

Speculations on *2 Henry IV*, Theatre Historiography, the Strait Gate of History, and Kenneth Branagh

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"The oppressors do not work the same way in every epoch. They cannot be defined in the same fashion at all times."¹

"You're still fucking peasants as far as I can see."²

I

In one of his sermons John Donne noted that heresies can arise from something as small as a preposition,³ but there are orthodoxies of the preposition as well. One of the most entrenched of the orthodoxies of literary studies can be seen in even such a progressive collection as the recent *Shakespeare Reproduced*. Although the subtitle of this work is "The text in history and ideology," the titles of individual essays tell a different story: "class-gender tension in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*"; "femininity and the monstrous in *Othello*"; "the politics of gender and rank in *Much Ado About Nothing*"; "subversion and recuperation in *The Merchant of Venice*"; "legitimation crisis in *Coriolanus*."⁴ What these titles indicate is that the epistemology and teleology of literary studies remain bound by a movement inward, into the literary text, even in a book whose name invokes the recontextualization of the Shakespearean drama text. Therefore, when a work which breaks from these

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orthodoxies arises, it is important to recognize this work and to study its implications. Such a work is David Wiles's *Shakespeare's Clown*.⁵

Wiles is interested in the relationship in the Elizabethan playhouse between the Shakespearean drama text and the afterpiece or jig which comes after or athwart it. The object of study and the locus of meaning is no longer in the drama text, but in the interplay between drama and afterpiece. Such an interplay has its most acute implications for the understanding of *2 Henry IV*.

What is printed as the Epilogue of *2 Henry IV* seems to be, actually, two epilogues. A. R. Humphreys writes,

Not all three paragraphs would be delivered at any one time; if they were, they would be overlong, and awkward too. The first spoken by its author, presumably Shakespeare, . . . would soon be out-of-date through its reference to a recent 'displeasing play.' The second and third paragraphs need a dancer . . . they must belong to another occasion.⁶

Whatever separate occasions are involved, the 1600 Quarto prints, apparently out of confusion, both epilogues run together, and so both epilogues/occasions are likely to have been part of the play's performance history before that date, that is, within the play's first two years of life.

The second epilogue, that spoken by a dancer, seems to be prologue to an afterpiece, most likely one of "the jigs with which every performance in the public theatres end[ed]." The jig was a song and dance, a brief farce, with deep roots in the popular theatrical tradition, especially in the folk festival and the feast of Misrule. Jigs were an extremely popular element in the public theatre; they were often staged independently, at an admission price half of that for a play—which would have made them attractive to that class for which even the penny admission to a play was rather steep.⁷

Politically, religiously, or personally satiric, coarse or obscene, the art form of the groundlings who delighted in their abusiveness, performed as often in the streets, taverns, and fairs as in the confines of the theatre, jigs often threatened to be socially disruptive. In the theatre they were known to be accompanied by small scale riots after or even during performances.⁸ In 1612 jigs at the Fortune playhouse became such a regular cause of "tumults and outrages" that the General Session of the Peace for Middlesex ordered that all theatre companies within London and its liberties "utterlye abolishe all Jigges Rymes and Daunces after their playes, And not tollerate permitt or suffer anye of them to be used."⁹

The first great jig master was Richard Tarleton, but the jig was brought to its greatest glory in the days of Will Kempe. In 1598, the year of *2 Henry IV*, "Kempe's Jigge" was being "filthily" chanted in the streets by "Whores, bedles, bawdes, and sergeants." At the time Kempe was an actor in Shakespeare's company, the Lord Chamberlain's men, which was, consequently, the company most prominent in fostering the jig.¹⁰ The second prologue to *2 Henry IV* would, therefore, most likely have been spoken by Will Kempe, introducing himself in a jig. Another dancer than Kempe may have been the speaker, but before 1600 Kempe was the most notable dancer in the company—the most famous dancer in the country—and the dancer customarily assigned the jig which the second epilogue appears to be introducing.

Eleanor Prosser assumes that "the epilogue is not spoken by one of the play's characters,"¹¹ but this need not be the case. The practice of doubling and the principle of economic use of manpower would mitigate against an actor—especially one as prominent as Kempe—being used solely to deliver the epilogue. The majority of Shakespeare's epilogues are spoken by one of the play's characters; only two other plays, *Henry VIII* and *Two Noble Kinsmen*—both from a very different moment in Shakespeare's career, and both in part the work of Fletcher—have epilogues not assigned to characters. In the case of *2 Henry IV*, although no character's name is given as speaker, this may be because separate epilogues have been run together: either both epilogues cannot be assigned to one character, or the name of the character has been lost in the shuffle.

Will Kempe was not only a jig dancer, but the company's foremost clown: among the parts presumed to be his are Bottom and Dogberry, Launce and Launcelot Gobbo.¹² Which part did Kempe play in *2 Henry IV*? One very likely answer, and one argued convincingly by Wiles, is that he played Falstaff. This is not, in itself, a new argument. Dover Wilson suggests Kempe as Falstaff, and Gary Taylor responds that this "seems likely enough, although we have no direct evidence to prove it." Robert Weimann argues that Kempe's Falstaff was a direct descendant of Tarleton's Dericke in the *Famous Victories*.¹³ Wiles, however, has developed the argument with more weight, consistency, and rigor than any of his predecessors.¹⁴

What if Kempe played Falstaff and what if Kempe delivered the second epilogue? We would be confronted with the astounding sight of Falstaff, banished and apparently broken, returning to the stage to break into an obscene jig. Would this not signal the resurrection of popular misrule? In place of the triumph of order, in place of the rise of the new monarchy, the epilogue and afterpiece would have been reasserting the spirit of carnival, rebellion, and disorder. As Wiles puts it, the audience is confronted with

the moment when Kemp [sloughs] off the desexualized, workaday, Lenten identity that the playwright has given him, and join[s] them to become their Lord of Misrule in the festive climax that concludes the performance,

and "With Kemp/Falstaff's dismissal by Hal, and his reappearance in the jig, the conventional structure of comedy is restored."¹⁵ If this were the case, it would call not only for a complete reversal of our reading of the play, but also a different approach to the study of the drama text, which cannot be understood—which is in fact open to radical misinterpretation—outside of the context of the theatrical event.

