In his essay 'Orality, Print and Popular Culture: Thomas Nashe and Marshall McLuhan', Neil Rhodes argues that the boundaries between print and popular culture became blurred through the medium of chapbooks, which were also a popular medium for the publication of ballads.¹⁵² Investigating examples of these publications, Rhodes observes cases where the choices of roman, italic and black letter fonts were specifically selected for a particular association or voice they were deemed to carry.¹⁵³ Zachery Lesser's essay 'Typographic Nostalgia: Play-Reading, Popularity, and the Meanings of Black Letter' addresses the particular function of blackletter font, the typeset used for the publication of *Famous Victories*, and its sometimes conflicted meanings. *Famous*

¹⁵⁰ Hertel, *Staging England*, p. 27.

¹⁵¹ It should be noted, however, that the history plays did not offer a perfect depiction of history or court proceedings; however, it served a vital function of humanising the nobility and in many cases suggested that rule was a more human and fallible state than divinely ordained.

¹⁵² Neil Rhodes, 'Orality, Print and Popular Culture: Thomas Nashe and Marshall McLuhan', in *Literature and Popular Culture in Early Modern England*, eds. Matthew Dimmock and Andrew Hadfield (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 29-44 (p. 40).

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 35

Victories was first published in 1598, the decade Lesser notes that black letter font was falling out of use, suggesting that this font choice was a deliberate one.¹⁵⁴

Black letter font had popular connotations, as it had been used for printed ballads, chapbooks and other works that were considered to be ‘low’ books, often due to the social status of its readers. However, as Lesser also notes, black letter was also known as English letter, in reference to the second meaning the font contained.¹⁵⁵ Lesser notes that:

one of the dominant meanings of black letter in the period, I am suggesting, was the powerful combination of Englishness (the “English letter”) and past-ness (the “antiquated” appearance of black letter by the seventeenth century) that I call typographical nostalgia.¹⁵⁶

Lesser continues that this ‘typographical nostalgia presents an image of unity’, suggesting that what was seen as an exclusively popular medium was merely the construction of nostalgia.¹⁵⁷ Popular associations with such a font is evident in its use in ‘low mediums’ and the cheaper cost of printing that such a font ensured; however, Lesser is certainly correct in his assertion that the use of font creates a unity amongst its readers, and it is in the text of *Famous Victories* that both of these conflicting meanings united. It is unlikely to be a coincidence that the seminal text of the Elizabethan history genre is printed in the same font as the chronicle sources it used, further emphasising its roots and influence. However, the popular connotations of the font and the play’s past performances on the commercial stage remain, combining within print to create ‘a popular chronicle’.

¹⁵⁴ Zachary Lesser, ‘Typographic Nostalgia: Play-Reading, Popularity, and the Meanings of Black Letter’, in *The Book of the Play: Playwrights, Stationers, and Readers in Early Modern England*, ed. Marta Straznicky (London: University of Massachusetts, 2006), pp.99-126 (p. 101).

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 104.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 107.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

Famous Victories, however, is not only inclusive in its availability but in its variety of popular characters as well. Throughout the play many occupations are represented including a cobbler and his wife, a thief, a carrier, a pewterer, a winemaker's boy, a fruit vendor and common soldiers, the majority of whom fall into Smith's bottom tier of labourers that 'have no voice' in the commonwealth.¹⁵⁸ In *Famous Victories*, however, they are each given a voice and even allowed to complain about the difficulties they face, which are often related to their poor social position. These are not voiceless members of a mass, riotous mob or army, they are individuals that interact with each other and authority figures, such as the army captain, creating relatable figures for similar members of the audience. Karen Oberer notes that these characters operate as stock characters which provided a point of reference for lower class theatregoers and could be used 'to make the audience members feel as if they were participating in history'.¹⁵⁹ This was furthered through appropriation of popular culture and tropes, including the genre's roots in the miracle play tradition, the use of rustic clowns and the comically insulting rhetoric that was associated with the common man.¹⁶⁰ In this way the previously exclusive nature of the chronicles is modified to not only include a common audience but to restructure the material into a familiar form that they were able to identify and relate to, allowing them to take ownership of their own history.

Appropriation of popular traditions, however, does not necessarily mean that the popular characters themselves are given a wholly positive representation. While the popular characters on the stage itself are given a voice it must be queried if this

¹⁵⁸ It should be noted that Smith's hierarchy concerns only men, women were excluded from his description altogether and denied the identity of a class or social tier.

¹⁵⁹ Karen Oberer, 'Appropriations of the Popular Tradition in *The Famous Victories of Henry V* and *The Troublesome Raigne of King John*', *Locating the Queen's Men, 1583-1603* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 171-82 (p. 172).

¹⁶⁰ See the first chapter of this thesis for a more detailed discussion of the history play's origins.

can truly be considered authentic? It should also be noted that while the medium of commercial theatre was more accessible than the chronicle texts, popular involvement on the stage was strictly limited in comparison to the miracle plays which had been traditionally produced and staged by each trade guild within a town. Due to the inaccuracy of attempting to use verbal echos and parallels to determine authorship, it is currently impossible to ascertain the identity of the playwright and thus their social standing. Looking to the social grouping of other playwrights who wrote for the Queen's Men offers few clues as to the possible class of *Famous Victories*' writer either. The few known playwrights are Thomas Lodge, George Peele and Robert Greene, the son of a knight, clerk and saddler respectively, demonstrating little correlation between The Queen's Men's playwrights and their social class. However, it is likely that the playwright, or playwrights, of *Famous Victories* had received some education as they have certainly had access to a number of history chronicles. As Peter Burke notes, one must be careful when considering the 'popular voice' as there are so few genuine examples of it that have survived. 'The essential point is surely to accept the fact that we cannot often reach the craftsmen and peasants of early modern Europe directly,'¹⁶¹ Burke writes, and in *Famous Victories*, which is unlikely to have been written by such a craftsman, this is also the case. The voices of the craftsmen in this play are not genuine ones and a 'double ventriloquism' is at work instead as the popular voice is presented through characters such as John Cobbler who finds his voice from the playwright himself.¹⁶² When entering into an analysis of this play the biases that may be at work because of this must be considered. Even if the author came from a humble background, similar to Robert Greene, one must still remember that this may breed bias and adherence to

¹⁶¹ Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 118.

¹⁶² See Annabel Patterson's *Shakespeare and the Popular Voice* (1989) for further discussion of the social ventriloquism that appears within Elizabethan drama.

the dominant ideology. As Hertel notes where social mobility occurs '[i]n order to distance themselves from the common people above whom they have risen, they require an ideology that still retains a concept of hierarchy'.¹⁶³ This suggests that there may be just as much of a propagandistic intention present in *Famous Victories* as the exclusionary chronicles. It should also be noted that even the medium of commercial theatre which catered to a socially mixed audience, removed popular involvement, unlike the miracle plays which had been traditionally produced and staged by each trade guild within a town.

Where the people's voice is limited, a critical approach to their representation must be maintained. Unlike the historical morality plays that predated *Famous Victories*, and some of the later examples of the history plays that would follow afterwards, there is an abundance of common characters, with John Cobbler and Derick maintaining a strong presence throughout. However, it must be noted that these two characters serve a comedic function in the play. John and Derick are not allowed the glory afforded to Henry V and his men; instead they provide the roles of the stereotypical 'cowardly soldiers'.¹⁶⁴ The thief, as a masterless man and outside of acceptable societal norms, is not allowed to join Henry V's disgraced men or share in their promised reward for redemption: instead he becomes a chance for comic relief as Ned snidely notes, 'Gogs wounds, how the villaine stinkes'.¹⁶⁵ The common man thus appears to merely serve a comic function within the play, providing entertaining relief as the prince takes on a more politically focused duty and renounces his jests. Maya Mathur notes the strong association of the lower classes with comedy in her excellent essay 'An Attack of the Clowns: Comedy, Vagrancy,

¹⁶³ Hertel, *Staging England*, p.161

¹⁶⁴ The cowardly soldier proved to be a popular trope in Shakespeare's plays and can be found in the figures of Falstaff and Fastolf in *Henry IV* and *Henry VI, Part 1* respectively, Nym and Pistol in *Henry V* and Parolles in *All's Well That Ends Well*.

¹⁶⁵ Anon., *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, (London, 1598; STC: 13072), sig. D1r.

and the Elizabethan History Play'. Mathur notes the 'low' position that comedy holds observing that it had a use as a method of control: '[i]n genres like epic and romance, the threat posed by the rebellious peasant was contained by presenting him as a figure of ridicule'.¹⁶⁶ Her position agrees with Phyllis Rackin's argument that comedy is used to degrade its subject. Rackin notes that this also occurs in the Elizabethan history play, where lower social tiers find 'they can never finally transcend the conventions of comic representation that keep them in their social place and mark their separation from the serious historical world of their betters'.¹⁶⁷

It first appears, then, that *Famous Victories* falls prey to the same prejudices and corruption that appears within the chronicles themselves, in spite of its inclusion of 'common characters'. The use of comedy appears to highlight the distinctions between classes, ensuring that any serious comment on class struggle is diminished amongst the laughter of the crowd. It is thus difficult to agree with Louise Nichols' reading of Henry V as the people's prince, a character who is 'closer to the play's riffraff than he is to the rather dull two-dimensional courtiers'.¹⁶⁸ Further to this, Nichols suggests a strong connection between the prince and the masterless thief, the lowest character in the play, noting that 'one could almost be taken for the other'.¹⁶⁹ At its heart, Nichols's essay argues that 'all are one' in a similar spirit to the Prince's confident declaration to his companions that, '[w]e are all fellowes, I tell you sirs, and the King/ My father were dead, we would be all Kings'.¹⁷⁰ Janet Clare appears to agree with this, at least in part, noting that '*The Famous Victories* in the early scenes

¹⁶⁶ Maya Mathur, 'An Attack of the Clowns: Comedy, Vagrancy, and the Elizabethan History Play', *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 7, (2007), 35-44 (p. 35).

¹⁶⁷ Phyllis Rackin, *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 221.

¹⁶⁸ Louise Nichols, "'My name was known before I came": The Heroic Identity of the Prince in *The Famous Victories of Henry V*' in *Other Voices, Other Views: Expanding the Canon in English Renaissance Studies*, eds. Helen Ostovich, Mary V. Silcox and Graham Roe (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999), 154-75 (p. 158).

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

¹⁷⁰ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. A3v.

presents a prince who seems to aspire to be one of the people' and other critics focus on Henry's claim that all are equal.¹⁷¹ Hunter in particular picks up on the appearance of equality that Henry V perpetuates in his speech and actions when he claims, 'his resolute defence of "his man", the Thief, indicates that the difference is only one between the top and the bottom of a homogeneous community' and goes on further to repeat the quote they shall be 'all fellows'.¹⁷² If these examples are indeed indicative of Prince Henry's ideology then the prince's ideas are certainly radical for the time as he includes all his men when he speaks, suggesting equality amongst his companions and social levelling.¹⁷³ He shuns the court for the entertainment of London itself and associates with disgraced company instead of his father's nobles. It appears then, that this Henry has a disregard for the current ideology and wishes to bring in a new hierarchy on his own terms.

With such a reading, *Famous Victories* represents an extremely radical play that seeks to question the rigid structures of Tudor society. As Clare continues, it must be remembered that Henry 'is a commoner playing the prince, which accords with the Queen's Men as an actor's theatre'.¹⁷⁴ While Tudor sumptuary laws did not apply within the theatre, the very idea of assuming the role – albeit a fictional one – and the attire of a person above one's own class was seen to be blasphemous by some. Stephen Gosson states this when he notes that if a play is to be performed one:

must haue time to whet his minde vnto tyranny that he may giue life
to the picture hee presenteth, whereby they learne to counterfeit, and

¹⁷¹ Janet Clare, 'Medley History: *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth to Henry V*', *Shakespeare Survey*, 63 (2010), 102-113 (p. 110).

¹⁷² Hunter, *English Drama*, p. 172.

¹⁷³ Henry V repeats this famous line 'we would be all kings' in scene six and unites his men by nationality when he speaks to enflame their spirits in scene fourteen.

¹⁷⁴ Clare, 'Medley History', p. 105.

so to sinne... [they] cannot be playd, without a manifest breach of Gods commaundement.¹⁷⁵

Gosson claims that to transgress the strict boundaries of the social hierarchy, even within the theatre, was both treasonous and blasphemous and thus, by being performed, *Famous Victories* takes part in these ‘transgressions’. Within the play itself, attention is drawn to the levelling power of the stage when John Cobbler and Derick perform their own re-enactment of the historical event they have just witnessed. To do so they must take on the roles of their social betters, drawing attention to how class distinctions become blurred in the theatre, just as they threaten to do in *Famous Victories*.

While there are many threats of social mobility or levelling within the play, these are hardly substantial and promises of class unity break down as soon as they are made. John Cobbler and Derick, whilst assuming the personas of members of the nobility and officials, find themselves unable to remain within these roles for any great period of time.¹⁷⁶ While each man declares their roles with confidence at their performance’s beginning, as the Lord Chief Justice and the young prince, they find themselves unable to maintain this illusion during their performance and at no point call the other by their character’s name. Instead they name each other in their own dialogue, for example, ‘Shall I not Iohn?’ instead of addressing the cobbler as the judge. When John asks ‘Who am I?’, Derick finds himself unable to answer in character instead replying, ‘Who art thou, Sownds, doost not know thy self?’ before declaring ‘[n]ow away simple fellow,/ Why man, thou art *Iohn* the Cobler’.¹⁷⁷

Derick’s dialogue returns John to his own social tier reminding him that he is a ‘simple fellow’ and not the Lord Chief Justice. While social levelling may be mused

¹⁷⁵ Stephen Gosson, *Playes confuted in fve Actions* (London, 1582; STC: 12095), sig. E6r-E6v.

¹⁷⁶ This fact in itself is particular significant and will be discussed further in the final chapter of this thesis.

¹⁷⁷ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. B4v.

upon, their failed performance demonstrates the rigidity of the social hierarchy and just how difficult, or even impossible, social mobility truly is.

The prince's joking promises that 'all will be Kings' proves to be particularly hollow, even as he makes them. Even as he declares all will be equal in these jokes he demonstrates that a definite hierarchy still exists in his mind as he assigns the titles and positions associated with the current order in his imagined future: Ned is promised the title of Lord Chief Justice once Henry IV dies and Prince Henry still maintains himself as a leader of sorts of the group he establishes. Although Hunter champions Prince Henry as a form of popular folk hero within *Famous Victories* and finds some form of social levelling to be taking place, he must also admit that, '[i]n the first half of the play the exploitable Other is defined by class rather than nationality'.¹⁷⁸ Although Hunter claims that this only occurs in the first half of the play it can be seen to pervade into the second half as well, where the lives and safety of the citizens under Henry V's rule are disregarded as he conscripts them for the battlefield in his war. Indeed, although the French men provide an 'Otherness' in opposition to the English that should draw them together as one nationality it can instead be seen that a segregation still remains even within the English army. The culture of hierarchy even pervades the Prince's speech, demonstrating that he is certainly not blind to social position, or that he is a man who loves the people; his very language is saturated with class based terms and insults. In the first scene upon learning of the thief's arrest he states '[n]ow *base* minded rascal to rob a poore carrier,/ Wel it skills not, ile saue the *base* vilaines life'.¹⁷⁹ Here he uses the term 'base' to insult the thief in the same way he uses the terms rascal and villain; however, these insults are tied very closely to the thief's class and used to insult one

¹⁷⁸ Hunter, *English Drama*, p. 172.

¹⁷⁹ Anon, *Famous Victories*, sig. A2v. (emphasis added).

who is the lowest member of the group. The use of such language demonstrates that the social structure has been successfully naturalised in this culture, to the point that it enters the rhetoric of insult: to be poor is to be base, and to be base is to be abhorrent. Prince Henry also uses the language of class as an insult when he encounters Derick naming him ‘What wast you batten-breech?’.¹⁸⁰ Here he names him for his clothing, a pair of buttoned breeches which are likely to match his status as a ‘poor carrier’. As established sumptuary laws strengthened the connections between clothing and class and insults based on class specific clothing was common, it seems that Prince Henry’s curt response is aimed to highlight Derick’s lowly status in this scene.¹⁸¹

Nichols’ assertion that the prince is of his people, sharing more in common with them than the nobility, is finally disproved by the rigorous segregation of the classes throughout the play. As Oberer observes, ‘[t]hat Prince Henry allies himself with Ned, Tom, and Jockey rather than with Derick, John, and Robin, undermines any pretence that he might belong to the common folk’.¹⁸² Larry S. Champion pushes this assertion further:

Even more revealing is his disdain for those of lower social standing, whether in his peremptory insistence that his companions must celebrate with him in a tavern in Eastcheap even though they all prefer an inn in Feversham, or in his terrorizing the poor fellows whom he has robbed.¹⁸³

Prince Henry fully embraces the ideology of social hierarchy despite his inflated promises to level it once he is king. When he rejects the idea of the Feversham inn he

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., sig B3r.

¹⁸¹ Other examples of class specific clothing used to insult can be found in Shakespeare’s *King Lear* (c.1605), when Kent names Oswald a ‘three-suited... worsted-stocking knave’ (II.2.1088-9), *Henry IV, Part One*’s (c.1597) Prince Hal’s damning summation of Francis’ master as a ‘leathern jerkin, crystal-button, not-pated, agate-ring, puke-stocking, caddis-garter...’ (II.4.1054-5) and Thomas Heywood’s *Edward IV, Part One* (1599) where Spicing insults the ‘flat-caps’ only for them to take pride in the name (5).

¹⁸² Oberer, ‘Appropriations of the Popular Tradition’, p. 174.

¹⁸³ Larry S. Champion, “‘What Prerogatives Mean’: Perspective and Political Ideology in *The Famous Victories of Henry V*”, *South Atlantic Review*, 53, 1988, 1-19 (p. 6).

does so because it is 'a pettie Ale-house' and does not befit his status. His only staged encounter with a popular character is when he encounters Derick, who is insulted and promptly ignored, during his own pursuit of justice. Even when speaking of the prince amongst themselves, the labourers of the city speak with a certain level of apprehension and self-censorship. John carefully tells Lawrence that 'I dare not call him theefe, but sure he is one of these taking fellowes', and after speculating that he will be cut off from the crown if he doesn't change his ways, he hastily adds 'But neighbour, say nothing of that'.¹⁸⁴ The citizens of London are forced to speak in euphemisms and only to trusted friends. The prince's robberies are implied in their speech but he is never directly accused.

This fear is also exhibited by the king's two receivers whom the prince ambushed. They first appear on the stage in great distress:

Alas good fellow, what shal we do?
I dare neuer go home to the Court, for I shall be hangd.
But looke, here is the yong Prince, what shal we doo?.¹⁸⁵

At first their speech alerts the audience to the terrifying situation the prince has placed them in; however, their panic only increases when they spy him. At first it appears they fear confessing the robbery, however, as they tell their tale a second reason becomes apparent. The comedy in this dialogue operates off the dramatic irony created when those who were robbed inform their robbers of the event; however, as they add more details to their account such as, 'one of them had *Sir Iohn Old-Castles* bay Hobbie,/ And your blacke Nag', and 'there was one about the bignes of you' it soon appears that the receivers themselves are just as aware that it was the prince who robbed them as the audience are.¹⁸⁶ Their fear of the prince, then, stems not from a fear of confessing the robbery but that they must confront the very

¹⁸⁴ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. A3v-A4r.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., sig. A2v.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., sig. A3r.

robbers themselves and remain silent or risk treason. The prince's treatment of the men quickly demonstrates that such fear is justified as he immediately uses disrespectful and oath-ridden language to name the two as villains and rascals before finally commanding 'Sowns, villains speak, or ile cut off your heads'.¹⁸⁷ When they give their accounts, including details that would condemn the prince, he cruelly rewards them with the threat 'looke that you speake not a word of it,/ For if there be, sownes ile hang you and all your kin'.¹⁸⁸ As the prince boasts of the fear he has distilled within the men, the next scene begins with John Cobbler's fearful discussion of the prince's activities and subtle acts of self-censorship. It is seen then that the Prince's jests have impacted further into the community than he himself might have been aware of, and as such the playwright hints that these are not the first men to receive such a threat.¹⁸⁹

Class unity is an alien concept in *Famous Victories*, even to the hypocritical prince who promises it. Throughout the play, popular characters are kept separate from the prince, confined instead to the comic scenes, and, where they may encounter him, they are offered only abuse and insults. However, this does not necessarily mean that *Famous Victories* offers the same social biases as its source chronicles. While the history play genre may be seen as a purely propagandistic tool at the disposal of the nobility, there is a deeper layer to *Famous Victories* that must be examined. The popular characters are segregated from the prince and the nobility to scenes where they serve comic roles, class distinctions are carefully maintained throughout and there is a strict return to social hierarchical norms once the prince reforms and rejects his former companions. The power of *Famous Victories*,

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., sig. A2v.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., sig. A3r.

¹⁸⁹ It should be noted that it is only the Receivers who are threatened in this way by the Prince. When he appears in official settings and encounters the Lord Chief Justice and the royal porter, any threats against their lives are made by Ned, not Prince Henry himself.

however, is that it uses its adherence to these norms and ideologies to question them and to bring a voice to the social struggles of the day. Their society has a strong affinity with Elizabethan society, despite the historical setting, and the playwright refuses to romanticise the struggles of the classes or encounters between the nobility and commoners. This depiction, which more accurately reflected and reinforced Tudor social order, allowed the playwright to highlight social issues and facilitate the audience's questioning process.

Society's Mirror

While it may not appear so to the reader today, *Famous Victories*' strong class distinctions are what provides it with its own critical power. It presents society on the stage as it would have appeared. It does not present the 'unnatural' equality that Elyot feared nor does it give Smith's 'fourth class', the labourers, any voice or impact on the commonwealth. Royalty's influence can be seen on the lives of their subjects, but they have no influence over the political realm themselves. Even where Henry V uses the concept of nationhood to unite his army as one English whole against a 'foreign threat', he does not give weight to Hertel's suggestion that 'instead of an aristocratic pedigree, English nationality now became the precondition for nobility, and every Englishman was potentially noble because of his Englishness'.¹⁹⁰ Instead, his speech is addressed to his lords on the stage itself, the common soldiers do not appear, and he is careful to affirm their noble status:

What my Lords, me thinks you looke cheerfully vpon me?
 Why then with one voice and like true English hearts,
 With me throw vp your caps, and for England,
 Cry S. *George*, and God and St *George* help vs.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ Hertel, *Staging England*, p. 160.

¹⁹¹ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. F1r.

The stage directions firmly state that Henry V enters the stage with his Lords and he refers to them as such before uniting these true English men as ‘one voice’. The common soldiers are not present, and as such the united voice of England is only a noble one. The Lords and common soldiers never appear together on the same stage and in the next scene, when the dead are listed a strong separation is maintained: ‘[o]f your Maiesties Armie, are slaine none but the good/ Duke of Yorke, and not aboute five or six and twentie/ Common souldiers’.¹⁹² Even in death, distinction must remain. The nobility is identified and named, those of the lower social tiers are given an estimation as to the number of the dead and soon forgotten. Even during war, when all are united in their effort, social hierarchy remains as strong as ever.

The reason why this is so effective is that *Famous Victories* does not contain the idealised tropes of the king-commoner encounter that was the subject of many ballads at the time.¹⁹³ As Linda Hutjens observes such ballads adhered to a definitive structure:

Like the medieval poems and ballads, the Renaissance ballads display a recurring narrative sequence. Its essential elements are: the unrecognized king, a rude subject who becomes his host, abuse of the king and/or his laws, a moment of recognition, the subject’s expectation of hanging, a plea for forgiveness, the king’s pardon, a generous reward, and occasionally plans for subsequent reunion in a courtly environment. The disguised king is subjected to rudeness, hardships, and even violence, but endures them with patience and rewards the subject with magnanimity.¹⁹⁴

This repeated structure offered an extremely romanticised imagining of such an encounter, demonstrating an infinitely patient and loving ruler and a reformed subject. Much like the morality plays and biblical tales, it is a tale of transgression

¹⁹² Ibid., sig. F1v.

¹⁹³ Surviving ballads that contain such a plot include ‘Edward the Fourth and the Tanner of Tamworth’, ‘King James I and the Tinker’ and ‘A Tale of Kyng Edward and the Shepherd’.

¹⁹⁴ Linda Hutjens, ‘The Disguised King in Early English Ballads’, in *Literature and Popular Culture in Early Modern England*, eds. Matthew Dimmock and Andrew Hadfield (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp.75-90 (p. 84).

and forgiveness. Whilst the subject has not remained true to the law, the king recognises his transgression to be a minor offence and offers a pardon to give the commoner a second chance and to demonstrate to the reader or listeners the kindness and compassion of the divine king where these two worlds meet. As Rochelle Smith observes in her study of genre:

A key part of the king-commoner feast is the experience of drinking with the king. This is an essential part of the ballad motif, perhaps because drinking seems to be the great levelling experience.¹⁹⁵

Rochelle continues, '[u]ltimately, it is the cross-class education that becomes the true focal point of the king-commoner encounter'.¹⁹⁶ As Rochelle observes, the experience is depicted as a chance for education as well as reformation, each man learns from the other. For a short time, within the safe confines of the ballad, each man becomes level and is able to discuss their lives and gain from the experience.

However, as Burke warns:

These were the 'mass media of the period, and it was obvious to political and religious leaders that these media must be used in order to influence as many people as possible'.¹⁹⁷

This idealisation occurs within a propagandistic context and is intended to support the aims of the king and his officials, creating an image that is particularly suited for his purpose. While the devolution of status qualifiers and class distinctions does not fit within Tudor ideology it serves a greater purpose and by the ballad's end there is a return to the status quo. The king's depiction in such ballads is also a romanticised version. As Burke notes, the king benefits from his absence from his subjects' lives; in cases where his actions and decisions would have impacted upon their lives, 'it

¹⁹⁵ Rochelle Smith, 'King-Commoner Encounters in the Popular Ballad, Elizabethan Drama and Shakespeare', *SEL: Studies in English Literature*, 50, (2010), 301-336 (p. 310).

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Burke, *Popular Culture*, p. 111.

was often the miller or the bailiff who got the blame'.¹⁹⁸ In such ballads, then, the king is faultless, he speaks to the commoner with patience and kindness and repays him with favours worth far more than what is owed. The king becomes the very embodiment of generosity and goodwill and often expresses envy at such a peaceful way of life, a sentiment that demonstrates to the reader and listeners the sacrifices and hardships of the monarchy and casts the king in the role of selfless martyr. Often his praise of such basic living, as Smith notes, also 'masks, but only for a time, the truth that most commoners, given the choice, would prefer to live like kings'.¹⁹⁹

Smith argues that the romantic subject matter of such ballads directly influenced the creation of the history play genre:

The comic history plays of the 1590s tended to idealise the encounter between king and subject; thus, when examined solely within a dramatic context, Shakespeare's satiric treatment appears to be unique.²⁰⁰

Smith's overestimates of the ballads' influence on such plays and incorrectly describes this technique as unique to Shakespeare. This offers the playwright more credit in this regard than he merits; there are a number of plays that had already established a critique of the king's relationship with people, and others that would follow Shakespeare's work.²⁰¹ *Famous Victories'* refusal to adhere to such an idealised plot, separates it from this tradition and influence, instead allowing it to offer greater truths about society and contain a satiric edge. King-commoner encounters are very few and, when Prince Henry does first encounter his subjects within the play, it is as a thief. This particular circumstance may constitute one of the few influences of the ballad tradition on the play itself. As Smith observes:

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 213.

¹⁹⁹ Smith, 'King-Commoner Encounters in the Popular Ballad', p. 302.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ This critique is to be found in Thomas Heywood's *Edward IV* plays (1599), the anonymous *Edward III* (1596) and Shakespeare's *Richard II* (c.1595).

The commoner's inability to recognize the monarch is common to all of these ballads [...] In fact, most often he errs by moving in the wrong direction on the social ladder as he mistakes the king for a thief.²⁰²

Within *Famous Victories*, the prince meets his subjects in disguise, much like the ballads; however, in this case it is to rob them. In contrast to the ballad tradition, the two carriers hint at their recognition of the prince in a reversal of the commoner's inability to recognise the monarch, hinting that it is not out of character for the nobility to rob the people. This point would only become more overt in *Henry IV, Part One* (c. 1597) when Falstaff informs Hal that 'thou camest not of the blood/royal, if thou darest not stand for ten shillings'.²⁰³ The implication is a subtle one but biting: the royalty has a long tradition of robbing the people, and they are beginning to recognise it.

One of the most significant class distinctions that *Famous Victories* does not omit, or romanticise, is the privilege of the nobility, particularly in the case of the monarchy, and, in this respect, the representation of the nobility is less than favourable. In spite of Prince Henry's claims that all would be kings if his father was dead, he understands and exploits the privilege that his position brings. Prince Henry is able to persist in his robbing 'jests' and cause disruption because his royal blood protects him from the consequences of these actions, a fact that he is all too aware of. When John Oldcastle congratulates the Prince on his liberty, mentioning that he was going to visit him in prison, Prince Henry replies with, '[t]o visit me, didst thou not know that I am a/ Princes son, why tis inough for me to looke into a prison,/ though I come not in my selfe'.²⁰⁴ Prince Henry overtly states his awareness of the double standard in the law, and exploits this to its full advantage. However, in stating this he

²⁰² Smith, 'King-Commoner Encounters in the Popular Ballad', p. 306.

²⁰³ William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part One*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: Norton & Company, 2005), p. 1194.

²⁰⁴ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. C1r.

not only flippantly boasts such a claim to John Oldcastle but also the audience, informing them directly about this double standard. The significance of Hertel's observation that theatre hinted at the inner workings of the state, thus becomes apparent, as it demonstrates not only a functioning state, but the dysfunction it contains as well. He notes that:

...it shows how the state works, anatomizes it, and exposes its web of entangled interests and strategic plots – and thus turns politics into something which is no longer divinely ordained and represented by God's royal representative on earth but which can, and must be, negotiated. Thus it makes it possible to criticise monarchy and other forms of political structures.²⁰⁵

Thus, the refusal of *Famous Victories* to depict class unity and romanticise the relationship between the nobility and the common man serves a vital function as, by displaying a flawed community that adhered to the structure of Elizabethan society, the playwright is able to reveal how such a system works and the discrimination and privileges that are created because of this.

Famous Victories contains many examples of the abuse of such status, often highlighting these moments through dialogue or juxtaposition. The fact that Cuthbert Cutter is arrested for the robbery is a very deliberate and careful decision. As the lowest member of the group his treatment and imprisonment becomes a foil to the trivial inconveniences the prince must suffer as a result of his crimes. The fact that Cutter is arrested for the robbery while Prince Henry and John Oldcastle remain free, despite hints that the Carriers recognised them, shows his lack of status, while respect and fear of the prince guarantees his liberty. Even when Prince Henry must be detained, sometimes reluctantly, by officials his treatment is more preferable to the treatment of others who committed the same crimes. When Prince Henry is first

²⁰⁵ Hertel, *Staging England*, p. 27.

arrested by the Mayor and Sheriff of London they are brought before Henry IV for such an action:

What although he be a rude
youth, and likely to giue occasion, yet you might haue con-
sidered that he is a Prince, and my sonne, and not to be
halled to prison by euery subiect.²⁰⁶

Here it is made very apparent that status does have an effect on the application of the law, and the two officials are only excused, despite the protests of Exeter and Oxford, after the Mayor's account that 'for our own safegard we/ sent him to ward, where he wanteth nothing that is fit for/ his grace, and your Maiesties sonne'.²⁰⁷ There are no such comforts or protests offered for Cutter when he is arrested: it is not mere detainment he faces, but the death penalty. The contrast in the treatment of the prince and Cutter reaches its height when the prince finds him during his trial and does not recognise the situation, or understand the severity of the penalty he faces. Upon finding his man he scolds him for 'loytering', not comprehending that he is being detained and sentenced, then, when he understands the situation, he offers only the weak defence that 'he did it but in iest' and finally demands that the law makes an exception for his own wishes.²⁰⁸ By the scene's end both are taken to prison, yet even in their respective prisons there is a clear class distinction. Prince Henry is taken to the Fleet, a privately owned gentlemen's prison affording relative luxury for the rich, while Cutter is sent to the hellish conditions of Newgate prison.²⁰⁹ These factors all indicate to the audience that justice is not fair for all. As Janet Clare observes, '[t]he message is unequivocal: there is one law for the powerful, another

²⁰⁶ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. B1v.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., sig. B2r.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., sig. B3r.

²⁰⁹ The Fleet was a London prison that was built in 1197 and named for its location by the Fleet River. Newgate was also located in London and built in the twelfth century during the reign of Henry II. It was located on the corner of Newgate street and the Old Bailey, and its miserable conditions, where prisoners were shackled to the walls and often left to starve until their executions, was infamous.

for the powerless: the king is a law unto himself'.²¹⁰ It is significant that the Prince interrupts a trial when he threatens the Lord Chief Justice, as Clare's observation is most evident at this point. The process of a trial was one of the forms those of the lower classes would have been aware of. As Burke notes, the mock trial was an established part of popular culture, reused for a new purpose:

...creators of popular culture took over ready-made forms from the official culture of the Church and the law[...] Ecclesiastical and legal forms also had the great advantage of familiarity. The audience knew the structure of a trial or a litany, they knew what was coming next and so they could concentrate of the message.²¹¹

The trial structure within *Famous Victories* would be well known by each tier of the audience. It begins by taking names and a report of the event, all aspects that would be anticipated by the audience before the familiar, methodical process is rudely overturned by the prince, with his own demands and frivolous concerns. That the audience would have been well acquainted with this process only serves to emphasize the prince's intrusion as they would have been able to anticipate the next step in the court procedure only to have it delayed and then completely cancelled, robbing Derick of the justice he had craved. That such order is destroyed so thoroughly by the Prince's disruption, demonstrates just how different the prince's life is from the citizens of London, whilst hinting at the disruptive effect the actions of the nobility has on the people.

The scene immediately following this, points directly to royal freedom from the law, and the double standards that occur in its execution, when John Cobbler and Derick discuss the event:

DERICK. Why *Iohn* thou maist see what princes be in choler,
A Iudge a boxe on the eare, Ile tel thee *Iohn*, O *Iohn*,
I would not haue done it for twentie shillings.

²¹⁰ Clare, 'Medley History', p. 106.

²¹¹ Burke, *Popular Culture*, pp. 171-172.

