

Alison Thorne "["Awake remembrance of these valiant dead": Henry V and the politics of the English history play](#)". Shakespeare Studies. FindArticles.com. 21 Oct, 2009.

"A PROPAGANDA-PLAY on National Unity: heavily orchestrated for the brass" was how A. P. Rossiter summed up Henry V in 1954. (1) The assumption that this play is complicit with the promonarchical, nationalist rhetoric of the Chorus, and with the particular myth of Englishness it propounds, has persisted. In recent years the most cogent articulation of this view has come from Richard Helgerson, who sees the play as the culmination of Shakespeare's gradual tightening of his "obsessive and compelling focus on the ruler" during the writing of his English history cycle, at the cost of occluding the interests of the ruled. In contrast to the historical dramas staged by the rival Henslowe companies, which, he argues, were less concerned with the "consolidation and maintenance of royal power" than with the plight of the socially inferior "victims of such power," Shakespeare's chronicle plays exorcised the common people from their vision of the nation with increasing ruthlessness:

It is as though Shakespeare set out to cancel the popular ideology with which his cycle of English history plays began, as though he wanted to efface, alienate, even demonize all signs of commoner participation in the political nation. The less privileged classes may still have had a place in his audience, but they had lost their place in his representation of England. (2)

Helgerson explains this exclusionary process as part of a policy of self-gentrification pursued by Shakespeare and the Lord Chamberlain's Men--a determination to remove themselves as far as possible from the humble, "folk" origins of the theater they served. According to his reading, the banishment of Falstaff at the end of 2 Henry IV, along with the popular carnivalesque values he stands enacts this desire to be cleansed of the taint of vulgarity associated with the public stage. And in Henry V the purgation is completed. Despite the monarch's populist credentials earned in the Eastcheap tavern, the last play in the cycle confirms the "radical divorce ... between the King and his people," riding rough over the "dream of commonality, of common interests and common humanity, between the ruler and the ruled" that had figured so prominently in the popular imagination. (3)

On the face of it, Henry V offers ample evidence to validate the proposition that, of all Shakespeare's chronicle plays, this one is "closest to state propaganda," and that such proximity denies the "less privileged classes" a significant place in the nation. One need only cite the near-unanimous commitment to Henry's cause expressed by nobility and commoners alike (in a striking departure from the aristocratic factionalism and popular insurgence that had dominated the preceding plays in the cycle); the curiously muted treatment of those few dissenting voices that do make themselves heard; the play's protective attitude to its royal protagonist, whom it shield from overt inquiry into the legitimacy of his claim to the English as well as the French throne; and, last but not least, the decision to excise Falstaff, whose iconoclastic wit could, on past form, be trusted to play havoc with the nationalistic pieties and chivalric ideals promulgated in Henry V. In each of these respects, the play appears to be fully implicated in the Chorus's campaign to "coerc[e] the audience into an emotionally undivided response" in favor of the English monarch. (4) As the play's critical history attests, however, the pressures exerted by its patriotic rhetoric have not

precluded more sceptical responses. What might be called the "Machiavellian" reading, first formulated by Hazlitt in 1817, has tended to focus on the gaps between Henry's laboriously constructed public image as "the mirror of all Christian Kings" and his manifest brutality and political opportunism, between the aggrandizing rhetoric of king and Chorus and what is actually shown on stage. (5) Latterly, cultural materialists have argued that, in the act of rehearsing various discourses of national unity, the play unconsciously discloses the faultlines inherent in them. (6)

This essay concurs with such readings in arguing that Henry V distances itself from the Chorus's brand of patriotism, but it contends that the play does this not so much by incorporating vocal dissent or through inadvertent self-exposure, as by means of the ironic self-referentiality of its dramatic form. (7) As he reached the end of a period of working intensively within a given genre, Shakespeare habitually turned a searching eye on the structural conventions governing that genre. The last play in his second tetralogy is no exception. From beginning to end, Henry V is informed by an acute "metadramatic self-consciousness," which entails a close scrutiny of the discursive modes and conventions associated with the English chronicle play. (8) Through a process of internal mirroring, the ideology of this particular form is opened up to critical inspection in ways that expose both the latent ambiguities and the coerciveness implicit in its discourse of native heroism. The play also invites scrutiny of the rhetorical usage of history ascribed to the genre, by showing how the past is deployed to manipulate audiences (both on-and offstage) into identifying with a political enterprise founded upon a value system and material interests that must, in many cases, have been fundamentally at odds with their own. It is this provocative mixture of reflexivity and self-contradictoriness in the play's modes of address, I argue, which allows scope for a more complex, more divided affective response than that solicited by the Chorus. Indeed it is here that we should perhaps locate the primary source of the play's ideologically ambivalent effects. (9)

As it has become customary to note, the rhetorical energies of King Henry and the Chorus are ultimately directed at producing a collective sense of national identity. The linguistic ploys used in seeking to achieve this will be examined more closely in the second half of this essay. First, though, we need to consider what sorts of problems would have to be imaginatively negotiated when evoking the effects of nationhood on the public stage. It has long been accepted that the outpouring of historiographic texts, including chronicles and plays dealing with English history, in the closing decades of Elizabeth's reign played a crucial part in fostering national self-awareness. The late sixteenth-century vogue for historical drama is said to have "incited patriotic interest in England's past and participated in the process by which the English forged a sense of themselves as a nation"; more specifically, it "provided a 'myth of origin' for the emerging nation," whose people "learned to know who they were by seeing what they had been." (10) In Henry V the appeal to history as a means of exciting jingoistic fervor is made unusually explicit. But which version of the nation does the play invite us to endorse? And should we assume the efficacy of its patriotic appeal as given in advance, bearing in mind that the play's success depended on its capacity to engage all sections of the socially heterogeneous audiences that patronized the public playhouses of the period, not merely a privileged minority? (11) For what must be emphasized at the outset is the integral involvement of the lower orders in the "cultural project of imagining an English nation." So far from being effaced, demonized, or even confined to mere tokenism (as Helgerson and others claim), popular participation is shown by

Shakespeare's English history cycle to be an essential component in the making of the modern political nation. Henry V, in particular, vividly discloses the extent to which the monarchy's imperialistic exercise in nation-building depends upon the active collaboration of the common populace--in the context not only of the dramatic fiction itself but of the theater in which that fiction was staged and consumed.

