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## The alien world within: The political, cultural and geographical marginalisation of Northern England in Shakespeare's Second Tetralogy

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"THE ALIEN WORLD WITHIN": THE POLITICAL, CULTURAL  
AND GEOGRAPHICAL MARGINALISATION OF NORTHERN ENGLAND  
IN SHAKESPEARE'S SECOND TETRALOGY

By

G. Cattle

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the  
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Signature .....  
Date ..... 1-11-94 .....

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## Preface

In the opening line of Shakespearean Negotiations, Stephen Greenblatt writes: "I began with the desire to speak with the dead" (1). My aim is less spectacular, but motivated by a desire to speak for the northern English - a region and culture which, in many instances, has been neglected in Shakespearian criticism. If, in the course of reading the following dissertation one detects my ideological preoccupations, I offer in defence, the belief that for too long the concept of "England" has been to speak almost exclusively about the dominance of the south over the north - a situation in which the Home Counties and London have become a metaphor for the whole nation. I hope the following may re-address this imbalance.



## Abstract

This paper considers Shakespeare's representation of the north of England in his second tetralogy of history plays. In this study, I argue that the plays are not only a representation of the past, but an expression of the political, cultural and geographical divisions within England in the era of their production. Drawing on contemporary reports from the region, official papers, ballads and various modern histories of the age, I will suggest that there exists a direct correlation between Shakespeare's representation of the region and the concept of the north as the alien element within Elizabethan England.

Reading the plays as explorations of the development of England from feudalism to a centralised nation state, I discuss the manner in which Shakespeare's second tetralogy exposes the contradictions behind the concept of a united and stable England. Central to my argument is the notion that to be marginalised (in the latter decades of the sixteenth century) was not only a matter of social status or political expediency but was, to a degree, dependent on being identified as belonging to, and existing within, the geographical margins of the state.

The four central chapters, comprising Richard II, both parts of Henry IV and Henry V, examine the manner in which the north, and those associated with it, are increasingly

presented as a disruptive element that threatens the stability of the realm, a role that I suggest is reliant on both historical experience and contemporary expectation.

In the final chapter, I attempt to discuss the implications of the north's portrayal in the Elizabethan popular theatre in relation to the current debate within New Historicist criticism.

## Introduction

The aim of this study is to explore the political, cultural and geographical marginalisation of northern England in Shakespeare's second tetralogy. While Richard II, both parts of Henry IV and Henry V remain the primary focus of this study, I will draw on additional material such as ballads, state papers, observations, anecdotal evidence and written histories (both Elizabethan and modern) to argue that there is a direct correlation between the north, as constructed in the Elizabethan popular theatre, and the political and cultural status of the region in Elizabethan society. Consequently, this study proposes that the plays of the second tetralogy are not only representations of the past, but expressions of the political, cultural and geographical divisions within England at the time of their production.

In historicising the plays, one should be aware that Shakespeare's second tetralogy remains a dramatic reconstruction of English history between 1398 and 1420. Yet, despite the compression of material, and the fictive nature of many of the scenes, the plays are grounded in historical "fact". Although reliant on actual events, the textuality of written history demands one cannot privilege historical writing as offering an objective view of the past. As Foucault suggests, history is "fictioned from a political reality that renders it true" (Wilson 13). Applying this maxim to the situation at the close of the sixteenth century,

this study will argue that the concept of the nation-state was privileged over regionalism - the result being the existence of an economically backward, politically irrelevant and geographically remote, marginalised north. This study will argue that the Elizabethan theatre and Shakespeare's histories were not immune from this process. As Philip Edwards in Threshold of a Nation suggests, the Elizabethan drama "centred itself in and around the swiftly growing metropolis of London" (18).

Locating the plays within the cultural and political context of the 1590s, it is evident that drama is not a separate discipline operating in a void, but an integral part of society and subject to the same constraints and ideological pressures as any other institution. The theatrical representation of the north as an "alien world" is determined by an historical past (no matter how problematical) as well as the political and social "realities" of the period in which it was produced. In addition, the staging of the north as "the other" was, to a degree, reliant on the existence of what Greenblatt terms a process of "negotiation and exchange" (12) between the text and the audience. While the Elizabethan dramatist cannot totally escape the historical and social conditions in which his work is produced, Holderness suggests that the plays of the second tetralogy are "locations of ideological, cultural and artistic contradiction" (The Play of History 15).

Contrary to the Tillyardian concept of the "Elizabethan world view", I will argue that the portrayal of the north in the history plays demonstrates that the culture of the ruling elite does not represent the whole of society (Williams 121-127). Far from being celebrations of the dominant order, the second tetralogy deconstructs many of the ideological tenets of the Elizabethan state by interrogating the conflicts and contradictions of the latter 1590s in which the political and cultural problems created, in part, by the transition of England from feudalism to a centralised state, remained unresolved. While an absolutist state never fully developed in England, the demise of feudalism and the emergence of a more centralised government did threaten the traditional position of certain sections of the ancient nobility (Sinfield 168). The resultant struggle, between monarchical power and baronial independence, provides one of the central themes of the plays, and highlights how the process of historical change was contested by different groups in society (Holderness, The Play of History 2). Whereas the north, historically, functioned as an oppositional force to this process, of interest is the manner in which the Elizabethan popular theatre interprets and portrays this challenge.

Treading a fine-line between the old historicism of Tillyard and Campbell, and the more extreme positions offered by contemporary post-structuralism, what emerges in the following chapters is a reading of the second tetralogy in which I argue Shakespeare was neither an apologist for the

Tudor monarchy nor a revisionist, but was, to paraphrase Wells, "an exceptionally shrewd political analyst" (391). Indeed, as explorations of the past, the plays of the second tetralogy highlight many of the contradictions of the Elizabethan present. Of particular relevance to this study, therefore, is the progressive change in the perception of the north of England in the plays, a transformation which appears to coincide with the historical development of what, by the 1590s, was essentially "two Englands" - definable as an alien north and a dominant south.

## Richard II

The deposition of Richard in 1399 was, in a sense, a watershed marking the end of a line of kings who would rule "by hereditary right, direct and undisputed from the conqueror" (Tillyard 253). As Rackin suggests, Richard's fall was regarded (in certain quarters) as a "loss" - a moment that marked the end of an "idealised feudal world" (117). In what one could term the orthodox view, the deposition of Richard was seen as the cause of the Wars of the Roses, a period of civil war ended by the providential accession of Henry VII and the establishment of the House of Tudor (Ornstein 40). In a similar fashion, Shakespeare's dramatic reconstruction of Richard's reign acts as a prelude to a period of chaos which, in the subsequent plays of the tetralogy, is ended (temporarily) by Henry V. However, while Gaunt may lament that "God's is the quarrel" (1.2.37)<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare's plays, without ever totally abandoning the providentialist view of history, suggest that the historical process is determined not only by the will of a divine being, but by the actions of men. This "Machiavellian view of historical causation" (Rackin 45) offers an alternative perspective to the events of the past - in which mankind's destiny is, to a degree, reliant on and shaped by political considerations. As Shakespeare's theatrical representation of the past interrogates the concept of the English as a "happy breed of men" (2.1.45) and of

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<sup>1</sup> All quotations, unless otherwise stated, are drawn from The Riverside Shakespeare ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

England as a "demi-paradise" (2.1.42), the "reality" of the medieval world, as constructed in the theatre, appears to be one of division and violent insurrection by a powerful elite motivated, in part, by personal ambition.

The contrasting fortunes of both Richard and Bolingbroke rely, to a great extent, on the support and the continued loyalty of the powerful magnates. Richard finds (to his cost) the aura of kingship is not enough to guarantee obedience, nor is it worth "twenty thousand names" (3.2.85) - particularly if the king no longer has the support of the nobility. The "powerful friends" (2.2.55) whom Green names as having fled to support Henry are all northern lords. One of the most powerful, the Earl of Northumberland, is the "ladder wherewithal the mounting Bolingbroke ascends" (5.1.55-56) to the throne of England. Hence, politically, one begins to witness the emergence in Richard II of a "northern faction" whose power and support becomes a crucial factor in Richard's fall and Bolingbroke's rise. As Andrew Gurr notes, Northumberland's function within the play can be interpreted as that of Bolingbroke's "strong man" (146). Nevertheless, while Northumberland is, and remains, a loyal supporter of Bolingbroke (even to the point of destroying the lingering support for Richard), Shakespeare "darkens Northumberland's character" (Bullough 3: 363). Indeed, in an interesting footnote on this very point, Humphreys refers to Dover Wilson's suggestion that Jean Creton's Historie du Roy d'Angleterre, in which Northumberland is presented as Judas and



Richard as Christ, was a possible source of Shakespeare's Richard II (2H4 xxxii). Notably, although Richard is still the "lawful king" (3.3.74), it is Northumberland who first omits Richard's title and whose

... joints forget  
To pay their awful duty.