IOHN. No nor I, there had bene no way but one with vs,
We should haue bene hangde.²¹²

Finally, the two common characters give voice to what has been demonstrated on the stage throughout the play: that the law is not applied equally, highlighting it for the audience without making direct accusations about the flaws of the system itself. These characters also provide a foil to Prince Henry's treasonous threats through their guarded speech when simply describing Prince Henry's inappropriate behaviour. An element of guarded fear is evident when they speak; however Prince Henry never considers self-censorship. Instead, threats towards his father are made openly in front of his men and he brings a dagger in his hand to the court; despite the implications, he still obtains full forgiveness at the hands of his father, not once but twice, where others would have been sentenced to death. Consequences only apply to the lower social tiers of society, never for the prince.

Behind the Laughter

It appears then that *Famous Victories* serves a vital function in revealing the corruption and the biased privilege that exists within society and the justice systems by refusing to idealise the depiction of the nobility's relationship to the people. As stated previously, a strong class segregation pervades the play, particularly in the division of scenes. The scenes of the nobility depict the great deeds of that class with suitable drama, whilst the common characters must instead inhabit 'low comic' roles to provide entertainment in between. Such segregation matches with Caralyn Bialo's observations of the division of high and low culture after the Reformation as neoclassical and aesthetic tastes became strongly associated with the higher classes

²¹² Anon, *Famous Victories*, sig. B4r.

whilst that which could be enjoyed at all social levels ‘became associated with the “rude and popular” sort’.²¹³ Such was the fate of comedy, which did not appeal to neoclassical sensibilities. Sir Philip Sidney, famously complained against the mingling of these two traditions in his famous *The Defense of Posey* stating that:

...all their Playes bee neither right Tragedies, nor right Comedies, mingling Kinges and Clownes, not because the matter so carrieth it, but thrust in the Clowne by the head and shoulders to play a part in maiesticall matters, with neither decencie nor discretion: so as neither the admiration and Commiseration, nor the right sportfulnesse is by their mongrel Tragicomedie obtained.²¹⁴

Sidney’s complaint and demand for segregation does not merely apply to the mixing of genres but of the very tiers and sensibilities of society. The kings were figures of noble, political thinking while, as Maya Mathur observes, the figure of the clown became synonymous with the people and plebeian revolt.²¹⁵ However, despite uses of comedy to ridicule and undermine the ‘lower sorts’ and a disregard for the art of the genre by some members of the aristocracy, such as Sidney, Tudor comedy existed in many sophisticated forms and had substantial utility as a satiric tool. As Robert Hornback, observes, Tudor comedy advanced quicker and further than English tragedy ‘forming a more distinctively English contribution to literature’.²¹⁶ Hornback goes on to note that it is in fact the very blending of ‘kings and clowns’ that gives such plays their strength. Citing Jeremy Lopez’s *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama* he notes:

Lopez recognizes, for instance, that comedy of the Elizabethan and Jacobean period is “terrifically complicated” partly because “seriousness and ridicule, artifice and reality, fixed representations

²¹³ Caralyn Bialo, ‘Popular Performance, the Broadside Ballad, and Ophelia’s Madness’, *SEL: Studies in English Literature*, 53 (2013), 293-309 (p. 294).

²¹⁴ Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesie* (London, 1595; STC: 22535), sig. I1r-I1v.

²¹⁵ Mathur, ‘An Attack of the Clowns’, p. 35.

²¹⁶ Robert Hornback, *The English Clown Tradition from the Middle Ages to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2009), p. 3.

and irony exist in [such] vital tension” as authors and actors sought “to indulge and delight in complexity”.²¹⁷

Indeed Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge offer similar praise of *Famous Victories*’ hybridity and state that ‘[o]ne of the undoubted achievements of *Famous Victories* lies in its mingling of clowns and conquest at a time when “heroicall histories” contained few examples of low-life humours’.²¹⁸ As Karen Oberer observes, this genre of dramatic hybridity would prove to be a specialty of the Queens Men, who understood the dramatic potential of this device.²¹⁹ *Famous Victories*, however, as the first history play experimented with this blend of genres, and was likely to have been influenced by the comedic miracle plays it had evolved from.²²⁰

Comedy serves a specific and complex purpose within the play and its dominance in the ‘low scenes’ reveals that there is much more at work in the themes of the play than first appears. Corbin and Sedge note this and in reference to the play note Simon Shepherd’s observation that ‘it is important to recognise how the interspersing of the action with comic scenes offers not “relief” but a balance of perception to the audience’.²²¹ To discuss only the ‘serious scenes’ is to merely discuss half the play and reveal half the meaning. However, this is not to say that the ‘high’ scenes of the court completely lack satiric comedy, to the contrary, Henry V and the Dauphin both use comic word play and jests in their first political negotiation. The Dauphin makes a presentation of tennis balls for a new king ‘more fitter for a Tennis Court/ Then a field, and more fitter for a Carpet then the Camp’ and Henry V replies ‘that in steed of balles of leather,/ We wil tosse him balles of

²¹⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

²¹⁸ Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge, ‘Introduction’, in *The Oldcastle Controversy: ‘John Oldcastle’ and ‘The Famous Victories of Henry V’*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 1-35 (p. 25).

²¹⁹ Oberer, ‘Appropriations of Popular Tradition’, p. 171.

²²⁰ See the first chapter of this thesis for a more detailed comparison between *Famous Victories* and the miracle play tradition.

²²¹ Corbin and Sedge, *The Oldcastle Controversy*, p. 27.

brasse and yron'.²²² The use of witty wordplay in such a serious negotiation, particularly one that results in the declaration of war, and use of sport imagery suggests that the nobility make light of war, using it as a means to defend their pride whilst literally 'toying' with men's lives. Such commentary is highlighted by the fact that this interaction interrupts a serious tactical discussion of the practicalities of claiming France, and Henry V's expression of his disappointment at the Dauphin's absence from the field:

Why then he doth me great iniurie,
I thought that he + I shuld haue plaid at tennis together,
Therefore I haue brought tennis balles for him,
But other maner of ones then he sent me.²²³

While such critiques are to be found in Henry V's scenes, such as the bias of privilege, his role as a thief and his wilful ignorance of the lives of the working man, it is in fact in the 'low scenes' that the most biting critiques are to be found and the more complex imagery and doubling within the play can finally be revealed, disguised by a thin veil of 'rude' humour.

Doubling and repetition occurs repeatedly throughout *Famous Victories*; significant lines become refrains throughout the dialogue ('we would all be kings', 'who am I?', 'taking fellow'), the same actions are repeated (the prince is arrested twice, forgiven twice, forgets himself in a rage twice) and, particularly after the prince's reformation, for each scene the nobility dominates a 'lowly comic mirror' is provided. As noted in my introduction, criticism of *Famous Victories* has traditionally offered scathing critiques of the play itself, stating that it is not worth critical discussion. The sentiments of Madeleine Doran in 1954, that the play represents a 'stringing together of events in mere temporal succession', are also to be

²²² Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. D3v.

²²³ Ibid., sig. E3r.

found as recently as 2005 when James Shapiro pronounced it to be ‘more a series of skits than a coherent play’.²²⁴ Irving Ribner offers, perhaps, the most damning criticism of the play:

Interspersed with this historical matter drawn from Holinshed’s version of Hall, there are many scenes of pure comic buffoonery, obviously designed for Tarleton, with no real relation to what little plot there is. As drama the play is *formless and incoherent* and, in general, worthless.²²⁵

As can be seen from these examples the same criticisms are reoccurring in each fleeting analysis of this ‘worthless’ play: it is incoherent, formless and disconnected in its structure. Ribner’s view in particular is alarmingly similar to Sidney’s disgust at ‘the mixing of kings and clowns’; the comic scenes provide mere entertainment with no bearing on the main action of the play, thus creating such an ‘incoherent’ work. Whilst critics of *Famous Victories* have claimed the play lacks cohesion and instead presents itself as nothing more than a series of unconnected skits or episodes, they demonstrate a lack of understanding of the potential capacities of *Famous Victories*: a play where everything happens twice.

While such repetition may be taken as amateurish and reveal the limited nature of the playwright, or at least the damaged and incomplete nature of the publication itself, it is this very repetition and doubling of action that draws the ‘unconnected scenes’ into one complete whole with a clear message. The aimless structure that Shapiro perceived, led to his claim that ‘*The Famous Victories* had no ambition to leave audiences wrestling with any great moral issue and it certainly didn’t make any intellectual demands on them’. However it is the reverse that proves

²²⁴ Madeleine Doran, *Endeavours of Art: A Study of Form in Elizabethan Drama* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1954), p. 295; James Shapiro, *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare* (London: Faber and Faber, 2011) (original work published in 2005), p. 87.

²²⁵ Irving Ribner, *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare* (Abington: Routledge, 2005), p. 69.

true.²²⁶ *Famous Victories* is not overt in its message, and it does present its scenes in ‘temporal succession’ without a clear linking thread leaving its audience to connect the scenes themselves. However, once the doubling of scenes is observed the controversial message of the play appears at once providing a bleak critique of the social hierarchy through its comic material.

The use of these comic scenes in *Famous Victories* has been noted by a limited number of critics, and some parallels between the ‘high’ and ‘low’ scenes have already been identified; however, due to the limited nature of the criticism surrounding this play the implications of these connections have not been fully realised. Champion, Clare, Nichols and Oberer all note the theatrical importance of comedy in *Famous Victories*. Oberer and Champion both note that the comic scenes set in France portray the grim reality of ‘noble war’ for the popular characters.

Oberer notes that:

Comic scenes and stock characters strike a delicate balance in the Queen’s Men’s histories: one which alternately draws the audience into the action of the play and also allows viewers to be critical of these same events.²²⁷

In the midst of battle, however, Oberer notes that the jests take a dark turn as the popular characters ‘deal with their fear through clowning and wit’ on the battlefield. Here the use of comedy is not intended to degrade or ridicule the efforts of these men in war, but instead to show the horrors they have been led to. In a similar way, Oberer notes that this also leads the audience to question the men who comprise the army:

What are a cobbler, a pewterer, and a clown doing amidst serious battle? Why is the Captain so intent on pressing a shoemaker into service (D4v)? This act of conscription implies desperation on the

²²⁶ Shapiro, *A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 99.

²²⁷ Oberer, ‘Appropriations of the Popular Tradition’, p. 172.

part of the English forces. Perhaps Henry's victory is not as certain as the play's reference to providence suggests.²²⁸

Here, Oberer notes that the situation of these comic types in the battle leads to a serious critique of the nature of the war itself.

Although comedy provided entertainment for the audience it could also be used to soften and hide critiques and, as Clare notes, its use to avoid censorship should not be ignored.²²⁹ Indeed it should be noted that the positioning of this comic scene allows for a critique of the nobility's power over the people, and their thoughtlessness in exerting this authority with haste and little care. Henry V declares war in haste based on an insult to his pride, leaving him little time to prepare forces for the battle. Having declared such an act in the heat of the moment he sends the messenger back to France noting 'I would be there before him, if it were possible' before hastily gathering an army.²³⁰ It is no coincidence that this scene is followed by the 'rag-tag' conscription scene that Oberer describes. While Henry V's speech is exciting and passionate, demonstrating jingoistic English pride and determination, it is immediately juxtaposed by a comic scene of cowardly soldiers who are completely unprepared for war. As John Cobbler begs to stay at home, he is comically interrupted by the ridiculous Derick. While the stage directions offer little clue as to his costume, the reaction of John's wife provides an idea of how comical he must appear:

He tell you, come ye cloghead,
What do you with my potlid? Heare you,
Will you haue it rapt about your pate?
*(She beateth him with her potlid).*²³¹

²²⁸ Ibid., p. 176.

²²⁹ Clare, 'Medley History', p. 103.

²³⁰ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. D3v.

²³¹ Ibid., sig. D4v.

Appearing eager for the fight and armed with a woman's potlid for a shield – it is also to be imagined that Derick's costume in this scene may contain other makeshift weapons or armour – Derick becomes a laughable parody of a soldier that represents how unprepared the English are for war in a visually striking way.²³² During the slapstick attack of Cobbler's wife he is unable to defend himself properly leading to a second attack at which point he informs the Captain that he should '[p]resse her for a souldier, I warrant you,/ She will do as much good as her husband and I too'.²³³ That a woman is able to best one of England's soldiers, and is jokingly offered to join them is a more striking demonstration of how ill-equipped the English side really is than Henry V's technical discussion of the armies, where he states '[t]hey are a hundred thousand,/ And we fortie thousand, ten to one'.²³⁴ When looking back over history with the knowledge of the outcome, the urgency and threat of the situation fades; however, the threat is made real once more, as the dramatist allows the audience to connect to two likeable characters who are able to suggest in their manner and appearance just how slim the chance of English victory truly was.

There is a repetitive structure to *Famous Victories* where the actions of the nobility are repeated throughout the course of a comic side plot, by two popular characters. Although this provides ample opportunity for humour, Oberer notes that '[t]he popular dramatic elements in particular were used to negotiate a primarily critical space within the plays' historical, even propagandistic, content'.²³⁵ Oberer builds upon Clare's observation that the comic scenes could be used to escape censorship and instead suggests that it is the 'low' quality of the scenes that allow for

²³² The SQM project incorporated this visual joke in their performance of the play, Peter Cockett, *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth, Performing the Queen's Men*, University of Toronto, 2007, DVD.

²³³ Anon, *Famous Victories*, sig. D4v.

²³⁴ Ibid., sig. E4r.

²³⁵ Oberer, 'Appropriations of the Popular Tradition', p. 172.

a more thoughtful social criticism. Indeed, the prevalence of these high and low scenes which mirror each other, certainly suggests that a deeper reading may be warranted. Louise Nichols notes a great number of parallels that can be found within the play itself, although a small number remain unconvincing.²³⁶ However, one that is particularly noteworthy, is the double rejection that occurs in scene nine where Henry V's old companions reject the thief only to be rejected by Henry V himself. Nichols notes that, '[t]he similarity between the two rejections has an effect on the way we view the actions of both the new king and his old companions'.²³⁷ Nichols suggests that this repetition is intended to strengthen the connection between Henry V and his old companions by showing how they react to their new situation in a similar way:

Henry's acts align him with this lower class of characters, suggesting that he too responds to his exalted position by distancing himself from those who do not share with him the same social sphere.²³⁸

The repetition of the action certainly invites such a comparison revealing that each character was only using those below them for their own gains before cruelly rejecting them; however, it is Nichols' observation of the connection between the character of Henry V and the thief that proves more interesting:

The play suggests a closer relationship between these two than simply servant and master since the actions of the "the theefe" run parallel to the actions of Henry in the first few scenes as though one could almost be taken for the other.²³⁹

Although Nichols goes on to suggest that this connection demonstrates that Prince Henry is one of the people – a flawed argument as discussed earlier in this chapter –

²³⁶ For example, the parallels Nichols' observes between the thief's freedom and Henry's role as the successor, the Lord Chief Justice claiming himself to be unworthy as John does and Henry V's refusal to surrender mirroring Derick's comic sword routine each require further explanation that could not be afforded in the limited space of the chapter.

²³⁷ Nichols, 'The Heroic Identity of the Prince', p. 167.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid., p. 165.

the observation itself is still a valid one. The prince and the thief may not be interchangeable, particularly in terms of their class distinctions; however, there is a strong connection between them. Both are referred to as 'taking fellows', both are arrested and taken to their respective prisons in scene four at the end of the thief's trial and the thief's first appearance in scene two, mirrors the action of Prince Henry in scene one as both men encounter the victims they robbed, albeit with differing results.

While Nichols speaks only of the similarities these two characters share, it is indeed the very fact that they are not 'interchangeable' that provides the sting in the satiric point. The prince is just as much a thief as Cutter is, and will continue to be so long after his reformation, but the difference is that Prince Henry is of royal blood. At once the characters are demonstrated to be the exact same and complete opposites of each and all because of their class, and in a way that extends far beyond their treatment within the justice system, but by society and the history books. John Cobler's description of Henry V as a 'taking fellow' is an accurate characterisation as throughout the play he takes gold at Gad's Hill, his father's crown, the previously stolen power of the monarch, men for soldiers, the crown of France and finally Princess Katherine.²⁴⁰ While the thief actually makes an effort to reform his ways, claiming that he will go back to his old master, the prince does not follow through with his reformation to actually transform his character; however, he falls under no pressure to do so. When he takes men from their homes, including the reformed thief, for the purposes of war he will only be praised for such an action, when he takes the crown from his father's bedside it was only an innocent mistake and when

²⁴⁰ It must be noted that in the chronicles, Henry IV usurped the throne from Richard II, a fact that Henry V makes reference to when he claims '[h]owsoever you came by it, I know not,/ But now I haue it from you, and from you I wil keepe it' reminding the audience of his father's own theft of the crown and, through his own wilful ignorance of his father's acquisition of the crown, his complicity in this 'theft'; Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. C4v.

he takes the power of monarchy from the French King and it is his right and duty to take it from the 'usurped Frenchman', despite his refusal to discover the history of his own 'usurped' right to the crown. Despite the fact that Henry V takes just as much as Cutter does, if not more considering the larger scale and impact of his actions, he is not known as a thief, indeed, he is celebrated for these deeds, his 'famous victories'. Men like Cutter, however, despite their similarities are doomed to become lost to the tide of history and forgotten. His thefts are 'low' but Henry V's are noble, and it is finally in *Famous Victories*, where their dual scenes, character mirroring and strong connection, reminds the audience of history's bias and that Henry V, as in his first appearance in the play, is just as much a thief as Cutter.

While a strong connection and dualism is established between the Prince and the thief in the first half of *Famous Victories*, this becomes less prominent as the play progresses and as Cutter's role becomes greatly reduced in the action of the play until he disappears completely. A second character instead replaces him, offering a second point of comparison for the audience: Derick the clown. The effect is a similar one, but is all the more biting for its implications. As with Cutter, Derick occupies a much lower tier than Henry V; however he becomes a parody of the nobility and their relationship with the common man simultaneously. Champion notes that '[t]he clown Dericke, for another, is a walking parody of aristocratic disdain in his first appearance'.²⁴¹ This is indeed true from his first knowing joke that '[a]m I a Clowne, sownes maisters,/ Do Clownes go in silke apparell?/ I am sure all we gentlemen Clownes in Kent scant go so/ Well'.²⁴² Playing a poor carrier and presumably dressed in fitting attire for this class, Derick's offence is extremely comical as he gestures to a costume that is unlikely to contain such silks and is

²⁴¹ Champion, 'Perspective and Political Ideology', p. 9.

²⁴² Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. A4r.

instead more suited to the clown, Tarlton, who was playing this role.²⁴³ The character of Derick throughout *Famous Victories* acts as if he were a nobleman which clashes sharply with his reality. He imagines himself to be of a higher class, however when these actions and opinions are voiced by one so low in society it not only creates comedy through the character's delusions but also safely transfers the actions of the nobility into the comic scenes, offering them for both critique and ridicule. However, this comedic point is not merely confined to Derick's introduction, it is instead the very essence of his character. As early as scene five, after the thief has completed his major part in the action, Derick becomes a prominent presence throughout the play. After the Prince has given the Lord Chief Justice the infamous box on the ear in scene four, Derick reappears in scene five with the intention of recreating this moment, taking on the part of the prince himself. He mirrors the deeds of Prince Henry, but on a much smaller scale, establishing a model for his action throughout the rest of play with each of the Prince's scenes becoming mirrored by Derick's 'low' re-enactment.

This continues into the next two scenes where the disagreement and reconciliation between Prince Henry and Henry IV in scenes six and eight, are mirrored in a slapstick, comedic manner by Derick and John before reaching a final conclusion. This continues into the second part of the play as Derick's enthusiasm for the fields of France, despite his laughable lack of preparation for war, reflects Henry V's same eagerness despite the low number of soldiers at his disposal or any appearance of an advantage. As Oberer notes, there is a further parallel in these scene:

²⁴³ As Tarlton was famous for his interaction with the theatre's audience, it is likely that such questions are intended to rouse a response from the audience such as a collective 'yes', increasing the impact of the comedy.

The viewers would likely recognize the same outrage that King Henry feels; however, the viewers would likely recognize a comic connection between the underlying personal motivations of King Henry's vengefulness and of Derick's greed.²⁴⁴

Certainly, Henry V thinks only of gaining land in France, whilst Derick considers the prizes that might be scavenged from the battlefield. The end of the play offer this juxtaposition of scenes as Derick tricks a French soldier into surrender and begins to steal the shoes and clothing from the dead men, while Henry V uses manipulative tricks in his political negotiations with the French King to secure a better deal.

Nichols notes the structuring of these scenes has a particular message:

The honourable victories and all its advantages that Henry has won for his country is brought down from the idealistic to the realistic with this dishonourable treatment of those who died in battle [...] Once again, the comic material opens a gap between heroism and selfish opportunism.²⁴⁵

However, what is particularly important to note is that this comparison, of each man taking from injured France, is not a levelling moment; there is glory in Henry V's promised return to England as he ends the play looking forward to a desirable bride, while Derick and John invite judgement from the audience and are forced to sneak back home in disgrace. Each takes full advantage of the wounded country and its people; however, only one set of acts will be remembered in the history books despite the fact that, as the play sets out, there is little difference between the actions of these men at all.

Finally, it is Derick's satiric role as a clown that provides the most significant commentary in the play. As noted by Maya Mathur and Mildred E. Davis, the use of comedy, particularly the figure of the clown, was often used to ridicule, and

²⁴⁴ Oberer, 'Appropriations of the Popular Tradition', p. 176.

²⁴⁵ Nichols, 'The Heroic Identity of the Prince', p. 169.

simultaneously neutralise, the threat of peasant uprising.²⁴⁶ The clowns used in such scenes are, what Hornback defines as the ‘natural fool’ as opposed to the ‘artificial wit’ which became more popular at the beginning of the Jacobean era:

[Whereas the innocent fool was] a butt who was generally laughed at for mental deficiencies, the artificial fool distinguished himself and his fooling with his clever, bitter wit, as he provoked laughter at others. Thus, whereas the innocent natural fool was helpless dependent, and consequently could often be depicted as sweet and pathetic even when he was unintentionally insulting, the artificial fool was capable and characterized by his consistent and intentional bitterness.²⁴⁷

By using a ‘natural fool’ as the leader or spokesperson for a peasant rebellion, the audience is encouraged to laugh at his mistakes, and associate such foolishness with the complaints of the common man. However, Mathur continues that there are also examples where ‘rather than invoking contemptuous laughter, stage clowns could function as critics of economic inequality’.²⁴⁸ Clowns and fools had the ability to speak of the issues of the day and not always to discourage complaint from the lower orders. As Hornback notes, Tarlton was famous for playing the ‘innocent fool’ attracting the laughter of the audience towards himself; however, through his connection and mirroring of Henry V he instead brings the actions and behaviour of the nobility into the comic scenes and, acting as proxy, directs ridicule towards the higher classes instead.

Much of the comedy, and social commentary, of *Derick*, stems from the clash of cultures that occur in his interactions with John Cobbler. Having resigned his occupation of carrier, Derick remains with John, claiming that he will become a cobbler too and take advantage of his hospitality. At this point Derick has already begun to mirror the actions of the prince and is already established as an aristocratic

²⁴⁶ Mathur, ‘An Attack of the Clowns’, p. 35; Mildred E. Davis, ‘The serious use of Comedy in Some Elizabethan Drama’, MA Dissertation, Queen’s University Belfast (1986), p. 60.

²⁴⁷ Hornback, *The English Clown Tradition*, p. 151.

²⁴⁸ Mathur, ‘An Attack of the Clowns’, p. 39.

parody of the elite from his introduction. Acting as proxy for a member of the nobility, his reaction to John Cobbler's hospitality becomes a comic parody of the king-commoner encounter that occurs in the popular ballad tradition. After the trial, Derick renounces his occupation, declaring that he will instead take up John's occupation after meeting him:

DER. Ile dwell with thee and be a Cobler.
 IOHN. With me, alas I am not able to keepe thee,
 Why, thou wilt eate me out of doores.
 DER. Oh Iohn, no Iohn, I am none of these great slou-
 ching fellowes, that deuoure these great peeces of beefe and
 brewes, alas a trifle serues me, a Woodcocke, a Chicken,
 or a Capons legge, or any such little thing serues me.
 IOHN. a Capon, why man, I cannot get a Capon once a
 yeare, except it be at Christmas, at some other mans house,
 for we Coblers be glad of a dish of rootes.²⁴⁹

After announcing his intention to stay with John, Derick soon demonstrates that while he is eager to participate in this lifestyle he is completely ignorant of the common man's difficult life. Similar to the kings in the ballads who declare the simple life to be the best, Derick is eager to take part in the 'pleasures of the simple life'; however, as *Famous Victories* makes it clear, this is only so long as the harsh realities of such a lifestyle remain hidden. Here the ridicule that the 'innocent fool' invites is turned upon the ignorance of the nobility, highlighting the great disparity between the classes: Derick's idea of a simple life involves more food than the Cobbler could ever expect to see in a year. 'The simple life' that is romanticised in the ballad traditions is destroyed, instead replaced by the Cobbler's harsh reality that he must eat poorly and has very little to spare, whilst the scene ridicules the social unawareness of the higher classes in this matter. This parody continues into scene seven after Derick has received the hospitality of the cobbler and his wife:

she cald me in to dinner.

²⁴⁹ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. B4v.

John, marke the tale wel Iohn, and when I was set,
 She brought me a dish of rootes, and a peece of barrel butter
 therein: and she is a verie knave,
 And thou a drab if thou take her part.²⁵⁰

Here Derick takes offence when he is served the very food John promised to provide.

As well as deriving more humour from the ignorance of the higher classes, this also continues the parody of the idealised king-commoner encounter. Such ballads followed a very formulaic structure that the audience would have been familiar with. An essential part of the tale, is where the subject plays host to the king, and provides some humble food before a second feast is revealed with richer food and often poached cuts of the king's own venison. John Cobbler fails to provide a second richer feast, because this traditional narrative is unrealistic. However, Derick's reaction to the meagre meal suggests that, similar to the ballads, he considered the promise of roots only a humble show before the true dinner would be revealed. The scene, and short subplot, concludes with a final display of Derick's obliviousness to the realities of other classes when he refuses John's peace offering and instead claims 'Then Ile go home before, and breake all the glasse/ windowes'.²⁵¹ Derick's threat is particularly humorous because, once again, he has overestimated the luxury that a cobbler can afford. Glass windows were expensive and as such were rarely seen in houses, with wooden shutters being used instead. As has been previously established in the play, the cobbler is unable to afford chicken, so the threat falls humorously flat because the cobbler has no such windows to fear for.

In conclusion, *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* was a significant play in the representation of Tudor social hierarchy, even if it did not transgress class boundaries in the text itself. By providing the people with a history that they could

²⁵⁰ Ibid., sig. C3v.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

access and representing each social tier on the stage, *Famous Victories* creates a certain level of apparent transparency to the inner workings of the state that, most importantly, allowed for its critique. Refusing to fully romanticise the nobility and their relationship to the people, the resulting history play genre, as opposed to the ballads, was able to adhere to the dominant ideologies of class rigidity, whilst demonstrating the inequality and ignorance that exists within such a system. As poor and rich learnt from each other in the ballads, similarly, *Famous Victories* was able to prove a teaching moment for each social tier through its faithful depiction of class relationships: the lower tiers are presented with a nobility that do not always act heroically or necessarily show a love for their people, while the nobility is shown that the 'simple life' is a harsher existence than it is portrayed to be in other works.

Finally, the very structure of *Famous Victories* proves itself to be particularly suited to its class commentary, despite previous critics' concerns. The extensive mirroring and repetition that occurs throughout the play is its strength, not a weakness, and a cohesive narrative structure is formed as each 'noble' deed finds its 'low' echo. In particular, the reclamation of the low clown character, previously used to ridicule popular voices, represents *Famous Victories'* most cunning tactic, as Derick mirrors the actions of the prince, effectively bringing a representation of the nobility into the low scenes without overtly claiming to do so, and thereby drawing ridicule to this class by proxy. Depictions of society in both the elite chronicles and popular ballads were problematic, distorting reality to adhere to the dominant ideology of the time. To offer a truer depiction of class relations a new genre needed to be created, one that would educate, and appeal to, high and low alike.

Chapter Three

Tyrannical Youth: Fears for a Young King

For millennia, kings have inspired and been the subject of numerous legends and stories, from the heroic King Arthur to the wise King Cnut. At his best, a king was a wise and noble leader, a protector and a brave soldier; however, at his worst he could be fickle, a coward or even a tyrant. As the path of succession was determined through the bloodline, the people had no control or influence over who would be chosen to lead the country next, and attempts to alter this succession were met by rebellion and bloodshed. If the people were ruled by a weak or corrupt king, they had no power to change this. As such, the king's subjects held no influencing factor over their leader's actions, behaviour or who would inherit the crown next; this created anxiety surrounding the discussions of the monarchy's line of succession and the behaviour of kings.²⁵² Although the history plays are often held to be the pinnacle celebration of English history, it should be noted that many of the plays concern the rule of kings who were deposed during their reign or displayed transgressive traits. The most well-known of these is perhaps Shakespeare's *Richard III* (c. 1593); however the anonymous *Thomas of Woodstock* (c.1592), Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* (c.1592) and Shakespeare's *Richard II* (c.1595) also focus on the corruption and fall of England's kings. *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* (c.1586), in contrast to this, depicts the reign of a successful and beloved king of England and is particularly noteworthy as the play begins when the king is still a prince which offers a brief look into his youthful, and more transgressive, activities.

²⁵² It should also be noted that the concept of resistance theory - the question of whether there were any circumstances where revolt against a king was morally right - was also a topic that was debated in pamphlet literature during this time. See Christopher Goodman's *How superior powers ought to be obeyed of their subjects* (1558) and John Ponet's *Short treatise of politike power* (1556) for examples of this debate.

In this chapter I will provide a detailed study of the character of Prince Henry as he is depicted in *Famous Victories* to determine to what extent his rebellious, youthful behaviour could be considered tyrannical or dangerous and suggest the contexts within which it should be read. To do this I will briefly discuss the legacy of Henry V and compare how two differing interpretations of the character were created in Prince Henry from *Famous Victories* and Prince Hal from Shakespeare's *Henriad*. In particular I will be comparing to what extent these two characters adhere to the early modern depiction of youth as a time of boldness and rebellion. Throughout this chapter I will be utilising the Alexandra Shephard's *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England*, particularly her second chapter on 'Youthful Excesses and Fraternal Bonding' and Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos' *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England*. In doing so I will demonstrate *Famous Victories*' specific focus on Prince Henry as a youth who must mature and undertake a number of rites of passage through the play, and suggest that what might at first be read as tyrannical behaviour, is instead, as Prince Henry's followers claim, a 'mere trick of youth'.

One Legacy, Two Princes

One need only look at the title of *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* to see how the legacy of Henry V had been integrated into Tudor society. Comparisons to Henry V were used to flatter Henry VIII and Henry V's helmet and shield from the battle of Agincourt were proudly displayed at his tomb in Westminster as his funeral achievements. Jonathan Bate and Dora Thornton note that the final resting place of this king became quite the tourist spot towards the end of the sixteenth century, and that tour guides were even appointed to guide those who paid a penny to view the

sword, shield, saddle and helm that had been used on the battlefield of Agincourt.²⁵³ Raphael Holinshed, Edward Hall and John Stow all wrote favourably of Henry V's legacy in their chronicles, with Hall even naming his chapter on Henry V 'The victorious actes of Kynge Henry the fyfth'.²⁵⁴ These chronicles with their glorious descriptions would prove a common source for the plays based on his life, and it seems that the subject of Henry V's reign was a popular one in particular as at least five plays focusing on Henry V are thought to have been performed during the Elizabethan era.²⁵⁵ Although the chronicles offered positive depictions of Henry V's legacy, it should be noted that the playwrights made full use of their artistic licence to alter the source material to their own purposes and ends. However in the case of the surviving Henry V plays, it can be seen that this is often used to make Henry V a more transgressive character, a decision that is reflected in both *Famous Victories* and Shakespeare's *Henry IV* plays.

It has long been maintained by critics that there are a great deal of similarities between *Famous Victories* and Shakespeare's plays, and, as such, *Famous Victories* has commonly been held to be a source for Shakespeare's later work.²⁵⁶ Indeed the two plays focus on the exact same periods of Henry V's life, depict many of the

²⁵³ Jonathan Bate, Dora Thornton, *Shakespeare: Staging the World* (London : British Museum, 2012), pp. 107-9.

²⁵⁴ Edward Hall, *The Vnion of the Two Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancastre and Yorke* (London, 1550; STC: 12723), p. A5v.

²⁵⁵ These include *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, *Henry IV Part One* and *Two*, *Henry V* and a lost play recorded in Philip Henslowe's account book, 'harey the v', which was performed at the Rose Theatre. While it has been suggested that this play may have been *Famous Victories* or perhaps even an early *Henry V* by a number of critics, the difference in time between the two performances suggests this was not the case. Further to this, in her essay 'Henry of Monmouth and the Gown-of-Needles' Sally Robertson Romotsky notes that the costume inventory of the acting troop calls for a 'gown of needles', a garment associated with Henry V, but separate from the 'cloak of needles' called for in *Famous Victories*; Sally Robertson Romotsky, 'Henry of Monmouth and the Gown-of-Needles', *Intertexts*, 8 (2004) 155-72 p. 161

²⁵⁶ Janet Clare, 'Medley History: *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* to *Henry V*', *Shakespeare Survey*, 63, (2010), 102-113, (p. 104); C.A. Greer, 'Shakespeare's Use of "*The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*"', *Notes and Queries*, 1 (1954), 238-240 (p. 239); Bernard M. Ward, 'The *Famous Victories of Henry V*: Its Place in Elizabethan Dramatic Literature', *The Review of English Studies*, 4 (1928), 270-94 (p. 270).

same events and characters and both end with Henry V's promised marriage to Katherine. Each series also shares similarities in their themes of rebirth and transformation as the unruly prince is brought back to his noble status and proves himself to be worthy of his birthright, interpreting the stories of the chronicles within the narrative framework of the prodigal son. It has even been suggested in the past that the similarities are so numerous that *Famous Victories* may even be Shakespeare's first attempt at writing what would ultimately become his *Henriad*, although such claims are greatly unsubstantiated and lack evidence outside of some lexiconic similarities.²⁵⁷

Although critical of the literary merits of the play itself, the artistic director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, Gregory Doran, thought that it was important for his cast to have a knowledge of *Famous Victories* and used the text in rehearsals for their most recent production of *Henry IV* (2014). Doran, had his cast rehearse and perform *Famous Victories* to increase their familiarity with the source, and even included a scene from this earlier play, where Prince Henry strikes the Chief Justice, in the middle of *Henry IV, Part One*'s (c.1597) tavern scene (Act 2, scene 4).²⁵⁸ The moment surprised the audience during one of the live performances, eliciting gasps while a shocked silence fell in its wake; within this new context, the overall effect of the scene was quite jarring.²⁵⁹ Although much of the analysis that has surrounded *Famous Victories* has been concerned with demonstrating the similarities between it and Shakespeare's work, such an incident as this demonstrates that the two

²⁵⁷ Seymour M. Pitcher, *The Case for Shakespeare's Authorship of 'The Famous Victories'* (London: Alvin Redman, 1962), p. 6.

