

The “Marginal” and the making of Hal as a “National Hero” in *The First and Second Parts of King Henry IV*¹

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In the current criticism of Shakespeare’s Histories, post-colonial studies have developed a range of readings of prodigious variety. Neill (1994), doubting the existence of definite borders of nationality, deals with language and optic power in early modern texts, assisted by the concept of Anderson’s “imagined communities” (1991).² Hawkes (1998) radically focuses on the historical project of colonization, or Anglicization of the “Welsh” by the “British” in the discussion on the second tetralogy, with reference to Jacques Derrida’s *Glas*. Both are most challenging in their breaking of frames barely established in the process of colonizing “others”.

Gender studies and feminist criticism have extended the possibilities. Rackin (1990) creates a monumental analysis of the “Histories” from the feminist point of view, followed by Barker and Kamps (1995) and Howard and Rackin (1997). Their studies examine “Englishness” represented as masculinity, in the fantastic frames of Nationhood in early modern times, making clear the dynamic mechanism of the establishment of a subject-object relation produced by the differences in sex and gender.

The approaches of both groups are more or less affected by the idea of “transgression” in Stallybrass and White (1986). Under the influence of Bakhtin (1976), Stallybrass and White pay attention to contradictions brought forth in the formation of symbolic order. “Self” identity is established by placing “others” ideologically in a lower position. It is useful to

use this approach in the analysis of the two parts of *Henry IV*, as Greenblatt (1980) has done to clarify power politics. However, our approach is much closer to the strategy of cultural studies, post-colonial studies, gender studies and feminist criticism rather than that of new historicism which stresses the triumph of containment. The aim of the thesis is to shake the weak bases of the anxious "subject" that cannot attain its "self" identity without depending on the "marginal". We shall give regard to various kinds of boundaries, positions, locations and spaces, high and low, public and private, clean and dirty, silent and noisy, and to formations, exchanges, interchanges of things and men/women with their spirits/bodies, as key elements of the reading.

I

There are some differences in the two texts of *Henry IV: Part I*, whose title page in Q₁ reads "THE / HISTORY OF / HENRY THE / FOVRTH: / With the battell at Shrewsburie, / *between the King and Lord* / Henry Percy, surnamed / Henrie Hotspur of / the North. / *With the humorous conceits of Sir / Iohn Falstalffe.*" and *Part II*, given the title in Q_a, "The / Second part of Henrie / the fourth, continuing to his death, / *and coronation of Henrie / the fift. / With the humours of sir Iohn Fal- / staffe, and swaggering / Pistoll*". So it can be said that there are some problems in discussing both parts together or dealing with them simply as a single text. Before starting any discussion, we must at first confirm the similarities and differences between these two parts.

We shall divide the discussion into three categories: sources, construction and ideologies.

As for sources, the two plays use about one-fifth of Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* (2nd edition, 1587), mainly the materials concerned with

Percy's rebellion and its consequences.³ One of the characteristics of Shakespeare's historical plays, categorized into the genre of "Histories" in the folio (1624), is to deal with a chain of the events centralizing the theme of England. If we arrange the two-part work and *Henry V* after *Richard II*, we can see how the latent anxiety of the sin of murdering Richard II haunts Henry IV and Henry V, and that it comes to be the most urgent requisite for both father and son to win domestic and foreign wars. We can regard the two parts of *Henry IV* as a sequence which attempts to redefine England's identity. The main purpose of the inclusion of the rebellion of Percy and its sequels is to enforce the male subject of England, represented by Hal.

Shakespeare creates vivid portraits of Glendower, Hotspur and Hal unlike the flat descriptions in Holinshed. These three are important characters who display male power in *Part I*. Glendower, a savage robber at the frontier in both Holinshed and *A Myrroure for Magistrates* (1559), becomes a civilized Welsh male head with magical power (see Act III, Scene i).⁴ Hotspur is a misogynist warrior, whose meadieval heroic tension longs for honour and renown on the battle field as well as in the home, with a rebuke for "a popinjay" lord who "With many holiday and lady terms" questioned him (see I. iii. 32-63), an explanatory speech for the fierce battle of "Revolted Mortimer" and "great Glendower" (see 92-111), and a comical exchange of words with his wife Kate in which he emphasizes his masculinity (see II. iii. 74-119). Hal, the boisterous Prince of Wales, indulging in a disgraceful life with the effeminate and devilish Falstaff and his company in the low order district, only shows his virtuous masculinity before the King; in evincing his secret plan that when the time comes Hal "shall make this northern youth exchange / His glorious deeds for my indignities", to "[b]e more myself" (III. ii. 93), making Hotspur his

"factor" "To engross up glorious deeds on my behalf" (147-48); helping his father Henry IV in a lethal situation and subjugating his double, another Harry, with his valour, as is shown in the last scene in *Part I*. In this way, three high ranking leaders, largely devised by Shakespeare, are more clearly delineated as male rivals competing for supremacy.