Twentieth-century political theorists and historians of nationalism are generally agreed that the emergence of the modern nation-state presupposed the existence of a broad popular mandate, though they differ sharply in their dating of this event. (12) Expanding on his influential definition of the nation-state as an "imagined community," Benedict Anderson relates the rise of this sociopolitical formation to the decline of the "divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm" and its displacement by a horizontal sense of community strong enough to engender feelings of kinship between complete strangers and across existing social divisions. The nation is thus

imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible ... for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings. (13)

Others have echoed Anderson's insistence that the mere fact of social stratification need be no hinderance to conceiving of the nation as a community of free and essentially equal individuals with the right, in principle at least, to participate in political decision-making. Arguing specifically for the sixteenth-century origins of English nationhood and nationalism in general, Liah Greenfeld finds that this grew out of an alliance of interests between the monarchy and the common people--the very alliance that, in the civil upheavals of the next century, it would help to destroy. As "an important symbol of England's distinctiveness and sovereignty," the crown provided an initial focus for nationalist sentiment; conversely, the Tudor monarchs, who "were time and again placed in a position of dependence on the good will of their subjects," found it expedient to support this burgeoning national consciousness. (14) Claire MacEachern similarly holds that the Tudor system of monarchical government was not incommensurable with a genuine belief in a "corporate political identity." Existing as an affective utopian structure, this belief, she suggests, was rooted in a sense of intimacy or fellow-feeling between the populace and the personified institutions of the state, concentrated in the person of the monarch himself. (15)

Yet we scarcely need press the point that nations are never as integrated in reality as our myths of national identity would have us believe. The meaning of the nation is continually being contested by different social and ethnic groupings in ways that are liable to expose the fractures within its ideal unity. As Anthony D. Smith remarks, "deep within what appears to the outside as a unifying myth, are hidden many tensions and contradictions, which parallel and illuminate the social contradictions within most communities." Moreover, although as a general rule national loyalties, once established, tend to override local allegiances and sectional interests, this is not always the case. (16) In Henry V the contradictions embedded in the myth of

corporate identity are registered primarily through the fluctuating boundaries (both geographic and demographic) of the nation, which are constantly being redrawn. As recent investigations of the play's colonial context have reminded us, the question of whether England's Celtic neighbors should be excluded from, or absorbed within, the "pale" of an expanded English or proto-British polity was never wholly resolved under successive Tudor and Stuart administrations. (17) Hence the Irish and the Scots are sometimes stigmatized in this play as inveterate enemies of the English state to be kept at a distance (1.2.166-73; 5.0.30-34). At other times--notably in the scene (3.3) bringing together the four captains from each of the constituent countries of the British isles--they are figured as loyal servants of the Lancastrian crown. A similar prevarication can be traced in the play, as I shall try to show, over the entitlement of the common people (and of other subordinate groups, including women) to be counted as members of the nation's imagined community. How far the king and Chorus choose to recognise the people's contribution in bringing that community into being varies sharply according to the political exigencies of the moment. The likelihood of the tussle between class-based and broader national identities enacted in Henry V being replicated in the experience of the play's first audiences is also considered in the conclusion to this essay. Owing to its ideological multivalency and the social inclusiveness of its clientele, the popular theater of the Elizabethan and early Jacobean era has been widely regarded as an authentically national institution, one of the key sites where a sense of collective identity was forged. (18) Yet insofar as they represented a "heterocosm" of the nation, the public playhouses were also bound to reflect its underlying social divisions, and such deep-seated differences among those present at performances (whether as players or spectators) may well have proved easier to activate than appease.

Shakespeare's second tetralogy charts a shift in political episteme remarkably like that described by Anderson. That is, it stages a process of transition from the feudal, hierarchically organised realm of Richard II, putatively authorized by the principle of divine right, to a recognizably more modern prototype of the nation-state under Bolingbroke and his heir, which, though still centred on the monarchy, acknowledges the need for popular legitimation. Like his father, Henry V is acutely mindful of the necessity of compensating for the loss of sanctified authority, consequent upon the usurpation and murder of the anointed king, by winning popular approval. His adroit manipulation of the royal image to make it "show more goodly and attract more eyes" (1 Henry IV, 1.2.214) is wholly directed to that end. Contrary to Helgerson's suggestion, the demotic touch Henry learns in the tavern is not discarded on entering political adulthood; rather, as Joel Altman remarks, such "vile participation" is consistently the "distinguishing feature of Harry's princely career as Shakespeare represents it." (19) No mere short-term "fix" imposed on him by a perilous situation, the rhetoric of cross-class fraternity he invokes on the battlefield of Agincourt is central to his fashioning of the nation's self-image. Hence he figures his army (in whom that nation is synecdochically represented) as "warriors for the working day" (4.3.110), who draw their strength from their broad social origins in contrast to the aristocratic hauteur and effete-ness of the French. But even among those who fully appreciate the political capital to be made from such "vile participation," the social interdependency it implies may well inspire ambivalent feelings as a potential source of shame and inevitable dilution of royal sovereignty. Equally, the appearance of new forms of national consciousness did not signal the instantaneous demise of the dynastic realm, whose modes of thought and social organization retained a hold on

men's minds long after they had lost their absolute political hegemony. Henry's oratory testifies to the ideological fluidity that characterized ideas of the commonwealth at the turn of the sixteenth century. In his speeches, the embryonic discourse of national solidarity collides repeatedly with older self-definitions based on aristocratic codes of behavior, the desire to "pluck allegiance from men's hearts" with the desire to withdraw his royalty from the defiling contacts this entails. And similar tensions, as we shall find, shape the Chorus's dealings with the theater audience.

The compromises demanded by this redefining and opening up of the monarchically governed state to allow for greater popular participation are inscribed in the two best-known contemporary accounts of the English chronicle play. In Thomas Nashe's *Pierce Penniless* (1592) and Thomas Heywood's *Apology for Actors* (printed in 1612, but probably also written during the 1590s), a shared ideological agenda is sketched out for this dramatic genre. For both these writers, the chief function of the history play was to resurrect "our forefathers valiant acres" by reenacting their "memorable exploits" with such "lively and well-spirited action" that the spectator would be induced to emulate their example. (20) One reason for emphasising the exemplary nature of historical drama, we may surmise, was to sustain a sense of continuity between the present and England's glorious past in ways that appealed to, and helped to bolster, the nation's growing self-confidence. (21) Yet in his legendary account of the origins of the genre, Heywood dwells on the exclusively "noble," even quasi-divine, derivation of this historical tradition:

In the first of the Olimpiads, amongst many other active exercises
in which
Hercules ever triumph'd as victor, there was in his nonage
presented unto
him by his Tutor in the fashion of a History, acted by the choyse
of the
nobility of Greece, the worthy and memorable acts of his father
Jupiter.
Which being personated with lively and well-spirited action,
wrought such
impression in his noble thoughts that in meere emulation of his
fathers
valor ... he perform'd his twelve labours: Him valiant Theseus
followed,
and Achilles, Theseus. Which bred in them such hawty and
magnanimous
attempts, that every succeeding age hath recorded their worths,
unto fresh
admiration. (22)

And so it goes on: a dramatic reconstruction of Achilles' part in the fall of Troy made so great an impression on Alexander the Great that "all his succeeding actions were merely shaped after that patterne," just as Julius Caesar's actions were patterned on those of Alexander. Heywood imagines the principle of dramatic imitation engendering its own eminent genealogy of valor, as each performance begets a new generation of royal heroes, from Hercules down to the present: "Why should not the lives of these worthyees, presented in these our dayes," he inquires, "effect the like wonders in the Princes of our times ...?"