²⁵⁸ The original event of the 'boxe on the eare' is to be found in scene four of *Famous Victories* and is based on an event which is retold in John Stow's chronicle. Although the incident is referred to be Falstaff in *Henry IV, Part Two* it is not actually witnessed within the *Henriad*.

²⁵⁹ William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part One*, dir. Gregory Doran (Stratford-upon-Avon: Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company).
[Viewed on: 15/04/14]

depictions of Prince Henry are actually quite distinct and are not easily interchangeable.²⁶⁰ The same action thus takes on a new meaning depending on the nature of the character, their arc and development. In this production, it should be noted that Prince Henry's assault of the Chief Justice character occurs *after* he has already been seen taking an active part in a robbery, started a disruptive riot and been placed under arrest for the safety of the officials involved. Hal, however, by the same point in *1 Henry IV*, has committed no such comparable acts.²⁶¹ Thus placing this attack within Hal's character arc makes it his first, and arguably only, truly transgressive act, whereas the same action performed by Prince Henry is merely the latest in what is becoming an increasingly larger and escalating list of misdeeds.

In *Famous Victories* these transgressions must build to this shocking moment to demonstrate a rebellious prince who has gone too far and is finally being taken in hand as the Chief Justice demonstrates that his behaviour is not acceptable. In this depiction the Chief Justice is allowed to retain his authoritative presence and the prince is corrected for his tyrant-like actions, allowing the scene to maintain a comic element because societal structures have not been threatened. To have this moment contained within *1 Henry IV* and orphaned from this particular character arc gives the moment new meaning and even threatens to change the perception of Hal's character. As it is so unexpected and has no consequences it offers the audience a chance to see Hal's future as a possible, unquestioned tyrant, and provides the originally comic moment with an unintended darker edge.

²⁶⁰ For the purposes of differentiation, in this chapter these two prince characters will be referred to by the informal names given to them by their companions, i.e. the prince of *Famous Victories* will be referred to as Prince Henry and the prince of *Henry IV* as Hal.

²⁶¹ Although he is certainly evading his courtly duties with unsuitable company, Hal plays no direct role in the robbery and actually ensures that Falstaff's stolen loot is returned.

As can be seen, there is a greater difference between these two characters than may be first supposed. Hal certainly appears to represent a positive depiction of Henry V's legacy, whilst Prince Henry embodies the more negative aspects of his character and performs many moral transgressions from the outset of the play. As Janet Clare notes, there is a strong taste of irony when the play entitled *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* begins with the titular prince boasting the success of his latest robbery.²⁶² Indeed one of Prince Henry's first lines is: 'But tell me sirs, thinke you not that it was a villainous/ part of me to rob my fathers Receiuers?'²⁶³ Immediately the audience is presented with the prince's crime and a question that is just as much posed to them as to Prince Henry's companions. In examining the character of Hal in 1 Henry IV, Nicholas Grene notes the shock of the prince acting 'all too much like other men, all too little like the king he is born to be'.²⁶⁴ There is a subversion of expectations when the audience is introduced to the title character of the play that promises the great deeds of a king, to discover the young prince who has not grown into himself yet. Several critics, such as Seymour M. Pitcher in his work *The Case for Shakespeare's Authorship of The Famous Victories*, defend the actions of Prince Henry as a prince with morals. Pitcher suggests that Prince Henry demonstrates his conscience when he worries aloud if his actions were villainous, compassion when he is horrified that one of his men has robbed a poor carrier and an innocent chastity when he claims to enjoy the barmaid only for her conversation.²⁶⁵ However, what Pitcher fails to note is a possible double entendre in Prince Henry

²⁶² Clare, 'Medley History', p. 104.

²⁶³ Anon., *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, (London, 1598; STC: 13072), sig. A2r.

²⁶⁴ Nicholas Grene, *Shakespeare's Serial History Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 218-9.

²⁶⁵ Pitcher, *The Case for Shakespeare's Authorship*, p.88; it is on points such as these that Pitcher bases his argument for Shakespeare's authorship, suggesting that Henry and Hal are more alike in manner than usually acknowledged, and that the last point in particular suggests Prince Henry is a typical Shakespearean hero or youth as he remains chaste.

words: ‘there is a pretie wench/ That can talke well, for I delight as much in their toongs,/ As any part about them’,²⁶⁶ suggesting he may enjoy the barmaid for more than her wit. It seems instead that Pitcher’s description would be better suited to Hal who clearly demonstrates a conscience, compassion and a chaste manner. While Hal is overly familiar and informal in his manner with the people of the tavern, he never displays any interest in the pursuit of women, a fact that leaves him at a disadvantage in *Henry V* (1599) when he must woo Princess Katherine.

It can thus be seen that upon examination, the examples that Pitcher provides to demonstrate Prince Henry’s more innocent, moral nature begin to fall apart. His display of a conscience when he asks if the robbery is villainous appears to be less of a worry and more of a playful boast which is quickly forgotten; it comes across as incredibly insincere if compared to Hal’s own self-questioning and examination during his staged play with Falstaff: ‘Thou art violently carried away from grace:/ [...]Why/ dost thou converse with that trunk of humours’.²⁶⁷ While staged and spoken through the persona of another, Hal’s questioning of his actions and choices is at once more genuine and thorough than the fleeting question which Henry poses, ending with the solemn response to Falstaff’s good natured plea not to banish him: ‘I do; I will’.²⁶⁸ This is in stark contrast to Henry’s flippant and immediate acceptance of Ned’s excuse that his behaviour ‘was but a tricke of youth’.²⁶⁹ In a similarly fickle manner, Prince Henry’s promise to save the thief is also easily forgotten. Pitcher argues that the prince’s resolve and actions to free the man further demonstrate true loyalty to one of his men and a great regard for human life. However such reasoning appears flawed when, after an unsuccessful rescue attempt, the prince never

²⁶⁶ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. A3v.

²⁶⁷ William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part One*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: Norton & Company, 2008), II.4.1428-1432, p. 1219.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. A2r.

mentions the thief, Cuthbert Cutter, again and instead becomes distracted planning his future rule with his remaining men. If compared to Hal's sacrifice of redemptive honour in *1 Henry IV*, Prince Henry's 'compassionate act' is revealed to be more superficial and less selfless than Pitcher suggests. Further to this, a closer reading of the scene reveals Henry's actions to be more ego-centric and concerned with power balances than his friend's life. His concern is rooted in a lack of respect for his supposed authority. He is affronted when the Chief Justice does not respond to his commands, questioning 'Why my Lord, I pray ye who am I?' and, after asking 'shall I haue my man?' growing impatient and demanding that 'I will have him'.²⁷⁰ The man is forgotten in this exchange as the prince becomes obsessed with the lack of obedience to himself and turns the exchange into the site of a power struggle as he attempts to assert his own authority. The attempt to free Cutter is less for the thief's sake, but instead an attempt for the Prince to demonstrate his authority and stroke his own ego.

As can be seen, there is a sizable disparity between the characters of Hal and Prince Henry, and Prince Henry's behaviour in the first half of the play appears more transgressive than Hal's with fewer redeeming features. In her essay on Henry V's cloak of needles, Sally Robertson Romotsky builds her argument upon this, and suggests that Shakespeare probably intended to distance Hal from the more negative associations that Prince Henry from *Famous Victories* carried. One way that she suggests Shakespeare achieved this was by ignoring the legendary 'coat/robe of needles', despite its strong association with Henry V even outside of the theatres and in the original chronicles themselves. Romotsky argues that the physical garment is omitted because costume carries all the meanings endowed upon it and are not easily

²⁷⁰ Ibid., sig. B3v (emphasis added).

forgotten, but were unwanted for Shakespeare's characterisation. As Romotsky notes '[t]he rejection of the garment's vulgar ambition and implied violence is so complete that Shakespeare does not even allude to it in dialogue'.²⁷¹ She later observes that this garment is replaced with a metaphorical costume in *1 Henry IV*: 'With this metaphorical garment Shakespeare begins to create the portrait of Hal as a warrior prince. The impatient ruffian Prince in the ruffian cloak-of-needles is rejected...'.²⁷² As Romotsky suggests, this action appears to have been a deliberate one to create a strong distinction between the two princes and the absence of the slap was likely to have emerged from a similar intention. While based on the same historical figure and stories, Hal and Henry represent two different sides of the same coin, with Hal seeming to offer a more traditional interpretation of Henry V's princehood while Prince Henry provides a more transgressive interpretation of the figure. However, whilst Romotsky suggests that Hal's characterisation was self-consciously created to shake off any leftover associations with the 'ruffian prince', it appears that this characterisation may have influenced the depiction of an alternate historical character in *1 Henry IV*: Henry Percy.

Prince Henry vs. Hotspur

Sir Henry Percy, nicknamed Henry Hotspur for his readiness to quickly advance when fighting on the Scottish border, was the eldest son of the Earl of Northumberland and appointed warden of the east marches. He died during the Percys' rebellion against Henry IV in 1403, at the age of 39.²⁷³ During the rebellion, which provides the climax of *1 Henry IV*, Henry V would have been a young prince

²⁷¹ Romotsky, 'Gown-of-Needles', p. 163.

²⁷² Ibid., pp. 165-166.

²⁷³ Simon Walker, 'Percy, Sir Henry (1364–1403)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21931>, accessed 20 Feb 2017]

at the age of 16. However, in *1 Henry IV* Shakespeare makes both characters the same age for the purposes of comparison. With a truly rebellious and destructive nature, Hotspur is offered as a foil to Hal, suggesting through comparison that Hal's behaviour may merely be harmless, although boisterous, playful antics. Offered as the same age, the two characters are consistently compared to the other, a device which demonstrates the great difference between them. Henry IV wonders at Hotspur's brave acts on the battlefield and enviously calls out:

O that it could be proved
That some night-tripping fairy had exchanged
In cradle-clothes our children where they lay,
And call'd mine Percy, his Plantagenet!²⁷⁴

It can be seen that the two figures are deliberately offered up for a self-conscious comparison, with a reminder of their similar ages. Henry IV thinks back to when they were still in the cradle, emphasising their youth by a similar means to the nurse's youthful stories about Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* (c.1595), stressing her immaturity and youthful years.

Although Hotspur was aged thirty-nine during the rebellion, he is defined as a youthful figure throughout the play and is said to be the same age as the young Hal. As Ilana Ben-Amos notes Galenic physiology was still followed into the seventeenth century. This mode of thinking stated that youth was governed by red choler, which was associated with fire, the summer, hotness and dryness.²⁷⁵ Indeed later in the play when Glendower compares Hotspur to his cousin Mortimer, he uses similar language to describe him: 'Come, come, Lord Mortimer; you/ are as slow/ As hot Lord Percy is on fire to go'.²⁷⁶ Hotspur is thus directly associated with the fiery imagery that was

²⁷⁴ Shakespeare, *1 Henry IV*, I.1.87-90, p. 1190.

²⁷⁵ Ilana Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern English Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 19.

²⁷⁶ Shakespeare, *1 Henry IV*, III.1.1816-7, p. 1227.

linked to the youthful red choler which suggests that many of his transgressions stem from an unruly, youthful spirit. Indeed, as Ben-Amos continues:

[i]n the seventeenth century, young years were associated with a quarrelsome and vengeful spirit, and the natural heat of youth was linked with immoderate temper and rashness. The “humour” of most young people, as William Fleetwood put it, made them “grow wanton, insolent and head-strong”.²⁷⁷

To this list Ben-Amos also adds that there was also a perception that youths would hold the qualities of ‘boldness, arrogance, excessive activity, rashness, a spirit easily drawn to quarrelling and vengeance, and especially to disobedience, riot and rebelliousness’.²⁷⁸ Hotspur demonstrates all of these qualities almost to the point of hyperbolic exaggeration, as these rebellious, quarrelsome and disobedient traits are taken to the very extreme to make him a traitor and enemy of the country. Hotspur, proves himself to be the ultimate choleric youth, which sets him up as the antithesis of Hal’s noble intentions and, later, his willingness to submit to the role of the honourable, dutiful son. As such, this draws many similarities between Hotspur and the prince from *Famous Victories*, allowing Prince Henry’s ‘ghost’ to appear within the play and inform the characterisation of Hotspur.

At the beginning of *Famous Victories*, Prince Henry contains just as choleric a spirit as Hotspur and even demonstrates a similar sluggishness to learn and resistance to discipline. Having just been released from an arrest for his riotous behaviour Prince Henry finds himself sent to Newgate immediately afterwards for striking the Chief Justice demonstrating that he has learnt nothing from his previous encounter. Mirroring this, Hotspur refuses to be schooled and take the advice of his elders, instead he is openly defiant towards the king, sparking a rebellion that will cost the lives of many. In addition to this both of these young men can also be seen

²⁷⁷ Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth*, p. 17.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

to contain an angry, violent streak that appears almost uncontrollable once provoked. Once angered by Henry IV's refusal to ransom his cousin Mortimer, Hotspur speaks out of turn, risking his own life, and is thrown into a rage wishing to scream out the name of Mortimer, merely to provoke the king himself to anger.²⁷⁹ Similarly, Prince Henry, attacks the Chief Justice in a rage and, in a more drastic example after his coronation, is provoked into a war with France, despite his previous decision to carefully consider the tactical advantages and disadvantages of the 'Scottish situation' first. These examples demonstrate the rashness of these princes and their disrespect for authority figures, with Prince Henry's attack on the Chief Justice, fuelled by his frustration that the man will not accept his authority and grant him privileges because of this. Such disrespect is mirrored in Hotspur's insolent disrespect of his captain when he refuses to surrender his prisoners to the king. As Henry IV leaves after refusing his request to use the prisoners as ransom for his cousin he cries out in a fit of anger:

HOTSPUR: And if the devil come and roar for them,
I will not send them: I will after straight
And tell him so; for I will ease my heart,
Albeit I make a hazard of my head.

NORTHUMBERLAND: What, drunk with choler? stay and pause
awhile.²⁸⁰

His father instantly recognises the anger, guiding his son's emotions and causing him to act foolishly, and advises him to wait until his mood is cooler.

Hotspur's rage and disrespect surfaces again when he speaks with Glendower, whom he repeatedly interrupts and scolds, despite the fact that he is a guest within his home and dependent on his aid for their operation. This behaviour is well noted by the other characters and is associated so strongly with his youth, which

²⁷⁹ Shakespeare, *1 Henry IV*, I.3.553-561, p. 1198.

²⁸⁰ Ibid, I.3.452-7.

is often used as an excuse for his rash behaviour. When discussing Hotspur's disobedience Westmoreland offers that his uncle, 'makes him prune himself, and bristle up/ The crest of *youth* against your dignity',²⁸¹ and, later in the play, the Earl of Worcester also blames inexperience and youth for Hotspur's actions, 'My nephew's trespass may be well forgot;/ it hath the *excuse of youth* and heat of blood'.²⁸² Youth, is also offered as an excuse to defend the transgressive and choleric behaviour of Prince Henry too; his robbery is dismissed as a 'trick of youth', he is named a 'rude youth' by the king to justify his riotous actions, and 'as lively a young Prince as ever there was' by Lawrence, a euphemism for his more questionable behaviour. To discuss Prince Henry as a good or bad prince misses a vital context that is important to understanding his character; Prince Henry is not a transgressive ruler, but instead must be understood as a rebellious youth.

A Lively Youth

Young rulers, either in age or experience, were a cause for concern and, with the identity of Elizabeth I's successor becoming a pressing source of anxiety, the idea of a younger monarch could simultaneously symbolise hope and strength or, conversely, inexperience and disaster.²⁸³ Indeed, the history plays that would follow *Famous Victories* often focused on the reigns of unsuccessful rulers who exhibited traditionally immature behaviours, such as revelling in excess, insubordination and maintaining overly familiar friendships.²⁸⁴ In *Richard III* the citizens of the city

²⁸¹ Ibid., p. 1191 (emphasis added)

²⁸² Ibid., p.1246 (emphasis added).

²⁸³ It must be remembered that at this time Scotland's current king, and Elizabeth I's successor, James VI, had come to the throne as an infant, and the short reign of the young, sickly Edward VI was still within living memory.

²⁸⁴ Such examples of these rulers can be found in the anonymous *Thomas of Woodcock*, Shakespeare's *Richard II* and Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II*.

come together to discuss the succession when they hear the news of Edward IV's death and realise that his young son will be crowned as their new king. The news is discussed mournfully by the citizens who warn each other to 'look to see a troublous world'. The cause for this anxiety is not hidden, as one of the group declares with distress, 'Woe to the land that's govern'd by a child!'²⁸⁵

Within the context of a culture that held anxieties about young or immature rulers, it is particularly significant that Prince Henry's youth is consistently referred to in the first half of the play. The prince's age is emphasised by Lawrence and John Cobbler when they first discuss the rumours of his rebellious behaviour:

LAW. Neighbour, what newes heare you of the *young* Prince?
 IOHN. Marry neighbor, I heare say, he is a toward *yoong* Prince...
 LAW. Indeed neighbour I heare say he is as liuely
 A *young* Prince as euer was.²⁸⁶

The boy recounting his story of the night's escapades, first mentions that the 'young prince' came into the tavern and the thief describes the prince as young followed by a stage direction that begins 'enter the young Prince...'. Even the king himself names the prince as a 'rude youth' and later fears that the company his son keeps, 'abuseth youth so manifestly'.²⁸⁷ With so many references to the age of the prince being made through the stage directions and dialogue, the audience is not allowed to forget that he is a relatively young character. Further to this, the prince's very nature is particularly coded with recognisable behaviours and pastimes that an audience would have associated with a young man.

Ben-Amos' work, *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England*, provides a thorough examination of the culture and associations that surrounded young people in England from 1500-1700. In particular, with this work she hopes to

²⁸⁵ William Shakespeare, *Richard III*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: Norton & Company, 2008), II.3.1444, p. 577.

²⁸⁶ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. A3v, emphasis added.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. C2v.

provide a complex and more detailed understanding that challenges the research which claimed that the young were only viewed as sinful creatures within early modern England. Ben-Amos analyses a number of sources that suggest loving relationships between child and parent as well as examples of children being used as symbols of hope or purity; however, she also acknowledges that a number of transgressive and dissuaded behaviours were strongly associated with adolescents and young men too.²⁸⁸ The volatile and rash nature that Hotspur and Prince Henry both share had strong associations with young people in particular, as Ben-Amos notes:

The notion of youth as a period guided by hot temper, or humour, or fire – a ‘sighing furnace’ as Shakespeare portrayed it – could be used to evoke a variety of qualities: boldness, arrogance, excessive activity, rashness, a spirit easily drawn to quarrelling and vengeance, and especially to disobedience, riot and rebelliousness.²⁸⁹

These were all qualities associated with the youthful red and, after a particularly volatile outburst from Hotspur, his father, the Earl of Northumberland, asks ‘What, drunk with choler?’ referring to this red choler that was thought to influence the behaviour of young men.²⁹⁰ Although there is no direct reference to choler specifically within the text of *Famous Victories*, Prince Henry exhibits all of the associated behaviours that Ben-Amos lists as choleric. It is these behaviours that help to code Prince Henry’s character as full of youthful independence; as a character he is rash and his manner heated where he should retain the cool and sober manner of his older, rational father, Henry IV.

²⁸⁸ Ben-Amos notes a distinction between the stages of youth and uses the terms ‘adolescent’ and ‘youth’ to denote two separate and distinct life stages. ‘Adolescent’ is used to describe a person in their early to mid-teens, while ‘youth’ describes a person in their late teens and into their twenties. Following with Ben-Amos’ terminology I will be using the term ‘youth’ throughout this chapter to describe people who are in their late teens and twenties.

²⁸⁹ Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth*, pp. 16-17.

²⁹⁰ Shakespeare, *1 Henry IV*, I.3.456, p. 1198.

The typical depiction of youthful behaviour was forged in opposition to the image of sober and mild maturity that Henry IV presents. In contrast to the king's modest and humble piety, Prince Henry indulges in the immature pastime of excess through his spending, drinking and brawling. Having just robbed his father's carriers of a thousand pounds he swears that 'as I am true Gentleman, I wil haue the halfe/ Of this spent to night'.²⁹¹ In addition to this extravagance Prince Henry chooses to visit the local tavern where he enjoys the company of the barmaid, 'there is a pretie wench/ That can talke well, for I delight as much in their toongs,/ As any part about them'.²⁹² Although the comment appears innocent on the surface, the early modern double-entendre of 'tongue', offers a sly and knowing joke to the audience about Prince Henry's youthful lust.²⁹³

This night of overindulgence is recounted to the audience later by two characters, a boy, and later, the mayor who offer two similar descriptions of the night. Each of them recounts a night of excessive and rowdy entertainments that were associated with the overindulgent youth. Shepard analyses the anxiety that surrounded nocturnal drinking as an 'initiation into the manhood of excess', which often led to brawls such as the one that both the boy and mayor describe here:

It is clear, however, that for groups of young men indulging in rituals of excessive drink culture such behaviour held entirely different meanings, however much their elders sought to label it as scandalous, wasteful, or riotous. As a deliberate inversion of prescribed norms, the collective misrule of drunken revelry rejected expectations of frugality, order, and control, facilitating an entirely oppositional bid for manhood.²⁹⁴

²⁹¹ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. A2v; It should be noted that the amount that Prince Henry promises to spend is the equivalent of £74,655 when compared to the value of the pound in 2005, demonstrating just how extravagant their plans for the night truly is; 'Currency Converter', *National Archives*

[Available: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/results.asp#mid>, accessed on: 17/04/17].

²⁹² Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. A3v.

²⁹³ Gordon Williams, *Shakespeare's Sexual Language: A Glossary* (London: Continuum, 2006), pp. 309-310.

²⁹⁴ Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 105.

Shepard notes that this behaviour was not uncommon amongst the young men, and that it was used to challenge established meanings of manhood in opposition to the sober and restrained stoic ideal held by their elders. Prince Henry is merely engaging in this tradition; although it is certainly seen to be particularly scandalous by his elders, it serves as another activity which codes him as a rebellious youthful spirit. It has been suggested by Louise Nichols that the Mayor presents the story ‘in a voice that echoes the moral tone of the chronicles’,²⁹⁵ while in the boy’s account ‘his enjoyment of the event is strongly evident’.²⁹⁶ Although Nichols claims that the distinction in the boy’s account is apparent, it is a very subtle change that neither provides the prince with the glowing support of the people that Nichols suggests, nor contains the disapproving tone of the Mayor’s account. However slight these differences are it can be seen that the boy’s account has a more favourable tone. To examine these two speeches I have laid them out adjacently below with the differences in word choice highlighted in italics:

²⁹⁵ Louise Nichols, ““My name was known before I came”: The Heroic Identity of the Prince in *The Famous Victories of Henry V*” in *Other Voices, Other Views: Expanding the Canon in English Renaissance Studies*, eds. Helen Ostovich, Mary V. Silcox and Graham Roe (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999), 154-75 (p. 158) (p. 157).

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.158.

BOY. Why this night about two houres ago, there came the young Prince, and three or foure more of his *companions*, and called for wine good store, and then they sent for a noyse of Musitians, and were *very merry for the space of an houre*, then whether their Musicke liked them not, or whether they had drunke too much Wine or no, I cannot tell, but *our pots flue against the wals*, and then they drew their swordes, and went into the streete and fought, and some tooke one part, & some tooke another, but for the space of halfe an houre, there was such a bloodie fray as passeth, and none coule part them untill such time as the Mayor and Sheriffe were sent for, and then at the last with much adoo, they tooke them, and so the yong Prince was carried to the Counter.

MAIOR. *Then if it please your Maiestie*, this night betwixt two and three of the clocke in the morning, my Lord the yong Prince with a very *disordred companie*, came to the old Tauerne in Eastcheape, and whether it was that their Musicke liked them not, or whether they were ouercome with wine, I know not, but they drew their swords, and into the streete they went, and some tooke my Lord the yong Princes part, and some tooke the other, but betwixt them there was such a bloodie fray for the space of halfe an houre, that neither watchmen nor any other could stay them, till my brother the Sheriffe of London & I were sent for, and at the last with much adoo we staid them, *but it was long first, which was a great disquieting to all your louing subiects thereabouts.*²⁹⁷

Although both characters note the violence of the brawl and suggest that it was over a fickle reason or drunkenness, the Boy's account does contain less disapproval. He names the Prince's men to be companions, rather than 'disordred companie', does not acknowledge that the event was 'disquieting' to the king's subjects as the Mayor did, and gives an account of the better start of the evening where there was good wine, music and a merry space. Whilst Nichols suggests that the reason for this distinction is because the 'low-life characters', of which the boy is a part, speak highly of the prince in contrast to the noble characters, it is perhaps more significant to note the differences in age.²⁹⁸ The Mayor is a fully mature man in a position of

²⁹⁷ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. B1r; sig. B1v-B2r.

²⁹⁸ Nichols, 'The Heroic Identity of the Prince', p. 155.

responsibility, whereas the boy, being identified as such, would be an adolescent or youth, much like Prince Henry himself. The boy's tale of the night's events are less judgemental than the Mayor's and betray an enjoyment of the gossip and excitement generated from the event when he promised Lawrence and Cobbler that he has 'such newes as neuer you haue heard the like'.²⁹⁹

Whilst linking Prince Henry to images of youthfulness, through the glowing report it should also be noted that the boy's enjoyment of the event links to the youthful tradition of fraternal bonding. Shepard, continues that:

[c]entral to the youthful exploits was the role of the group, which facilitated young men's disruptive assertions of manhood in ways which often cut across boundaries of social status and geographical origin [...] It was a particularly significant feature of male youth culture in early modern England, because it both validated claims to manliness and provided a largely unacknowledged source of intimacy.³⁰⁰

Between the youths, there is a shared fraternal bond and enjoyment in the feats to demonstrate their manhood. Shepard notes that these feats of manhood were 'disruptive', something that both the Boy and the Mayor can't help but note in their retellings, and required an audience that could even transcend class barriers. Prince Henry is a part of such a group which are able to validate the youth's manhood and authority, either through encouraging him to these exploits or reminding him of his privileged position and the power he will be granted because of his birthright, thus boosting his ego with their praise. The activities in particular that Prince Henry can be seen to engage in, were common throughout the youth and were controversially seen as an act of rebellious behaviour known as nightwalking. Shepard notes that:

Youthful rituals of misrule indulged routine aspects of male sociability to excess; misappropriated the authority of adult males; and subverted patriarchal imperatives of order, thrift, and self-

²⁹⁹ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. B1r.

³⁰⁰ Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 95.

control. In their bids for manhood, young men embraced precisely the kinds of behaviour—violent disruptions, excessive drinking, illicit sex—condemned by moralists as unmanly, effeminate, and beast-like’.³⁰¹

Although Shepard notes that these behaviours were mostly practiced by young students and apprentices, it can be seen that Prince Henry perfectly follows the activities of a youth engaged in nightwalking himself. An audience would recognise his coded behaviour: rioting, drinking and walking the streets during the late hours of night when it was a time to sleep. Indeed Hunter suggests that ‘a popular audience will see these pranks as only wild-oats sowing by upper-class hooligans, playing defiance of the Establishment as a prelude to joining it’.³⁰² By aligning these transgressive behaviours with the ‘wild-oat sowing’ of a group of youths, Hunter suggests that audience will expect him to mature out of this behaviour, thus neutralising the anxiety that an audience may feel at witnessing a future ruler act in such a disrespectful and self-indulgent way.³⁰³

His very behaviour, within a fraternal group structure, establishes him as a youth who indulges in the very excessive and disruptive behaviour that Shepard identifies. She continues that these behaviours:

...were an expression of the collective power and identity of the group which temporarily eclipsed the profiles of its individual members... Through such collective activity, individual men could temporarily claim authority and prowess which was ordinarily denied to them. It is no coincidence that the majority of nightwalkers appear to have been young men who occupied subordinate positions due to either their age or social status.³⁰⁴

Within the wider context of society, Prince Henry holds a privileged position and is not a subordinate. However in his impatience to acquire the crown and its associated

³⁰¹ Ibid., p. 94.

³⁰² G.K. Hunter, *English Drama 1586-1642* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 172.

³⁰³ Whilst Hunter continues and claims that the play takes steps to avoid this reading by aligning Prince Henry with a ‘genuine proletariat’ this chapter argues that this true social levelling never takes place and that a class segregation is maintained throughout the play, Hunter, *English Drama*, p. 172.

³⁰⁴ Shepherd, *Meanings of Manhood*, p.100.

powers he is denied the full supremacy that he will hold once he inherits the title of king, claiming to ‘stand vpon thorns,/ til the Crowne be on my head’.³⁰⁵ The men within his chosen social group, also feel a pain at their relative subordinate positions, relative to the royal court, and look forward to a future where ‘we would be all kings’.³⁰⁶

As such the group looks for opportunities to make demonstrations of authority in a play form of the powers that they later hope to hold. Ned preemptively judges the doorman for his disobedience to the Prince, asking if he should cut off his head,³⁰⁷ and the group begin the play with a show of power over two carriers that they know to be the innocent victims of their own robbery:

HEN.5. Are you my fathers Receiuers?
Then I hope ye haue brought me some money.
[...]

BOTH RECEL. I beseech your grace, be good to vs.
NED. I pray you my Lord forgiue them this once.
Well, stand vp and get you gone,
And looke that you speake not a word of it,
For if there be, sownes ile hang you and all your kin. (*Exeunt Receiuers*).³⁰⁸

When Prince Henry attempts this again with the Lord Chief Justice he finds himself reprimanded although he does not face any major consequence, and it is from this moment onwards, that the play begins to shift towards the growth and maturation of the character.

³⁰⁵ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. C1v.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., sig. A3v.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., sig C2r.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., sig. A3r.

The Fear of False Friends

Prince Henry and Hotspur, both demonstrate the rash and hot nature of youth, and can be seen to engage in many transgressive behaviours due to this excuse. However, it should be noted that although Hal also drinks at the tavern and avoids his princely duties in a rebellious way, he does not engage in such behaviours to the same extent as Hotspur or Prince Henry. Clare notes that there is a great difference between the rebellious behaviour of Hal and Prince Henry, noting that one key change in language is when the refrain ‘when I am king’ is switched to ‘when thou art king’.³⁰⁹ Hal does not impatiently await the passing of his father to seize the crown for himself or promise to turn the world upside down as Prince Henry does so. She continues, ‘[t]he difference is that Hal in *1 Henry IV* is willing to take pleasure in the subordination of order and yet cunning enough to avoid directly inculcating himself’.³¹⁰ Clare notes that Hal remains one stage removed from the truly transgressive behaviours: he does not promise that all will be kings nor does he take part in the robbery himself, although he does enjoy the fun that it provides. This, however, does not mean that he is any less of a transgressive character than Prince Henry, as he demonstrates a different, but also troubling youthful vice in an over attachment to the men that he keeps in his company.

While Prince Henry socialises with a very ‘disordered company’, the friendships are shallow; the men are valued for their companionship and fraternal comradery; however they lack the deeper bonds of friendship. Prince Henry makes some attempt to free the thief; however, when he is unsuccessful the man is forgotten and the remaining men plan their next mischief with the prince instead. It is very

³⁰⁹ Clare, ‘Medley History’, p.106.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

easy for the Prince to cast these men aside as they are not truly friends of his, but immature companions that he outgrows quickly when he recognises the value of bonds with his father's old advisors instead.

HEN.5. I prethee Ned, mend thy maners,
and be more modester in thy tearmes,
For my unfeined greefe is not to be ruled by thy flattering
And dissembling talke, thou saist I am changed,
So I am indeed, and so must thou be, and that quickly,
Or else I must cause thee to be chaunged.

HEN.5. Ah Tom, your former life greeues me,
And makes me to abandon & abolish your company for euer³¹¹

As Shepard noted, belonging to a group was an important part of the nightwalking activities, although the members were joined by fraternal bonds and not necessarily by friendship itself.³¹² While a vital part of the maturing process, these are not permanent bonds and to show his maturity, Prince Henry is able to cast his men aside instantly without a second thought; Hal, however, finds himself unable to do this as easily. Hal's greatest struggle is to cast off the flatterers that he has become overly attached to and should have long outgrown. Whilst Prince Henry is not seen to associate with his previous companions after his promise to reform, Hal still frequents the tavern and seeks the company of Poins and Falstaff, even after his reformation. Shepard observes that '[c]lose contact between men, in the form of either friendship or homosexual intimacy, was considered dangerous'.³¹³ Although Shepard notes that there was an idealisation of Aristotelian 'entire' or 'perfect' friendship, anxieties over such a relationship still remained:

Despite the idealisation of 'entire' friendship it could involve the indebtedness and obligations which men were ordinarily anxious to

³¹¹ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. D1v-D2r.

³¹² Shepard notes that there is a key difference between comradeship and friendship, which relate to two different social relationships with the latter holding a greater affection, trust and intimacy; Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 95.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

avoid, especially since there was increasing uncertainty about how to detect genuine friendship from falsity.³¹⁴

These fears of false friends, particularly ones who lead the royalty astray, appear in a great number of works where kings demonstrate childish and immature tendencies.

Richard II is unable to let go of Bagot and Green who flatter him and lead him astray, in his spending and excess, making him an unfit, 'womanly' ruler for England. This issue is also addressed in *Thomas of Woodstock* where the older and sympathetic advisor demonstrates gravity and maturity by taking pleasure in the simplicities of life, in contrast to the younger Richard II who retains court favourites and allows them to spend the treasury gold on frivolities without any idea of the consequence. The same also rings true of Edward II, where his court favourite, Gaveston, is retained by the king upon ascending the throne, where he is encouraged to spend the state's treasury and neglects his marital duties for Gaveston's sake instead, leaving him unable to play the role of husband.³¹⁵ Each of these warning plays contain a focus on the king's juvenile insistence on overspending and impressing court favourites which are invited to be fast friends and later a corrupting influence that poses a threat to England itself. It is therefore vital for Hal to recognise the dangers of his companions and to cut off the fraternal bonds that he enjoyed throughout his youth.

The second part of *Henry IV* focuses on this subject even more as Hal finds time and time again that those he had granted privileges and considered to be friends have betrayed him in one way or another to capitalise on his status, proving them to be dangerous company for a prince, let alone a king. By the play's end he has cut off all companionship, although he finds it difficult to do so. Allowing himself to be

³¹⁴ Ibid., p. 124.