Wiles's arguments are powerful and profoundly important, and yet they are problematic in two general ways. Firstly, they revert at times to orthodoxies which limit the revolutionary force of the discussion. Wiles seeks to replace the "unity of the text" with the "unity of the theatrical experience." In the place of Shakespeare as author, Wiles doesn't posit a heterogeneous and contradictory agency, but rather a collaboration of Shakespeare and Kempe which ultimately does very little to displace Shakespeare's authorial intention: "Of course, we cannot ever say that the jig is moving in a direction which Shakespeare has not himself pointed to in his scripts."¹⁶ The idea of dramatic or authorial intention is of very limited use in the Renaissance playhouse, where, according to Michael Bristol,

The theatrical performances that took place . . . were created by means of a coalition strategy shared among writers and their texts, players and their repertoire of 'business,' and integral groups of spectators and their proverbs, jokes, curses and improvised commentary.¹⁷

Although Wiles writes of multifacetedness, multiplicity of points of view, and "plurality of meanings," this multiplicity is circumscribed by the complex, yet balanced and unified, intentionality of Shakespeare/Kempe.¹⁸ The question remains whether the theatrical experience should be thought of as unified. Even if Kempe played Falstaff and Kempe danced the jig, it is not certain that there was any dramatic intention on the part of Shakespeare and/or Kempe at work. It may be that Kempe played Falstaff and, quite by coincidence, Kempe danced the afterpiece: these two actions could have been brought together as much by the exigencies of the playhouse—Kempe always played the clown; Kempe always danced the jig—as by any conscious and overweening authorial intention. In the place of a dramatic, ultimately unifying irony, there

would be the heterogeneous (in)significance of the theatrical event. In this case the jig would not act as a binary reversal of the drama, but would be independent of it, part of a "tradition of multifarious entertainment," the "popular hodge-podge," that does battle in its own way with the legitimate and aristocratic tradition of "discerning private audiences,"¹⁹ which, rather than balance, could sometimes result in "tumults and outrages" spilling into the streets. Wiles's acceptance of the propaganda ploy of the "Elizabethan compromise" as historical fact,²⁰ makes him read the afterpiece as always effecting balance and resolution of tension: for example, as quoted above, "With Kemp/Falstaff's dismissal by Hal, and his reappearance in the jig, the conventional structure of comedy is restored." This equation of multiplicity with balance and resolution effaces the history of plebeian struggle. Rather than the restitution of a comic balance, the jig served potentially as the enactment and actualization of plebeian rebellion writ small. Wiles, of course, deals with the politics of the jig, and admits that the Elizabethan balance did not last past the 1590s, but his aestheticization of the Shakespeare/Kempe collaboration rewrites popular political difference as quasi-bourgeois artistic triumph.

Secondly, much of what Wiles wants to present as conclusion and fact is more complicated and uncertain than he allows. For instance, is it true that every performance in the public theatre ended with a jig? Every performance in the public theatre ended with an afterpiece, and the jig may have been the most common type of afterpiece, but it appears that there were other possibilities: other forms of dance, or improvisation on a theme suggested from the audience. On September 21, 1599 the Swiss visitor Thomas Platter crossed the Thames to see a performance of *Julius Caesar*, at the end of which he saw performers who "danced with all possible grace, two dressed in men's and two in women's clothes, marvelously with one another." This doesn't seem to describe an obscene jig. Platter presumably saw Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* performed by the Lord Chamberlain's men. Is this the same company that staged "Kempe's Jigge," chanted filthily in the streets? Kempe left the Lord Chamberlain's men in late 1599. It is generally assumed that his departure marked a shift in style for the company, what we might today call a gentrification of Shakespeare's theatre. Part of this would entail the curtailing and purging of the jig. Kempe left the Lord Chamberlain's men for Worcester's company, and the popular jig left the Globe for the Boar's Head Inn, the Fortune, and the Red Bull.²¹ But did Platter see a performance just before or just after Kempe's departure? If just before, then the company may have been moving toward curtailing the jig even before Kempe left; in which case the jig might very well have been curtailed at the end of *2 Henry IV*.

Wiles assumes, like Humphreys, that the first epilogue is spoken by the author, and, further, in a performance before the queen.²² If this is so, was it an alternative to Kempe's jig before or after he left the company, or was it the original epilogue to which Kempe's jig was a later alternative? But it is not at all necessary to assume that the first epilogue was spoken by Shakespeare. What are we to make of its claim to being *extempore*, or at least composed by the speaker: "If you look for a good speech now, you undo me, for what I have to say is of my own making, and what indeed (I should say) will (I doubt) prove mine own marring" (3-6)? There is a passage in *Hamlet* which has often been taken as an attack on Will Kempe's clownish extemporizing:²³

And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them, for there be of them that will themselves laugh to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the mean time some necessary question of the play be then to be considered. That's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. (3.2.38-45)

The extemporization in the first epilogue is not unrelated to Falstaff's ability to speak his way out of a bind, most notably in *1 Henry IV* when confronted with the truth concerning the Gadshill robbery. When he misplays his part, in the "play extempore" (3.2.280) he then enacts with Hal, Hal quickly turfs him out of the role with the same disapproval that Shakespeare, through the words of Hamlet, displays for Kempe. The first epilogue, then, could possibly have been spoken by Shakespeare (or his spokesman) as author, or Will Kempe could have spoken the words Shakespeare, mimicking or ridiculing the barrenness of his unwanted additions, had written for him.²⁴ If it is indeed a scripted improvisation, then it is really no improvisation at all, but rather a foreclosure and appropriation of improvisation. And to what end? I kneel down before you—but, indeed, to pray to the Queen" (16-17). Even if Kempe as Falstaff is resurrected in this epilogue, he is resurrected in order to bow to hegemonic authority. This would leave us with two epilogues, both using Kempe as Falstaff, but with diametrically opposite effects: the latter overturns oppression and order; the former contains and limits popular misrule as much as it invokes it.

The epilogues show signs of a struggle, but it is impossible to know the details of the struggle. If the occasions that the two epilogues point towards are part of the progress of this struggle, it is impossible to know what their chronological relations might be. Dover Wilson suggests that Falstaff was written out of a revised *Henry V* because Kempe had left the company, but

Gary Taylor argues that it is just as likely that Kempe left because Falstaff was never in *Henry V*.²⁵ In *Kemps nine daies wonder*, Kempe's account of the famous morris dance he undertook after leaving the Lord Chamberlain's men, he writes that his purpose is "to reprove the slaunders spred of him,"²⁶ but what those slanders were, and what exactly drove Kempe from the Globe, we will never know.²⁷

II

In facing the uncertainties surrounding the epilogue of *2 Henry IV* and its afterpieces, we face the inevitable uncertainties that arise whenever we try and understand the past. What is there to be said or done when so much will always remain unknown? How is it possible for understanding to proceed in the light of such uncertainties? These are the questions posed by recent works in the theory of historiography, works by such thinkers as Michel Foucault, Hayden White, Dominick LaCapra, James Clifford, and Paul Hirst. The concern of this historiographic theory is to explore the limitations we always face in our attempts to understand the past, but rather than to be arrested by these limitations, the point becomes to take the understanding of these limitations as enabling, as allowing analysis to continue in new ways. Two of these enabling limitations are the bias of the historiographer and the ineluctable effects of discursive practice.