When he turns to "our domesticke hystories," however, Heywood is forced to modify this discourse of aristocratic heroism in order to accommodate the socially mixed clientele of the public playhouses. That the Elizabethan history play was targeted primarily at the ordinary citizens in its audience is strongly implied by Heywood's citing, among his justifications for the theater, that it "hath taught the unlearned the knowledge of many famous histories, [and] instructed such as cannot read in the discovery of all our English Chronicles." (23) It is presumably this plebeian presence that dictates the insinuation of a calculated imprecision, a politic ambiguity, into Heywood's language: "To turne to our domesticke hystories, what English blood seeing the person of any bold English man presented and doth not hugge his fame, and hunnye at his valor.... What coward to see his contryman valiant would not bee shamed of his owne cowardise?" (my emphasis). By refusing to locate the grammatical subject in terms of the social categories insisted upon earlier in the Apology, Heywood manages to create the impression that any Englishman, whatever his class origins, is capable of being "inflam'd" by the spectacle of native valor, and so "may be made apt and fit for the like atchievement." (24) Nationality, coming of "English blood," has replaced narrower status definitions as the criterion for participating in this heroic tradition. Comparable efforts to broaden the appeal of the English chronicle play, to render its elitest discourse more flexibly inclusive, are made on Nashe's side. In return for the patriotic sentiments it would elicit, he hints, this type of historical drama offers its audiences a stake in the "right of fame that is due to true nobilitie deceased." Hence the chief bait it "propose[s] to adventurous minds, to encourage them forward" is the prospect of sharing, at some unspecified level, in the "immortalitie" normally bestowed by the chronicle play on such dead English heroes as "brave Talbot," Edward III, or Henry V. (25) Underlying both texts is a suggestion that the malleable spectator, who allows images of the past to act upon him in this way and "fashion [him] to the shape of any noble or notable attempt," will be rewarded by being joined with the valiant dead in what Nashe calls "one Gallimafry of glory" that transcends class differences.

If the heroic vision of Englishness projected by the chronicle play is seen here as dependent for its very force and validation on the involvement of the common spectators, what precisely was expected of them? It is clear from Nashe and Heywood's vivid descriptions of the reception given to such plays that the contribution sought was primarily of an imaginative kind. Both writers ascribe a "bewitching" power to the genre that derives, firstly, from its ability to impart a living presence to the dead (who are "rayed from the Grave of Oblivion, and brought to pleade their aged Honours in open presence") and, secondly, from the power of dramatic impersonation to make audiences experience in themselves the full immediacy of the emotions enacted on stage (known in rhetoric as *ethopeia*). Indeed, it is the unmatched reality effects made possible by the theatrical medium, according to Nashe, that renders the history play a far more effective instrument for inculcating patriotic values than "worme-eaten bookes" of chronicles. At one point he asks:

How would it have joyd brave Talbot (the terror of the French) to thinke
that after he had lyne two hundred yeare in his toomb, he should triumph
againe on the Stage, and have his bones new embalmed with the teares of ten

thousand spectators at least ... who in the Tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding. (26)

This illusion of presence, combined with the powerful affects it stirs in the spectators, solicits an imaginative identification with what is witnessed on stage so complete that the distinction between dramatic fiction and historical reality, between the actor and the part he plays, is temporarily erased. (27) In much the same vein, Heywood asserts that audiences, "seeing the person of any bold English man presented," will be irresistibly impelled to "hugge his fame, and hunnye at his valor, pursuing him in his enterprise with [their] best wishes ... as if the Personator were the man Personated." (28) In the context of the popular commercial theater, then, it would appear that the mimetic desires aroused by a dramatic reenactment of the past are no longer regarded chiefly as a means of calling forth heroic deeds, instead their function is to secure the spectator's acquiescence in, and identification with, the nationalist ideologies staged by the play.

Benedict Anderson repeatedly poses the question of why the imagined community of the nation should command such deep emotional attachments that even its most oppressed or disenfranchised members are prepared to sacrifice their lives for this idea. For an explanation of how such identifications are produced, however, we may find it more useful to turn to Louis Althusser's now-classic account of interpellation: that is, the procedures whereby ideology addresses the individual subject in a manner that ensures his or her cooperation with the existing sociopolitical formation. (29) Echoing Jacques Lacan's emphasis on the importance of the "mirror phase" in the psychic construction of identity, Althusser argues that interpellation always takes a specular form. Individuals are invited to recognize themselves in the image of authority in whose name a given ideology exists, and to identify with the roles, or subject positions, designated for them within that ideology. Crucially, interpellative techniques operate through rhetorical manipulation, not force. By persuading us to accede to the fictive representation of actual social relationships it reflects back at us, ideology masks our subjection to the dominant order and ensures that we will freely give of our own labor--or, as Althusser puts it, that we work by ourselves. Theatrical experience, because of the ways it is structured, is peculiarly well adapted to producing such specular effects. In its exemplarity the chronicle play capitalizes on that potential by urging spectators to discover their own image in--and transform themselves into--the heroic models it sets before them. Its success in fostering such identifications may partly explain why Nashe and Heywood chose to focus on this particular dramatic genre when defending the theatre against the endlessly reiterated charge that it promoted sedition and civil unrest. (30) The use of historical exemplars as an incitement to patriotic behavior, they believe, offers the strongest proof that "stage-plaies" are, in fact, a "rare exercise of vertue," instrumental in deflecting rebellious impulses and fashioning compliant subjects who willingly defer to the rule of constituted authority.