³¹⁵ Edward III, ascends the throne as a child; however, while this is first posed as a terrible risk the danger is allayed by the young king placing his entire trust in a senior member and councillor that will ensure the correct running of England, choosing wisdom and seniority over false friends.

emotionally vulnerable in front of Poins he says, ‘albeit I could tell thee, as to one it/ pleases me, for fault of a better, to call my friend, I could/ be sad, and sad indeed too’.³¹⁶ Later in this very scene, Hal’s perspective shifts as, when Poins points the prince’s reputation is being damaged from being ‘so much engrafted to Falstaff’, Hal adds pointedly, ‘And to thee’.³¹⁷ Offended, Poins claims to be well spoken of; however by the scene’s end, Falstaff warns the prince in a letter, ‘Be not too familiar with Poins; for he misuses/ thy favours so much, that he swears thou art to marry his sister Nell’.³¹⁸ *Henry IV, Part Two* (c.1597) muses on the subject of false friends as one of its themes. As part of his final journey to maturity, Hal must discover this, through such betrayals of trust committed by Poins and Falstaff who both lie about their relationship to the Prince for their own ends.

Instead Hal must join in a more formal bond to the Lord Chief Justice who has previously demonstrated his loyalty to the royalty and order of the state. This rite of passage is established in the first of the *Henry IV* plays, where Hal performs a small improvised play with Falstaff to ‘practice’ his answer to his father when he is called to account for his behaviour. It is in this moment that Hal promises to forsake Falstaff one day, offering a hint of the redemption that he will undertake in the second play. It is particularly significant that Hal makes this promise while sitting on the ‘throne’ and acting out the role of his father. Although he is still Hal, his performance lends him some of the insight and credibility of his father’s maturity once he takes on the role, and it is here that he is able to see clearly and realise what must be done:

³¹⁶ William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part Two* in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: Norton & Company, 2008), II.2.992-5, p. 1353.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, II.2.1020.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, II.2.1096-7, p. 1355.

FALSTAFF:...banish not him
 thy Harry's company, banish not him thy Harry's
 company: banish plump Jack, and banish all the world.
 Prince Henry: I do, I will.³¹⁹

Although Hal will struggle to fulfil this promise over the course of the two plays it is his final deed by the end of 2 *Henry IV*. The play ends with his coronation and rejection of Falstaff combined within the one scene, a concise and symbolic gesture of his final journey into maturity.

The immature behaviour and transgressions of Hal, especially those of the first play, are not a permanent state and while it is necessary for Hal to cast these aside before he ascends the throne, they are only a temporary phase of youthful folly. In this way, Hal did not represent the dangers of a possible tyrant coming to the throne, but an immature one. In each of the *Henry IV* plays, he undertakes an action that shows his promise and maturation. In 1 *Henry IV*, this is his duel with Hotspur, whose strong associations with youth mean that symbolically in this duel, Hal is fighting to kill the dangerous immature streak within himself too. That the hotness of youth is only a temporary state is stressed here when Hotspur cries out 'O, Harry, thou hast robb'd me of my youth' as he dies.³²⁰ It is telling that in his final moments Hotspur mentions his young age one final time within this context. The use of this phrasing has two different effects: firstly, it reminds the audience that Hal has slayed the embodiment of rash youth within the play, foreshadowing Hal's journey to maturity in the second play. Secondly, it reminds the audience that Hotspur's life has been cut particularly short; Hal has denied Hotspur the chance to mature and grow out of his rebellious nature that has made him so dangerous to the state. Instead, Hal kills him to survive and mature into a sober and successful king himself.

³¹⁹ Shakespeare, 1 *Henry IV*, II.4.1461-4, p. 1219.

³²⁰ Ibid, V.4.3040, p. 1251.

Youthful Transgression as a Phase

As can be seen with these examples, whilst youth was a time associated with many transgressions and possible misdeeds, it was also acknowledged to be a temporary state. Just as Hal learns to mature throughout *Henry IV* and become an adult who is worthy of the power associated with the crown, so too does Prince Henry make a similar journey. Even in Elizabethan society some of the more riotous activities of young men were tolerated as it was seen to be a temporary behaviour. When discussing nightwalking and its associated disruptive behaviours, Shepard also notes that:

Despite official pronouncements against excessive drinking and the frequent punishment of those indulging in collective misrule, there is also evidence that at times the excesses of young men were tolerated and even condoned by their elders as harmless sport, or at least only a temporary form of deviation attributable to inexperience.³²¹

Although the behaviour was still held to be transgressive, it is significant that there was also some acceptance of the activities as temporary horseplay that would be outgrown. Indeed, Ben-Amos notes that the various stages of youth were all considered to be part of a chain that led to maturity. She notes that the Seven Ages of Man, that Jacques puts forth in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (c.1600) adheres strongly to Aristotle's simple depiction of the cycle of life as one of growth, maturity and then decay.³²² There is a similar symmetry to Jacques' description of the mewling infant which comes from nothing and by the end of his life experiences a 'second childhood' before becoming nothing once more. Ben-Amos notes that in a great range of traditions, the life of man was divided between a number of ages, from

³²¹ Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 106.

³²² Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth*, pp. 10-11.

three to eleven or more. A man's behaviour was ever changing as he progressed throughout his life and was guided by the nature of his age, he was not truly fixed in one state. Ben-Amos notes that while 'alarm at the threat youth posed to the social order was only natural' such frameworks that depicted a lifetime as a series of growths and progressions meant that:

...the predilections and hot temper of the young were assumed to be a stage in the natural course of life, such predilections were sometimes also regarded as the acceptable forms of youth's behaviour, which would inevitably disappear in time.³²³

With this understanding, the disruptive threat of rebellious youth is thus compromised with the promise that turbulent young men will outgrow this stage and conform to the societal norm once more.

Whilst Prince Henry's rebellious nature must be understood in the context of his role as an Elizabethan youth, it is also particularly important to understand how this behaviour is staged to be temporal too as he is demonstrated to come to maturity and outgrow this stage of his life. Indeed, *Famous Victories* is concerned with more than youth and contains many references to the elder age and poor health of Henry IV, using him as a foil for Prince Henry's manner. In the first half of the play, Henry IV is presented as the antithesis of his son as he holds the desirable qualities for rule that Prince Henry lacks. He is kind and respectful to his subjects when they present him with upsetting news and treats them fairly in spite of his Lords who suggest that they should be punished for apprehending his son, regardless of whether he had been deserving of the punishment or not. Just as Prince Henry is associated with rash and chaotic behaviour, Henry IV stands as the embodiment of a lawful and sober ruler and thanks the men for their duty, dismissing the Lord's claims as he states, 'they haue done like faithfull subiects:/ I will go my selfe to discharge them, and let them

³²³ Ibid., p. 18.

go'.³²⁴ It is particularly significant that after this, the audience is allowed to witness an example of the Prince's disobedient behaviour where he physically assaults the Lord Chief Justice, a man who stands as the very symbol of order.

As the first chapter of this thesis demonstrated, this example of the first history play had evolved from the tradition of the morality plays with *Magnyfycence* (c.1533) providing a prominent influence on the development of the genre. The protagonists of this genre of plays would speak to the literal embodiment of vital qualities and morals, to learn lessons about themselves and mankind. *Famous Victories* shares in this tradition, albeit in a metaphorical way, to provide the ultimate display of disobedience as Prince Henry attacks Justice in a rebellious rage. Although the character of the Lord Chief Justice is based on a real historical figure, he also stands as a symbolic representation of 'justice' itself and it is of particular note that he still bears the name of Justice, and is even simply named as 'Justice' in the printed script. This incident makes the Prince's disobedient and rebellious nature all the more evident as the red choler leads him into a rage. In a perfect contrast to his father whom the audience had witnessed praise his subjects for arresting his son, in spite of his nobility, they now witness the young Prince Henry demand the laws of the land be bent to his whim, because of his privileged position.

Just as Prince Henry's youth is emphasised through both action and dialogue, so is Henry IV's wiser age highlighted in dialogue too. The Prince and Jockey both mock Henry IV's age, as they look forward to the prince's new reign:

HEN.5. but my lads, if the *old* king my father
Were dead, we would be all kings.
IOH.OLD. Hee is a good *olde* man, God take him to his
mercy, the sooner.³²⁵

³²⁴ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. B2r.

³²⁵ Ibid., sig. C1r, (emphasis added).

Henry IV contains none of the red choler of his son, and instead provides the perfect example of the old, wise man archetype of Jacques's Seven Ages of Man monologue:

And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lin'd,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part.³²⁶

Losing the heat of his youth, man is destined to mature into a calmer, experienced figure who is linked with justice and wisdom. Having slowed and taken comfort in good food, he no longer has the same energy as the mature soldier that preceded him but is able to judge and offer insight instead. Henry IV is able to offer this type of leadership, it is noted in the play that his days as a warring king are behind him as he is troubled by sickness and sleep. This older king is slowly losing control and confesses his own inability to rule his son when praising the Lord Chief Justice, 'now truly that man is more fitter to/ rule the Realme then I, for by no meanes could I rule my/ sonne'.³²⁷ Unable to discipline his own son, Henry IV weeps that his country should go to 'ruine and decaie', the physical outlet of his emotional pain demonstrating that he is even unable to rule his emotions.³²⁸ Just as the young prince shows a lack of restraint in his excessive spending and volatile nature, so does his father find himself succumbing to his age and finds himself unable to control his own melancholic mood and sickness suggesting his own imbalance of humours that are controlling his mood, in this case, the melancholic black bile. In each of their current states, neither is fit to rule the country. As Ben-Amos notes, there was also a

³²⁶ William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: Norton & Company, 2008), II.7.1051-5, p. 1647.

³²⁷ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. C2r.

³²⁸ Jennifer C. Vaught notes that the early modern man was expected to stoically maintain his emotions and that in plays such as Shakespeare's *Richard II* the weeping king is judged for a lack of self-control when allowing his emotions to manifest in this way; Jennifer C. Vaught, *Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 218.

stigma associated with old age too and that in Aristotelian thought, ‘a man reached perfection in middle life rather than in old age’.³²⁹ As such, Prince Henry’s coming of age represents hope as he enters the stage of life that Jacques described with the imagery of the strong soldier, an image that Henry IV paints himself when he predicts that his son ‘[w]ill be as warlike and victorious a Prince,/ As euer raigned in England’.³³⁰

Throughout the play Prince Henry can be seen to make this journey from the rash youth who engages in nightwalking to the shrewd negotiator who secures territory in France for his heir and a betrothal to Princess Katherine. From rocky beginnings Prince Henry is able to transform from a rebellious youth to the heroic Henry V of England. It is unlikely to be an accident that this play begins with Henry V before he has been crowned and follows his life through to his first campaign in France, ending with the promise of marriage. Time is condensed down so that each of these major events can be seen in sequence providing a parade of milestones that the young prince must hit before he can be seen as a mature and noble king. It is of particular note that when Henry V was crowned it was at the age of twenty six.³³¹ Ben-Amos acknowledges that there is an ambiguity surrounding the age at which a youth fully matured into an adult; however, she suggests that the most common ages ranged from 14-18 to 25-28, a range that Prince Henry fits within.³³² As with *Henry IV*, throughout *Famous Victories* Prince Henry progresses from a rebellious prince who lacks the experience to make wise decisions for himself to an adult who assumes responsibility for his country. His coronation which represents the acquisition of state power and dependents is one of the key rites of passage that he

³²⁹ Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth*, p. 20.

³³⁰ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. D1r.

³³¹ C. T. Allmand, ‘Henry V (1386–1422)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Sept 2010 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12952>, accessed 17 April 2017]

³³² Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth*, p. 11.

must go through. However as Ben-Amos notes, the path to maturity took time and acquisition of experience was seen to be the best indicator that a young person, particularly one from a noble family, had reached adulthood.³³³ She continues, ‘this belief in the long experience required before an adolescent and a youth could become fully mature had many other expressions. It was demonstrated in fables and moral tales’.³³⁴ As Ben-Amos notes, the journey to acquire this experience was seen to be a long one, and was the subject of many stories. *Famous Victories* continues this tradition and follows the young ruler through his first war in France where he learns how to lead and negotiate. The process of this development will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter of this thesis where Henry V’s development in the second half of the play will be examined to not only analyse his final transformation into the famed heroic king but to examine how this process challenged preconceived ideas about ideal masculinity.

The play ends with a final decisive rite of passage that secures Henry V’s journey into adulthood: a marriage. Although the marriage itself would not take place until 1420, five years after the Battle of Agincourt, the timeline is condensed so that Henry V has secured his betrothal by the play’s end and the play concludes with the lines:

FRENCH KING. With all my heart I like it,
But when shall be your wedding day?

HENRY 5. The first Sunday of the next moneth,
God willing.

(*Sound Trumpets.Exeunt omnes.*).³³⁵

Although it is not chronologically accurate, Henry V confirms that the match has been secured and looks forward to the close date of his wedding. Although it held

³³³ Ibid., p. 32.

³³⁴ Ibid., p. 31.

³³⁵ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. G2v.

more significance as a rite of passage in the lower tiers of society, Ben-Amos notes that marriage held importance as a sign that the individual as the young man was able to provide for his wife and family meaning that it was one of the most important signposts of maturation.³³⁶ Although Henry V has already proved himself on the battlefield, through leadership and gained great experience, having long left behind his youthful exploits of the first half of the play, the marriage is an important symbolic event that the audience would clearly recognise as the final task for the young king which provides closure on his coming of age arc.

Throughout the first half of the play Prince Henry certainly embodies the negative traits and behaviours associated with youth in the Elizabethan era and displays them in a way that would have been clearly recognisable to the audience. However, as the play progresses, Prince Henry can be seen to develop and outgrow these juvenile traits to become a successful and mature king. His childish state is not a permanent one and *Famous Victories* demonstrates a natural progression through the ages of man as the youth ‘ripens’ into a more competent and trustworthy leader. As Henry V begins with the red choler of rash youth, demonstrating himself to be excessive and indulgent, in his behaviour, violence and lust, he matures to become a valiant soldier and wise leader in the second half of the play. Although *Famous Victories* demonstrates the disruptive behaviours of young men and the worries of the elders watching on, it also offers a strong defence for it too. Although the tale is clearly embellished from the chronicles of Hall, borrowing more strongly from the work of John Stow instead to depict Prince Henry’s rebellious behaviour, it offers Henry V as a positive representation of the youths that were feared as a transgressive Other. The excessive young men who challenged each other to demonstrations of

³³⁶ Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth*, p. 32.

masculinity and took part in nightwalking were not depicted in the chronicles; however, through the appropriation of the heroic legend of Henry V, *Famous Victories* was able to transform him into one of these youths that behaved much like those in the audience. Although *Famous Victories* does not defend the behaviour itself, it lends it a degree of legitimacy by demonstrating that it is merely a phase that may be outgrown and does not necessarily demonstrate a great flaw of character. It normalises this stage of life as a natural one that is appreciated by the other young men that Prince Henry encounters. Although the elders within the court fear that this youthful behaviour predicts a tyrant, Prince Henry shows that is able to mature and become a successful king through growth. Although the first scene may show the future king taking part in a robbery, the title does not hold the irony that Clare suggested, but instead a promise that this ruffian prince will become the victorious king that would forge Henry V's great legacy. This is the very making of a king who will outgrow these behaviours, much as the young men of Elizabethan London will one day outgrow their transgressive behaviour and mature into proper and appropriate citizens.

In conclusion, although there are a number of differences between the Prince Henry of *Famous Victories* and Hal of *Henry IV, Parts One and Two*, it can be seen that both characters are encoded with signifiers and behaviours that signal to the audience that these characters are youths that have not fully matured to reach their full potential. While Prince Henry shares much in common with Hotspur's volatile nature this is demonstrated to only be a temporary state. Hotspur is robbed of a chance to grow and learn due to his untimely death; however Hal and Prince Henry, who err in overfamiliarity within their fraternal social group and in their indignant and disruptive behaviour respectively, survive their youths to mature to the next

stage of their development towards becoming a full and complete adult. In this way, *Famous Victories*, exists as a coming of age story and uses the figure of Henry V to demonstrate that even the most lost of youths is able to become successful as he matures into an adult and can cast off his childish behaviours.

Famous Victories provides a defence of youth in so far as it demonstrates its transience as an imperfect life stage, an idea in keeping with Aristotle's concept of ripening to perfection before the later decay. Even the most upstart of young people may grow into a successful and wise adult and leader. The figure of Henry V is not one who appeared instantly in his prime; he was human and had to adapt and be moulded to become the king that was worth remembering and writing on. This development, however, extended further than an individual coming of age story, and has further implications when looking at the evolution of masculinity as a whole, which shall be discussed in the next chapter of this thesis. Ultimately, *Famous Victories* offers a gentle reminder to its audience that time can mature rebellious men and make great leaders of its youth; the heroes of the past did not appear fully-formed, with time and patience they grew.

Chapter Four

The Taming of the King: Patriarchal Nostalgia and Evolving Masculinity

History is the story of male achievement. One need only look to the history chronicles of the Tudor period to find a narrative dominated by the many accounts of great men.³³⁷ This exclusivity only becomes more exaggerated in the genre of the Elizabethan history play which often removed or stigmatised the role of female historical figures. Emerging in the latter half of Elizabeth's reign, the genre enjoyed nearly two decades of popularity before its transformation into a much rarer, and tonally different, category of plays during the Jacobean period. These later history plays include Samuel Rowley's *When You See Me You Know Me* (c.1604) and Thomas Heywood's *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody* (c.1604) which celebrate the strength and femininity of their queens whereas the history plays of Elizabeth I's reign instead focus on male rulers and masculine achievement. Phyllis Rackin notes that where women appear in these earlier history plays, their role is only to be a supporting one. She states:

Aliens in the masculine world of history, women can threaten or validate the men's historical projects, but they can never take the centre of history's stage or become the subjects of its stories.³³⁸

Such an observation certainly seems strange when England itself was ruled by a female monarch whose own reign and accompanying mythology had secured a place in both the 1577 and 1587 editions of Raphael Holinshed's *The Firste Volyume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande* (1577).

³³⁷ It should be noted that contemporary feminist theory observes that the prioritisation of male narratives in accounts of history has remained a consistent problem, resulting in the 'herstory' countermovement.

³³⁸ Phyllis Rackin, *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 147.

The figure of Elizabeth I was prominent in artistic works of the time including paintings, poetry and pamphlet literature which makes the lack of significant female characters in this genre seem peculiar. One convincing response to this is provided by Katherine Eggert in her essay, 'Nostalgia and the Not Yet Late Queen: Refusing Female Rule in *Henry V*'. Here Eggert suggests that the triumphant, patriotic war narrative of William Shakespeare's *Henry V* (1599) gives the theatre 'the power of patriarchy, which is asserted over and against the waning and increasingly disparaged power of female rule'.³³⁹ Written and performed over the last years of an elderly queen's reign, Eggert suggests that *Henry V* created nostalgia for patriarchal leadership in anticipation for Elizabeth I's male successor. *Henry V*, however, is a late example of the Elizabethan history play and can be seen to adhere to the same structural and thematic precedents already established by earlier examples of the genre. Therefore, if these earlier history plays, written before the last tired years of Elizabeth I's reign, were the ones that set the precedent for a narrative of patriarchal nostalgia it suggests that the history play genre itself may have been produced as a result of anxiety towards female rule.

This chapter will focus on *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* (c.1586), as an example of the first history play, to examine the play's representation of gender and ascertain if elements of patriarchal nostalgia may be found within the text and what effect they create. In doing so I will be consulting the works of John Knox and John Alymer who both wrote pamphlets literature condemning and defending female rule respectively, as well as responding to Carole Levin's accounts of Elizabeth I's reign. In particular I will be responding directly to the key concept of Eggert's essay and Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin's *Engendering a Nation*, which provides a

³³⁹ Katherine Eggert, 'Nostalgia and the Not Yet Late Queen: Refusing Female Rule in *Henry V*', *ELH*, 64 (1994) 523-50 (p. 523).

thorough examination of gender in Shakespeare's history plays. This chapter will first examine the culture that surrounded the play and how it may have served as a reaction to such anxieties concerning female rule, before suggesting that *Famous Victories* may also have been a product of evolving perceptions of masculinity throughout the Tudor reign to depict a more civilised and cunning mode of the ideal man.

Opposition to Female Rule

The year 1553 was a significant one in English history for it saw the crowning of England's first queen, Mary Tudor.³⁴⁰ As Cristy Beemer notes, '[f]or the Tudor queens Mary I and Elizabeth I, the first reigning women of England, the only existing historical image of a monarch was a man'.³⁴¹ However, whilst a reigning queen may have posed a strange novelty for the people of England, they were familiar with the concept of a queen as the king's wife. As Gaywyn Moore notes, a distinct term for the role that would be eventually be known as the 'queen consort' was not be coined until the Stuart era and, as such, the term 'queen' held its own power. Moore observes that after her marriage, the queen's coronation traditionally:

...emphasized the individual strengths or hopes that the future queen brought to the office. The ceremony itself became a significant event for acknowledging and imbuing the queen with a share of the monarchy.³⁴²

These queens held their own power and were invested in the public sphere, often managing elements of their administration and even advising the king on financial

³⁴⁰ For the purpose of this thesis the Empress Matilda and Lady Jane Grey will not be considered to be monarchs of England as significant opposition to their rule meant that they were not crowned.

³⁴¹ Cristy Beemer, 'The Female Monarchy: A Rhetorical Strategy of Early Modern Rule', *Rhetoric Review*, 30 (2011), 258-77 (p. 258).

³⁴² Gaywyn Moore, "'You Turn Me into Nothing': Reformation of Queenship on the Jacobean Stage', *Mediterranean Studies*, 21 (2013), 27-56 (p. 34).

and legal matters. However, their roles became constricted during the Tudor era, particularly under Henry VIII's rule, as they were robbed of their influence and their duties became reduced to the mere private role as the king's wife.³⁴³

Such an oppression of the queen's role certainly denied Mary and Elizabeth a traditional model of female governance and wisdom that might have been emulated, instead, female leadership in public affairs appeared to be a strange novelty whereas previously it may have appeared to be a natural progression of the duties of the king's queen. As such, both queens had to create their own traditions and rhetoric as well as face staunch opposition from subjects who saw a female monarch as abhorrent. The most famous example of this is perhaps John Knox's pamphlet, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558). Noting the threats of the Catholic Mary Tudor, Mary of Guise and Mary Stuart, Knox's pamphlet serves primarily as a reaction to Catholic power. However, Knox grounds his argument against Mary Tudor's rule in the idea that the authority of women was an unnatural and abhorrent state due to their divinely ordained place as subservient to man. As the pamphlet was published at the end of Mary Tudor's rule, it remained in public consciousness at the beginning of the Protestant Elizabeth I's reign. Soon after the Archbishop, John Aylmer, responded to Knox's argument with his own work, *An harborowe for faithfull and trewe subiectes* (1559). Within this pamphlet he defended Elizabeth's rule using religious sources and examples from legend, in a similar manner to Knox, to make his case, as well as noting his own impressions of the young queen. Aylmer's work, however, unintentionally reflects a similar disregard for women's capabilities as Knox, even as he seeks to defend Elizabeth as the rightful heir. Knox states that:

³⁴³ Ibid., pp. 30, 33.

Nature I say, doth paynt them further to be weak, fraile, impacient, feble and foolishe: and experience hath declared them to be vnconstant, variable, cruell and lacking the spirit of counsel and regiment [...] And these notable faultes haue men in all ages espied in that kinde, for the whiche not onlie they haue remoued women from rule and authoritie, but also some haue thought that men subject to the counsel or empire of their wyues were unworthie of all public office.³⁴⁴

Here Knox lists the many elements of a woman's nature that makes her unable to rule; however, Aylmer fails to disagree with this sentiment and instead incorporates such 'facts' into his own argument claiming that a weaker vessel for God's divine authority better demonstrates his power. Adapting quotations from 2 Corinthians and Judges he states:

My strength is moste pefight vwhen you be moste vveake, if he ioyne to his strengthe: she can not be vveake. If he put to his hande she can be feable, if he be vvith her vvho can stande against her? Thou shalt not take vvith the any great power (saith he to Gedeon) lest you thinke to ouercome your enemies by your ovvn strength, and proves, and not by my vvurking and might [...] Yea his moste vvonderfull vvorkes are always wrought in oure moste vveakenes, as infinite examples and testimonies do shevve.³⁴⁵

Whereas Knox dismisses a woman's ability to rule outright, Aylmer defends it by removing all agency and power from Elizabeth, transforming her into a mere puppet of God's will as he stresses the weakness and fragility of her gender. Aylmer removes any final powers from the role of queen when he discusses her duties. First, he states that it is the laws of the land that rule and not the queen herself; Aylmer then stresses that such laws are made by a *male* parliament and enforced by *male* judges, stripping away her agency piece by piece until he finally claims:

If she iudged offences according to her wisdom, and not by limitation of statutes and laws: if she might dispose alone of war and peace: if to be short she wer a mere monark, and not a mixte ruler, you might

³⁴⁴ John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (London, 1558; STC: 15070), sig. B2r.

³⁴⁵ John Aylmer, *An harborowe for faithfull and trewe subiects* (London, 1559; STC: 1005), sig. B3r.

peradventure make me to feare the matter themore, and the les to defend the cause.³⁴⁶

While Aylmer defends Elizabeth's right to the throne, he does so with the understanding that she is a mere figurehead and comforts his reader by claiming that patriarchal authority is retained in the parliament and through the might of divine power.

Such a debate stemmed from the greater ideology of Tudor society that reported the public realm to be the natural place of men, whilst the private, domestic sphere was considered to the domain of the women. Cristina Malcomson notes that such attitudes were not exclusive to men during the early modern era and refers to Christine de Pizan's *Livre de la cité des dames* (c. 1405) and Margaret Cavendish's *Orations* (1662) noting that:

...it seems a peculiar and telling limit, that both Christine and Cavendish revel in developing their wit and skill at argument and eloquence, and yet find it unnatural for women to use these skills in person as speakers in a public forum.³⁴⁷

As Malcomson notes, *Livre de la cité des dames* was kept in the royal libraries and would likely have been read or translated by the young Princess Elizabeth, whose education matched the ideals that Pizan wrote of, although she thoroughly embraced her role in the public realm. Despite opposition to her femininity, Elizabeth actively drew attention to and utilised her gender in her speeches. As Mary Beth Rose notes:

Elizabeth creates herself as *sui generis*, an exceptional woman whose royal status and unique capabilities make her inimitable. Her rhetoric technique involves appeasing widespread fears about female rule by adhering to conventions that assert the inferiority of the female gender only to supersede those conventions.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁶ Ibid., sig. H4r.

³⁴⁷ Cristina Malcomson, 'Christine de Pizan's *City of Ladies* in Early Modern England', in *Debating Gender in Early Modern England, 1500-1700*, eds. Christina Malcomson and Mihoko Suzuki (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 15-36 (p. 29).

³⁴⁸ Mary Beth Rose, 'The Gendering of Authority in the Public Speeches of Elizabeth I', *PMLA*, 115 (2000), 1077-82 (p. 1079).

Elizabeth's strategy certainly appeared to be successful and, as Carole Levin notes, Elizabeth generally enjoyed popularity amongst her subjects and inspired great loyalty, and Carol Levin notes, the first half of her reign is often depicted as a golden age.³⁴⁹

In spite of this, a major concern of the people was Elizabeth's failure to either produce or name an heir, a tactic that Levin suggests was intentional so as not to create a new threat to her rule. While particular choices such as Katherine Grey held a greater claim to the title, the claim of Henry Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon, was preferred as he was male.³⁵⁰ Katherine Eggert also notes the danger posed if Elizabeth had named an heir, stating that if she had done so, many may have considered them to be a more suitable candidate for rule to usurp her place. One of the more peculiar examples of this that Eggert observes were the rumours spread amongst the people that Edward VI had survived and would return in glory to lead his people once more. As Eggert notes:

If such desires could be attached to the figure of a less than mythic boy-king who had reigned only six years, the fantasy of the return of legitimate male rule must indeed have been powerful.³⁵¹

She continues that such nostalgia for a long dead king may have inspired Shakespeare's *Henry V* at a point when the nation felt the weight of being ruled by an elderly monarch. However, the desire for such a play may have been felt at an earlier point in Elizabeth I's reign and the fact that the genre appears to emerge in the mid-1580s must not be forgotten as this is a point that Levin identifies as the beginning of Elizabeth I's decline. As Levin notes:

The events of the 1580s and 1590s drove Elizabeth into a policy that went against her instincts and England into a period of war that had

³⁴⁹ Carole Levin, *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 80, 104.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

³⁵¹ Eggert, 'Nostalgia and the Not Yet Late Queen', p. 526.

grave repercussions, and made the English people far more critical of their monarch.³⁵²

The 1580s saw the start of a darker period of Elizabeth I's reign, one of greater poverty and muddled foreign policy concerning Ireland and the war with Spain.

Whilst battles successfully defended lands and protected the country, Elizabeth I did not engage in any conquests that would match the legendary feats undertaken by Edward III, Edward IV and Henry V to claim French territory. Henry V in particular was held in the highest regard as a role model for masculine leadership and for this reason Henry VIII had sought to mirror his image and legacy whilst his courtiers suggested that he was the bold Henry V born once more.³⁵³

Female Erasure

In selecting the reign of Henry V as his matter, the anonymous author of *Famous Victories* had selected a figure that celebrated male achievement and invited comparison to the female monarch, reminding the audience of everything that she was not. In fact the development of the history genre itself encouraged the exclusion of women and prioritised the achievements of the public realm to the private domain of women. Based almost exclusively on the tales of the history chronicles, few tales of female achievement were to be found and, where they did exist, they were ignored. As Martha A. Kurtz observes, '[t]here are few women characters in any of the best-known plays, and even fewer who exercise any kind of political power'.³⁵⁴ With such a basis in the chronicles, which prioritised the events of the public realm and the battle field over the domestic setting that women were often confined to, the

³⁵² Levin, *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, p. 104.

³⁵³ Dale Hoak, 'Introduction', in *Tudor Political Culture*, ed. Dale Hoak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp. 1-10 (p. 7).

³⁵⁴ Martha A. Kurtz, 'Rethinking Gender and Genre in the History Play', *SEL*, 36 (1996), 267-287 (p. 269).

recorded history of the time was certainly male-centric which was naturally reflected in the resulting history plays.

However, it was not merely the choice of source material that limited the roles of women in these plays; the playwright of *Famous Victories* also actively removed female figures from the narrative in favour of progressing the development of male characters. One particular example of this is to be found when the newly crowned Henry V must appoint a figure to protect the realm in his absence. In *Famous Victories* the new king chooses the Lord Chief Justice whom he had previously wronged and attacked previously in the play. The moment demonstrates his new wisdom as he chooses the man for his honourable intentions and fair judgement when applying the law. This cements the bond between the two men, as the character becomes a surrogate father for the prince, and concludes this particular sub-plot before the second half of the play commences. This appointment, however, is entirely fictional and is introduced to conclude a sub-plot that was taken from popular legend. In the *Chronicles*, Holinshed records that:

When the King had al his prouisions readye, and ordered all things for the defence of hys realme, he leauing behynde him for *gouernor of the realme, the Quene his mother in law*, departed to the towne of Southampton, intending there to take shippe, and so to passe the seas into Fraunce.³⁵⁵

This passage is a significant one as it demonstrates the use of the word queen to describe a woman endowed with the responsibility of the state revealing a differing attitude towards women. In much the same way as the role of the queen was transformed within the Tudor era, this role of Henry V's mother-in-law is reduced to nothing in the plot of the history play and is instead replaced by a fictional conclusion to a separate subplot. In *Famous Victories*, and subsequently

³⁵⁵ Raphael Holinshed, *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (London, 1577; STC: 13568b), sig. Bbb2v (emphasis added).

Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part Two* (c.1597), the role of protector of the realm is instead granted to the Lord Chief Justice to provide a final symbolic closure to the bold and forceful behaviour of the young prince and to repair this pseudo father-son relationship. The omission of this character, however, is extremely significant as it limits the cast of female characters in a play that has very few to begin with and because such a character would have provided a historical example of female government, reflecting favourably on Elizabeth I's rule itself.

Of the thirty-nine named parts to be found in *Famous Victories* only two are female, the cobbler's wife and princess Katherine, who, together, only appear in three scenes in total throughout the play. Aside from these two characters the only other woman to be mentioned in dialogue is 'Bouncing Bess' a popular stock character who appeared as a desirable maid that was commonly wooed with gifts such as Derick's 'brace of ginger' that had been stolen. Unlike Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part One* (c.1597) there are no mentions to be found of Henry IV's or the French king's wife, creating an absent mother in these two families. The effect is twofold; first, by sacrificing the part of the mother a greater focus can be given to the two parallel father-son relationships and, second, the mother's absence from court maintains the boundaries between the court and domestic scenes. In future history plays, the presence of a mother at court, for example the Duchess of York in Shakespeare's *Richard II* (c.1595) or Queen Elinor in *King John* (c.1596), serve only to demonstrate a court in chaos as the domestic sphere bleeds into the governance of the state. As Howard and Rackin note:

The difficult transmission of patrilineal authority from one generation to the next is the subject of the history plays, but they marginalize the

roles of the wives and mother, centering instead on the heroic legacies of the fathers, the failures and triumphs of the sons.³⁵⁶

The roles of women are thus minimised within the play itself to give priority to male history and genealogy, a trend that would continue throughout the genre, particularly when the subject was battles and warfare. It was suggested by E.M.W. Tillyard that the Elizabethan history play emerged to perpetuate the 'Tudor myth' and support the Tudor, and therefore Elizabeth's, inheritance of the crown.³⁵⁷ Elizabeth's claim had been previously contested before and she had been declared illegitimate for a time; however, her father's final will secured her birthright.³⁵⁸ Tillyard, therefore argues that this genre of plays emerged within Elizabeth I's reign to expel any doubts as to her legitimacy and to provide a structured narrative out of the series of medieval rebellions and dispositions to justify the Tudor's claim.

If this were the aim of these particular plays it is significant that *Famous Victories* focuses on the reign of Henry V, the king who married Princess Katherine, Elizabeth's great great grandmother. As *Famous Victories* contains a direct female ancestor of Elizabeth I and offers the acknowledgment of ancient female succession as the original grounds for Henry V's invasion, the second half of the play certainly appears to offer propagandistic support for Elizabeth I's claim to the throne.

However, as Eggert observes in *Henry V*, female contribution to the male succession is swiftly forgotten in favour of heroic battles and conquest. Noting the Archbishop of Canterbury's dialogue in the opening scene of the play, Eggert observes that:

The stirring phrasing of Canterbury's reference to mythic Edward and his son, especially after the dry, convoluted, even specious recital of the French monarchy's derivation, has the immediate effect of

³⁵⁶ Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 44.

