

Affective History, Felt Time, and Embodied Pasts in Early Modern England

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## Abstract

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Affective History Felt Time, and Embodied Pasts in Early Modern England

Thesis directed by Professor Katherine Eggert

This dissertation takes as its subject early modern England's enduring fascination with its national past. I argue that accounts of English history in plays, poetry, and prose treatises were designed not only to represent history, but to make readers and viewers experience the past in emotional and embodied ways. In chapters covering Edward Hall's *Union of the Houses of Lancaster and York*, *A Mirror For Magistrates*, Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, William Shakespeare's English history plays, and Milton's *History of Britain*, I analyze how these various works enable readers and spectators to feel and thus experience the past in an interactive fashion. In this way, the texts I address craft experiences of felt temporality in which the past seemingly unfolds in the present.

This project intervenes in two subfields of early modern studies that have previously been quite distinct. First, while the "affective turn" has shown how discourses of emotion play a constitutive role in aesthetics, this approach has often elided historiography and history writing; meanwhile, scholarship on the Renaissance fascination with history has overemphasized the period's relation to the past as solely an experience of loss. My argument builds on and emends these approaches to show that the longstanding appeal of historical genres in England lay in this ability to represent the past as happening again and felt in the here and now. The texts I examine represent history as a mode of being-in-time in which distinctions between past and present are blurred. Therefore, my project advances a larger argument for how emotion can structure a subject's experience of time in ways that defy linear models of temporality.

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Anne and Joe,  
and to the memory of my grandparents.

## Acknowledgements

Given that this dissertation explores the ways in which feeling history creates relationships between the past and the present, I want to acknowledge the history of relationships that have brought this project to its present, completed state. First, I owe all my thanks and gratitude to Katherine Eggert, who has provided me with rigorously intellectual and graciously supportive mentorship at every stage of my career. She has read countless drafts of this project with a spirit of critical generosity and positivity, often knowing what I wanted to say before I knew how to say it. Through her careful, considered, and erudite feedback, she enabled me to ascertain which directions my dissertation should take, and working with her has been the single most valuable experience of my graduate career. I would also like to express my thanks to David Glimp and Katie Little for their incisive observations and overall enthusiasm for this project at its various stages. Their intellectual energy and excitement about the potential of my work imbued me with the drive to keep pushing this dissertation in the ambitious directions they envisioned for it. I am also grateful to my other committee members, Kelly Hurley and Paul Hammer, for their time and helpful feedback. I extend my gratitude to the Center for the Humanities and the Arts at the University of Colorado Boulder, which awarded me the George Reynolds Dissertation Completion Fellowship.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Anne and Joe Stein, and to the memory of my grandparents: Catherine and Lloyd Reynolds, and Dorothy and John Stein. My parents, simply but profoundly, were my first teachers, and through their loving example their daughter gained a life-long of books, an ambitious work ethic, and a desire for her achievements to serve others as well as herself. My grandparents filled my life with joy and adventure, with stories and with books, and I view my relationship with each of them as the most formative of my life. Within these pages lies the fruit of their unconditional love, selfless support, and boundless curiosity.

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## Note on Texts

I have retained the original spellings of quotations, modernizing only i/j and u/v with the exception of quotations from Spenser, whose use of i/j and u/v spellings signals specific pronunciations, etymologies, and puns. I have also silently expanded contractions.



## Introduction

From the late fifteenth century through the end of the seventeenth century, England's writers were obsessed with the topic of their national past. This dissertation takes as its subject early modern England's fascination with its history. I argue that historical plays, poetry, and prose treatises of the early modern period were designed not only to represent the past, but also to make readers and viewers experience the past in emotional and embodied ways. By eliciting emotional responses to history, I claim, Edward Hall's chronicle, *A Mirror for Magistrates*, Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, Shakespeare's English history plays, and Milton's *History of Britain* create experiences of felt temporality in which the past seemingly unfolds in the present. Thus, these texts transform history into an affective, interactive process happening in the here and now to readers and spectators.