Henry V, I would argue, stands in a profoundly ambivalent relationship to these sixteenth-century definitions of the English chronicle play and its politico-moral functions. On the one hand, it cannot be denied that Shakespeare's play exploits the strong affective charge generated by identification with dead English heroes--as the regularity with which it has been either performed or invoked at times of national

crisis confirms. (31) Yet it does so in ways that seem to discourage, rather than invite, an uncritical acceptance of the imaginary versions of the nation articulated within the play. This paradoxical effect, I suggest, is achieved largely by self-reflexive means. In particular, the play insistently foregrounds the interpellative techniques used with fearsome efficiency by various characters, laying open its own ideological stratagems in the process. Thus Henry is shown addressing his common soldiers as "so many Alexanders" in the making as he endeavors to mould them into a redoubtable fighting force in 2.1 and 4.3, while the Chorus's appeals to the theater audience position them as the king's loyal camp followers who embrace his trials and tribulations as their own (cf. 3.0.17-24). Concomitantly, the normally dissembled purposes for which such techniques are deployed are also made visible. Summoning up the idea of a harmoniously integrated commonwealth in 1.2, the Archbishop of Canterbury reflects knowingly on its effectiveness in "setting endeavour in continual motion;/To which is fixed, as an aim or butt,/Obedience" (lines 186-88). A similar observation is made by Henry as, preparing to set himself up as an inspirational model to his troops, he extols the power of "example" to "quicken" the mind and cause the bodily organs to "move with casted slough and fresh legerity" (4.1.18-23). (32) Whether the king is demanding extraordinary physical efforts from his soldiers, or the Chorus is urging the audience to "work, work [their] thoughts," their characteristic modes of address are quite blatantly directed at getting others (mostly representatives of the lower orders) to labor on behalf of the king's cause.

Superficially, Henry V also appears to reaffirm the populist agenda ascribed to the English chronicle play to the extent that both Henry and the Chorus strive to invoke a socially inclusive model of history. Replicating Nashe and Heywood's tactics, they manage this by putting a more egalitarian "spin" on the patrician ideals of martial heroism associated with the genre. But even as the celebrates the king's ability to enlist every stratum of society imperialist enterprise, uniting them in "one purpose" through a charismatic appeal to "mean and gentle all" (cf. 4.0.28-47), it discloses the anxieties, strains, and contradictions attendant on this project. All Henry's rhetorical dexterity cannot smooth away the class tensions inherent in the goal of national unification that, ironically, are thrown into greater prominence by his attempts to reconfigure aristocratic idioms for popular consumption. Cumulatively, these reflexive devices seem designed to provoke us into questioning the fundamental, if tacit, claim underpinning contemporary defences of the genre: that the common subject can participate on an equal footing in the creation of a national community that continues to be defined in the interests of a ruling elite.

Within the play, the coercive use of historical exempla as a means of "setting endeavour in continual motion" is reflected on three different levels: in the analogous modes of address employed by the king's counselors towards him, by the king to his troops, and by the Chorus to the audience. The Archbishop of Canterbury sets the tone in 1.2 with his convoluted exposition of the Salic law, which shamelessly manipulates historical precedent in the hope of inciting Henry to pursue his hereditary claim to the French throne and so divert him from implementing a bill that would strip the Church of the "better half of [its] possession." With the same end in view, the archbishop proceeds to invoke the "tragedy" enacted on French soil by Henry's "mighty ancestors" at the battle of Crecy nearly seventy years before:

Look back into your mighty ancestors.

Go, my dread lord, to your great grand-site's tomb,
From whom you claim; invoke his warlike spirit,
And your great-uncle's, Edward the Black Prince,
Who on the French ground played a tragedy,
Making defeat on the full power of France,
Whiles his most mighty father on a hill
Stood smiling to behold his lion's whelp
Forage in blood of French nobility.
(1.2.100)

Other counselors take up this exhortation to emulate past greatness, urging the king to "awake remembrance of those valiant dead./And with [his] puissant arm renew their feats" (1.2.115). Conscious of the obligations this heroic lineage imposes, Henry accepts their challenge, and the terms of his acceptance reveal what is personally at stake for him:

Or there we'll sit,
Ruling in large and ample empery
O'er France and all her almost kingly dukedoms,
Or lay these bones in an unworthy urn,
Tombless, with no remembrance over them.
Either our history shall with full mouth
Speak freely of our acts, or else our grave
Like Turkish mute, shall have a tongueless mouth,
Not worshipped with a waxen epitaph.
(1.2.225)

The dialectical structure of this speech implicitly equates military victory with fame; for Henry occupying France is, first and foremost, a route to securing his place in history. By reenacting the drama of imperial conquest performed by his ancestors in this land, he will ensure that his exploits too are preserved from oblivion in their turn, and that "history" will "speak freely of [his] acts" to future generations. (33) Without such forms of official "remembrance," Henry admits, he would be reduced to the impotent condition of a "Turkish mute," lacking any influence in shaping the national destiny.

In staging the council scene as a contest in deliberative oratory, Shakespeare takes his cue from Holinshed, who narrates the "earnest and pithie persuasions" employed by Henry's advisors to "induce" him to adopt the course of action they prescribe. (34) But Shakespeare infuses this rhetorical occasion with an ironic self-consciousness largely absent from his source, and thereby makes provision for a more skeptical appraisal of the practice of resorting to an exemplary past. The archbishop's figuration of the Black Prince's victory at Crecy in 1346 in terms of a dramatic *mise-enscène* (cf. 2.4.53-62) pointedly calls attention to the role of the theater as a site where such national traditions are not simply commemorated but actively manufactured. Phyllis Rackin has argued that such metadramatic allusions can produce "a kind of alienation effect," pushing the audience into adopting a critically detached position relative to the action, especially when combined (as they are here) with anachronism. (35) For it should not be forgotten that the idealized chivalric past evoked by the name of Crecy existed at a double historical remove from the audiences who first saw Henry V in 1599. As we noted earlier, the ethos of the English chronicle play was epitomized for Nashe by the figure of "brave Talbot," whose death wrung tears from "ten thousand spectators at least." Nashe's remark has been taken as an allusion to Shakespeare's 1

Henry VI (which is usually, though not conclusively, dated to 1590-91), where the discourse of ancestral valor, kept alive by funerary monuments to the "valiant dead" and by the aristocracy's self-sacrificing feats of bravery, is firmly centred on Talbot and his son. But even in the earlier play the values upheld almost single-handedly by the Talbots are represented as a throwback to a vanishing chivalric world (associated ironically with the memory of Henry V's French conquests), whose passing leaves them vulnerable to the machinations of a more secular, pragmatic age. And by the time Henry V was staged roughly a decade later, this discourse had become still more conspicuously outmoded, more jarringly at odds with the context of realpolitik in which it is invoked. (36) In such circumstances, it would have been hard for an audience not to register the competing political interests that motivate the characters' appeals to "bygone valour," or to overlook the way that past is being manipulated as a means of mobilizing and channeling activity in the present. (37)

