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The Drama of History: Examinations in Shakespearean Historiography

by

Cindy Chopoidalo 

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Department of English

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 2000

University of Alberta

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Degree: Master of Arts

Year This Degree Granted: 2000

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July 10, 2000

Abstract

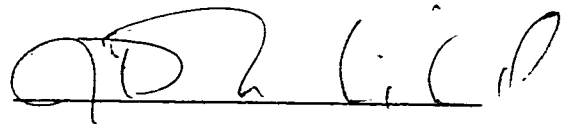
In this thesis I examine Shakespeare's use of historical and literary sources for his history plays, taking *Richard III* as a specific example, and demonstrating how Shakespeare combines historiography, ritual, and epic poetry to create the play. Following a brief overview of medieval and Renaissance historiography and the genres of the historical epic and the history play, I discuss historical works of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as well as previous poetic and dramatic treatments of the events in the play. In the final chapter, I apply my findings to the play itself to demonstrate Shakespeare's creation of a historical epic.

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *The Drama of History: Examinations in Shakespearean Historiography* by Cindy Chopoidalo in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Jonathan Hart, Supervisor



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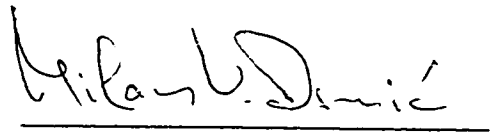

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Acknowledgements

This thesis is the culmination of five years' interest in Shakespeare's history plays in general and the first tetralogy in particular. Along the way, I have received support from many people, and I would like to thank them all for providing the inspiration for this project. First of all, thanks to my parents, Andy and Louise Chopoidalo, and my brother, Ronald Chopoidalo, for all your love and encouragement.

To my professor and supervisor, Jonathan L. Hart, and everyone in English 338, 1994-95, and English 696, 1998: without you, this thesis, and my interest in the history plays, would not have been possible. I am especially grateful for the opportunity to have seen four productions of *Richard III* (in November 1994, February 1995, April 1999, and July 1999 - this last also included *Henry VI, Part Three*) in five years; these inspired not only this thesis but also a creative work on the subject.

To all my professors, especially Jean MacIntyre, John Orrell, Raymond Grant, Juliet McMaster, Brahma Chaudhuri, and Doreen Watt Piehl: thank you for your suggestions and your patience.

To my classmates, too many to name here: thank you all for continuing to inspire me.

To the Departments of Linguistics and English: thank you for providing me with an enjoyable academic career.

To the University of Alberta Library, especially the Interlibrary Loan department.

To Lynn Gregg and the Creative Writing Club of Archbishop MacDonald High School, 1989-92: in the last five years, I have realized what you knew all along.

Finally, to everyone I have not named who contributed in any way to my thesis: many thanks.

Cindy Chopoidalo
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
June 2000

Note on the Source Texts

For the convenience of the reader, I have, where possible, modernized the spelling in the medieval and Renaissance texts I use in this thesis. When referring to the plays themselves, I follow (except for modernization of some French names) the spelling in the first edition of *The Riverside Shakespeare*.

Table of Contents

I. Introduction: The Drama of History: Examinations in Shakespearean Historiography

It is a tribute both to Shakespeare's literary talent in general and to the powerful aesthetic appeal of his history plays in particular that, even today, after the efforts of generations of historians to displace them, his descriptions of the important people and events of late-medieval England are the ones readers remember. Even the first-time reader of the history plays is already rudimentarily familiar with the characterizations of their central figures: "the graceful fecklessness of Richard II, the exuberant heroism of Henry V, the dazzling villainy of Richard III" (Saccio 4), for example, to say nothing of the multitudinous supporting cast that populates Shakespeare's eight-part historical series. However, since Shakespeare's death, historians have not merely been content to correct the oversights, gaps, and conflations in the plays, but have also often dismissed them and the historical sources upon which they are based as mere propaganda, no matter how artistically executed. The attempts of historians to dislodge Shakespeare's hold on the popular imagination have also found their echo in the world of fictional writing: many writers of historical fiction after Shakespeare have followed the lead of the revisionist historians in challenging his view of the events in the history plays. Indeed, in her study of the influence of the first tetralogy on later works of historical fiction, Roxane C. Murph remarks, rather derisively, "How very fortunate [the Tudors] were to have had the genius of Shakespeare to impress on men of the late Tudor and Stuart periods, and all future generations, the history ... that they wanted the world to believe" (19). Though the view of the history plays as a deliberate suppression or distortion of actual events is attractive to scholars who are aware of the potential uses and misuses of historical writing, and is a prevailing view among historians proper as opposed to literary scholars, it is an oversimplification of the appeals and purposes of the plays. As Alexander Leggatt states, "There is a current tendency to see society as a structure of oppression and exploitation, and to read Shakespeare accordingly. We will get at *part* of the truth that way, but *only* part" (x; emphasis mine).

While it is true that Shakespeare based his plays primarily on the works of sixteenth-century historians, and left most, if not all, of their biases intact, the plays transcend their sources through the vivid characterizations and rich re-creations of bygone

events. They do so through the flexibility and versatility of the genre of the history play, which combines elements of tragedy, comedy, and chronicle to bring new life to people and events of the past (Hart, *Theater & World* 13-28). The ways in which Shakespeare transformed historical events as told by the chronicles of his own time into the material of a great historical epic are demonstrated throughout his history plays, but are especially apparent in *Richard III*, both a powerful historical tragedy and the most famous true-crime story in English literature. The relationships between the history plays and their sources have been examined before, most notably in George Bosworth Churchill's *Richard III up to Shakespeare* (1900), Geoffrey Bullough's *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (1960), Joseph Satin's *Shakespeare and His Sources* (1966), and Kenneth Muir's *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays* (1977). However, this study differs from the previous work on the subject in that it is not my purpose to dispute or establish the accuracy of Shakespeare's or his sources' treatment of late-medieval history, but instead to examine those sources as historical and literary works in themselves alongside their influence on the plays. Unlike those of Churchill and Satin, my examination is less concerned with labelling the plays and their sources under the catch-all category of 'Tudor propaganda,' a description with which I disagree, and more concerned with showing the influence of poetic and ritualistic traditions, as well as the information in the sources, on the form and content of the plays. In this, I also differ from Bullough and Muir, who are more immediately concerned with the source material itself than with Shakespeare's handling of that material, and who tend to ignore the contemporary versions of the events in favour of Shakespeare's immediate sources.

In order to understand the combinations of tradition, ideology, and storytelling that make up the history plays, one must know something about the differences between medieval and Renaissance historiography, and between Renaissance and modern historiography. This may be accomplished by examining some of the contemporary accounts of the events in the plays alongside the works of the sixteenth-century historians, especially the ones on which Shakespeare relied the most: Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historia*, Sir Thomas More's *History of Richard III*, Edward Hall's *The Union of Lancaster and York*, and Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and*

Ireland. Though the political concerns expressed in these accounts and in Shakespeare's versions of them are very important to understanding the history plays, other writers have examined these concerns already; however, most studies of the history plays have overlooked their use of the sources' narrative characteristics as a way of telling a story as opposed to simply presenting the known facts and the historians' conjectures. Furthermore, the plays also show a strong influence from the tradition of the historical epic, the story of a nation told in poetry, which E.M.W. Tillyard acknowledges in his declaration that, based on the constant references each play makes to the others, "we can say ... that the two tetralogies make a single unit" (147). Epic poetry was regarded in Shakespeare's time as the highest literary form, and indeed, many of the greatest English examples of epic poetry, such as Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, and Samuel Daniel's *The Civil Wars* (a source for Shakespeare's second tetralogy), were written during this period. However, the historical epic was relatively uncommon in English poetry: Spenser devotes only portions of his second and third books to versifying the history of England; and Daniel's poem, comprehensive as it is, is not as artistically satisfying as Shakespeare's plays which dealt with the same subject would prove to be.

II. Historiography, Storytelling, and the Epic Tradition

Since ancient times, historiography has been a way for people to establish a recognizable shape and direction for the otherwise infinite procession of events that occur in life. Because, according to Peter Munz, "Every single event is a construction" (31) of smaller subevents that can be further divided *ad infinitum*, historical writings of different times and places display different degrees of accounting for events in their societies. In English historiography, the earliest extant accounts are annals, lists of events following the basic pattern 'In this year, these things happened', with little or no observable attempt at explanation. Many of the early English annals are lists of religious feast days, while others refer to events such as battles, natural disasters, or visits by the annalist's noble patrons. Some annals occasionally left out events corresponding to a certain period of time, producing bare and incomplete lists of events whose "importance consists in nothing other than their being recorded" (White 7). However, even a sketchy, incomplete annal is itself a form of discourse, a model for the passage of time, "the signified of which the events ... are the signifiers" (White 9), because the years an annal covers are themselves conventional representations of periods of time above and beyond the events in those years.

As time progressed, historians began to incorporate more noticeable narrative techniques into historical writing, thus producing the genre known as the chronicle. Like annals, chronicles are arranged in list form and in chronological order, but chronicles have more of a central focus; they cover the events that happen in a specific place, to a specific group of people, at a specific period of time. Chronicles first appeared in English historiography during the Anglo-Saxon period, in which monastic writers, though still writing from a relatively narrow focus, moved away from recording only the dates of religious feast days to recording other events that occurred in their districts. By the fifteenth century, the time covered in the history plays, historiography had largely expanded from these narrowly-focused ecclesiastical writings to a form more recognizable to the modern reader: historians began to write in English alongside Latin and French, and the accounts themselves were increasingly fleshed out into a readable story rather than being merely a list of events. The obvious use of narrative techniques in chronicle writing displays a heightened self-consciousness of a social order on the part of the historians; and it also reveals a

growing awareness of the moral lessons to be learned from events of the past and the necessity to impose a narrative structure on those events to illustrate the lessons plainly. According to Hayden V. White, "narrativity ... is intimately related to, if not a function of, the impulse to moralize reality, that is, to identify it with the social system" (14). Nonetheless, even with the emphasis on a moral and political order to time and society, a chronicle still lacks the narrative closure that modern readers normally associate with a historical account, or even with the history plays themselves. The lack of narrative closure demonstrates that for the writers of chronicles, history is still unfolding according to "the workings of Providence preordaining [its] course" (Collingwood 50).

The providential view of history was one of the most important characteristics of medieval historiography, which combines the Greco-Roman reliance on tradition with the Christian world view of "history ... as a play written by God, ... wherein no character is the author's favourite character" (Collingwood 50). Medieval historiography was generally universal in scope, tracing human existence back to the creation of the world and following its progression through many civilizations and societies. This did not, however, preclude the writing of chronicles covering a particular society; the history of one society was considered as part of the whole of human existence. Similarly, though medieval histories covered human accomplishments, these were not necessarily considered important in themselves but were manifestations of a divine plan over which people had no control.[1]

Nationalism was not absent from medieval historiography; in fact, it was a significant part of chronicle writing. Even though the world view expressed in medieval histories was essentially theocentric, historians still wrote with the intent of preserving and glorifying their society's legendary past as well as the more recent accomplishments of members of that society. Hand in hand with nationalism came patronage: both ecclesiastical and secular historians wrote for patrons, usually members of noble families or rulers, and these patrons often became the focus of the historians' work. Charles Lethbridge Kingsford characterizes the late-medieval chronicles, most of which show the influence of noble patrons, as "a variety of small sources, many of them of a more or less avowedly partisan character" (3), even more so than the sixteenth-century adaptations of those chronicles that Shakespeare used for his plays. However, it is still an oversimplification to regard histories

(or adaptations of histories into poetry or plays) dedicated to noble patrons only as "government propaganda ... introduced because the author was persuaded that the official point of view was right, or because he wanted to curry favour with his audience" (Gransden xii), because the historian, poet, or playwright may very well have reached the conclusions he did even without a patron's influence. Patrons definitely provided financial and moral support to writers, but this does not necessarily mean that writers were, in effect, ghostwriters for their patrons; indeed, many medieval histories, including the ones discussed here, included digressions in which the authors gave their own opinion of the events they were examining.

Historiography in the sixteenth century represented a significant step away from the comparatively bare narratives of previous writings; by this time, because histories were being made available to anyone who could read, rather than only to the monastic or noble audiences of earlier annals and chronicles, historiography took on a clear didactic purpose. This didacticism was influenced by the rediscovery of classical Greek and Roman historians such as Herodotus, Thucydides, Tacitus, and Livy, and the philosophy of humanism which informed their works, a philosophy that regarded historiography as a branch of rhetoric, in which "a written history subserves a higher truth" (Anderson 77) that could be either political or moral, and was often both. Though many Renaissance historians, especially political historians such as Machiavelli and other Italian writers, allowed their political or moral theories to overshadow the historical events themselves, others, such as the authors of Shakespeare's sources, tried to strike a balance between historical reporting and political moralizing while still using the rhetorical techniques that Renaissance historiography demanded.

The didactic purposes of sixteenth-century histories derived in part from their combination of the classical view of history, which saw time as cyclical, in which events periodically repeated themselves; and the Judeo-Christian view, which saw time as linear, with a distinct beginning, middle, and end. According to Daniel R. Woolf, these two views of history were not mutually exclusive, and were not so regarded by Renaissance writers, because both shared the proto-Calvinistic idea that "Events were fixed and unchanging, points pre-plotted on a timetable" (5); thus, human events, even those that seemed

inexplicable or unexpected, were actually all part of God's plan for the universe, and if history did seem to repeat itself, this was a divinely-ordained cycle of rewards and punishments that could not be altered by human efforts. The combination of the linear and cyclical concepts of time proved ideal for the didactic purposes of historiography: because historical events recurred in recognizable patterns, the study of history allowed people to anticipate directions for the future by examining the past. The Elizabethan writer Thomas Blundeville, in his 1574 treatise *The True Order and Method of Writing and Reading Histories*, presented an argument, adapted from that of the Italian historian Giacomo Aconcio, for the encouragement of historical study:

> First that we may learn thereby to acknowledge the presence of God, whereby all things are governed and directed. Secondly, that by the examples of the wise, we may learn wisdom wisely to behave ourselves in all our actions, as well private as public, both in time of peace and war. Thirdly, that we may be stirred by example of the good to follow the good, and by example of evil to flee the evil. (qtd in Woolf 4)

Indeed, the theories of historical study that Blundeville described were not only accepted but officially encouraged during the sixteenth century, both through the production of prose chronicles and the adaptation of those chronicles into poetry and drama. The official acceptance of the didactic purpose of history has quite naturally led to the view, espoused by Tillyard, that the pattern of sixteenth-century histories "began with the Tudors and was sedulously fostered by them ... a pattern highly convenient to themselves" (24). But this view risks reducing all the interest in historical study that characterized the English Renaissance, whether officially supported or not, to the nebulous and potentially misleading category of 'Tudor propaganda,' thus overlooking the value of historical study to all members of society, rather than just to the ruling classes, as a means of national self-definition and preservation of important past events. In addition, the historical pattern which forms a major part of what historians have referred to as the 'Tudor Myth' was not limited to the events described in the history plays; for example, as Jacobean histories such as those of Bacon and Raleigh illustrate, the recurring phenomenon whereby "every successive dynasty was destroyed in the third generation" (Woolf 31) did not end with the fifteenth

century but continued down to the historians' own time.

Didacticism was not the only purpose of Renaissance historiography, however; with the advances in scientific and analytical thought of the time, historiography became more critical than it had previously been. For example, the rise of antiquarianism, which combined historiography with anthropology and archaeology, represented a shift away from the mixture of provable history and legendary tradition that marked many medieval writings, and toward a concept of history as more or less factual, in which "historians invented nothing but certain rhetorical flourishes or poetic effects to the end of engaging their readers' attention" (White x). In English historiography, the new emphasis on humanist history as opposed to the legendary past is represented by Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historia* (1534), which eschewed the legends told by medieval writers such as Geoffrey of Monmouth in favour of a more critical examination of the past; and in part, through Shakespeare's use of it for his plays, it also became the ancestor of English historical poetry in the Renaissance and afterward.

Vergil's work and those of the other sixteenth-century historians were ideal for poetic adaptation in part because of their innovations in the techniques of historical narrative. The greatest difference between annals, chronicles, and histories, according to Hayden V. White, is the degree to which each uses narrative techniques while respecting chronology and evidence: "what distinguishes 'historical' from 'fictional' stories is first and foremost their content, rather than their form" (27). This means that though both historiography and fictional writing are narratives, the types of events that these narratives embody are different: historical narrative is based primarily on events that the author and reader agree to be true, whereas fictional narrative is based on imagined events. However, the real/imaginary distinction does not mean that history and fiction are polar opposites, as many modern historians believe; it means that both are representations of human time, attempts to impose a structure on an otherwise amorphous experience. Indeed, many narrative works written during the Renaissance were referred to as 'histories' whether they were factually true or not; and many historical narratives, before and after Vergil's, contained elements of the fantastic or supernatural even as they described events which were undeniably true.

Similarly, though both historical and fictional narratives often conform to certain world views or ideologies, it is important to remember that the negative view of ideology as "a distorted, fragmentary, or otherwise deformed view of reality, produced to serve the interest of a specific social group or class" (White 190) grew out of the desire of scientific historians to create an objective view of reality uncoloured by individual opinions; and 'reality,' 'facts,' and 'truth' are generally defined according to different sets of assumptions for the writer, the reader, and the scholar. Thus, to relegate the world view of medieval or Renaissance historiography, or the fictional works based on historical writings, to the status of myth does not accurately reflect the intents of these historical narratives; they are attempts to give recognizable shape to "the human experience of time" (White 175) in ways that served the society in which the histories were written but may not translate to other times and places.

Closely tied to the innovations in historiography of the sixteenth century was the re-emergence of the English epic poem, a genre that had not appeared since the Anglo-Saxon period. Since classical times, epic poetry was considered the highest form of fictional writing, in part because it bridged the gap between history and poetry, between sober fact and artistic impressions. Furthermore, "it was correct to make your country's history the theme of your epic; and by achieving an epic in your own tongue you glorified that tongue and hence the land where it was spoken" (Tillyard 242). In societies which rely on oral tradition, epic poetry is the main method by which the deeds of great people are recorded and passed down to the next generation; and when people in these societies move toward a written tradition, historians often use epic poems among their sources. Epic poetry is also an important ancestor of drama because both art forms are meant to be performed aloud; an epic poet is expected to be as skilled in reciting, singing, and dancing as he is in composing the poem. Indeed, even the famous nickname for Shakespeare, "The Bard," suggests his debt to the epic tradition, because a bard is a composer and performer of epic poetry, though the term was often used to refer to a poet with a courtly audience.

Epic poetry fulfills many of the purposes Renaissance historians gave for their own writings: it records and glorifies the deeds of great people in a society; provides a moral example for its audience in its presentation of idealized characters; traces the formation and

growth of the society from events in the remote past; and most importantly, "tells stories because men like to hear them" (Bowra 29). It also suggests the Renaissance approach to history in another way: though some early epic poems, such as those of the Greeks and the Norse, include the presence of the supernatural, most epics tend to concentrate on the deeds of human beings rather than mythical creatures. Thus, epic poetry, like Renaissance history, uses the humanist world view to praise "men by showing of what high deeds they were capable" (Bowra 23), even though the characters in epic poems are usually larger than life, and the events the poems describe are often exaggerated for dramatic effect. Unlike Renaissance historians, however, epic poets did not see a need to adhere solely to provable fact; in epic poetry as in medieval histories, 'fact' and 'fiction' flow together in such a way that it is often difficult to tell where one ends and another begins. But in both epic and history, the author claims to be telling the truth, even with the use of poetic licence, and the author's society generally accepts this claim to truth. It was left to scholars of later periods to attempt to separate the provable from the improbable, and to relegate much of epic poetry to the realm of myth - in the sense of falsehood rather than of narrative paradigm - while privileging the straight prose narrative, with no dramatic embellishments, as the ideal method of historical writing.

The typical epic poem is both a historical and a biographical narrative; like history plays and tragedies, an epic usually follows the life and adventures of one great person, from his or her birth - often described in unusual and significant detail - to death and even afterward. But the biography of the poem's protagonist is interconnected with the history of his or her society, because the main focus of an epic is the effect of the hero's deeds upon that society. Indeed, in many epic poems, the society itself becomes just as much a character in the story as the people do, a characteristic which influenced Tillyard's famous statement that England as a whole "is the true hero" (160) of Shakespeare's history plays, above and beyond their central characters. This emphasis on the hero's society derives mainly from the essential themes of both epic poetry and historiography, "a man's world, the field of politics and war" (Dixon 37); and especially the depiction of a victorious hero who "represents a country or a cause which triumphs with his triumph, whose honour would suffer from his defeat" (Dixon 21). Both epic poems and history plays, therefore, not only

tell stories from the nation's history, but also function as means of promoting national pride by preserving events that were important in shaping the way that nation thinks about itself, and people who, through their efforts, contributed to this national self-definition.

Another notable way in which epic poetry gave rise to history plays is that both genres are essentially ritualistic: both grew out of ceremonial depictions of events that are significant to the society they affect. The earliest examples of heroic poetry, panegyrics and elegies, are occasional poems written to commemorate important people, usually at ceremonies honouring those people; and many of the literary devices and plot elements which occur in epic poems reflect an origin in ritual practices. For example, the death of an epic poem's hero in battle may be a literary version of the scapegoat ritual, in which one individual is sacrificed for the greater good of the society, while a marriage in an epic poem may grow out of a fertility ritual. Similarly, history plays, dramatized versions of epic poems, have as their earliest ancestors the rituals of both pre-Christian and Christian traditions. The presentation in a history play of a victorious national figure overcoming a formidable enemy suggests the early ritualistic battle between light and darkness, or summer and winter; and both religious and secular history plays drew upon "the conversion of [the] theatrical aspect into historical drama" (Griffin 220) that makes up the Christian ritual, especially after the Reformation redefined the communion ritual as a re-enactment rather than a reoccurrence of Christ's sacrifice. Since the earliest examples of English plays were dramatizations of religious stories, the history play emerged as an attempt to present secular narratives also in dramatic form, just as historical narratives and poems resulted from the adaptation of those literary genres to secular, as opposed to religious, matters. The history play, however, has a more obviously ritualistic aspect than its purely literary ancestors: just as a religious service and a morality play both represent the vastness of God in a form that is accessible to ordinary human beings, a history play "asserts a present individual (the actor) to be a dead person who is nonetheless *present*, resurrected by the arts of the stage" (Griffin 225; emphasis in original). By seeing the historical events recreated before their eyes rather than merely on the printed page, the audience of a history play would gain the impression of being on the sidelines of the events the play portrayed; and the parallels between the past events being dramatized and the present events of the audiences' lives

would provide a graphic illustration of the principles the playwright wished to present, more so than other genres could.

The most prominent characteristic of a history play is that it deals with real people, places, and events, instead of mere figments of the writer's imagination, though often a writer - as Shakespeare did in most of his history plays - will add some characters and events that did not appear in the historical sources alongside those that did. Because most history plays are dramatizations of events in medieval and Renaissance chronicles, they are often referred to as chronicle plays, though this term is potentially misleading because, according to Irving Ribner, it implies that history plays, like the chronicles that inspired them, are "formless, episodic drama" (5) rather than focusing on one character or series of events, as history plays usually do. Though strictly speaking, a history play can deal with the history of any nation or period, and thus many of Shakespeare's other plays, such as *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, or the Roman tragedies, may be regarded as history plays, the editors of the First Folio chose to classify only those plays that dealt specifically with English history as history plays.

Besides its focus on events that are "assumed by the dramatist to be true, whether in the light of our modern knowledge they be true or not" (Ribner 24), the history play also fulfills the purposes of Renaissance historiography through its emphasis, either obvious or implied, on the political significance to the immediate audience of the events it depicts. A writer could choose to write a play about a certain period in history with an eye "for its analogical relation to the present time, [or] for any current topicality of the historical figures themselves" (Griffin 227). Many history or chronicle plays, such as John Bale's *King Johan*, made the parallels between the past and present quite explicit; others, such as Shakespeare's historical series, were less direct but no less effective in comparing the successes and mistakes of the past to the socio-political currents of the present and the possibilities of the future. This is not to say, however, that the sole purpose of a history play was to teach a moral or political lesson, or that the play was actually a beautifully-written propaganda piece; like its ancestor, epic poetry, the history play is as entertaining as it is educational, and though it often does include praises of those in power, these praises may be the genuine view of the author or a courtesy to the noble audiences of the play.

Both epic poetry and history plays have been criticized by serious historians for their use of poetic licence. In both genres, writers often condense and conflate certain events, and leave others out entirely, while the characters in the plays or poems usually appear as idealized presentations of good and evil as much as, or more than, they appear as realistic characters. This conflation of plot and idealization of character is less for "the warping of history so that it may more effectively support political doctrine" (Ribner 18) than most historians are willing to admit; rather, it comes from the difficulty of presenting so much history in one small space within two to three hours. This is a difficulty that Shakespeare acknowledges many times throughout his plays, but his most famous admission of the limitations of the historical poet occurs in the prologue of *Henry V:*

> ...But pardon, gentles all,
> The flat unraised spirits that hath dar'd
> On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
> So great an object. Can this cockpit hold
> The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram
> Within this wooden O the very casques
> That did affright the air at Agincourt?
> O, pardon! Since a crooked figure may
> Attest in little place a million,
> And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,
> On your imaginary forces work. (*HV Pro.* 8-18)

Because a theatrical company only has a limited number of actors, costumes, and properties, and can only perform what can fit on stage for the duration of the play, some degree of conflation is necessary so that as many of the important historical events as possible can be covered within that time and space. The audience members may know enough of the history itself to fill in the details of the play with their own imaginations, and thus strict historical accuracy is not always necessary. The idealized presentation of the characters is also a method of keeping the play interesting as well as appealing to the audience's nationalistic feelings; they can cheer for the English characters and boo the French ones, for example. The characters Shakespeare created in his history plays, however,

are increasingly more sophisticated than those in history plays by other writers; they progress from the plain-and-simple English-French opposition in *Henry VI, Part One* to the more complex characterizations that emerge in the latter half of the first tetralogy and continue to develop in the second tetralogy.