Part II uses Holinshed five times as much as *Part I*, but mostly in a fragmentary way. In such a hybrid history, the invisible Hal stays in the margins, repeating entrances and exits in a hurried manner. Shakespeare mentions the enemies against which England has to make war: the Scots and Welsh at home, and the French abroad. This is seen in the lines of Lord Hastings, "one power against the French; And one against Glendower; perforce a third / Must take up us" (I. iii. 71-73). Thus, Hal goes to Wales accompanying the King offstage. This gives the impression that the father and the son were closely linked in their military action, though Holinshed left no description of the Prince of Wales' participation in a Welsh campaign. In *Part II*, Hal seems to have hidden himself mostly in remote places, as shown by the fact that he first appears on stage at length in Act II, Scene ii: he is no longer an impressive character but an heir waiting to succeed to the throne, just turning up at the private scenes in the vulgar, noisy tavern and at the noble court of tranquil air where the dying King is waiting for both Hal and his own doomsday to come.

Samuel Daniel's poem, *The First Fowre Bookes of the Ciuile Wars Between the Two Houses of Lancaster and Yorke* (1595) is another important source by which Shakespeare creates the King, Hotspur and Hal. The poem makes clear father-son relationships among the four Henries, who try to survive in history in their own way. At the battle of Shrewsbury in 1403, Henry IV was only thirty-six, Hotspur was Henry's senior around thirty-nine, and Hal only sixteen. Besides the age scheme, the rivalry of

Hotspur and Hal in opposite positions is stressed both in the King's speech, "O that it could be prov'd / That some night-tripping fairy had exchang'd / In cradle-clothes our children where they lay, / And call'd mine Percy, his Plantagenet! / Then would I have his Harry, and he mine" at the opening scene (I. i. 85-89) and in the final match at Shrewsbury. Hal rescues his father from Douglas, while forlorn Hotspur abandoned by his father was defeated by Hal. On the other hand, *Part II* owes its tone in the scene of the King's death-bed to Daniel's post-Shrewsbury stanzas. The theme of nemesis for Henry's usurpation is gravely retold by the King himself. The private scene between man-father and man-son is to prepare for the dramatising of the reconciliation of the King and the reformed(?) Prince of "Wales". Magestic "England" is born from this male community at the "centre" of the dramatic world.

There are many stories about the wild prince Hal, in chronicles such as Thomas Washingam's record (1418), Tito Livio's official *Vita Henrici Quinti* in Latin (c.1437), and the Lambeth MS 84 (c.1479) of *Brut*. However, John Stow's *The Chronicle of England* (1580), and *The Annales of England* (1592), which, like Holinshed, do not include the episode of the highway robberies, and the original play of *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* (1594?-98) entered on Stationer's Register by Thomas Creede on 14 May 1594, are thought to be direct sources for Hal. Utilising these, Shakespeare changes the image of Hal. The soliloquy in *Part I* (I. ii. 190-212) gives the impression of Hal as a Machiavellian. The ideas of metamorphosis, transportation and reformation are significant to understand the violence of Hal's skill. This corresponds to the device in the robbery scene in which, unlike in the anonymous play, *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, Hal robs the "money of the King's coming down the hill" (II. ii. 51) of Falstaff who robs it from the travellers who took it from "the

King's exchequer" (53). Hal keeps the money for some time and returns it to the owner later. By this manipulation, Hal's honour is retained since he is not a thief but a carrier. In *Part II*, while using similar materials such as his entering the tavern in Eastcheap and his praising of the hostess, Shakespeare reduces the scenes of Hal's escapades, separating him from Falstaff, and preparing for the time of the Prince of Wales' reformation to come. Hal, already conscious of his laziness and the necessity to return to his father and leave the effeminate world of the lower orders quickly, speaks to his intimate friend, "By heaven, Poins, I feel me much to blame, / So idly to profane the precious time" (II. iv. 358-59) within a break between scenes after his first appearance.