(3.3.71)

Perhaps of greater significance, it is Northumberland who, in raising objections to Carlisle's assertion of Richard's divine right, is identified with the right of the "commons' suit" (4.1.154) to challenge the authority of the crown (a concept that the Tudors throughout the sixteenth century refuted). Consequently, Bolingbroke's role in usurping the throne is partly absolved. The responsibility for Richard's deposition is placed on Northumberland and the King himself.

Commenting on the widespread support for Bolingbroke, Scroop informs Richard that:

And all your northern castles yielded up,  
And all your southern gentleman in arms  
Upon his party ...

(3.2.201-3)

More importantly, this speech is an expression of the political, cultural and geographical gulf between the southern regions of England and the north (a division that becomes more marked in the later plays). Significantly, while the "southern gentleman [are] in arms" (and as such rebels), in

Richard II they are never present on the stage - the only clearly identifiable rebels are the northern lords.

As the "tragedie" (Q1) of Richard unfolds, it becomes increasingly evident that there is both a political and a geographical distinction between a world of legitimation and a world of insurrection, a conflict between two distinct geographical regions - the north and the south. In Richard II, the more formal and ceremonial aspects of the play are situated in the city of London, at Windsor, or in the southern part of the kingdom and, although Richard is formally deposed at Westminster, the challenge to legal authority stems from areas located on the periphery of the realm. When represented on the stage, the north and those identified with it are associated with rebellion, opposition, armed insurrection and the deposition of the King. Bolingbroke returns from exile to Ravenspurgh (Spurn Head) on the Yorkshire coast, an area which even now is one of the most desolate and sparsely inhabited regions of England. Similarly, the crucial confrontation between Richard and the rebels occurs at Flint Castle on the Welsh border. From this perspective, Bolingbroke's development from exile to King can be seen as a progression, a journey from the margins to the centre. In stark contrast, Richard's demise is a journey from the centre - from Windsor and the south (as King), to the outer margins of Ireland, Wales, and finally, Pomfret castle in Yorkshire. Richard is separated from his Queen and dispatched not to the Tower of London but

... towards the north  
Where shivering cold and sickness pines the clime.  
(5.1.76-7)

To legitimise his kingship, Bolingbroke remains in London and Westminster - the "centre" of power. In the final scenes, the roles have been reversed; it is Richard who is exiled to the periphery of the realm where, "unkinged", he will "have no name, no title" (4.1.255) and eventually be murdered in "rude assault" (5.5.105).

As an historical play, the political issues raised in Richard II have a remarkable similarity to those of the Elizabethan age (Rackin 19). Even as theatrical representations of the past, the political issues that the second tetralogy explores (such as the instability within the kingdom and anxiety over the future of the crown) are interchangeable with the England of the 1590s (Worden 11). While the period was, compared to the previous century, one of relative stability, it was not a "golden age" but an era beset by civil unrest, the threat of foreign invasion, increased anxiety over the question of Elizabeth's successor and "factional competition at court" (Haigh 164). Indeed, a letter written in the last decade of the century noted that England was "shaken by religious feuds, by plagues and other internal troubles" (Wells 91).

The topicality of Richard II to the political situation at the close of the 1590s and the parallels between Richard and Elizabeth have been well documented, particularly by Lily Campbell. However, without detailing Campbell's study, it is possible to explore the similarities between Shakespeare's representation of the past and the contemporary world of the 1590s, specifically as it relates to the north of England. Of particular importance is the comparison that was drawn between the dominance of Richard by certain favourites (Bushy, Bagot and Green) and Elizabeth's increasing reliance on a narrow band of advisers such as the Cecils - a situation that resulted in the exclusion of such powerful figures as the Earl of Essex (Campbell 188). Nevertheless, the danger of this policy, although diminished by the close of the sixteenth century, was that the alienation of the powerful and popular could lead to civil insurrection. Indeed, the exclusion of the northern nobility as Wardens of the border marches (a position traditionally held by the Percy Earls of Northumberland) partly explains the outbreak of the Northern Rebellion in 1569 (Haigh 52).

Moreover, it was not purely within the theatre that comparisons were made between Elizabeth and Richard; one of the most (in)famous examples was Hayward's The First Part of the Life and Raigne of Henrie 1111 which, despite its title, was largely devoted to the overthrow of King Richard II. Significantly, as both the chronicles and Shakespeare's play suggests, Richard's downfall could be attributed to his

reliance on favourites and advisers drawn not from the aristocracy, but from the "squirearchy and the gentry" (Stone 256). As Stone suggests, the "fortunes of the nobility depended as much upon the favours and ferocities of monarchs as upon their own hereditary resources" (399). In both the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, presence at court was crucial to political and financial success because the court was a "clearing house for royal patronage" (Haigh 89). Clearly, if history was perceived as providing a lesson about the present, then Shakespeare's play could be construed as dangerous and subversive. Not surprisingly, one finds that in the quartos printed in Elizabeth's lifetime, the deposition scene was omitted.

In Richard II, the nobles are not (from their point of view) rebels, but protectors of the realm with a mission to rescue a king who is

... not himself, but basely led  
By flatterers, and what they will inform,  
Merely in hate, 'gainst any of us all,  
That will the King severely prosecute  
'Gainst us, our lives, our children, and our heirs.  
(2.1.241-245)

However, while Northumberland aims to "redeem from broking pawn the blemish'd crown" (2.1.293) and save the country from tyrannical rule, the rebellion has an ulterior motive. The challenge to Richard is a "feudal reaction" (Sahel 27) in which the principal aim was to restore the rights and privileges of an aristocratic elite against a king "seeking to

extend his powers" (Holderness, The Play of History 24). Indeed, it is not his banishing of Bolingbroke that finally pushes the nobility into rebellion, but his decision to appropriate Gaunt's "plate, coin, revenues and movables" (2.1.162), an act "which takes Hereford's [Bolingbroke's] rights away" (2.1.195). Consequently, the rebels are not symbolic representations of a new order, but a conservative faction struggling (and in Richard II succeeding) to re-assert their traditional position as both confidants and advisers to the crown (Ornstein 26).

The dynastic struggles, unleashed by the deposition of Richard in 1399, would propel the English nation into a century of instability culminating in the Wars of the Roses, a period when the crown was not in "sole control of the country" (Elton 30). Correspondingly, in the final scenes of Richard II, the country appears to be on the brink of civil war. As a portent of things to come, the unity of purpose, so instrumental in challenging and deposing Richard, no longer exists. The new regime is threatened by a serious insurrection in which

... the rebels have consumed with fire  
Our town of Cicester in Gloucestershire.

(5.6.2-3)

In Richard II, we begin to observe the manner in which the north of England is collectively presented as a central factor in the challenge to monarchical authority (no matter how

problematical its legitimacy). Perhaps, more ominously, as one turns to the next plays in the tetralogy, the "infection and the hand of war" (2.1.44) which appears to engulf the realm stems from (and involves) a faction identifiable with the northern regions of the kingdom.

## Henry IV Part One

It has been argued that Shakespeare's reconstruction of the past, while bound by actual events, seeks to interrogate the limited perception of written history by examining the contradictions and conflicts of that past. Significantly, Shakespeare's "history" of Henry IV excludes the religious conflict with the Lollards and the ongoing wars with France, choosing instead to concentrate on the danger to the crown from within. In particular, the two plays concerned directly with Henry's reign focus on the threat to the crown from the largely fictional world of Falstaff and the taverns of Eastcheap, and the historically based rebellions of the Percies. While accepting that Falstaff and the antics of Hal as a "madcap Prince of Wales" (4.1.95) represent an inversion of the social order and constitute a threat to the state, it is the Percy rebellions which remain the central political event of both plays. As a consequence, in 1 Henry IV northern England and those associated with it are, in terms of an actual presence in the popular theatre, no longer marginal but "symbolically central" and "thoroughly implicated in both the structure and instabilities of rule" (Dollimore, Radical Tragedy xli).