Of course, an increased fascination with history has long been recognized as one of the hallmarks of the early modern era, and the emotions elicited by classical, mythical, or national pasts feature prominently in both continental and English historical writing throughout this period. One might in fact condense the innumerable statements of praise and justification for historical writing into a single representative quote—Cicero's vindication of history in *De Oratore*, a maxim so popular it was quoted in nearly every historical text of the English Renaissance: "Historia vero testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae, nuntia vetustatis."<sup>1</sup> Translated by Ben Jonson as "Times witnesse, Herald of Antiquitie, / The light of Truth, and life of Memory," this maxim gestures to an adoration of and overall reverential response to history in the early modern period, and also succinctly outlines history's purpose in a

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<sup>1</sup> E.W. Sutton's translation reads as follows: "History bears witness to the passing of the ages, sheds light upon reality, gives life to recollection...and brings tidings of ancient days." E.W. Sutton, trans., *De Oratore*, II (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), 36.

culture of humanism equally obsessed with moral education. History, in giving life to memory, ensured that the lessons of the past (and the mistakes of the past) could never be forgotten, and ideally would never be repeated. Moreover, as “the best doctors” capable of illustrating “with great life, how affections are kindled and incited, how pacified and restrained. . .how to set affection against affection, and to master one by another,” history offered an in-depth course in how to live with, and feel with, other human beings.<sup>2</sup> Thus, history functioned as a main pillar of humanism’s optimistic mission to illuminate the truth of the human condition, such that it could ultimately progress and be perfected thanks to the past’s vibrant, and vast, examples for the present.

To a large extent, writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries took it as a given not only that history could teach and thus improve the present, but also that English people were inherently capable of learning from history. At face value, then, early modern historians and authors appear unquestioningly confident in history’s educational functionality. However, behind this positive belief in history’s utility lay a creeping pessimistic inkling about history’s effect on the present that some early modern thinkers hinted at, but that few dared fully articulate. For example, Jean Bodin worried that history “ever vacillates and has no objective,” while in the *Defence of Rhyme* (1602) Samuel Daniel viewed history as an inexorable movement in which “we must be content to submit ourselves to the law of time, which in a few yeares will make all for which we now contend Nothing.” Traditional scholarship on the Renaissance obsession with history has noted this lurking pessimism and has attributed it to various sources, among them larger cultural trends such as the Neoplatonic belief that all existence represents a decline from an original perfection, and a preoccupation with mutability. In England specifically, both the

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<sup>2</sup> Francis Bacon, quoted in William Bouwsma, *The Waning of the Renaissance, 1550-1640* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 63.

enthusiasm for and latent gloom surrounding history has been primarily blamed on the cultivation of nostalgia born out of the Renaissance's "discovery" of anachronism.<sup>3</sup> In addition, William Bouwsma has capably shown how this historical malaise speaks to a cultural anxiousness in the early modern period that marked its own ambivalent relation to, and shift away from, the humanist optimism of the high Renaissance.<sup>4</sup> Critics agree that these various expressions of doubt in history, although so starkly antithetical to the early modern valorization of the discipline as the "light of truth," merely reflect the irony that the period which so worshipped the past simultaneously understood, more so than any previous historical moment, that "the past always reaches us across a space which we want to deny. It reaches us incomplete, and in attempting to make it whole we merely create a new incompleteness."<sup>5</sup>

The English Reformation has also been identified as a primary source for this historical pessimism, with critics recognizing the Reformation as an historical project aimed at obliterating—in most cases literally—the physical and social fabric of England's Catholic past.<sup>6</sup> Stephen Mullaney has articulated the affective consequences of these efforts to "reform" the nation's past, and reads early modern England's relationship to history in this period as one of trauma and upheaval because "in the space of a single generation, from 1530 to 1560, England officially adopted and abandoned no fewer than five state religions."<sup>7</sup> In an eloquent vignette

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<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Thomas Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982) Phyllis Rackin, *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); and Stephen Mullaney, *The Reformation of Emotions in the Age of Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015). My work in this dissertation is both considerably indebted to, and consistently engaged with, the claims made by Rackin and Mullaney in particular, and I will continue to return to their findings throughout this study.

<sup>4</sup> See William Bouwsma, *A Usable Past Essays in European Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); and *The Waning of the Renaissance*, 112-28, 198-214.

<sup>5</sup> Greene, *Light in Troy*, 34.