In the following acts Henry redirects the rhetorical strategies used so effectively on him at the plebeian subject, with the aim of eliciting superhuman exertions from his troops. For that purpose he seeks to assimilate the rank-and-file to the loftily aristocratic vision of English heroism conjured up in 1.2 by giving this a more demotic inflection. His celebrated oration before the walls of Harfleur, which first holds out the possibility of an egalitarian partnership that suspends class differences, is deeply and ineluctably ambiguous. Henry prefaces the speech with an oblique acknowledgment that wartime situations such as this license the violation of normal social decorums, according to which "there's nothing so becomes a man [especially, it is implied, the low-born man]/As modest stillness and humility" (3.1.3). The self-transformative action Henry calls for in exhorting his soldiers to "bend up every spirit/To his full height" (line 16) is nevertheless accompanied (as Michael Goldman has shown) by a terrible sense of strain, as though betraying his belief in the grotesque unnaturalness of aspiring to transcend one's allotted place in the social hierarchy. (38) The troops are then urged to authenticate their mythologized ancestry by fighting bravely:

On, on you noblest English,
Whose blood is let from fathers of war-proof,
Fathers that like so many Alexanders
Have in these parts from morn till even fought,
And sheathed their swords for lack of argument.
Dishonour not your mothers; now attest
That those whom you called fathers did beget you.
Be copy now to men of grosser blood,
And teach them how to war. And you good yeomen,
Whose limbs were made in England, show us here
The mettle of your pasture; let us swear
That you are worth your breeding--which I doubt not,
For there is none of you so mean and base
That hath not noble lustre in your eyes.
3.1.17)

Essentially Henry faces the same problem here as Heywood did in the Apology: he has to find a way of negotiating the uncomfortable gap between an elitest tradition of martial valor and its popular reenactments. Not surprisingly, he too hits upon the solution of subsuming social demarcations in an ambiguously inclusive discourse of nationhood. Henry's speech is addressed first to "you noblest English," the nobility whose duty is to "by copy [i.e., an example] to men of grosser blood/And teach them

how to war," before turning to the "good yeomen," who are admonished to model their behavior on that of their military leaders. But these sharply differentiated designations are offset by his skillful playing upon the indeterminacy of words such as "noble," "base," and "mean," which, though they originated as status terms, were increasingly used in this period to denote relative moral worth. A similar slip-page occurs in his references to "blood" and "breeding"; initially defined in a hereditary context as coming of noble parentage or blood, having the required breeding is later broadened to include anyone born and raised on English soil. Through such rhetorical sleights-of-hand, Henry contrives to suggest that all Englishmen, irrespective of class origins, are eligible to participate in his exalted "fellowship," provided their actions prove them worthy of it.

The incipient contradictions in Henry's interpellation of the soldiers make his vision of a socially inclusive partnership highly vulnerable to contestation. (39) And in 4.1 the implication (reinforced by the Chorus at the beginning of the act) that "mean and gentle all" can become equal participants in this imagined community is duly challenged. As has often been observed, Henry's disguised encounter with three of his common foot soldiers, in which he tries unsuccessfully to convince them that "the King is but a man" of their sort, serves only to expose the "complete lack of rapport," the ineradicable differences of perspective, separating him from them. (40) In disputing Henry's claims to ordinariness, Soldier Williams and his companions drive a wedge into the self-serving myth that the monarch and his common subjects are bound together not so much by political expediency as by their shared humanity and commonality of interests. The humiliation inflicted on the king in this debate provokes a backlash in his ensuing soliloquy. Where once he courted the approval and loyal cooperation of his subjects, he now laments the "hard condition" that subjects his own "greatness" to "the breath / Of every fool, whose sense no more can feel / But his own wringing" (4.1.221-3). His rhetorical energies also undergo a radical reorientation, as he seeks to reestablish his distance from the multitude; no longer addressed as "brothers, friends, countrymen," the common soldiers are now reclassified in terms of aristocratic contempt as "lackey[s]," "wretched slave[s]," and ignorant "peasants" (lines 255-72). But with his army teetering on the brink of a catastrophic defeat, Henry is again compelled by circumstances to seek assistance from those whose social consequence he dismissed a short while before.

Accordingly, his prebattle address to the troops resorts once more to the rhetoric of brotherhood. Previous hints that the ordinary conscript, "be he ne'er so vile," will "gentle his condition" by his valiant deeds and earn the right to partake of the fame normally reserved for patrician warriors, are restated more baldly in an attempt to bribe him into action. With this we see a return to the same fudging tactics, the same ambiguities and inconsistencies, that allow Henry to construct the image of an egalitarian national community, but that simultaneously threaten to unravel that fantasy. His reiterative use of the first-person plural hovers between the royal and the collective "we," between the exclusive and inclusive senses of that pronoun. (Cf. "If we are marked to die, we are enough / To do our country loss" [4.3.20]; or "We would not die in that man's company / That fears his fellowship to die with us" [line 38]). Yet, in one sense, there is no contradiction here, since the community envisaged turns out to be little more than an expansion of the regal persona. For as Henry's rallying cry--"the fewer men, the greater share of honour"--should remind us, the fame promised the soldiers is predicated on a feudal cult of honour and ancestral pride that

is, by definition, jealously individualistic. The nearest approximation to genuine fellowship this aristocratic code of honor admits is the blut-bruderschaft of Suffolk and York, whose deaths in battle are invested, in Exeter's elegaic narrative (4.6.6-27), with the full panoply of chivalric values once bestowed on Talbot or Hotspur. To attempt to found a modern nation-state on such an inherently elitist and anachronistic code is self-evidently untenable. That Henry winds up the speech by drawing the parameters of his imagined brotherhood in relation not to the foreign enemy but to the significant proportion of his subjects it excludes--among whom are numbered not only "grandsires, babies, and old women" (3.0.20) but all "those men in England that do no work today" (4.3.64-67)--merely underscores the problem.

The second half of the speech leaps forward to a hypothetical future perfect where the "Feast of Crispian" has become a day of national commemoration honoring the English triumph at Agincourt. Henry's ingenious manipulation of his audience's temporal perspective fulfils various purposes. On one level, it mimics the peculiar motivational logic of the chronicle play; treating a yet-to-be-accomplished victory as something long since achieved and sanctified by memory enables the soldiers to be inspired by their own historical example and, by spurring them into action, ensures that the day will indeed be won. But it also offers assurance that the fraternal cross-class community forged on the battlefield will be maintained into futurity through the observance of collective forms of remembrance. Imaginatively projecting this annual event as a popular domestic scene, combining the functions of an aural history lesson with a convivial feasting of the neighborhood, is another brilliant touch, in that it presents an image, at once homely and heroic, with which the common soldier can hardly fail to identify. Yet this carefully crafted vision of shared national rituals cannot entirely dispel the social tensions latent within it. In a recent essay highlighting the importance of memory in the play, Jonathan Baldo notes that, although the Elizabethan establishment was no less intent on orchestrating the collective memory in the pursuit of national unity than Shakespeare's Henry V, the act of remembering continued to be a potential site of division and resistance. (41) The same holds true here:

Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember, with advantages,
The feats he did that day. Then shall our names,
Familiar in his mouth as household words--
Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester--
Be in their flowing cups freshly remembered.
This story shall the good man teach his son,
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by
From this day to the ending of the world
But we in it shall be remembered,
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers.
(4.3.49-60)

At the same time that the personal recollections of the Agincourt veterans are granted a central role in perpetuating the fame of that legendary victory, it is archly insinuated that their memories will play them false, leading them not only to embellish "feats [they] did that day," but (by extension) to exaggerate the degree of intimacy they once enjoyed with the "great commanders," whose names are "familiar in [their] mouths as household words." (42) This nostalgic fantasy of brotherhood will be belied even as

they speak by the fact that the names immortalised through their reminiscences are confined to the aristocratic titles of their leaders. (Again, the fluctuating use of the first-person plural at once encodes and masks this shift: "our names" are syntactically opposed to "their flowing cups" in lines 51-55, the pronoun only recovering its inclusive meaning at line 60.) While Henry thus concedes the need for popular involvement in establishing such national traditions, he cynically anticipates that the ordinary veterans will be denied the honorable place promised them in the official (and unofficial) historical records. This is confirmed after the battle when, reading from the roll call of the English dead, he lists several casualties among the ranks of the nobility and gentry, concluding "none else of name, / And of all other men, / But five-and-twenty" (4.8.103). Significantly, these lines closely paraphrase Holinshed, who rarely bothers to identify individual foot soldiers by name in his chronicling of Henry's French campaigns. (43)

Both Henry's methods of galvanizing his troops into action and the ambiguities inscribed in those methods are paralleled in the Chorus's repeated exhortation of the play's audience. From the outset, the Chorus helps to construct a reflexive, metacritical framework for the dramatic action by foregrounding the difficulties posed by historical representation and the theatrical medium through which the past must be brought back to life.

Initially, like Heywood, he fantasizes about an exclusively royal performance, "a kingdom for a stage, princes to act, / And monarchs to behold the swelling scene" (1.0.13), before ruefully conceding that this ideal is unrealizable on the public stage where common players masquerade as kings. Conversely, he displays none of Heywood or Nashe's confidence in the theater's ability to produce a compelling recreation of ancient prowess by means of powerful reality effects. On the contrary, he assumes that this can only be achieved if the playhouse's inadequate technical resources are supplemented by the spectators' cerebral activity. It is their "thoughts," he urges them, that "now must deck our kings," their laboring imaginations that must give impetus to Henry's campaign. The Chorus's apparent readiness to defer to the "imaginary puissance" of the humbler sections of the audience--as implied by the artisanal metaphor of "the quick forge and working-house of thought" (5.0.23)--making them co-partners in his theatrical enterprise, has led some critics to find an expression therein of the communal ethos of the Elizabethan theater. (44) But while his entreaties to the audience to "eke out our imperfections with your mind" certainly confirm (once again) the indispensability of popular participation, they also reveal this recognition of dependency to be fraught with tension and anxiety. Often accepted at face value as a token of (quasi-authorial) modesty, the Chorus's apologetic references to the "imperfections" of the stage can more plausibly be seen, I suggest, as rehearsing a familiar set of anxieties regarding the subversive potential of the popular commercial theater. As Stephen Orgel (among others) has argued, a recurrent concern of the theater's opponents in this period was that the "great image of Authority" would be undermined and debased by being staged to the common view, a fear that greatness might be demystified in the very act of dramatizing it. (45) It is surely an echo of this social pathology that resonates in the Chorus's claim that "so great an object" as Henry's famous victory cannot be "cramm'd" within the walls of this "wooden O" without travestying its true magnitude (1.0.8-18), or in the apology he tenders in the epilogue for the playwright's "rough and all-unable pen," which has allegedly defaced the reputation of "mighty men," "mangling by starts the full course of their glory." For

all his eagerness to recruit the spectator's "imaginary forces" to the service of the royal cause, the Chorus (like the king of whose image he makes himself custodian) betrays considerable nervousness at the thought of allowing a tradition of aristocratic heroism to be adulterated by being performed and intimately witnessed by low-born subjects--in this case, on the "unworthy scaffold" of the Curtain or the newly opened Globe.

Henry's pledge that his soldiers will be ennobled (in the moral if not social sense) by their participation is also echoed in the Chorus's practice of addressing the spectators as "gentles all" (1.0.8, cf. 2.0.35), who are entreated "gently to hear, kindly to judge our play" (1.0.34). The prospect of gentling their condition is itself conditional upon their willingness to collaborate in the construction of the play's heroic vision of Englishness, and is obviously intended to bind them into that vision. But it is, of course, an inescapable fact that a large proportion of the play's original audiences would have been drawn from the "base, common and popular" classes. (46) Exposing the actions of the monarchy to the gaze and judgment of the common multitude congregated around the platform stage was a risky and unpredictable affair--indeed the very fervency of the Chorus's appeals may perhaps indicate that they are designed to head off unsympathetic responses from that quarter. Given their predominantly modest social origins, however, we may reasonably infer that some spectators at least would have been more inclined to follow Soldier Williams's example in resisting the invitation to identify with the royal viewpoint. (It is Williams, after all, who brings home to the king that there are limits to the power of interpellation, that he may command the "beggar's knee," but not necessarily his innermost thoughts [4.1.228-45]). Women, too, formed an important constituency within the theatergoing public of the day, and they are even more emphatically excluded by the chivalric, masculine terms in which Henry's confraternity is defined (cf. 3.0.17-24). (47) Should we assume that the manifold ironies in the exhortations of king and Chorus would have escaped the attention of these playgoers? The less privileged members of the play's audience may well have balked at being asked to overcome through their imaginative exertions deficiencies that are seen as arising directly from their own lowly status and that of the theater they patronised. Female as well as plebeian spectators may equally have resented attempts to coerce them into identifying with an imagined community that, overtly or not, defines itself in opposition to them.

This essay has argued for the need to reappraise Helgerson's generalizing and oversimplified account of the attitude to the common populace expressed by Shakespeare's English history plays. A careful analysis of the rhetoric of class in Henry V reveals that those beneath the rank of gentleman are not, as alleged, progressively erased from the play's ideological construction of the nation, but neither are they fully embraced as equal partners in its formation. Instead, a more complicated picture of class relations emerges in which the leveling dynamic inscribed in the newly formed discourse of nationalism interacts with an older status-defined politics of exclusion in complex and unpredictable ways. Similarly, there has been a critical tendency to homogenize the reception that its original audiences gave to Shakespeare's history cycle. Dissenting from the widely accepted premise that the response elicited by these plays was straightforwardly patriotic and must have functioned to solidify the spectators' sense of belonging to a larger national community, I have suggested that in all likelihood audience reactions varied markedly, depending on a number of factors. In the case of Henry V it seems probable that differences in social allegiance would have inflected the way each spectator

related imaginatively to the ambiguous position assigned to the lower orders in the play's representation of the nation as a heroic fellowship incorporating both "mean and gentle."