In the opening act, Henry Bolingbroke (now king) is "wan with care" (1.1.1) and "loaden with heavy news" (1.1.37) as the Welsh under Glendower defeat an English force. Furthermore, Henry's problems are compounded with the arrival of



... more uneven and unwelcome news  
... from the north.

(1.1.50-51)

In these opening lines, one can begin to detect the emergence of a recurring pattern in which the theatrical representation of the north is, again, associated with disaffection and opposition to the ideal of a unified state where

... mutual well-beseeming ranks,  
March all one way, and be no more oppos'd  
Against acquaintance, kindred, and allies.

(1.1.14-16)

As the chronicle histories suggest, the border regions of England in both the west and the north had been a cause of concern for the crown, and remained so throughout the sixteenth century. In both 1536 and 1569, major rebellions had broken out in the north, partly in response to the crown's attempt to extend its authority over the region (Watts 31). As such, it is no coincidence that Shakespeare's Henry faced rebellion on his borders. The rebels, in anticipation of their success against Henry, partition the kingdom

Into three limits very equally:  
England, from Trent and Severn hitherto,  
By south and east is my part assign'd;  
All westward, Wales beyond the Severn shore,  
And all the fertile land within that bound,  
To Owen Glendower; and, dear coz, to you  
The remnant northward lying off from the Trent.

(3.1.71-78)

This is no random division, but relates directly to the cultural, political and geographical differences that existed within England both in the contemporary era of the play's production and the historical past it explores. Indeed, it is a division that suggests clearly defined boundaries between inner and outer zones. The "part assign'd" to Mortimer, as claimant to the throne of England, is a recognition and, perhaps, a tacit reminder of the geographical limits within which the authority and power of the crown was popularly accepted, even in the latter decades of the sixteenth century. In an era when, as Greenblatt notes "power depended upon its privileged visibility" (64), the royal progresses never ventured further north than Stafford in the English midlands or further west than Bristol. This suggests that "beyond" and the "remnant" were not considered safe or, perhaps more significantly, important (Haigh 147).

The perception of the land "off from the Trent" (3.1.71) as an uncivilised area with a reputation of lawlessness and banditry was not without foundation. The theatrical representation of the north as an alien world has a direct correlation with the north's projection and status in both official and popular discourses as a geographically remote, politically irrelevant and economically backward region. In 1586, while compiling Britannia, William Camden visited Bushy Gap, a point on Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland, which he noted was "a place infamous for thieving and robbing," and where he could not safely take a full survey of the area for

fear of "the rank robbers thereabouts" (Rouse 92). As late as 1601, the English Parliament found it necessary to pass "An Act for the more peaceable government of the parts of Cumberland, Northumberland, Westmorland and the bishopric of Durham" because of the continued "incursions ... robberies, and burning and spoiling of towns, villages and houses" in the region (Elton 209). Further, in maps dated 1599, the county and the population of Northumberland was "chiefly noted for swift horses and sea coals, a rough country, and hardly tilled, inhabited by a fierce people" (cited in Bryne 61).

The land beyond the Trent remained a sparsely populated and mainly pastoral region, economically poor, and an area whose topography and lack of roads ensured that, even in the sixteenth century, it remained an isolated region divorced from the "economic, social and intellectual changes that had broken up medieval society in the south" (Reid 6). By 1600, there was a clear economic division between an impoverished north and the more prosperous south, with London not only the political but commercial centre of the realm. This economic difference within England is demonstrated by a certain Thomas Wilson who, commenting on social status and wealth in 1600, noted that

... especially about London and the adoyning, where their landes are sett to the highest, he is not counted of any great reckning unless he be betwixt 1,000 marks ... but northward and farr off a gentleman of good reputation may be content with 300 and 400 yearly.

(cited in Watts 63)

Indeed, it was the poverty of the north that partly explains the continuance of feudalism in the region. A lack of viable alternatives (particularly for the young and the ambitious), drove many to seek a career in the household of the great land-owning families (Sharp xvii). While not unusual in Elizabethan England, what made this situation particularly dangerous in the north was the overriding loyalty of those retained by the local lord (James 291). Moreover, the potential threat was further compounded as those drawn into the service of the local magnate were, owing to the military requirements of the border regions, often well versed in the martial arts. Despite the weakening of the military strength of the north by the Wars of the Roses, the Percy Earls of Northumberland could still (in 1513) raise 500 men to accompany Henry VIII to France, while leaving behind 1500 armed men to defend the border region (Reid 20). In the north, regional loyalties remained an obstacle to the imposition of monarchical authority as late as 1569 when Lord Hunsdon, reflecting on the Northern Rebellion of that year, concluded in a letter to the Privy Council that

... if any foreign power should attempt it  
[invasion] he knows few in Northumberland he would  
suffer to enter to help him, for throughout  
Northumberland they know no prince but a Percy.  
(C.S.P. Foreign 1569-1571:159)

In Shakespeare's histories the conflict between the Percies and the crown interrogates one of the major political problems that plagued England in both the fifteenth and the

sixteenth centuries, namely the emergence of what Elton terms the "over-mighty subject" (30). Although in 1 Henry IV it is Hotspur who appears as the leader of the rebels, his father's role in the play epitomises a medieval nobility whose power could "shake the peace and safety of [the] throne" (3.2.117). In an age when the crown possessed no standing army, yet frequently needed to defend its northern border against invasion by the Scots, magnates such as the Percies were, in one sense, indispensable (James 65). The very nature of border society with its close bonds of kinship meant that the wardship of the border marches could only be placed in the hands of powerful local families (Elton 196). Indeed as Reid (22) notes, for his support of Henry, Northumberland was made

Warden-general of the Marches against Scotland,  
Governor of Berwick, Constable of all the royal  
castles, Justice of all the forests, and Justice of  
the Peace in all the shires north of the Trent.

Despite these rewards, the northern Earls remained a threat to the stability of the realm as Shakespeare's Richard II prophesied:

Though he divided the realm and give they half  
It is too little.

(RII 5.1.60-61)

In 1 Henry IV the rebellion led by the Percies is motivated by two issues: Henry's demand for the prisoners

taken at Holmedon, and the support of Mortimer's claim to the throne. However, these issues are (as Ornstein suggests) the "occasion rather than the cause of the break between Henry and the Percies" (131). More appropriately, the conflict between the crown and the Percies in both Henry IV plays is part of a larger ideological struggle between a monarchy seeking to extend its power, and an aristocracy struggling to maintain its independence against the encroachment of royal control and authority within their traditional lands. Hence, the battle of Shrewsbury with the single combat between Hal and Hotspur is a clash of competing and incompatible power structures within the realm and not a struggle for the throne - a situation that Shakespeare's earlier but chronologically later tetralogy had already explored.

In 1 Henry IV, Shakespeare contrasts and combines "two distinct historical periods" (Edelman 106), the Elizabethan present and the medieval world of aristocratic rebellion. This double plot and time scheme increasingly develops into a division between the south and north of England, a contrast between a world that is familiar and a peripheral zone that is strange, remote and distant in terms of time, location and culture. In 1 Henry IV, the world of Eastcheap and the tavern is situated both in the Elizabethan present and the geographically familiar (Rackin 233). However, the "detailed material life of the Elizabethan present" (Rackin 140), remains located in the southern part of the realm, a world drawn from the same culture as the playhouses of London. In

contrast, one is confronted by societies whose mannerisms, speech and conditions of life although sited in an historical past, are represented as alien and strange in the present (Mullaney 82). The most obvious example in 1 Henry IV remains the portrayal of the Welsh, whose difference is announced by their language, mannerisms and customs, a culture steeped in mythology and prophecies who inhabit a region of barbarous practices where English troops are "butchered" (1.1.43). This difference is perhaps highlighted by Shakespeare's juxtaposition of scenes and language structure between the world of "Skimble-Scamble stuff" (3.1.152) and "strange concealments" (3.1.165) spoken in verse, against the familiar world of the tavern spoken in prose. While the boundaries of what can be termed the known and the familiar of England and the English are greatly increased, so too are the areas of exclusion. In Richard II, the Irish are considered outcasts and "venom" (2.1.157), and in 1 Henry IV the Welsh are "irregular and wild" (1.1.40). However, the construction and representation of an alien world is not only reserved for those who inhabit the Celtic fringes of the realm; in 1 Henry IV the northern English also pose a threat to the "cultural boundaries" (Roberts 15) of an emerging English state.