³⁵⁷ See E.M.W. Tillyard's *Shakespeare's History Plays* (London: Penguin, 1991).

³⁵⁸ Levin, *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, p. 7.

associating male rule with compelling theatre – unlike female rule, which remains embedded in dull chronicle.³⁵⁹

While Eggert's remarks concern Shakespeare's later play, the same effect may also be observed in the earlier *Famous Victories*. The Archbishop in this text also uses Salic law as justification for Henry V's right and recognises Isabella's role in the royal succession, reminding the young king that Isabella is his great grandmother and was previously the late Edward III's wife.³⁶⁰ Unlike Shakespeare's Archbishop, the importance of women in the succession is not buried under the comically long sixty three lines of stale, archaic arguments concerning the validity of Salic law. Instead, the crucial reason for his claim is succinctly argued with a warning that 'if the French king deny it, as likely inough he wil,/ Then must you take your sword in hand,/ And conquer the right'.³⁶¹ Although Isabella's role is identified to be a great enough cause to begin a war, as with *Henry V*, she is never mentioned in the text again. Henry V listens to this counsel and calmly thanks his advisors without committing to either of the strategies that were offered to him. Instead it is only when the Dauphin offers a direct insult to his pride and manhood that he becomes resolved to engage in warfare and finally appears passionate about his claim as he cries:

Now my Lords, to Armes, to Armes,
For I vow by heauen and earth, that the proudest
French man in all France, shall rue the time that euer
These Tennis balles were sent into England.³⁶²

In this passionate cry for war, the lineage from Isabella is soon forgotten while the Dauphin's response instead becomes prominent. This insult of pride thus creates a new narrative subplot that runs concurrently with the war as the two youths engage

³⁵⁹ Eggert, 'Nostalgia and the Not Yet Late Queen', p. 527.

³⁶⁰ Anon., *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, (London, 1598; STC: 13072), sig. D2r.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Ibid., sig. D3v.

in a separate battle for their honour, whilst the claim through Isabella remains ignored, sacrificed once again for the benefit of male narratives.

Princess Katherine, who is introduced in the same scene, suffers a similar fate as she is immediately reduced to a bargaining chip when her father's messenger states:

My Lord and maister, the most Christian king,
Charles the seuenth, the great & mightie king of *France*,
 As a most noble and Christian king,
 Not minding to shed innocent blood, is rather content
 To yield somewhat to your vnreasonable demaunds,
 That if fiftie thousand crownes a yeare with his daughter
 The said Ladie *Katheren*, in marriage,
 And some crownes which he may wel spare,
 Not hurting of his kingdome,
 He is content to yield so far to your vnreasonable desire.³⁶³

Stressing that he is a Christian king twice before stating his offer, the French King establishes himself as a man of generosity in response to the 'unreasonable' – another word he repeats for emphasis – demands of an inferior king. As such, a sum of money that would not hurt his kingdom and his daughter are offered as an appeasement. Juxtaposed with an expendable amount of money, Katherine's own value may also be viewed in a similar light, as she is transformed into an object of little value by her father. Henry V, however, engages in this objectification by transforming Katherine into a trophy that must be won to secure his honour. In response he demands:

No tell thy Lord and maister,
 That all the crownes in *France* shall not serue me,
 Except the Crowne and kingdome it selfe:
 And perchance hereafter I wil haue his daughter.³⁶⁴

³⁶³ Ibid., sig. D3r .

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

Previously offered as part of an insulting compromise, Henry V now threatens to take Katherine almost as an afterthought, if he should feel like it, in retaliation for his hurt pride.

Unlike the absent women before her, Katherine is given a presence in the plot and a speaking role within the cast; however, it is only to serve the male narratives within the plot and provide a prize suitable for the king of England's conquest. Such a role demonstrates that a shift had occurred in the Tudor perception of masculinity, which had previously seen an overactive lust for women to be a sign of effeminacy. However, as Howard and Rackin trace the development of Shakespeare's history plays into *Henry IV* and *Henry V*, they note that these plays 'included idealized roles for women as the objects of sexual conquest and matrimonial possession that provide the proof of the hero's manhood'.³⁶⁵ The traditional effeminate language of lust and wooing is thus transformed into the language of conquest as women become a desirable award that must be won to demonstrate masculine ability. The overlap between these two forces of lust and conquest are best seen in scene nineteen as Henry V anticipates the arrival of Katherine, 'I but I loue her, and must craue her,/ Nay I loue her and will haue her'.³⁶⁶ Henry V begins his statement with the traditional language of the lovesick courtier, a familiar stock figure in Elizabethan literature and art. However, he immediately asserts his will in order to claim the prize of conquest when he states that he will *have* her.³⁶⁷ This image of conquest is developed further when he imagines that her father would not grant the match his blessing:

Farwel sweet Kate, in faith, it is a sweet wench,

³⁶⁵ Howard, Rackin, *Engendering a Nation*, p. 188.

³⁶⁶ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. F3v.

³⁶⁷ See Nicholas Hilliard's miniature *Young Man Among Roses* (1547-1619) and the subplots of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1590-2), *As You Like It* (c.1600) and John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (c. 1613) for examples of this figure.

But if I knew I could not haue her fathers good wil,
 I would so rowse the Towers ouer his eares,
 That I would make him be glad to bring her me,
 Upon his hands and knees.³⁶⁸

Here the language of subjugation and warfare becomes more overt as Henry V threatens to lay siege and reignite the war to possess Katherine. Although his speech begins with the traditional language of courtship, it is soon transformed into a threat to take Katherine as a show of superiority and to assert his masculine power over the French King. Katherine, thus becomes a pawn in a battle of male dominance and in spite of her significance as a historical role model for her great great granddaughter, her own story and character become lost in a play that primarily celebrates male achievement at the cost of female characters.

Patriarchal Nostalgia

It seems then that—to a greater extent than the chronicles that preceded them—the history play genre excluded the achievements of women to emphasise, and sometimes even invent, a heroic male narrative that romanticises the medieval past. Although Howard, Rackin and Eggert focus their attention on the Shakespearean history plays of the late 1590s, their analysis still holds true for the first history plays to emerge in the mid-1580s. Speaking on *Richard II*, Howard and Rackin note that:

Confronted by rapid cultural change, Shakespeare's contemporaries often idealized the past as a time of stable values and national glory, when social status was firmly rooted in patrilineal inheritance and expressed in chivalric virtue. [...] In Richard's characterization—as in the case of Elizabeth herself—the polluting forces of effeminate modernity are embodied in the same person who represents the patrilineal royal authority they threaten to subvert.

Despite (or perhaps because of) its association with the cult of Elizabeth, the nostalgic ideal of a glorious English past was overwhelmingly masculine.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁸ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. F4r.

In the face of a female ruler, the past became a source of patriarchal nostalgia that, as Howard and Rackin continue to argue, Elizabeth I's male courtiers would attempt to reclaim by emulating displays of chivalry in tournaments. Eggert continues this observation, noting that:

Henry V, in contrast, gives voice to the fantastical, irrational desires to which nostalgia, when intensified to the point of supersaturation, gives way: that the past may return, that the dead are indeed alive, that historic heroism may replace the feminine chaos and decay that are the audience's more recent memory—both their memory of what has happened in Shakespeare's first historical tetralogy and, increasingly, their memory of what has been happening in the English monarchy of the late 1590s.³⁷⁰

Eggert defines such a sentiment as 'supernostalgia'; however it is not merely limited to Shakespeare's late history plays. Both works note that dissatisfaction with matriarchal rule led some of Elizabeth's subjects to seek out traditional models of masculinity as a means to emulate a romanticised past, protected from the unrelenting forces of change and modernity.

Yet, this is not merely confined to the particular grouping of plays highlighted here and may be applied to the history genre as a whole. Emerging during the mid-1580s, the birth of this genre coincides with the date Levin identified as the beginning of Elizabethan deterioration, creating perfect conditions for a surge of nostalgic feeling. *Famous Victories* was performed 1583-1587, when the threat of an attack from Spain was increasing and by 1587, one of the most likely years for performances of *Famous Victories*, the Spanish Armada had been anticipated and defensive procedures had been put in place to build a fleet to counteract this attack.³⁷¹ Whilst Elizabeth's foreign policy largely maintained a peaceful reign with

³⁶⁹ Howard, Rackin, *Engendering a Nation*, p. 147.

³⁷⁰ Eggert, 'Nostalgia and the Not Yet Late Queen', p. 537.

³⁷¹ Levin, *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, p. 68.

few wars, as Timothy Francisco notes, such a strategy was perceived to have a negative impact on Elizabethan masculine identities:

England's want of an organized, large-scale war, the result of Elizabeth I's scattered foreign policy, was cause for much anxiety over the state of masculinity, and male writers of the Elizabethan era speculated, in their prose, their poetry and their drama on this drought of large scale organized, state sanctioned violence.³⁷²

As Francisco continues, proof of one's own masculinity was, and to some extent still is, demonstrated by acts of violence and, as such, the figure of the warrior was valued higher than the pacifist who was thought to have an idle personality.³⁷³

Denied the traditional rite of passage that was battle, masculinity thus entered into crisis, and figures such as Thomas Nash feared that without the power of war to give vent to these emotions, the violence inherent within men would not be sated and would become a chaotic and unpredictable force.³⁷⁴

Such an ideology is certainly demonstrated by the character of Henry V in *Famous Victories* as the unoccupied youth begin brawls and attack public officials in the heat of anger; however, once crowned, Henry V begins to plot a war against France in a 'productive' use of his violent energies thus allowing him to purge his aggression. While the scenes of war are not described in the text itself, the surviving stage direction 'The Battell', is left to represent an individual, non-scripted scene. It is to be assumed that a sequence of choreographed fights to demonstrate the visual spectacle of the battle would ensue and, in addition to the actors' stage combat, the next scene commences with Henry V's speech: 'Come my Lords come, by this time our/ Swords are almost drunke with French blood'.³⁷⁵ The feigned violence and vivid language of the victors allows the audience to participate in the victory of their

³⁷² Timothy Francisco, *The Impact of Militarism and Social Mobility of the Construction of Masculinity in Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007), p. 12.

³⁷³ Ibid., p. 1.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 12.

³⁷⁵ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. F1r.

ancestors in an attempt to appease their 'natural' bloodlust as they enjoy the nostalgia of a lost era. As Francisco continues:

Subscribing to a quasi-Aristotelian condition of catharsis, Nashe sees war, or in its absence, theatre, as performing a cleansing, almost laxative, function of expunging the state body of "corrupt excrements".³⁷⁶

Famous Victories thus not only provides the means to achieve such a cathartic release of sentiment, but it creates a genre that may replicate such a reaction, time and time again, establishing a means of theatre that will focus on the achievements of the battlefield and minimise the role of women to that of a desirable prize as a measure of male success.

Male victory over women is not limited to Henry V's treatment of Princess Katherine, however, and a metaphorical gender domination occurs through the imagery of the war itself. Howard and Rackin observe that the land of France itself is feminised in Shakespeare's *Henry V*:

In *Henry V*, in fact, the entire French kingdom is represented as a woman to be conquered by the masculine force of the English army, [...] literalized in the final scene when Henry claims the French princess for his bride.³⁷⁷

France is thus offered as a strange, Other, to be conquered by the patriotic and masculine might of the true and noble English king, affirming his power and might in the same way that the sexual conquest of women affirmed the masculinity of her pursuer. The imagery of warfare and courtship were closely linked in the early modern period, in particular the imagery of a siege was often utilised in literature when a woman was being seduced or, in more unsettling examples, raped. The prevalence of this imagery is such that the language of battle also gained a double meaning as sexual euphemisms; however, the gendered difference in these terms are

³⁷⁶ Francisco, *The Impact of Militarism and Social Mobility*, p. 13.

³⁷⁷ Howard, Rackin, *Engendering a Nation*, p. 213.

clearly divided. Collecting the sexual language of Shakespeare's plays, Gordon Williams observes that the following weaponry terms were used as euphemisms for male genitalia: bullet, falchion (sword), knife, lance, pistol, sword and weapon.³⁷⁸ As Williams notes in his description of the term 'soldier', the lines between 'martial prowess and sexual virility frequently blur',³⁷⁹ however, if a male wooer is transformed into the figure of the soldier, it must be examined how such imagery informs his relationship to his, presumably female, lover. The imagery of warfare depicted women very differently; whereas men were described with the imagery of weaponry, female genitalia was compared to a wound or a city that could be ravished or pillaged, transforming them into the passive objects that were acted upon by male passions.³⁸⁰ The images of the siege or yielding to the assault and surrendering one's chastity were also popular images that were applied to women in the narrative of courtship.³⁸¹ In *Famous Victories*, however, this mode of discourse is reversed, as the siege and attack on the town of Harflew evokes the imagery of courtship. As the French King converses with his men, a messenger appears to inform him of Harflew's fate, stating:

I come from your poore distressed Towne of *Harflew*,
Which is so beset on euery side,
If your Maiestie do not send present aide,
The Town will be yielded to the English King.³⁸²

Immediately the town is personified into a distressed figure under attack, evoking the images of sexual siege as the king fears the country will be 'spoyled' by the prowess of the English army.

³⁷⁸ Gordon Williams, *Shakespeare's Sexual Language: A Glossary* (London: Continuum, 2006), p. 58, 119, 178, 181, 237, 299, 334.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 70, 345.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 277, 346.

³⁸² Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. E2r.

The feminisation of France is taken further when the French army demonstrate an incompatibility with traditional models of masculine honour, as even the French men do not fit the traditional standards of fierce masculinity. The most overt example of this is where the French King demands that his son refrain from entering the battle, choosing compassion and sentiment over the honour of battle glory, when he states:

I tell thee my sonne,
Although I should get the victory, and thou lose thy life,
I should thinke my selfe quite conquered,
And the English men to haue the victorie.³⁸³

The French King demonstrates here that he values the life of his son above his honour, or even the safety of his state, and ignores the Dauphin's pleas to fight. While the relationship between father and son would continue to be celebrated in later history plays, these examples often prioritised family honour and depicted the son who was willing to sacrifice himself for glory and the figure of the righteous father who would stand aside for the greater good and honour. In *Henry VI, Part One* (1592) Talbot seeks to save his son from the battle; however, after an impassioned plea from his child he concedes and vows that they will die together, but with honour. Similarly in *Edward III* (c.1593), the eponymous character, upon learning his son is outnumbered on the field refuses the pleas of his men to save him, instead replying, 'Then will he win a world of honour too,/ If he by valour can redeem him thence. If not, what remedy? We have more sons'.³⁸⁴ Warriors and great kings are expected to prioritise the pride of their family over their safety and by failing to do this French King has more in common with *Richard II*'s Duchess of York who begs the Duke to 'hide the trespass of thine own' and keep the news of plotted treason

³⁸³ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁴ Anon., *Edward III*, ed. Giorgio Melchiori (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 129.

from the king.³⁸⁵ By valuing his son above his state itself, the French King reveals ‘womanish’ sentiment which is mocked as cowardice by Henry V in the next scene.

Just as the French King is feminised for his sentiment towards his family, so is his army feminised when they speak together on the eve of the approaching battle. This trope has proved to be a popular one within the history genre and Nicholas Grene has observed that within Shakespeare’s early histories ‘[t]he two sides are constructed to illustrate the oppositions of national character by which the English can congratulate themselves on being staunch, upright, strong and masculine, over against the shifting, effeminate and double-dealing French’.³⁸⁶ This binary is also employed in *Famous Victories*. Whilst Henry V speaks only of the honour and the glory he hopes to gain from France, this is juxtaposed with the French soldiers’ conversations about the clothing they wish to win from the English, ‘Oh the braue, the braue apparel that we shall/ Haue anon’.³⁸⁷ A final soldier steers the conversation to the ‘oh braue horse’ that he should hope to win as well. The adjective ‘brave’ is repeatedly used in this way by the soldiers to describe the splendour of the spoils they hope to acquire and inviting ridicule from the audience. On the eve of battle, the term ‘brave’ is certainly an appropriate one for the soldiers to use; however, this only makes their irreverent and inappropriate use of the term more striking as they demonstrate no hunger for the oncoming violence or glory of battle. Instead they gain pleasure at the thought of ‘brave apparel’, instead of brave deeds, and horses,

³⁸⁵ William Shakespeare, *Richard II*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: Norton & Company, 2008)V.2. 2540, p. 1035.

³⁸⁶ Nicholas Grene, *Shakespeare’s Serial History Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 66.

³⁸⁷ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. E3v.

both objects that were traditionally associated with women.³⁸⁸ After this lengthy exchange the Captain joins the men on stage to rhetorically ask:

Why who euer saw a more flourishing armie in France
 In one day, then here is? Are not here all the Peeres of
 France? Are not here the Normans with their firie hand-
 Gunnes, and slaunching Curtleaxes?
 Are not here the Barbarians with their hard horses,
 And lanching speares?
 Are not here Pickardes with their Crosbowes & piercing
 Dartes.
 The Henues with their cutting Glaues and sharpe Carbuckles.
 Are not here the Lance knights of Burgondie?³⁸⁹

Filled with vigour at the sight of the men he commands, the French Captain's hyperbolic comparisons fall comically short as the men are directly compared to their grand, war-hungry ancestors all whilst they play at dice and dream of clothing. It is important here that the captain uses rhetorical questions in his comparison as in doing so he invites the audience to consider the answer to his increasingly lacking comparisons. Unbeknownst to the Captain an English audience is watching his speech in the theatre and considering the juxtaposition of the soldiers' staging to his sweeping epic imagery it is an audience who would almost certainly think, and perhaps even voice, their own answer: 'no'.

In this way France is established as a feminine land that must be conquered by Henry V to achieve glory and create a historic moment so that his victory may be long remembered afterwards. The ending of the play thus endows Henry V with all the symbols of a successful kingship that Elizabeth I lacked, allowing the audience to further indulge in nostalgia for previous glories and to sate such desires by allowing them to witness and share in England's historic glory. The final scene of the play does little to add to or conclude previous elements of the plot; however, it instead

³⁸⁸ In *Moderating Masculinity in Early Modern Culture*, Todd W. Reeser notes the feminisation of excess, while the trait of being moderate is upheld as a masculine one; the association between women and horses are observed by Joan Hartwig, Teresa Nelson and Kevin de Ornellas.

³⁸⁹ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. E3v-E4r.

acts as a coda to the work by displaying Henry V's spoils of war. It is officially agreed that Henry V has won the crown of France and the French courtiers swear their allegiance to Henry V in a small ceremonial pledge that demonstrates the might of the English king as the Duke promises to become his 'league-man' and to protect 'Henry or his heires' from any foreign power that may threaten to conquer them. That Henry V's heir will inherit his French crown is stressed repeatedly by the characters in this last particular scene as the terms of England's victory are agreed upon:

Item, that *Henry* King of England,
Be Crowned heire and Regent of *France*,
During the life of King *Charles*, and after his death,
The Crowne with all rights, to remaine to King Henry
Of England, and to his heires *for euer*.³⁹⁰

Here, the reward of the war is stated outright by the secretary as the audience bears witness to the various displays of formal procedure to formally acknowledge and bestow such prizes upon the king. The Secretary's formal acknowledgement of Henry V's claim to the crown in the particular boasts of a stable succession as Henry V secures his position as the heir of France and anticipates a strong lineage to inherit the title from him after. It should be noted that the Secretary adds the word 'for euer' to the end of his speech, promising a continuous succession that Henry V's ancestors could enjoy. While the word in this context stresses the success of the war and the great achievement that came with the victory it also reminds the audience of what has been lost.

As a descendent of the royal lineage, Elizabeth I never held France and so the word choice here rings false, forcing the audience to conversely consider the eventual loss of this prize as well, even at the point that it is bestowed upon the

³⁹⁰ Ibid., sig. G1v-G2r (emphasis added).

English monarchy. This, however, is not the only symbol of victory that Henry V acquires in this scene that Elizabethan England lacked: in addition to the crown of France, throughout the negotiations, Henry V's heirs are repeatedly mentioned. These references evoke the image of his son, Henry VI, and states that a strong succession is in place, something England lacked at the time. The final lines of the play anticipate the marriage of Henry V in a move that not only strengthens his political position in France but will result in the male heir that will succeed him and secure the future of England. Further security is also assured by the courtier's promise to aid England if threatened by a foreign power and in 1587 the loss of such a useful allegiance in the face of the contemporary Spanish threat would be felt all the more strongly at this time. The play ends with image of a strong English conqueror who has won princess Katherine, for a match that will produce a male heir, reclaimed his 'birthright' to the French crown, gained a strong political allegiance from the French court to defend England from foreign attack and secured a strong succession and inheritance for his future heir; all accomplishments that Elizabeth I was unable to boast.

Elizabeth famously never married and refused to name an heir throughout her reign, meaning that her country's future remained uncertain. Noting that Elizabeth I was the target of a great number of plots and conspiracies throughout her reign, Levin notes that:

Many perceived Elizabeth's refusal to marry and have a child or name a successor as only exacerbating the situation; people were afraid of civil war and turmoil should the Queen die.³⁹¹

Whilst Elizabeth I's rule brought about a period of peace for England, her choices to secure her own reign also adversely affected the security of the nation, a threat her

³⁹¹ Levin, *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, pp. 80-81.

people had become all too aware of when Elizabeth had contracted smallpox in 1562, nearly killing her without an official successor named.³⁹² The staging of Henry V's victories is thus a bittersweet one, allowing the audience to share in the glory of their past, but also allowing them the realisation that all these securities have been lost in their own contemporary age. It seems then that pride in the past is created at the cost of breeding discontent in the present, acknowledging, and even affirming anxieties surrounding female, and it seems specifically Elizabeth's, rule. It must be noted that the prevalence of the history play fell rapidly as James I ascended to the throne, securing a male patriarchal leader for England once again. What is particularly interesting, however, is that the Jacobean era saw a series of plays that celebrated female rule from *Antony and Cleopatra* (c.1606) to *If You Know not Me, You Know Nobody*, whilst others such as *Henry VIII* (c.1612) and *When You See Me You Know Me*, celebrate the strength and wit of Henry VIII's wives over the central king himself. As Levin notes, in addition to this the figure of Elizabeth emerged in pamphlet literature to mourn the fate of her country creating an idealised image of her own reign.³⁹³ It appears then that the Jacobean history play diminished as opposed to its more successful Elizabethan counterpart as the demand for patriarchal nostalgia lessened in the rule of a male king. Indeed, it may even be stated that the few examples of the history play after James I's reign instead displayed examples of matriarchal nostalgia for the golden era of Elizabeth's early reign thus demonstrating the superficial nature of nostalgic sentiment.

It cannot be denied that the Elizabethan history play celebrated masculine achievement, often at the cost of female representation, and it may be seen that examples of the genre both affirm and provide release for the audience's anxieties

³⁹² Ibid., p. 19.

³⁹³ Ibid., p. 6.

towards female rule, through the use of patriarchal nostalgia. In this way, the play certainly offers a critique of female rule for its audience; however, the use of male narratives have a greater complexity in their usage than Eggert's theory of 'supernostalgia' allows for. Whilst such plays certainly provide a critique of Elizabeth's later reign, they also criticise certain modes of masculinity. The final scene of *Famous Victories* provides a perfect demonstration of such a two-fold criticism by achieving both of these goals. As has already been demonstrated in this chapter, Henry V's extensive list of victories may remind the audience of their absence in Elizabeth I's reign; however, the stress on Henry V's heir's new birthright to the French crown 'for euer', may also remind the audience that it was Henry V's direct male heir, Henry VI, who lost these. Although this association is not made as directly as Shakespeare's final lines of *Henry V*, where the Chorus reminds the audience that Henry VI 'lost France and made his England bleed', the repeated stress on Henry V's lineage – which would become displaced through the War of the Roses – and the inclusion of 'for euer' in the terms for surrender become reminders to the audience that such achievement is only temporary and will be soon destroyed in the hands of an incompetent king.³⁹⁴

The figure of historical kings were certainly not beyond criticism and Alymer, in his defence of Elizabeth I's reign, even offers examples of poor male kings to demonstrate that poor choices may be made by male monarchs too, noting 'hovv many misfortunes, ouerthrowes, changes, and translations of monarchies, haue happened vnder the regiment of men: it is harde to number, and impossible to declare'.³⁹⁵ However, even a popular king such as Henry V may be criticised and, as noted in the previous chapter of this thesis, the depiction of his youthful exploits as a

³⁹⁴ William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: Norton & Company, 2008), V.2.3369, p. 1547.

³⁹⁵ Alymer, *An harborowe for faithfull and trewe subiectes*, sig. D2v.

prince demonstrates a rebellious and transgressive nature that is not positive in its depiction. While celebratory of Henry V, *Famous Victories* also extends a critique towards certain elements of his rule. However, it must be questioned why the rule of such a popular and beloved king would attract criticism; the answer to such a riddle may also lie in Elizabeth I's era.

Whilst there are certainly accounts of Elizabeth I's subjects eagerly anticipating the return of a patriarchal monarchy, she still remained a beloved figure and source of national pride for many of her subjects. As Levin stresses before beginning an examination of the assassination attempts that targeted the queen:

A discussion of the plots and attempts against her should not suggest that most of the English people wanted Elizabeth off the throne or dead; in fact, they rallied loyally around her and were infuriated by the conspiracies against their Queen.³⁹⁶

While this does not negate all anxieties concerning a female rule that were raised throughout her reign, her popularity suggests that despite the lack of a traditional queenship to legitimise her authority, Elizabeth I was able to create a strategy of rule that minimised such anxieties and challenged some perceptions of gender. Analysing the published speeches of Elizabeth I, Cristy Beemer notes that the subject of gender was an important factor in Elizabeth's speeches in which she 'reflected back society's expectations for gender roles while [she] subverted them'.³⁹⁷ One speech in particular that Beemer uses to illustrate this point was one made to Parliament in 1559 when she argued against marriage as she already had a husband: the realm of England itself. As Beemer observes, Elizabeth casts herself in the role of a loyal wife with such an assertion. However, she then continues:

Elizabeth knows that a marriage, and even one wholly agreed upon by Parliament, will not benefit her reign save to ensure an heir. Her

³⁹⁶ Levin, *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, p. 80.

³⁹⁷ Beemer, 'The Female Monarchy', p. 259.

decision to maintain her power by remaining single is a confirmation of women's power. In a thinly veiled insult to her audience, the male members of Parliament, Elizabeth implies that she does not need a man for anything except perhaps biology.³⁹⁸

Not satisfied to remain a passive object that would bow to a political marriage and new authority, Elizabeth I ensured that her power was not diluted by her own parliament, as Aylmer had suggested to be the case and, as Beemer observes in 'The Petticoat Speech', '[s]he also expertly volleys back the argument that a woman's reign is monstrous by asserting that she is the head, and for Parliament to rule her would be monstrous'.³⁹⁹ As can be seen, Elizabeth did not apologise for, nor did she hide, her gender and ultimately embraced it in political discourse, expertly establishing her own female tradition of rule that would be offered as a shining precedent when Queen Anne ascended the throne in 1702.

The Tudor era saw great changes to social structures and ideologies and, under the reign of Elizabeth I, the traditional medieval concepts of masculine honour saw a transformation as she moved away from the reign of her father, Henry VIII, towards an a proto-capitalist society. In a discussion of Elizabeth I's speech to Parliament in 1586, Mary Beth Rose notes that when Elizabeth describes the trials of her life she does not refer to the moments when her life was at risk but instead to the points when she felt the cost of living. Rose states:

This passage implicitly exposes the negative values of male heroism (i.e., willingness to die) by transforming the meaning of courage: dying is easy; living is hard. Survival, not death, constitutes the meaningful self-sacrifice. There could be no more profound rejection of male heroism than Elizabeth's repeated refusal to privilege death.⁴⁰⁰

By doing so, Elizabeth challenges the previous chivalric tales of the heroes, such as Talbot who died in pursuit of glory on the battlefield, to allow such honour to be

³⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 269.

³⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 270.

⁴⁰⁰ Rose, 'The Gendering of Authority', p. 1080.

claimed independently of the male dominated historic battlefields and in new accessible ways, signalling a shift in perceptions of gender expression. Approaches to previously aggressive forms of masculinity were beginning to change and Elizabeth herself embraced this in her speeches as she appropriated the chivalrous traits of honour, sacrifice and bravery and redefined such terms so as to allow herself to become associated with such coveted qualities. Such a shift, however subtle, can be seen in the history play which, despite prioritising male characters and narratives, offers some strength to its female characters. The appearance of Princess Katherine in the narrative is an important one, even if her role is greatly reduced in the text itself. Karen Oberer suggests that Katherine retains some sense of agency in her brief scenes and even goes so far as to state that in the process of Henry V's wooing, she manages to seduce him too, providing a mutual manipulation that suggests an equality between them.⁴⁰¹

Katherine certainly demonstrates an element of authority that is suitable for negotiation, suggesting a stronger link between her and her future descendent, Elizabeth I, and upon entering the scene she states her political interest clearly, assertively asking if Henry V will 'debate any of these/ Unreasonable demands which you require'.⁴⁰² Oberer observes that '[t]here is a suggestion of annoyance in Katherine's voice' at this point, and highlights the princess' word choice when she describes Henry V's 'unreasonable' demands.⁴⁰³ In doing so, Katherine certainly cuts a formidable figure and arguably provides a more assertive, blunt political adversary than her father before her. With limited actors to play a variety of roles, it is very likely that the young boy who relates the prince's brawl to Derick and John

⁴⁰¹ Karen Oberer, 'Appropriations of the Popular Tradition in *The Famous Victories of Henry V* and *The Troublesome Raigne of King John*', in *Locating the Queen's Men, 1583-1603*, ed. Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Griffin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp.171-82 (p. 175).

⁴⁰² Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. F3v.

⁴⁰³ Oberer, 'Appropriations of the Popular Tradition', p. 175.

Cobbler in scene two would have also played the two female roles as well, first as Cobbler's wife and then Katherine by the play's end. Doubling these roles certainly risked an association between the two female characters, and a contemporary audience account of a performance of *Famous Victories* certainly suggests that even in different roles the actors were imbued with the ghosts of their previous roles.⁴⁰⁴ The character of John Cobbler's wife, whilst loving to her husband, is seen in her conflict with Derick to contain shrewish and aggressive attributes. After attacking Derick he claims she would make a greater fighter than the two conscripted men and threateningly claims 'I had my dagger here, I wold worie you al to peeces'.⁴⁰⁵ Outshining the men in terms of fighting ability, as well as demonstrating her aggressive side, the emasculating quality of the wife is finally demonstrated in a Derick's threat. As stated earlier in this chapter, weapons of warfare were often offered as euphemisms for male genitalia so a subtle joke is created at Derick's expense when he tells the wife that he would fight back if he only had a dagger thus highlighting the loss of manhood that he feels in her presence.

With the doubling of this role, the character of Katherine could easily become associated with similar traits of transgressive femininity. In her first appearance, such a characterisation appears likely as she speaks brashly to Henry V reminding him that he has 'dealt hardly' with her father and snidely joking that 'I would to God, that I had your Maiestie,/ As fast in loue, as you haue my father in warres'.⁴⁰⁶ At first Katherine is offered as reluctant participant in the wooing, as she uses her barbed wit against Henry V in much the same manner that Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew* (c.1592) originally rejects Petruchio, a connection that is

⁴⁰⁴ One of Richard Tarlton's jokes to the audience certainly relies on the audience's memory of his previous parts when, after playing the role of the Lord Chief Justice, he jokes that he feels the Prince's slap upon his cheek still when he resumes his role as Derick in a later scene.

⁴⁰⁵ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. D4v.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., sig. F3v.

strengthened by Henry V's insistent use of the nickname Kate in these two wooing scenes. As with Shakespeare's earlier Kate, Katherine's irreverent behaviour is not used to strengthen or complicate her character but, rather, is utilised to increase the victory of Henry V. Whilst Katherine enters the scene as a political ambassador that means to secure a better deal for her country, it is stressed in her first dialogue that her father sent her with this task and any political agency that she retains in spite of this is stripped from her by Henry V's attempts to woo her, as he focuses only on his lust for her and moulds their dialogue around his topic:

KATE. How should I loue him, that hath dealt so hardly
With my father.

HEN.5. But ile deale as easily with thee,
As thy heart can imagine.⁴⁰⁷

Henry V demonstrates his great rhetorical skill in such exchanges as he distracts his subject from their ultimate purpose by appearing to respond to each point whilst simultaneously taking control of the conversation to steer it back to his own argument. Katherine firmly makes her case that Henry V's terms of peace are excessively harsh, reflecting the sentiments of her father earlier in the scene. Henry V refuses to respond to this claim and instead evades the accusation by promising to 'deal as easily with thee', returning Kate's own language back to her in what appears to be a counterargument, but is in fact a complete change in topic. This works until Katherine finally replies to his proposal with:

If I were of my owne direction,
I could giue you answere:
But seeing I stand at my fathers direction,
I must first know his will.⁴⁰⁸

In this final statement, Katherine relinquishes all illusion of control or agency and reveals her true place in a patriarchal society that only values her as a pawn. Her

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., sig. F4r.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

previous ferocity and stubbornness then are revealed to have been fleeting, serving only as an additional challenge for Henry V to overcome as he demonstrates his ability in terms of sexual conquest, in addition to his physical and political prowess, and reducing Katherine's role from character to a mere prize to be won. Whilst Katherine's character suffers for such a superficial addition to Henry V's already bloated list of achievements, this scene provides a perfect demonstration of how perceptions of manhood and masculinity had changed. Although *Famous Victories* certainly excludes the participation and celebration of women, often ignoring them in favour of male characters, it can be seen to instead give legitimacy and weight to changing views of masculinity that occurred over Elizabeth I's reign.

Evolving Masculinity

In addition to the introduction of female monarchy, the concept of masculinity saw a great transformation during the Tudor era as traditionally male symbols and behaviours in favour of fashioning the civilised Elizabethan man. Francisco suggests that such a shift in social behaviour was necessitated by the evolving need of the military. He suggests that:

sixteenth century masculinity undergoes a gradual but profound transformation, one marked, among other things, by a movement away from a "warrior" sensibility, which privileges individual prowess, to on the one hand, a "military" or "soldier" sensibility, which advocates discipline and moderation, and on the other hand, a "courtier" sensibility which advocates discipline of another sort, which Nobert Eilas describes as a "curbing of the affects in favour of calculated and finely shaded behaviour in dealing with people" (Court, III).⁴⁰⁹

Francisco identifies three major models of masculinity in this process of evolution as the warrior, which was associated with ancient Greek and Roman myth, became

⁴⁰⁹ Francisco, *The Impact of Militarism and Social Mobility*, p. 3.

replaced with the disciplined medieval soldier and his code of chivalry and finally became the tactical courtier who would use his influence and persuasive power to his advantage. Such skills were necessary for the political environment of the court and were major elements of Elizabeth I's foreign policy which made full advantage of negotiation often through the promise of marriage or courtship to foreign princes to maintain peace.