Walter Benjamin, an important precursor to these discussions, wrote that the historiographer always reads the past in "the Now of recognizability"; that is, the historiographer has an inescapable predilection or bias, founded in his/her historical situation, which allows him/her to recognize only certain aspects of the past. LaCapra employs Freud's concept of transference, "a repetition-displacement of the past into the present as it necessarily bears on the future," to understand this predicament. He writes,

Coming to terms with transference in an exchange with the past may be the issue that confronts historiography with its most engaging and unsettling challenge.

History has altered the historiographer's sensibility in such a way as to make him/her, in complex ways, both connected and disconnected with the past in the present. Partly for this reason, Hayden White writes, the historical record is never "a window through which the past 'as it really was' can be apprehended."²⁸

Such an awareness has fostered a disclaimer which has become almost *de rigueur* in historiographically aware criticism. Wiles's version, for instance, is that any assessment "of the clown's significance is an interpretation shaped by the premises about art and theatre available to us in the present."²⁹ Wiles's arguments for the return of Falstaff, no matter how convincing his evidence, are driven by something akin to wish fulfillment, and the interest of scholars such as Wiles and Weimann in the popular culture of the Renaissance is, at least as importantly as it is disinterested study, an engagement with the ongoing struggles between popular culture and hegemonic authority in our time. This is true of the present study as well, in ways that will become obvious.

For White, even more important than the transference relation of the historiographer with the past are the structures that modes of discourse impose on all historical knowledge. Modes of discourse—for instance, narrative—are not neutral, but carry ontological, epistemic, ideological, and political choices. An understanding of the "content of the form" of discourse problematizes both the notion of the reliable, transparent historical document—which is seen to be opaque text,³⁰—and the writing of the historiographer itself, which accepts the historical record only in ways it is structured to assimilate.

Once this problematic is admitted to, however, the point is not to grind historiography to a halt, to incapacitate understanding, but to find new ways of undertaking it. The ethnographer James Clifford, in an essay entitled "Partial Truths," notes that self-consciousness need not lead to the conclusion that it is impossible to know anything certain about other people, and that fiction is not merely opposed to truth:

to recognize the poetic dimensions of ethnography does not require that one give up facts and accurate accounting for the supposed free play of poetry. "Poetry" . . . can be historical, precise, objective.³¹

How are such partial truths to be obtained? If there is no escaping transference, then it must be owned up to. It is not only that "a rigorous sense of partiality can be a source of representational tact," a caveat against epistemological hubris, but the historiographer's engagement with the past raises the question of the very purpose of historiography itself. Paul Hirst, arguing that Marxism is less a science of history than a theory of contemporary politics, writes that products of historiography have to be analyzed vis-à-vis present political usefulness. White, writing of the ethics and politics of historiography, asserts that the historiographer must interpret the past "as an

occasion for his [sic] own speculations on the present (and future)." LaCapra writes,

I try to revive a Renaissance ideal of historiography that is largely out of favor at present—one in which scholarly research is intimately linked to "rhetorical" and "ethicopolitical" discourse.

An ethicopolitical historiography engages the problem of transference, while a rhetorical historiography engages the problem of discourse.³²

If ethics and politics give historiography its purpose, discourse and rhetoric give it a privileged access to the texts of history, including its own. An awareness of discourse, as we have seen, is one source of historiography's illuminating selfconsciousness. However, discourse also functions as the authenticating affinity between historiography and its subject. LaCapra notes the mutual reliance of literature and historiography on narrative.³³ This affinity provides a certain access for the historiographer to the understanding of texts from the past: s/he sees in those texts elements of his/her own practice which s/he is capable of recognizing first hand. A discursive historiography also takes security from the "fixedness of the philological object" in the face of "the extreme transitoriness" of the historical event.³⁴ The text from the past roots historiography in the study of something solid and in certain ways unchanging.

However, theatrical historiography presents a different set of discursive relations and problems which are in many ways more daunting. It is symptomatic that LaCapra's privileged object of study is the novel, whose affinities with historiography as both narrative and discourse are highly pronounced. The theatrical event, however, only shows such affinities if it is reduced to the drama text, and even then Shakespeare's plays read less like history writing than most nineteenth century novels. The theatrical event itself is neither predominantly narrative nor discursive; neither is the past theatrical event present to us in the way the text of a novel remains present. The epilogue to *2 Henry IV* shows the historiographer of the theatrical event that in this case the meaning of the solid drama text—leaving aside questions of the solidity of Renaissance drama texts—is founded upon a context which long ago melted into air.

What can theatrical historiography do in the face of such limitations? To begin with, clearly the answer cannot be to turn away from the theatrical event as if its absence makes it irrelevant, and—ignorance being bliss—retreat into the text. If nothing else what Wiles has shown is that in theatre studies strictly textual reading is inadequate scholarship, that especially in the case of Renaissance theatre the movement into the drama text imposes a profound

limitation on our understanding. What Wiles's speculations have done is tear a gaping hole in the conclusion of the drama text, a gaping hole that opens the drama text irrevocably onto history and the theatrical event, even if the conclusion of that event, its afterpiece, is forever missing.

This historiographical awareness, therefore, presents itself as a powerful critique of a false sense of security in drama studies and a furthering of our awareness of the nature of dramatic discourse as inextricably linked to the theatrical event. The point is not, once again, to paralyze understanding, but to render it more sophisticated. In this way historiographical awareness aligns itself with certain theoretical issues in theatrical reconstruction: the attempt in performance to simulate as closely as possible theatrical events of the past. In a recent article on reconstruction in dance performance, Mark Franko draws upon ideas from Richard Schechner to argue that "all reconstructions of earlier performances are actually recreations of conceptualized events rather than replications of true originals." What is reconstructed is not historical reality but historical significance, that is "significance in the present moment." Such a reconstruction is conscious of the distance between itself and the work being reconstructed, conscious that it does not replicate but reinvents.³⁵ As concept, as significance, what is not known can be as important, as revealing, as what is known. In this way Wiles's speculations teach us something *because* of their uncertainty.