If the demise of Richard signifies the hegemony of the barons over the crown, one of the themes of both parts of Henry IV is the struggle to reverse this situation which, ironically, becomes a contest between a former rebel, now King, and the faction whose support was instrumental in making

him so (Weimann 165). More specifically, it is a struggle that increasingly becomes a contest within what Bullough terms "the Hal-Hotspur antithesis" (4: 164), a rivalry that symbolises the clash of two contrasting cultures. In a past that is selectively reproduced for the popular theatre, not only is Hotspur's age changed to make him a contemporary of Hal, but his character is "largely invented" (Bullough 4: 174), a characterisation that Shakespeare possibly drew from sources such as Daniel's "Civil Wars" and Holinshed's History of Scotland, which records

This Henrie ... was surnamed, for his often  
pricking, Henrie Hotspur, as one that seldome times  
rested, if there were anie service to be doone  
abroad.

(Bullough 4: 174)

Clearly, tradition appears to accord Hotspur the status of a hero, an historical figure celebrated in border ballads such as "The Battle of Otterburn" fought between the Scots and the English who were led by the Percies:

'By my good faythe,' sayd the noble Perssye,  
'Now haste thow rede full ryght;  
Yet wyll I never yelde me to the,  
Whyll I may stonde and fyght.'

The Perssy was a man of strength,  
I tell yow in thys stounde;  
He smote the Dowglas at the swordes length  
That he felle to the growynde.

(Child 3: 298)



However, in Shakespeare's "history", a distinction, indeed a contradiction, exists between the Hotspur of the medieval world presented as a manifestation of chivalric values, and the Hotspur who is ridiculed in the contemporary world of the tavern as the "mad fellow of the north" (2.4.335-36) who

... kills me some six or seven dozen of Scots at a breakfast, washes his hands, and says to his wife "Fie upon this quiet life! I want work".

(2.4.102-105)

In a similar fashion, Hotspur's dismissal of the "popinjay" (1.3.50) that Henry sends to collect the prisoners taken at the battle of Holmedon highlights a cultural difference between the brash "northern youth" (3.2.145) and the

... certain lord, neat, and trimly dress'd,  
Fresh as a bridegroom, and his chin new reap'd  
Show'd like a stubble-land at harvest-home.  
He was perfumed like a milliner.

(1.3.33-36)

This incident possibly functions on another level - as an allusion to the rise of "a new service nobility" (Worden 1992:9) in the contemporary world of Elizabethan England. Like Bushy, Bagot and Green in Richard II, the "perfumed" lord owes his position not to inherited wealth, land or military deeds but royal favour and positions at court - a court located in London and the south east.

Although not witnessed on the stage, in 1 Henry IV the Percies fulfil their obligations to the crown by defeating the

Scottish forces at Holmedon. However, the "honour and renown" (3.2.139) of Hotspur, once admired when in the service of the state, is, as the play progresses, re-defined as "ill-weav'd ambition" (5.4.88) which becomes a subversive and disruptive element, threatening the existence of the Lancastrian state (Holderness, The Play of History 47). While Tillyard's claim that Hotspur is a "country bumpkin" (280) is extreme, "the all-praised knight" (3.2.140) whom the ballads and Holinshed suggest was brave and physically strong is, in the popular theatre, also portrayed as "hare-brain'd" (5.1.19). Indeed, in contrast to the fictional characters drawn from the familiar world of the Elizabethan present, Hotspur (while an historical figure) is, in one sense, an expression of what the north "contained and [was] imagined to contain" (Roberts 17). Yet, one cannot totally dismiss Hotspur, even though he may have graced "a latter age with noble deeds" (5.1.92). Hal's emergence as the archetypal warrior king in the last play of the second tetralogy is based on the attributes of Hotspur which Hal appropriates in order to "salve", in the eyes of his father, "the long grown wounds of [his] intemperance" (3.2.156). More significantly, Hal's appropriation of Hotspur's values demonstrates the manner in which a dominant culture (in this case the Lancastrian's) adapts and absorbs other cultural formations that challenge its position into the service of the state (Holderness, The Play of History 52).

Inevitably, as history dictates, Hotspur and the Percies are defeated, as England cannot "brook a double reign"

(5.4.65-66) of two competing and antagonistic powers. Yet, Shakespeare's version of historical events, such as the manner in which Hotspur's death is portrayed, appears to confirm and support the projection of the north as a marginalised element within the Elizabethan present. The death of Hotspur becomes not only a "factor" (3.2.147) in Hal's development, but also signifies a victory of the increasingly politically dominant south over the north, the latter functioning as a region whose political structure and cultural practices are portrayed on the stage as archaic, irrelevant and slightly ridiculous.

In 1 Henry IV, the "past" has already become a matter of debate; even the deposition of Richard is subject to conflicting interpretations. The Percies claim that their initial support of Henry was only offered to enable him to regain his titles and not the crown

My father gave him welcome to the shore;  
And when he heard him swear and vow to God  
He came but to be Duke of Lancaster,  
To sue his livery and beg his peace,  
With tears of innocency and terms of zeal,  
My father, in kind heart and pity mov'd,  
Swore him assistance, and perform'd it too.  
Now when the lords and barons of the realm  
Perceiv'd Northumberland did lean to him,  
The more and less came in with cap and knee.

(4.3.59-68)

Nevertheless, in Shakespeare's "history", it can be argued that Henry never actively seeks the throne, but is offered it by a willing Richard and that his accession rescues England from the tyranny of an inept king and the "thousand

flatterers" (2.1.100) who surround him (Ornstein:128). Before the battle of Shrewsbury, Worcester complains that the king "calls us rebels" (5.2.39) yet, one can argue that Henry was a "rebel" and, worse, a usurper implicated in regicide. The various references to Mortimer's claim as Richard's heir raise doubts about Henry's legitimacy, inviting the audience

... to pry  
Into his title, the which we find  
Too indirect for long continuance.

(4.3.103-105)

Hence, "truth" remains a matter of interpretation, as the play interrogates the issue of who or what represents authority and legality. However, Shrewsbury clearly demonstrates that official history is the discourse of the winners, regardless of whether, as Holinshed notes, the Percies could claim they were not rebels but (bearing a remarkable similarity to Bolingbroke's grievances against Richard)

... procurers & protectors of the common-wealth ....  
[because] ... taxes and tillages were dailie levied,  
under pretense to be imploied in defense of the  
realme, the same were vainlie wasted, and  
unprofitable consumed: and where through the  
slandrous reports of their enimies, the king had  
taken a greevous displeasure with them.

(Bullough 4: 187)

The Bolingbroke to be found in the chronicles and Shakespeare's 1 Henry IV may have been implicated in the deposition of a lawful king but, as Hotspur prophesies to his

father Northumberland, history will record that it was the Percies who

... set the crown  
Upon the head of this forgetful man,  
And for his sake wear the detested blot  
Of murtherous subornation - shall it be  
That you a world of curses undergo,

.....  
Shall it be for shame be spoken in these days,  
Or fill up chronicles in time to come  
That men of your nobility and power  
Did gauge then both in an unjust behalf.

(1.3.166-173)

In I Henry IV, the survival of the new regime is partly the result of Henry's ability to contain the various rebellions to the periphery of the realm while still maintaining control of the centre (the location of authority and legitimacy): London and the south. The defeat and dispersal of the rebel forces is a step towards securing the Lancastrian dynasty and extending the geographical limits in which the authority of the crown is recognised over "feudal attachments and regional antagonisms" (Ornstein 150). In the final scenes, the battle of Shrewsbury has, for the crown, been a success. The southern and midland shires of England appear secure and firmly controlled by the crown. The task now is to enter and conquer the land beyond the Trent and defeat the remnants of opposition - only then will "Rebellion ... lose his sway" (5.5.41).