History plays emerged in English literature in the 1530s, as the religious changes in society, and the rules governing the content of plays that these changes prompted, led writers to apply the conventions of morality plays to secular concerns. The earliest recognizable English history play, though it is actually more of a chronicle play, John Bale's *King Johan* (1538), shows very strong influence from the morality plays in its depiction of King John's opposition to the Catholic Church; aside from the main character himself, most of the other characters are abstractions with allegorical relations to people in both John's time and Bale's. As the sixteenth century and the writing of history plays progressed, the plays evolved away from the morality form into a recognizable genre of their own, as they appropriated elements of tragedy, comedy, and romance to create dramatized epics or mini-epics rather than historical object lessons as the earliest plays did, though history plays did not abandon the conventions of moralities entirely. But the greatest outpouring of English history plays occurred after 1588, as the defeat of the Spanish Armada provoked a wave of pro-English nationalistic feeling and a desire to relive, in dramatic form, all the previous events both positive and negative that went into making the English nation, although this enthusiastic nationalism was coupled with anxiety over the question of who would succeed the childless Elizabeth I. As Elihu Pearlman puts it, "So many plays addressed to the fortunes of the English monarchy were composed during these few years [from 1588 to the death of Elizabeth I in 1603] that scarcely a reign was left undramatized" (1). Indeed, Shakespeare wrote his first history play, *Henry VI, Part One,* sometime between 1590 and 1592, and then proceeded for the next nine years to recreate nearly every major occurrence of the fifteenth century in his historical series, as well as to explore other periods outside the scope of his series in his 'minor' histories, *King John* and *Henry VIII.*

The interest of sixteenth-century playwrights in medieval history also suggests the combination of nostalgia and irony that would become a staple of medievalism in literature;

Renaissance writers generally regarded the Middle Ages both as the roots of their own social order and as an idealized heroic age, as attested by the continuing popularity of historical romances as well as more serious history plays. Medievalism for Renaissance writers was similar to ancient Greek writers' fascination with the time of great heroes; or modern North American writers' fascination with the settlement of the West in the nineteenth century: all these were ways of presenting these societies' literary and moral ideals in a largely fanciful version of a remote period in history, usually a period which represented a time of transition for the society. Historical literature generally focuses on "periods of violence and dissolution" (Murray, *Classical Tradition* 200), in which the contrasts between good and evil, or between the time represented in the work and the time of the reader and writer, are most apparent; however, the strongest characteristic of heroic literature is a sense of beauty and potential within the society the work describes even as it recognizes the dangers from within and without. According to Gilbert Murray, "an heroic age is a time of birth-pangs as well as death-pangs, of hope as well as fear. That would differentiate it from periods like ... the War of the Roses" (*Classical Tradition* 200). But as Murray's reference to the subject of Shakespeare's first tetralogy demonstrates, the Renaissance view of the Middle Ages was also tinged with irony both in its recognition of the grim reality behind the pageantry and in its occasional satirical view of the chivalric ideal. Indeed, we can read Shakespeare's historical series, and especially *Henry IV*, as a satire on medievalism rivalling the works of Cervantes, "a satiric history with a crisis that compounds existing problems" (Hart, *Theater & World* 23), exposing both the humour and the darkness behind the beautiful exteriors.

Among the known history plays of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, aside from Shakespeare's series, were *The Funeral of Richard Coeur-de-Lion* (1598), *The Famous Wars of Henry I and the Prince of Wales* (1598), and the two-part *Sir John Oldcastle* (1599; a revisionist version of Shakespeare's *Henry IV*), by Michael Drayton and others; *Edward I* (c. 1593) by George Peele; *Edward II* (before 1592) by Christopher Marlowe; the two-part *Edward IV* (c. 1597) by Thomas Heywood; and the anonymous plays *The Troublesome Reign of King John* (c. 1591), *Henry I* (1597), *Edward III* (c. 1590; sometimes attributed to Shakespeare), *Woodstock* (before 1595), *John of Gaunt* (c. 1595),

Jack Straw (1590-1593), *The Famous Victories of Henry V* (c. 1586), and *The True Tragedy of Richard III* (c. 1587-1592), to name but a few (Pearlman 3-4). There were most likely others whose titles are now unknown to us, and indeed, not all the texts have survived. But from the existing history plays, a modern reader can form a vivid picture of the Renaissance view of medieval history, from the secularized moralities of the earliest plays to the all-encompassing panorama in Shakespeare's historical series, as "an integral part of the drama of the nation" (Pearlman 15).

III. The Historical Sources of the Plays

Though the most important sources for Shakespeare's history plays are the sixteenth-century histories of Vergil, More, Hall, and Holinshed, and the earlier poems and plays based on those histories, these works relied in large part upon the contemporary accounts of the events that the plays describe, most of which were written by observers or participants in those events. The contemporary sources are also important for tracing the evolution of English historiography, as they were produced at a time when historical writing was expanding from the relatively simple monastic annals and chronicles toward the detailed and more critical works that would become prevalent during the Renaissance. The sources for the second tetralogy, however, are generally less detailed and less reliable than those for the first, because the early fifteenth century marked the decline of traditional medieval historiography and was thus a period of transition for historians; and despite the constant war that formed the backbone of the first tetralogy, the later fifteenth century saw the re-emergence of historical writing as a genre in itself.

The contemporary sources for the first tetralogy have inspired much debate among historians and literary scholars, in large part because of the socio-political conditions that influenced their writing. The perpetual war and constant shifts in power led many historians to revise their works several times over to be favourable to whichever side had the advantage, so it often becomes difficult to tell where the authors' sympathies lie. Indeed, Sir Henry Ellis dismissed the early sources of the first tetralogy as "confused, mutilated, and disjointed. They who wrote history in it, had no talents for the task; and there was a ferocity abroad among the partizans of both the rival houses, which prevented many from even assembling the materials of history" (qtd in Halliwell, *Warkworth* x; spelling as in original). Ellis' dismissal of late fifteenth-century history belies the accomplishments of its writers, however; just as the earlier chroniclers, the sources for the second tetralogy, preserved the elements of what became the brightest period in late-medieval English history, so did the later chroniclers record the darkest period in terms that, while admittedly influenced by patronage and unrest, provided much insight for later writers who used the events of the later fifteenth century as examples of undesirable behaviour among the ruling or governing classes.

The earliest contemporary account of the events of *Richard III*, though more properly a source for *Henry VI, Part Three*, that is useful for a study of Shakespeare's version is *A Chronicle of the First Thirteen Years of the Reign of King Edward IV*, written in about 1482 by John Warkworth, who "was Master of St. Peter's College [at Cambridge] from ... 1473 to ... 1498" (Halliwell, *Warkworth* xxv). While written in the simple narrative style that characterizes most medieval chronicles, Warkworth's chronicle is one of the first contemporary accounts to describe Richard's first great crime, the murder of Henry VI, in any detail approaching or suggesting Shakespeare's depiction. The mere fact that Warkworth was able to do so is a measure of the integrity of his work, despite its narrative simplicity; he wrote it eleven years after Henry's murder, but he still retains his sympathy for the Lancasters, despite the obvious risk such sympathy might have posed to him.

Warkworth's description of Henry's last night points ahead to two key moments in Shakespeare's first tetralogy: the murder itself as shown in *Henry VI, Part Three* V.vi. and Henry's funeral in *Richard III* I.ii. He says:

> And the same night that King Edward came to London, King Henry, being inward in prison in the Tower of London, was put to death, the 21st day of May, on a Tuesday night, between 11 and 12 o'clock, being then at the Tower the Duke of Gloucester [Richard], brother to King Edward, and many other; and on the morrow he was chested and brought to Paul's, and his face was open that every man might see him; and in his lying he bled on the pavement there; and afterward at the Blackfriars was brought, and there he bled new and fresh; and from thence he was carried to Chertsey Abbey in a boat, and buried there in Our Lady Chapel. (21)

The account is in stark contrast to the 'official' version as given in *The History of the Arrival of Edward IV in England*, written shortly after Henry's death; this version, to which Holinshed does refer briefly, says only that Henry died "of pure displeasure and melancholy" (qtd in Kingsford 175) upon learning of the death of his son. Warkworth's is the version used in most of the sixteenth-century histories, not only those written in English but also those written in Latin, French, and Welsh (Halliwell, *Warkworth* ix-xxvii); and

indeed, I.ii. of *Richard III*, with its depiction of Henry's funeral procession, shows that Shakespeare was familiar with it, at least as it appeared in his immediate sources.

The major events of what would become the greatest true-crime story in English literature occurred only a year after Warkworth wrote his chronicle, but English historians generally showed a reluctance to record the events as they happened; as A.L. Rowse notes, "There was no lack of people who knew what had happened; but it was too appalling and too dangerous to write it down" (258). In fact, the most detailed contemporary source for *Richard III* is the work of an Italian clergyman, Dominic Mancini, who, at the request of the Italian astrologer and physician Angelo Cato, wrote *De Occupatione Regni Anglie per Riccardum Tertium*, or *The Usurpation of the Throne of England by Richard III*, in December 1483, following a visit to England that summer. It is unlikely that Shakespeare knew Mancini's work,[2] and indeed, it was not published in English until 1936, but it does have many similarities to Sir Thomas More's *History of Richard III*, the most significant of Shakespeare's sources, including a humanist approach to the subject matter and the condemnation of tyranny that characterizes both works as well as the play. In his edition of Mancini's book, C.A.J. Armstrong notes that Mancini's other writings of the time, more so than his history, showed a "marked abhorrence ... [of] the violent man in public life, as though he were still recovering from the shock of what he had lived through in England" (12).

The introduction of the book suggests that Mancini had discussed with his patron, Angelo Cato, what he saw in England before beginning to write it down; it begins with a reference to Cato's request "to put in writing by what machinations Richard III ... attained the high degree of kingship, a story which I had repeatedly gone over in your presence" (57). As a result of the preliminary discussions and of Mancini's admitted gaps in his memory, some significant details are missing from the story, but the major details that we know from the English accounts and from Shakespeare's adaptation are more or less present. Mancini begins his story with an account of the death of Edward IV, which he attributes to despair over his failure to prevent an alliance between the Flemish and the French; and a very brief overview of Edward's family before progressing into his principal subject.

As More would do in his own history, Mancini admits that much of his information was derived from popular opinion; he repeatedly uses such phrases as "men say" or "the story runs", and he refers to specific people to whom he had spoken, some of whom are also known to have been informants for More. The influence of popular opinion makes itself known right from the beginning, as Mancini states that "in claiming the throne Richard was actuated not only by ambition and lust for power, for he also proclaimed that he was harassed by the ignoble family of the queen and the affronts of Edward's relatives by marriage" (61). Indeed, Mancini's treatment of Elizabeth and her family is far less sympathetic than Shakespeare's: he follows the then-popular view that Elizabeth, rather than Richard, was responsible for the murder of the Duke of Clarence; and he quotes her son Dorset as saying, "We are so important, that even without the king's uncle we can make and enforce these decisions" (75). However, he displays a great deal of sympathy for young Edward V, whom he describes as a budding scholar with a special ability "to discourse elegantly, to understand fully, and to declaim most excellently from any work whether verse or prose that came into his hands" (93) - though he points out that at the time he was writing, "Whether ... he has been done away with, and by what manner of death, so far I have not at all discovered" (93).

Despite his inability to report the fate of Edward V and the Duke of York, Mancini reports most of the incidents that we know from the first half of the play - such as the abduction of Edward and York (*RIII* III.i.), the arrest of Elizabeth's brothers (*RIII* II.iv.), and the murder of Hastings (*RIII* III.iv.) - in a fair amount of detail, though not always to the same degree as More or the other sixteenth-century historians. Like other European historians of the time, and the later English historians, he does mention that Clarence was killed "by being plunged into a jar of sweet wine" (63), and he also refers to Elizabeth's family's unsuccessful attempts to share official duties with Richard on the realization that "if the entire government were committed to one man he might easily usurp the sovereignty" (71). But the most notable similarity between Mancini and More - and Shakespeare - comes not so much in the reporting of Richard's crimes as in the characterization of Richard himself and of those affected by his plotting. For example, following his comparatively brief account of the meeting at which Hastings was murdered

(cf. *RIII* III.iv. 59-107), Mancini remarks, "Thus fell Hastings, killed not by those enemies he had always feared, but by a friend whom he had never doubted. But whom will insane lust for power spare, if it dares violate the ties of kin and friendship?" (91) The reaction of the public to this incident also foreshadows the characterizations of the observers in both More's and Shakespeare's versions: Mancini says that, upon hearing Richard's 'justification' for the murder (cf. *RIII* III.v.), "At first the ignorant crowd believed, although the real truth was on the lips of many; namely, that the plot had been feigned by the duke so as to escape the odium of such a crime" (91). Mancini closes the main plot of his report with the staged appeal to the people of London (*RIII* III.vii.), which progresses into a summary description of London itself and, in a nod to the popular taste for prophetic riddles, "a prediction ... that three kings in three months should possess England" (105) - a device that both Shakespeare and his immediate sources would also use.

Mancini's fidelity to detail, combined with his critical distancing from the English court, works greatly in his favour and suggests the overall veracity of the story as Shakespeare tells it. Because Mancini was unknown in England, and wrote for a continental European audience almost immediately after Richard's seizure of the throne, the rediscovery of his history has, at least for Shakespearean scholars, "demolished the view that Richard's accession was welcomed by contemporaries as right and just, and that he was a most popular king until his reputation was destroyed by his enemies the Tudors and their paid historians" (Hanham 72). Even so, Mancini's work, like that of any other contemporary historian, is occasionally unreliable. Because he had only been in England for a short time, he was unfamiliar with English politics, and thus he makes some careless mistakes concerning, for example, the granting of titles to the nobility and leaves out any description of parliamentary procedure or official ceremony. Similarly, the description of London with which he closes his book, though quite detailed, is that of a first-time visitor rather than of a long-time resident. But the most notable omission from Mancini's tale is the lack of a description of Richard, a striking oversight when compared to the sixteenth-century histories as well as to the play. Though some historians have suggested that the lack of a description means that there was nothing unusual in the first place, it is more likely that "Mancini had no opportunity to observe him sufficiently" (Armstrong 16). However, he

does describe Edward IV, at the beginning of the book, as "a tall man and very fat though not to the point of deformity" (59) - the closest he ever comes to referring to Richard's appearance, of which Shakespeare and his sources would make so much.

The first reasonably full description of Richard as a disfigured criminal mastermind occurs in the writing of a Warwickshire clergyman and antiquarian, John Rous, who included it in the Latin version of his *History of the Kings of England,* written sometime between 1489 and 1491. Because the description does not appear in the English version of Rous' earlier work, *A Roll of the Earls of Warwick* (c. 1477), but was added later to the Latin version (after 1485), many historians, even those who more or less agree with Shakespeare and his sources, dismiss the revised version as "early Tudor propaganda" (Gransden 317). However, Rous' change of heart is more a result of patronage than of propaganda; he was "a chaplain of the chapel of St. Mary Magdalene at Guy's Cliff, two miles from Warwick" (Gransden 309), and was thus a protégé of the Earl of Warwick. Rous' connection to and admiration for his patron's family, including Warwick's daughter, Lady Anne, suggests that his revulsion for Richard, and subsequent revision to his history, "may ... derive in part from the belief that Richard had murdered his wife" (Hanham 124, n. 1), and indeed, he had included a flattering description, as well as a drawing, of Lady Anne in all the versions of his history (Hallam 295).

Rous combines his now-famous description of Richard as "small of stature, with a short face and unequal shoulders, the right higher and the left lower" (qtd in Hanham 121), and his notorious statement that "Richard was ... retained within his mother's womb for two years, emerging with teeth and hair to his shoulders" (qtd in Hanham 120; cf. *3HVI* V.vi. 44-55), with a detailed list of his crimes, including the murders of Edward and York, Clarence, Hastings, Elizabeth's brothers, Lady Anne, and Henry VI; Rous refers to Henry's murder as "the most detestable to God and all Englishmen, and indeed to all nations to whom it became known" (qtd in Hanham 121). He is also the first historian known to have mentioned the "prophecy, which says that G / Of Edward's heirs the murtherer shall be" (*RIII* I.i. 39-40); his version is as follows:

> And because there was a certain prophecy that after E (that is, after Edward IV), G should reign; for this ambiguity George, Duke of

> Clarence ... was killed on account of his name George. And the other G, that is, Gloucester, lived to fulfill the prophecy. For a similar prophecy, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester was said to have been destroyed, but undoubtedly that Duke of Gloucester killed himself [not quite; cf. *2HVI* III.ii.], and everything came true in the despicable person of this Richard III, formerly Duke of Gloucester. (qtd in Hanham 121)

The prophecy found its way into the work of Polydore Vergil and Edward Hall, and thus into Shakespeare's adaptation; while the description was elaborated upon by More and thus by Hall and Holinshed, to be given its most memorable - and most horrifying - expression in III.ii. of *Henry VI, Part Three* and I.i. of *Richard III.*

Though Rous does have some kind words, probably left over from his earlier version, for Richard's military ability and endowments to the church, he concludes his account with a characterization of Richard as "excessively cruel ... in the way that Antichrist is to reign. And like the Antichrist to come, he was confounded at his moment of greatest pride" (qtd in Hanham 123). The characterization proved influential for the sixteenth-century historians, especially More, who may have used Rous' version among his source material. But Rous' characterizations and descriptions, as well as what Alison Hanham calls "his extremely jumbled account of events" (105), have not made him popular with modern historians, especially when comparing the English and Latin versions of his history; however, as far as Shakespearean scholars are concerned, Rous' history is an intriguing example of the evolution of Richard III into an epic villain, in the same way the contemporary sources of the second tetralogy helped to define Henry V as an epic hero. In this light, Rous' curious description of Richard's birth, the only part of his history which really strains credibility, can be read as the application of an epic tradition, the unusual birth, to a historical figure, while the history itself can be regarded as an attempt at a prose epic, though a far less satisfying one than the works of the sixteenth-century historians or Shakespeare.

In contrast to Rous' lurid account, probably the fullest contemporary source for the first tetralogy, as well as the most objective of the English histories, is the "second

continuation" of the Crowland (or Croyland) Chronicle, part of a series of historical writings prepared at Crowland Abbey near Peterborough, and an important source for Vergil. The work was written after April 1486 - according to tradition, in a period of ten days - and covers the period from October 1459 to the time of its composition. Though the author of the Crowland Chronicle, who identifies himself only as "a Doctor of Canon Law" (qtd in Hanham 86), has not been determined with certainty, several historians have claimed that he was John Russell, Bishop of Lincoln, who became Lord Chancellor in 1483 and was thus a reluctant participant in many of the events the chronicle describes (Hanham 76-77; Gransden 270-271; Hallam 227). Indeed, according to Alison Hanham, the strongest evidence for Russell's authorship is the relative sparsity of detail in the chronicle concerning the events Shakespeare describes in Act III of *Richard III*, as though the author was ashamed to admit his part in those events.

The Crowland Chronicle, like its counterparts written in London, often resembles a prose anticipation of the first tetralogy: when discussing the Lancasters, it favours Henry V and his brother Gloucester, but mildly criticizes Henry VI; and when discussing the Yorks, it begins by favouring Edward IV but then criticizes his excesses, and opposes Richard III. Its description of the significant events of the first tetralogy is also quite close to those in the sixteenth-century versions and in the plays; for example, in its recounting of the murder of Henry VI, the chronicle says:

> I shall pass over at this point the discovery of the lifeless body of King Henry in the Tower of London. May God show mercy, and grant sufficient time to repent, to whomever it was who dared to raise a sacrilegious hand against the Lord's Anointed. Let the perpetrator, therefore, deserve to be called tyrant and the victim to be called glorious martyr. (qtd in Hallam 264)

The chronicle mentions no names, as opposed to Warkworth and Rous, who explicitly mentioned Richard's involvement in the whole affair; but by the time the Crowland Chronicle was written, no names were necessary: the readers would know to whom the chronicle referred. The account continues with a description of Henry's funeral procession, as well as some brief references to miracles that were said to have occurred afterwards,

which the chronicler affirms were "witness to [Henry's] blameless life, the extent of his love of God and the Church, of his patience in adversity, and of his other outstanding virtues" (qtd in Hallam 264).

Shakespeare's decision to conflate Henry's funeral procession with Lady Anne's forced marriage to Richard (*RIII* I.ii.) may have been partly inspired by the proximity of these two events in the Crowland Chronicle, the only contemporary account to describe the marriage in any detail; though two years intervened between these incidents, they do follow each other quite closely in the chronicle. The chronicle also gives a very different account of Anne's ordeal than Shakespeare does: rather than attending her father-in-law's funeral, she hid out with Clarence, "in London, disguised as a kitchen maid" (qtd in Hallam 264), only to be discovered, as "the cunning of the Duke of Gloucester proved superior ... and he had her moved to the safety of St. Martin's church" (qtd in Hallam 264) - a form of honourable imprisonment - before forcing her to marry him. The chronicle's report of Lady Anne's death is as brief as Shakespeare's; however, its extensive account of "the king's intention and plan to marry his niece, Elizabeth" (qtd in Hallam 300) and the subsequent "lengthy denial to the effect that the idea had never entered his head" (qtd in Hallam 300) does lend credence to the idea, which Rous had stated explicitly and which Shakespeare would refer to indirectly, that Richard did murder Lady Anne and did want to marry Princess Elizabeth (cf. *RIII* IV.ii.). The chronicler describes this plan as Richard's "way of confirming his position as king [and] of depriving his rival [Richmond] of hope" (qtd in Hallam 300), but does not mention whether the denial of the plan was accepted as genuine by the public.

An important difference between the Crowland Chronicle and Shakespeare's play is the treatment of the Earl of Richmond, who appears only briefly in the first tetralogy but has a more significant role in the chronicle. The chronicle states that "The leaders of the opposition to Richard III realized that it would soon be the end of them all if they were unable to find a new candidate for the throne to lead their campaign. They remembered Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, who for many years had been living in exile in Brittany" (qtd in Hallam 296), and gives detailed reports both of Richmond's unsuccessful attempt to return to England in the fall of 1483 and his eventual victory; in the play, these two campaigns are conflated (*RIII* IV.iv. 433-538). The chronicle's account of the final battle

between Richard and Richmond is very close to Shakespeare's, including the role of Lord Stanley in Richmond's victory, the addresses by the leaders on both sides to their men, and especially Richard's "terrible dream" portending "that the outcome of that day's battle, whichever side won the victory, would destroy the kingdom of England" (qtd in Hallam 304). The chronicler does not mention what the dream was; it is Shakespeare, following hints in Vergil, Hall, and Holinshed, and the works of earlier playwrights, who describes the dream as the appearance of all of Richard's victims (*RIII* V.iii. 118-176).

Many times throughout the Crowland Chronicle, the author states his intentions of ending the work "with the death of King Richard" (qtd in Hanham 79), but the chronicle does add a short notice about the first year of Henry VII's reign as well as three short poems, probably by a different author, summarizing the events the chronicle describes. Overall, according to Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, the chronicle is "a vigorous and truthful presentment of the opinion of the time" (184), which provides much insight into the major events depicted in Shakespeare's first tetralogy. Indeed, it would be unfair to refer to the Crowland Chronicle as merely "the Tudor view of the events of the War of the Roses" (Gransden 272), because at least one copy was known to contain the argument against the legitimacy of Edward IV's marriage, an argument that was considered "seditious matter" (Hanham 96) at the time the chronicle was written, though it should be noted that the author included the argument mainly as his way of disagreeing with it. In fact, the chronicle has been used as evidence not only by Shakespearean scholars but also by revisionist historians; the first writer to criticize Shakespeare's version of Richard III, Sir George Buck, who was "Master of the Revels from 1607 to 1621" (Woolf 128), used excerpts from the Crowland Chronicle to prove his arguments against the legality of Edward's marriage and for the supposed approval of Richard's accession, though Alison Hanham points out that these excerpts may have been deliberately altered from the original (101-102).

The Crowland Chronicle exerted a significant influence on the historical writings of the sixteenth century, especially the first important source for Shakespeare's history plays, Polydore Vergil's pioneering work, *Anglica Historia.* Vergil originally came from Urbino, Italy, and like his contemporary and counterpart, Sir Thomas More, he was a friend of

Desiderius Erasmus. He began his literary career in 1498, and moved to England in 1501; there, in 1508, he began his history at the request of Henry VII. Vergil's royal patronage has led to attacks on his integrity by revisionist historians; the most common accusation made against him is that he was only "a party hack ... the author of an official history that is mere propaganda" (Hanham 126). Others, from his contemporaries to modern scholars, have accused him of falsifying or even destroying his sources, either to conceal the weaknesses in his writing or to remove anything that did not fit the 'party line.' However, the most likely reasons for Vergil's unpopularity with English scholars were that he was an Italian Catholic and was thus, after the Reformation, regarded with suspicion by English Protestants; and that in his quest for a rational, humanist history of England, he dismissed the works of Geoffrey of Monmouth and other medieval historians as "an heterogeneous mixture of fact and fable, furnishing comparatively little which could be safely relied upon as history" (Ellis xx). Furthermore, the strongest argument against the *Anglica Historia* being only flattery to the Tudors is that Vergil did not finish his history until the early years of the reign of Henry VIII (it was first published in 1534), and he, like More, was occasionally critical of both Henry VII and Henry VIII.

Vergil's history fills twenty-seven volumes, the last of which was added in the second edition of 1546, and covers the whole of British history from the earliest days to the first half of the reign of Henry VIII. Though it relies mainly on previously published works for much of its information - Charles Lethbridge Kingsford characterizes the work before its treatment of the fifteenth century as "of necessity a mere compilation" (254) - it is a valuable piece of writing, not only as a source for Shakespeare's history plays, but also as the first example of humanist history written in England. Unlike the previous English histories, Vergil's uses the rhetorical techniques of classical Greco-Roman historiography, critically analyzes the works of previous historians, and provides a more or less objective view of the events it treats. According to Denys Hay, "Vergil's avowed purpose was ... to tell the truth and nothing but the truth" (xxix); thus, to regard his history as only "an apologia for the house of Tudor ... intended to spread Tudor propaganda by means of the scholars whom it persuaded" (Gransden 439) overlooks Vergil's impartiality and diligence in his research and writing. In fact, where Vergil does show the most evidence of

"suppressing truth and suggesting falsities" (Hanham 127) is not, as many revisionist historians insist, in his treatment of Richard III, but in his treatment of more recent history; his account of Henry VIII reduces the Reformation to a bare minimum and severely criticizes Cardinal Wolsey, for whom Vergil had a great dislike.

However, it is Vergil's account of the later fifteenth century that is most relevant for an examination of his influence upon Shakespeare; on the whole, the first tetralogy, and especially *Richard III*, shows the influence of Vergil more clearly than does the second. In his discussion of the murder of Henry VI, for example, Vergil states that "The continual report is that Richard, Duke of Gloucester, killed him with a sword, whereby his brother might be delivered from all fear of hostility" (*English History* 156). Earlier in his account, Vergil had also mentioned the meeting of Henry VI with his nephew Richmond, at which "he [Henry VI] is reported to have said to the noblemen there present, 'This truly, this is he unto whom both we and our adversaries must yield and give over the dominion'" (*English History* 135; cf. *3HVI* IV.vi. 65-76); however, Vergil reports the prophecy more as a word-of-mouth tradition than as the absolute truth.

Vergil elaborates upon the accounts of contemporaries such as Mancini, Rous, and Crowland in his version of the death of the Duke of Clarence; he not only mentions that Clarence "was drowned (as they say) in a butt of malmsey; the worst example that ever man could remember" (*English History* 167), but also repeats the "soothsayer's prophecy ... that, after King Edward, should reign someone the first letter of whose name would be G" (*English History* 167). His own addition to this incident, however, is Edward's reaction to his brother's murder, which Shakespeare alludes to in II.i. of *Richard III*: "But it is very likely that King Edward right soon repented the deed, for (as men say) whensoever any sued for saving a man's life, he was wont to cry out in a rage, 'O unfortunate brother, for whose life no man in this world would once make request!'" (*English History* 168). Vergil's use of the parenthetical statement "as they say" in these examples, and elsewhere in his history, follows the examples of the earlier chroniclers; either in order to avoid giving the impression that any of the story was made up, or to distance themselves from a story that seemed difficult to believe, the historians acknowledged that their information came from popular opinion.