Such a change in the perception of masculinity was also necessary due to the changing nature of society which allowed for new emerging classes such as merchants. As the state turned from a feudal system towards a new society that held the seed of capitalist culture and suggested the possibility of social mobility. The acquisition of money and assets became important signifiers of class allowing the chance for individuals to socially climb and gain power that would have previously been denied to those who lacked a noble bloodline; status could now be earned and bought instead of inherited. William Shakespeare was one such social climber as his writing and investment in theatres increased his wealth to the extent that he was able to buy a coat of arms for his family name, an important status symbol.⁴¹⁰ As such, the courtier became an acceptable masculine figure as a man who could gain success with his intelligence and wit over the more outdated figure of the knight who would earn his honour at the point of his sword.

As the history plays evolved over time, a critique of these traditional models of masculinity can be seen to increase while the traits associated with the courtier are increasingly stressed to be desirable. This would finally result in Heywood's *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody, Part Two*, the first half of the play disregards the traditional narrative of warfare that the Elizabethan history plays were famous for, to

⁴¹⁰ Peter Holland, 'Shakespeare, William (1564–1616)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Jan 2013 [Available: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25200>, accessed on: 09/10/15].

instead focus on a discussion between merchants and various tradesmen, revealing that it is in the marketplace that honour and status is won from the Elizabethan era onwards. This, however, is made possible by the early precedent that *Famous Victories* provides which becomes increasing overt until, as Howard and Rackin observe:

Literalized in an obsession with horses, Hotspur's single-minded devotion to chival(cheval)ry makes him an ambivalent figure—the ideal of martial honor, but, because that ideal is outmoded in the modern world of Henry IV, an object of sophisticated ridicule as well.⁴¹¹

As Howard and Rackin observe, the determined, chivalrous soldier of Hotspur is offered as the antagonist in *I Henry IV* rather than the hero. As has been suggested in the previous chapter, the figure of Hotspur in these plays resembles the figure of *Famous Victories*' Prince Henry more than Hal does and, as such, it follows that the origins of such a parody of chivalry may be found in this earlier play.

Henry V is offered as the hero of *Famous Victories*, and the play is unrelentingly concerned with male narratives; however, this work divides masculine nature into two categories and establishes one set of behaviours as appropriate and the others as outdated ideals. As a prince, Henry is certainly seen to embody many of these 'outdated' traits which causes him to engage in violent, disruptive and, generally, transgressive behaviour that is unsuitable for a king. However, he is not depicted as an unsuccessful king or leader in the same way that Richard II, Edward II or Henry VI are in their respective plays, as Henry V's status as a legendary ruler is important to such an unfolding narrative. Much as Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* a shrewish, stereotype of transgressive femininity that must be converted into a shining example of the ideal feminine wife, so does *Famous Victories* offer a

⁴¹¹ Howard, Rackin, *Engendering a Nation*, p. 188.

similar tale for masculinity. Henry V is first established to have an outdated, harmfully masculine nature that must be tamed over the course of the play to earn the status and respect of his Elizabethan legacy. Henry V was the perfect choice for such a narrative as he was upheld as the ultimate figure of male kingship and, as such, his legacy could be appropriated to demonstrate which factors of traditional masculinity should be considered obsolete and must be rejected to ensure greatness. It is particularly fitting that such a narrative takes place within a medieval time period—the very world—that Elizabeth’s courtiers attempted to mimic to preserve their own sense of manhood, as the evolution of masculine behaviour becomes more apparent in such a setting and proves that the great historical achievements of England are not necessarily reliant on a medieval mind-set.

The audience is introduced to Henry V whilst he is still a wild and brash prince, who makes great displays of his physical strength and unstable rage in a manner that firmly associates him with the model of the ancient warrior; however, these displays are shown to be disruptive to the peace, to authority and to the respect of his future subjects.⁴¹² This violence, however, is consistent with traditional perceptions of masculinity and the aggression that all men were, and to a certain extent are still today, stereotypically expected to naturally exhibit. Prince Henry’s behaviour in these scenes, however, demonstrates the destructive nature of such a figure and, upon meeting his father, he must publicly renounce such behaviour so that he does not sabotage his future reign. As such, Henry V’s shift in behaviour follows the evolution of the warrior to the soldier that Francisco identifies:

As the technoscience of warfare evolves, the representation of the soldier progresses toward an ideal that is predicated on “sobriety” and “obedience”. This emerging model of masculinity, the disciplined,

⁴¹² For a full account of these examples of transgressive behaviour see the third chapter of this thesis.

consummate soldier, *rather than the hot-tempered, riotous warrior*, also sets foot on the English stage.⁴¹³

As can be seen, Henry V's early behaviour certainly matches Francisco's description of the 'hot-tempered, riotous warrior'; however, he soon learns that he must exhibit the persona of the restrained soldier in order to complete his achievements. Whilst elements of the warrior still reside within Henry V, once crowned, these become greatly reduced. Henry V's hurt pride at the Dauphin's insult may be considered to be a patriotic display of righteous anger that is put to productive use. However, it is soon shown to have been a reckless move as depicted by the image of John Cobbler and Derick armed with pot lids and Henry V's disappointed assessment of the outnumbered army that he commands in the face of the full force of the French defence. As Louise Nichols observes, the next scene shows the French soldiers playing at dice, suggesting an element of luck and chance in war that, alongside Henry V's assessment of the soldier numbers as odds, suggests that the divine providence that the history chronicles often attributed victory to is absent.⁴¹⁴ At a clear disadvantage due to their low numbers, the English army's situation is bleak; however, Henry is shown to be able to win the battle when he applies the restraint and organisation of the soldier.

After an assessment of the French side reveals the extent of the English army's disadvantage, the king abandons such archaic displays of masculine aggression to instead rationally plan the attack on the French army that utilises his resources and cunning to create an ambush. Speaking to his lords, Henry V calmly and thoughtfully concocts a strategy:

⁴¹³ Francisco, *The Impact of Militarism and Social Mobility*, p. 11 (emphasis added).

⁴¹⁴ Louise Nichols, "My name was known before I came": The Heroic Identity of the Prince in *The Famous Victories of Henry V* in *Other Voices, Other Views: Expanding the Canon in English Renaissance Studies*, eds. Helen Ostovich, Mary V. Silcox and Graham Roe (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999), 154-75 (p. 168).

Then I wil, that euery archer prouide him a stake of
 A tree, and sharpe it at both endes,
 And at the first encounter of the horsemen,
 To pitch their stakes downe into the ground before them,
 That they may gore themselues upon them,
 And then to recoyle backe, and shoote wholly altogether,
 And so discomfit them.⁴¹⁵

The focus, thus, on the eve of the battle is not on the bravery of the men or their blood lust, but instead on how to outwit their opponents with an organised strategy on the battlefield. This particular stratagem is the central focus of John Cobbler and Robin Pewterer's conversation when they reappear after the battle:

ROBIN. Now, *Iohn Cobler*,
 Didst thou see how the King did behaue himselfe?
 IOHN. But *Robin*, didst thou see what a pollicie
 The King had, to see how the French men were kild
 With the stakes of the trees.
 ROBIN. I Iohn, there was a braue pollicie.⁴¹⁶

Whilst Robin attempts to initiate a discussion of Henry V's behaviour, suggesting that he wishes to discuss the traditional heroic traits of ferocity or bravery, John immediately changes the discussion to the part of the battle that he found the most impressive, the king's 'pollicie'. Already a shift has become apparent within the play itself as the men who discussed the 'lively' nature of the prince in hushed tones at the beginning of the play may now exclaim their wonder at his 'braue pollicie' that won the day. Intelligence and cunning are thus demonstrated to be a more desirable quality in a leader than the unrestrained strength and anger that Henry V previously displayed, which instead only won the fear of these subjects and not their admiration as it does so here. Henry V's speech outlining the role of each of his men stands in sharp contrast to the French captain's exaggerated praise for his men on the eve of the battle. It must be noted, however, that each of his offered comparisons are to

⁴¹⁵ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. E4v.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., sig. F2r.

ancient, historical armies such as the Barbarians, to inspire his men to emulate the past. However, the French captain's reliance on brute strength without tactical consideration is outdated and demonstrates that such models of masculine power are becoming redundant and must evolve to maintain an advantage. A comparison of the two speeches also invites analysis of the play's own displays of masculinity. The French captain looks solely to the past to inspire his men with tales of ancient glories to prepare them for battle, which ultimately fails in the face of Henry V's innovative warfare. In a similar way the audience is then, perhaps, invited to consider their own attitudes to England's historical victories and consider if such heroic figures are suitable for the present day.

Henry V, however, must evolve even further by the play's end, leaving behind the persona of the soldier with the end of the war to become the civilised courtier who is necessary for negotiations. The importance of restraint and civility paved the way for the new Elizabethan man as perceptions of masculinity changed throughout Elizabeth I's reign. Ira Clark notes that during Elizabeth I's reign male youths faced a new challenge as they needed to discover 'how to assert manhood (without, harder than now, proving brutes)'.⁴¹⁷ Clark continues, that academies were established during Elizabeth I's reign to instil suitable virtues and honour in young men and produce, quoting Humphrey Gilbert, 'gallant Cowrtier[s]'.⁴¹⁸ Throughout *Famous Victories* Prince Henry must struggle to emulate this figure of the 'gallant Cowrtier' and find a means to assert his manhood in a way that does not equate him with the savage, riotous warrior. As Oberer notes, by the play's end, Prince Henry can be seen learning to negotiate within the political environment of the French

⁴¹⁷ Ira Clark, *Comedy, Youth, Manhood in Early Modern England* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003), p.13.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.33.

Court.⁴¹⁹ As he opens negotiations with France, Henry V maintains civility throughout and even calls the French King ‘my good brother of France’. Here Henry uses persuasion to convince the French King to agree to his terms of peace and not the rash violence that he has been provoked to in the past. In response to the king’s horror that his son will be dispossessed of his birthright, Henry V replies:

Why my good brother of *France*,
 You haue had it long inough:
 And as for Prince *Dolphin*,
 It skils not though he sit beside the saddle:
 Thus I haue set it downe, and thus it shall be.⁴²⁰

Henry V shows no rage in the French King’s hesitation and maintains a tactical civility, addressing him as ‘good brother of France’ once again to create the illusion of equality and offering a justification of his reasoning with a firm reminder of his own authority at the end. His play proves to be successful and the terms are accepted by the French King with no further resistance.

Such an example shows how far Henry V has come from his days as a prince where he attempted to convince the Lord Chief Justice to release a prisoner with a consistent bombardment of questions and resorted to brutality when refused. This final graduation of sensibility is subtly reinforced through a verbal echo that has been used throughout the play. When he considers that he might not gain the love of Katherine he proclaims himself to be ‘Ah Harry, thrice unhappie Harry’. This curse specifically mirrors the anguished language of his father, Henry IV, in the early scenes of *Famous Victories* where he cried out ‘Ah *Harry, Harry*, now thrice accursed *Harry*/ That hath gotten a sonne, which with greefe/ Will end his fathers dayes’.⁴²¹ Henry V applies this specific curse to himself at two other points in *Famous Victories* which each prove to be a significant moment of change and

⁴¹⁹ Oberer, ‘Appropriations of the Popular Tradition’, p. 174.

⁴²⁰ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. F3r.

⁴²¹ Ibid., sig. B2r.

transformation. When Prince Henry vows to reform his behaviour, he declares ‘A Harry, now thrice vnhap/pie Harry’ and when he thinks his father to be dead exclaims ‘Now thrice accursed Harry’.⁴²² The first of these moments marks Prince Henry’s resolve to shift from the behaviour of the riotous warrior to that of the tactical soldier and the second instance represents the new shift in power and responsibility as the prince becomes king, which is ultimately handed directly to him by his father in this scene. This final scene offers an example of Prince Henry making his transformation in the play as he, anachronistically, embraces the role of the new Elizabethan man.

Henry V not only embraces the subtle wit and skills of social negotiation befitting the courtier, but he also verbalises his lust for Katherine to the audience. This is significant as such sentiment is voiced in opposition to the morality of the chaste knight who refuses to be feminised by a woman’s love thus demonstrating an appropriation of contemporary views. Henry’s lust for Katherine not only ties Henry V to the Elizabethan idea that the pursuit and conquest of women demonstrated the masculinity of the pursuer but in desiring his bride, Henry V is more keenly associated with new concepts of love and marriage that were becoming more prominent at the time. As Howard and Rackin note:

In the medieval period aristocratic marriages were unabashedly made to strengthen political alliances and economic well-being. “Love” was a suspect emotion, connected with irrationality and likely to lead one to make imprudent marriage choices. By the late sixteenth century, however, love and conjugal affection were in some quarters being praised as things good in and of themselves, and marriage was valued as a source of affection and companionship [...] Forced unions were seen as dangerous, likely to lead to unhappiness and disobedience.⁴²³

⁴²² Ibid., sig. C3r, C4r.

⁴²³ Howard, Rackin, *Engendering a Nation*, p. 27.

The focus of this particular match, however, is distanced from the cold, political necessity of the medieval period to the more sentimental reasoning of the Elizabethan period thus associating him with an emergent morality. As such, his use of this final verbal echo at the point that he notes his love for Katherine marks the final stage of his evolution into a figure of appropriate masculinity; however, it is important to note that this particular phrase was first introduced to the play by his father, Henry IV. In his first scene of the play, Henry IV establishes himself as an ideal ruler, in opposition to the tyranny that his son's early behaviour suggests. Whilst his son demonstrates rash behaviour stemming from injured pride or anger, Henry IV does not hastily offer accusations upon hearing that his son has been arrested but instead listens to the accounts of the men so they will not 'thinke me an vnequall Iudge, hauing more affection to/ my sonne, then to any rightfull iudgement'.⁴²⁴ After hearing the tale, the king decides that they had acted accordingly and calls for their release, even in spite of his courtiers' advice:

L.OXF. Perchance the Maior and the Sheriffe haue
Bene too precise in this matter.

HEN.4. No: they haue done like faithfull subiects:
I will go my selfe to discharge them, and let them go.⁴²⁵

Henry IV admits his mistake in arresting the men and acknowledges that in arresting his son they fulfilled their civic duty. It should be noted here that the king resolves to free the men himself, rather than send another to do the task for him, and that he uses a singular pronoun rather than the royal plural he used to establish his authority at the beginning of the scene. It is during this show of humility that he calls himself 'thrice accursed Harry' introducing the phrase at a moment where he proves that is a wise, just and modest leader. Thus, when Henry V becomes king he adopts

⁴²⁴ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. B1v.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., sig. B2r.

Elizabethan concepts of acceptable masculinity it is notable that this verbal echo is incorporated into his language, reflecting this moment and demonstrating that he has transformed into the great leader that his father once was, if not a greater figure.

Henry IV is not the only king that Henry V imitates in his behaviour and it can be seen that he learns from the desirable traits of the mature French King too. While the French army is feminised to allow for Henry V's masculine conquest of the country, not all of these traits are necessarily negative. Whilst the French King refuses to allow his son the honour of battle, Larry S. Champion notes that this is one of the few moments of 'genuine human compassion' in the play.⁴²⁶ Although the audience is invited to think ill of the French King for his decision to save his son's life over his honour, it is a moment of heartfelt familial affection within a series of scenes that prioritises the brutality of war. The French King, within *Famous Victories*, does not exhibit the behaviour of the archaic warrior or knight, nor does he display the behaviour of the shrewd and charismatic courter. However, after his victory, Henry V imitates some, but not all, of the French King's actions, particularly those that characterise him as a man of compassion. In negotiations, each name the other 'brother' as a formal indication of civility, suggesting a metaphorical bond between the two. After the battle, the French King has a direct impact on the actions of Henry V when he sends a request to Henry V via a herald:

He hath sent me to desire your Maiestie,
To giue him leaue to go into the field to view his poore
Country men, that they may all be honourably buried.⁴²⁷

Here the French King demonstrates a love of his people to the point that he attends upon the dead himself. This deep respect for his people mirrors the similar, humble behaviour of Henry IV when he personally went to free the wrongfully imprisoned

⁴²⁶ Larry S. Champion, "'What Prerogatiues Meanes': Perspective and Political Ideology in *The Famous Victories of Henry V*", *South Atlantic Review*, 53, 1988, 1-19 (p. 13).

⁴²⁷ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. F1v.

mayor, and this behaviour is self-consciously mirrored by Henry V who leaves this particular scene stating:

Now my lords, I will go into the field my selfe,
To view my Country men, and to haue them honourably
Buried, for the French King shall neuer surpasse me in
Curtesie, whiles I am Harry King of England.⁴²⁸

This dialogue immediately follows the exit of the Herald to conclude the scene. The scene may have easily ended here, with the characters all leaving the stage with the Herald as no more needs to be said or resolved in this scene; however, in terms of character development this dialogue is incredibly important. Henry V not only acknowledges that the French King's behaviour is of a gentlemanly fashion but he also self-consciously declares to his lords, and the audience that he intends to copy such behaviour himself, demonstrating that he values courteous behaviour, even on the site of a battle. In particular, his declaration that 'the French King shall neuer surpasse me in Curtesie, whiles I am Harry King of England', anticipates his final development from the masculine soldier to the civil courtier that will be fully realised in his political negotiations in the final scenes.

It can thus be seen that Henry V's behaviour has three clear stages of development as the playwright utilises the heroic English figure to demonstrate the necessary evolution of medieval masculinity into one that is compatible with new Elizabethan concepts and changing society. This is demonstrated in both the manner that Henry V behaves and in the qualities and figures of other royal subjects that he ultimately selects to emulate. Whilst *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* both reveals and reacts to anxieties surrounding female rule in the Elizabethan era, through its appeal to patriarchal nostalgia, this may not have been the primary aim of its representation of gender. The depiction and characterisation of female figures are

⁴²⁸ Ibid., sig. F2r.

often sacrificed in favour of strengthening male narratives and historical female figures may be omitted completely to develop, sometimes fictional, male relationships and characters, such as Derick or the fatherly relationship between Henry V and the Lord Chief Justice. Women that do appear often demonstrate transgressive feminine traits or remain trapped as passive pawns in a wider political narrative that excludes them.

In contrast to this, Henry V is offered as a successful king who achieves all the symbols of a successful rule that Elizabeth I lacked, whilst gaining security and power for his realm. However, whilst *Famous Victories* celebrates the masculine achievements of a beloved historical monarch, it should be noted that he must evolve through the various models of masculinity to transform into a victorious and acceptable monarch. Beginning as the riotous warrior, he evolves into the disciplined soldier before finally displaying his rhetorical wit and social skills to secure a strong political relationship with France, a third crown and a wife to secure his bloodline. By using an historical figure to project the new figure of the civilised Elizabethan man onto, *Famous Victories* thus creates its own tradition for this emergent model and lends new concepts of masculinity a form of legitimacy and legacy in much the same way that John Bale transformed King John into a proto-Protestant in *King Johan* to offer the new religion a tradition to match that of the Catholic Church's. Whilst patriarchal nostalgia would be a key component of the developing history play genre, it is too simplistic to merely subscribe its appearance to female monarchy; instead, *Famous Victories* lent legitimacy to an emergent mode of masculinity by evoking nostalgia for a concept that had not previously existed.

Chapter Five

Theatrical Identity: Historicising the Actor and the Performance of Identity

The Elizabethan era saw the growth of the theatre industry, particularly in London, where playhouses were opened as dedicated spaces to stage theatrical performances. These were enjoyed by a large and varied audience and their popularity meant that there were never fewer than six playhouses in London at any one time until 1642, with plays being performed every day, except for Sundays and the period of Lent. As such, the theatre became a prevalent part of London's culture, and was the popular entertainment of many of the city's citizens.⁴²⁹ Playing companies attracted the patronage of noblemen and the elite, which provided them with particular privileges and protection, especially in the case of the Queen's Men, a specially formed acting troop formed for Elizabeth I, who were granted great privileges due to the power of their patron.⁴³⁰ Theatre had a large reach across the country as there were a number of traveling acting companies that toured the English towns, and the playhouses united elite and lowborn audiences who came to watch the spectacle and enjoy the stories that were presented on the stage. However, there was also a great reaction against this art form; a great amount of pamphlet literature was written against the playhouses by men such as Phillip Stubbes, John Rainolde and John Green.⁴³¹ Even travelling acting companies attracted suspicion and some towns would pay the

⁴²⁹ Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 10-11.

⁴³⁰ These advantages included, but were not limited to: the privilege of holiday court performances, preferential consideration for playing at the inns and theatres of London and receiving higher payments for their performances when touring the country as well as royal protections, Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. xiii, 1-2.

⁴³¹ Stubbes, Rainolde and Greene each wrote *The Anatomie of Abuses* (1583), *The Overthrow of Stage-Players* (1600) and *A Refutation of the Apology for Actors* (1615) respectively.

company to avoid performing in that area as the plays and culture surrounding them was thought to breed disorder.⁴³²

It is noted by Jonas Barish that there was a distrust of the inconstant and ever-changing nature of the actor, who was seen to be dishonest, and the language and imagery of change and transformation was heavily endued with negative connotations.⁴³³ The actor was able to create a new persona for the stage, a feat that may be praised, or alternatively condemned, for the divine-like action of creating a new self. Whilst actors created new identities on the Elizabethan stage, it is particularly interesting that the concept of self-fashioning was gaining traction in Elizabethan culture alongside the rise of the theatres and playhouses. Protestantism was also adapting at this time, and was moving away from the traditional view that the 'self' was a sacred and divinely ordained constant. Instead, a new idea of self-fashioning that allowed an individual to change their manner and improve themselves was being incorporated into Protestantism itself.⁴³⁴ Books such as Baldassare Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* (1528), Thomas Hoby's translation of *Il Cortegiano* (1528), *The Courtyer* (1561), and Henry Peacham's *The Compleat Gentleman* (1622) also emerged at this time, providing, as their titles suggest, guidelines and codes of conduct to allow the reader to fashion themselves into the pleasing figure of the courtier or gentleman. People were learning to change and alter themselves to fit particular expectations and ideals and, as such, the Proteus-like figure of the actor became less controversial.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I suggested that the tradition of the history play evolved from one of the last of the morality plays, *King Johan* (c.1550) written

⁴³² McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men and their Plays*, p. 13.

⁴³³ Jonas Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1981), p. 105, 109.

⁴³⁴ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 85, 115-6.

by John Bale, which transformed the historic figure of King John into a Protestant martyr. This play represents an attempt to legitimise this form of Christianity by providing it with a deeper history to rival the ancient traditions of Catholicism, and offer it a historical authenticity. The chapters that followed this, argued that Bale's play sowed the seeds for a genre that was able to, in a subtler way, offer an established tradition to emergent forms of identity and marginalised groups. The first example of the English history play, *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* (c.1586) offers some legitimacy to transgressive youths, socially mobile members of society, as well as the labourers and 'popular classes', and those who embraced the more refined model of Elizabethan masculinity. These identities were offered a precedent and historic tradition too. This final chapter will argue that the art of performing identity was legitimised on the stage itself, both in the form of courtly performance and also in the transformative skill of the actor. I will explore attitudes towards the theatre and the art of self-fashioning, and how these are represented in *Famous Victories*; particularly in the figure of Henry V and popular characters that have a similar Proteus ability. Through analysis of the play itself and careful consideration of Jonas Barish's *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* and Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-fashioning*, I will demonstrate that the first English history play, fashioned history to legitimise the very dramatic art that brought it to the stage.

The Transformative Power of the Theatre

Jonas Barish states that there is an 'ancient distrust of the stage itself' and an 'old hatred' of the theatrical that reaches far back throughout time and across a vast

number of countries and cultures.⁴³⁵ Although Barish lists a great number of popular critiques levelled against the theatre – including accusations that it was a waste of time and money, spread false political doctrines and was a great arena of depravity – he suggests that antitheatrical prejudice is too universal to be purely due to economic, political or social factors.⁴³⁶ Instead, he suggests that the necessary qualities of adaptability, growth and variety that both the actors and the stage contain, flew in the face of the conservative values of order, stability and integrity.⁴³⁷ This may be demonstrated by taking a closer look at an important element of theatrical production: costumes.

The costumes of the stage had a particularly transformative power that provided players with the ability to slip through rigid layers of identity and transform themselves into what they were not: men could become women, Englishmen could change nationality and the poor could become kings. This was possible through the specific cultural meanings that certain items of clothing were endowed with thus turning them into signifiers. A study of Tudor sumptuary laws reveals some of the associations and meanings that particular pieces of clothing were seen to carry in regards to class.⁴³⁸ These laws dictated which materials and items of clothing were restricted to the higher ranking members of society and were intended to provide an easy means of class distinction by preventing those lower in the social hierarchy from taking on the appearance of a class they did not inhabit. Sumptuary laws were infamously ignored in the theatres, particularly on the stage, where the players were able to take on the clothing and appearance of a character who held a greater rank than their own, becoming a member of the nobility for the duration of the play. A

⁴³⁵ Barish, *Antitheatrical Prejudice*, p. 3.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 116-7.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁴³⁸ Robert I. Lublin, *Costuming the Shakespearean Stage* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 43.

look at Philip Henslowe's account book demonstrates the great number of costumes that were owned by the players and the extravagance of the costly materials including: '[a] crimosin Robe strypt w^t Gould fact w^t ermin', '[a] purple velvet cut in dimonds Lact & spangels', 'carnation satten Venesyons, layd with gold lace'.⁴³⁹ These items alone would be enough to transform a low-born labourer's son into an earl, duke or even a king, a trespass that would have been deemed extremely transgressive and illegal outside of the playhouse.

Although the actor's costume was legally exempt from sumptuary laws, there was still vocal contempt for this digression. Christine Eccles notes that, '[a]n actor, offstage or on, wearing the "payer of crimson satten Venysiones, layd with gowld lace", as listed by Henslowe, was a target for public criticism'.⁴⁴⁰ An example of this can be seen in a letter from a soldier to Sir Francis Walsingham on 25th January 1586 where he notes with distaste that it is a 'wofull sight to see two hundred proude players jett in their silkes, wheare five hundred pore people sterve in the streets'.⁴⁴¹ Tiffeny Stern draws attention to the particular use of the word 'jet' in this famous extract, noting how it suggests inflated 'actorly pride' within the contexts that the word appears.⁴⁴² It seems then that the writer of this extract is mocking the hubris and indulgent natures of the actors and their attire. It should be noted that the elite noblemen and women within the audience and the court do not come under such an attack for their costly clothing in the letter; it is the actors in their 'silks' who are the targets instead. This suggests that the writer's critique of the actors stems from the fact that they do not have the privilege to wear such materials and so, as the clothing

⁴³⁹ Philip Henslowe, *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. R.A.Foakes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 292, 294, 317.

⁴⁴⁰ Christine Eccles, *The Rose Theatre* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1990), p. 59.

⁴⁴¹ 'Letter from a soldier to Sir Francis Walsingham', Jan 25 1586, quoted in E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), p. 304.

⁴⁴² Tiffany Stern, 'Early Modern Tragedy and Performance', in *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespearean Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 489-504 (p. 493).

does not befit their social status, it is therefore an indulgent waste. Although met with disdain by many, the actor could change himself into anything with a few simple signifiers worn on his body, and this transformative magic, and with it the associated stigma, extended out to the very playhouse itself.

The theatre was an arena of changes, adaptations and possibilities: statues could come alive, ghosts could haunt castles and legendary dead kings could appear on stage to re-enact their heroic deeds once more. The transformative power of the theatre is overtly referred to by the Chorus in William Shakespeare's *Henry V* (1599). Although the chorus offers his speeches by means of an apology for the humble nature of the theatre and players out of fear that they will not be able to do justice to the legends, he self-consciously draws attention to the collaborative illusionary power of the theatre and the use of imagination to transform it:

...can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France? or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?
O, pardon! since a crooked figure may
Attest in little place a million;
And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,
On your imaginary forces work.
Suppose within the girdle of these walls
Are now confined two mighty monarchies,
Whose high upreared and abutting fronts
The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder:
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts.⁴⁴³

The Chorus begins the play with an open acknowledgement of the artifice of the stage and its ambitious intentions to recreate heroic battles, figures and locations, even as he notes the weakness of the stage and its limitations. As the players themselves lack the means to trick their audience into believing that they are actually witnessing the Battle of Agincourt, the Chorus admits that for the illusion to be

⁴⁴³ William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: Norton & Company, 2008), Prologue.12-24, p. 1482.

complete he requires the audience to be complicit participants in their own deception. Collaboratively through the efforts of the players, the imagination of the audience and the space of the playhouse itself, with devices of deception such as trapdoors, sound effects and costumes, the true magic of the theatre may be unlocked to create scenes, characters and even transform a bare wooden stage into ancient Rome, a forest or even a ship.

The realm of the stage was ever changing, unstable and unfixed, and in their work, *Engendering the Nation*, Jean E. Howard and Phylis Rackin note the theatre's effeminising reputation as 'the disreputable feminised world of the playhouse'.⁴⁴⁴ It is not surprising that the playhouse, a round 'O' pregnant with possibility and creativity was traditionally feminised. However this comparison carries many negative associations too as these comparisons also linked the theatre to the inconstant and deceptive reputation assigned to women. Women with painted faces were used as unfavourable metaphors for distrust, their 'cyclic biology' and supposedly indecisive natures also led to the feminisation of fickle fortune with her infamous wheel and the 'th'inconstant moon/ That monthly changes in her circled orb' that Juliet begs Romeo not to swear by.⁴⁴⁵ Greenblatt observes that there was a suspicion of the 'doubleness' of women, whereas 'singleness, fidelity, the identity of inner state and external appearance, are attributes of the virtuous man'.⁴⁴⁶ In Howard and Rackin's analysis of Joan of Arc's character in *Henry VI, Part One* (1592), they note her dual-embodiment of masculinity and femininity, the latter of which overlaps with her theatrical nature:

⁴⁴⁴ Jean E. Howard and Phylis Rackin, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 51

⁴⁴⁵ William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: Norton & Company, 2008), II.2.958-9, p. 926.

⁴⁴⁶ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p. 160.

Most obvious in this moment of explicit role-playing, Joan's theatricality is actually her salient quality. Her role as leader of the French army involves her in the same transgressions against God and the social hierarchy that were repeatedly charged against the players in Shakespeare's England: wearing a costume and playing a part that belie her true social rank and natural sex. Moreover, her female gender, her sexual promiscuity, and her deceptiveness all imply the vices that were associated with theatrical performance.⁴⁴⁷

Howard and Rackin observe that both deviant femininity and theatricality are combined within Joan of Arc who embodies the complaints levelled against the theatre in her inconstant and deceptive nature.

The inconsistency of women and the theatre were transgressive faults that were consistently scolded and shamed; however, Howard and Rackin also note that in Thomas Nashe's defence of the theatre, he claimed that the English history play was a masculine genre:

Nashe invoked the authority of the English history to defend theatregoing as an elevating, manly activity; but in the eyes of its opponents, the theatre was associated with the destabilizing and effeminising forces of social change.⁴⁴⁸

A gendered binary can be seen between these two aspects of the theatre: past and future. History is the story of masculine achievements and, as was noted in the previous chapter of this thesis, male achievement took centre stage in the history play. History, however, was believed to be a fixed point in the past; it was a stable constant in the face of the ever changing, feminised playhouse that Howard and Rackin suggest represented the rapid evolution of society at that time.⁴⁴⁹ It is likely that it is the deceptive, feminine instability of the stage that generated such contempt and suspicion as it reflected current anxieties about the rapidly changing world that the Elizabethan audience had found themselves occupying. It is of particular note

⁴⁴⁷ Howard and Rackin, *Engendering the Nation*, p.54-55.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

⁴⁴⁹ It should be noted that while the events of history are technically fixed in the past our concept of them is ever evolving and adapting, meaning that the study of history is perhaps as inconstant as theatre is itself.

that the Tudor period saw great change and transformation in religion, politics and social structures. England moved on from feudal forms of control and inheritance to the more contemporary form of proto-capitalism within the space of eleven years, four monarchs had occupied the throne, switching England from Protestant rule to Catholic and back again. During her golden age, Elizabeth I was heralded as a source of stable Protestant power; however the threat of larger, foreign ‘Catholic’ forces served as a constant point of anxiety as well as the Queen’s health after she had had a near death experience with smallpox with no named successor or heir to succeed her.⁴⁵⁰

The instability of the playhouse reminded the audience that the world was in flux. Superficial elements of disguise, such as costume, were particularly transgressive as, when clothing is tied so strongly to certain aspects of identity such as class, gender and power, it creates the ability for characters and, temporarily the actors themselves, to appear to change what was once considered a stable and fixed state of their being. Moll Cutpurse is able to perform a male identity in *The Roaring Girl* (1611) by wearing male attire, the shoemaker’s wife dresses extravagantly when her husband climbs socially to become the mayor in *The Shoemaker’s Holiday* (1599) and Richard II ‘undoes himself’ in *Richard II* (c.1595) when he imagines abdicating by describing how he will lose his crown, jewellery and fine robes and exchange them for plainer items. However, in such examples, the symbolic dressing and undressing of these characters is in itself a deception as the clothing fails to reflect the character’s true ‘self’. In these particular cases the clothing provides the characters with a theatrical doubleness, much in the same way that the actors themselves held a number of various identities when they took to the stage. Such

⁴⁵⁰ Carole Levin, *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 19.

inconsistency was deemed to be deceitful and unnatural; as Greenblatt notes, the Elizabethan ideal was to have a single, stable identity which demonstrated one's virtue as the individual rejected the 'doubleness' of nature and its disingenuous performance.⁴⁵¹ As Barish observes, much of this stemmed from Christian ideology where God was a stable absolute, whereas the devil was able to deceive and tempt man, often through the use of many disguises to hide his form.⁴⁵² Thus, Barish argues, when man is constant and unchanging he is divine and:

As a result, the actor, his trade founded on change, becomes a lively image of fallen man, the one who renews the primal degradation every day of his life, and so places himself beyond the pale.⁴⁵³

Thus, the flexibility of identity is linked closely to deception and dishonesty, and theatricality becomes a dangerous 'Other' pitted against the wholesome, honest integrity of those who are transparent about their true selves.