<sup>6</sup> See Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400-c. 1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Sarah Beckwith, *Shakespeare and the Grammar of Forgiveness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Mullaney, *Reformation of Emotions*, 9.

describing the night that the Duke of Somerset ordered the four-hundred year old ossuary beneath St. Paul's to be emptied—and its human contents dumped outside Moorgate—Mullaney argues that such Reformist actions tried to eradicate not simply religious belief, but “the deep structure or genealogy of feelings in the city,” taking aim at “place[s] where the past and the loved ones who embodied it were granted a lasting habitation in the affective landscape of the city.”<sup>8</sup> In Mullaney's view, the Reformation attacks early modern peoples' structures of feeling, which sets Shakespeare's generation affectively adrift from their own history and their means for feeling in contact with it. Thus, the primary emotional relation to the past in this period becomes one of profound loss and alienation, which of course echoes the emotional responses provoked by historical anachronism.

I find, though, that this scholarship overemphasizes early modern England's relation to the past as solely an experience of loss, and I would argue that these lingering suspicions speak to a deeper cultural fear regarding the past that cannot be dismissed as either nostalgia, ironic historical awareness, or estrangement. Instead, these statements regarding history's uselessness or meaninglessness communicate the other, bleaker side of the emotional coin built into the bedrock of early modern England's philosophy of history as that which inspires virtue, and discourages vice. Philip Sidney bears witness to the substance of this almost unspeakable anxiety in his *Defence of Poesy* when he presents his famous arguments for poetry's didactic effectiveness. Criticizing the reverential Ciceronian view, Sidney counters that “the historian. . . is tied, not to what should be, but to what is, to the particular truth of things and not to the general reason of things” (426-28).<sup>9</sup> Sidney's critique of historiography's educational potential

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 1-4.

<sup>9</sup> Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, in *Sir Phillip Sidney*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

hinges on his discomfort with the fact that history cannot represent the ideal, as poetry can. Rather, history shows the past in its “bare was,” and therefore will “as in Alexander or Scipio himself, show doings, some to be liked, some to be disliked. And then how will you discern what to follow but by your own discretion” (537-41)? Sidney’s rhetorical question finally expresses the deep dark side of early modern England’s emotional faith in the edifying potential of the past: what if people learn the *wrong thing* from history? History’s examples are not all sunshine and rainbows, Sidney emphasizes, but rather an unedifying mélange of the worst of times.<sup>10</sup> For Sidney, history is no “light of Truth, and life of Memory;” rather “history, being captive to the truth of a foolish world, is many times a *terror* from well-doing, and an encouragement to unbridled wickedness” (593-95, emphasis mine). Sidney poses a strikingly modern view of the relationship between past and present as one of terror, in which the past provokes emotional responses and actions that are starkly antithetical to humanism’s precepts. Furthermore, by describing the effect of the past on the present as one of terror, Sidney emphasizes history’s intractable presence within the present, contradicting the myriad views of history as distant from or lost to the present. Instead Sidney outlines how, in turning to history, the present may very well become like the past, and that should horrify us. We see these secret feelings about history echoed and furthered by a descendant and fierce critic of the very historical idealism so lauded by humanism: Karl Marx. In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), Marx makes an incisive observation about how history operates, and how

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<sup>10</sup> “For see we not the valiant Miltiades rot in his fetters? The just Phocion and the accomplished Socrates put to death like traitors? The cruel Severus to live prosperously? The excellent Severus miserably murdered? Sulla and Marius dying in their beds? Pompey and Cicero slain when they would have thought exile a happiness? See we not the virtuous Cato driven to kill himself, and rebel Caesar so advanced that his name yet, after 1600 years, lasteth in the highest honour” (596-602)?

history makes those subject to it feel, that reflects what Sidney so feared, and what early moderns struggled to express, about their own relationship to the past:

Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations *weighs like a nightmare* on the brains of the living.<sup>11</sup>

The past cannot and does not shape the present for the better, but instead persists in its immunity to redemption or change, infecting the present with an equal inability to learn from or prevent the past. Moreover, Marx deflates the anachronistic sense that the past remains forever separated from the present, and in fact anachronism becomes an acceptable alternative to the reality that both Sidney and Marx recognize; history is always here, is always felt, and is indeed too heavy to be borne. As Marx asserts and as Sidney presciently argued, the past inevitably haunts the present, creating a nightmare from which the present can never awake.