Another aspect of historiographical method which has been much discussed is the primacy of localized analysis. This stems in large part from the influence of Foucault, whose suspicion of "the inhibiting effect of global, totalitarian theories" led him to stand up for the "essentially local character of criticism," and to declare that analysis

should be concerned with power at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with those points where it becomes capillary, that is, in its more regional and local forms and institutions.³⁶

This programme has resulted in works like Leah Marcus's *Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Reading and Its Discontents*, in which she writes,

In its very indefiniteness and provisionality, topicality cuts across closed, static explanatory systems and closed cultural forms, opening them to the vagaries of historical process.³⁷

Although localized analysis serves to oppose inhibiting and static globalizations, it must be remembered that Foucault's work realizes the

importance of the interplay between local analysis and the construction of larger schema:

One must rather conduct an *ascending* analysis of power, starting, that is, from its infinitesimal mechanisms, which each have their own history, their own trajectory, their own techniques and tactics, and then see how these mechanisms of power have been—and continue to be—invested, colonized, utilized, involuted, transformed, displaced, extended, etc., by ever more general mechanisms and by forms of global domination.³⁸

A second point concerning the relation of the local and the global needs to be made, however. Given the vicissitudes of theatre historiography, whereby any number of elements of the local record are radically unrecoverable, it is not possible to proceed in the orderly pattern presented by Foucault: from the local systematically to the global. A much more ad hoc and improvisational articulation of the local and the global is necessary. To use Marcus's metaphor, if Shakespeare is a puzzle—with some of the pieces irretrievably lost—it may be that in specific instances a larger pattern is discernable while the relation of the particular pieces remains uncertain: we may see a lake before we see how the pieces of the shoreline fit together.

Such a specific instance is the relation between *2 Henry IV* and its afterpiece(s). Something important took place at the end of *2 Henry IV*. We can't say exactly what happened, but on the other hand we can trace its general significance. The commercialization and professionalization of popular drama in the playhouse jig, Kempe's troubled relations with the Lord Chamberlain's men, the banishment of Falstaff, the suppression of jigs in 1612, our own lack—or revival—of concern with the study of the popular afterpieces of Renaissance theatre, these are related moments in the ongoing struggle between hegemonic authority and the popular tradition. This seems clear enough, and whatever happened on whatever occasions after the performance of *2 Henry IV*, whether momentary triumph and return of the popular spirit, its harnessing and assimilation, its vanquishing, or something else, or variations of all these, those inscrutable moments are part of the ongoing history of popular culture and cast Shakespeare's play into a particularly important and acute relation to that history.³⁹

III

Just as a local historical analysis should not be incapable of benefiting from the observation of larger patterns, a contextual reading should be open to a return to the drama text, which constitutes a problem only in as much as it inhibits, not helps, contextual reading. This almost goes without saying. Shakespeare's text, which deals explicitly with a number of ongoing historiographical and political issues, is capable of historiographical insight and blindness, of entering into historiographical dialogue with the present, of helping to further historiographical speculation. To read Shakespeare's text is to encounter many of the concerns that arise with speculation on the lost theatrical event: the irretrievability of the past event, the biases and distortion of any understanding of the past, and yet a belief that something is discernible in the past: an agenda of oppression which continues, *mutatis mutandi*, into the present.

2 *Henry IV* ends with a series of epilogues, and begins with an Induction. The Induction features the "presenter" of the play, the allegorical character Rumor. What Rumor speaks about is of primary concern to the historiographer: discursivity, bias, and the play of truth and deception in the understanding of events from the past, "The acts commenced on this ball of earth" (5).

Rumor comes "painted full of tongues":
 Upon my tongues continual slanders ride,
 The which in every language I pronounce,
 Stuffing the ears of men with false reports. (6-8)

The historical event, the battle at Shrewsbury, is no more; only language remains, and the language of Rumor is "Blown by surmises, jealousies, conjectures" (16). Rumor holds sway "from the orient to the drooping west" (3). "[W]hich of you will stop / The vent of hearing when loud Rumor speaks?" (1-2) Rumor asks, and declares, "The posts come tiring on, / And not a man of them brings other news / Than they have learnt of me" (37-39). Rumor holds sway over all accounts of the past; its "household" is the cross-section of humanity represented by the theatre audience (22); it is perversely democratic in that it is

of so easy and so plain a stop
 That the blunt monster with uncounted heads,
 The still-discordant wav'ring multitude,
 Can play upon it; (17-20)

as Presenter of *2 Henry IV*, it also holds sway over Shakespeare's history writing. Rumor is the common, global—yet always multiple and local—condition of uncertainty and (mis)representation that unfolds all human accounting of the past.

However, if Rumor is common and uncertain, it also declares an interest and a truth, and this interest and truth are the triumph of hierarchical authority and (what amounts to its corollary) the defeat of "The still-discordant wav'ring multitude."

In Shakespeare's text, as elsewhere in the Renaissance, rebellion and insurrection are identified with the lower classes. Just as the worst excesses of Rumor are associated with the wavering multitude, rebellion is associated with "the peasant towns" (33) that lie between Shrewsbury and Warkworth. Even though the rebellion has been led by many of the highest peers in the realm, it is thought of as essentially plebeian. Thus Westmoreland addresses the Archbishop of York and other highly placed rebels:

If that rebellion

Came like itself, in base and abject routs,
Led on by bloody youth, guarded with rags,
And countenanc'd by boys and beggary—
I say, if damned commotion so appear'd
In his true, native, and most proper shape,
You, reverend father, and these noble lords
Had not been here to dress the ugly form
Of base and bloody insurrection
With your fair honors. (4.1.32-41)⁴⁰

Similarly, even in the wake of the Essex rebellion royal proclamations associated civil disturbance with the "great multitude of base and loose people." In 1599 Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, declared,

I have no fear of men of worth; when has England felt any harm by soldiers or gentlemen of worth? The state has ever found them truest. Some Jack Cade or Jack Straw and such rascals are those that have endangered the kingdom.⁴¹

Rumor, then, is typical in making such connections, but also in the way that—in this case at least—it positions its own interests on the side of the ruling hierarchical powers. Rumor has "an office" (28): to bring to the rebels "smooth comforts false, worse than true wrongs" (40). Rumor is in the service

of royal authority against rebellion, a rebellion profoundly associated with the lower classes. What is made clear here is that historiography is not disinterested, but political and strategic.