Yet while there is every reason to suppose that the political significance of Henry V would have been contingent, in part, on the particular social make-up of its audiences along with other extratextual circumstances affecting its production and reception, we should not therefore deny Shakespeare's text a decisive role in determining its meaning and ideological effect. In the last analysis, as I have tried to show, it is the rhetorical mechanisms of that text which, by acting upon the emotional proclivities and class loyalties of individual spectators, create the conditions for a more complex and diverse response than the characters' patriotic effusions might seem to call for. For if, on the one hand, the play's modes of address, together with its rhetorical invocation of history, are framed to elicit an unquestioning commitment to the values inculcated by king and Chorus, on the other, its generic self-consciousness, by working to expose the coercive and contradictory aspects of such strategies, enables resistance to the process of interpellation. In adopting this paradoxical stance, Henry V makes available to the spectator (or reader) a range of possible subject positions. Like the disaffected conscripts of 4.1 who, despite being suspicious of Henry's fraternal rhetoric, resolve to "fight lustily" for him, we may thus move between--or even experience at one and the same moment--a critical distanciation from, and emotional identification with, the royal myth of Englishness.

Notes

(1.) A. P. Rossiter, "Ambivalence: The Dialectic of the Histories," rpt. in *Angel with Horns*, ed. Graham Storey (London and New York: 1961), 57.

(2.) Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 214.

(3.) Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, 232.

(4.) Andrew Gurr ed., *Henry V*, New Cambridge ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press], 1992), 7.

(5.) See William Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, ed. Ernest Rhys (London, 1906), 156-64. For a more recent Machiavellian reading, see H. C. Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 215-68.

(6.) See, e.g., Alan Sinfield and Jonathan Dollimore, "History and Ideology, Masculinity and Miscegenation: The Instance of Henry V," in Alan Sinfield, *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 109-42.

(7.) All references to the play cited in this text are taken from the Oxford edition (1982), ed. Gary Taylor. The majority of the reflexive features identified below are present only in the Folio version, including all the Chorus's speeches, crucial parts of the council scene (1.2.115-35), 3.1, and the king's soliloquy (4.1.218-72). Critical opinion generally concurs with the view that the omission of these and other passages

in the 1600 Quarto, whether theatrically or politically motivated, "simplif[ies] the play in order to make it more uncomplicatedly patriotic" (Oxford edition, 23; cf. Annabel Patterson, *Shakespeare and the Popular Voice* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989], 76-77).

(8.) The phrase is borrowed from Phyllis Rackin, *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), 71. Previous critics have seen the dramatic self-reflexivity of *Henry V* as a vehicle for exploring the hazards of imposing dramatic unity on the chaos of history (James L. Calderwood, *Metadrama in Shakespeare's Henriad: "Richard II" to "Henry V"* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979], chap. 7), or for highlighting the performative basis of royal power (Rackin, *Stages of History*; 76-85).

(9.) Norman Rabkin's classic study of this ambivalence of effect invokes the model of a gestalt drawing, which can be seen either as a rabbit or a duck but never both at once, to argue that the play lends itself equally to being construed as a celebration of ideal kingship or a disillusioned study of Machiavellian imperialism ("Either/Or: Responding to *Henry V*," in *Shakespeare and the Problem of Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). Where I part company with Rabkin is (firstly) in positing the play's rhetorical mechanisms and generic self-consciousness as the main source of this ambivalence, rather than characterization, plot, or dramatic sequencing, and (secondly) in arguing for the possibility of experiencing simultaneously conflicting responses to Henry's nationalist project.

(10.) See Jean Howard and Phyllis Rackin, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 18, and Philip Edwards, *Threshold of a Nation: A Study in English and Irish Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 68. For much of the twentieth century the rise of the English history play was directly attributed to the tide of patriotism and "exuberant national sentiment" that swept England in the wake of the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. (On the history of this critical commonplace, see Lily B. Campbell, *Shakespeare's "Histories": Mirrors of Elizabethan Policy* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library Press, 1947), chap. 2). Although recent writing on Shakespeare's history plays has tended to reject the more triumphalist and politically naive aspects of this theory, a causal connection between the emergence of the genre and a growing sense of nationhood is still widely postulated.

(11.) As Larry Champion observes of this patriotic reading, "the essential difficulty with such an approach is that it assumes both an audience basically sympathetic to the monarchy and a universal perspective in plays that, in fact, are designed to appeal to, and engage the emotional interests of, as many spectators as possible" (*The Noise of Threatening Drum": Dramatic Strategy and Political Ideology in Shakespeare and the English Chronicle Plays* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990), 9).

(12.) Many regard both nations and nationalism as a distinctively modern phenomenon, locating its origins in the revolutionary movements of the late eighteenth century along with the advance of industrialisation and capitalist economics, but this theory (as propounded by Hobsbawm, Gellner, and Anderson) has

come under increasing pressure in recent years from those who believe that the antecedents of the modern nation-state are traceable back to the sixteenth century and beyond.

(13.) Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983; rev. ed., London: Verso, 1991), 7.

(14.) Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), chap. 1, esp. 50-51, 65.

(15.) Claire McEachern, *The Poetics of English Nationhood, 1590-1612* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), chap. 1. McEachern's thesis is extended, and subtly qualified, by her later analysis of Henry V, which she rightly considers to be "as vigilant in limiting the scope of common feeling as it is in encouraging it" (108).

(16.) Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 71, 86-88.

(17.) See, e.g., Michael Neill, "Broken English and Broken Irish: Nation, Language and the Optic of Power in Shakespeare's Histories," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 45 (1994): 1-32, and Christopher Highley, *Shakespeare, Spenser, and the Crisis in Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

(18.) See, e.g., Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater*, ed. Robert Schwartz (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 169-77, and Walter Cohen, *Drama of a Nation: Public Theater in Renaissance England and Spain* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985). Peter Womack argues further that, by involving audiences in the reconstruction of a collective "national"; past, the Elizabethan theater invited them "not merely to contemplate the 'imagined community' but to be it" ("*Imagining Communities: Theatres and the English Nation in the Sixteenth Century*," in *Culture and History 1350-1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities and Writing*, ed. David Aers [New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf: 1992], p. 138).

(19.) Joel Altman, "'Vile Participation': The Amplification of Violence in the Theater of Henry V," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42 (Spring 1991): 7.