In encountering the past, writing it as history, and affectively responding to it, a great many early modern poets, prose authors, and playwrights conceived of history's emotional substance as a stark dichotomy of either adoration or despair. The past was either a storehouse of edifying examples to be both observed and revered; or a recurring nightmare haunting the present. It is my argument, though, that the texts examined in this dissertation represent the past, and make the past emotionally felt, in ways that do not slavishly correspond to the paradigms outlined above. Rather than viewing the past as a storehouse of edifying, educational examples to be digested and lauded, on the one hand; or as distant, different, alienating, or haunting on the other, the texts I analyze in this dissertation express a simultaneously affective and somatic view of history, and their authors all experiment with ways of representing the past so that it can be

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<sup>11</sup> Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in *Marx/Engels Internet Archive*, updated 2006, accessed January 3, 2017. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/ch01.htm> (emphasis mine).

encountered by early modern readers and spectators as something other than either education or nightmare. I intend to show, therefore, how this historical writing of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries endeavors to establish a felt relationship of affective history between the present and the past.

My use of the term “affective history” to describe the forms of emotional engagement, connection, and embodiment facilitated by early modern history writing draws on a robust, and diverse, philosophical background. In some ways, affective history operates similarly to Raymond Williams’s “structures of feeling,” constructing experiences of and emotions about the past that shape one’s being in the world.<sup>12</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty defines affective history as a product of a hermeneutic tradition that “produces a loving grasp of detail in search of. . .life-worlds;” in contrast to analytical history, affective history produces narratives of interpersonal human belonging that are not rooted in capitalist models of exchange.<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Freeman extends this to postulate affective history as a form of intimate, visceral reading that brings one into a form of relation with the past: “Close reading is a way into history, not a way out of it, and itself a form of historiography and historical analysis.”<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, I conceive of affective history as a hybrid, embodied, non-linear experience of temporality, and my concept of affective history as a form of encounter between the present and the past is indebted to Walter Benjamin’s work on history, time, and temporal experience. In *The Origin of Tragic Drama*, for instance, Benjamin’s theorizes the “ruin” as an experience of history characterized “by the irregular rhythm of the constant pause, the sudden change of direction, and consolidation into new

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<sup>12</sup> See Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

<sup>13</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 18, 73. Chakrabarty attributes the expression “affective history” to Homi Babha (264, n.58).

<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), xvii.

rigidity.”<sup>15</sup> History is revealed as a constructed experience of time because the past (the ruin) does not stay in the past; rather, it presents itself in the present for the present. This “presentational” capacity of the past allows for the past to interrupt the present, and these ideas would eventually develop into Benjamin’s philosophy of history as articulated in both the *Arcades Project* and “On the Concept of History.” Criticizing Marxist historical materialism, Benjamin finds that the method’s emphasis on dialectics reproduces progressive historicism “at the expense of the *perceptibility* of history.”<sup>16</sup> For Benjamin “articulating the past historically does not mean recognizing it ‘the way it really was.’ It means appropriating a memory as it flashes up in a moment of danger.”<sup>17</sup> In Benjamin’s model, the present constitutes the only sphere of history because it functions as the space in which the past insists on being seen in the now, and thus creates an alternative experience of temporality in which the past becomes experiential: “Historicism offers the ‘eternal’ image of the past; historical materialism supplies a unique experience with the past.”<sup>18</sup> Benjamin offers, in my view, a theory of history as now-time, in which the past manifests to compel a momentary encounter between itself and the present.<sup>19</sup> Throughout this dissertation, I will echo and employ Benjamin’s vocabulary of temporality to show how early modern affective history facilitates similarly experiential encounters between the present and the past.

Hall, the *Mirror* contributors, Spenser, and Shakespeare all pioneer various ways of making the English past present and felt as a form of affective history, while John Milton,

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<sup>15</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osbourne (London: Verso, 1998), 178, 197.

<sup>16</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 461, sec. N2, 6, emphasis mine.

<sup>17</sup> Walter Benjamin, “On the Concept of History,” trans. Harry Zohn, in *Selected Writings, Volume 4: 1938-1940*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 391.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 396.

<sup>19</sup> See also Peter Osbourne, *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde* (London: Verso, 1995), 145, 150.



writing over fifty years after the completion of these works, reflects on the affective sustainability of these forms for feeling and experiencing England's past. In Hall's diatribes against factious nobility and in the *Mirror's* gory improvisations; in *The Faerie Queene's* episodes of chronicle reading and historical prophecy; or in Richard III's malicious asides and Henry V's efforts to "redeem time," these works of historical prose, poetry, and drama turn the past into a present place for embodied and emotional interaction between readers, playgoers, and their national past.