Now let us shift the discussion to the construction of the *Henry IV* plays.

Both works have, as shown in their titles, an important character, Falstaff, in the centre of the mixed structure of the two-part play. This humorous knight is a key person to link and harmonise the whole cast with his "womanish" wit. Though he belongs to a higher class, Falstaff, living a dissipated life, frequents the highway at Gat's Hill and the Boar's Head in Eastcheap as well as the King's court. Besides, he has a mock father-son relationship with Prince of Wales and in a world full of festive atmosphere accommodates himself to patriarchy to take advantage of it or repels it to expose its artifice. He shows another strategy to survive the world making the most use of comical nonsense. By centralizing such a colonizer and womanizer as Falstaff, Shakespeare creates a continuity and similarity between the two texts. Each records the conditions of conscription, Falstaff's way of recruiting soldiers and the quality of his men. Moreover, in *Part I*, his abuse upon Hotspur's dead corpse with the stabbing at the end reminds us of the devilish and canibalistic behaviour of

Welshwomen at the opening. He also has a demonic image in common with the Welsh head, Glendower.⁵

Part II has a particular feature in its construction beginning with the prologue of the “Rumour”, which functions as a chorus, and concluding with the epilogue of the dancer. *Part II*, Act I, Scene i, immediately after the disappearance of the “Rumour”, which describes how the Earl of Northumberland, Henry Percy, worries about the war situation and the safety of his son, makes a clear contrast with *Part I*, Act I, Scene i, which presents the reactions of the King, receiving the reports of the situation on the battle field. Each, playing the part of prologue and epilogue has the function of forcing the audience to watch the play with consciousness of its falsity. *Part II* has narrators, as seen in “Interrudes”, to make us conscious of the frame of the work, whose contents are of a different space and time. On the other hand, *Part I* has another way to make us conscious of the very “dramatic” moments through performance: Prince Hal’s one-man stage play mocking the imaginative conversation between Hotspur and his wife Kate, and an improvised play between Hal and Falstaff as a rehearsal for Hal’s visit to the King at court next day.

Furthermore, *Part II* has many scenes in a strong allegorical vein with a number of characters with symbolic names, newly introduced on a large scale. In *Part I*, no name but the nickname “Hotspur” for Henry Percy is allegorical, whereas, in *Part II*, many names are indicative of what the characters are: Doll Tearsheet, Shallow, Silence, Mouldy, Shadow, Wart, Feeble, Bullcalf, etc. They are all given allegorical names, though it is not clear whether each shows the character’s real quality. Though neither a name nor a nickname, the Lord Chief Justice, who plays an important role in *Part II*, can be understood as the embodiment of “justice” in law. A large number of tongues drawn on the cloth of “Rumour” are also

allegorical.

In *Part II*, there is an impressive scene in Gloucestershire where Falstaff meets again and talks with his friends Justice Shallow and Justice Silence remembering their young days. This stirs the most nostalgia. *Part II* is full of words which remind us that "death" is approaching, maybe partly because the death of Henry IV is waiting near at hand. In the conversation, Shallow and Silence mention how lively their "dead" friends were in their youth. The scene brings out an uncertainty about the "past" in memory as encapsulated earlier in the speeches of "Rumour". Falstaff's comment on the young days of Shallow exposes the falsity of the Justice who makes up a boastful "past" for his convenience, though the lines also ironically reflect upon Falstaff's habit of telling lies.

Next, we shall deal with the topic of ideology bringing forth the power to convey historical ideas.

We can see a manipulation in order to make the "noble" history of "England" where "men" are "superior", at least on the surface, compared with "others" of any difference in sex, gender, class, culture, language and nationality.

The first example is in the arrangement of "domestic" scenes outside the court of King Henry IV. In such scenes, "female" characters appear with the immanent power of transcending borders. This power is a projection of the anxiety of the patriarchy cunningly concealed in the privileged men's space in England.⁶ No women appear in the scene of the King's court, but "lower" Englishwomen do appear outside the court, and upper-class women appear in *Part I* both at Warkworth Castle in Northumberland, the principal seat of the Percies, and at the Archdeacon's House, Bangor, in Wales, and in *Part II* at Warkworth Castle in Northumberland. Women in opposing positions cannot exchange words, because they have definite