Popular sentiment also touches Vergil's description of the death of Edward IV. Unlike any of the known contemporary sources, Vergil suggests that Edward's "unknown disease" (*English History* 171) was not natural; in fact, he even says that "there was a great rumour that he was poisoned" (*English History* 172) - though Vergil does not say who was responsible. He does acknowledge that, upon learning of Edward's death, Richard "began to be kindled with an ardent desire for sovereignty" (*English History* 173); and in his account of Elizabeth's attempt to protect her family, he suggests, as no other contemporaries had, that "Hastings, who bore privy hatred to the marquess [Dorset] and others of the queen's side, ... for that cause had exhorted Richard to take upon him the government of the prince" (*English History* 175).

In addition to reporting the common opinions regarding the events he discusses, Vergil, like his contemporary More, adds a dramatic note to his history by including speeches by important people; indeed, the similarity between the dramatic treatments of Vergil and More suggests that they may have exchanged ideas for their histories. Vergil's first important use of a speech occurs in his version of the abduction of the Duke of York; he describes Richard, at a meeting of the nobles, justifying his arrest of Elizabeth's brothers, and then telling his audience, "What a sight, I pray you, shall it be to see the day wherein the king shall be crowned, if, while that the solemnity of triumphant pomp is in doing, his mother, brother, and sisters shall remain in sanctuary?" (*English History* 177). A similar dramatic treatment occurs in Vergil's account of the murder of Hastings, a passage which bears a striking similarity to, and may even be connected to, More's version. Vergil includes many of the details that More and, later, Shakespeare would use, including a list of the nobles who were present at the meeting, the division of the Council, and Richard's false accusations of witchcraft against Hastings and Elizabeth. However, at this point, Vergil adds an element to his characterization of Richard that More and Shakespeare would not mention until later in their works: following the imprisonment of Edward and York, Vergil reports that "Richard, whose mind partly was inflamed with desire of usurping the kingdom, partly was troubled by guiltiness of intent to commit so heinous wickedness" (*English History* 178).

Vergil's accounts of Richard's crimes are far more judgemental than any of the

contemporary histories had been; he speaks bitterly about Richard's attempts to cast doubt on his mother's honour, and declares that people gave in to his demands out of fear, even though they "detested the presumptuous boldness of Duke Richard as a very pestilence that finally would consume and utterly ruinate that house" (*English History* 186). But Vergil reserves his greatest criticism for the murder of Edward V and the Duke of York; he admits that "with what kind of death these sely [innocent] children were executed it is not certainly known" (*English History* 188), but he describes in heart-rending detail the reaction of their mother and the general public to the murder (cf. *RIII* IV.iv.) before pointing out that the destruction of Edward's sons was actually a divine punishment "because Edward their father committed th' offence of perjury" (*English History* 190).

Vergil devotes a considerable portion of his history to Richmond's experiences in France, the details of which he may well have heard from Henry VII himself, before resuming his main narrative. In a brief interlude to his account of Richmond's return, he repeats the assertions of Rous and Crowland that Richard "procured a rumour (uncertain from whom) to be spread abroad of the queen his wife's death" (*English History* 211) and that "the queen, whether she were dispatched with sorrowfulness, or poison, died within few days after" (*English History* 211), but he does not report Richard's attempts to deny the murder.[3] He then describes Richmond's return to England, leading up to the final battle.

Shakespeare's version of the final battle owes much to Vergil's narrative, even though the history gives a much fuller description than the play does; but the most significant influence Vergil exerts upon the play's final scenes is in the account of Richard's dream, which expands on the comparatively brief reference in the Crowland Chronicle. Vergil says, "It is reported that King Richard had that night a terrible dream; for he thought in his sleep that he saw horrible images, as it were, of evil spirits haunting evidently about him, as it were before his eyes, and that they would not let him rest" (*English History* 221), and further explains that "(I believe) it was no dream, but a conscience guilty of heinous offences" (*English History* 222). Both Hall and Holinshed incorporated Vergil's reference to the dream, including its suggested meaning, into their own chronicles, and Shakespeare, building upon Vergil's digression on the workings of a guilty conscience, imagines the "evil spirits" that Vergil mentions to be the ghosts of

Richard's victims.

Unlike Shakespeare's short and almost wordless depiction of the battle itself, a necessary abbreviation due to theatrical limitations and thematic purposes, Vergil provides a detailed description, as was standard in both medieval and Renaissance histories. The inspiration for Richard's famous last words, "A horse, a horse! My kingdom for a horse!" (*RIII* V.iv. 7) may have come from Vergil's "report ... that King Richard might have sought to save himself by flight" (*English History* 225); according to this passage, "when the matter began manifestly to quail, they [Richard's men] brought him swift horses; but he, who was not ignorant that the people hated him, ... is said to have answered, that that very day he would make end either of war or life" (*English History* 225). Following a description of Richmond's victory, and a moral passage on the consequences of tyranny, Vergil concludes his account with a description of Richard similar to Rous' and suggestive of More's: "He was little of stature, deformed of body, th' one shoulder higher than th' other, a short and sour countenance, which seemed to savour of mischief, and utter evidently craft and deceit" (*English History* 226-227); though, like Rous, Vergil does admit that whatever else he was, at least Richard was no coward. The latter half of the first tetralogy, not just *Richard III* but also *Henry VI, Part Three*, demonstrates that Shakespeare agreed with both the positive and negative aspects of Vergil's assessment.

Vergil's influence on Shakespeare and on Renaissance historiography does not end there, however; in his telling of the reign of Henry VII, he demonstrates the providential view of history that would become an important overtone of later chronicles and of the history plays, but would also be derisively labelled "the national myth" (Hay xxxix) and would result in attacks on his literary reputation. Like Hall and Holinshed after him, Vergil traces the dissension of the fifteenth century back to the rebellion of Henry IV; and in describing the reconciliation of the rival families through the marriage of Richmond and Elizabeth, he says, "It is legitimate to attribute this to divine intervention, for plainly by it all things which nourished the two most ruinous factions were utterly removed, by it the two houses of Lancaster and York were united and from the union the true and established royal line emerged" (*Anglica Historia* 7).[4] Interestingly, even as Vergil dismisses the stories of King Arthur - said at the time to be Richmond's distant ancestor - as only marginally

historical, he does include another semi-legendary genealogical connection, that of "Cadwallader, last king of the Britons" (*Anglica Historia* 5), at the beginning of his history of Henry VII, though not without an admission that the connection was a matter of popular opinion. However, Vergil does differ in one important way from his sources and from his successors: in discussing Henry VIII's claim to the throne, Vergil emphasizes that the claim was from the York side more than from the Lancaster side (*Anglica Historia* 149-151); a marked contrast to Henry VII's preference for his own side of the family. But no matter which side he prefers, Vergil's message is very clear: in his history he has attempted to show, by means of diligent research alongside oral tradition, "how ... the whole population of England was split into two factions, Lancastrian and Yorkist, and how a bloody struggle ensued for over a hundred years, ... till at last the houses of Lancaster and York were united" (*Anglica Historia* 149); and in this aim, he succeeded, as the use of his work by Hall, Holinshed, and Shakespeare demonstrates.

Vergil's work has established itself as "part of the canon of English historical literature" (Gransden 443), despite the criticism it has received from other historians; and in its use of the humanist approach to historical writing, it exerted a great influence on historians after him. The influence of the *Anglica Historia* was probably most immediately felt in one of the most important sources for Shakespeare's first tetralogy, Sir Thomas More's *The History of King Richard III*, written in both English and Latin in about 1513, and perhaps influenced by More's reading of Vergil's manuscripts and/or personal communications between More and Vergil. Though neither version of More's book was ever completed, its power and influence have made it "a landmark in the development of sixteenth-century prose and ... a remarkable witness to what the new humanist history could accomplish" (Sylvester xvi). Indeed, More's work became the chief source for other sixteenth-century historians, including Richard Grafton, Edward Hall, and Raphael Holinshed, and as such exerted a significant influence upon Shakespeare.

The intent of More's history, especially in light of its incompleteness, has caused some division among historians and literary scholars. A.L. Rowse, while praising its vivid characterizations and its dramatic style, regards it as "an experiment, or an exercise, and ... only a first draft, uncorrected, full of gaps of names or dates or things that escaped More's

memory at the time to be filled in later" (257). On the other hand, Alison Hanham, drawing upon the light-hearted, satirical tone that characterizes both the history and More's other writings, treats the history as "a Lucianic, and so irreverent, comment on the whole craft of history" (155) meant as a parody of historiography as much as, or even more than, as an example of it. Henry Ansgar Kelly and Judith H. Anderson both suggest that it should be read as a "highly literary essay in biography" (Kelly 129); and Retha M. Warnicke draws a compelling series of parallels between More's book and medieval plays, especially the Corpus Christi plays, which also "explore the nature of tyranny and sacrifice" (762). Because More's work walks such a fine line between literature and history, in its use of imagined dialogues, dramatic narratives, and ironic humour, as well as its brilliant characterization of the criminal mind, there are also many scholars, from Sir George Buck to Horace Walpole to Paul Murray Kendall and other revisionist historians, who dismiss it as "so intemperate as to be a travesty of historical method" (Hanham 152), even to the point of denying More's authorship and preferring to ascribe it instead to More's patron, the Bishop of Ely, who appears significantly in the history and as a minor character in Shakespeare's play. [5]

What most scholars, except the most ardent revisionists, do agree on is that More wrote not "simply another piece of government propaganda designed to strengthen the somewhat shaky claim of Henry VII to the throne" (Sylvester xiv), but a critique of tyranny using a recent and familiar example. Indeed, like Dominic Mancini, More devoted other works, aside from his history, to exploring the differences between tyranny and just rule; for example, in one of his Latin poems,[6] he writes:

> What is a good king? He is a watchdog, guardian of the flock.
> By his barking he keeps the wolves from the sheep.
> What is the bad king? He is the wolf. (141)

More's dislike of tyranny, in fact, may be part of the reason why he never finished the *History of Richard III*. He was probably aware "that his work could easily be read (as it has since so often been read) as an apology for the Tudors" (Sylvester xv-xvi); and he was also equally aware that it could be read as an attack on Henry VIII, especially since, nine

years after the history was written, the Duke of Buckingham, son and heir of Richard's former partner in crime, was arrested and executed for treason, albeit on contrived charges - an incident Shakespeare refers to in his last history play, *Henry VIII*. And because More was himself executed by Henry VIII, over twenty years after the writing of the history, A.L. Rowse remarks of the ironic relation between the history and More's own life "that he fixed one tyrant in literature, but was himself fixed by another" (258).

More begins his story with an idealized description of Edward IV as "a goodly personage, and very princely to behold" (4-5), along with an equally favourable description of Edward's children, all of which help to create a "contrast between good King Edward and wicked King Richard" (Anderson 81). He does not introduce Richard himself until the very end of the elegy to Edward (even then very indirectly), to emphasize Richard's status as outsider within his own family. However, More's character sketches of the rest of the York family at least partly undermine the flattering portrait of Edward, as he points out that "All three [Edward, Clarence, and Richard] as they were great states of birth, so they were great and stately of stomach, greedy and ambitious of authority, and impatient of partners" (7). This characterization also lends some irony to More's dark vision of Richard; rather than being merely the 'black sheep' of an otherwise respectable family, as the idealized description of King Edward might otherwise suggest, he becomes one part - albeit the worst part - of a family already notorious for unbridled ambition and political dishonesty.

Probably the most famous part of More's history is his description of Richard, which elaborates upon the descriptions left by Rous and Vergil to create one of the most memorable portraits of the criminal type in all of English literature, even before Shakespeare's use of that portrait:

> Richard, the third son, ... was in wit and courage equal with either of them [his brothers], in body and prowess far under them both: little of stature, ill-featured of limbs, crook-backed, his left shoulder much higher than his right, hard-favoured of visage, and such as in states [nobles] called warly, in other men otherwise. He was malicious, wrathful, envious, and from afore his birth, ever froward. It is for truth reported that the duchess his mother had so much ado

> in her travail [labour] that she could not be delivered of him uncut, and that he came into the world with the feet forward, ... and (as the fame runneth) not untoothed - whether men of hatred report above the truth, or else that nature changed her course in his beginning, which in the course of his life many things unnatural committed.
>
> (8)

After this portrait, More goes on to list some of Richard's crimes, most notably the murder of Henry VI, and at least partial responsibility for the murder of Clarence - though More declares himself unsure whether Richard had anything to do with Clarence's death. Like his predecessors in historical writing, More admits that most of his information comes from popular opinion, indeed from "rumours and covert tales" (Sylvester xii), as he acknowledges when, following his character sketch of Richard, he admits, "But of all this point is no certainty, and whoso divineth upon conjectures may as well shoot too far as too short" (9). More's presentation of his material, in fact, suggests his attitude toward his sources; he arranges the details in descending order of credibility, from the details of Richard's appearance to the report about his birth, both to show that he himself is aware of the origins of the details in popular sentiment and to create a "less literal and more figurative, less true and more so" (Anderson 87) image: not so much a portrait of a historical figure as an avatar of tyranny. His admission of the role of popular opinion also demonstrates his awareness of the prevalence of rumours among the materials of historical inquiry and the difficulty of sorting out the literal truth from the dramatic embellishments; one of the principal obstacles of historiography, as More so wonderfully demonstrates, is that "fair scrutiny of all opinions [means] countenancing some wild legends" (Hanham 160), but in the absence of concrete evidence, even the most obvious exaggerations must be considered.

Much has been said on the discrepancies between More's description and those provided by Rous and Vergil. The discrepancies were most likely a slip on More's part, but Alison Hanham points out that perhaps he "was ... wryly aware that he too walked with the right shoulder higher [though probably not nearly as obvious for More as for Richard], as Erasmus tells us" (165, n. 3), and thus did not want to be seen as creating a distorted self-

portrait. However, as Retha M. Warnicke notes, More may have allowed the discrepancy to stand because of a common image in medieval morality plays: "in the important judgement scenes, ... the cursed are segregated on the left-hand side of God and are forced to carry their wicked works on their backs, thereby visually assuming hunchedback shapes" (767). By placing the deformity on Richard's left side rather than the right, therefore, More, however inadvertently, draws upon an already well-known literary and dramatic device to emphasize his central figure's demonic character; what may have begun as a misreading of the sources takes on a greater symbolic significance.

Though in his introductory character sketch, More had pointed out that it was impossible to tell for certain whether "the Duke of Gloucester had of old foreminded this conclusion [ie. his plan to seize the throne for himself] or was now at erst [at that moment] thereunto moved and put in hope by the occasion of the tender age of the young princes" (10), the strongest implication in the history, as well as in the play, is that Richard did plan the destruction of his family all along, even - or so More suggests - fostering discords between Edward's friends and Elizabeth's family. It is within the context of the rivalry between the nobles that More creates the greatest contrast between Edward and Richard: he presents Edward as a wise mediator, "a figura of Christ" (Warnicke 768), who attempts to remind his family and friends both of their responsibilities to the country and of the dangers of the "pestilent serpent ... ambition and desire of vainglory and sovereignty" (More 13). Indeed, in keeping with the use of prophecy as dramatic irony common in both historical prose and history plays, More has Edward foreshadow the atrocities that would follow his death: Edward warns the nobles that "if you among yourself in a child's reign fall at debate, many a good man shall perish and haply he too, and ye too, ere this land find peace again" (14).

Edward's dying speech to the nobles, which Shakespeare adapted in II.i. of *Richard III*, is the first notable example of More's use of dramatic techniques in his history; throughout the work, he reports conversations between important people, especially at significant moments in the plot. Even the narrative itself displays a dramatic structure, as More presents the major events of Richard's rise to power in a progression of rising action much like the first half of Shakespeare's version, and then periodically interrupts the main

story with a series of interludes, including the discussion of the rights of sanctuary - which More gives to Buckingham rather than to Richard as Vergil did (26-40; cf. *RIII* III.i. 31-56), the affectionate yet rueful character sketch of Mistress Shore (55-58), the marriage of Edward and Elizabeth, which Mancini also described (61-67; cf. *3HVI* III.ii.), and the fate of Richard and his accomplices (89-90). Throughout his work, More is deeply aware of the dramatic potential, in every sense of the word, of the events he describes. He portrays the pageantry attendant upon the nobles as well as the awareness on the part of the observers that the nobles in general and Richard in particular are engaging in an especially disturbing form of playacting.

One of the most striking examples of More's dramatic presentation of history occurs in his treatment of the murder of Hastings, which Shakespeare adapts in Act III of his play. More takes up the details of the meeting which Vergil used in his own account, but fleshes them out into a powerful example of the terror Richard inspired in his observers and of the uneasiness that the political situation caused among the people. The amount of detail More uses in this passage has often been taken by revisionist historians as the strongest evidence that the Bishop of Ely, who was present at the meeting, might have written the history himself; however, though More may well have obtained the details from Ely, the treatment of those details is his own. Among More's innovations in the description of the meeting are the conversations between Stanley, Hastings, and Catesby on the reasons for the division of the Council; Stanley's dream about the white boar - Richard's emblem - on the night before the meeting; and Hastings' conversation with the messenger who bears his name (50-52; cf. *RIII* III.ii.); as well as Richard's now-famous request to Ely for "a mess of strawberries" (47). Retha M. Warnicke suggests that the strawberry request, as innocuous as it seems to the initial observer, is itself an underscoring of Richard's intentions because "the wood strawberry ... was still more available in the forests where boars roamed and where witches allegedly congregated than in cultivated gardens" (772) and because the request itself is an example of "the deadly sin of gluttony" (Warnicke 770), especially when combined with Richard's excuse for nearly missing the meeting, because he overslept - an example of "the sin of sloth" (Warnicke 770). But the most memorable aspect of More's depiction of the ill-fated meeting is Richard's trumped-up

charge of witchcraft against Hastings, Queen Elizabeth, and Mistress Shore, the latter of whom is added to the list for the first time in More's account. Though Vergil had previously mentioned Hastings' unconscious pronunciation of his own death sentence, and Richard's attempt to blame his deformity on witchcraft, More takes these details further by pointing out that the nobles realized the weaknesses in Richard's argument: "well they wist that the queen was too wise to go about any such folly. And also, if she would, yet would she, of all folk, least make Shore's wife of counsel, whom of all women she most hated, as that concubine whom the king, her husband, had most loved. And also no man was there present but well knew that his arm was ever such since his birth" (49).[7] Even so, none of the immediate onlookers referred to these weaknesses, for fear of the consequences if they did; however, More acknowledges that the common people were not afraid to point this out, with his references to the hastily-publicized order for Hastings' execution (54-55; cf. *RIII* III.vi.) and Richard's and Buckingham's meeting with the Mayor after the execution (53-54; cf. *RIII* III.v.).

The greatest awareness More exhibits of the dramatic nature of his history occurs in his presentation of Richard's staged appeals to the people of London: in commenting upon the refusal of the people to answer Buckingham's praises of Richard, More comments, "in a stage play all the people know right well that he that playeth the sowdaine is percase a sowter" (83). The comment is both a remark upon political playacting in general and a reference to Richard's playacting in particular, for as Warnicke notes, "both of the relevant occupational words begin with the word 'sow,'" (764), a reference to Richard's boar emblem. Furthermore, More refers to political pageantry as "kings' games, as it were, stage plays, and for the more part played on scaffolds" (83), a reference both to medieval mystery plays and to executions, since the word "scaffold" meant both "the stage upon which plays were performed and the platform erected for an execution" (More 83, n. 5). More is not unaware, however, that the appeals take on a distinctly comic tone, especially in their failure to convince the people. This is most noticeable in his account of Dr. Shaw's sermon in praise of Richard (67-69), characterized by the unbelievable description of Richard as "the sure undoubted image, the plain express likeness of that noble duke [his father, the Duke of York]" (68) and the utter failure of this appeal when Richard arrives too late for

his entrance cue. More does not even need to repeat the obvious weakness in Dr. Shaw's comparison, and neither did the people: upon hearing the speech, "they stood as they had been turned into stone" (69). The ineffectiveness of Richard's appeals to the people serves as a foreshadowing and underscoring of his unsuitability for royal power; or, as More says, "they that sometime step up and play with them, when they cannot play their parts, they disorder the play and do themselves no good" (83). As well, it also serves to deflate some of the tension the reader would otherwise feel, much like a scene of comic relief in a Shakespearean history play, by reducing Richard from a figure of horror to "a melodramatic actor" (Rowse 193), if only for a moment.

Though More ends the Latin text of his history at Richard's coronation, the English text continues with Richard's reign of terror, beginning with "the lamentable murder of his innocent nephews, the young king and his most tender brother" (84). The *History of Richard III* is the first historical work to provide a detailed description of the murder, including the names of Richard's accomplices, and it is this version that Shakespeare follows in his adaptation. Because most of the details are not found in the contemporary sources, Alison Hanham suggests that they may be More's own inventions; however, More admits that his report of "the dolorous end of those babes" is "not after every way that I have heard, but after that way that I have so heard by such men and by such means as methinketh it were hard but it should be true" (85). In other words, after examining what little was known about the incident, More has chosen to report what he considers the most plausible version of events, though not without his usual ironic treatment of his source material.

More's version of the plot to murder Edward and York differs in one significant way from its appearance in Shakespeare's play. More says that Richard discussed the plot with Tyrrel and his page while "sitting at the draught [privy], a convenient carpet for such a counsel" (87), an example of More's taste for scatological humour as well as a fitting characteristic for his protagonist; as Peggy Goodman Endel remarks, the plot is "a secret and foul deed both private and befitting the privy" (118). Though theatrical decorum may have prevented Shakespeare from recreating the scene exactly as More wrote it, the adaptation still draws upon the feelings of disgust and revulsion that More's account

evokes in the reader. But More evokes other emotions besides these; he proceeds immediately afterwards to evoke pity for Richard's young victims by mentioning Edward's reaction to being overthrown: "Alas! I would my uncle would let me have my life yet, though I lose my kingdom" (87). Mancini, in his contemporary version, had also referred to Edward's despair; but More takes this further by providing an illustration of the details to which Mancini and others had referred.

Though many revisionist historians have attempted to prove otherwise, More's description of the murder of Edward V and the Duke of York is not only the most detailed but also the most plausible account of what happened; A.L. Rowse points out that though there is little concrete evidence for More's testimony, "everything that has come to light in our time is completely consistent with it, bears it out, confirms it" (193-194). His account is as follows:

> For Sir James Tyrrel devised that they should be murdered in their beds, to the execution whereof he appointed Miles Forest, one of the four that kept them, a fellow fleshed in murder before time. To him he joined one John Dighton, his own horse-keeper, a big, broad, square, strong knave. Then, all the other being removed from them, this Miles Forest and John Dighton about midnight (the sely children lying in their beds) came into the chamber and suddenly lapped them up among the clothes - so bewrapped them and entangled them, keeping down by force the featherbed and pillows hard unto their mouths, that within a while, smored and stifled, their breath failing, they gave up to God their innocent souls into the joys of heaven, leaving to the tormentors their bodies dead in the bed. (88; cf. *RIII* IV.iii. 1-19)

But More proceeds beyond these details. In keeping with traditional historiography, he draws moral conclusions both of the impermanence of life and prosperity and of the consequences of tyranny, though his elegy to Edward and York admittedly descends into sentimentality with its characterization of "these innocent, tender children, born of most royal blood, ... by traitorous tyranny taken, deprived of their estate, shortly shut up in

prison, and privily slain and murdered" (89), a characterization which Retha M. Warnicke connects to the Massacre of the Innocents, as depicted in morality plays. However, the sentimental tone of the passage is tinged with irony; though More likely did feel sympathy for Edward and York, the heavily detailed, didactic, alliterative style of the excerpt is in part a deliberate imitation of earlier historians, especially Vergil - as the use of Vergil's own phrase, "sely children," and the moral conclusion drawn from the incident, demonstrate.

All sentimentality disappears from More's narrative as it nears its end; in contrast to the rueful elegy to Edward and York, the final characterization of Richard in More's story is a graphic description of the workings of a guilty conscience: "after this abominable deed done, he never had quiet in his mind; he never thought himself sure.... troubled with fearful dreams, [he would] suddenly sometime start up, leap out of his bed and run about the chamber; so was his restless heart continually tossed and tumbled with the tedious impression and stormy remembrance of his abominable deed" (89-90). The characterization draws upon hints in the Crowland Chronicle and Vergil, though More places his treatment of Richard's guilty conscience later in the story than Vergil did and earlier than both the Crowland Chronicle and Shakespeare. The juxtaposition of "Richard's inner torment ... [with] the justice done to the actual murderers" (Anderson 105) serves to heighten the effect of this passage by displaying all the consequences of Richard's crimes together. The result is that More does not need to continue the story to its actual end; the reader already knows that Richard will receive his just reward, even before the narrative chronology reaches Richmond's return.

With the conversation between Buckingham and Ely that closes his history, More brings the story full circle: the history begins with one plot to overthrow a king, and it ends with another. Drawing on details in Vergil's history, More states that Buckingham's change of heart was due to Richard's refusal to grant him "the Duke of Hereford's lands, to which he pretended himself just inheritor" (91; cf. Vergil, *English History* 193-194), and that Ely persuaded him to oppose Richard. However, in the last sentence of the history, Ely says, "But for the weal of this realm whereof his grace [Richard] hath now the governance and whereof I myself one poor member, I was about to wish that to those good abilities, whereof he hath already right many little needing my praise, it might yet have pleased God for the

better store to have given him some of other such excellent virtues meet for the rule of the realm, as our Lord hath planted in the person of your grace [Buckingham]" (95-96). By suggesting that Buckingham has the qualities Richard lacks to be a successful ruler, Ely may be hinting "that he ought to advance his own claims to the throne" (Anderson 105). The abrupt ending of the history at this point, however, leaves this passage ambiguous, even though the reader knows that Buckingham and Ely both agreed to support Richmond, as Vergil and the earlier chroniclers had previously acknowledged.

Interestingly, More's characterization of the Bishop of Ely, who was his patron, is as ironic as the rest of the history. On the one hand, More describes Ely in the manner in which a historian would usually describe his patron, as "a man of great natural wit, very well learned, and honourable in behaviour, lacking no wise ways to win favour" (92); but on the other, he describes Ely's several changes of allegiance over the years, as well as his "craft of a consummate Machiavel" (Anderson 108) in his appeal to Buckingham, never quite making it clear whether Ely is a practical man or a mere opportunist or both. In a way, Ely can be said to symbolize the contemporary historians whose works inspired More's history and Shakespeare's first tetralogy: though his changes of heart along with changes in political power may give the impression of mere sycophancy, he understands the necessity of maintaining at least a semblance of sympathy to those in power even as he recognizes the need to oppose an unjust ruler.[8] The ambiguous characterization of the Bishop, in fact, is probably the strongest proof that Ely was not the real author of More's history, as revisionist writers have often suggested; it is unlikely that Ely would have characterized himself as a mixture of pragmatist and opportunist, as he appears in the story, if he had written it.