### Critical Methodology

The texts examined in this dissertation create various opportunities for early modern readers and playgoers to have an emotionally embodied experience of the past. To understand how affective representations of the past create visceral experiences of the past actually happening again, we must understand how historical genres employ and engage with the early modern discourse of the embodied passions, a psycho-physiological tradition that viewed the mind, soul, and body as interacting and enmeshed. The discourse of the embodied passions understood all sensation as embodied and all stimuli (even historical figures in books) as essential to the cultivation of ethical behavior.<sup>20</sup> For example, Thomas Wright's *The Passions of the Mind in General* presents a study of individual passions (which in the early modern period were synonymous with what we might call emotion or affect), and how those passions can affect a person's physiology, psychology, behavior, and relationships: "As this treatise affordeth great riches to the Physician of the soul, so it importeth much to the Physician of the body, for that

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<sup>20</sup> The notion that action could be affected or shaped by one's passions had its roots in Aristotle (or, for the early modern period, Aristotle as interpreted by Aquinas), whose *praxis* and *pathos* "describe the moral virtues as dispositions toward action and passion—toward characteristic modes of conduct, in other words, in which the virtuous person acts and is acted upon." L.A. Kosman, "Being Properly Affected: Virtues and Feelings in Aristotle's Ethics" in *Essays in Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. Amélie Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 104.

there is no passion very vehement but that it alters extremely some of the four humours of the body.”<sup>21</sup> Wright’s primary aim is to offer Englishmen a practical rubric for training themselves to become aware of how their passions work and how they can control them. Such regulation necessitates a thorough understanding of the dialectical relationship between the bodily processes of the humours and the emotions: “These passions then be certain internal acts or operations of the soul, bordering upon reason and sense, prosecuting some good things or flying some ill thing, causing therewithal some alteration in the body.”<sup>22</sup> Wright’s treatise outlines a pervasive scientific, religious, cultural, and aesthetic belief of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: that to feel, to think, to learn, to read, or to interact with others constitutes a fully embodied, and thus fully transformative, somatic event.<sup>23</sup>

Over the past twenty years, early modern scholars have attended to how Galenic and humoral discourses of the body describe body and soul as so linked that an operation in one manifests itself as an effect in another. Moreover, this approach has illuminated how early moderns understood physical sensation, including emotions, as capable of structuring moral, ethical, personal, and political relationships. Gail Paster offers a way of reading early modern emotions that “introduce[s] an insistent materialism into locutions once understood solely as figuration.”<sup>24</sup> This method proposes that by literalizing utterances once considered metaphorical

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Mind in General*, ed. William Newbold (New York: Garland Publishing, 1986), 89-93. Published in 1601 and probably written in 1597, Wright’s work constitutes one of the fullest articulations of a theory of the embodied passions that had existed since the early medieval period; in addition, Wright’s text would heavily influence (and in some instances, be directly copied by) the period’s most famous account of abnormal psycho-physiology, Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-43.

<sup>23</sup> Katharine Craik, in her examination of sensation, aesthetic response, and ethics in early modern literature, uses Wright’s treatise to claim that emotional literary experiences “affected not only men’s internal poise but also their habits, manners, and behaviour. To be moved or touched by literature gave rise to drives and motivations central to human experience, and these shaped men’s ability to live meaningfully among others.” Craik, *Reading Sensation in Early Modern England* (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 5-6.

<sup>24</sup> Gail K. Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1993), 22.

or figural, scholars can begin to see how early moderns experienced being in their bodies and how such embodiment affected aesthetic representations.<sup>25</sup> Michael Schoenfeldt's *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England* builds upon Paster's work to claim that the Renaissance obsession with bodily regulation actually had a positive influence upon self-formation. Drew Daniel's *The Melancholy Assemblage* examines melancholy in the early modern period through the lens of assemblage theory, which allows Daniel to explore how this affective experience simultaneously "connotes an individual body, the formation of a concept, the consolidation of a crowd, and alternately sexual, religious, and poetic fusions of flesh and spirit."<sup>26</sup> This interest in emotion and affect has also turned its attention to early modern representations of memory and experiences of time.<sup>27</sup> For instance, Jonathan Gil Harris analyzes "a distinctively Renaissance attitude to time...[in which] the past is always alive. And in its untimely life, that past speaks with and through us in the accents of the present."<sup>28</sup> Harris's work especially fosters a critical attentiveness to expressions of tangible modes of being-in-time, which has been lacking in early modern scholarship's embrace of the affective turn.<sup>29</sup>