(20.) This formula basically sought to adapt received humanistic notions of historiography to a theatrical context. According to sixteenth-century authorities such as Thomas Lanquet and Thomas Blundeville, the writing and reading of history was profitable because it preserved the fame of great rulers and commanders of antiquity, thereby providing a storehouse of instructive exempla, both positive and negative, of the arts of governance and warfare that would "sturre [readers] to vertue, and ... withdrawe them from vice." Of course such a theory is hardly able to encompass the diversity of approach that actually characterized English historical drama in this period; besides overlooking historical romances like Greene's *James IV*, it offers an inadequate definition of the chronicle play proper, which rarely followed such a straightforwardly didactic and hagiographic agenda.

(21.) According to A. D. Smith, the "myth of descent" is among the most potent of the ethnic myths, symbols, and traditions that constitute the bedrock of any nation. In invoking an heroic ancestry it provides the aspirant nation with a model of identity and a charter for "regenerative collective action," as its people seek to recreate the spirit of a "past golden age" (Myths and Memories, chap. 2).

(22.) Thomas Heywood, *An Apology for Actors* (1612), ed. Richard H. Perkinson, (New York: Scholars' Facsimile, 1941), B[3.sup.r].

(23.) Heywood, *Apology for Actors*, F[3.sup.r]. Cf. the implied concession to the illiteracy of some sections of the audience in the opening lines of the chorus to act 5: "Vouchsafe to those who have not read the story / That I may prompt them" (5.0.1-2).

(24.) Heywood, *Apology for Actors*, F[3.sup.r].

(25.) Pierce Pennilesse his supplication to the Divell (1612), (Menston, England: Scolar Press, 1969), H[2.sup.r].

(26.) Pierce Pennilesse, H[2.sup.r].

(27.) Cf. Pugliatti, *Shakespeare the Historian*, 60-62.

(28.) Heywood, *Apology for Actors*, B[4.sup.r].

(29.) See "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in Louis Althusser, "Lenin and Philosophy" and Other Essays, trans. Ben Brewster (London: 1961), 121-76. Despite the usefulness of Althusser's theory of interpellation for my purposes, this essay stops short of subscribing to its deterministic and totalizing implications. As many critics have noted, by positing the subject as a simple effect of ideology, Althusser seemingly precludes the possibility of individual agencies resisting its operations. (See, e.g., Claire Colebrook, *New Literary Histories* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997], 158-62). Drawing on recent work that critiques such monolithic narratives of ideology, culture, and the formation of self, I attempt to show how the contradictory ways in which characters and audience are interpellated in *Henry V* result in a proliferation of subject positions, thereby opening up a space for political contestation.

(30.) It cannot be coincidental that Heywood's comments on the instructive value of the history play are followed by a ringing affirmation of the ideological orthodoxy of the theatre in general: "Plays are writ with this ayne, and carryed with this methode, to teach the subjects obedience to their King, to shew the people the untimely ends of such as have moved tumults, commotions, and insurrections, to present them with the flourishing estate of such as live in obedience, exhorting them to allegiance, dehorting them from all trayterous and felonious stratagems" (F[3.sup.v], cf. Nashe, H[2.sup.v]-H[3.sup.r]).

(31.) See Taylor's introduction to the Oxford edition, 11.

(32.) The play abounds in promises or exhortations to rouse oneself to action. In addition to the instances discussed below, cf. 1.2.122-4, 273-75, 309-10; 2.2.36-38;

2.3.3-5; 2.4.69-72; 3.0.17-18; 3.1.1-2; 3.2.1; 3.5.48-53; 4.5.16-17; 4.7.56-60; 5.0.8-9; 5.1.9-12.

(33.) One might assume that "history" refers here to the chronicles, twice cited in the play (1.2.163, 4.7.89), once by Fluellen, whose excessive reverence for, and comic misuse of, historical precedent is one of the ways in which the practice of invoking an exemplary past is ironized in the play. However, the personification of history as "speak[ing]," along with the allusions to funerary monuments, seems to encompass more popular (oral and visual) forms of historical commemoration.

(34.) Raphael Holinshed, *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, rev. ed. (London, 1587), 3.546.

(35.) Rackin, *Stages of History*, 94.

(36.) The intervening figure of Hotspur, whose self-dedication to the obsolete code of "bright honour" is represented as both laudable and ludicrous, is the clearest index of this shift of perspective.

(37.) For an excellent analysis of the ideological appropriation of heroic exemplars sanctioned by humanist tradition, see Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990). As Hampton notes, Shakespeare's attitude to this practice is consistently sceptical (though he confines his study to the latter's handling of classical models): "[His] use of the exemplar theory of history works both to celebrate the power of the past and to undermine attempts to appropriate its authority for political ends. Shakespeare demystifies the relationship between politics and history and demonstrates the extent to which all use of the past in guiding public action is shaped by rhetoric" (206).

(38.) See Michael Goldman, *Shakespeare and the Energies of Drama* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 58-73.

(39.) Such contrarities emerge not only from the diction, imagery, and other rhetorical devices of particular speeches, but between speeches. A much less flattering image of the common soldier as an inhuman and immoral brute is delineated by Henry at 3.3.90-121, and 4.1.152-59.

(40.) See, e.g., Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, 231, and Anne Barton, "The King Disguised: Shakespeare's Henry V and the Comical History" (1975), rpt. in *Essays, Mainly Shakespearean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 207-33.

(41.) Jonathan Baldo, "Wars of memory in Henry V," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 47 (1996): 132-59.

(42.) Again we are alerted to the mystification of social relationships by the existence of alternative images. At 3.6.70-83, Gower offers a less romantic "take" on the veteran who exploits his supposed intimacy with the "great commanders" to defraud gullible "ale-washed wits." In actuality, the ordinary conscripts could expect to suffer

acute social and economic hardship on their return from the wars (see Pugliatti, *Shakespeare the Historian*, 229-32).

(43.) For exceptions, see Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 3.551, 565. But, equally significantly, there is no equivalent in Holinshed for the exchanges between Henry and individual foot soldiers in 4.1 and 8, which (as with 3.2) do, briefly confer both an identity and a voice on the recalcitrant conscripts.

(44.) See, e.g., Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular tradition*, 214-15.

(45.) See, esp., Stephen Orgel, "Making Greatness Familiar," in *The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), 41-48, and David Scott Kastan, "Proud Majesty Made a Subject: Shakespeare and the Spectacle of Rule," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 37 (1986): 459-75.

(46.) Although the relative proportion of "privileged" versus "non-privileged" spectators estimated to have attended the public playhouses in this period is still vigorously debated, Andrew Gurr's conclusion that the citizen and artisanal classes provided the staple audience has been widely accepted (see *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987], 64).

(47.) For the evidence of women frequenting the commercial theatres, see Gurr, *Playgoing*, 55-63. The question of how their experience of plays and playgoing might have been differently inflected by their gender is addressed by Jean Howard in *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1994), 76-92, and (with Rackin) in *Engendering a Nation*, 32-36.

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