Whether More abandoned his history because of the rebellion of Buckingham's son, the possibility of its being read as either a criticism or a praise of Henry VIII, the difficulty of placing the flamboyant Richard and the dignified Richmond in the same work, or simply his own distaste for the subject matter - A.L. Rowse notes that "More was appalled by the story, but got most of it down" (258) - what he did produce was a powerful, passionate combination of history, biography, and literary narrative, in which actual historical events exist side-by-side with the larger realities of tyranny and political

manoeuvring. As such, despite its embellishments to the characters and events, More's history remains the best-known and, given the existing evidence, the most plausible version of the events it describes.

The adaptation of More's history, from Richard Grafton's incomplete edition, by Edward Hall into his chronicle, *The Union of Lancaster and York*, in 1542 is itself somewhat ironic, since More and Hall were very different in character and experiences: A.L. Rowse points out the contrasts between Hall, "the son of Protestant Reformers, the enthusiastic, patriotic Henrician, whose hero Henry VIII could do no wrong", and More, "Henry's most eminent victim, who died for the unity of Christendom" (259). However, the use of More's work by Hall both protected the earlier work from anti-Catholic reprisals and ensured its survival in the canon of sixteenth-century historiography. Hall's chronicle appeared in two editions: the first was published in 1542, and the second in 1548, the year after Hall died. The full title of Hall's chronicle makes its purpose explicit: in its first printed edition, the chronicle's title is *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustrious Families of Lancaster and York, Being Long in Continual Dissension for the Crown of This Noble Realm, With all the Acts Done in Both the Times of the Princes, Both of the One Lineage and of the Other, Beginning at the Time of King Henry IV, the First Author of This Division, and So Successively Proceeding to the Reign of the High and Prudent Prince, King Henry VIII, the Undubitate Flower and Very Heir of Both the Said Lineages.* The titles of the chronicle's eight main chapters further enumerate Hall's purpose in tracing the historical progression from the dissensions of the fifteenth century to the successes of Henry VIII: *The Unquiet Time of King Henry IV, The Victorious Acts of King Henry V, The Troublous Season of King Henry VI, The Prosperous Reign of King Edward IV, The Pitiful Life of King Edward V, The Tragical Doings of King Richard III, The Politic Governance of King Henry VII,* and *The Triumphant Reign of King Henry VIII.* At the beginning of the history, its publisher, Richard Grafton, lists the sources on which Hall's account is based; among them are the works of Polydore Vergil, whom Hall and Grafton call "Polidorus" (viii), and Sir Thomas More, as well as many other chronicles written in English, French, and Latin.

Hall, like other chroniclers of his time, includes a justification for his writing in the

introduction to his history. In his dedicatory preface, addressed to Edward VI, he writes:

> If no man had written the goodness of noble Augustus, nor the pity of merciful Trajan, how should their successors have followed their steps in virtue and princely qualities: on the contrary part, if the cruelty of Nero, the ungracious life of Caligula had not been put in remembrance, young Princes and frail governors might likewise have fallen in a like pit, but by reading their vices and seeing their mischievous end, they be compelled to leave their evil ways, and embrace the good qualities of notable princes and prudent governors: Thus, writing is the key to induce virtue, and repress vice: Thus memory maketh men dead many a thousand year still to live as though they were present; Thus Fame triumpheth upon death, and renown upon Oblivion, and all by reason of writing and history. (v-vi)

He continues with a brief history of English historical writing, from Geoffrey of Monmouth to Robert Fabyan and the French writer Jean Froissart, and announces his intention to continue where Froissart ended, "at the beginning of King Henry IV" (vi). By beginning his history with the deposition of Richard II and the accession of Henry IV, Hall sets the groundwork for Shakespeare's historical series; indeed, the division of Hall's history into eight chapters itself foreshadows Shakespeare's own division of fifteenth-century history into eight parts. According to Geoffrey Bullough, Hall's chronicle is probably the most frequently-consulted source for Shakespeare's first tetralogy, though it is a more significant influence on *Henry VI* than on *Richard III*.

Hall sets the stage for his discussion of late-medieval English history by referring to other, earlier cases of civil war and dissension in Italy, France, Scotland, Germany, Denmark, and elsewhere, admitting that while these were certainly shameful events, "what misery, what murder, and what execrable plagues this famous region hath suffered by the division and dissension of the renowned houses of Lancaster and York, my wit cannot comprehend nor my tongue declare neither yet my pen fully set forth" (1) - in other words, none could compare with the atrocities that took place in England. However, with the marriage of Richmond and Elizabeth, "malice is extinct, amity is embraced, and

indissoluble alliance and consanguinity is procured" (2).

Hall's version of the murder of Henry VI follows the details in the accounts of Warkworth, Crowland, and Vergil; he says, "Poor King Henry VI, a little before deprived of his realm and imperial crown, was now in the Tower of London, spoiled of his life, and all worldly felicity, by Richard, Duke of Gloucester (as the constant fame ran), which, to th' intent that King Edward, his brother, should be clear out of all suspicion of sudden invasion, murdered the said king with a dagger" (303), and then describes Henry's funeral procession in a manner similar to Warkworth: "The dead corpse of King Henry ... was conveyed from the Tower, to the Church of St. Paul, and there laid on a bier, where it lay the space of one whole day; and the next day, without priest or clerk, torch or taper, singing or saying, it was conveyed to the monastery of Chertsey, being distant from London fifteen miles, and there was buried" (303). Hall actually refers to Henry's murder twice: following the character sketch of Richard III adapted from More's version, he says, "He [Richard III] slew in the Tower King Henry VI, saying 'Now there is no heir male of King Edward III but we of the House of York:' which murder was done without King Edward's assent, which would have appointed that butcherly office to some other, rather than to his own brother" (343; cf. *3HVI* V.v. 86; V.vi. 61-93).

Just as Hall repeats the murder of Henry VI twice in his history, so does he provide two distinct portraits of Richard III: one (342-343) adapted almost verbatim from More's history, and one (421) adapted from Vergil's. However, Hall's characterization of Richard is not entirely disparaging: though he accepts the "portrait of a psychotic type" (Rowse 261) of the earlier historians, he acknowledges that "if he [Richard] had continued still Protector, and suffered his nephews to have lived and reigned, no doubt but the realm had prospered and he much praised and beloved as he is now abhorred and vilipended" (421), and also praises Richard's earlier accomplishments in Edward's service. Indeed, the dramatic change in Richard's character throughout *Henry VI, Part Three,* from a seemingly loyal son and brother (*3HVI* II.i.) to a criminal mastermind (*3HVI* III.ii.), comes in large part from Hall's characterizations.

For his account of the death of the Duke of Clarence, which encompasses the entire entry for the seventeenth year of Edward IV [1478], Hall follows the accounts of More and

Vergil, including the accusations made against Clarence, the unusual method of his death "in a butt of malmsey" (326), Edward's anguished reaction to his brother's murder, and especially the prophecy surrounding the murder:

> The fame was that the king or the queen, or both, sore troubled with a foolish prophecy, and by reason thereof began to stomach and grievously to grudge against the duke. The effect of which was, after King Edward should reign one whose first letter of his name should be a G. And because the devil is wont with such witchcrafts, to wrap ... the minds of men, which delight in such devilish fantasies they said afterward that that prophecy lost not his effect, when after King Edward, Gloucester usurped his kingdom. (326)

Following More, Hall says, later on in his history, that while it is impossible to tell whether Richard really had anything to do with Clarence's death, "which thing in all appearance he resisted, ... he inwardly minded it" (343). This can mean either that Richard approved of the murder or that it was his idea, although Hall does note that it was done on Edward's orders.

Hall's description of the death of Edward IV combines the opinions of many of the earlier historians: he includes the suggestion of Mancini that Edward died of "the melancholy and anger that he took with the French king, for his untruth and unkindness" (338-339) alongside the suggestions of Vergil that the illness was the result of either overindulgence or poisoning; indeed, Hall notes that "he [Edward IV] used himself among mean persons, more familiar than his degree, dignity, or majesty required, which was the cause that some suspected him to have died of poison" (341). The chronicle includes two versions of Edward's deathbed address to his friends and family: one taken from More's version, and an alternate version in which Edward admonishes the nobles to set a proper example for his young sons:

> Therefore I desire you, and in God's name adjure you, rather to study to make them rich in Godly knowledge and virtuous qualities, than to take pain to glorify them with abundance of worldly treasure and mundane superfluity. And certainly, when they come to maturity of age, and shall peradventure consider, that by your omission and

> negligent education, they have not such graces, nor are endowed with such notable qualities, as they might have been, if you had performed the trust to you, by me committed: They shall not only deplore, and lament their ungarnished estate, and naked condition, but also it may fortune, that they shall conceive inwardly against you, such a negligent untruth, that the sequel thereof, may rather turn to displeasure than thanks, and sooner to an ingratitude, than to a reward. (340)

Edward's speech can be said to summarize Hall's own intention for his history, as an exemplum for its readers. But Hall is aware that in order to produce a proper exemplum, a writer must recount the mistakes of the past as well as the successes: he admits that though he dislikes having to write about Richard III, it is necessary for the purpose of his history. He says in the introduction to his chapter on Richard III: "But if I should not declare the flagicious facts of the evil princes, as well as I have done the notable acts of virtuous kings, I should neither animate, nor encourage rulers of realms, countries, and seignories to follow the steps of their profitable progenitors, for to attain to the type of honour and worldly fame: neither yet advertise princes being prone to vice and wickedness, to avoid and expel all sin and mischief, for dread of obloquy and worldly shame: for contrary set to contrary is more apparent, as white joined with black, make the fairer show" (374). Hall's admitted reluctance to write about Richard III produces the contrary rhetorical effect: it provides an emphatic introduction to the darkest section of the history.

The entire chapter on Edward V and the first half of the chapter on Richard III are based almost wholly on More, which Hall acknowledges in his marginal notes (342, 379), but Hall does add significant details of his own. He provides a very detailed description of Richard's coronation (375-376), suggesting that the extravagance of the occasion was meant to conceal the illegality of Richard's accession. Indeed, Hall mentions in an aside that "the French king [Louis XI] so abhorred him and his cruelty that he would neither see nor hear his ambassadors" (377). As well, Hall acknowledges, inspired by Vergil's account, that after the death of Edward V and the Duke of York, people began to speak out openly, railing against "the most cruel tyranny that hath invaded the commonwealth ... in him is neither hope of justice nor trust of mercy but abundance of cruelty and thirst for innocent

blood" (379; cf. Vergil, *English History* 189-190). Hall also continues the story where More left off, with the conversation between the Duke of Buckingham and the Bishop of Ely; unlike More, Hall states explicitly that Ely and Buckingham planned to "either devise to set up again the lineage of Lancaster or advance the eldest daughter of King Edward to some high and puissant prince, ... [so that] all civil war should cease, all domestical discord should sleep, and peace, profit, and quietness should be set forth and embraced" (385). He then provides a detailed account of the plan between Queen Elizabeth and the Countess of Richmond to unite their surviving children in marriage, as well as an account of Richmond's adventures in France, derived in part from Vergil's narrative.

The inspiration for Richard's appeal to Elizabeth for her daughter in IV.iv. of Shakespeare's adaptation may have come from a detail in Hall's history: following the failure of Richmond's first expedition to England, "King Richard ... with glorious promises and flattering words pleased and appeased the mutable mind of Queen Elizabeth which knew nothing less than that he most intended, he caused all his brother's daughters to be conveyed into his palace with solemn receiving, as though with his new familiar and loving entertainment they should forget, and in their minds obliterate the old committed injury and late perpetrated tyranny" (407). Hall differs from Shakespeare, but follows the accounts of the earlier historians, in placing the appeal before the death of Lady Anne; for this subsequent incident, he follows Vergil and Crowland in saying that Richard "procured a common rumour (but he would not have the author known) to be published and spread abroad among the common people that the queen was already dead" (407), and soon afterward, "howsoever it fortuned, either by inward thought and pensiveness of heart, or by intoxication of poison (which is affirmed to be most likely) ... the queen departed out of this transitory life" (407).

For his version of the final battle, Hall follows Vergil quite closely, but his version is more dramatic in tone than Vergil's. Like Vergil, Hall describes Richmond's return to England in great detail, and includes the description of Richard's dream on the night before the battle. But Hall's most significant innovation comes just before the battle: while the Crowland Chronicle and Vergil both allude to the addresses of Richard and Richmond to their men, Hall actually provides them. In his speech to his men, which Shakespeare adapts

into his own play, Richard admits that "in the adoption and obtaining of the garland, I being seduced and provoked by sinister council and diabolical temptation did commit a facinerous and detestable act" (415), but he claims that "I have with penitence and salt tears (as I trust) expiated and clearly purged the same offence, which abominable crime I require you of friendship as clearly to forget, as I daily do remember to deplore and lament the same" (415; cf. *RIII* I.ii. 151-170; IV.iv. 397-417). But following his insincere confession, Richard rails against his young adversary Richmond, whom he calls "an unknown Welshman (whose father I never knew nor him personally saw).... a Welsh milksop, a man of small courage and of less experience in martial acts and feats of war" (415), leading "braggers without audacity, drunkards without discretion, ribalds without reason, cowards without resisting, and in conclusion the most effeminate and lascivious people" (415-416; cf. *RIII* V.315-337).

On the other side, Richmond too is given a magnificent speech, also the basis for a passage in Shakespeare's version. He announces to his men:

> Our cause is so just that no enterprise can be of more virtue, both by the laws divine and civil, for what can be a more honest, goodly, or Godly quarrel than to fight against a captain, being an homicide and murderer of his own blood and progeny? An extreme destroyer of his nobility, and to his and our country and the poorest subjects of the same, a deadly malle, a firebrand and a burden intolerable? Beside him, consider who be of his band and company, such as by murder and untruth committed against their own kin and lineage, ye against their Prince and sovereign Lord have disherited me and you and wrongfully detain and usurp our lawful patrimony and lineal inheritance. (416-417; cf. *RIII* V.iii. 237-270)

In his speech, Richmond appeals to his men's sense of justice, faith in God, and dislike of tyranny; he refers to Richard as "both Tarquin and Nero ... a tyrant more than Nero, for he hath not only murdered his nephew being his king and sovereign lord, bastarded his noble brethren and defamed the womb of his virtuous and womanly mother, but also compassed all the means and ways that he could invent how to stuprate [rape] and

carnally know his own niece under the pretence of a cloaked matrimony, which lady I have sworn and promised to take to my make and wife as you all know and believe" (417).[9] He assures his men that God is on their side, and if they are successful, they will be rewarded both with material goods and with a free nation - though he is not unaware that they are taking a great risk. As a parallel to Richard's disparaging description of Richmond's men, Richmond describes his army as "true men against traitors, pitiful persons against murderers, true inheritors against usurpers, the scourges of God against tyrants" (418). Richmond's speech not only serves as an inspiration to his men and to the readers; it also bolsters Hall's description of him as "more an angelical creature than a terrestrial personage, his countenance and aspect ... cheerful and courageous, ... prompt and ready in answering, but of such sobriety that it could never be judged whether he were more dull than quick in speaking (such was his temperance)" (416) - in short, everything Richard is not.

Hall's description of the battle follows Vergil's but adds a few more details, including a single fight between Richard and Richmond (cf. *RIII* V.iv.), the names of some of the noblemen who were killed in the battle, and the letter given to the Duke of Norfolk on the night before: "Jockey of Norfolk, be not too bold, / For Dickon thy master is bought and sold" (419; *RIII* V.iii. 304-305). He also notes that after the battle, "few lamented, and many rejoiced; the proud bragging white boar ... was violently rased and plucked down from every sign and place where it might be espied, so ill was [Richard's] life that men wished the memory of him to be buried with his carrion corpse" (421). By contrast, Richmond's victory is hailed as a divine miracle: "Which kingdom he obtained and enjoyed as a thing by God elected and provided, and by his especial favour and gracious aspect compassed and achieved" (423). Indeed, Hall repeats the prophecy of Henry VI and the story of Richmond's descent from Cadwallader, both of which Vergil also referred to, as proof of the divine nature of his success.

Like his sources, More and Vergil, Hall has been praised as an innovative and influential historian, but has also been criticized for his use of "literary exercises and not history" (Kingsford 264), such as the dramatic use of the providential theme in his work, and his creation of dialogues and speeches for his central figures. The literary nature of Hall's history, as well as its combination of medieval and Renaissance styles, made it ideal

for adaptation by poets and playwrights; in addition to its direct influence on Shakespeare's historical series, it is also the primary source for *A Mirror for Magistrates*, the best-known poetic treatment of medieval English history and itself an influence on Shakespeare.

Hall, and through him More and Vergil, provided much of the background material for one of the most important sources for the history plays, as well as the most famous English historical work of the sixteenth century, Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, which first appeared in 1577. Holinshed, in fact, was not the sole author of the chronicle, but rather the principal editor in a group of "nearly a dozen persons who contributed to the project over two decades and in two quite different editions" (Patterson 3); among the writers and editors known to have contributed to the work are Reginald Wolfe, John Stow, William Harrison, Richard Stanyhurst, and Francis Thynne. The second edition of the chronicle, the version Shakespeare most likely used, appeared in 1587, seven years after Holinshed's death, and was edited mainly by John Hooker and Abraham Fleming.

According to Annabel Patterson, Holinshed may have intended his history as "a defence of a hands-off historiography designed to encourage independent judgement in the reader" (15) and thus a contrast to Hall's more tightly-arranged, unified history. Indeed, unlike Vergil and Hall, whose works he used, Holinshed did not produce his chronicle under royal patronage, and as such frequently encountered both opposition and outright censorship; Holinshed himself admitted that "It is dangerous ... to range in so large a field as I have here undertaken, while so many sundry men in divers things may be able to control me" (qtd in Patterson 15).

For his version of the events of the latter half of Shakespeare's first tetralogy, Holinshed generally follows Hall, and thus Vergil and More; but unlike Hall, Holinshed uses both the English and Latin texts of More's history for his accounts of Edward V and Richard III. He also uses sources which were likely unknown to, or ignored by, Hall; most notably, he incorporates material from the anonymous contemporary chronicle, *The History of the Arrival of Edward IV in England*, into his story of the reign of Edward IV and the murder of Henry VI. After repeating Hall's statement about Henry's murder by Richard III, Holinshed notes, "Howbeit, some writers of that time, favouring altogether the House of

York, have recorded, that after he understood what losses had chanced unto his friends, and how not only his son, but also all his other chief partakers were dead and dispatched, he took it so to heart, that of pure displeasure, indignation, and melancholy, he died the three-and-twentieth of May" (324). Holinshed's description of Henry's funeral procession also follows Hall's, but adds a detail that appeared in Warkworth's version and subesquently in Shakespeare's adaptation: that when Henry's body was brought to St. Paul's Cathedral, "the same in the presence of the beholders did bleed, ... From thence he was carried to the Blackfriars, and bled there likewise" (324; cf. *RIII* I.ii. 55-56).

Because he follows Hall's accounts quite closely, Holinshed repeats many significant events twice; among these are the murders of Henry VI and the Duke of Clarence and the final words of Edward IV, as well as More's and Vergil's descriptions of Richard III. However, Holinshed, or more properly his co-editor Fleming, punctuates certain details in the texts by adding Latin proverbs, a practice that, though meant as rhetorical emphasis, Henry Ansgar Kelly dismisses as "tedious and often puerile comments" (138) because the reader could draw similar conclusions without such editorial intrusions. For example, following the description of Richard III adapted from More's history, Holinshed/Fleming notes that "the full confluence of these qualities, with the defects of favour and amiable proportion, gave proof to this rule of physiognomy: *Distortum vultum sequitur distorsio morum*" (362). The proverb means "A distortion of nature follows a distorted countenance" (Satin 6, n. 9), a common belief at the time, though Shakespeare's treatment of the details is somewhat more ambiguous than Holinshed's (*3HVI* III.ii. 124-195; V.vi. 68-93; *RIII* I.i.14-31). Similarly, following his account of the murder of Hastings, also taken from More, Holinshed/Fleming adds a moral interpolation on Richard's criminal behaviour: "Thus began he to establish his kingdom in blood, growing thereby in hatred of the nobles, and also abridging both the line of his life, and the time of his regiment: for God will not have bloodthirsty tyrants' days prolonged, but will cut them off in their ruff; according to David's words: *Impio, fallaci, avidoque caedis / Fila mors rumpet viridi in iuventa*" (381); or, "Murderous death breaks the thread of an irreverent, deceitful, and greedy man in vigorous youth" (Satin 21, n. 49).

The use of the Latin proverbs is not the only way in which Holinshed adds an

editorial opinion to his history; for example, in his account of Richard's appeal to Elizabeth to hand over her daughter to him, "as lambs once again committed to the custody of the ravenous wolf" (429), Holinshed notes:

> [It] was no small allurement that King Richard used to overcome her (for we know by experience that women are of a proud disposition, and that the way to win them is by promises of preferment) and therefore it is the less marvel that he by his wily wit had made conquest of her wavering will. Besides that, it is to be presumed that she stood in fear to impugn his demands by denials, least he in his malicious mood might take occasion to deal roughly with her, being a weak woman, and of a timorous spirit. (430)

From this passage in Holinshed's history came Shakespeare's reference to Elizabeth as "Relenting fool, and shallow, changing woman!" (*RIII* IV.iv. 431), though Shakespeare, unlike Holinshed, meant the reference ironically. This passage is but one example of Holinshed's and his co-authors' tendencies to moralize throughout their history; because the chronicle's account of Richard III is more thoroughly judgemental than those of Vergil, More, Hall, or the fifteenth-century historians, Geoffrey Bullough notes that "If possible Richard's character in Holinshed is blacker than in Hall, since his better qualities are ignored" (227). Even so, Holinshed does repeat Hall's admission that if Richard had been content to remain Lord Protector, history might have judged him better.

One detail that is unique to Holinshed found its way into Shakespeare's version. In an interlude to his account of Richmond's preparations to return to England, Holinshed mentions Richard's visit to Exeter, in which "he came to the castle, and when he understood that it was called Rougemount, suddenly he fell into a dump [depression], and (as one astonished) said, 'Well, I see my days be not long.' He spake this of a prophecy told him, that when he came once to Richmond he should not long live after: which fell out in the end to be true, not in respect of this castle, but in respect of Henry, Earl of Richmond, who the next year following met him at Bosworth Field where he was slain" (421; cf. *RIII* IV.ii. 103-107). The remainder of Holinshed's account follows Hall's, including such details as

Richmond's return to England, Lady Anne's suspicious death, Richard's dream, and both leaders' addresses to their men just before the battle - though Holinshed's version of Richard's speech refers to Richard's mother, rather than brother-in-law, as Richmond's patron, a misprint that appears in Shakespeare's version as well (440; *RIII* V.iii. 324). Holinshed's story of the war concludes with an account of the fate of the York family which, while acknowledging their claim to the throne, points out that "the house of York showed itself more bloody in seeking to obtain the kingdom, than that of Lancaster in usurping it, so it came to pass that the Lord's vengeance appeared more heavy towards the same than toward the other, not ceasing till the whole issue male of the said Richard, Duke of York was extinguished" (478).

Like his predecessors and sources, Vergil, More, and Hall, Holinshed has been variously treated by historians and literary scholars. Because the *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* are very important sources not only for Shakespeare's history plays but also for several of his tragedies, the importance of Holinshed and his collaborators to sixteenth-century historiography has been largely overlooked; indeed, Stephen Booth remarked that "we care about Holinshed's Chronicles because Shakespeare read them" (qtd in Patterson 3). Holinshed and his co-authors continued the practices Vergil had begun of diligent research and reproduction of both oral and written traditions; and, unlike Vergil and Hall, for whom the commonly-made charge of royal flattery has at least a small justification, "The charge that Holinshed and his colleagues were engaged in legitimation of the house of Tudor simply will not stand" (Patterson 6). Rather, Holinshed's chronicle is a comprehensive gathering of previous historical work combined with the findings of its editors, reflecting the viewpoints of its middle-class authors and its readers of all walks of society rather than merely those of a noble patron or an ecclesiastical chronicler, and respecting the views of different sides of controversial issues. The chronicle is also an important source for many sixteenth-century literary works aside from Shakespeare's plays: as Annabel Patterson notes, both Edmund Spenser and Samuel Daniel used Holinshed's work as the partial basis for theirs; and Holinshed himself may have contributed a poem on Sir Nicholas Burdet to the third edition of *A Mirror for Magistrates*, which was published after his death.

IV. The Literary Sources of the Plays

The historical works of both the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries "bore an extraordinarily rich harvest in literature" (Rowse 249), almost from the beginning. Many of the events Shakespeare describes in his history plays prompted occasional verses and ballads that expressed the views of the common people about the dissensions in late-medieval English society; and poets and playwrights before and after Shakespeare found the period attractive for literary adaptation, not only "from the desire to tell a good story" (Hanham 194), but also as an appreciation by contrast of the relative peace of their own time and as a warning lest such atrocity happen again.

The best-known of the contemporary poetic versions of the events of *Richard III*, largely due to its use by both Hall and Holinshed, is also one of the shortest. In the summer of 1484, William Collingbourne, "sometime sheriff of Wiltshire and Dorset" (Scott-Giles 174) and a supporter of the Earl of Richmond, wrote a satirical epigram about Richard and his partners in crime and was executed for it - though Holinshed notes that Collingbourne's execution was supposedly for "being confederate with the said earl [Richmond] and other his adherents" (423). The first two lines of Collingbourne's poem first appeared in print in the chronicle of Robert Fabyan, and were taken up by Hall and Holinshed. However, a longer version, reported in G.R. French's 1869 work *Shakespeareana Genealogica*, is also known to exist; this version is as follows:

> The cat, the rat, and Lovel the dog
> Do rule all England under the hog:
> The crookback boar the way hath found
> To root our roses from our ground;
> Both flower and bud will he confound
> Till king of beasts the same be crown'd:
> And then the dog, the cat, and rat,
> Shall in his trough feed and be fat.
>
> (qtd in Scott-Giles 174)

With typical black humour, Holinshed says of Collingbourne's writing and its consequences, "because the first line ended in 'dog,' the metrician could not (observing

the regiments of meter) end the second verse in 'boar,' but called the boar a hog. This poetical schoolmaster, corrector of briefs and longs, caused Collingbourne to be abbreviated shorter by the head, and to be divided into four quarters" (422). Collingbourne himself became a character in *A Mirror for Magistrates*, in which his fate becomes a warning about the risks of satirical writing, especially writing on tyranny; and, though Shakespeare does not use the poem explicitly, his references to Richard's emblem and to Catesby, Ratcliffe, and Lovel, the three other subjects of the poem, suggest that he knew it from Hall and Holinshed.[10] The complete text of Collingbourne's poem also appears in Thomas Heywood's play *Edward IV, Part Two* (V.i.).