## Henry IV Part Two

In 2 Henry IV, we find (as in the previous play) a double plot and time scheme that contrasts the world of the tavern situated in Elizabethan London with the historical struggle between the crown and the aristocracy (Melchiori 21). However, the boundaries of what has already been described as the familiar and recognisable world (existing outside the historical plot) are greatly enlarged. In 2 Henry IV there are references to Stamford in Lincolnshire, the county of Staffordshire, Oxford, and various scenes of life in rural Gloucestershire. Significantly, the "wild hills [and] uneven ways" (RII 2.3.4) of Gloucestershire are no longer associated with rebellion, at least not aristocratic rebellion. Nevertheless, "the panorama of national life" (Humphreys, 2H4 li) represents only a fraction of the actual realm. In stark contrast, the England that appears beyond the River Trent - places such as Gaultree forest and Warkworth castle - continue to be associated with disorder, violence and betrayal, a world "of base and bloody insurrection" (4.1.40). Hence, as in the earlier plays, there exists a clearly defined geographical division between a relatively stable and familiar south, and a volatile north.

In a departure from Shakespeare's other histories, 2 Henry IV opens with an induction in the guise of "rumour, painted full of tongues" - a theatrical device that explains the events of the previous play and leads the audience

"directly into the action" (Melchiori 59). However, because the chronicles from which Shakespeare's historical material is drawn say nothing about the spread of rumour after the battle of Shrewsbury (Humphreys, 2H4 xlix), the role of rumour in the opening scenes operates on at least two other levels. Firstly, in conjunction with the induction, the presence of rumour serves to highlight the remoteness and inaccessibility of the north that still existed in the sixteenth century

Between that royal field of Shrewsbury  
And this worm-eaten hold of ragged stone  
Where Hotspur's father, old Northumberland  
Lies crafty-sick ...

(Ind.34-37)

Secondly, the spread of rumour could be an allusion to circumstances in the north before the outbreak of rebellion in 1569, an event of which the underlying causes and eventual outcomes bear a remarkable similarity to the uprising against the crown in 2 Henry IV (Campbell 234). As the following extract from the Privy Council to Sir George Bowes in October 1569 suggests, the various letters and official papers pertaining to the situation in the north during 1569 drew attention to the rumours circulating at the time

After our hartly commendations. Wee have heard by dyvers meanes of some late trobles, or rumours of trobles, growne in those north parts ... and bycause wee fynde it very nedefull to understand how these late rumours and murmers have theyr begynning ...

(cited in Sharp 7)

The description of Northumberland's residence as a "worm-eaten hold of ragged stone" (Ind.35) which, most editors suggest, is a reference to Warkworth castle in Northumberland, illustrates how the historical plot of 2 Henry IV is interchangeable with actual events during the Elizabethan era. "Ragged stone" (Ind.35) is an apt phrase to describe the northern castles that, by the late 1590s, had fallen into disrepair as the policies of Elizabeth and her government had resulted in the northern aristocracy deserting their strongholds for residence in the south (Stone 217). Indeed, after the confiscation of estates of the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland, Sir John Forster, an appointee of the crown, occupied Warkworth castle and stripped it of every item that could be removed and sold (Watts 96). Furthermore, the last castle to be built in the fourteenth century was Dunstanburgh on the Northumberland coast which, in 1594, was noted by Royal Commissioners to be "decayed for want of repairing by long continuance" (cited in Watts 22). However, in an historical context, the description of Warkworth as "ragged stone" (Ind.35) hardly befits a stronghold that, in the fifteenth century, was one of a chain of castles protecting England's northern border from incursions by the Scots and whose military importance was, as Holinshed quoting Edward Hall records, one of the factors why Henry and Northumberland were reconciled after the battle of Shrewsbury

... because the earle had Berwike in his possession,  
and further, had his castels of Alnewike,  
Warkeworth, and other, fortified with Scots.

(Bullough 4: 269)



In the same manner as in the previous plays, the northern English (more precisely the Earl of Northumberland) are portrayed in a less than flattering light. One recalls that in Richard II Northumberland was the "ladder" on which Henry ascended the throne. However, in both parts of Henry IV, the Earl of Northumberland (while assuming the role of chief conspirator) is portrayed as a vacillating character (Ornstein 157). In 1 Henry IV, it is the failure of Northumberland to support his son Hotspur at the battle of Shrewsbury that contributed to the defeat of the rebels. Correspondingly, in 2 Henry IV despite Northumberland's claim to "let order die" (1.1.154), a "thousand reasons" (2.3.66) prevent him joining the Archbishop at Gaultree forest - an action that leads to the rebels' defeat (in a departure from the chronicles where Northumberland only fled into exile after the Archbishop had been captured and his forces dispersed).

In a play that Clare (76) suggests was censored because the original name (Oldcastle) given to the character now known as Falstaff offended the Lord Chamberlain, no such luxury is afforded to the Percies. In Shakespeare's histories, their role remains that of a disaffected element within the realm. Nevertheless, it is a role supported by historical evidence, not only in a past that Shakespeare's plays explore, but in the Tudor period itself. In 1537 Sir Thomas Percy was executed for his part in a rebellion against Henry VIII - known as the Pilgrimage of Grace, and the seventh Earl was executed for his role in the 1569 rebellion (Bullough 4: 249).

It was not only in the popular theatre that the Earls of Northumberland were seen as, what Humphreys (2H4 15) terms, the "foes of national harmony"; various non-dramatic sources suggest that the perception of the Percies as an alien element, was widespread. In the Mirror for Magistrates, one finds the following sub-title to the stanzas which describe the rebellions against Henry

How Henry Percy Earle of Northumberland, was for his  
covetous and trayterous attempt put to death at  
York.

(Bullough 4: 203)

Furthermore, in contemporary ballads such as "The White doe of Rylstone", the threat (and perhaps fear) of the northern hordes descending on the south is graphically illustrated

It was the time when England's Queen  
Twelve years had reigned, a sovereign dread;  
Nor yet the restless crown had been  
Disturbed upon her virgin head;  
But now the inly-working North  
Was ripe to send its thousands forth,  
A potent vassalage, to fight  
In Percy's and in Neville's right  
Two Earls fast leagued in discontent,  
Who gave their wishes open vent;  
And boldly urged a general plea,  
The rites of ancient piety  
To be triumphantly restored  
By the dread justice of the sword!

(Sharp 275)

However, there is another factor that allowed the north and the Percies to be castigated in the popular theatre - namely their religion. It is possible to suggest that even after the Reformation, the northern parts of England remained

predominantly Catholic, whilst Protestantism continued to be concentrated in the southern half of the kingdom (Stone 729). As Bindoff (208) notes:

... it was in that natural refuge for lost causes which lay beyond the Trent that the lost causes of Tudor England, the cause of feudalism, the cause of Rome, held out most stubbornly.

As Catholics, the Percies' loyalty to Elizabeth and the Anglican settlement was always suspect (as their support for Mary Queen of Scots in 1569 demonstrated) and, to be "suspect" could result in being "frozen out of public life and denied access to ... royal favour" (Stone 269). In fact, it was a combination of these two factors that drove the northern aristocracy and their supporters to issue the following proclamation in the Yorkshire town of Ripon in November of 1569:

Forasmuch as divers evil-disposed persons about the Queen's Majesty have, by their subtle and crafty dealing to advance themselves, overcome in this realm the true and Catholic religion towards God, and by the same abused the queen, disordered the realm and now lastly seek and procure the destruction of the nobility, we therefore have gathered ourselves together to resist by force ...  
(Haigh 55)

Of further interest is the reiteration (in part) of the rebels' grievances to their counterparts in the plays of the second tetralogy. One recalls that in Richard II the charge laid against Bushy, Bagot and Green is that they "have misled a prince, a royal king" (3.1.8). More significant, it is the

manner in which the above appears to mirror the complaints of the rebels in 2 Henry IV in which

... the summary of all our griefs  
When time shall serve to show in articles:  
Which long ere this we offer'd to the king,  
And might by no suit gain our audience.  
When we are wrong'd and would unfold our griefs,  
We are denied access unto his person.