In his discussion of representations of theatre on the stage, Dieter Mehl notes that the playwrights themselves also demonstrated a fear of theatre's deceptions and illusions. To illustrate this, he refers to the unmasking of the villains in *The Malcontent* (c. 1604) and Middleton's *Your Five Gallants* (c. 1605) as examples of mischief caused through assumed identities and disguise: '[t]he performance here brings out the sharp contrast between appearance and reality between a person's assumed role and his real character'.⁴⁵⁴ Mehl continues:

all seem in some measure to be derived from *The Spanish Tragedy*, and all play more or less skilfully on the spectator's awareness of what is actually going on. They all use disguise and acting for purposes of deception and mischief.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵¹ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p. 160.

⁴⁵² Barish, *Anti-theatrical Prejudice*, p. 113.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp.105-6.

⁴⁵⁴ Dieter Mehl, 'Forms and Functions of the Play within a Play', *Renaissance Drama*, 8 (1965), 41-61 (p. 48).

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

What is particularly interesting about the examples that Mehl cites is that even on the stage itself theatre and disguise are depicted as dangerous. Masks are used to hide identities; in *Thomas of Woodstock* (c.1592) a masque is staged as a trap to arrest the titular character and in *The Spanish Tragedy* (c.1587) the fictional audience initially think the real murder of the actor is merely part of the show, reflecting anxieties about the inability to tell fact from fiction and the levels of deception that can be produced from the theatre.

When Gloucester gives a speech on his own nature in Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part 3* (c.1591), he acknowledges the importance of performance for his own success in court:

Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile,
And cry 'Content' to that which grieves my heart,
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions.⁴⁵⁶

Gloucester casts himself in a disruptive role and plans to fashion himself – quite literally – by dressing himself in finery to match his ambitions, and by modifying his behaviour to adhere to the behavioural performances of the court. However, it is notable that Gloucester stresses the deceptive nature of his performance, that he would not change *himself*, but rather, his appearance. As his soliloquy continues, he associates this particular talent with dangerous creatures:

I'll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall;
I'll slay more gazers than the basilisk;
I'll play the orator as well as Nestor,
Deceive more slyly than Ulysses could,
And, like a Sinon, take another Troy.
I can add colours to the chameleon,
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
And set the murderous Machiavel to school.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁶ William Shakespeare, *Henry VI, Part Three*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: Norton & Company, 2008), III.2.1671-4, p. 363.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, III.2.1675-82, pp.363-4

Gloucester acknowledges not only the gains that may arise from his deception, but also notes two dangerous creatures, the mermaid and basilisk, which he associates with this talent. His final comparison in this soliloquy, is one that compares his behaviour and tactics to those set out by Machiaveli's instructions for effective rule in *The Prince* (1532). Criticism of *Richard III* (c.1593) traditionally identifies Gloucester as a Machiavellian villain, and he is not the only character who embodies this trait within Shakespeare's canon; indeed there are many other characters who hide beneath false appearances and ultimately become villains themselves. Edmund crafts and manipulates the situation around him to suit his own position and ideology and Iago pretends to be virtuous and casts doubts in Othello's mind to make him doubt the loyal wife. To be dishonest or a great schemer is to be a particularly controversial character, and at worst signifies their villainy.

The Performance of Identity

The Prince is one of Machiavelli's most infamous works; within this political treatise the speaker analyses models of government and gives the instructions for the most effective forms of leadership and rule. Machiavelli's teachings were particularly controversial; the opening prologue of *The Jew Of Malta* (c.1589) is read by a representation of Machiavelli himself who offers a defence of his writings, acknowledging the controversy when he notes that, '[t]o some perhaps my name is odious'.⁴⁵⁸ Machiavelli's infamy continued on long past this, and even in 1891 editor L. Arthur Burd notes that chapter eighteen, 'concerning the way in which princes should keep faith', 'has given greater offence than any other portion of Machiavelli's

⁴⁵⁸ Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*, in *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*, ed. David Bevington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 251.

writings'.⁴⁵⁹ This chapter in particular deals with that quality that Richard Gloucester seeks to emulate: appearance over reality. Within this chapter, Machiavelli controversially claims that:

...it is unnecessary for a prince to have all the good qualities I have enumerated, but it is very necessary to *appear* to have them. And I shall dare to say this also, that to have them and always to observe them is injurious, and that to appear to have them is useful.⁴⁶⁰

Machiavelli continues:

Every one sees what you appear to be, few really know what you are, and those few dare not oppose themselves to the opinion of the many, who have the majesty of the state to defend them.⁴⁶¹

The thesis that Machiavelli puts forth argues against the ideal image of the honest, genuine man who can be trusted to have one face. Instead, Machiavelli argues that it is unrealistic and impossible to encompass all positive traits while maintaining an effective rule and champions the performance of rule.

Although it was certainly controversial at the time, *The Prince* was only one early example of a genre that was becoming increasingly popular during this period. Throughout the Elizabethan era a great number of manner guides were published. This genre of texts provided information on how to act appropriately and accordingly, depending on the person's station and rank. There was a particular emphasis on how to conduct oneself in court; however, these texts, unlike the religious handbooks that sought to craft the reader and make their soul more righteous, were only intended to prepare the reader to fit within the theatricality of court life. Greenblatt notes that '[d]issimulation and feigning are an important part of the instruction given by almost every court manual'.⁴⁶² Lines are fed to the reader as

⁴⁵⁹ L. Arthur Burd, *Il Principe*, ed. L. Arthur Burd (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891), p. 297, fn. 17.

⁴⁶⁰ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Maurizio Viroli (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 61 (emphasis added).

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁴⁶² Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p. 163.

if it were a promptbook for their real-life situations. To read such a book is to lay bare the theatricality of social conduct, especially in a court setting where a particular degree of tact and cunning were needed to succeed. Bernhard Greiner notes in particular, that the court was a game of social advancement, and observes that Machiavelli's text not only recommended pretence, but other manner guides at the time suggested a similar strategy, even if it was proposed in a more tactful way. Comparing Baldassarre Castiglione's *The Courtier* with Machiavelli's *The Prince*, he notes that both recommend:

the art of concealing oneself, permitting no-one to see behind the mask, suppressing the emotions, controlling the body and its expressions, moulding oneself like a sculpture, all made to appear effortless, unforced, as "natural grace" under competitive pressure.⁴⁶³

By acknowledging such pretence and the necessity for theatricality, such books also provided a window which allowed the reader to see the fictions of their own society, and the role that they must play within it.

The increased popularity of such manner guides demonstrates a greater awareness, and perhaps even acceptance, of identity performance in society. While the antitheatrical movement targeted the playhouses, and critics of self-fashioning traditionally held constancy and transparency as the ultimate divine virtues, acting and performance could also be seen as a necessity in such settings as the court and the wider society as a whole. Barish even notes that in Gloucester's speech not all of his comparisons are necessarily negative, and highlights in particular his references to Proteus and the chameleon. Whilst Barish acknowledges that Proteus and the chameleon were both used to describe fawning and immoral people, he notes that positive associations also existed in contradiction to these meanings:

⁴⁶³ Bernhard Greiner, 'The Birth of the Subject out of the Spirit of the Play within the Play: The Hamlet Paradigm', in *The Play within the Play: The Performance of Meta-Theatre and Self-Reflection*, eds. Gerhard Fischer and Bernhard Greiner (New York: Rodopi, 2007), pp.3-14 (p. 5).

At least one iconographic handbook views him both as the flattering courtier and as the “true and affectionate lover,” accustomed with timely conformity to reflect within himself all the changing feeling of his beloved.⁴⁶⁴

Proteus himself could also be held in high regard as a role model for leaders, and in this case the figure ‘reflects a freedom from dogmatism which permits the ruler to respond flexibly to changing circumstances’.⁴⁶⁵

The act of transformation could hold positive connotations too, and as Barish continues, Pico notes that this skill could be depicted as a creative and divine power that mankind had above all other life; to be adaptable and become all things through free choice.⁴⁶⁶ Barish also shrewdly observes:

There were *two* archetypal disguises, that of Satan as the serpent and that of God made flesh [...] and the latter, no less than the former, contained a significant element of deception.⁴⁶⁷

Barish notes that while the devil was painted as the master of disguise, transformation itself could hold a strong and righteous position in religious narratives too. Narratives within the theatre may also celebrate the positive powers of disguise and transformation its heroes hold as well as its villains. Viola and Edgar, from *Twelfth Night* (c.1601) and *King Lear* (c.1605) respectively, both alter their appearance through disguise and trick the main characters in the play to accept their new identities, while characters such as Prospero and Helena, from *The Tempest* (c.1611) and *All's Well That Ends Well* (c.1605) respectively, both use deception and trickery to bring about a happy ending. Within the very theatre itself, these characters champion the creative and noble power of the actor and, as Barish notes, other protagonists within Shakespeare's work employ theatricality and spectacle for

⁴⁶⁴ Barish, *Antitheatrical Prejudice*, p. 107.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 106.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 109.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 113.

their own means, such as Hamlet, Falstaff, Cleopatra and Edgar.⁴⁶⁸ There are many more examples to be found in Shakespeare's work alone, beyond those that Barish lists, such as Titus Andronicus and Leonato who both craft a stage in which to take revenge or create redemption and Mark Antony who speaks to the people with a moving performance at Caesar's funeral to emotionally manipulate the audience and lead the people to civil unrest. All of these examples are moments of pure theatricality and spectacle created by the characters and crafted according to their will on the world of the stage itself, as well as by the playwright for the audience. Although none of these characters operate within the acting profession themselves, they clearly exhibit a theatrical style, and craft performances for an audience of sorts, providing positive representation of the theatre, however indirectly.

The Theatricality of Rule

Shakespeare's work is not the only place where theatrical characters may be found, and a closer look at *Famous Victories* reveals performance to be a key theme. Indeed the main protagonist of *Famous Victories* can be seen to learn and adjust to the performance of rule, and Henry V is demonstrated to be a Proteus-like figure himself. The character goes through a number of transformations throughout the play and constantly creates and reforms himself as he explores numerous identities to encompass the various roles that he must take on. The character is a natural actor, and a trickster at the play's beginning, who understands the power that manipulation may lend him as well as the vital nature of the performance of rule and good opinion. It is vitally important to this young prince that he wins the support of the people, and, throughout this play, the people act as a constant chorus to state their approval,

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 128-9.

or disapproval, for the actions of the young prince. Although their speech contains self-censorship in their first scene, it betrays their great displeasure that Prince Henry does not adhere to the code of conduct and behaviour that a prince should strive to follow:

IOHN. Marry neighbor, I heare say, he is a toward yoong Prince,
 For if he met any by the hie way,
 He will not let to talke with him.
 I dare not call him theefe, but sure he is one of these taking fellowes.
 LAW. Indeed neighbour I heare say he is as liuely
 A young Prince as euer was.⁴⁶⁹

It is particularly significant in this example that their disapproval is voiced mainly in terms of his character and identity. The Prince is ‘toward’ and ‘lively’, euphemisms for their discontent, and they tie the robbery closely to the Prince’s own identity, naming him to be a ‘taking fellow’. In this example, the citizens of the city guide the audience’s perception of the Prince, filling in the blanks to provide an unfavourable impression. These opinions will be changed, however, by the play’s end as he transforms and crafts a new identity for himself.

The first chapter of this thesis discussed Henry V’s theatricality and performance during his reformation scene, and noted that he appropriated the model of the morality play, applying the structure to his own moment of conversion with as much theatrical flair as Titus, Leonato or Mark Antony. Prince Henry employs the familiar language of these plays and utilises this rebirth imagery to finally cement this transformation in a revelation that demonstrates his ‘ultimate goodness’. This is a key moment of theatrical transformation into someone that becomes beloved and supported by the people around him, as he begins his transformation into the famed king who leads England to great victory, carrying on his father’s work. The

⁴⁶⁹ Anon., *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, (London, 1598; STC: 13072), sig. A3v.

characters' awareness of their own theatrical power allows them to create a specific moment for their own benefit that becomes a 'play within a play' of sorts, drawing extra attention to its artifice and fabrication.

In creating such a moment of theatricality for his own ends and purposes, Henry V is able to have a certain level of control over his audience and understands how best to manipulate them with these devices. Henry V demonstrates at this point that he understands the performance of rule that Machiavelli had described in his controversial chapter. Although it would be upheld as a manipulative and evil tactic by many to appear as something else entirely, Greenblatt observes that a certain amount of acting and fiction is required for the acceptance of all power structures when he writes that: '... kingship always involves fictions, theatricalism, and the mystification of power'.⁴⁷⁰ Greenblatt continues, that even Elizabethan figures, such as Bishop Goodman, were able to see royal appearances as a precise performance that was calculated to conjure specific emotions and responses and unpacks the rhetoric of Elizabeth I's speeches to discover the emotive stock phrases that were often repeated for effect.⁴⁷¹ 'The whole public character was formed very early on, then to be played and replayed...'.⁴⁷²

Performance and ideological beliefs were employed by more than just tyrants, and *Famous Victories* uses the character of Henry V to reveal this. In a lesser quoted paragraph of *The Prince*, Machiavelli notes the importance of 'props' and costume to demonstrate the power of the wearer. He suggests that to be truly liberal, a ruler must avoid every 'attribute of magnificence'; however, he then continues that such actions would be completely unreasonable as by 'becoming poor he will be

⁴⁷⁰ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p. 167.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid.

⁴⁷² Ibid.

little valued by any one'.⁴⁷³ The trappings of power are just as important as power itself, and the associated clothing, jewellery and other status symbols demonstrates in a spectacular way the wealth and value of the leader, making them unique and awe-inspiring to those who saw them. McMillin and MacLean observe that the Queen's Men specialised in 'visual-oriented' storytelling that extended beyond the page. They state that '[i]t consists of the figures and costumes of the actors, the objects they handle, and the properties and structures which frame their acting space'.⁴⁷⁴ Performance went deeper than the words spoken by a person and props were a vital tool of the performance. Just as the actor on the stage must don a crown – although a significantly cheaper one – to have their royalty recognised by the audience, so must the monarch themselves wear the appropriate costume to have their royalty and associated power recognised instantly by their subjects. Henry V himself incorporates visual storytelling in the construction of his public persona. He certainly appears to be visually aware of this when he employs the spectacular use of costume in his transformation, so that he may cast aside the cloak and all of its negative associations, creating his own blank slate from which to start again.

Even after this transformation, Henry V still retains a theatricality and awareness of the performance of rule, although he undergoes it with a greater subtlety than before. Once he is crowned, he undertakes the traditional coronation procession. McMillin and MacLean note that processions were the Queen's Men's specialty, suggesting that the procession in the middle of this play would have been a particularly impressive one, and Gurr's description of the traditional procession within Renaissance theatre details just how grand these moments would have been: '[a]t their simplest they were parades of spectacle, formal processions using all the

⁴⁷³ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 54.

⁴⁷⁴ McMillin and MacLean, *The Queen's Men*, p. 128.

company's most glorious apparel, with crowns, sceptres and other fake regalia, swords and often blazing torches'.⁴⁷⁵ Although Gurr speaks of the fictional processions on the stage with fake finery, it must be noted that genuine processions featuring the monarchy held a similar function as a visually spectacular demonstration of power and wealth through costume. The procession then, is one of the first appropriate uses of theatricality by the new king to demonstrate his power and newly acquired persona, and it is certainly not the last instance in which this occurs. Although the concept of self-fashioning, an idea that a person may be able to suitably craft their identity for the better, was gaining popularity, there is much to suggest that Henry V, whilst the new king has grown and matured, he has still retained some of the rash behaviour from the play's beginning.

Visual storytelling had a great importance, both on the stage and off; however this does not equate a lack of nuanced narrative or structure. McMillin and MacLean suggest that the Queen's Men's reliance on visual aids was a way to compensate for a lacklustre script. As such, the cloak of needles is needed to add a visually dramatic flair to an otherwise simplistic scene. They state that:

It is bold and unimaginative characterization to present England's hero as absolutely base, and when his transformation comes there is no fussing over careful language and logical shadings. It is sudden and complete.⁴⁷⁶

This reading, however, is a reductive one that does not take into the account the gradual growth and development that the prince engages in throughout the play.⁴⁷⁷ Whilst the prince stages his reformation as a miraculous transformation, casting his old behaviour off as easily as he does his cloak, the play still demonstrates that his character has not completely altered, and the second half of the play demonstrates

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 130; Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage*, p. 232.

⁴⁷⁶ McMillin and MacLean, *The Queen's Men*, p. 132.

⁴⁷⁷ The exact nature of this character growth is analysed in greater detail in both the third and fourth chapters of this thesis.

how he learns control and employs restraint and performance to rule effectively. As a king, Henry V is demonstrated to still be prone to anger and violence in the face of perceived disrespect. Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge suggest that:

Just as there is no hint in the first part of the play of a possible reformation, so there is no basic change of character with the Prince's conversion; for in the second half of the play he conquers the French with the same extrovert energy which has characterised his scapegrace youth.⁴⁷⁸

Indeed Corbin and Sedge suggest that that Prince Henry doesn't 'appear to change personality' throughout the course of the play, and note that he maintains the same qualities of his youth, although he directs these energies in a more productive way. Just as Prince Henry attacked the Lord Chief Justice for refusing to obey his commands, so does Henry V immediately jump to violence, by declaring war, when he is insulted by the French prince. The scene is a particularly significant one as it demonstrates one of the first examples of the young king's rule and appears to have been specially constructed to demonstrate that his past self has not been completely rewritten.

Doubleness and Fixed Identities

There are a number of inconsistencies surrounding the concept of 'self-fashioning' in the early modern period, a fact that Greenblatt notes when observing Tudor attitudes towards this concept, claiming that '[a]t times social identities seem as fixed and inflexible as granite; at times they shimmer like a mirage'.⁴⁷⁹ Greenblatt notes that a self-conscious awareness of fashioning human identity was a classical concept,

⁴⁷⁸ Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge, 'Introduction', in *The Oldcastle Controversy: 'John Oldcastle' and 'The Famous Victories of Henry V'*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 1-35 (p. 23).

⁴⁷⁹ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning*, p. 110.

although it was frowned upon by Christian teachings at first.⁴⁸⁰ This concept, however, evolved and was slowly assimilated by society and religious teachings; Greenblatt observes that an inwardness and self-conscious examination of the self occurs within the Thomas Wyatt's poetry and psalms where he 'give[s] voice to a "true" self, stripped of falsification and corruption' and promote a 'break away from enveloping corruption by means of a radical reformation of the self'.⁴⁸¹ In his discussion of character on the stage Andrew James Harley notes that the concept of these two selves can be seen through asides in Renaissance drama and uses the example of Vindice from *The Revenger's Tragedy* (c.1606) to show an example of the inward examination of selfhood:

The aside suggests a self within the self. Vindice the revenger turns his eyes inward, unwilling to look on a self which is external and theatrical, but which contains something deeper, less knowable: that within that passes show. The metadrama of the aside suggests not an absence of continuous psyche, but a sense of self beneath the theatrical type, a consciousness uneasily inhabiting the mode of the revenge protagonist, as if the actor himself is being momentarily channelled...

A similar tension is generated by Vindice's continual role-playing and disguise. These are means to generic ends common in revenge tragedy but here they plunge his identity into crisis as he struggles to keep track of where the real Vindice lies.⁴⁸²

Hartley observes the doubleness of Vindice who employs theatricality to meet his own ends but must examine his interior self, and confuses the exterior persona that he creates with his fundamental interior self. When combined with the idea of self-fashioning, this idea becomes more complex as it reveals two selves that may be fashioned. Machiavelli's instructions take note of this when he suggests the fashioning of an external persona that appears to the public, while the interior self is

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 2.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 127-8.

⁴⁸² Andrew James Harley, 'Page and Stage Again: Rethinking Renaissance Character Phenomenologically', in *New Directions in Renaissance Drama and Performance Studies*, ed. Sarah Werner (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 77-93 (p. 93).

unknowable to all but the individual. Whilst Wyatt's poetry suggests stripping away the corruption within the exterior self to show the interior, true nature of the righteous individual characters, such as Vindice, demonstrate the necessity for this doubleness where it is able to advance his plans. McMillin and MacLean's reading of Prince Henry's transformation as an instant and unimaginative reformation of character suggests only one self that has been transformed. However through glimpses of the Princes' previous behaviour and demonstrations of his theatrical nature and fashioning of a persona it appears that Henry V has gained an awareness of his two selves and that he has taken on the role of an actor to fashion a pleasing 'exterior self' to suit his needs.

It should be noted that the doubleness of character and the art of self-fashioning is also examined in *Famous Victories* outside of Henry V's transformation. Both the characters of John and Derick appear repeatedly within *Famous Victories* and, as was observed in the second chapter of this thesis, often reflect and satirically repeat the actions of Henry V and the nobility for the purposes of a subtle commentary. Here they cast themselves in the roles of actual actors and repeat the actions of Henry V, thus strengthening this connection. This scene is extremely significant as it signals the beginning of personal reflection as the pair repeatedly ask themselves, 'Who am I?', mirroring the dialogue that Henry V employed to boast his status; however, this question is misinterpreted by Derick as a genuine query by the actor, John, and not the character he plays:

IOHN. Well I am content to take this at your hand,
 But I pray you, who am I?
 DER. Who art thou, Sownds, doost not know thy self?
 IOHN. No.
 DER. Now away simple fellow,
 Why man, thou art *John* the Cobler.

IOHN. No I am my Lord chiefe Justice of England.⁴⁸³

The roles and distinctions between the characters become blurred as the powerful dialogue used to stress one's authority is taken for a genuine question about identity. The confusion about Vindice's true self and performance that Hartley observed can be seen on a smaller scale within this comic play, as the two labourers confuse each other's identities with their characters. However, unlike Vindice's confusion they do not lose their true selves in the performance, but instead find it nearly impossible to maintain their personas, even addressing each other by their true names repeatedly, instead of the characters that they are playing throughout their short performance. This once again establishes the thematic tone for the second half of the play, when the transformation and royal performance of Henry V will come under question and he must fashion his own new identity. Derick's role as a literal actor in this small improvised play reflects the theatrical role that Henry V must achieve to rule; however, it should be noted that while Derick and John both take on the roles of their characters the illusion is not a solid one.

They do not fully transform into these characters, but instead see both the carrier and the cobbler who are performing and even call each other by their real names. Peter Thompson rejects the idea of an actor completely representing or imitating the character that they played on the stage and suggest that the concept of one human being, i.e. the actor, being substituted for another whole being was 'at best embryonic on the early modern stage' and continues that playing a role 'did not abolish the performer's self from the playing space'.⁴⁸⁴ Indeed, Derick and John find it impossible to banish their previous identities from their performance, and cannot

⁴⁸³ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. B4v.

⁴⁸⁴ Peter Thompson, 'The Elizabethan Actor: A Matter of Temperament', *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, 20 (2000), 4-13 (p. 8).

fully embody their character parts. It is stated by Ulrike Landfester that within the ‘play-within-a-play’ device that the fool is ‘structurally the most important dramatic persona in metadrama’ and is often used as a device to reveal truths to the audience within these plays.⁴⁸⁵ The fact that Derick easily sees through the performances to the real people underneath the persona, and at times confuses performance with fact, foreshadows Henry V’s later confusion within the French court at the play’s end. It also serves a second function in suggesting that the full transformation of a person’s identity is not always possible. While John, even temporarily, adopts the role of a Lord Chief Justice, he is unable to escape his true fixed identity of a cobbler and Derick reveals this to the audience in a microcosm of the world that they inhabit.

Outside of their play, a second transformation occurs alongside Henry V’s as Derick parodies the event by declaring that he will transform himself from a carrier to a cobbler. Robbed of his brace of ginger, Derick claims that ‘ile be no more a Carrier’ and must form a new identity and life for himself. However, the wisdom and honesty of the clown, offers a different musing on the reality of self-fashioning: that people are unable to completely change who they are. Immediately in their next scene, Derick rejects the hospitality he has been offered while John convinces him that this is the very food that cobblers regularly eat. Derick is still affronted by this ‘insult’ in spite of his vow to become a cobbler like John, and makes a promise to instead forgive John for this ‘slight’, before revealing his true nature once more and running home before him, threatening to ‘breake all the glasse windowes’ instead.⁴⁸⁶

Derick is unable to change his nature to suit the life of a cobbler and the cycle repeats again when he is pressed into service for the army. He happily takes up the

⁴⁸⁵ Ulrike Landfester, ‘The Invisible Fool: Botho Strauss’s Postmodern Metadrama the History of Theatrical Reality’, in *The Play within the Play: The Performance of Meta-Theatre and Self-Reflection*, eds. Gerard Fisler and Bernhard Griener (New York: Rodopi, 2007), pp.129-44 (pp. 129,131).

⁴⁸⁶ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. C3v.

mantle of the soldier with just as much vigour and enthusiasm as when he declared that he would live the life of a labourer; however, once they actually go to war, his resolve fades again and we see that he is afraid of battle and tries to avoid it where possible. Unable to fight with courage or conviction, he takes on the part of the actor to pretend that he was capable of great deeds. He describes his methods to John Cobbler as he lists the tricks and illusions that he used, which include creating fake injuries to seem like he was bloodied in battle. He applies the blood like an actor creating fake wounds for a play and, when he finds himself in danger and face to face with a French soldier, he provides a performance to make himself seem more competent than he truly is. Having used a trick to disarm the soldier he declares: ‘O you villaine, now you lie at my mercie,/ Doest thou remember since thou lambst me in thy short el?/ O villaine, now I will strike off thy head’.⁴⁸⁷ His speech is dramatic and bold; however he immediately loses his prisoner. Alone once more he reveals to the audience that it was all pretend and refuses to chase down the man, declaring instead, ‘What is he gone, masse I am glad of it,/ For if he had staid, I was afraid he wold haue sturd again,/ And then I should haue been spilt’.⁴⁸⁸ Although Derick borrows the language of heroes and the noble warrior, he has little interest in providing justice but instead acts as if he does in an attempt to stay alive. In his deeds, Derick is anything but a soldier and his constant attempts to fashion himself are met with failure and rejection each and every time.

It is no coincidence that Derick and Henry V both attempt some form of self-fashioning and provide many performances throughout the play. In the second chapter, I suggested that *Famous Victories* was a play where everything happens twice and Derick’s performance here, mirrors the reformation, self-fashioning and

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., sig. F2v.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

performances of Henry V. In fact, as Derick brings the nobility into the ‘low’ comedic scenes so that they may be criticised, it could be argued that his inability to stick to one role effectively forces the audience to reflect on whether a true change in nature is possible for any person, especially when Henry V’s own brash nature can still be seen in a muted form the transformation may be called into question. Henry V even mirrors his own actions from the start of the play. The play begins with Prince Henry taking great treasures with violent force and, by the play’s end, he is seen taking treasure, in the form of crippling fees, from France to increase his own wealth. As a prince, we hear that he plans to visit a barmaid, claiming slyly to the audience that he enjoys her tongue as much as her other parts. This bawdy double entendre is repeated when he woos Katherine and declares that ‘Ile deale as easily with thee/ As thy heart can imagine, or tongue can require’.⁴⁸⁹ Further to this, in the depiction of his early reign, the Prince’s rash anger can still be clearly seen, particularly as his foreign policy relies on brute force rather than negotiation or persuasion. It appears then that underneath his pleasantries, this king is fundamentally the same character as the young prince: he is as unchanged as Derick. The difference between the two occurs in the fact that Henry V is knowingly crafting his external self, instead of attempting to change his inner character and identity whilst Derick fails throughout the course of play to completely reinvent himself, a fact that was foreshadowed by his inability to play a character in the earlier play-within-a-play.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., sig. F4r.

The King's Speech

Henry V plays the role of an actor from his dramatic reformation and on into his reign. Although he may not completely transform his entire character during this reformation he demonstrates an appreciation for the need to fashion and adjust the external persona that he puts forth. Thompson, in rejecting the concept of heavy imitation on the Elizabethan stage, puts forth an alternative means of viewing the role of the Elizabethan actor and claims that playing a part was 'a matter of temperament'.⁴⁹⁰ If actor and 'character' were distinct entities on the stage, two selves are created on the stage, with the actor's identity consciously remaining on the stage. Thompson notes the difficulty that the Elizabethan actor would have had with the vast amount of parts that they would need to perform within a short period of time. With this context, Thompson suggests that the Elizabethan actor was a 'mongrel' who retained the ghosts of past performance and thus did not have the luxury of time to dedicate to constructing new characters.⁴⁹¹ The actor remains a constant, whilst he uses elements from various stock figures to create the rest of the role, often with clear gestures to show the temperament of the character before the word itself strictly applied.⁴⁹² In a very similar way, Henry V's own self-fashioning adheres more closely to the creation of a suitable temperament that Thompson suggests, and he embraces this mode of identity fully.

Henry V demonstrates his skill as an actor while the English are at war with the French. Like Elizabeth I, and the very actors themselves, he employs emotive rhetoric and performance to motivate his men in battle and uses passionate speeches to construct his legend and self-consciously create his own historic moment. As he

⁴⁹⁰ Thompson, 'The Elizabethan Actor', p. 12.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., p. 10.

⁴⁹² Ibid., p.12.

delivers his speech to incite national pride, he does so as an artist and actor who selects his words with great consideration and skill. He creates a heroic identity for himself and his men as he crafts reality into legend, casting them all as champions for their country just as easily as he constructed his own moment of reformation to sway the opinions of his father's council in time for his coronation. Acknowledging the dire odds he tells his men:

They are a hundred thousand,
And we fortie thousand, ten to one:
My Lords and louing Countrymen,
Though we be fewe and they many,
Feare not, your quarrel is good, and God will defend you:
Plucke vp your hearts, for this day we shall either haue
A valiant victorie, or a honourable death.⁴⁹³

In this speech he imposes a 'black and white' morality upon the war; there is one good side and it is theirs, defended by God. He appeals to their sense of honour and promises glory in crafting and manipulating the conditions so they may even gain if they lose. He unites the men together with the story that they shall be remembered for either the glory of their triumph or the honour of their death for a righteous cause, using religious ideologies to support his claim. Banding all together as one, he unites them in the effort and makes *his* cause their own, giving them the motivation to fight.

Henry V also utilises the emergent concept of national consciousness and pride to further inspire his men. Ralf Hertel observes that the importance of national identity and Englishness was inflated during Elizabeth's reign that tied into the constructed cult of the Virgin Queen and provided a common ground for both Protestants and Catholics through a new identity that centred on being English.⁴⁹⁴

Although slightly anachronistic, Henry V mirrors Elizabeth I's tactics, and joins his

⁴⁹³ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. E4r.

⁴⁹⁴ Ralf Hertel, *Staging England in the Elizabethan History Play: Performing National Identity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p. 8.

men together in their collective English identity.⁴⁹⁵ They are united because they are all English which makes them superior to the opposition; to this end he stresses their ‘Englishness’ repeatedly before they leave for the battle and, in the above extract, intimately calls them his countrymen, a tactic he employs until the scene’s end.

‘What my Lords, me thinks you looke cheerfully vpon me?/ Why then with one voice and like true English hearts,/ With me throw vp your caps...’.⁴⁹⁶ Boundaries dissolve away as he forces a relationship upon them and unites them together to provoke an emotive response and invest them in his own cause. He uses a rhetorical question here to force emotions upon his men; he says that he thinks they look at him cheerfully; however, as the question is rhetorical they are unable to reply or correct him. There is a power imbalance at work here, although his inclusive language is carefully selected to suggest that there is no distinction between them at all, that the rewards and stakes are the same, even though this is clearly not the case. This *will* be a heroic moment, and despite unfavourable odds the English win the battle, almost seemingly through the force of their will alone.

Although the fight is over, Henry V’s role as the privileged story teller is not; as he names the battle in the very next scene for the purposes of the history books:

‘Well then my lords of England,/ For the more honour of our English men,/ I will that this be for euer cald the battell of *Agincourt*’.⁴⁹⁷ Greenblatt notes that ‘one of the highest achievements of power is to impose fictions upon the world’ and in this example we see that Henry V has the privilege to be able to do just that and, through his magisterial power, he makes them a reality by transforming his narrative into

⁴⁹⁵ It should be noted that this collective identity is not wholly unifying as the common soldiers are absent from the scene.

⁴⁹⁶ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. F1r.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., sig. F2r.

‘historical fact’.⁴⁹⁸ Henry V does not act as if he is ignorant of the process of creating history; he immediately notes the significance of the battle and that it should be named for the purposes of the chronicles, declaring that it will be called Agincourt ‘for euer’ as he creates the very victorious image and immortal legacy that the Elizabethan audience is witnessing at that very moment.

After his victory on the battlefield, Henry V proves that he is able to leave behind the persona of the courageous military leader to instead embrace the levels of performance needed for the court. Greenblatt concludes his exploration of Renaissance self-fashioning with a discussion of how forging an identity, or at least the appearance of an identity, was deemed to be necessary for life within the court. When discussing Wyatt’s life within a court setting, Greenblatt observes that, ‘[f]or someone in Wyatt’s situation, role-playing seems virtually inescapable’⁴⁹⁹ He continues that:

Dissimulation and feigning are an important part of the instruction given by almost every court manual, from this comedy of manners [*Book of the Courtier*] to Guazzo’s defense of the pretence necessary to achieve an agreeable social presence, to Castiglione’s idea of the sugar-coated pill of political virtue.⁵⁰⁰

Whilst doubleness and appearing to be other than what you truly were carried a stigma in Elizabethan England, the prevalence of manner guides and expectations to present an agreeable and honourable self demonstrate that in reality the ideal ‘singleness’ was not often practiced in court.

Performing a new, constructed identity to aid the individual in court was a necessity for success and, in the final scenes of the play, Henry V demonstrates that he is able to conceal his nature and crude intentions with the mask required for the nobility’s court. Although he is the enemy of France and negotiating terms that will

⁴⁹⁸ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p.141.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 161.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 162.

disinherit the Dauphin and remove France's independence, his true feelings, and those of the French King's, are hidden behind a polite, courtly performance during negotiations. Although there is a great power imbalance at play during these discussions, the two kings both adhere to a friendly fiction, and address each other with terms that suggest amicability and equality:

HEN.5. *Now my good brother of France,*
 My coming into this land was not to shed blood,
 But for the right of my Countrey, which if you can deny,
 I am content peaceably to leaue my siege,
 And to depart out of your land.

CHARLES. What is it you demand,
*My louing brother of England?*⁵⁰¹

This is the opening dialogue of scene eighteen, where both kings address each other as 'brother', whilst acknowledging the unpleasant reasons for their interaction.