The practice of using emblems to identify important people in poems was actually common in fifteenth-century literature; it is developed more fully than Collingbourne's brief and ultimately fatal attempt in the anonymous poem *The Rose of England*, written sometime before 1495. The poem is an account of Richmond's return to England, emphasizing the role of his stepfather, Lord Stanley, for whom it may have been written. *The Rose of England* begins with a description of England as "a garden green and gay" (qtd in Bullough 346) in which grows a red rose tree, representing the Lancasters. The poem skips over most of the war in order to emphasize the specific rivalry between the Earl of Richmond and Richard III, who is introduced in the fourth stanza:

> There came in a beast men call a boar,
> And he rooted this garden up and down,
> By the seed of the rose he set no store,
> But afterwards it wore the crown.
>
> He took the branches of this rose away,
> And all asunder did them tear;
> And he buried them under a clod of clay,
> Swore they should never bloom nor bear.
>
> (qtd in Bullough 346)

But one blossom, representing Richmond, survived, with the help of "an eagle gleaming gay, / Of all fair birds well worth the best" (qtd in Bullough 346); the eagle was

Stanley's emblem. The poem goes on to describe Richmond's return to Wales, his reception at Shrewsbury, and his march through England, until the capture of George Stanley, which is thus described:

> But now is a bird of the eagle taken,
> From the white boar he cannot flee.
> Therefore, the old eagle makes great moan,
> And prays to God most certainly:
>
> "O steadfast God, verament," he did say -
> "Three persons in one God in Trinity!
> Save my son, the young eagle, this day
> From all false craft and treachery!"
>
> (qtd in Bullough 349)

The last part of the poem tells of the battle between Richard and Richmond, referring specifically to several of Richmond's allies: the Earl of Oxford (the blue boar), Gilbert Talbot (the talbot dog), the Marquess of Dorset (the unicorn), and Sir William Stanley (the hart's head). It ends with a praise of Henry VII and a return to the garden imagery with which it began:

> But now this garden flourishes freshly and gay,
> With fragrant flowers comely of hue;
> And gardeners it doth maintain;
> I hope they will prove just and true.[11]
>
> Our King, he is the rose so red,
> That now does flourish fresh and gay.
> Confound his foes, Lord, we beseech,
> And love his grace both night and day!
>
> (qtd in Bullough 349)

The Rose of England is actually, like Shakespeare's *Richard III*, part of a tetralogy: it is a companion piece to three other poems on events in the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII, written for and emphasizing the roles of the Stanley family. Of these, the most important as an analogue to Shakespeare's first tetralogy is *The Song of the Lady Bessie*, thought to have been written by Humphrey Brereton sometime after 1495.[12] Geoffrey Bullough notes that though "Shakespeare did not use this piece, ... he may have known it" (229). *The Song of the Lady Bessie* exists in at least three different versions, all of which were transcribed much later than the poem's original composition: in his edition of two of these, James Orchard Halliwell notes that one copy dates from "the time of Charles II" (*Early English Poetry* v), and the other "appears to have been transcribed about the year 1600" (*Early English Poetry* vi).

The central characters in the poem are young Princess Elizabeth, the "Lady Bessie" of the title; and Lord Stanley, "who is by an anachronism called Earl of Derby" (Kingsford 250), as he is in Shakespeare's play. It tells of the planned marriage of Richmond and Elizabeth, but with some important differences from the chronicles: according to the poem, the marriage was the idea of Lord Stanley and Princess Elizabeth; and Brereton, the possible author of the poem, was Elizabeth's messenger to Richmond. In her appeals to Stanley to help Richmond return from France and claim his title, Elizabeth refers to the murders of Henry VI, Edward V, the Duke of York, and Lady Anne, as well as Richard's plan to marry her; however, one version of the poem apparently confuses Edward and York with the Duke of Clarence:

> Help, father Stanley, I do you pray,
> For of King Richard wroken will I be;
> He did my brethren to death on a day,
> In their bed where they did lie;
> He drowned them both in a pipe of wine,
> It was dole to hear and see!
> And he would put away his Queen,
> For to have lain by my body!

Help that he were put away,
For the royal blood destroy will he.

(*Early English Poetry* 44)

Stanley's initial reluctance to help Elizabeth and Richmond is similar to the Bishop of Ely's protestation at the end of More's history; he at first insists that "King Richard is my lord and sov'reign, / To him I will never be unkind" (*Early English Poetry* 7), but he finally does agree to the plan. Though "the principal share which the Lady Bessie is made to take in organizing the conspiracy is an obvious poetical invention" (Kingsford 251), the details of Brereton's visit to Richmond, as well as the account of Stanley's role in Richard's defeat, "seem to bear the stamp of personal knowledge" (Kingsford 251) and are to some degree corroborated by the chronicles. The poem's description of Richmond, for example, is somewhat less idealistic than that provided by Hall, but it does foreshadow Shakespeare's understated yet effective treatment:

The Prince of England know shall ye,
Low where he sit at the butts certain,
With other lords two or three;
He weareth a gown of velvet black
And it is cutted above the knee,
With a long visage and pale and black -
Thereby know that prince may ye;
A wart he hath, the porter said,
A little also above the chin,
His face is white, the wart is red,
No more than the head of a small pin;
You may know the prince certain,
As soon as you look upon him truly.

(*Early English Poetry* 29)

The poem's account of Richmond's march through England and his final battle with Richard expands upon the comparatively brief details in *The Rose of England*, and suggests the reports given in both the contemporary and later chronicles, though the poem

emphasizes the plight of George Stanley as Richard's prisoner; and the characters are referred to by name more often than by emblem as in the shorter poem. Like the contemporary histories, the poem acknowledges Richard's one redeeming quality, his willingness to defend himself in battle, in a manner similar to that of both the historians and Shakespeare:

A knight to King Richard can say there,
Good Sir William of Harrington;
He said, Sir King, it hath no peer
Upon this field to death to be done,
For there may no man these dints abide;
Lo, your horse is ready at your hand:
Set the crown upon my head that tide,
Give me my battle-axe in my hand;
I make a vow to mild Mary that is so bright,
I will die king of merry England.

(*Early English Poetry* 41)

The alternate version of the poem reports this as follows:

A knight to King Richard can say,
(It was good Sir William of Harrington)
He saith, we are like all here
To the death soon to be done,
For there may no man their strokes abide,
The Stanleys' dints they be so strong;
Ye may come in another time,
Therefore methinks ye tarry too long.
Your horse is ready at your hand,
Another day ye may worship win,
And to reign with royalty,
And wear the crown and be our king.
He said, Give me my battle-axe in my hand,

Set the crown of England on my head so high,
For by Him that made both sun and moon,
King of England this day I will die!

(*Early English Poetry* 77-78)

The Song of the Lady Bessie ends with the marriage of Richmond and Elizabeth, and briefly alludes to the execution of Sir William Stanley in 1495; this reference provides a means of dating the poem. Though it does not seem to have exerted any direct influence on Shakespeare's play, and some of the details in it are "unverified and unverifiable by any other source" (Murph 9), it is still a valuable analogue to the play and the historical accounts, especially in its use of some of the techniques of epic poetry to create a small-scale version of the larger epic that is Shakespeare's historical series. *The Song of the Lady Bessie* also foreshadows Shakespeare's first tetralogy in its use of a strong female character; though Princess Elizabeth does not appear in the flesh in Shakespeare's version, her appearance in Brereton's poem as the principal organizer of the resistance against Richard suggests Shakespeare's characterization of her mother and the other noblewomen who appear in *Richard III.*

The historical poems of the fifteenth century were meant primarily as reports on the events they described, though many were also meant as object lessons for their audiences. By the sixteenth century, the didactic purposes of historical poetry were uppermost in the concerns of writers and readers; poetic treatments of historical figures were often "cautionary tales, designed to point out the pitfalls of too much pride and ambition, and the perils of life at the top" (Murph 9). This was the intent of the best-known and most influential work of historical poetry of the English Renaissance, the anthology known as *A Mirror for Magistrates,* which first appeared in 1559 and went through at least three subsequent revisions. *A Mirror for Magistrates* was intended as a follow-up to John Lydgate's translation of Giovanni Boccaccio's *The Fall of Princes,* which covered historical events up to the beginning of the fifteenth century.

The *Mirror* grew out of John Wayland's 1553 attempt to continue Lydgate's work as "an uniform Primer[13] to be used of her [Mary I's] subjects" (qtd in Campbell, *Mirror* 5). Wayland's work was licenced, but was never published, due to Mary I's act against

seditious writing which also resulted in the suppression of Hall's chronicle; six years later, William Baldwin and several others produced the first official edition of the book. Aside from Baldwin, the principal editor, the other authors of the *Mirror* include George Ferrers, Thomas Chaloner, Thomas Phaer, Thomas Sackville, Thomas Churchyard, John Dolman, Francis Seager, and Humphrey Cavell; and Raphael Holinshed may also have been involved with the later editions. Its full title, as given in the 1559 edition, is *A Mirror for Magistrates, Wherein May Be Seen by Example of Other, With How Grievous Plagues Vices are Punished; And How Frail and Unstable Worldly Prosperity is Found, Even of Those Whom Fortune Seemeth Most Highly to Favour.*

The poems in the *Mirror* are based primarily on "Fabyan, Hall, and Sir Thomas More" (Campbell, *Mirror* 10), but rely especially on Hall. They follow the pattern established in the works of Boccaccio and Lydgate; most of the poems are narrated by the ghost of the main character, speaking to the author, and tell of the rise and fall of that character in a manner meant as an exemplum to the reader. According to Lily B. Campbell, the work "transferred to the poet the accepted task of the historian - a task which ... he could perform more delightfully, more directly, and hence more effectively, than the historian" (*Mirror* 51). Baldwin divided the *Mirror* into three parts: the first dealt "with situations which arose during the periods when England was ruled by minor kings" (Campbell, *Mirror* 55); the second examined "England in the days of a tyrant, Richard III" (Campbell, *Mirror* 55); and the third was intended to take the story down to the reign of Mary I, though the third edition ends chronologically earlier, with the story of Cardinal Wolsey.

Baldwin begins the *Mirror* with an address "To the nobility and all other in office" (63), outlining his intentions for the poems as exempla to the readers and as reminders of the cycle of divine justice. He entreats his noble audience to "cease not ... to be virtuous, but do your offices to the uttermost: punish sin boldly, both in yourselves and other, so shall God (whose lieutenants you are) either so maintain you, that no malice shall prevail, or if it do, it shall be for your good" (67). He further announces his intention of beginning his poetic history "at the time of Richard II, a time as unfortunate as the ruler therein" (70-71), not because Hall began there, but because Lydgate ended there. The introduction is the first

in Baldwin's series of prose commentaries that serve to link each poem and emphasize the lessons each story is intended to teach.

Though Shakespeare may have used the *Mirror* as potential source material for *Richard II* and other portions of the second tetralogy, it is a far richer source for the first tetralogy; the first edition includes poems on many of the major characters of *Henry VI, Parts Two and Three*, and the additions to the second edition are almost entirely devoted to the characters of *Richard III*. Contrary to Geoffrey Bullough's assertion that Shakespeare's "particular debts to [the *Mirror*] in *Richard III* were not great" (232), the poems do resemble anticipations of the play, even with the overt moralizing that Shakespeare avoided in his version. Baldwin himself contributed the poem on Henry VI to the first edition; its full title is *How King Henry VI, A Virtuous Prince, Was After Many Other Miseries Cruelly Murdered in the Tower of London*. This poem emphasizes Henry's studiousness and piety alongside the principal events of the war; indeed, in illustrating the impermanence of worldly pleasures, Baldwin incorporates a portion of Henry's self-composed epitaph, which enumerates the theme:

> Our kingdoms are but cares, our state devoid of stay,
> Our riches ready snares, to hasten our decay:
> Our pleasures privy pricks our vices to provoke,
> Our pomp a pump, our fame a flame, our power a smouldering smoke.
>
> (215)

Baldwin's account of Henry's death is very brief, much like the version in the Crowland Chronicle; following a description of the battle of Tewkesbury (cf. *3HVI* V.iv., V.v.), he says:

> For there mine only son [Prince Edward], not thirteen year of age,[14]
> Was ta'en and murdered straight, by Edward in his rage:
> And shortly I myself to stint all further strife
> Stabbed with his brother's bloody blade, in prison lost my life.
>
> (218)

Following the story of Henry VI, Baldwin notes that "This tragedy ended, another said, either you or King Henry are a good philosopher, so narrowly to argue the causes of

misfortunes: but there is nothing to experience, which taught, or might teach the king this lesson" (219). The prose bridge leads into Baldwin's poem on the Duke of Clarence, which, according to both A.R. Myers and Geoffrey Bullough, was the first work to explicitly accuse Richard of Clarence's murder. Indeed, the poem is entitled *How George Plantagenet, Third Son of the Duke of York, Was by His Brother King Edward Wrongfully Imprisoned, and by His Brother Richard Miserably Murdered.* In the poem, Clarence retells the history of the York family and his own changes of heart over the years (cf. *3HVI* IV.ii., V.i.); however, the lesson in his story is less his own mutability than his brother Edward's gullibility. Drawing upon the references in Rous and the sixteenth-century histories, Baldwin reports the prophecy that led to Clarence's arrest, introducing it in almost the same words Shakespeare would use: "A prophecy was found, which said a G, / Of Edward's children should destruction be" (227); and progressing into a long digression on the importance of skepticism about prophetic riddles, especially those referring to noblemen's emblems. However, even as Baldwin, through Clarence, warns the reader to beware of prophecies, he includes a counterexample which may have influenced Shakespeare's reference to Stanley's dream (*RIII* III.ii.11-30): one of Clarence's servants supposedly warned him that "my brother Richard was the boar, / Whose tusks should tear my brother's boys and me, / And gave me warning thereof long before" (230).

Baldwin's version of the events leading up to Clarence's murder is very close to Shakespeare's, except that unlike Shakespeare, Baldwin provides a more detailed reason for Clarence's arrest: he was "commanded to the Tower" (232) after the servant who tried to warn him about Richard's ambition was executed for supposedly attempting "by sorceries pretend / To bring the King unto a speedy end" (232). According to the poem, Richard not only regarded Clarence's arrest as the opportunity he had been awaiting, but turned Edward against Clarence with "forged tales ... Till at the last they did my [Clarence's] death conspire" (233). Baldwin's account of Clarence's death also differs from Shakespeare's in that Richard himself, rather than his servants, kills his brother:

> But like a wolf the tyrant Richard came,
> (My brother, nay, my butcher I may say)
> Unto the Tower, when all men were away,

Save such as were provided for the feat:
Who in this wise did strangely me entreat.

His purpose was, with a prepared string
To strangle me, but I bestirr'd me so,
That by no force they could me thereto bring,
Which caused him that purpose to forgo.
Howbeit they bound me whether I would or no.
And in a butt of malmsey standing by,
New christened me, because I should not cry.

(233)

Though Shakespeare's version of the murder differs in details, it does retain the ironic reference to the manner of Clarence's death, as Richard remarks, "O, belike his Majesty hath some intent / That you should be new christ'ned in the Tower" (*RIII* I.i. 49-50).

The first edition of *A Mirror for Magistrates* ends with an account of the death of Edward IV, which furnishes no significant information for Shakespeare's play but is merely a warning about the impermanence of earthly pleasures. In 1563, Baldwin and his collaborators continued the story in the second edition, which added eight new poems, six of which are sources for *Richard III*. These six tell the stories of Lord Rivers, Lord Hastings, the Duke of Buckingham, William Collingbourne, Richard III, and Mistress Shore. The poems on Rivers and Collingbourne were written by Baldwin; the poem on Hastings was written by John Dolman; on Buckingham, by Thomas Sackville; on Richard III, by Francis Seager; and on Mistress Shore, by Thomas Churchyard.

Baldwin begins the second edition of the *Mirror* with his poem on Rivers, *How Sir Anthony Wydville, Lord Rivers and Scales, Governor of Prince Edward, Was with His Nephew Lord Richard Grey and Others Causeless Imprisoned, and Cruelly Murdered.* After a lengthy introduction outlining the intent of the poem and the sanctity of marriage, Rivers tells of his sister Elizabeth's marriage to Edward IV and the favours subsequently granted to their family (cf. *3HVI* IV.i.), and Clarence's and Richard's objection to their

success. Rivers' account of Richard's ambition makes some references to Baldwin's poem on Clarence but does not refer to the prophecy:

> But see how sharply God revengeth sin:
> As he [Clarence] maligned me and many other
> His faithful friends, and kindest of his kin,
> So Richard, Duke of Gloucester, his unnatural brother,
> Maligned him, and beastly did him smother.
> A devilish deed, a most unkindly part,
> Yet just revenge for his unnatural heart.
>
> Although this brother-queller, tyrant fell,
> Envied our state as much and more than he:
> Yet did his cloaking flattery so excel
> To all our friendsward, chiefly unto me,
> That he appeared our trusty stay to be:
> For outwardly he wrought our state to further,
> Where inwardly he minded nought save murder.
>
> (257)

Rivers' story continues with the death of Edward IV and his own arrest by Richard, Buckingham, and Hastings on his way to bring young Edward V to London; like Stanley in More's history, and Clarence in Shakespeare's play, Rivers had a prophetic dream, which refers to the emblems of Buckingham, Hastings, and Richard, on the night before his arrest:

> I saw a river stopp'd with storms of wind
> Wherethrough a swan, a bull, and boar did pass,
> Franching the fish and fry, with teeth of brass,
> The river dried up, save a little stream
> Which at the last did water all the realm.
>
> Methought this stream did drown the cruel boar
> In little space, it grew so deep and broad:

But he had killed the bull and swan before.
Besides all this, I saw an ugly toad
Crawl toward me, on which methought I trode.

(262)

Rivers' companion, Sir Thomas Vaughan, further refers to the prophecy against Clarence when he says, "This tyrant Gloucester is the graceless G / That will his brother's children beastly kill" (265). The final lesson of Rivers' story is that murderers should be punished, whoever they may be; Rivers attributes his fate to failing to punish Richard for "King Henry's close confusion / Nor for his brothers' hateful persecution" (266).

Lily B. Campbell points out that John Dolman's poem on Lord Hastings is the least successful in the book; indeed, Baldwin himself admits that he and his colleagues found it "very dark, and hard to be understood" (297). Despite its weaknesses, however, it does contain some powerful imagery, much of which is derived from More's history, on which it is based. The poem is entitled *How the Lord Hastings Was Betrayed by Trusting Too Much to His Evil Counsellor Catesby, and Villainously Murdered in the Tower of London by Richard, Duke of Gloucester*. At the beginning of the poem, Hastings warns the reader not to refer to him as a martyr because his fate was his own fault: "O Judgements just, by injustice justice dealt, / Who doubteth, of me may learn, the truth who felt" (269). The poem describes Hastings' dislike of Queen Elizabeth and her family, his friendship with Edward IV, and his complicity in the murder of Henry VI's son Prince Edward, "The guilt whereof we shortly all did rue" (276). Its account of Hastings' murder closely follows More's, including Stanley's dream, Richard's false charges against Hastings, Elizabeth, and Mistress Shore, and Richard's and Buckingham's justifications for the murder. However, Dolman outdoes More and foreshadows Shakespeare with his description of the moment when Richard accused Hastings of plotting against him:

Frowning he enters, with so changed cheer,
As for mild May had chopped foul Januare.
And low'ring on me with the goggle eye,
The whetted tusk, and furrowed forehead high,
His crooked shoulder bristlelike set up,

With frothy jaws, whose foam he chewed and supp'd,
With angry looks that flamed as the fire:
Thus 'gan at last to grunt the grimmest sire.

(288-289)

Dolman concludes his account of Hastings with a warning to the reader to "Serve truly your prince and fear no rebels' might" (291).

According to Baldwin's prose commentary on Dolman's poem, the *Mirror* was originally supposed to contain a poem on "King Edward's two sons, cruelly murdered in the Tower of London" (297). However, the next poem in the anthology is the best-known and most powerful in the whole collection, Thomas Sackville's two-part *Complaint of the Duke of Buckingham*, which Baldwin himself praised as "so well-penned, that I would not have any verse thereof left out of our volume" (298). The first part of Sackville's poem, the *Induction*, differs from the other poems in the *Mirror* in its Dante-inspired imagery of "the descent into hell" (Campbell, *Mirror* 57).

Sackville begins the *Induction* with a winter night scene, which is, according to Peggy Goodman Endel, a possible inspiration for Shakespeare's opening image in *Richard III*, "the winter of our discontent" (*RIII* I.i. 1). He sets the stage for the nightmarish vision in which "the Duke of Buckingham will tell his horrifying tale of the reign of the tyrant Richard III who devoured his own nephews" (Endel 121):

The wrathful winter 'proaching on a pace,
With blust'ring blasts had all ybared the treen,
And old Saturnus with his frosty face
With chilling cold had pierced the tender green:
The mantels rent, wherein enwrapped been
The gladsom groves that now lay overthrown,
The tapets torn, and every bloom down blown.

(298)

As the poem progresses, the narrator encounters personifications of Sorrow, Remorse, Dread, Revenge, Misery, Greed, Sleep, Age, Malady, Famine, and War, as well as famous figures of antiquity, in a manner similar, in the latter case, to the description of hell

in Dante's *Inferno,* and to Clarence's prophetic dream in I.iv. of *Richard III.* Interestingly, in its enumeration of various images of death, the *Induction* foreshadows the main plot of Buckingham's story in the second part of the poem: Sackville's descriptions of Age and War both suggest the historians', and Shakespeare's, descriptions of Richard III himself. For example, Sackville describes Age as:

> Crookbacked he was, toothshaken, and blear-eyed,
> Went on three feet, and sometime crept on four,
> With old lame bones, that rattled by his side,
> His scalp all pil'd, and he with eld forlore:
> His withered fist still knocking at death's door,
> Fumbling and drivelling as he draws his breath,
> For brief the shape and messenger of death.
>
> (310; cf. *3HVI* III.ii. 153-162)

Similarly, Sackville describes War this way:

> Lastly stood War in glittering arms yclad.
> With visage grim, stern looks, and blackly hewed
> In his right hand a naked sword he had,
> That to the hilts was all with blood embrewed:
> And in his left (that kings and kingdoms rued)
> Famine and fire he held, and therewithal
> He razed towns, and threw down towers and all.
>
> Cities he sacked, and realms that whilom flow'red,
> In honour, glory, and rule above the best,
> He overwhelmed, and all their fame devoured,
> Consumed, destroyed, wasted, and never ceased,
> Till he their wealth, their name, and all oppress'd.
> His face forhewed with wounds, and by his side,
> There hung his targe [shield] with gashes deep and wide.
>
> (311-312; cf. *RIII* I.i. 1-31)

Near the end of this dark vision, the narrator reminds the reader that the horrors he has seen are ubiquitous and inevitable, especially to those in high places:

> Lo here (quoth Sorrow) Princes of renown,
> That whilom sat on top of Fortune's wheel
> Now laid full low, like wretches whirled down.
>
> (316)

This caution to the readers marks the end of the *Induction* as Buckingham himself appears to the narrator, with a "cloak of black all pil'd and quite forworn, / Wringing his hands, and Fortune oft doth blame" (317), to tell his story. Like Henry VI, Clarence, and Rivers in the earlier poems in the *Mirror*, Buckingham begins his narrative with a genealogical account of his family, until, upon the death of his grandfather (cf. *3HVI* I.i.), he comes into his own:

> Like on a stage, so stepp'd I in straight way,
> Enjoying there but woefully good wot,
> As he that hath a slender part to play:
> To teach thereby, in earth no state may stay,
> But as our parts abridge or length our age
> So pass we all while others fill the stage.
>
> (319)

All this changed, however, when Buckingham joined forces with "that wretched wight, / The Duke of Gloucester that Richard hight" (320); and at this point, the poem takes up the "cumulative method of recalling historical parallels" (Bullough 231) that had been used in the *Induction* as a lead-up to the main plot. After recalling other stories of unbridled ambition, including those of Cyrus the Great, the assassins of Julius Caesar, and Alexander the Great, Buckingham tells of his and Richard's plot "To make him [Richard] king that he might make me chief" (324) and the attacks of conscience that they both suffered afterwards (cf. More 89-90; *RIII* V.iii. 177-206). The poem refers to the murders of Hastings, Elizabeth's brothers, Edward V, the Duke of York, and Lady Anne; however, Sackville's version of the death of Lady Anne differs from the chronicles' and Shakespeare's in its statement that she was "His own dear wife, whom as his life he loved"(329), but even so, "lo, his wife foreyrked of his reign / Sleeping in bed this cruel

wretch hath slain" (329).

According to Sackville's poem, Buckingham turned against Richard less out of disappointment at not being properly rewarded, as the historians and Shakespeare suggested, than out of sheer revulsion:

> So cruel seemed this Richard III to me,
> That lo, myself now loathed his cruelty.
>
> For when, alas, I saw the tyrant king
> Content not only from his nephews twain
> To rive world's bliss, but also all world's being,
> Since earthly guilt ycausing both be slain,
> My heart agress'd that such a wretch should reign,
> Whose bloody breast so salvaged out of kind,
> That Phalaris had never so bloody a mind. (329-330)

The poem makes no mention of Buckingham's conversation with the Bishop of Ely, nor of Buckingham's decision to support Richmond; instead, it simply refers to Buckingham's plans of "how I might depose this cruel king" (332) and the failure of all his plans when his followers desert him and his once-trusted servant, Humphrey Banister, betrays him to Richard. In conclusion, Buckingham reminds Sackville, and the readers, that "false Fortune when I suspected least, / Did turn the wheel, and with a doleful fall / Hath me bereft of honour, life, and all" (344) and "Who reckless rules, right soon may hap to rue" (345).

In the prose bridge that follows Sackville's poem, Baldwin comments on his friends' remarks about Sackville's use of the Dantesque images that "a poet may feign what he list: Indeed, methinks it should be so, and ought to be well taken of the hearers, but it hath not at all times been so allowed" (346). With this sentiment in mind, Baldwin proceeds into his poem of *How Collingbourne Was Cruelly Executed for Making a Foolish Rhyme*, which begins:

> Beware, take heed, take heed, beware, beware
> You poets you, that purpose to rehearse
> By any art what tyrants' doings are. (347)

Baldwin's account of Collingbourne, whose death in the service of Richmond has been discussed above, as a martyr to poetry may have been inspired by the difficult publication history of the *Mirror* itself; however, in its zealous warning of the dangers of satire, it does become self-contradictory, especially in Collingbourne's insistence that "he meant no disrespect to Richard and the others" (Kelly 180, n. 54) by playing on their names and emblems even as he says:

> The chief was Catesby, whom I called a Cat,
> A crafty lawyer catching all he could,
> The second, Ratcliffe, whom I named a Rat,
> A cruel beast to gnaw on whom he should.
> Lord Lovel bark'd and bit whom Richard would,
> Whom therefore rightly I did term our Dog,
> Wherewith to rhyme I cleped the King a Hog.
>
> (350)

Baldwin does seem to recognize the incongruities in his poem on Collingbourne; though he had used the poem as a warning against writing about tyranny, he says in his prose commentary that "*Vox populi, vox dei*, in this case is not so famous a proverb as true: The experience of all times doth approve it" (359), and that satire is important as a warning to powerful people. He then goes on to introduce Francis Seager's poem on Richard III by saying, "But as all things work to the best in them that be good, so best things heap up mischief in the wicked, and all to hasten their utter destruction" (359).