(4.1.73-78)

Unlike previous rebellions, the articles presented by the rebels are not voiced by an aristocrat, but an Archbishop. Consequently, as in the decree of the rebels in 1569 (cited above), a new element is added to the already dangerous and subversive raising of the rebel standard: religion - an issue that, after the Reformation, dominated many aspects of English society. As the play and the actual events of 1569 demonstrate, religion was a powerful motivating force, capable of persuading disaffected elements within the kingdom to rebel. Indeed, one of the principal ideological tracts of the Tudor period, the homily "Against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion", was a response to the northern rebellion led by the Catholic Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland. The homily, designed to be read in church every Sunday (of which attendance was compulsory), was an attempt to create "sacred as well as secular support for the established order" (Calderwood 21). However, as Guy (296) notes, in practice, absenteeism was rife, thus rendering the attempt to indoctrinate the public against the evils of rebellion ineffective. In the latter half of the sixteenth century, the

church of the Elizabethan settlement was "expected to collaborate with the government and to denounce the evils of rebellion" (Clare 69). Yet, in 2 Henry IV the reverse occurs as a member of the church's hierarchy, the Archbishop of York, not only acts as a spokesman for the rebel cause, but his involvement appears to suggest that their quarrel and cause "derives from heaven" (1.2.206). The challenge to the crown is no longer simply a secular uprising but, like its counterpart in 1569, is a spiritual calling that constitutes a far greater threat to the Lancastrian dynasty than the rebellion of Hotspur for, no longer does the

... word, rebellion, ... divide  
The action of their bodies from their souls,  
And they did fight with queasiness, constrain'd  
As men drink potions, that their weapons only  
Seem'd on our side; but for their spirits and souls,  
This word, rebellion, it had froze them up,  
As fish are in a pond. But now the Bishop  
Turns insurrection into rebellion.

(1.1.194-201)

Again, it is possible to draw comparisons between Shakespeare's theatrical rebellion and the rebellion of the northern aristocracy in 1569 who, in support of the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots did, in fact, turn "insurrection into religion" (1.2.210), a revolt that Lord Burghley would later suggest only failed "because all Catholics had not been duly informed that the Queen was a heretic" (cited in Simpson 413).

In England, the fear of a religious civil war did not end with the defeat of the northern Earls in 1569, nor with the death of Mary Queen of Scots. The last decade of the century saw an increasing repression of Catholics, culminating in 1593 with the passing of an Act of Parliament that placed restrictions on the movement of English Catholics and the education of their children. Indeed, even after the defeat of the Armada in 1588, while the threat of a direct invasion by Spain receded, there was a perception that rebellion in Ireland would provide the Spanish with an opportunity to convert Ireland into a 'catholic Holland', a situation that became a distinct possibility when the Earl of Tyrone entered into a military alliance with Philip of Spain in 1596 (Black 355). Against this background, it is not surprising that a region whose religious loyalties (within the lifetime of an Elizabethan theatre audience) had posed a major threat to the crown, could be regarded as an "alien world within". Indeed, commenting on northern society during the period of the rebellion, Sir Ralph Sadler, a Privy Councillor, noted:

The ancient faith still lay like lees at the bottom of men's hearts and if the vessel was ever so little stirred came to the top.

(C.S.P. domestic addenda 1566-79 Vol XV:77)

In the political climate of the 1590s, little wonder that a play in which, Humphreys (2H4 lxxi) notes, "showed an Archbishop rising against an established monarch, proclaiming the good of the nation, religiously blessing insurrection and

citing Richard II's death under Bolingbroke", appears (at least in its published form) to have been censored. Although belonging to the same faction, there is a discernible difference between the representation of the rebels in 2 Henry IV and their counterparts in 1 Henry IV. As Melchiori (23) suggests, the triple alliance of Hotspur, Glendower and Mortimer is "presented in a grotesque light", while in 2 Henry IV, the rebels' cause is heard "more plainly" (4.1.66).

Why Shakespeare's company would perform a play that appears to give credence to the cause of rebellion is, perhaps, open to question - particularly if one accepts Melchiori's dating of the first staging of 2 Henry IV as early 1598 (Melchiori 3), only six months after which, due to the furore over Jonson and Nashe's The Isle of Dogs, the playhouses of London had been closed (Humphreys, 2H4 xvi). Intriguingly, this issue is further complicated when one considers that the theatrical portrayal of an historical event appears comparable with the only rebellion (before Essex's failure in 1601) that threatened the stability of the realm (Campbell 229). However, in 1596, Lord Hunsdon the Lord Chamberlain and patron of Shakespeare's company - who in 1569 had been the warden of the Eastern marches and Governor of Berwick and whose loyalty to his cousin the Queen was instrumental in the defeat of the northern rebellion - had died. In a further coincidence, Edmund Tilney, the Master of Revels, and responsible for the licensing of plays, was "theoretically subordinate to the Lord Chamberlain" (Clare

11), an office that between 1596 and early 1597 was no longer under the control of the Hunsdons. Indeed, the office of Lord Chamberlain passed (temporarily) to Lord Cobham, a direct descendant of Sir John Oldcastle who, it has been suggested by Humphreys (1H4 xv), was the original name and historical model of Shakespeare's Falstaff. Hence, there exists a period in which the production of a play in which northern rebels offer "a cogent defence of rebellion" (Clare 70), may have been permissible.

Nevertheless, it remains practically impossible to establish whether or not the "topical and referential" (Clare 27) passages absent from the quarto of 1600 were performed in the theatre, although recent scholarship suggests the copy sent to the printer was Shakespeare's own foul papers in which the offending passages, while not cut, had been revised for possible use in performance (Melchiori 194-97). Yet, despite the textual problems of the quarto version of 2 Henry IV, the northerners remain rebellious subjects. What appears to be missing from the text are speeches that explain the "insurgents' cause, their grievances and strategies" (Clare 68), passages that seriously weaken the rebels' case (Melchiori 24). Consequently, the north, because of the absence of certain passages, is again relegated to the role of an unstable element within the realm. More importantly, by concentrating on the Archbishop's rebellion, Shakespeare's 2 Henry IV highlights and possibly exploits another cultural difference between the south and the north of England which,



one can suggest, was recognisable to an Elizabethan theatre audience: namely, religion.

In the second tetralogy (as in the sixteenth century) the rebellions of the north constitute a conservative reaction against changing political structures. In Richard II, rebellion is not initially against the King, but against the "upstart unthriffts" (RII 2.3.122) who have replaced the traditional role of the nobility as advisers to the crown. In both Henry IV plays, the various rebellions are against a new regime that treats those who were once its equals as subjects (Ornstein 130). Paradoxically, in the second tetralogy, it is the crown that becomes the radical element within the kingdom. One recalls that in Richard II, there was an attempt to impose an absolutism more akin to the age of the Tudors than that of the Plantagenets. Furthermore, the Lancastrians' accession to the throne was the result of armed rebellion, a situation that raises questions about the very basis and legitimacy of monarchical rule. Consequently, for a dynasty whose claim to the throne was not unquestionable and whose tenure of the crown (with the childless Elizabeth approaching old age) was clearly ending, the theatrical representation of the rebellions against Henry highlights many of the ideas, questions and contradictions within society that the Tudors struggled to contain (Williams 13). Indeed, adding tension to the treatment of the rebels in the play is the fact that the Tudors themselves were "marginal" (originating from Wales) and also usurpers of the throne. As Greenblatt suggests,

Shakespeare's 2 Henry IV appears "to be testing and confirming an extremely dark and disturbing hypothesis about the nature of monarchical power in England ... where the illegitimacy of legitimate authority is repeatedly demonstrated" (56). The following lines are not only a call to arms, but a recognition of the fickleness of public opinion. More importantly, the reference to the reign of Richard suggests that the legitimacy of the established order may be questionable:

Let us on!  
And publish the occasion of our arms.  
The commonwealth is sick of their own choice,  
Their over-greedy love have surfeited.  
An habitation giddy and unsure  
Hath he that buildeth on the vulgar heart.  
O thou fond many, with what loud applause  
Didst thou beat heaven with blessing Bullingbrook  
Before he was what thou wouldst have him be!

.....

So, so, thou common dog, didst thou disgorge  
Thy glutton bosom of the royal Richard,  
And now thou wouldst eat thy dead vomit up,  
And howl'st to find it. What trust in these times?  
They that, when Richard liv'd, would have him die,  
Are now become enanor'd on his grave.

(1.3.85-102)

In 2 Henry IV, the rebels are not an insignificant force, but a potential threat whose

Present musters grow upon the file  
To five and twenty thousand men of choice.