Rumor also comes, strangely enough, speaking truth (28), and the truth it speaks is of "King Harry's victory" (23), which has quenched "the flame of bold rebellion / Even with the rebels' blood" (26-27). According to Rumor, there is, discernible through all the surmises and conjectures, a basic truth to the events of the past, and that truth is that royal authority has triumphed over an essentially plebeian insurrection, and this is a triumph which Rumor continues to foster. The truth is the truth of class.⁴²

Put in these terms, it is striking how much what Rumor says resembles points made by Walter Benjamin in "Theses on the Philosophy of History": traditional historiography has been structured by "empathy with the victor," is "a tool of the ruling classes"; if not the truth, then what the revolutionary historian must be firmly convinced of, is that the triumphant class—which Benjamin, unlike Rumor, thinks of as the enemy—"has not ceased to be victorious"; the class that has been triumphed over—the class with which Benjamin, unlike Rumor, identifies—is "the struggling, oppressed class."⁴³ Brought together in this way Rumor and Benjamin look at the same events, the same past, but from opposed points of view. What is agreed upon is that for all the uncertainties and biases of historiography, for all the local unknowns, there is a pattern to be recognized in the past: the defeat of the struggling, oppressed class, and of its culture.

The Induction to *2 Henry IV* is, then, like Benjamin's "Theses," a meditation on our relation to the past, and both confront the brute and ineluctable pattern of the past. But neither *2 Henry IV* or Benjamin's "Theses" ends there. If the Induction faces the past, the second Epilogue faces the future.

The second Epilogue is spoken from a time when the fate of Falstaff, of Kempe and the jig, still lies in the future, and therefore in uncertainty:

One word more, I beseech you. If you be not too much cloy'd with fat meat our humble author will continue the story, with Sir John in it, and make you merry with fair Katherine of France, where (for any thing I know) Falstaff shall die of a sweat, unless already 'a be kill'd with your hard opinions. (26-31)

From the present moment the future looks uncertain and open in a way the past can never be again. Shakespeare posits a similar moment in the player's speech in *Hamlet*, the moment before Pyrrhus takes the life of Priam:

for lo his sword,
 Which was declining on the milky head
 Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' th'air to stick.
 So as a painted tyrant Pyrrhus stood
 And, like a neutral to his will and matter,
 Did nothing. (2.2.477-482)

It is in such moments, Benjamin argues, that there exists the possibility of forging a different history than the history of the past, a moment in which the continuum of history, the single catastrophe of unrelenting oppression, would be exploded. Benjamin ends his "Theses" with the understanding, borrowed from Jewish religious thought, that all moments are such moments: "For every second of time was the strait gate through which the Messiah might enter."⁴⁴ If Shakespeare's texts don't posit such a proliferation of these moments, they do open up onto certain instances when the future lies in the realm of the "for any thing I know," when, as long as the sword sticks in the air, the strait gate remains open.

IV

One of the problems with Benjamin's historical materialism, Rolf Tiedemann points out, is his positing of "the open air of history." For Marx there is no open air of history, but rather conditions encountered from the past which we have not chosen.⁴⁵ Benjamin's assertion that every second of time is that through which the Messiah of revolution might enter fails to explain how the moment of revolution and the moment in which revolution fails to take place are both prepared for. Shakespeare, in at least a localized way, realized that he worked in conditions not of his own choosing: a previous displeasing play, the favour of the queen, the audience's hard opinions. In *Hamlet* the moment when Pyrrhus' sword stops in the air and history hangs in the balance is followed by the inevitable, or at least the historically prepared for:

so after Pyrrhus' pause,
 A roused vengeance sets him new a-work,
 And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
 On Mars's armor forg'd for proof eterne
 With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
 Now falls on Priam. (2.2.487-92)

And Pyrrhus has not ceased to be victorious. If the sword has continued to fall on Priam, on Falstaff, on the popular tradition, then there must be suspicion, when a new moment in this history arises, that anything but the falling of the sword has been prepared for or should be expected.

In a certain sense the epilogue to *2 Henry IV* is *Henry V*, and the epilogue to *Henry V* is the history of its restagings, in which the text transmitted from the past is made to play a role in new material circumstances. Like history writing, like theatrical reconstruction (each with its own rules and strategies), the remounting of plays is a politicized reworking of the past.

One of the newest moments in this reworking, the latest epilogue to *2 Henry IV*, is Kenneth Branagh's film of *Henry V*, released in 1989. What Branagh has repeatedly claimed for his work and this film is a place in the annals of popular entertainment. From the outset of his career the goal has been to produce popular art with the "power to make life seem richer and better." In founding the Renaissance Theatre Company the aim was once again "popular art" and a "life-enhancing populism." In making *Henry V* Branagh was convinced that he could make "a truly popular film" that would be "utterly accessible to anyone of whatever age and background."⁴⁶ If these claims are to be credible, it is necessary to ask if and how this "popular art" has been prepared for.

To examine Branagh's *Henry V* is to see Shakespeare's text at play in a new and specific material situation. In part this situation is defined by its status as film. In his seminal essay on film, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Benjamin discusses a broad range of factors which go into determining the effect of a film: the conditions of production and of exhibition, the content—whether or not a film presents "revolutionary criticism of social conditions," and finally the film form and apparatus. While Benjamin admits of a certain dialectic interchange between these elements, he posits an essentially revolutionary impulse to the film form itself, a force which undermines traditional artistic and cultural values, so that "the film *must be* the promotion of a revolutionary criticism of traditional concepts of art" [emphasis added]. Recent film theory, however, has developed a more conflictual and open understanding of the filmic effect: film engages in the struggle between forces of order—signification, subjectivity—and the excess and disorder which continuously threaten and are annihilated. This struggle—whether order or excess holds the upper hand—will be determined by the interplay of all elements—production, reception, content, form—in any specific situation.⁴⁷ It is possible, therefore, for a film to be positioned so as to be profoundly antirevolutionary. Such a film is Branagh's *Henry V*.