After his appearances in the stories of Henry VI, Clarence, Rivers, Hastings, Buckingham, and Collingbourne, Richard III is given the chance to speak in his own defence in Francis Seager's poem, which has the longest title of any in the anthology: *How Richard Plantagenet, Duke of Gloucester, Murdered His Brother's Children Usurping the Crown, and in the Third Year of His Reign Was Most Worthily Deprived of Life and Kingdom in Bosworth Plain by Henry, Earl of Richmond, After Called King Henry VII.* In the poem, Richard confesses only to the murders of Clarence, Edward V, and the Duke of York, and to his plan "to rule and reign alone / ... yet title had I none" (360); he ascribes his misdeeds to ambition, rather than to revenge for being marginalized, as in Shakespeare's

version. As in the histories of More and Vergil, the poem describes Richard's guilty conscience, which appears almost immediately after the murders of Edward and York:

> Both God, nature, duty, allegiance all forgot,
> This vile and heinous act unnaturally I conspired:
> Which horrible deed done, alas, alas, God wot
> Such terrors me tormented, and so my spirits fired
> As unto such a murder and shameful deed required,
> Such broil daily felt I breeding in my breast,
> Whereby more and more, increased mine unrest.
>
> (361)

Seager's account of the murder follows More's, including Brakenbury's refusal to take part in it, and the method Tyrrel and his helpers used; and the poem also retells the story of Buckingham's betrayal that appeared in Sackville's poem. With Richmond's arrival in England, Richard realizes that he is being punished for his crimes, and that "fawning Fortune began on me to frown" (368); but the poem makes no reference to his prophetic dream, as Vergil, Hall, Holinshed, and Shakespeare do. Seager agrees with Hall and Holinshed, however, that if Richard had accepted his proper duty, he "might have lived still in honour with the best" (370). The poem illustrates "that the defeat of Richard III was a judgement of God upon him for his wicked life" (Kelly 181), as well as the larger principle that "what thing may suffice unto the bloody man / The more he bathes in blood, the bloodier he is alway" (*Mirror* 364; cf. *RIII* IV.ii. 63-65). Seager's account of Richard III foreshadows Shakespeare's in another way: this poem is the only one in the *Mirror* in which the Earl of Richmond actually appears, thus prefiguring Shakespeare's decision to withhold Richmond's reappearance until near the end of the play.

Baldwin and his collaborators admit that Seager's poem is "not vehement enough for so violent a man as King Richard had been" (371), and that the poem's rhythm is somewhat lacking, although they were able to justify the odd rhythm by noting that "It is not meet that so disorderly and unnatural a man as King Richard was, should observe any metrical order in his talk" (371) - thus, the poem's rhythm reflects both Richard's cruelty and his disability. As a contrast, Baldwin concludes the *Mirror*'s retelling of fifteenth-

century history (except for a poem on the Duke of Somerset, who appears in Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part Two*) with Thomas Churchyard's poem on Mistress Shore, "which shall furnish out in meter and matter, what could not comelily be said in his person" (372). Churchyard's poem is entitled *How Shore's Wife, Edward IV's Concubine, Was by King Richard Despoiled of All Her Goods, and Forced to Do Open Penance.*

Mistress Shore is not a significant character in Shakespeare's play - indeed, she is mentioned only a few times in the text - but the poetic treatment of her life in the *Mirror* does show some similarity to portions of the play. Churchyard, following More's admiring characterization, describes Mistress Shore's intercessions to Edward to "help them up, that might have been overthrown" (380), which Shakespeare alludes to briefly at the beginning of *Richard III* when Richard and Clarence discuss Mistress Shore's relationships with Edward and Hastings (I.i. 71-80). The poem also refers to Richard's false accusations against her, but unlike the historians and Shakespeare, Churchyard says that "He falsely feigned, that I of counsel was / To poison him, which thing I never meant" (383) rather than the charges of witchcraft mentioned in the other accounts.

Churchyard's poem exerts a greater influence on Shakespeare's play in its references to "what strife this forced marriage makes, / What loathed lives do come where love doth lack" (377). The references to Mistress Shore's forced marriage and to her reaction to her mistreatment at Richard's hands foreshadow Shakespeare's treatment of Lady Anne's suffering as Richard's unwilling wife. Near the end of the poem, Mistress Shore makes a lengthy verbal attack on Richard that is similar to Lady Anne's impassioned speech in I.ii. 1-28 of Shakespeare's play:

> This raging wolf would spare no guiltless blood.
> O wicked womb that such ill fruit did bear,
> O cursed earth that yieldeth forth such mud,
> The hell consume all things that did thee good,
> The heavens shut their gates against thy sprite,
> The world tread down thy glory under feet.
> I ask of God a vengeance on thy bones,
> Thy stinking corpse corrupts the air I know:

Thy shameful death no earthly wight bemoans,
For in thy life thy works were hated so,
That every man did wish thy overthrow:
Wherefore I may, though percial now I am,
Curse every cause whereof thy body came.

Woe worth the man that fathered such a child:
Woe worth the hour wherein thou wast begate,
Woe worth the breasts that have the world beguiled,
To nourish thee that all the world did hate.
Woe worth the gods that gave thee such a fate,
To live so long, that death deserved so oft.
Woe worth the chance that set thee up aloft.

(384-385)

The lesson of Mistress Shore's story is twofold: to remember that earthly pleasures do not last forever, and to uphold justice and "strike not without a cause" (385).

The third edition of the *Mirror*, published in 1587, adds the stories of the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, analogues and possible sources for Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part Two;* as well as accounts of events in the reign of Henry VIII, and the poem attributed to Holinshed on Sir Nicholas Burdet, a follower of Henry V. Overall, the *Mirror* is significant both to Shakespeare's history plays, especially the first tetralogy, and to English Renaissance literature in general, for its combination of poetry and historiography, and its awareness of "the lessons that can be drawn from one life story or even from part of a life story" (Kelly 182). It also suggests the epic structure of Shakespeare's historical series in its presentation of various episodes in English history; however, the *Mirror* is not a true epic poem because these historical episodes are presented separately rather than as part of a unified whole.

As Roxane C. Murph points out, "Although Shakespeare is the best, and best-known, of the playwrights who wrote about the war between Lancaster and York, he was neither the first nor the last" (10). The first known play on the subject was Thomas

Legge's Latin trilogy, *Richardus Tertius*, which was "probably written in 1579" (Bullough 234) and exists in nine manuscript versions.[15] The trilogy is based primarily on Hall and follows the dramatic pattern established by Seneca, "in which Nemesis brought the downfall of a tyrant" (Bullough 234), even quoting from some of Seneca's plays. Whether Shakespeare knew of Legge's trilogy is uncertain, but there are similarities between the two works, including the theme of "vaulting ambition overreaching itself" (Bullough 234), which was also a favourite theme of Marlowe; the significant female characters to counterbalance the male ones; and resemblances between particular scenes in both plays.

The first part of Legge's trilogy covers the events "from the death of Edward IV to the execution of Hastings" (Bullough 234); the second part ends with Richard's coronation; and the third part covers Richmond's return to England and the final battle. The trilogy differs from Shakespeare's version primarily in characterization; unlike Shakespeare's mastermind, Legge's version of Richard is "cowardly and dependent on confidants" (Bullough 234). As well, Legge includes some characters, such as Mistress Shore and Princess Elizabeth, who do not appear on stage in Shakespeare's version; and ignores others, such as Margaret and the Duchess of York, who are very important to Shakespeare.

The greatest similarities between *Richardus Tertius* and *Richard III* occur in the third part of the trilogy, especially in the retelling of the murder of Edward V and the Duke of York; the attempted seduction of Princess Elizabeth; and the night before the final battle. Whereas Shakespeare leaves most of the details of the murder of Edward and York to the reader's imagination, Legge presents it in "abundant detail" (Bullough 234), following a dialogue between Tyrrel and Brakenbury, "in which Tyrrel gives a horrific account of Richard's wrath at Brakenbury's reluctance" (Bullough 234). But the similarity between Legge and Shakespeare is most noticeable in Legge's account of Richard's attempt to seduce Princess Elizabeth (qtd in Bullough 306-308; 310-312), which, according to Bullough, was based on Jasper Heywood's translation of Seneca's *Hercules Furens*. Legge's account bears a strong resemblance to the seduction of Lady Anne (*RIII* I.ii.) and the appeal to Queen Elizabeth (*RIII* IV.iv.). The scene begins with a passage similar to IV.ii. 39-43 of Shakespeare's play, as Richard says, following Lady Anne's death, "Now I set

about obtaining a happy marriage with my niece. I shall upset the girl's promised union. ... I shall begin to try, as a suitor, to win her for a bride" (qtd in Bullough 310). Following Elizabeth's impassioned refusal of his first advances, Richard then says:

> Come now, maiden, cease these unrestrained words, lest two persons perish for one crime. I confess that my throne was gained by blood and by the death of innocents [cf. Hall 415; *RIII* I.ii. 75-182]. Thus fate disposed it. Did your brothers die? I grieve for it. I am sorry for the fact. Are they dead? What's done cannot be undone [cf. *RIII* IV. iv. 292]. Shall I weep for their deaths? Tears do not avail. What do you wish me to do? Am I to requite the death of your two brothers by spilling my own blood with this right hand? Shall I do so? I will offer my breast to naked swords; and, if it please you better, I will die in your arms [cf. *RIII* I.ii. 173-191].
>
> (qtd in Bullough 311)

Elizabeth's reply foreshadows that of Lady Anne in Shakespeare's version; she says:

> Be it love, or hate, or wrath, or truth (you offer), I care not. My pleasure is in hating whatever you devise. Your sword shall pierce my breast sooner than your incestuous lust shall defile my body. O Jupiter, skilled wielder of the cruel thunderbolt, why is not the world set on fire by your triple torch? Why does not the gaping earth devour him forthwith - this prodigious monster of a savage prince, exceeding the Gorgon race in fearfulness?
>
> (qtd in Bullough 311; cf. *RIII* I.ii. 62-67)

However, unlike her unfortunate aunt, Elizabeth is able to resist Richard, even after he threatens to kill her if she does not cooperate - as some of the contemporary accounts suggested he had done to Anne, and as he will do in IV.iv. of Shakespeare's play. Instead, she displays the strength of character that Shakespeare will attribute to her mother, though her reply to Richard is more straightforward than Queen Elizabeth's ambiguous reply in Shakespeare's version.

At the end of the third part of Legge's trilogy, Richmond meets his stepfather, Lord

Stanley, before the final battle, and learns of the imprisonment of George Stanley (qtd in Bullough 312; cf. *RIII* V.iii. 79-107). Richmond's remark upon hearing of his stepbrother's plight also has an echo in Shakespeare's play; he says, "O crafty crime! O barbarous tyrant! Those whom he believes not to be faithful to him through love, cruel fear extorts their loyalty" (qtd in Bullough 312). The line suggests Sir James Blunt's comment to Richmond in *Richard III* V.ii.: "He hath no friends but what are friends for fear, / Which in his dearest need will fly from him" (20-21). Legge's account of the battle itself is a straight versification of Hall's, including translations of Richard's and Richmond's speeches to their men, and Richard's dream, "in which he saw himself torn by a troop of Furies" (Bullough 234) as in Hall and Vergil. The trilogy ends with Richmond's victory, in which George Stanley salutes "The King once in exile, hiding in France and the shores of Brittany, ... now a powerful victor.... a true glory for England over many years!" (qtd in Bullough 312). Richmond's final speech in Legge's play is shorter than the one Shakespeare gives to him; he announces, "I congratulate my kingdom and myself. My kingdom because it is free from the oppressive tyrant; myself because I now wield the royal sceptre of the realm. Wherefore let us sing humble praises with pious lips to Almighty God who has bestowed on me my kingdom" (qtd in Bullough 312; cf. *RIII* V.v. 15-41). Like Hall, Legge acknowledges that Richard did have a few redeeming qualities; the report of his death "balances the good he might have done against the evil he chose to do" (Bullough 234). In the epilogue to the trilogy, Legge brings the story down to his own time with a summary of "the happy uniting of both houses, of whom the Queen's majesty came, and is undoubted heir, wishing her a prosperous reign" (qtd in Bullough 310).

Though *Richardus Tertius* was written in the style of a Senecan tragedy, its close adaptation of Hall's chronicle, resulting in the abandonment of the classical dramatic unities, emphasizes "the epic sweep, the diversified action, and the episodic manner of the English chronicles" (Ribner 66), in much the same manner as Shakespeare's first tetralogy. However, the trilogy appears to have exerted more of an influence on the anonymous play, *The True Tragedy of Richard III*, which was written sometime between 1587 and 1592 and first published in 1594, than directly on Shakespeare's version. The *True Tragedy* combines classical and English literary and dramatic models, especially emphasizing the

difference "between the Senecan and the Christian ideas of tragedy" (Bullough 237); and, much like Shakespeare's version, it combines poetry and prose. The *True Tragedy* follows the examples of Hall's history and the poems in *A Mirror for Magistrates* by outlining its intentions in its full title: *The True Tragedy of Richard III, Wherein is Shown the Death of Edward IV, With the Smothering of the Two Young Princes in the Tower; With a Lamentable End of Shore's Wife, An Example for All Wicked Women; And Lastly, The Conjunction and Joining of the Two Noble Houses, Lancaster and York.*

The *True Tragedy* begins with a chorus comprised of the ghost of the Duke of Clarence and personifications of Truth (or History) and Poetry, symbolizing the "history play as a joint work of history and poetry" (Ribner 83), along with the invocation of the Muses that often opened a traditional epic poem. Its opening words, spoken by Clarence's ghost, are what Irving Ribner calls "a typically Senecan exhortation to revenge: *Cresse cruor sanguinis, satietur sanguine cresse, / Quod spero scitio. O scitio, scitio, vendicta!*" (83). The Latin phrase means "Let blood increase, let blood be satisfied with blood, / Which I hope speedily. O speedily, speedily, revenge!" (Ribner 83, n. 2). Most of the prologue itself is spoken by the character Truth, who retells the story of Henry VI and the elder Duke of York, and then describes the murders of Henry VI and Clarence. The play's description of Richard III follows those in Rous, Vergil, and More, and vaguely suggests that in Shakespeare:

> *Poetry:* What manner of man was this Richard, Duke of Gloucester?
> *Truth:* A man ill-shaped, crooked-backed, lame-armed, withal
> Valiantly minded, but tyrannous in authority.
> So during the minority of the young prince,
> He is made Lord Protector of the realm.
>
> (qtd in Satin 64)

Like most plays of its time, the *True Tragedy* is not divided into acts, although it is shorter than most other history plays, including Shakespeare's; it covers the events from Edward IV's attempt to reconcile his family and friends (cf. *RIII* II.i.) to Henry VII's accession. The *True Tragedy* follows the example of Legge's plays in providing Richard with confidants, especially a page who also serves as a narrator and chorus; it also draws

upon "both [Marlowe's] *Tamburlaine* and Machiavelli" (Boyer 76) for its characterization of Richard as both "a brutal tyrant ... [and] a man with a conscience" (Bullough 237), a hint of what is to come in Shakespeare's version. The play includes several characters who do not appear in Shakespeare's play, including Mistress Shore and some of the minor characters; and leaves out some of the characters who do, including all of Shakespeare's female characters except for Queen Elizabeth. As well, some of the scenes in the *True Tragedy*, such as the arrest of Elizabeth's relations (iv-viii; Bullough 319), the punishment of Mistress Shore (xi; Bullough 325-326), the final appearance of Edward and York before their murder (xii; qtd in Bullough 326-329), and the betrayal of Buckingham (xiii; qtd in Bullough 329-331) were not directly reproduced by Shakespeare.

Richard's first speech in the *True Tragedy* is tangentially similar to III.ii. 165-195 of Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part Three;* though it makes no reference to either physical disability or marginalization because of it, as in Shakespeare's account, it does emphasize Richard's desire for power:

> Principality brooks no equality,
> Much less superiority,
> And the title of a King is next under the degree of a God,
> For if he be worthy to be called valiant,
> That in his life wins honour, and by his sword wins riches,
> Why now I with renown of a soldier, which is never sold but
> By weight, nor changed but by loss of life,
> I reap'd not the gain but the glory, and since it becometh
> A son to maintain the honour of his deceased father,
> Why should I not hazard his dignity by my brother's sons?
> To be baser than a King I disdain,
> And to be more than Protector, the law deny,
> Why, my father got the crown, my brother won the crown,
> And I will wear the crown,
> Or I'll make them hop without their crowns that denies me.
>
> (iii. 354-368)

Scene ix of the *True Tragedy*, describing Elizabeth's reaction to the arrest of her relatives, is similar to Shakespeare's II.iv., except that it includes the abduction of the young Duke of York (840-892), which Shakespeare refers to indirectly in III.i. of his play. By contrast, most of the events which appear in Act III of Shakespeare's version are referred to in the page's narrative passage (x. 895-916) in the *True Tragedy*, which paraphrases More in its references to Richard's removal of his opponents: "He makes havoc of all to bring his purpose to pass: ... He spares none whom he but mistrusteth to be a hinderer to his proceedings, he is straight chopp'd up in prison" (x. 900-901; 904-906). The exception to this narrative compression is the murder of Hastings, although it too is presented in a much shorter version than in either the histories or Shakespeare's play. Following the page's narration of the events of the meeting (x. 931-942; cf. *RIII* III.iv. 21-58), Richard and Catesby send Hastings off to be executed in a manner similar to the account in More's history and Shakespeare's play:

> *Richard:* Come, bring him away, let this suffice, thou and that accursed sorceress the mother Queen hath bewitched me, with assistance of that famous strumpet of my brother's, Shore's wife: my withered arm is a sufficient testimony, deny it if thou canst: lay not Shore's wife with thee last night?
>
> *Hastings:* That she was in my house, my lord, I cannot deny, but not for any such matter. If -
>
> *Richard:* If, villain? Feedst thou me with ifs and ands? Go fetch me a priest, make a short shrift and dispatch him quickly. For by the blessed Saint Paul I swear, I will not dine till I see the traitor's head.
>
> (x. 942-956; cf. *RIII* III.iv. 59-77)

The scene then shows Richard and his page discussing the plot to "have my two nephews, the young prince and his brother, secretly murdered" (x. 992-993; cf. *RIII* IV.ii. 32-41), following More quite closely except in setting.

In contrast to Shakespeare's play, the *True Tragedy* resembles Legge's in its account of the murder of Edward V and the Duke of York, not only in presenting the murder in greater detail than Shakespeare does but also in including the debate between Brakenbury and Tyrrel over the moral implications of following Richard's orders.

However, the conversation between Tyrrel and his accomplices on what methods to use suggests the conversation between Richard and the two hired assassins in I.iii. of Shakespeare's version. Tyrrel reminds the others, "you must cast away pity, and not so much as think upon favour, for the more stern that you are, the more you shall please the King" (xii. 1223-1228; cf. *RIII* I.iii. 338-348). The final appearance of Edward and York also suggests Shakespeare's IV.i., when Forrest refers to Richard as the king, and then quickly corrects himself: "I would have said, my lord, your uncle the Protector" (xii. 1274-1275; cf. *RIII* IV.i. 15-18).

While the *True Tragedy* does not portray Richard's appeal to Queen Elizabeth, the appeal is referred to indirectly, both by Richard and Lovel in Scene xiv and by Richmond and his men in Scene xv; and as in Shakespeare's version, the Queen's answer is left deliberately ambiguous: Richmond's follower Pierre Landois says that peace will be restored to England only "if Queen Mother do but keep her word" (xv. 1675).[16] In contrast to the narrative compression in Scene x, Scene xv is actually longer than Shakespeare's V.ii., describing Richmond's arrival in England; and indeed, Shakespeare's account is largely a compression of the one in the *True Tragedy*. Richmond's first speech in the *True Tragedy* follows Hall's version in emphasizing "My [Richmond's] right ... and sole inheritance, / And Richard but usurps in my authority" (xv. 1644-1645), rather than presenting the rivalry as essentially a symbolic struggle between tyranny and just rule, as Shakespeare does.

Like both Legge's and Shakespeare's plays, the *True Tragedy* includes a meeting between Richmond and Stanley in Scene xvii; Stanley assures Richmond that "the chiefest of his [Richard's] company are likelier to fly to thee, than to fight against thee" (xvii. 1853-1854; cf. *RIII* V.ii. 17-21). However, the *True Tragedy* differs from Legge, Shakespeare, and the historians by reducing Richmond's stirring address to his men to one short speech, after which he does not appear again until the battle itself. Upon being notified that Richard has with him an army of "some twenty thousand" (xvii. 1864), Richmond says:

> And we, hardly five thousand, being beset with many enemies,
> hoping upon a few friends, yet despair not, Richmond, but
> remember, thou fightest in right, to defend thy country from

the tyranny of an usurping tyrant; therefore, Richmond, go
forward, the more dangerous the battle is in attaining, it proves
the more honourable being obtained. Then forward, Richmond,
God and Saint George for me!

(xvii. 1866-1871)

The greatest similarities between the *True Tragedy* and Shakespeare's play occur in Scene xviii, the treatment of Richard's attack of conscience on the night before the battle; and Scene xix, the battle itself. Though in the *True Tragedy* we do not actually see Richard's dream, as we do in Shakespeare's version, the dream is described in a long soliloquy suggesting V.iii. 177-206:[17]

The hell of life that hangs upon the crown,
The daily cares, the nightly dreams,
The wretched crews, the treason of the foe,
And horror of my bloody practice past,
Strikes such a terror to my wounded conscience,
That sleep I, wake I, or whatsoever I do,
Methinks their ghosts comes gaping for revenge,
Whom I have slain in reaching for a crown.
Clarence complains, and crieth for revenge.
My nephews' bloods, Revenge, revenge, doth cry.
The headless peers comes pressing for revenge.
And every one cries, Let the tyrant die.

(xviii. 1873-1885)

According to George Bosworth Churchill, this speech is the first version of the story in which "the terrible devils pulling and haling him have ... become the ghosts of those he has murdered" (460); however, it is still a mere foreshadowing of the vivid depiction of Richard's guilty conscience that Shakespeare will provide in his own version. By the end of the scene, however, Richard appears to have put the attack of conscience aside and returns to the reliance on fate that, in this version, is the greatest contrast between himself and Richmond; he says, "God, what talk I of God, that have served the devil all this while? No,

fortune and courage for me" (xviii. 1969–1970). Just as Richmond's address to his men is much shorter in the *True Tragedy* than in Shakespeare's version, so is Richard's; in fact, the *True Tragedy*'s version embodies the "'crude and savage expression of the revenge plays" (Churchill 463) rather than the rhetorical grandstanding to be found in both Hall and Shakespeare:

> I will never yield but by death only. By death, no, do not die,
> part not childishly from thy crown, but come the devil to claim it,
> strike him down, and though that Fortune hath decreed, to set revenge
> with triumphs upon my wretched head, yet death, sweet death, my
> latest friend, hath sworn to make a bargain for my lasting fame.
> And this, aye, this very day I hope with this lame hand of mine
> to rake out that hateful heart of Richmond, and when I have it to
> eat it panting hot with salt and drink his blood lukewarm - though
> I be sure 'twill poison me. Sirs, you that be resolute, follow me,
> the rest go hang yourselves ! (xviii. 1973-1983)

The speech follows the historians and the earlier poets in acknowledging Richard's willingness to defend himself, but it strips away the rhetorical embellishment that Hall gave to his version to emphasize the essential differences between the savage fatalist Richard and the devout, morally upright Richmond.

Both the *True Tragedy* and Shakespeare present the battle in very few words, but the words that the two plays do use are remarkably similar; indeed, George Bosworth Churchill notes that Scene xix "has been urged as proof by all supporters of the theory that Shakespeare borrowed from the *True Tragedy*" (519). The scene, in its entirety, is as follows:

> *The battle. Enter Richard wounded, with his Page.*
> *Richard:* A horse, a horse, a fresh horse.
> *Page:* Ah, fly, my lord, and save your life.
> *Richard:* Fly, villain? Look I as though I would fly? No,
> first shall this dull and senseless ball of earth receive my
> body cold and void of sense. You watery heavens roll on

> my gloomy day and darksome clouds close up my cheerful sound. Down is thy sun, Richard, never to shine again. The birds whose feathers should adorn my head hover aloft and dare not come in sight. Yet faint not, man, for this day, if Fortune will, shall make thee king possessed with quiet crown; if Fates deny, this ground must be my grave. Yet golden thoughts that reach for a crown, daunted before by Fortune's cruel spite, are come as comforts to my drooping heart and bid me keep my crown and die a king. These are my last. What more I have to say I'll make report among the damned souls.
>
> (xix. 1984-2000; cf. *RIII* V.iv.)

Like the account of Richmond's return to England, the account of Richard's defeat is actually longer in the *True Tragedy* than in Shakespeare's version; as well, Richard's last words in the *True Tragedy* suggest those in the *Song of the Lady Bessie* more than they do the historians' reports. Following the single combat between Richard and Richmond at the beginning of Scene xx, which also appears in Shakespeare's version, the rest of the battle is narrated by the page, before Richmond reappears with a promise "to root abuses from this commonwealth, which now flows faster than the furious tide that overflows beyond the banks of Nile" (xxi. 2098-2100) and a joyful meeting with Queen Elizabeth and her daughter. Like Legge's version, the *True Tragedy* ends with an epilogue, here spoken by Queen Elizabeth, Princess Elizabeth, and two messengers, tracing the legacy of "the joining of these houses both in one, by this brave prince, Henry VII" (qtd in Bullough 345) down to the reign of Elizabeth I.

Though Irving Ribner claims that "*The True Tragedy of Richard III* contributes little to the line of history play development" (83), it does represent an advance in the literary/dramatic treatment of English history along the lines of epic poetry, in its Marlowe-inspired attempts to unify the events taken from the chronicles under "one central and dominating figure" (Churchill 398). The *True Tragedy*, like its predecessors in historical poetry and drama, cannot completely escape the overt moralizing that characterized earlier historical poems and plays, especially in its "attempt to fuse the Senecan Revenge play with

the English History play" (Bullough 237) and its comparison of the classical and Christian world views through the characters of Richard and Richmond. Even so, in its use of a single dominating character whose deeds, or misdeeds, affect the whole of his society, and in its depiction of the restoration of peace to a war-torn kingdom, the *True Tragedy* does display a rudimentary awareness of the epic potential of English historical literature, a potential foreshadowing of or complement to Shakespeare's *Henry VI,* to which it may have been a near-exact contemporary.

V. Shakespeare's Use of His Sources

Contrary to the assertions of revisionist historians, and even some scholars who more or less accept the traditional 'Shakespearean' view of fifteenth-century history, Shakespeare did not write his historical series merely "to support the 'Tudor Myth' or glorify the Tudor kings" (Frey 134), and he probably did not regard the historians or earlier poets as only doing so themselves. However, "Shakespeare does in fact deal in political myths" (Leggatt x), but not in the sense of deliberate misrepresentation of previous governments. What the history plays, and especially the first tetralogy, do with their source material is more complex than the common view of Elizabethan 'conspiracy theory' suggests. As did most of the sources, especially More and *A Mirror for Magistrates*, the history plays present recent and familiar examples of "what a king should or should not be" (Ribner 157) while also acknowledging the power of these examples to both shock and fascinate the audience. Even if we do not wholeheartedly accept the view of Schlegel, Tillyard, and others "that Shakespeare's histories constituted an English epic" (Hart, *Theater & World* 219) all together, we can still see in a study of *Henry VI, Part Three* and *Richard III* how the first tetralogy, at least, uses the techniques of historical narrative, epic poetry, and ritual to create an English successor to the great classical epics. Thus, the history plays are mythic in the sense of a larger-than-life treatment of their material, on a scale rivalling the classical epics, rather than in the sense of "the utter disfiguring of, or disregard for, historical truth" (Pugliatti 36) of which they and their sources are too often accused.