(1.3.10-11)

However, despite this widespread support, what emerges in both parts of Henry IV is a northern zone that appears increasingly

out of step with the emerging culture of the south, a situation that has a resonance with the status of the north in Elizabethan society. The rebellion of 1569 was the final attempt by the northern aristocracy to regain its former prominence within the state and whose subsequent defeat meant that "northern feudalism and particularism could no longer rival Tudor centralisation" (Fletcher 96). In a similar fashion, the defeat and execution of the Archbishop and the defeat of Northumberland, mentioned by Harcourt (4.4.94-101) but not witnessed on the stage, signifies the end of the aristocratic challenge to Henry. In 2 Henry IV, the Archbishop's forces crumble before a southern army (although they are defeated not by force but subterfuge) and, in a further parallel to events of 1569, the defeat of the rebels is an almost bloodless affair as the leaders are arrested and executed and the "scatt' red stray" (4.2.120) pursued. As the kingdom's boundaries appear secure, the armies raised to quell rebellion are "discharged all and gone" (4.3.127). From this point onwards, the north is no longer relevant; the historical focus moves back to the world of the court and the continuing uncertainty surrounding the succession of Henry. In lines which one could apply to the function of the north in the plays, Warwick assures the king that Hal will reject his "followers" (4.1.53)

Like a strange tongue, wherein, to gain the language,  
'Tis needful that the most immodest word  
Be look'd upon and learnt: which once attain'd,  
Your Highness knows, comes to no further use  
But to be known and hated ...

(4.4.69-73)

Both parts of Henry IV explore (in an historical sense) the suppression of threats to the integrity of the English state from those who inhabit the outer margins of the realm. As one turns to the final play in the tetralogy, the marginalisation of those whose cultural practices and political affiliations are incompatible with an emerging centralised and southern based state, becomes more pronounced.

## Henry V

On one level, Henry V appears as a celebration of England, the culmination of a long struggle to establish a unified state under a strong monarch. As the defeat of the northern rebels at Gaultree forest and Branham moor in the previous play suggests,

There is not now a rebel's sword unsheath'd,  
But Peace puts forth her olive every where.

(2H4 4.4.86-87)

More importantly, the defeat of Northumberland removes what Dollimore terms the "structural problem of the over mighty subject - the repeated theme of the other plays" (191), a political problem which, in Shakespeare's second tetralogy, appears (inevitably) to involve the north of England.

Critics have compared the topicality of Henry V with the political climate in England during the latter years of the sixteenth century. In particular, the analogy is often made between Henry's defeat of France and the anticipated success of the Earl of Essex's expedition to Ireland in early 1599. Furthermore, as Dollimore (188) notes, in Henry V the resistance to the king from the established church, aristocratic factions and disgruntled soldiers, constitutes the same elements that periodically opposed the policies of the Elizabethan regime. However, perhaps the most significant feature of the play, in respect to the north of England, is

the concept of a unified state which, in a similar fashion to England in the 1590s, stands on the brink of expansion. Significantly, in Henry V, the threat "from the pilfering borderers" (1.2.142) stems not from the northern English, but the Scots, as the play suggests the final defeat of regionalism in England. Furthermore, in Henry V, in a departure from the previous plays, there exists the concept of a British nation united under one crown (Edwards 74). As Greenblatt (56) suggests, Henry is

... the charismatic leader who purges the commonwealth of its incorrigibles and forges the martial national spirit. By yoking together diverse peoples - represented in the play by the Welshman Fluellen, the Irishman Macmorris, and the Scotsman Jamy, who fight at Agincourt alongside the loyal Englishman - Hal symbolically tames the last wild areas in the British Isles.

However, in the same essay, Greenblatt (57) recognises the problematic nature of Shakespeare's Henry V, a play in which foreign conquest appears solely motivated:

To frustrate prophecies, and to rase out,  
Rotten opinion...

(2H4 5.2.127-28)

Although Shakespeare was, to a certain degree, bound by the need to present Henry both as a hero and "the perfect icon of Royal authority" (Rackin 80), underlying the apparent unity of purpose (of the clergy and nobility) lie a mass of contradictions, a situation that the theatrical representation

of Henry's reign fully exploits. Indeed, in a play that suggests a unified kingdom, "its obsessive preoccupation is insurrection" (Dollimore, History and Ideology 188).

In the opening scene, Henry faces possible dissension and resistance from the church as the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely debate how they can offset a Bill "Urg'd by the commons" (1.1.71) to limit the church's wealth by the seizure of

... all the temporal lands, which men devout  
By testament have given to the Church.

(1.1.9-10)

Perhaps the greatest threat to Henry and the unity of the realm occurs in Act II, when the conflict of interest between the state and the church is resolved. Almost immediately, the focus of the play shifts to the violence and instability of the London streets and, as already anticipated by the chorus, the aristocratic dissatisfaction within Henry's court (Taylor 71). In Henry V, the north of England, or more precisely those associated with it, are once again portrayed as an oppositional element within the dominant order. However, in a departure from both parts of Henry IV (and to a degree Richard II), geographically, the north no longer exists as a definable entity. For, while the early scenes of Henry V are located in England, they remain confined to London and Southampton. Indeed, the majority of the action consists of Henry's deeds in the "vast fields of France" (Pro.12).

The conspiracy of Scroop, Grey and Cambridge and their arrest on the eve of the English army's departure for France, seriously undermine the concept

That many things, having full reference  
To one consent, may work contrariously;  
As many arrows, loosed several ways,  
Come to one mark; as many ways meet in one town;  
As many fresh streams meet in one salt sea;  
As many lines close in the dial's centre;  
So may a thousand actions, once afoot,  
End in one purpose.

(1.2.205-212)

Initially, the plot against Henry appears motivated by greed in which the traitors' confessions of guilt seemingly support Exeter's belief that

... for a foreign purse, so sell  
His sovereign's life to death and treachery.

(2.2.10-11)

However, there is a suggestion of another reason for the conspiracy against Henry when the Earl of Cambridge claims in his confession whereby

... the gold of France did not seduce,  
Although I did admit it as a motive  
The sooner to effect what I intended.

(2.2.155-157)

As recorded in the chronicles, Shakespeare's dramatisation of the plot against Henry draws attention (albeit fleetingly) to one of the underlying themes of the second tetralogy - namely the continuing resistance to the Lancastrian dynasty. More



significantly, although never directly stated, the conspiracy against Henry stems from the same faction which, in the Henry IV plays, fought at Shrewsbury and was tricked into submission at Gaultree forest. Indeed as Tillyard suggests (311), Shakespeare in Henry V keeps "alive the theme of civil war, but more faintly than in any other History plays". Yet, the extent to which the Elizabethan audience would have been aware of the significance of Cambridge's speech to the earlier plays in the second tetralogy remains open to question, particularly as this passage was omitted from the quarto text of 1600 (Taylor 12). In fact, to fully appreciate the significance of the conspiracy against Henry, one needs to step beyond the world of the playhouse. Turning to non-dramatic literature, one discovers the underlying cause and motivation behind the challenge to the Lancastrian crown. In Holinshed (one of Shakespeare's principal sources) the following passage records that

... Richard earle of Cambridge did not conspire with the lord Scroope & Thomas Graie for the murthering of king Henrie to please the French king withall but onelie to the intent to exalt to the crowne his brother in law Edmund earle of March.

(Bullough 4: 386)

Significantly, both Scroop and Grey were related to the Percies - the former being the nephew of the Archbishop executed for his role in the rebellion depicted in Shakespeare's 2 Henry IV (Wentersdorf 271). Nonetheless, even without knowledge of the early plays of the tetralogy or an awareness of the political history of the fifteenth century,

what remains is a threat to the stability of England by an aristocratic faction associated (if only by title) with northern England. In less than a hundred lines, both Henry and Exeter clearly identify and, more importantly, stress that the "English monsters!" (2.2.85) to be arrested and executed for high treason, are Richard Earl of Cambridge, Lord Scroop of Masham and Thomas Grey, knight of Northumberland (emphasis added).