In an attempt to characterize in general the cultural production of our era Fredric Jameson argues that late capitalism is "a *purier* stage of capitalism than any of the moments that preceded it." This "apotheosis of capitalism" has resulted in "a prodigious expansion of capital into hitherto uncommodified areas." Among the areas in which this expansion has proceeded apace is the area of aesthetic production, which "has become integrated into commodity production generally." This has resulted in the amalgamation of high culture and mass or commercial culture.⁴⁸ Mass culture is populist but not popular in the sense of a traditional popular culture such as Shakespeare had to deal with. LaCapra notes that mass culture, unlike traditional popular culture, is structured by relations of commodification and alienation, and is more passive and less resistant toward the hegemonic order.⁴⁹

If these are, in part, the circumstances in which Branagh cannot choose but make his history,⁵⁰ how has he as an individual subject responded to these conditions? Branagh's own story is one of assimilation and upward mobility. Coming from a working class, Northern Irish background, he has worked his way up through the English theatrical industry, slowly but surely adopting its ways and outlook. At RADA, the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, Branagh was confronted with the imperialist and classist attitudes which reject his colonial, working class manner of speech. "Can't have kings sounding like peasants, can we?" he was told. Branagh failed his Standard English Test, which measured his ability to ape the BBC announcer's received pronunciation. At first he quarreled with this test, but then, after passing on the second attempt, he finds it "necessary." Branagh's personal investment in English cultural values makes him take a specific position on the problems of Northern Ireland, which he sees as "the effects of long-term unemployment, neogangster life, personal obsession, the insidious power of the screen."⁵¹ That centuries of English imperialism is missing from this list seems highly noteworthy. Ultimately Branagh places most of the blame on "the mobs," the Ulster Defense League and the Irish Republican Army, a position with which the British military would be in agreement.

Branagh's professional preparation for *Henry V* is his singular and singularly swift rise to success and celebrity. He came to the part of Henry "with a lucrative TV series just completed," as well as a number of other successes, yet was the youngest *Henry V* ever to play Stratford. He finds himself identifying with Henry, "thrown by the onset of responsibility and a kind of fame." He admits to an idealistic view of the character, and sees in Henry spirituality and "a genuine visionary quality."⁵²

The two men, besides Branagh, who have had the greatest impact on preparations for the film of *Henry V* are Prince Charles and Stephen Evans,

the financial director of Branagh's Renaissance Theatre Company. Branagh was privileged enough to obtain an interview with Prince Charles when he was preparing for the stage production of *Henry V*. Perhaps not surprisingly, he felt an "instant rapport" with the prince, and sensed in him an extraordinary and genuine humility. In Charles he saw some of the qualities he wanted to bring to Henry: a balance between responsibility and compassion, leadership and finer spiritual attributes. Later Charles agreed to become Royal Patron of the Renaissance Theatre Company. Steven Evans, on the other hand, affords Branagh "a realistic collaboration between the worlds of commerce and art." The aesthetic which Evans contributes to is one in which there is "no fat," which ruthlessly seizes opportunity for economy, in which almost everything is to be sacrificed "on the altar of instant understanding":

It was a story that would make you laugh, make you cry, and be utterly accessible to anyone of whatever age and background. These were all ingredients that would be needed to persuade Stephen's financial contacts to invest in the film.

The published screenplay is dedicated to Stephen Evans, "who made it all possible."⁵³

And what of the film that all this has produced? Branagh's film works by the control and eradication of excess, of fat. It does this not only in its situation of production, but also in its content and in its form. Content and form are united in their focus on the king, whose subjectivity becomes that through which everything else is ordered, mobilized, executed.

When I saw *Henry V* the trailer before the film began was for Steven Spielberg's *Always*. Spielberg is one of the great masters of mass culture, of rendering and reaching a wide, passive audience. One of the strategies which unites these two films in their stance toward a shared potential audience is their manipulation of emotion—"a story that would *make* you laugh, *make* you cry" [emphasis added]. One of the most striking effects of Branagh's film is to instigate and orchestrate an emotional investment in the charismatic, messianic leadership of the young king.⁵⁴

The prime purveyor of emotion in *Henry V* is Henry himself. He cries on at least two occasions: the hanging of Bardolph and after the victory at Agincourt in the arms of Fluellen, and on other occasions he acts "at great personal cost," howls in rage, drops his head as if in shame, and is surprisingly nervous.⁵⁵ And yet Branagh and his Henry are in total control, and make of the audience passive and compliant recipients, like the soldiers listening to Henry before battle:

The men still follow [] to listen as the young King, no trace of last night's fear, weaves his spell of honour in tones of quiet, confident compassion. His strength of feeling undeniable, the effect bewitching.⁵⁶

In the face of the king's sentiments other more resistant and angry emotions are silenced. In Branagh's *Henry V*, we do not get a Pistol whose cock is up, who says "Fuck the king and fuck the world," but an old man whose anguish at the death of Nym is uncontrollable, "a very broken and battered Pistol," left not planning future stealth and resistance, but "contemplating his inevitably empty future."⁵⁷

As in the work of Spielberg and other mass culture film makers, *Henry V* uses music as a major vehicle to instill emotion in the audience. The most pronounced moment of musically induced emotion in the film is the "Non Nobis" played over the battlefield at Agincourt. Here the audience is spoon fed the film's emotions, which are the emotions of the king. It is through his emotion, his sorrow and shame, that we observe the slaughter:

We cut close on his blood-stained and exhausted face, the dreadful price they have all had to pay for this so-called victory clearly etched into his whole being.

One of the most striking additions Branagh has made to *Henry V* is the on screen execution of Bardolph. The scene is played for horror and pathos. And yet once again the emotions are channeled through the king and his "distressed but unflinching stare."⁵⁸ Branagh first inserts a golden hued flashback which establishes the shared emotional memories of Bardolph and the king. Bardolph is not reduced to an object until after he has been constructed as a source of emotion to be tapped. Only at this point does Branagh interject the execution. Then the king speaks: "We would have all such offenders so cut off . . ." The scene is structured to culminate in the emotive rasp of the king's voice, in the devastation the king feels both from the momentary bonding with Bardolph and from his cutting off, and not in anything Bardolph has experienced.

The effect of this scene, like the effect of the long tracking shot through the slaughter at Agincourt, is ultimately not to make us question Henry, but to make us submit to his emotional richness.⁵⁹ Branagh and Adrian Noble had agreed upon such an approach for the stage production of *Henry V*:

From the beginning we both agreed that the many paradoxes in the character should be explored as fully as possible. That we shouldn't try to explain them. I made clear my firm belief in the *genuine* nature of Henry's humility and piety. I also agreed that the man who threatens such violence before the gates of Harfleur was a professional killer of chilling ruthlessness.