Henry V reminds the French King that the siege can only be ended by the loss of the crown, using positive, affirmative language to stress how a desirable result can be brought about. He does not mention what will happen should the French King deny this condition; however, the implication that the siege will continue, at the very least, hangs in the air, without Henry V having to make the threat overt. Indeed, Henry V is clever in his wording and presents his conditions almost as a request that the French King may choose to consent to; he asks '*if*' the king will deny the crown and claims that if he does Henry V would be 'content' to leave. His terms are offered in the style of a proposal; however, given the damage that the French side sustained the French King is not in a situation where he has a choice. Although the French King calls Henry V 'my louing brother of England', he doesn't make the mistake of reading Henry V's offer as a request and, perhaps even bluntly, asks what the 'demand' is. The two kings, thus treat each other as friends in the court, and the

⁵⁰¹ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. F3r, (emphasis added).

French King must ignore the devastation that Henry V has inflicted upon his own countrymen and the crippling terms that he is demanding.

He may take anything he wants from this king, but, just like Machiavelli suggests, he ensures that throughout these negotiations that he appears merciful, even as he seizes the Dauphin's birth-right from him. He does not want to be hated, something Machiavelli warns against, when he advises:

...he can endure very well being feared whilst he is not hated, which will always be as long as he abstains from the property of his citizens and subjects and from their women.⁵⁰²

Henry V, however, must obtain both to secure his claim to the French crown, and thus he must take every action to ensure that the French King will be seen to *give* him both the land and his own daughter, so that the new king will not risk the ill opinion of the people. Instead he attempts to appear reasonable, and even respectful, when he negotiates for a marriage to unite the two bloodlines and ensure a greater foothold for his own rule in France.

This is perhaps his greatest performance in the play so far, as he asks for Katherine's hand from her father and then proceeds to attempt to woo her. The marriage is guaranteed; with France in such a weak position neither Katherine nor her father can refuse the match as the inheritance and their country's welfare are at stake.⁵⁰³ The scene is particularly comedic as Henry V attempts to woo Katherine with courtly language and the promises of love ignoring her repeated rebuffs that note the harm that he has done to her father and her country with his 'unreasonable demands'. Eventually she yields and claims that she stands 'at my fathers direction', revealing that she does not have any great say in the match herself and, upon

⁵⁰² Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p.58.

⁵⁰³ As Henry V's Queen, Katherine would historically have had a greater say in the running of her home country and would have expected to hold an active involvement in many aspects of rule; Gaywyn Moore, "You Turn Me into Nothing": Reformation of Queenship on the Jacobean Stage', *Mediterranean Studies*, 21 (2013), 27-56 (pp. 30-31).

Katherine leaving, to ask if her father will consent to the match, Henry V ends the scene with the menacing:

But if I knew I could not haue her fathers good wil,
I would so rowse the Towers ouer his eares,
That I would make him be glad to bring her me,
Upon his hands and knees.⁵⁰⁴

If he is denied, he will still take her anyway. Indeed, Corbin and Sedge note that ‘Henry is characteristically brisk even in his attempts to lyricism’ and that he ‘unromantically links his suit to notions of military conquest, calculated to play upon an audience’s sense of national chauvinism.’⁵⁰⁵ In these final lines he reminds the audience that the wooing was all an illusion. He would have gotten what he wanted anyway, and the image he paints of the French King humiliated on his hands and knees is a grim reminder that for all the shallow niceties Henry V offers, the French King is powerless in these negotiations; there is no need for Henry V to *ask*, let alone attempt to woo Katherine.

The scene has an element of coercion to it even though it is presented as a wooing for mutual affection. Karen Oberer in particular suggests that:

the scene is about mutual capitulation; the audience is invited to believe that their marriage will be a partnership of equals, since Katherine and Henry both show an expertise in manipulation.⁵⁰⁶

However, it is only Katherine who is doggedly prompted to surrender her love. Katherine is unable to get the king to even discuss the terms that he has placed upon her father and it appears that Henry V’s feelings have not changed from the beginning of the wooing scene to the end. At the scene’s beginning he stated that, ‘I loue her and will haue her’ and has maintained this resolution throughout to the

⁵⁰⁴ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. F4r.

⁵⁰⁵ Corbin and Sedge, *Oldcastle Controversy*, p. 24.

⁵⁰⁶ Karen Oberer, ‘Appropriations of the Popular Tradition in *The Famous Victories of Henry V* and *The Troublesome Raigne of King John*’, in *Locating the Queen’s Men, 1583-1603*, ed. Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Griffin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp.171-82 (p. 175).

scene's end without extra influence.⁵⁰⁷ The great power imbalance at work within this scene cannot be ignored, establishing a tradition that would also be seen in *Edward III* (c.1593) and *Edward IV, Part One* (1599) where unsolicited attention is forced upon a woman who must submit to the king's desires, but not be seen to be coerced or risk painting him as a villain.

It is no coincidence the play ends with Henry V's symbolic initiation into the Elizabethan mode of acceptable masculinity as he must perform the role of the shrewd courtier: the final stage of acceptable masculinity. As well as demonstrating power and tactical advantages, he is also able to negotiate within the court and manipulates the enemy to agree to his terms in the most peaceful and complicit way possible. A coercion is taking place, but, from the outside, this is not explicitly clear. Threats are given in subtext and through the subtle use of language in a joint performance that benefits both parties as Henry V can't be seen to be a tyrant, and the French King does not want to appear to be a weak victim in his own court. This exchange is designed to stroke Henry V's ego and satisfy him to a greater degree. At one point in the wooing scene, Henry V becomes so invested in his performance that he even begins to blur the lines between his own fiction and reality. However, in his soliloquy he quickly re-establishes the truth, and reminds the audience, and himself, that these discussions and requests for permission are only for show:

Which hath sought to win her fathers Crowne?
Her fathers Crowne, said I: no it is mine owne:
I, but I loue her, and must craue her,
Nay I loue her and will haue her.⁵⁰⁸

In these lines, Henry V begins to believe his own fiction that the king retains the crown which he hopes to win, but he quickly corrects himself, and instead states

⁵⁰⁷ Anon., *Famous Victories*, sig. F3v.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., sig. F3v.

more assertively that it is already his. He does the same when speaking of Katherine's affections as well. He will not pine or crave her, but instead *will have* her. It is vital for his performance to slip here so that the audience may see that the actions of the court are pure performance and that underneath the pretence of polite negotiation Henry V still has control, even if his performance is so convincing that he even fools himself.

He thus fashions himself to be a modern gentleman fit to play the social games of the court. Henry V is certainly manipulative during his rule and uses his performance and emotive language to create the desired emotional response that he needs from his audience. He is every inch the actor and, particularly in the second half of the play, these skills are shown to be necessary for effective rule. Henry V will pretend and mask his own behaviour, but it is shown to be necessary for his position of power and the courtly setting he inhabits. Performance is thus seen to be a necessary part of leadership, and it is no coincidence that both the talents of an actor and a leader are displayed within such a popular king. In the hands of Henry V, already a famous and beloved figure of English history, these traits are not sinful, deceptive or dishonest, but shrewd and necessary. Henry V creates fictions just as any actor on the stage might and, in doing so within this history play, he lends a sense of credibility to it through association. It should also be noted that when Shakespeare would adapt this play into his *Henriad*, that he would turn Henry V, or Prince Hal, into a literal actor who mimics his competitor, Hotspur, for the entertainment of Poins, and later takes part in a play with Falstaff for the entertainment of the inn's patrons. Although, Prince Henry has no such scenes like this one within *Famous Victories*, he still retains the identity of an actor, even if it is not literally the case in this earlier play.

By examining the fashioning and performance of identity through two of its main characters, *Famous Victories* is able to offer credibility to these modes of identity and offer a subtle defence of the legitimacy of the actor through a defence of theatricality. *Famous Victories* demonstrates the necessity of self-fashioning by providing a number of examples where varying levels of theatricality are necessary as well as settings, such as the royal court, where a strict set of etiquette and performance is necessary for negotiation on the other side of the battlefield. Thematically, through the example of Henry V, who matures but is unable to escape his essential violent character, and through the example of Derick, who attempts to completely reinvent himself a number of times throughout the side plot, *Famous Victories* does not appear to support the concept of a complete reinvention or fashioning of character.

Although some characters such as Henry V may mature to exhibit some self-control he must rely on a very different kind of self-fashioning to mould his character into one that is suitable for rule. Henry V learns the adaptability of the actor and fashions a second external character and performance for these roles, proving himself to be more adept at such a task than Derick who finds himself unable to be anything other than what he already is. He does not fully grasp the art of the performance that Henry V is able to use with ease. However, by the play's end Derick and John learn the value of performance when they see that it may save their lives in the war, a skill that is displayed overtly in a final mirroring of Henry V's development as he slips into the role of the pleasant politician when making his demands of the French King. Whilst a 'doubleness' of the self carried unpleasant associations of duplicity and a fickle nature, *Famous Victories* offered a positive representation by suggesting that performance was necessary for rule. An audience

may fear the dishonest Machiavellian tyrannical king; however when these traits were demonstrated in a heroic one, who mirrored many of Elizabeth I's own tactics for performing rule, the audience could grow to accept the necessity for performance in particular situations and, perhaps, even the very 'two-faced' actors who were part of the fast growing theatrical trend in London.

Conclusion: The Power of Historical Representation

This thesis has discussed and analysed how *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* (c.1586) was able to create an accessible history that was seen by a varied audience.⁵⁰⁹ As one of the first examples of a play about English history, *Famous Victories* is a particularly interesting case study for examining how emergent identities could be incorporated into the text itself, often anachronistically, to include themselves within the histories that had left them out. These were the groups that were ignored as they were considered inconsequential to the grand reigns of kings, or were perhaps even demonised or victimised with unfair representation. Just like Protestantism in the face of Catholicism's long tradition, rebellious youths, new modes of masculinity, the socially mobile, the popular voice and the actor himself, were inserted into England's national history and given their own stories and victories. Appropriating the former king's legacy for their own ends, these identities and groups could be represented by one figure, that of Henry V himself, who, through his own heroic legacy and historical tradition, was able to legitimise these movements by demonstrating the traits of each in his own likeness.

In the final chapter of this thesis, it was demonstrated that this depiction of Henry V provided a positive representation of the adaptable actor, and it is significant that the marginalised groups legitimised by *Famous Victories* often included the playwrights and players that would bring these stories to life on the stage. The theatre offered careers for the socially mobile youths and those that performed the newest Elizabethan form of acceptable masculinity, all within the transgressive, feminine 'O' of the playhouse. All these qualities were shared in this

⁵⁰⁹ As the Queen's Men are likely to have toured the country with *Famous Victories* with the Elizabeth I's royal approval the play had a greater reach as the actors journeyed from town to town, teaching this history to the people even as it entertained them

emergent career that was gaining popularity in London, and were legitimised through their insertion into history, giving these traits a tradition they lacked and making the novel familiar, and therefore acceptable.

However, there is one emergent identity that is legitimised within *Famous Victories* that has not been mentioned yet in this thesis, and is perhaps the most significant of them all: that of the play itself. The first chapter of this thesis demonstrated that *Famous Victories* may reasonably be considered the first English history play. With the boom of theatre in English culture, particularly in London, there was a high demand for new and fresh plays to entertain the masses. There was thus a great variety of genres that were brought to the stage to entertain the people and a great range of myths, legends and tales were adapted for the stage to provide audiences with the new material they craved. There was a wealth of variety and the old Tudor morality play *King Johan* set a precedent for plays with historical figures. Chronicles were sold in beautiful folios as artefacts, and although their price meant that they were exclusive to the well off and elite audiences, they were a desirable item. Public interest in Henry V can also be seen at this time, and in Westminster Abbey his shield and helmet were on display so that the common man could witness these historical and secular relics from the legendary Battle of Agincourt. It was only a matter of time before English history inspired a theatrical adaptation, especially one surrounding such a well-known, and admired, figure as Henry V himself.

This brings us back to the play-within-a-play that John and Derick both perform. *Famous Victories* recreates English history in an accessible way for the people to be able to witness a form of history and reclaim it for themselves. The Queen's Men turned to history for inspiration for its plays, and would later adapt the reigns of King John, Richard III and even the Scottish James IV to create their

playbooks. It is particularly interesting that it was the Queen's own company who chose this genre and popularised it. It has been suggested by Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean that the Queen's Men were particularly suited to bowing to censorship laws and may even have been a great tool for propagandistic purposes as they were able to journey to places where Elizabeth's control was weaker.⁵¹⁰ These plays could have been used as tools to increase public support for the monarch. One means of doing this could have been by glorifying Elizabeth I's ancestry and inspiring English national pride. Whilst the Queen's men were willing to adhere to heavy censorship and support Elizabethan ideology, they were also able to include their own ideologies and ideas through subtle critiques and representation of marginalised identities. History was a perfect medium to pave the way to acceptance for these groups by introducing them within a depiction of English history and thereby including them as if they were already part of an established tradition, encouraging a greater tolerance and normalisation of these people. However, the English history play was a particularly new genre that had little authority in itself.

It is thus particularly significant that *Famous Victories* also contains one of the earliest examples of the play-within-a-play on the Elizabethan stage as, in the same way that *Famous Victories* legitimised other identities, it also legitimised its own existence.⁵¹¹ By witnessing John and Derick recreate the actions of the nobility in order to make sense of it, and provide an excuse for horseplay, the audience is invited to watch 'the very first proto-history play' within the first English history play. Although *Famous Victories* is thought to be the first instance of this particular

⁵¹⁰ Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1998), pp. 23-24

⁵¹¹ Dieter Mehl claims that *The Spanish Tragedy* is the first theatrical example of the play-within-a-play device; however as the play is thought to have been composed during the same period as *Famous Victories*, this would place *Famous Victories* as one of the earliest, if not the first, examples of the play-within-a-play on the stage, Dieter Mehl, 'Forms and Functions of the Play within a Play', *Renaissance Drama*, 6 (1965), 41-61 (p. 46).

type of play, the audience are invited to imagine a fictional past for the genre itself that did not truly exist. In this way, the play is reimagined as another link in a chain that follows a pre-established tradition. By imagining Derick's play as an early ancestor, legitimacy is offered to the history genre itself, and it demonstrates how it can be adapted to recreate events and simultaneously provide a medley of clowning and entertainment too. It is of particular note that this mock 'first history play' is performed for the purposes of entertainment and to aid the understanding of an important event, by two members of the labourer class. This reflects the tradition of the miracle plays which were traditionally conceived, written and designed by the labourers in each town.⁵¹² This example, then, is reflective of the previous tradition which was influential to the history genre. It draws a strong connection between the two types of play to legitimise its own creation as an example that pays tribute to Tudor theatre's roots and its medieval early beginnings. In doing this successfully it managed to look forward and inspire a genre that would increase in popularity throughout the 1590s.

The original scope of this research project had ambitiously planned to cover three plays that had been side-lined in academic studies due to their status as source plays: *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, *King Leir* (c.1589) and *Timon* (1602). To be dismissed as a mere source for Shakespeare's work is a stigma that, as demonstrated in the introduction of this thesis, can stay with a play and influence the criticism surrounding it. This leads to reductive 'alchemy' debates that are preoccupied with how Shakespeare transformed a base work into the artful form of his plays. As I have demonstrated in this thesis, such an approach risks overlooking the merits of such a 'source play', whilst *Famous Victories* may not contain the

⁵¹² See the first chapter of this thesis.

genius of Shakespeare's poetry in its language, the significance of its role in creating the English history play genre, and the creativity of its structure, warrants academic study. Whilst *King Lear*, another of the Queen's Men's plays, has won kinder comments praising its verse, research has been limited whilst more obscure plays such as *Timon* attract even less academic attention.⁵¹³ In order to provide a more detailed study, I decided upon *Famous Victories* as my focus to offer an example of a source play that held great worth in its own right, but had also received an unfavourable academic reputation over the years. Source plays, and anonymous plays in particular, deserve to hold a more prominent place in the field of literary criticism outside of authorship studies and linguistic comparisons. Whilst they may never achieve the same reputation or prestige that Shakespeare holds in academia, or indeed English culture itself, these plays are being undervalued and important research areas about early modern literature and culture are being left unexplored.

In arguing that *Famous Victories* may be considered a particularly significant work and by demonstrating the subtle layers of complexity that may be unearthed from a deeper reading of the play, I hope that the research within this thesis will lead to more academic interest around *Famous Victories* within the early modern field. The study of this thesis has been by no means exhaustive and further research around this play as a literary work should certainly be encouraged. With the recent production of resources provided by the Shakespeare and the Queen's Men Project (SQM) and, Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean's detailed study of the Queen's

⁵¹³ As with early criticism of *Famous Victories*, the main critical debate has involved ascertaining if it was a source for Shakespeare and, as the general critical consensus appears to be that Shakespeare is unlikely to have seen it, critical interest appears to be lacking. Geoffrey Bullough neglects to provide the play in its entirety in his volumes *Narrative and Dramatic Sources for Shakespeare*, for this very reason. See for a more detailed, although relatively brief, study that argues for Shakespeare's knowledge of the play which may have influenced his writing of *King Lear* see Robert Hillis Goldsmith, 'Did Shakespeare Use the Old Timon Comedy?', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 9 (1958) 31-38. For a counterclaim to this, which is by no means completely comprehensive, see J.C. Maxwell's introduction to *Timon of Athens*, ed. John Dover Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), pp. xix-xxii.

Men, the stage has been set for new criticism with a surge of resources that should encourage studies, and perhaps even its inclusion in literature modules. Although the criticism surrounding *Famous Victories*, and the Queen's Men's plays, is slowly building, this is an exciting time as this source play slowly begins to gain the same legitimacy that it provided for the marginalised groups within its own text.

In conclusion, the invention and use of the history play genre was a particularly shrewd move by the Queen's Men who were able to use the vehicle of history to carry specific ideologies and put forth alternative fictions for the people to accept and understand. The rewriting of history was an established practice at the time, and the many varying tomes and licenced, and illegal, versions of history that appeared during this time attest to this trend. However, the Queen's Men achieved this by employing a fast paced cultural art that could produce such works at a rapid rate, and also simultaneously made the audience aware of such a process too by allowing them to be privy to the creation of history. The audience are invited to view how it was written and could witness how the established facts and events could differ from the accounts that the history books had retold. Whilst there was a great amount of antitheatrical pamphlet literature in circulation, often targeting the theatre itself as well as the new Elizabethan men, youths and labourers that frequented the theatres and often comprised its audience, *Famous Victories* offers a defence against this discourse. This play created an accessible history that establishes these groups within the past and offered them positive representations on the stage. Henry V is offered a new identity as an everyman of sorts, offering a touchstone for each of the marginalised identities, even through his transgressive acts.

In *Famous Victories* it can thus be seen that Henry V's threefold identity, of heroic actor, heroic legend and hybrid character, is able to offer a new authority and

legitimacy to these identities that they may not have held previously. The actor may have been a hated and suspicious figure throughout history, but Henry V was able to demonstrate that the player had positive attributes as well, and that adaptability and performance were an important part of a leader's reign. This is particularly true if, as the play maintains, true identity cannot be truly changed in spite of the self-fashioning literature that claimed otherwise. In these cases, then, it is more crucial that Henry V creates the persona of a king and performs this rather than hold the key characteristics needed for rule. In this way Henry V, as well as Derick, in a more literal sense, become actors, and their place within history is clearly established with reminders to highlight to the audience the evolution of commercial history itself and where it came from. Although Henry V is an actor on the stage, he is also the playwright and, as a powerful member of the nobility, he is able to create fictions in society and force the other subjects and people around him into the role of players too. Whether it is his father, who becomes 'Good Hope' or Katherine who becomes his love interest, he determines their roles and turns history into a play before the eyes of the audience. This transformation is far subtler than the creation of the 'first' history play that Derick performed with John Cobbler, which took a literal look at the translation, importance and comprehension of the past itself. It depicts the creation of history for the purposes of entertainment which is the reason why many of the patrons would have visited the playhouse that day. However, at work behind the surface, the true creation of history can be seen by Henry V who directs it all like a grand dictator to suit his own reputation and needs.

This thesis has not engaged with the tempting question of who wrote the first history play, ignoring previous suggestions of Shakespeare, Tarlton or Samuel Rowley, as word analysis and language patterns can never be fully accurate or

provide the anticipated results. Until greater information comes to light the authorship of these histories will remain a mystery. It is fitting, however, that the playwright is anonymous as, within the scope of this play, he is invisible, allowing the true author of the history play to be revealed as the self-aware Henry V who crafts his own legacy to suit his own desires. The history play appears in several forms within *Famous Victories*, establishing itself as a key and important genre with a greater history than merely the latest novel genre that had appeared in London. The most important identity, then, is the history genre itself which becomes established here as history is crafted and recreated before our very eyes as the anonymous playwright legitimised the first example of this genre within its own historic setting.

By borrowing the legacy of Henry V, the playwright was able to use his name and legend to offer a degree of legitimacy to these emergent and marginalised identities. Through the inclusion of 'popular' characters and shrewd comparisons the playwright could question the ideologies that privileged the stories and achievements of the nobility above all else. The first history play brought the events from the chronicles to life; however it does so on its own terms and not as a jingoistic demonstration of patriotic pride. History is not held on the pedestal of historical accuracy and negotiations, but is, rather, a narrative to be wrangled and reclaimed by the groups of Elizabethan society that would find legitimation by writing themselves back into their nation's past.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

----- ‘Letter from a soldier to Sir Francis Walsingham’, Jan 25 1586, quoted in E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923).

----- *Edward III*, ed. Giorgio Melchiori (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

----- *Tarlton’s Jests*, ed. Iohn Haviland (London, 1638; STC: 23684).

----- *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, (London, 1598; STC: 13072).

Aylmer, John, *An harborowe for faithfull and trewe subiectes* (London: 1559; STC: 1005).

Bale, John, *King Johan*, in *The Dramatic Writings of John Bale*, ed. John S. Farmer (London: Traylen, 1966).

Elyot, Thomas, *The boke named the Gouvernour* (London, 1537; STC: 7636).

Gosson, Stephen, *Playes confuted in fiue Actions* (London, 1582; STC: 12095).

Hall, Edward, *The Vnion of the Two Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancastre and Yorke* (London, 1550; STC: 12723).

Henslowe, Philip, *Henslowe’s Diary*, ed. R.A.Foakes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Holinshed, Raphel, *The Firste Volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande* (London, 1577; STC: 13568).

Knox, John, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (London, 1558; STC: 15070).

Leland, John, *A learned and true assertion of the original life, actes , and death of the most noble, valiant, and renoumed Prince Arhure, King of great Brittainne*, trans. Richard Robinson (London, 1582; STC: 15441).

Machiavelli, Niccolo, *The Prince*, ed. Maurizio Viroli (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Marlowe, Christopher, *The Jew of Malta*, in *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*, ed. David Bevington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 247.

Shakespeare, William, *As You Like It*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: Norton & Company, 2008).

Shakespeare, William, *Henry IV, Part One*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: Norton & Company, 2008).

Shakespeare, William, *Henry IV, Part Two*, *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: Norton & Company, 2005).

Shakespeare, William, *Henry V*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: Norton & Company, 2008).

Shakespeare, William, *Henry VI, Part Three*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: Norton & Company, 2008).

Shakespeare, William, *Richard II*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: Norton & Company, 2008).

Shakespeare, William, *Richard III*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: Norton & Company, 2008).

Shakespeare, William, *Romeo and Juliet*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: Norton & Company, 2008).

Sidney, Philip, *The Defence of Poesie* (London, 1595; STC: 22535).

Skelton, John, *Magnyfycence* (London, 1533; STC: 22607).

Smith, Thomas, *De Republica Anglorum* (London, 1583; STC:22857).

Secondary Sources

Allmand, C. T., 'Henry V (1386–1422)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Sept 2010 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12952>, accessed 17 April 2017]

Althusser, Louis, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001), pp. 127-86.

Barish, Jonas, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1981).

Bate, Jonathan, Dora Thornton, *Shakespeare: Staging the World* (London : British Museum, 2012), p. 122.

Beemer, Cristy, 'The Female Monarchy: A Rhetorical Strategy of Early Modern Rule', *Rhetoric Review*, 30 (2011), 258-77.

Ben-Amos, Ilana, *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern English Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

Bialo, Caralyn, 'Popular Performance, the Broadside Ballad, and Ophelia's Madness', *SEL: Studies in English Literature*, 53 (2013), 293-309.

Burd, L. Arthur, *Il Principe*, ed. L. Arthur Burd (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891).

Burke, Peter, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 118.

Burrow, John, *A History of Histories* (London: Penguin, 2009).

Cavanagh, Dermot, *Language and Politics in the Sixteenth Century History Play* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

Champion, Larry S., "'What Prerogatives Meanes': Perspective and Political Ideology in *The Famous Victories of Henry V*", *South Atlantic Review*, 53 (1988) 1-19.

Clare, Janet, 'Medley History: *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth to Henry V*', *Shakespeare Survey*, 63 (2010), 102-113.

Clark, Ira, *Comedy, Youth, Manhood in Early Modern England* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003).

Clarke, Sidney M., *The Miracle Play in England: An Account of the Early Religious Drama* (New York: Haskell House, 1964).

Connell, William J., 'Vergil, Polydore (c.1470–1555)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004
[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28224>, Accessed on: 8 June 2014].

Corbin, Peter and Douglas Sedge, 'Introduction', in *The Oldcastle Controversy: 'John Oldcastle' and 'The Famous Victories of Henry V'*, eds. Peter Corbin, Douglas Sedge (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 1-35.

Cuddon, J.A., *Dictionary of Literary Terms & Literary Theory*, ed. J.A. Cuddon (London: Penguin, 1999).

Daniel, P.A., 'Introduction', in *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, ed. P.A. Daniel (London: C. Paertorius, 1887).

Dillon, Janette, 'The Early Tudor History Play', in *English Historical Drama, 1500-1600: Forms Outside the Canon*, eds. Teresa Grant and Barbara Ravelhofer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 32-57

Doran, Madeleine, *Endeavours of Art: A Study of Form in Elizabethan Drama* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1954).

Dutton, Richard, 'The Famous Victories and the 1600 Quarto of *Henry V*', in *Locating the Queen's Men, 1583-1603*, eds. Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Griffin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 135-44.

Eccles, Christine, *The Rose Theatre* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1990).

Eggert, Katherine, 'Nostalgia and the Not Yet Late Queen: Refusing Female Rule in *Henry V*', *ELH*, 64 (1994) 523-50.

Francisco, Timothy, *The Impact of Militarism and Social Mobility on the Construction of Masculinity in Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007).

Goy-Blanquet, Dominique, 'Elizabethan historiography and Shakespeare's sources', in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*, ed. Michael Hattaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 57-70.

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

Grant, Teresa, Barbara Ravelhofer, 'Introduction', *English Historical Drama, 1500-1600: Forms Outside the Canon*, eds. Teresa Grant and Barbara Ravelhofer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 1-31.

Greenblatt, Stephen, *Renaissance Self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005) (original work published in 1980).

Greer, C.A., 'Shakespeare's Use of "*The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*"', *Notes and Queries*, 1 (1954), 238-40.

Greiner, Bernhard, 'The Birth of the Subject out of the Spirit of the Play within the Play: The Hamlet Paradigm', in *The Play within the Play: The Performance of Meta-Theatre and Self-Reflection*, eds. Gerhard Fischer and Bernhard Greiner (New York: Rodopi, 2007), pp.3-14.

Greene, Nicholas, *Shakespeare's Serial History Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Griffin, Benjamin, 'The Birth of the History Play: Saint, Sacrifice, and Reformation', in *SEL: Studies in English Literature*, 39 (1999), 217-237.

Gurr, Andrew, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Guy, John, 'Monarchy and Counsel: Models of the State', in *The Sixteenth Century 1485-1603*, ed. Patrick Collinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.113-144.

Harley, Andrew James, 'Page and Stage Again: Rethinking Renaissance Character Phenomenologically', in *New Directions in Renaissance Drama and Performance Studies*, ed. Sarah Werner (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 77-93.

Hertel, Ralf, *Staging England in the Elizabethan History Play: Performing National Identity* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2016).

Hoak, Dale, 'Introduction', in *Tudor Political Culture*, ed. Dale Hoak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp. 1-10.

Holland, Peter, 'Shakespeare, William (1564–1616)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Jan 2013 [Available: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25200>, accessed on: 09/10/15].

Hopkinson, A.F, 'Introduction', in *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* (London: M.E. Sims & co, 1896).

Hornback, Robert, *The English Clown Tradition from the Middle Ages to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2009).

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

Hunter, G.K., *English Drama 1586-1642* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

Hutjens, Linda, 'The Disguised King in Early English Ballads', in *Literature and Popular Culture in Early Modern England*, eds. Matthew Dimmock and Andrew Hadfield (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp.75-90.

King, John N., 'Bale, John (1495–1563)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2009
[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1175>, Accessed on: 10 June 2014]

Kurtz, Martha A., 'Rethinking Gender and Genre in the History Play', *SEL*, 36 (1996), 267-287.

Landfester, Ulrike, 'The Invisible Fool: Botho Strauss's Postmodern Metadrama the History of Theatrical Reality', in *The Play within the Play: The Performance of Meta-Theatre and Self-Reflection*, eds. Gerard Fisler and Bernhard Griener (New York: Rodopi, 2007), pp.129-44.

Lesser, Zachary, 'Typographic Nostalgia: Play-Reading, Popularity, and the Meanings of Black Letter', in *The Book of the Play: Playwrights, Stationers, and*

Readers in Early Modern England, ed. Marta Straznicky (London: University of Massachusetts, 2006), pp.99-126.

Levin, Carole, *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002).

Logan, Terence P., Denzell S. Smith, *The Predecessors of Shakespeare* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973).

Lublin, Robert I., *Costuming the Shakespearean Stage* (Sussex: Ashgate, 2011).

Malcomson, Cristina, 'Christine de Pizan's *City of Ladies* in Early Modern England', in *Debating Gender in Early Modern England, 1500-1700*, eds. Christina Malcomson and Mihoko Suzuki (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 15-36.

Martin, John Jeffries, *The Myth of Renaissance Individualism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006).

Martin, Matthew, 'Introduction', *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth, Queen's Men Editions* (2010)

[Available:

<http://qme.internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Annex/Texts/FV/intro/GenIntro/section/Famous%20Victories%20and%20Shakespeare> , Accessed on: 15/05/2017]

Mathur, Maya, 'An Attack of the Clowns: Comedy, Vagrancy, and the Elizabethan History Play', *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 7, (2007), 35-44.

McMillin, Scott and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Mehl, Dieter, 'Forms and Functions of the Play within a Play', *Renaissance Drama*, 8 (1965), 41-61.

Misra, Karuna Shanker, *The Tragic Hero Through Ages* (New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 1992).

Moore, Gaywyn, "'You Turn Me into Nothing": Reformation of Queenship on the Jacobean Stage', *Mediterranean Studies*, 21 (2013), 27-56.

Neuss, Paula, 'Introduction', in *Magnificence*, ed. Paula Neuss (Manchester: Manchester Press, 1980).

Nichols, Louise, "'My name was known before I came": The Heroic Identity of the Prince in *The Famous Victories of Henry V* in *Other Voices, Other Views: Expanding the Canon in English Renaissance Studies*, eds. Helen Ostovich, Mary V. Silcox and Graham Roe (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999), pp. 154-75.

Oberer, Karen, 'Appropriations of the Popular Tradition in *The Famous Victories of Henry V* and *The Troublesome Raigne of King John*', in *Locating the Queen's Men*,

1583-1603, eds. Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Griffin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp.171-82.

Pitcher, Seymour M., *The Case for Shakespeare's Authorship of 'The Famous Victories'* (London: Alvin Redman, 1962).

Potter, Robert, *The English Morality Play: Origins, History and Influences of a Dramatic Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1975).

Rackin, Phyllis, *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

Rhodes, Neil, 'Orality, Print and Popular Culture: Thomas Nashe and Marshall McLuhan', in *Literature and Popular Culture in Early Modern England*, eds. Matthew Dimmock and Andrew Hadfield (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 29-44.

Ribner, Irving, *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare* (Abington: Routledge, 2005).

Romotsky, Sally Robertson, 'Henry of Monmouth and the Gown-of-Needles', *Intertexts*, 8 (2004) 155-72.

Rose, Mary Beth, 'The Gendering of Authority in the Public Speeches of Elizabeth I', *PMLA*, 115 (2000), 1077-82.

Rosman, Doreen, *The Evolution of the English Churches, 1500-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Schwyzler, Philip, 'Paranoid History: John Bale's *King Johan*', in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama*, eds. Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 499-514.

Shapiro, James, *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare* (London: Faber and Faber, 2011) (original work published in 2005).

Shepard, Alexandra, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Smith, Rochelle, 'King-Commoner Encounters in the Popular Ballad, Elizabethan Drama and Shakespeare', *SEL: Studies in English Literature*, 50, (2010), 301-336.

Sterling, Eric, *The Movement Towards Subversion: The English History Play from Skelton to Shakespeare* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1996).

Stern, Tiffany, 'Early Modern Tragedy and Performance', in *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespearean Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 489-504.

Taylor, Andrew W., 'The Reformation of History in John Bale's Biblical Dramas', in *English Historical Drama, 1500-1600: Forms Outside the Canon*, eds. Teresa Grant and Barbara Ravelhofer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 58-97.

Thomson, Peter, 'Knell, William (d. 1587)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004
[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15705>, Accessed on: 20 May 2014]

Thomson, Peter, 'The Elizabethan Actor: A Matter of Temperament', *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, 20 (2000), 4-13.

Tillyard, E.M.W., *Shakespeare's History Plays* (London: Penguin, 1991).

Vaught, Jennifer C., *Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

Walker, Simon, 'Percy, Sir Henry (1364–1403)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008
[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21931>, accessed 20 Feb 2017]

Walsham, Alexandra, 'History, Memory, and the English Reformation', *Historical Journal*, 55 (2012), 899-938.

Walter, John, *Crowds and Popular Politics in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

Ward, Bernard M., 'The Famous Victories of Henry V: Its place in Elizabethan Dramatic Literature', *The Review of English Studies*, 4, (1928) 270-94.

Wells, William, 'Introduction', in 'The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth: A Critical Edition', PhD Thesis, Stanford University (1935).

Wiggins, Martin, *British Drama, 1533-1642: A Catalogue*, 7 vols, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012-6).

Williams, Gordon, *Shakespeare's Sexual Language: A Glossary* (London: Continuum, 2006).

Wilson, F.P., *Marlowe and the Early Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953).

'Currency Converter', *National Archives*
[Available: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/results.asp#mid>, accessed on: 17/04/17].

'Project Overview', *Performing the Queen's Men* (2007)
[Available: <http://thequeensmen.mcmaster.ca/about/aboutSQM2.htm>, accessed on 13/05/2017]

Performances and Recordings

The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth, Performing the Queen's Men, dir. Peter Cockett, University of Toronto, 2007, DVD.

Henry IV, Part One, dir. Gregory Doran (Stratford-upon-Avon: Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company) [Viewed on: 15/04/14].