Following the progression of Shakespeare's historical epic throughout the series requires more space than this study will allow; and therefore, in order to follow the development of the historical epic in *Richard III*, we must first begin in Act V of *Henry VI, Part Two*, for that is where, after its gradual development over the first two parts of *Henry VI*, the rivalry between the Lancaster and York families begins to assert itself. It is also where Edward IV and Richard III make their first appearance (*2HVI* V.i. 121), although in order to emphasize their importance to the story, Shakespeare makes them both older than they were in real life.[18] Indeed, the altered chronology of *Henry VI, Parts Two and Three* seems to work more in Richard's favour as a character than in Edward's, because Richard is thereby established both as York's favourite son, despite his youth and infirmity - at the

beginning of *Henry VI, Part Three*, York proudly says, "Richard hath best deserv'd of all my sons" (*3HVI* I.i. 17) - and as a force to be reckoned with for the remainder of the first tetralogy.

In the first half of *Henry VI, Part Three*, Shakespeare follows Hall's grudging admiration of Richard's seeming loyalty to his family; though Richard is the one who encourages York the most in his opposition to Henry (*3HVI* I.ii.), here it seems more a sign of filial admiration than of personal ambition. Rather than displaying any outward feelings of resentment about being either the youngest brother or a distorted version of his father, he declares, "Methinks 'tis prize enough to be his [York's] son" (*3HVI* II.i. 20), and vows revenge on the Lancasters for York's death. It is not until the betrothal of Edward IV and Lady Elizabeth Grey in III.ii. that Richard's true colours come out, and they do in a lengthy soliloquy - the first of many for Richard - that draws heavily upon More's history and the earlier poetic treatments, and indirectly upon Rous' description. The abrupt and practically unexpected introduction of the dark side of Richard's character in the middle of *Henry VI, Part Three* suggests that at the time he wrote it, Shakespeare already had *Richard III* in mind, or perhaps had begun working on the conclusion to his historical series.

In its combination of the earlier poets' treatment of Richard's single-minded ambition and the historians' treatment of his unusual appearance, the soliloquy in III.ii. of *Henry VI, Part Three* marks Shakespeare's first significant instance of playing on the convention of the epic hero - or anti-hero, in Richard's case - as "a marked man from the start, ... with unusual birth and breeding" (Bowra 94). Like the similar speech in Scene iii of the *True Tragedy*, the soliloquy illustrates Richard's desire "to catch the English crown" (*3HVI* III.ii. 179) and the methods by which he plans to do so; however, it differs from the earlier play in introducing Richard's other motives for his crimes, "the bitterness of soul arising from physical malformation" (Marriott 213) and his jealousy of his attractive elder brother, by incorporating details from More's history and Sackville's *Induction* in *A Mirror for Magistrates*:

> Why, love forswore me in my mother's womb;
> And for I should not deal in her soft laws,
> She did corrupt fair nature with some bribe,

To shrink mine arm up like a wither'd shrub,
To make an envious mountain on my back,
Where sits deformity to mock my body;
To shape my legs of an unequal size,
To disproportion me in every part,
Like to a chaos, or an unlick'd bear-whelp
That carries no impression like the dam.
And am I then a man to be belov'd?
O monstrous fault, to harbour such a thought!

(*3HVI* III.ii. 153-164)

The details of Richard's unusual birth are further elaborated on in V.vi., as Henry VI, just before Richard kills him, recalls the portents which were said to have surrounded Richard's birth:

The owl shriek'd at thy birth, an evil sign;
The night-crow cried, aboding luckless time;
Dogs howl'd, and hideous tempest shook down trees;
The raven rook'd her on the chimney's top,
And chatt'ring pies in dismal discords sung;
Thy mother felt more than a mother's pain,
And yet brought forth less than a mother's hope,
To wit, an indigested and deformed lump,
Not like the fruit of such a goodly tree.
Teeth hadst thou in thy head when thou wast born,
To signify thou cam'st to bite the world.

(*3HVI* V.vi. 44-54)

Richard himself takes up this subject immediately following the murder:

Indeed 'tis true that Henry told me of;
For I have often heard my mother say
I came into the world with my legs forward.
Had I not reason, think ye, to make haste,

And seek their ruin that usurp'd our right?
The midwife wonder'd and the women cried,
"O Jesus bless us, he is born with teeth!"
And so I was, which plainly signified
That I should snarl, and bite, and play the dog.
Then since the heavens have shap'd my body so,
Let hell make crook'd my mind to answer it.

(*3HVI* V.vi. 69-79)

Interestingly, however, Richard's description of himself in I.i. of *Richard III* demonstrates a digression from the sources; whereas Rous' account described Richard's birth as unnaturally prolonged, Shakespeare's version says he was "sent before my time / Into this breathing world, scarce half made up" (*RIII* I.i. 20-21), a more probable version of the event. The theme of unusual birth becomes a recurring motif in the play; indeed, it is referred to no less than six times: by Lady Anne in I.ii. 21-25; twice by Margaret, in I.iii. 227-231 and in IV.iv. 47-58; by the young Duke of York in II.iv. 10-30; and twice by the Duchess of York, in IV.i. 52-55 and in IV.iv. 166-175. Similarly, as Judith H. Anderson notes, Richard "also has an acute awareness of his own deformity" (115) which is either ignored or only briefly mentioned in most of the earlier accounts. Within the first tetralogy, however, the frequent references to his unnatural appearance, beginning with the description in V.i. of *Henry VI, Part Two* (157-158), continuing in Richard's two important monologues (*3HVI* III.ii. 153-195; *RIII* I.i. 14-31), and including both the insults hurled at him by the other characters and at least three examples of morbidly humorous references (*RIII* II.i. 90-91, III.i. 128-131, III.vii. 125-126), demonstrate Shakespeare's adaptation, or distortion, of the tradition that "A hero's appearance reveals his essential superiority and difference from other men" (Bowra 99).

In addition, the opening soliloquy of *Richard III*, rather than merely repeating all that was set down before in the speech in *Henry VI, Part Three*, overlooks Richard's specific plan to seize the throne for himself in favour of his more general decision "to prove a villain / And hate the idle pleasures of these days" (30-31). On the one hand, Shakespeare may have done this on the assumption that the audience would already be familiar with

Richard's plan from *Henry VI, Part Three;* but on the other, he may also be signalling a change in emphasis from both the earlier plays and the historical sources: unlike the earlier versions which primarily underscored Richard's desire for power, his version places greater emphasis on "the motivation of an ugly cripple seeking revenge upon the hale and the handsome" (Levin 202) alongside mere ambition. Furthermore, the soliloquy and the rest of I.i. display an innovation in a common literary device of both historiography and epic poetry, which almost all of Shakespeare's sources used. Richard's use of "drunken prophecies, libels, and dreams" (33) to advance his plans follows the tradition of using prophecies as dramatic irony and foreshadowing, and also plays with that tradition by showing that although, in the play, prophecy is the principal device that ties the plot together, the first prophecy mentioned is actually part of Richard's master plan, as opposed to the 'true' prophecies that will appear later on. Shakespeare's treatment of the George/Gloucester prophecy is thus ironic in that it appears in the histories as a prophecy that did come true, but it appears in the play as a deliberate appeal to the credulity of others.

The unusual birth and frightful appearance are not the only characteristics that Shakespeare draws on to mark Richard as an epic villain; throughout the play, Richard's encounters with other characters demonstrate and rework another feature commonly ascribed to epic protagonists, that "a fearful appearance is combined with a voice whose tones strike silence and dismay" (Bowra 100). This is most significantly demonstrated early on in the play, with the seduction of Lady Anne (I.ii.). The scene is only tangentially related to the historical sources, as Shakespeare does not appear to have used, or might not have known about, the Crowland Chronicle's story of Lady Anne's ill-fated attempt to avoid Richard's advances.[19] Instead, he fleshes out the comparatively brief details of Henry VI's funeral and Lady Anne's second marriage that Hall and Holinshed provided into a jarring and effective display of "Richard's near-diabolical powers" (Smith 199) that is also a dark parody of the traditions in elegies, verbal duels, and historical romances - and even of an earlier part of the first tetralogy itself: Edward IV's first meeting with Elizabeth in III.ii. of *Henry VI, Part Three.*

Lady Anne's monologue at the beginning of I.ii. begins as an elegy to "Th' untimely fall of virtuous Lancaster" (6), and thus to the passing of the old order, but it

quickly progresses into a blistering pronouncement of her hate for Richard, possibly inspired by the speech Thomas Churchyard attributed to Mistress Shore in *A Mirror for Magistrates*. It is also a bitterly ironic prediction of her own fate, to be made "More miserable by the life of him / Than I am made by my young lord and thee!" (27-28). However, with Richard's sudden arrival, the dominant literary mode of the scene changes from elegy to flyting, or verbal duel, another common device in epic poetry. The verbal duel sets this scene up as an analogue to the battles with which the first tetralogy is primarily concerned, except that the weapons used in this battle are words.

The form of the verbal duel, with its use of stichomythia and repetition, also creates a parallel to Edward's more sincere and gentle use of similar techniques in *Henry VI, Part Three* III.ii. 1-117, thus illustrating Richard's "envy and jealousy of his brother Edward" (Pearlman 53) as well as the brothers' different attitudes toward women. Edward's repartee with Elizabeth, based largely on a passage in More's history, shows his desire to meet Elizabeth halfway by agreeing that she is "too good to be [his] concubine" (*3HVI* III.ii. 98) and would thus make a good wife, in the tradition of many a historical romance. However, by insisting that his crimes were motivated by desire for Anne (*RIII* I.ii. 121-191), Richard distorts the tradition of courtly love and "cleverly transforms this quarrel between innocent victim and willful murderer into a 'keen encounter' of wits between a cruel mistress and her lover" (Levine 105). The result of this perversion of the romantic tradition, this "obvious appeal to her vanity which also shifts the guilt to her" (Smith 201), is that Richard does not need to use physical force to get Anne into his power, as the historical accounts suggest he might have done; his skillful use of words proves to be all he needs. As well, though both Edward and Richard are motivated by feelings other than true love - Edward by physical attraction, Richard by desire for power - we can detect a current of affection in Edward's argument with Elizabeth that is totally absent from Richard's verbal duel with Anne. In the previous play, Edward said admiringly of Elizabeth:

> Her looks doth argue her replete with modesty,
> Her words doth show her wit incomparable,
> All her perfections challenge sovereignty:
> One way or other, she is for a king,

And she shall be my love or else my queen.

(*3HVI* III.ii. 84-88)

In contrast, Richard gloats over his conquest of Anne and scoffs at her weakness:

Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?
Was ever woman in this humour won?
I'll have her, but I will not keep her long.

(*RIII* I.ii. 227-229)

Similarly, in his sarcastic reference to his success, "Upon my life, she finds (although I cannot) / Myself to be a marv'llous proper man" (*RIII* I.ii. 253-254), Richard appears to be triumphing as much over Edward as over Anne; he has beaten his brother at his own game. We will see throughout the rest of the play how Richard's jealousy of Edward's attractiveness and popularity will lead him to destroy almost their entire family.

By conflating the seduction of Lady Anne with the funeral of Henry VI, Shakespeare emphasizes the unnaturalness of the event and brings it into near-mythic dimensions; this is powerfully illustrated by the use of Warkworth's assertion, as reported by Holinshed, that during the procession, "dead Henry's wounds" did indeed "Open their congeal'd mouths and bleed afresh" (*RIII* I.ii. 55-56). The chronicles do not mention whether Richard was present at Henry's funeral, but since it was believed at the time that "the corpse of a murdered man would bleed if approached by his slayer" (Kelly 281), Shakespeare took the incident as a cue to place both Richard and Anne at the funeral procession. The use of the phenomenon also emphasizes the presence of the supernatural in the world of the play; in contrast to Richard's invented prophecy about Clarence in I.i., and as a complement to Anne's unconscious prophecy at the beginning of I.ii., the incident is presented as a 'true' example of "a miracle or ... a divine sign of disapproval" (Kelly 281), and thus a signal that we are more in the world of epic than of history per se.

The most significant use of prophecy in the play, in I.iii., is coupled with the most obvious digression from the historical sources: Shakespeare's depiction of the disdain in which Queen Elizabeth and her family were held develops into the main thread that holds the plot together with the reappearance of the widowed Queen Margaret, who in real life returned to France after her husband's murder and did not live to see Richard's reign of

terror. The first half of I.iii., both before and after Margaret's entrance at line 108, is largely a narrative account of Elizabeth's "advancement and [her] friends'" (74) and Richard's and Clarence's experiences "on Edward's party for the crown" (137), as well as Margaret's pitiless treatment of the elder Duke of York (174-186), a summary of I.iii. and I.iv. of *Henry VI, Part Three*. However, Margaret refuses to accept Richard's insistence that "God, not we, hath plagu'd thy bloody deed" (180) and instead prophesies doom for the entire York family, especially Richard - though Richard tries to deflect the prophecy by saying her name where she intends to say his (232-239), an example of the magical thinking linked to naming in the traditions of ritual and epic poetry (Anderson 121). The nobles also refuse to accept Margaret's prophecy or her warning to Buckingham that Richard "shall split thy very heart with sorrow, / And [they will] say poor Margaret was a prophetess" (299-300), even though nearly everything she predicts will eventually come true over the course of the play.[20] Margaret's reappearance not only serves to tie the major events of *Richard III* together under the prophecy and to emphasize the workings of divine justice; it also forges a link to *Henry VI*, reminding the audience of what has gone before as well as what is to come.

Closely following Margaret's sweeping prophecy is Clarence's dream on the night he is murdered (I.iv. 9-74), which owes a great deal to *A Mirror for Magistrates*, especially to William Baldwin's poem on Lord Rivers and to Thomas Sackville's *Induction* (Levin 205). Like that of Rivers in the *Mirror*, Clarence's dream is a warning to him to beware of Richard; and like the narrator of Sackville's *Induction*, Clarence has a vision of "the kingdom of perpetual night" (*RIII* I.iv. 47), in which he encounters the ghosts of Prince Edward and the Earl of Warwick, an apparent foreshadowing of Richard's own dream of his victims in V.iii. The dream itself is told in some of the finest descriptive poetry in the first tetralogy, suggesting the use of description for dramatic effect that is commonly found in epic poetry, and providing a contrast to the prose passage that follows, the discussion between Richard's two servants that is one of only two examples of overt moralizing in the play. In the previous scene, the hired assassins had promised Richard that "We go to use our hands, and not our tongues" (I.iii. 351); however, their debate on inability to escape a guilty conscience (I.iv. 100-152) and Clarence's plea for his life by appealing to their

consciences (I.iv. 169-267) belie this promise, and indeed, only one of the ruffians actually carries out Richard's orders. The debate itself comes largely from the earlier plays, especially the *True Tragedy*, except that Shakespeare places it earlier than the previous plays did, choosing to juxtapose the moral digression with a crime which received relatively less notice from the historians than "the most notorious of the Tower murders, that of Richard's two nephews" (Levin 205). Indeed, in contrast to the earlier plays, which hardly mention Clarence's murder at all, Shakespeare uses the incident as a counterpoint to and foreshadowing of Richard's most notorious crime. It is one of only two death scenes in the play which is represented on stage, the other being that of Richard himself.

Following the compression of twelve years' events [1471-1483] into Act I, the remainder of the play covers the two years of "the lurid drama of Richard's brief reign" (Rowse 222), beginning with Edward IV's deathbed address to his family in II.i. However, unlike the historians, Shakespeare leaves out Edward's advice to the others to set a good example for his children in favour of his attempts to reconcile his family and friends to each other (1-75) and, in a conflation of five years' time, his anguished reaction to the news of Clarence's death, adapted from Vergil (76-134). The rest of Act II consists largely of the formal, ritualized laments of Edward's family and the common people for "Edward, my lord, thy son, our king" (II.i. 40), at first almost overshadowing Richard's and Buckingham's plan to take custody of young Edward V when he comes to London. As with the death of Henry VI at the end of the previous play, "the last warm light in the human world goes out, and the tetralogy is plunged into the gloom of Hades" (Frey 66-67); the death of Edward IV brings the world of the play back into winter and darkness, as the apprehensive citizens acknowledge in II.iii.:

> When clouds are seen, wise men put on their cloaks;
> When great leaves fall, then winter is at hand;
> When the sun sets, who doth not look for night?
> Untimely storms makes men expect a dearth.
> All may be well, but if God sort it so,
> 'Tis more than we deserve or I expect.
>
> (32-37)

II.iv. provides a contrast to Legge's trilogy and the *True Tragedy* in that the arrest of Elizabeth's relations and the abduction of Edward V are narrated rather than shown (38-48); as with the lament for Edward IV and Clarence in I.iii., "Shakespeare leaves it to the women to make the sensible comment on this world of male action" (Rowse 286) with the anxious reactions of Elizabeth and the Duchess of York to the fate of their relatives. There is also an element of comic relief in II.iv. that is not found in the previous versions, provided by the little Duke of York's mischievous comments on Richard's unnatural birth (8-37), a reinforcement of Richard's difference and a digression from young York's sentimental characterization in the historical sources.

In Act III, the unfolding of Richard's plan follows More's history quite closely, although Shakespeare adds significant details of his own in his depiction of the imprisonment of Edward and York in III.i. Like More, Shakespeare gives the argument against York's remaining in sanctuary (31-56) to Buckingham rather than to Richard as Vergil did; however, Shakespeare condenses the lengthy argument in More's version into a relatively brief dialogue between Buckingham and the Cardinal. The principal emphasis of this scene is not so much the historical event, the removal of York from sanctuary, as the characterizations of Edward and York themselves: unlike their sentimental descriptions in the histories, Shakespeare gives them distinct personalities which serve to emphasize the sense of wasted potential and loss of innocence that their untimely deaths evoke. Edward is represented as serious and precocious, a worthy successor to his father; Shakespeare attributes to him a statement on the role of historical tradition: "Methinks the truth should live from age to age, / As 'twere retailed to posterity, / Even to the general all-ending day" (III.i. 76-78). The statement both illustrates the intelligence that Mancini and the other historians praised in Edward - and the unfulfilled potential he represents - and summarizes the intention of the history plays themselves: through Edward's observations on historical tradition, "Shakespeare was telling his audience that they must put his tetralogy among other solemn documents of history, that he is striving to continue the high tradition of Polydore [Vergil] and Hall" (Tillyard 203) as well as acknowledging the role of the history plays in the formation of historical opinion.

By contrast, York displays a combination of innocence and audacity in his remarks

on Richard's appearance (III.i. 127-131), the way he did in the previous scene. His youth gives him a licence to say what the others are too tactful or too intimidated to mention, although Richard's reaction to his little nephew's "sharp-provided wit" (132) suggests that York was killed for his impudence as much as for being Edward IV's son.[21] Indeed, there may even be a hint of William Baldwin's version of the unfortunate satirist, William Collingbourne, in Shakespeare's characterization of York; both unjustly suffer for what were originally meant as humorous remarks. Similarly, the comments reveal another feature often found in epic poetry, that "a hero is not so tolerant of immodesty" (Bowra 487) and may react in extreme ways to being insulted; Richard's sardonic sense of humour and consciousness of his difference do not extend to others' reminders of that difference.

Most of Act III after the imprisonment of Edward and York is essentially a dramatization of More's history, expanding on the comparatively brief account in the *True Tragedy*, although the execution of Queen Elizabeth's relations in III.iii. is unique to Shakespeare's version, and Richard's and Buckingham's staged appeal to the people in III.v.-III.vii. is given a somewhat different treatment than in the sources. In keeping with the idea of prophecy as narrative paradigm, Shakespeare retains More's references to Stanley's dream "that the boar had rased off his helm" (III.ii. 11) as well as the portents Hastings had seen on his way to the Council meeting (III.iv. 82-91); and these are coupled with the references that Rivers and Lord Grey (III.iii. 15-23) and Hastings (III.iv. 92-93) make to Margaret's prophecy. III.iii. also combines prophecy with retrospection, demonstrated by Rivers' reference to the murder of Richard II (9-14), one of the few times in *Richard III* that Shakespeare refers to what would later become the subject matter of his second tetralogy; it is a brief reminder of Hall's thesis that the troubles England is facing have very deep roots, going back to the rebellion of Henry IV.

As a contrast to the melodramatic horror of III.iv., taken from More's history and from John Dolman's poem on Hastings in *A Mirror for Magistrates*, the final three scenes of Act III "[draw] on More's humorous description of Richard's hypocritical piety, to make the episode [of the staged appeal] one of high comedy" (Kelly 289), although Richard's attempts to malign his parents (III.v. 85-94; III.vii. 9-14) and the scrivener's comment on the spuriousness of Hastings' arrest (III.vi.) inject a darker note into this

example of political absurdity. The appeal begins with Richard's and Buckingham's meeting with the Mayor, at which they attempt to justify Hastings' execution by claiming "that the subtile traitor / This day had plotted, in the Council-house, / To murther me [Buckingham] and my good Lord of Gloucester" (III.v. 37-39). It continues, and becomes more outrageous, with Richard's "venomous attack on Edward's sexuality" (Pearlman 53) motivated as much by jealousy for Edward's attractiveness as by hypocritical moralizing (III.v. 80-84), and reaches its lowest point with Richard's insinuations against his mother's honour and - in a reversal of the admiration he professed for his father in *Henry VI, Part Three* - his instruction to Buckingham, rather than to Dr. Shaw as in More, to portray him as "the right idea of [his] father / Both in [his] form and nobleness of mind" (III.vii. 13-14), thus distorting the memory of the elder Duke of York. As in More's version, except for a few of Buckingham's followers, the people make no reply to Buckingham's speech on behalf of Richard, necessitating, or at least prompting, the elaborate playacting with which the rest of the scene is concerned. The appeal itself takes a slightly different form in the play than in the histories; instead of dramatizing Dr. Shaw's sermon as reported by More, Shakespeare transforms the appeal into a vivid example of Richard's self-conscious theatricality which also points back to one of his earlier crimes: by pretending to be a holy man, Richard is actually parodying his first victim, Henry VI (Frey 108).

Shakespeare's version of Richard's and Buckingham's appeal to the people also displays a degree of irony that surpasses even More's history; Richard's feigned reluctance to assume the throne demonstrates "the true instinct of the Machiavel, that he is able to tell so much of the truth, and make that which should work against him to do an about-face and achieve the opposite" (Frey 108). Richard is ironically telling the truth when he says to Buckingham and the others:

> Your love deserves my thanks, but my desert
> Unmeritable shuns your high request.
> First, if all obstacles were cut away,
> And that my path were even to the crown,
> As the ripe revenue and due of birth,
> Yet so much is my poverty of spirit,

So mighty and many my defects,
That I would rather hide me from my greatness -
Being a bark to brook no mighty sea -
Than in my greatness covet to be hid
And in the vapour of my glory smother'd.

(III.vii. 154-164)

Buckingham's narrative summary of III.ii. of *Henry VI, Part Three* further extends the irony of the appeal: in his account of the supposed illegality of Edward's marriage, he outright admits that "your brother's son shall never reign our king, / But we will plant some other in the throne / To the disgrace and downfall of your house" (III.vii. 215-217), which is exactly what happens. As well, Buckingham displays some of the same audacity as the young Duke of York during the appeal: when he points out that as long as Edward V is allowed to rule, "The noble isle doth want her proper limbs; / Her face defac'd with scars of infamy" (125-126), he may be making a barely-veiled reference to Richard's appearance beside his intended reference to the uneasy political situation.

Rather than proceeding directly to Richard's coronation as the historical accounts did, Shakespeare follows the staged appeal to the citizens with the reactions of the noblewomen to Richard's triumph, an event of which they learn indirectly with Brakenbury's remark, "The King hath strictly charg'd the contrary" (IV.i. 17), adapted from Scene xii of the *True Tragedy*. It is here that we learn both of Lady Anne's suffering (56-86) and of the possible emergence of Richard's guilty conscience, with Anne's reference to "his timorous dreams" (84); however, we also discover the first hint that Richard's triumph will be short-lived, with Elizabeth's plea to her surviving son, Dorset, to "go cross the seas, / And live with Richmond, from the reach of hell" (41-42).

The play reaches its climax in IV.ii., in which "in Richard's first act as king, he plots his nephews' deaths as though he were in private; and ... broods on Richmond, leaving off his meditation only to refuse Buckingham the gift he has promised" (Endel 116). The seeming incongruity of Richard's plotting, in full view of everyone, the murders of Edward and York and Lady Anne - a conflation of two years' events - serves to emphasize the unnaturalness of his ill-gotten position; and it also demonstrates Shakespeare's application

of theatrical decorum to More's description of the plot, although in rewriting the scene to make it acceptable for the stage, Shakespeare creates an even more jarring effect than More's original version did. However, as if to soften the blows this scene and the next produce in the audience, Richard's seeming triumph is coupled with more foreshadowings of his eventual defeat, beginning with Buckingham's combination of reluctance to comply with Richard's latest plan (15-26) as More's history and Sackville's poem suggest, and disappointment over not being properly rewarded (88-122) as most of the historians suggest. Furthermore, Richard's order to Tyrrel (66-82) is immediately preceded by news of Dorset's defection to Richmond (47-49), which prompts Richard to remember both that "Henry the Sixth / Did prophesy that Richmond should be king / When Richmond was a little peevish boy" (95-97; cf. *3HVI* IV.vi. 67-76) and that "a bard of Ireland told me once / I should not live long after I saw Richmond" (106-107); the former of these appears in almost all the historical and most of the literary accounts, while the latter appears only in Holinshed's history. Both references continue the current of prophecy and supernatural presence that has run through the play, preparing us for the dawn that will come after the darkness with which the rest of Act IV is concerned.

Unlike the previous accounts, Shakespeare does not treat the murder of Edward and York in excruciating detail; instead of showing it, he prefers to tell it, beginning IV.iii. with Tyrrel's narration, which draws on More's version of "the best known charge in Richard's criminal record" (Levin 205). It is as though, having nearly exhausted the audience - and himself - with the horrors of the previous scenes, Shakespeare has chosen to leave the most disturbing moment in the first tetralogy to the audience's imagination, in the style of Greek tragedy in which "messengers report murders and other violent acts that happen off-stage" (Hart, "Narrative" 156). Indeed, Richard himself briefly alludes to the imprisonment of Clarence's children and the murder of Lady Anne immediately after Tyrrel makes his exit (IV.iii. 36-39). But as in the previous scene, the news of the murders is immediately followed by reports of Buckingham's and Ely's defection to Richmond.