The presentation of such contradictions is not meant to undermine Henry's authority: "Do not judge this man, place him in context—*understand!*" It only serves to make the character "amazingly rich."⁶⁰ In this proto-apotheosis of capitalism—where British miners' only desire is to "do good service"—in the face of Henry's amazing success, nothing diminishes his stature. All the suffering of those around him is there to be etched into his whole being. One of Marx's favorite metaphors for capitalism is a vampire sucking the blood and life out of the workers. Similarly Branagh's film sucks the life and emotion out of its secondary characters and uses them for the aggrandizement of the ruling nobility. This is why Branagh's claim that "There would be no question about the statement this movie was making about war" seems naive or disingenuous. "War is hell," but it was one of the victors who said it: war is hell, but not without its payoff.⁶¹

Jameson says that late capitalism has encroached upon heretofore uncommodified areas. Similarly Branagh is confident enough to enter onto terrain that Shakespeare avoided: the gruesome execution of Bardolph, the return of Falstaff. However, Branagh is able to bring back Falstaff because Falstaff no longer poses any threat. He is brought back from the dead merely to add "emotional weight"⁶²—but no fat—to the film. He is an eviscerated, ghostly Falstaff. And the emotional weight of the film is ultimately at the service of making Henry a richer character. Throughout the film—in the Cheapside tavern, at Agincourt, in the French court—Branagh cuts to the faces of the dead. But the dead are all leveled: no distinctions are made between their deaths, none of the dead are allowed to speak of their own deaths and resentments; all of the dead are there to be part of the emotional being of the king. Jameson notes that nature and the unconscious are no longer safe from commodification. As Branagh reveals, and Benjamin already knew, neither are the dead.⁶³

In his essay on film Benjamin quotes Abel Gance in order to undermine Gance's vision of the film as the new locus of the traditional masterpiece; Gance writes,

Shakespeare, Rembrandt, Beethoven will make films . . . all legends, all mythologies and all myths, all founders of religion, and the very religions . . . await their exposed resurrection, and the heroes crowd each other at the gate.

Benjamin's response is "Presumably without intending it, he issued an invitation to a far-reaching liquidation."⁶⁴ For Gance film is a gateway of opportunity for the old order; for Benjamin the gate inevitably opens onto the death of that order. Benjamin's essentialization of the film work blinds him to the way in which the film can function to block up that other gate, that through which the revolutionary might enter. Presumably without intending it, Gance speaks another truth: in the new material reality of the film the masterpieces of the past are used to crowd the gate so that nothing really revolutionary can get through.

At the end of filming, Branagh writes, "The possibilities for the film seemed limitless."⁶⁵ The exact opposite holds true. With its commercial and critical success—mass culture aligned with high culture, but hardly popular culture in the sense used by LaCapra or Weimann—Branagh's *Henry V* will surely help define Shakespeare's play for at least a generation. Once again the strait gate of history has been closed.

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Notes

1. Bertolt Brecht, "Against Georg Lukács," *Aesthetics and Politics* (London: Verso, 1980) 82.
2. John Lennon, "Working Class Hero," *Plastic Ono Band* (Apple SW 3372, 1970).
3. John Donne, *John Donne and the Theology of Language*, eds. P. G. Stanwood and Heather Ross Asals (Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1986) 78.
4. Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor, *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology* (New York: Methuen, 1987).
5. David Wiles, *Shakespeare's Clown: Actor and text in the Elizabethan Playhouse* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987).
6. A. R. Humphreys, ed., *The Second Part of King Henry IV* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1966) 186n.
7. A. M. Nagler, *Shakespeare's Stage* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1958) 73-74; Charles Read Baskerville, *The Elizabethan Jig and Related Song Drama* (New York: Dover, 1965) 3, 16, 22, 126; Stephen Orgel, *The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the Renaissance* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1975) 8. There is a discrimination to be made between two uses of the word popular: the jig as practiced in the theatre was popular in as much as it drew large crowds, but it was not popular in the sense that it was part of a genuine folk tradition. The jig was an

urbanized, commercial art form which had been strongly influenced in material and tone by popular and folk elements (Baskervill 6), thus a forerunner of mass or commodified culture.

8. Baskervill 21, 38, 3, 75. In 1654 Edmund Gayton recalled this explosive side of the public theatre, especially during Shrovetide: the spectators would begin by mounting the stage and "making a more bloody catastrophe amongst themselves than the Players did"; the audience would take over and dictate to the actors what parts to play; sometimes the actors would be made to strip and the theatre would become a bawdy house, there would be bear baiting on the bankside, and obscene jigs would be sung (Gerald Eades Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage: Dramatic Companies and Players*, Vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941) 690-691.

9. E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, Vol. IV (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923) 340-341. It is not clear, however, how effective this order was. After 1632 jigs were again openly used as afterpieces, and after the closing of the theatres in 1642 jigs were the going form of surreptitious dramatic activity when it was too difficult and risky to put on an entire play (Baskervill 120-122). The jig, therefore, outlived the Renaissance theatre to which it had served as afterpiece and opponent.

10. Baskervill 109, 86; Chambers 522.

11. Eleanor Prosser, *Shakespeare's Anonymous Editors* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1981) 111.

12. Thomas Witfield Baldwin, *The Organization and Personnel of the Shakespearean Company* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1961) 243; Harry Levin, "General Introduction," *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974): 18. All references to Shakespeare's plays are to this edition.

13. Wiles 116-135; Gary Taylor, "Introduction," *Henry V* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982): 20; Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978) 191.

14. Rather than rehash Wiles's evidence, it might be more constructive to add to it. The first epilogue refers to the speaker as, like Falstaff, a bad debtor who will "pay you some, and . . . promise you infinitely" (14-16). The second continues the conceit: "And yet that were but light payment, to dance out of your debt" (20). Like Falstaff, the speaker of the second epilogue is more kindly thought of by women than by men: "All of the gentlewomen here have forgiven me" (22-23): Doll Tearsheet says to Falstaff, "Come on, you whoreson chops. Ah rogue! i' faith I love thee" (2.4.218-219), and Mistress Quickly drops her complaints against Falstaff in act two, scene one. The third paragraph promises the continuance of the story "with Sir John in it" (28), a promise which would have been delivered most convincingly by the actor who had played Falstaff. Finally, throughout the two parts of *Henry IV* Falstaff is associated with the ballads and bawdy songs which were part of, or closely aligned with, the jig: in part one Falstaff threatens to commission ballads "sung to filthy tunes" attacking Hal and the rest of the Eastcheap crowd (2.2.45-46); he asks Bardolph to sing him a bawdy song to make him merry (3.3.13-14); in part two he himself breaks into popular song (2.3.33), and threatens to commission another ballad, this time commemorating his victory over Coleville, "with mine own picture on the top on't" (4.3.48-49)—much like the famous frontispiece of Kempe at his morris dance.