Paradoxically, it is the silences within the play that reiterate the manner in which the north of England existed as a marginalised element in Elizabethan society and, perhaps highlight the degree to which the Elizabethan popular theatre was implicated in the ideological formation of the north as the "alien world within". On the eve of Agincourt, there is no suggestion of English regionalism (apart from an oblique reference to Cornwall) when Henry, in disguise, confronts Williams and Bates. In a play in which cultural difference is expressed by language (most noticeably the accented speeches of Fluellen, Jamy and Macmorris), the only recognisable cultural reference point of the English soldiery is the presence of the former companions of Falstaff who remain identifiable with the world of Eastcheap - a world that is firmly grounded in the southern half of the realm. Consequently, while certain scenes deliberately refer to the diverse nature of Henry's army (the presence of the Irish, Welsh and Scots captains), the English nation appears as a single entity into which the north has either been submerged

or excluded. In the political climate of 1599, this perspective is not without foundation, for despite the contradictions and conflicts within the Elizabethan state, England did emerge as a unified nation under the Tudors but as a state partly built on the suppression of the north.

Clearly, in Henry V a sense of national unity (not only in England but in the British Isles) exists, no matter how flawed. As such, Shakespeare's final play in the tetralogy represents a progression from the dramatisation of the preceding reigns that concentrated on the chaos within England. The crushing of internal opposition within the ranks of the aristocratic elite lays the foundation for the conquest of France and establishes the unity under the crown that the deposition of Richard destroyed. Nevertheless, the securing of England required the occupying of "giddy minds" (2H4 4.5.13) and the creation of enemies that would unite the nation. In Henry V that role is no longer the preserve of the northern English, but of the French (Dollimore, History and Ideology 187). Therefore, Henry V represents a subtle shift in perspective, for after the execution of the three conspirators, the north of England no longer functions as the ideologically constructed "other" which, as a threat, served to legitimise the rule of the Lancastrian dynasty by hiding the contradictions behind its establishment.

However, as historical "fact", Shakespeare's earlier tetralogy and the final appearance of the chorus in Henry V

(now acting as an epilogue), remind its audience that the dynastic struggles unleashed by Richard's deposition are only temporarily checked as:

Henry the Sixt, in Infant bands crown'd King  
Of France and England, did this king succeed;  
Whose state so many had the managing,  
That they lost France, and made his England bleed;  
Which oft our stage hath shown ...

(Ep. 9-13)

With the early death of Henry, the contradictions and tensions within society could no longer be contained. France would be lost and England would slide into the chaos of the War of the Roses.

## Conclusion

The preceding chapters have attempted to establish a relationship between the portrayal of the north on the Shakespearian stage and its status within Elizabethan society. In doing so, it has been argued that in both literary and non-literary discourses, the north exists as a politically and culturally irrelevant but dangerous entity, located during the sixteenth century in what was deemed the periphery of the kingdom. However, it now remains to examine the motivation and ideological implications of this portrayal.

The challenge that the Elizabethan theatre offered to many of the ideological tenets of the dominant order is not disputed. Yet, while the history plays restore the "erasures in the official record ... the voices silenced by the repression of the dominant discourse" (Rackin xi), the question remains whether the theatre (as a licensed place of entertainment existing geographically and culturally on the margins of society) was either a place of containment or genuine resistance. In one sense, these two complementary but conflicting positions epitomise the current debate within Shakespearian criticism: between those who, to paraphrase Rackin, "have discovered a polyphonic discourse, where even the voices of the illiterate [and marginalised] are never fully silenced" (42), and those who argue that any subversion is contained and often produced by the dominant order. However, these opposing views are, to a degree, reliant on the

ideological preoccupations of the critic. What the plays of the second tetralogy appear to suggest is that both readings are possible and, more importantly, demanded.

Representing a progression, the second tetralogy dramatises the increasing suppression of the north. Accordingly, it highlights the manner in which the status of the northern English changed from that of an integral part of the dominant order to a residual element within society - to exist as the "ideological other" (Williams 121). In Richard II, one recalls that it is "all the English peers" (3.4.88) (including the northern Earls) who depose Richard. However, in the Henry IV plays, the once "gentle Percy" (RII 5.6.11) and the faction he represents are increasingly demonised as representing an attempt to "subvert the social order" (Dollimore, Cultural Materialism 50), becoming, in Henry V, associated with "another fall of man" (2.2.142). In the medieval world, as portrayed on the stage, the creation of the "alien" by the Lancastrians serves to deflect attention from their tentative claim to the throne which, in the final analysis, was based on the success of armed insurrection and the defeat of rival claimants. Clearly, it does not require a great leap of faith to acknowledge the manner in which the contradictory nature of the Lancastrian crown could be applied to the situation of the Tudor dynasty whose tenure as the heads of the English state was built on Henry Earl of Richmond's success at the battle of Bosworth. As such, the "histories" demonstrate the manner in which political and

cultural structures that challenge the dominant order, are contained and absorbed and used to deflect criticism from "the instability which originated in its own policies" (Dollimore, Cultural Materialism 183). In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, this challenge would stem from the margins of the realm, a point recognised in the plays of the second tetralogy. Consequently, the ideologically motivated creation and identification of disparate elements did not only involve a process of political and cultural alienation but the establishment of geographical boundaries.

In one sense, while the north functioned as an alternative power within England, its political structures and cultural organisation were increasingly outdated by the emergence of a rudimentary capitalist state centred on London and the southern counties (Howard 21). Accordingly, the role of the north of England in the theatre highlights (what Worden terms) the "gains and losses of the Tudor achievement" (9) representing, as it does, the subjugation of a recalcitrant part of the nation and the consolidation of the English state under a centralised power structure based in the southern half of the kingdom (Neill 4). Yet, the establishment of political and cultural parameters requires the identification of those elements which are to be excluded on the grounds of their perceived difference from an ideologically formulated concept of nationhood (Dollimore, Cultural Materialism 53). The plays of the second tetralogy not only identify disparate elements in Elizabethan society but interrogate the very processes

whereby those regions such as the north of England were transformed from an alternative and rival element within the state, into a marginalised ideologically constructed "other", politically and culturally suppressed in an emerging English nation (Mullaney 57). Nevertheless, while Shakespeare's theatrical representations of the past do not idealise State authority, they are bound by a past in which the north of England was an area of disaffection and, in the last decades of the sixteenth century, remained so. However, the representation of the marginalised, particularly in one of the most visible forms of cultural exchange - the public theatre - subverts the attempt to silence and mask the alien world that the dominant ideological constructs sought to deny or marginalise (Kastan cited in Kamps 256). As the events of 1569 demonstrated, while "any culture defines itself in terms of its Others, whether imaginary or real; what a given culture excludes as alien can, however, come back to haunt it" (Mullaney 93). As both Shakespeare's second tetralogy and "history" suggest, the "other" was not imaginary but existed as a focal point for those disaffected elements in the kingdom whose aristocratic leaders periodically led

... ancient lords and reverend bishops on  
To bloody battles and to bruising arms.

(1H4 3.2.104-105)

Hence, if the plays of the second tetralogy are an expression of an emerging nation at the close of the century, it is a



portrayal that contradicts the concept of an homogeneous whole.

While being aware of the problems of reducing the whole discussion to economic determinism, on a level which Holderness defines in Shakespeare's History Plays as "vulgar marxism" (5), one should not overlook the fact that the Elizabethan popular theatre was a commercial enterprise whose major revenue base included the royal court and the theatres around the city of London - a city which in the late sixteenth century was, by far, the largest metropolis in England (Weimann 171). While it remains impossible to gauge an Elizabethan audience's reaction to the representation of the north in the theatre, non-literary discourse suggests that the perception of the north did present a recognisable and, perhaps, popular "other". Indeed, if we further interrogate the plays, there appears to exist a deliberate fashioning of the north in the manner of a threat. In Richard II, the Earl of Northumberland and his northern supporters are instrumental in the deposition of Richard who, despite his failings, is the lawful head of state which, in a departure from the chronicles, serves to partly absolve Bolingbroke. Of greater significance, is the manner in which Shakespeare (in both parts of Henry IV), alters the chronology of the uprisings against the Lancastrian crown to become what, in the theatre, essentially appears to be a prolonged period of civil unrest caused by the northern English (Bullough 4: 253). In Henry V the threat to the conquest of France is disrupted by an

aristocratic faction that, again, is associated with the north of England (if only tentatively). While, such departures and the compression of material from the various sources on which the plays are based were prompted by the desire to create a viable and dynamic drama, they reiterate the perception of the northern English as the major cause of instability in the realm. As a result, the Elizabethan popular theatre (which was increasingly associated with the London playhouses) appears to be implicated if not in the creation, then in the perpetuation of the ideological formation of the north as the "alien world within".

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