IV.iv. is the longest scene in the play, and the one which shows the greatest influence from the traditions of epic poetry; indeed, its only debts to the historical sources are Richard's appeal to Queen Elizabeth to hand her daughter over to him (199-431) and

the conflation of Richmond's two expeditions to England into one successful invasion (432-538). The first two hundred lines of IV.iv., however, resemble Lady Anne's elegy to Henry VI in I.ii., in that they are an elegiac lament for Richard's victims, recited by the three widows, Elizabeth, the Duchess of York, and Margaret - who is Shakespeare's own addition, as she in fact had died a year before Edward IV. For Margaret, the events of the previous three acts have confirmed her prophecy and largely satisfied her desire for revenge on those who robbed her of her family and kingdom; her joining with Elizabeth and the Duchess to "curse / That bottled spider, that foul bunch-back'd toad" (80-81) demonstrates how the former rivals are now united against a common enemy, which is exemplified in their litany of Richard's crimes:

> *Margaret:* I had an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;
> I had a Harry, till a Richard kill'd him;
> Thou hadst an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;
> Thou hadst a Richard, till a Richard kill'd him.
> *Duchess:* I had a Richard too, and thou didst kill him;
> I had a Rutland too, thou holp'st to kill him.
> *Margaret:* Thou hadst a Clarence too, and Richard kill'd him.
> .... And the beholders of this frantic play,
> Th'adulterate Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey,
> Untimely smoth'red in their dusky graves.
>
> (IV.iv. 40-46; 68-70)

Margaret's reminder to Elizabeth of all they both have lost (82-115) draws upon the moral digressions in the historical accounts, as well as the principal lessons in *A Mirror for Magistrates*, to produce the only other example of overt moralizing in the play, a lesson on the impermanence of prosperity. Prophecy also reappears in this scene, as the Duchess, following her reminiscence of Richard's difficult birth (166-175), predicts not only that Richard will pay for his crimes, but also that "the little souls of Edward's children [will] / Whisper the spirits of thine enemies / And promise them success and victory" (192-194). But it is with Richard's verbal duel with Elizabeth, "the final confrontation between the sexes in the tetralogy" (Levine 107), that IV.iv. derives most of its power, as Richard

attempts to repeat his earlier triumph in I.ii. as well as to further attack the memory of his brother Edward by "thrusting a lewd sexuality in the face of his brother's widow" (Pearlman 54). However, though the appeal to Elizabeth takes the same form as the seduction of Lady Anne, a stichomythic verbal duel, the results are very different: where Richard successfully silenced all of Anne's defences through his use of words, Elizabeth proves to be more than a match for him. Indeed, she now uses all of his rhetorical tricks against him, from throwing his arguments back at him to "cataloguing ... all his atrocities against her family as seals of his love....the very technique he used so successfully against Anne" (Hassel 64); and in reply to her litany (IV.iv. 271-283), all Richard can say is, "You mock me, madam, this is not the way / To win your daughter" (284-285) - another ironic admission of the truth. As the debate progresses, Richard becomes increasingly frustrated by Elizabeth's answers, until, as in Legge's version, he threatens "to myself and thee, / Herself, the land, and many a Christian soul / Death, desolation, ruin, and decay" (407-409) if she does not give in to his demands. But even this does not faze Elizabeth; in fact, faced with threats against her surviving children, she resorts to deliberate ambiguity with her use of the rhetorical question, "Shall I be tempted of the devil thus?" (418). By phrasing her answers as rhetorical questions, Elizabeth makes Richard - and, for a moment, the audience - believe that he has won; however, her answers also reveal her clarity of thought even against such a formidable adversary: she remembers only too well that Richard killed her sons and will likely kill her daughter too if she surrenders to him. Elizabeth, in the final analysis, proves not the "shallow, changing woman" (431) that Richard contemptuously calls her and that she was in Hall's and Holinshed's histories, but instead "the heroic figure of a 'natural' mother who fights not for herself but for her children" (Levine 107), an analogue to Margaret in her earlier incarnation in *Henry VI*. On the other hand, Richard's failure to ensnare Elizabeth the way he did Anne marks the beginning of his decline: his orders to Ratcliffe and Catesby which immediately follow (439-456) are confused and partial, and he replies to the news of Richmond's arrival with an explosive fury:

> Is the chair empty? Is the sword unsway'd?
> Is the King dead? The empire unpossess'd?
> What heir of York is there alive but we?

And who is England's king but great York's heir?

(469-472)

As well, in a repetition of the strategy he used unsuccessfully against Elizabeth, he threatens to kill George Stanley if his father does not cooperate (494-496). Richard does gain a small victory with the capture and execution of Buckingham (IV.iv. 530-531; V.i.), but it is too little too late; "he [is] never to know any security or even respite again" (Rowse 198) once Richmond arrives in England. The failure of Richard's appeal to Elizabeth, which Lord Stanley confirms in IV.v. 7-8, is the strongest foreshadowing of his coming defeat: with the betrothal of Princess Elizabeth to Richmond, Richard has lost his first battle, and in Act V he will lose the war as well.

The arrival of Richmond upon the scene in V.ii. comes as a great relief both to the characters and to the audience, although the relatively small size of his role in the play has caused some division among scholars. Because Richmond has a smaller part in Shakespeare's play than he did in the histories and most of the literary sources, except for *A Mirror for Magistrates*, David L. Frey suggests that Shakespeare was undermining his historical importance by giving him "a total lack of personality, dullness of speech, and lack of any distinguishing feature" (129). However, the downplaying of Richmond serves to heighten the contrast between him and Richard: as Harry Levin notes, "it is enough for [Richard's] foil to be sober, sincere, conscientious, genuinely religious, and ultimately triumphant" (207). We have, in fact, been prepared for Richmond's return throughout the second half of *Richard III*, and even from his brief first appearance in *Henry VI, Part Three*, based on the histories of Vergil, Hall, and Holinshed, in which Henry VI predicts that his young nephew "will prove our country's bliss" (*3HVI* IV.vi. 70). Furthermore, Shakespeare's understated treatment of Richmond also helps to elevate the play out of the simple political treatise it might otherwise have become - the opinions of revisionist historians notwithstanding - by presenting the rivalry between Richard and Richmond as an allegorical struggle between tyranny and just rule, or between darkness and light, in the ritualistic tradition; in this reading, Richmond becomes the "glorious summer" to Richard's "winter of discontent."

The rivalry and essential contrast between Richard and Richmond form the basis for

Shakespeare's treatment of the final battle in the last three scenes of Act V, with the constant alternation between the two rival forces, usually presented on opposite sides of the stage (Levin 208), in the manner of the judgement scenes in morality plays. The alternation helps to emphasize the differences between Richard and Richmond: on one side, we see Richard, without "that alacrity of spirit / Nor cheer of mind that I was wont to have" (V.iii. 73-74), refusing supper, calling for wine, and threatening the death of George Stanley; meanwhile, on the other side, we see Richmond inquiring for the safety of his mother and stepbrother, and praying for success in the coming battle - a legacy from the *True Tragedy*'s comparison of the classical and Christian world views. Where Richard had over-confidently insisted at the beginning of V.iii. that "the King's name is a tower of strength" (12), Richmond regards his forces, of which he sees himself as one part, as God's "ministers of chastisement" (113).

Immediately following Richmond's prayer comes Shakespeare's most innovative transformation of his historical and literary sources: the "apocalyptic showpiece" (Levin 209) in which the ghosts of all of Richard's victims - Prince Edward, Henry VI, Clarence, Rivers, Vaughan, Lord Grey, Edward V, the Duke of York, Lord Hastings, Lady Anne, and Buckingham - appear, briefly retelling the manner of their deaths and making their predictions for the battle. To Richard they say, "Despair and die!" (126), and to Richmond they say, "Live and flourish!" (138). In the historical accounts, the dream was mentioned only briefly, and in the *True Tragedy*, it was narrated; but Shakespeare uses the tradition of supernatural visions in epic poetry and the controlling image of the wailing ghosts in *A Mirror for Magistrates* to create a vivid representation of both Richard's guilty conscience and Richmond's divine blessing. Shakespeare's representation of the dream is also the first version to ascribe a prophetic dream to both Richard and Richmond rather than to Richard alone; though he does not provide a detailed account of Richmond's preparations to free England from Richard, as the historical sources do, Shakespeare does emphasize Richmond's role in the epic pattern of the first tetralogy by allowing him a supernatural visitation.[22]

With his sudden awakening from the dream, Richard enters what may be referred to as his third verbal duel, with one important difference: it is a duel with himself. His first

words upon awakening, "Give me another horse!" (177) foreshadow his last words in V.iv.; at first, he still seems to be dreaming, until he manages to gasp, "Soft, I did but dream. / O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!" (178-179). The rest of the speech is not so much a soliloquy as an internal dialogue as, in a reversal of his opening declaration to become what others would make of him, he sees himself for the first time as others see him:

> What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by.
> Richard loves Richard, that is, I am I.
> Is there a murtherer here? No. Yes, I am.
> Then fly, What, from myself? Great reason why -
> Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself?
> Alack, I love myself. Wherefore? For any good
> That I myself have done unto myself?
> O no! Alas, I rather hate myself
> For hateful deeds committed by myself.
> I am a villain; yet I lie, I am not.
> Fool, of thyself speak well; fool, do not flatter:
> My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
> And every tongue brings in a several tale,
> And every tale condemns me for a villain.
>
> (182-195)

After denying any conscience or human feeling for half the first tetralogy, Richard finally realizes the truth of his assertion in V.vi. 83 of *Henry VI, Part Three;* he really is "[himself] alone." He is now the guilt-ridden, confessed multiple criminal he was in Francis Seager's poem in *A Mirror for Magistrates,* although the one-man debate "between villainy and remorse, as though Richard himself were a battleground between two opposing abstractions" (Pearlman 57) suggests that he has no intention of reforming and resists all internal and external pressure to do so.[23] Indeed, just before his speech to his men later on in the scene, Richard defiantly declares, "Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls; / Conscience is but a word that cowards use, / Devis'd at first to keep the strong

in awe; / Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law!" (308-311).

In contrast to Richard, Richmond, upon awakening, is cheerful and confident in his "remembrance of so fair a dream" (233), and proceeds directly into his address to his men, adapted in large part from Hall's history, although Shakespeare, unlike Hall, places Richmond's speech before Richard's. In both Hall's and Shakespeare's versions of the speech, Richmond refers to Richard as "a bloody tyrant and a homicide; / One rais'd in blood, and one in blood established" (246-247); however, Shakespeare's version does not refer to Richmond's claim to the throne, weak as it was, preferring instead to emphasize Richard's abuses of power. Richmond appeals not only to his men's sense of justice and faith in God as he did in Hall, but also to their love for their families:

> If you do fight in safeguard of your wives,
> Your wives shall welcome home the conquerors;
> If you do free your children from the sword,
> Your children's children quits it in your age. (259-262)

Richmond's speech in the play is also similar to the one in Hall's history because its use of the conditional, 'if-then' pattern (253-268) shows Richmond's awareness that he and his men are taking a great risk; though the audience knows Richmond will prevail, "the air is still full of uncertainty" (Levin 212) at the time he makes the speech. Even so, he reminds his men that "God and our good cause fight upon our side" (240), and as he leads them into battle, he calls on "God and Saint George" (270) to lead them to victory.

On the opposite side, Richard takes the overcast sky - a reference to Edward IV's emblem, the rising sun (cf. *3HVI* II.i. 25; *RIII* I.i. 2) - as a sign that "A black day will it be to somebody" (280); but after seeing the message on Norfolk's tent, he regains most of his usual composure and attempts to deny the previous night's dream. His speech to his men, like Richmond's, is based primarily on the one in Hall's history - though the reference to Richmond's being "Long kept in Bretagne at our mother's cost" (324) comes from Holinshed - but Shakespeare's version leaves out Richard's half-hearted confession. Richard's speech, in fact, is a savage parody of Richmond's, including the appeal to family values - bitterly ironic for Richard - which echoes his previous slanders against his brother Edward:

You sleeping safe, they bring to you unrest;
You having lands, and blest with beauteous wives,
They would restrain the one, distain the other.
...Shall these [Richmond's men] enjoy our lands? Lie with our wives?
Ravish our daughters?

(320-322; 336-337)

The speech also follows Hall's version in Richard's vitriolic description of Richmond as "A milksop, one that never in his life / Felt so much cold as over shoes in snow" (325-326), and his men as "overweening rags of France, / These famish'd beggars weary of their lives" (328-329) and "bastard Bretons, whom our fathers / Have in their own land beaten, bobb'd, and thump'd" (333-334). Like Richmond, Richard appeals to St. George, but his reference to St. George's famous adversary, the dragon, underscores his own status as an embodiment of evil, and the battle itself as an analogue to "the myth that a hero slays a monster before gaining a kingdom" (Munz 139).[24]

The battle itself covers one short scene, "only thirteen lines between the first alarum and Richard's death" (MacIntyre 38), and differs somewhat from the historical accounts with Richard's reference to "six Richmonds in the field / Five have I slain to-day instead of him" (11-12). This doubling strategy, which Shakespeare would use again in Act V of *Henry IV, Part One*,[25] is both a military manoeuvre and a reminder that "Richmond is the true king and cannot be killed; we touch here on the theory of the king's two bodies, one of which is immortal" (Leggatt 77). It is thus an emphatic prelude to the single fight between Richard and Richmond which will decide the fate of England. Shakespeare also follows the *True Tragedy* for Richard's famous last words, but his version gives them a double meaning not found in the earlier play. When Richard cries, "A horse, a horse! My kingdom for a horse!" (7; 13), he is not only literally calling for a new horse to replace the one he has lost - and which would not physically appear on stage; he is also experiencing "the amazed realization, not unmixed with a sense of irony, that the throne to which he has waded through blood and craft should at the most critical hour depend on such a paltry thing as the timely supply of a horse" (Sen Gupta 43).

The fight between Richard and Richmond is based on Hall's description, but it draws heavily on the conventions of epic and heroic poetry and ritual; by reducing the entire battle to one duel, Shakespeare portrays it as "the ancient tradition of trial by combat, the victory of good over evil as in jousts, romances of chivalry, morality plays, and masques" (MacIntyre 38). It also makes use of the tradition in ancient ritual and literature that one of royal blood would be sacrificed for the good of the kingdom, connected with that of "the *pharmakos* or scapegoat, the ugliest man in the community, who was made into a sin-offering and driven out from the city" (Murray, *Greek Epic* 225). With Richard's death at the beginning of V.v., the world of the play proceeds from night to morning, from winter to spring, from war to peace, and - as it is treated by many historians even today - from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. Though Shakespeare would return to the root causes of the war in his second tetralogy, with the end of *Richard III* he portrays the beginning of "smooth-fac'd peace, / ... smiling plenty, and fair prosperous days" (V.v. 33-34), thus providing a tidy ending to his historical series.

The play's final scene differs from the earlier versions in its lack of a narration of the battle, as in the *True Tragedy*, or an elaborate epitaph to Richard other than Richmond's triumphant declaration, "God and your arms be praised, victorious friends, / The day is ours, the bloody dog is dead" (V.v. 1-2). The play also does not have a separate epilogue as its predecessors did; instead, Richmond himself summarizes the horrors of the first tetralogy and his own role in their end:

> We will unite the White Rose and the Red.
> Smile heaven upon this fair conjunction,
> That long have frown'd upon their enmity!
> What traitor hears me, and says not amen?
> England hath long been mad and scarr'd herself:
> The brother blindly shed the brother's blood,
> The father rashly slaughter'd his own son,
> The son, compell'd, been butcher to the sire.
> All this divided York and Lancaster,
> Divided in their dire division,

O now let Richmond and Elizabeth,
The true successors of each royal house,
By God's fair ordinance conjoin together!
(V.v. 19-31)

Indeed, the absence of explicit references to Richmond's descendants, except for a brief allusion to "their heirs (God, if thy will be so)" (32), is itself an argument against reading the play as 'Tudor propaganda;' the controlling image in Richmond's final speech is the restoration of peace and the necessity of maintaining that peace at all times, not who was in power at the time the play was written, as one possible reading of the previous plays may suggest. In this respect, the final scene is more reminiscent of the poetic treatments, both the contemporary versions and *A Mirror for Magistrates*, than of the historical or dramatic treatments; and it also elevates the play to the universal, paradigmatic level of epic alongside the more specific level of history.

From the time of their first performances, the four plays of the first tetralogy have captured the public imagination with their use of historiography, poetry, and epic to recreate the horror as well as the beauty of late-medieval English history; and *Richard III*, the play which, of the whole first tetralogy, owes the most to the epic and ritualistic traditions, has remained one of the most popular with actors, scholars, and readers. The fifteenth-century historical accounts are today known primarily to historians and Shakespearean scholars, and even the sixteenth-century histories are known more to specialists than to general readers, but the plays have consistently remained favourites for over four hundred years.[26] Indeed, A.R. Myers remarks that "there has never been a generation between his day and ours when more than one historian has not written about [Richard III]" (181), and Shakespeare's plays are an important reason for this interest, whether one agrees wholeheartedly with their view or whether one rejects them as a distortion of their subject matter.

VI. Conclusion

In his essay on the influence of Shakespeare's first tetralogy and its sources on later historians, which echoes the views of New Historicist critics, A.R. Myers notes that the tendency of many a twentieth-century historian to insist that the first tetralogy is a distortion of the actual historical events "may ... be due in part to the special awareness in our time of the role of government propaganda in the formation of public opinion" and that "To those who have lived through an epoch of Nazi and Communist double-talk and brainwashing, it seems natural *for the untrained mind* to think of a Tudor government in terms of equal propagandist efficiency" (201; emphasis mine). From the study of Shakespeare's historical and literary sources, it becomes easier to see that to regard the plays, poems, and histories this way is an oversimplification that, perhaps, reveals more about modern historians than it does about historians, poets, or ruling classes in either the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries or about Shakespeare. Indeed, "It is in fact doubtful whether consistent distortion for political and dynastic ends can be charged against any of the historians" (Hanham 191); where any distortions do exist, they are more for dramatic purposes than for political ones. However, it would also be an oversimplification to regard Shakespeare as the most reliable expert on fifteenth-century history; though there is some validity in the famous statement of "the great Duke of Marlborough, who is said to have remarked, 'Shakespeare, the only history I ever read'" (Myers 181), we should also remember that his plays are works of art that, while using the methods of historical inquiry, are meant for an entirely different purpose than those works we recognize as purely historical. By modern standards of historical objectivity, a 'pure' history is one that faithfully follows the known facts, keeping the dramatic treatments to a minimum; and thus, according to these standards, Shakespeare would be found wanting. However, according to Renaissance standards of historical inquiry, in which the known facts are interwoven with greater political and moral truths, the plays, apart from their appeal as pure entertainment, are valuable complements to their sources and other historical works. Indeed, Thomas Heywood, a contemporary of Shakespeare who also wrote on the same subjects, stated in *An Apology for Actors* (1612) that "Plays have made the ignorant more apprehensive, taught the unlearned the knowledge of many famous histories, [and] instructed such as cannot read in the discovery of all our English

Chronicles" (qtd in Pearlman 3),[27] in the same way that sermons were also often used for educational purposes. If by 'historiography' we mean the written representation of past events, then we can agree that there is certainly a degree of historiography in the plays, as Shakespeare himself acknowledged in III.i. of *Richard III*, the narrative passages of *Henry V*, and elsewhere. However, there is also an awareness that the events in the plays transcend their immediate historical significance, "[taking] us out of history into myth, ... [and] back to history again" (Leggatt 53) - but 'myth' in the sense of universal narrative paradigm rather than that of falsehood. As Henry Ansgar Kelly notes, "'mystique' ... might have been [a] better" word (9) to describe the transformation of the events of the fifteenth century into the foundation story of the English Renaissance.

Since the publication in 1900 of George Bosworth Churchill's comprehensive examination of all the then-known sources and analogues for *Richard III* (at that time, Mancini's history had been largely forgotten) - upon which this study has in part relied - most source studies of the first tetralogy have attempted to show that for Shakespeare, "a historical Richard III did not exist" and that "It was the Richard of a hundred-year-old saga whom alone Shakespeare knew and made the subject of his play" (Churchill 2). Churchill's dismissal of the existing sources for the first tetralogy, however, is too sweeping a condemnation of both Shakespeare and his sources; the republication of Mancini's history, all but unknown to Shakespeare, as well as the accounts of other European historians who had no vested interest in the English court, have in fact helped to show that Shakespeare and his sources might not have been very far off the mark (Hanham 65-73; Rowse 173-289; Kelly 61-81). Furthermore, the opinions of revisionist historians may be in part influenced by a distrust of poetic treatments of history, in the belief that what a non-historian, especially a poet or dramatist, writes cannot possibly be true or must somehow be a reversal of the truth. For this reason, we not only find those who "seek a 'historical Richard' who was virtuous" (Moseley 33), but also those who extend 'anti-Shakespearean' attitudes to the second tetralogy to argue, for example, that "Shakespeare went too far in white-washing [Henry V]" (Muir 95).

It is of course possible, as generations of playgoers and scholars have proved, to enjoy Shakespeare's history plays without touching on the complex problems of their

accuracy. By regarding them as historical epic, a genre which Francis William Newman described as "a compromise between poetry and history" (qtd in Dixon 122), we can appreciate how they use the historical facts as Shakespeare knew them alongside the traditions of ritual, the roots of drama, to illustrate the greater truths of tyranny and justice, and of endings and beginnings. In this way, "Shakespeare complicates but does not negate the ideas of reason and truth, but his representation of history makes us work hard for truth and understand our limits and potential for history, justice, and truth" (Hart, *Theater & World* 253). Their combination of actual events with the literary genres of comedy, romance, tragedy, heroic poetry, and true-crime story illustrate the complex and dynamic relationship between 'fact' and 'fiction'; just as we regard imagined narratives in terms of real things, we also regard real events in terms of imagined paradigms. The distinction "between 'history' in our sense and history in the meaning of 'story' or 'drama'" (Myers 184, n. 7) was not as strong in Shakespeare's time or in the time he examines in the history plays; if we wish to understand the plays and their intentions the way Shakespeare likely meant them to be understood, we must put aside that distinction and read them, not as propaganda or misrepresentation, nor even as factual inquiry, but as the story of a nation in poetry, a foundation legend that happens to be true.

Notes

1. See Collingwood 46-58 and White 1-27 for a further discussion of the characteristics of medieval and Renaissance histories.

2. However, John Julius Norwich suggests that "Shakespeare has clearly read ... Mancini" (311), at least for the account of Edward IV's marriage in III.ii. of *Henry VI, Part Three*, though this was more directly based on More's version.

3. In *Shakespeare and His Sources*, Joseph Satin insists that the story of Lady Anne's suspicious death "is found nowhere but in More and seems to have no basis in fact" (2); however, More does not mention it at all. The accounts in Hall and Holinshed come from Vergil, who probably derived it from Rous and Crowland.

4. Though Vergil was probably unaware of it, there was a linguistic justification for the providential view of the success of Henry VII: the name "Tudor" is the Welsh form of the name "Theodore," which means "gift of God."

5. The Bishop of Ely (John Morton, later Archbishop of Canterbury and a cardinal) died in 1500, thirteen years before the accepted date of the *History of Richard III.*

6. Translated by Leicester Bradner and Charles Arthur Lynch; originally appeared in *The Latin Epigrams of Thomas More* (1953).

7. Retha M. Warnicke suggests that this too is derived from the morality plays, based in part on a reference in 1 Kings 13:4 (773); however, I believe that More, noticing a parallel between the historical events and the moralities, adapted the convention of the moralities to the historical details, rather than altering the details to fit the convention.

8. In this respect, Ely is similar to the Duke of York in Shakespeare's *Richard II* (*RII* V.ii.; V.iii.).

9. Hall's reference to Tarquin in Richmond's speech may have exerted an influence on Shakespeare beyond the history plays: he wrote *The Rape of Lucrece* at approximately the same time he wrote *Richard III.*

10. Some productions of the play, including Sir Laurence Olivier's film version (in which the first two lines appear in III.iv., just before the murder of Hastings), have included all or part of Collingbourne's poem as an addition to the text.

11. The imagery is somewhat reminiscent of III.iv. of *Richard II.*

12. *The Song of the Lady Bessie* was also the inspiration for a prose adaptation, Blanche Hardy's *Sanctuary* (London: Philip Allan, 1925).

13. The word "primer" was usually used to describe a prayer-book; Wayland appears to be using the term in the later sense of a moral lesson book.

14. Baldwin apparently confused Prince Edward, who was eighteen years old at the time of his death, with Edward V.

15. In the absence of a full English translation of Legge's trilogy, I follow the English translations provided by Bullough. For the connections between Legge and Seneca, see Churchill 265-395.

16. The appearance of Pierre Landois in the *True Tragedy* is an incongruity; according to Vergil (*English History* 205-208), Landois, treasurer to the Duke of Bretagne, had attempted to betray Richmond to Richard. The author of the *True Tragedy* may simply have borrowed the name from the histories without regard to the details.

17. In addition to its influence on Shakespeare's *Richard III,* this speech also has an echo in *Hamlet:* line 1892, "The screeching raven sits croaking for revenge," gave rise to Hamlet's line during the Mousetrap play, "Come, the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge" (*Hamlet* III.ii. 253-254).

18. *Henry VI, Part Three* begins in 1455; at that time, Edward was thirteen years old and Richard was only three.

19. The account of Lady Anne's marriage in the Crowland Chronicle does tangentially suggest an incident Shakespeare refers to in *Richard III,* the abduction of the Duke of York in III.i., though this is done offstage; in fact, it also throws an ironic light on Buckingham's argument (taken from More) on the rights of sanctuary (III.i. 31-56).

20. Margaret's prophecy suggests the one given to Eleanor in I.iv. of *Henry VI, Part Two;* both prophecies become controlling elements in their respective plays.

21. Cf. Bowra 487, a reference to a similar incident in a 19th-century Russian poem. In a February 1995 production at the Citadel Theatre, Edmonton, in addition to making these remarks, York imitates Richard's walk and slaps him on the back; the combination of words and physical action thus emphasizes both Richard's difference and his sensitivity to others mentioning that difference.

22. Richmond's dream in the play is not entirely unprecedented, however; Pietro Carmeliano's Latin poem on the birth of Henry VII's son Arthur depicts Henry VI as Richmond's guardian angel (Kelly 317-324; summarized in Kelly 74-75).

23. An April 1999 production at the University of Alberta used the internal division in this scene to great effect by having two actors (Richard and his conscience) recite this passage to represent the struggle between Richard as criminal mastermind and Richard as would-be repentant sinner.

24. According to C.W. Scott-Giles, one of Richmond's emblems was the red dragon, still the emblem of his native Wales. Cf. James Orchard Halliwell's note to Warkworth's chronicle: "Merlin's prophecy of *bellum inter duos dracones, videlicet albeum et rubeum* [a battle between two dragons, which were white and red], was completely fulfilled in the War of the Roses" (*Warkworth* 71).

25. The historians do not mention whether Richmond actually used this strategy. Its use by Henry IV is referred to in the chronicles of the English historian Thomas Walsingham and the Welsh historian/adventurer Adam Usk, and appears in both Hall and Holinshed.

26. See Rowse's reference (288-289) to Richard Corbett's poem "Iter Boreale," which testifies to the impact of *Richard III*, as originally performed by Shakespeare's company, within the playwright's own lifetime.

27. Conversely, *A Refutation of the Apology for Actors* (1615) outlines the struggle between 'pure' history and historical drama, accusing playwrights such as Shakespeare, Heywood, and others of presenting "instead of true history ... nothing but fabulous lies" (qtd in Halliwell, *First Sketches* xxxvi).

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