15. Wiles 115, 129.

16. Wiles 56.

17. Michael D. Bristol, *Carnival and Theater: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England* (New York: Methuen, 1985) 123.

18. Wiles 93, 177.

19. Chambers 550; Weimann 192; Baskervill 114.

20. Wiles 43.

21. Chambers 553; *Riverside Shakespeare* 1839; Chambers 325; Baskervill 114. Brome's *Antipodes* of 1638 expresses the ideology and *fait accompli* of this purge:

Yes in the days of *Tarlton* and *Kempe*,
 Before the stage was purg'd from barbarisme,
 And brought to the perfection it now shines with,
 Then fooles and jesters spent their wits, because
 The Poets were wise enough to save their owne
 For profitabler uses.

This is quoted in Edwin Nungezer, *A Dictionary of Actors and of Other Persons Associated with the Public Representation of Plays in England before 1642* (New York: AMS Press, 1971) 222.

22. Wiles 128.

23. Nagler 74.

24. It is also possible that this first epilogue is a transcript of actual extemporizing by Kempe.

25. Taylor 20.

26. Nungezer 218.

27. But even to pose these unanswerable questions assumes that Kempe played Falstaff, and this is far from certain. Baldwin argues that Thomas Pope played Falstaff (232). According to Baldwin, among Pope's other roles was Shylock. If Falstaff is to be connected with Pope and Shylock rather than with Kempe and Bottom, then he no longer seems to be a figure from the popular tradition, but rather a representative, as Michael Nerlich argues, of the antiquated feudal aristocracy: as Falstaff is the plundering aristocrat, Shylock is the usurious one (*Ideology of Adventure: Studies in Modern Consciousness 1100-1750*, Vol. 1 [Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1987] 134-182). In this case, even if Kempe danced one of his jigs at the end of some performances of *2 Henry IV*, this outburst of the popular tradition has a much more tangential relation—if any—to the banishment of Falstaff. Also, the question remains unanswered as to who played Falstaff in any remountings of the play after Kempe's departure; it is possible that even if Kempe was the original Falstaff, the part was later transferred to Pope and thus appropriated by a different, and much less popular, comic tradition.

28. Walter Benjamin, "N [RE THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE, THEORY OF PROGRESS]," *Benjamin: Philosophy, History, Aesthetics*, ed. Gary Smith (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1989) 50; Dominick LaCapra, *History and Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985) 72, 11; Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1987) 82.

29. Wiles xi.

30. White, *The Content of the Form* ix, 187.

31. James Clifford, "Introduction: *Partial Truths*," *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: U of California P, 1986) 7, 6, 25-26.

32. Clifford 7; Paul Q. Hirst, *Marxism and Historical Writing* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985) 147; White, *The Content of the Form*, 188; LaCapra, *History and Criticism* 9.

33. Dominick LaCapra, *History, Politics, and the Novel* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1987) 9.

34. Jennings 147-148.

35. Mark Franko, "Repeatability, Reconstruction and Beyond," *Theatre Journal* 41.1 (March 1989): 73, 56.

36. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980) 80, 81, 96.

37. Leah S. Marcus, *Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Reading and Its Discontents* (Berkeley: University of California P, 1988) 37.

38. Foucault 99.

39. This would be true even if Kempe didn't play Falstaff, for a generation before the analogous part had gone to Dick Tarleton, and so a Falstaff who was not Kempe would mark a particularly important moment in the suppression of popular culture.

40. See Brents Stirling, *The Populace in Shakespeare* (New York: AMS Press, 1965) 122.

41. Jonathan Dollimore, "Transgression and Surveillance in *Measure for Measure*," *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, eds. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985) 80; Stirling 122.

42. In *Shakespeare and the Popular Voice* (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1989), Annabel Patterson argues that Shakespeare as author becomes more radical and sympathetic to popular causes as his career progresses (10), and it is certainly not necessary to equate Rumor's arguments with Shakespeare's. However, any belief in Shakespeare's authorial or textual sympathy with popular positions would have to be brought into confrontation with the gentrification of the Lord Chamberlain's Men and their break with Kempe and the jig—a contextualization which is not discussed by Patterson.

43. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969) 253-264, 256, 255, 260.

44. Benjamin, "Theses" 264.

45. Rolf Tiedemann, "Historical Materialism or Political Messianism? An Interpretation of the Theses 'On the Concept of History,'" *Benjamin: Philosophy, History, Aesthetics*, ed. Gary Smith (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1989) 201; Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," *Selected Works*, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1968): 97.

46. Kenneth Branagh, *Beginning* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1989) 46, 193, 197; Kenneth Branagh, "Introduction," *Henry V*, William Shakespeare (London: Chatto & Windus, 1989): 10.

47. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969) 231. For an overview of more recent theory see Philip Rosen's introductions in his anthology, *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader* (New York: Columbia UP, 1986).

48. Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review* 146 (July-August 1984): 55, 78, 56, 54.

49. LaCapra, *History and Criticism* 77-78.

50. No absolute economic determinism is implied here. One need only examine more subversive or at least resistant—and yet more or less mainstream—aesthetic production coming out of contemporary Britain and Ireland, works with a different arrangement of high, mass, and popular elements, for instance Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls*, Stephen Frears' *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, Elvis Costello's "Let 'Em Dangle" and "Tramp the Dirt Down," and Sinéad O'Connor's "Black Boys on Mopeds," to see that artists can produce politically very different work than Branagh has produced.

51. Branagh, *Beginning* 55, 68; Kenneth Branagh, *Public Enemy* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988) vii.

52. Kenneth Branagh, "Henry V," *Players of Shakespeare 2*, ed. Russell Jackson and Robert Smallwood (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988) 95; Branagh, *Beginning*, 135; Branagh, "Henry V" 105, 104, 97.

53. Branagh, *Beginning* 142, 144-145, 199, 197; Branagh, "Introduction," *Henry V*, 11, 10.

54. The relations between the messianisms of Benjamin, Shakespeare, and Branagh are complicated. The naivete of Benjamin's messianic faith is partly offset by his understanding, in his theory of film, that the mechanics of the camera lie behind the aura of the face and our identification with it ("The Work of Art" 228), an understanding which Branagh's film ruthlessly eradicates. However, Benjamin's messianism returns with his faith in the essentially revolutionary