While the "affective turn" in early modern literary studies has shown how discourses of emotion play a constitutive role in aesthetics, this approach has generally elided English

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<sup>25</sup> See also Paster, *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (Chicago, 2004); and Gail K. Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson, *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

<sup>26</sup> Drew Daniel, *The Melancholy Assemblage: Affect and Epistemology in the English Renaissance* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 4.

<sup>27</sup> See John Sutton, *Philosophy and Memory Traces: Descartes to Connectionism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Garrett Sullivan, *Memory and Forgetting in English Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Lina Perkins Wilder, *Shakespeare's Memory Theatre: Recollection, Properties, and Character* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010); and Jonathan Baldo, *Memory in Shakespeare's Histories: Stages of Forgetting in Early Modern England* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

<sup>28</sup> Jonathan Gil Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 20, 25.

<sup>29</sup> See also Kurt Schreyer, *Shakespeare's Medieval Craft: Remnants of the Mysteries on the London Stage* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014). Schreyer examines how Shakespeare's dramaturgy displays a polychronic link with stage practices from medieval Corpus Christi drama.

historiography and history writing generally. In this dissertation, I analyze the affective and bodily resonances of language used to represent England's national past to show that affective history turns historical poetry, drama, and prose into sites for emotional and embodied contact with the past. Just as tragedy, epic, lyric, and other Renaissance genres foster vibrantly somatic affective experiences via the embodied passions, early modern historical writing fosters somatic experiences of being-in-the-body and being-in-time. To illustrate this, let us examine some exhortations to read and learn from history, a common rhetorical move in early modern historiography, through the discourse of the embodied passions. In *The True Order and Methode of Wryting and Reading Hystories* (1574), the first instruction manual for how to write history published in early modern England, Thomas Blundeville justifies why history constitutes a better educational medium than philosophy: "Whereas stories [histories] are fit for every place, reache to all persons, serve for all times, teache the living, revive the dead, so farre excelling all other bookes, as it is better to see learning in noble mens lives, than to reade it in Philosophers writings."<sup>30</sup> To some extent, Blundeville echoes the omnipresent Ciceronian maxim with which we began, but notice also his emphasis on history's *relatability*. For Blundeville, history writing possesses a distinctly human element, such that people can of course learn from it, but history also reaches out to the present, extending itself into now as a form of contact. Moreover, Blundeville highlights history's revivifying capacity (something we will see enacted in every text examined in this study). Writing about the past possesses the power to give life to the past and, in this sense, Blundeville's use of "revive" has a specifically embodied connotation. Therefore, Blundeville's description of historiography opening tombs and allowing the dead to rise is not

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<sup>30</sup> Thomas Blundeville, *The True Order and Methode of Wryting and Reading Hystories*, Early English Books Online, [http://gateway.proquest.com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:image:4887:3](http://gateway.proquest.com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:4887:3) (emphasis mine).

simply exuberant hyperbole. Rather, Blundeville claims that historical writing stimulates readers to feel, and reach out to, the past that becomes reembodyed through the historiographical text.

The discourse of the embodied passions allows me to take seriously the physiological and emotional element built into early modern historiography's exhortations to read history, which "at first look merely metaphorical, a convenient way of articulating the abstract and intangible phenomenon of affect."<sup>31</sup> By paying attention to the emotional and bodily resonances of this affective history, we can understand how historical writing gave early modern subjects an embodied experience of being-in-time. According to my methodology, therefore, the discourse of the embodied passions reveals how early modern history writing facilitates both the early modern "subjective experience of being-in-the-body" and an early modern subjective experience of being-in-the-past.<sup>32</sup> Early modern authors could convert historical writing—just as they transformed epic, lyric poetry, the sonnet, and tragedy—into an embodied, passionately discursive mode of representation that creates sensual, present experiences. The discourse of the embodied passions thus allows us to see how representations of the English past could transform into present experiences of feeling and being in the past.

Affective history, rendered viscerally present through historical prose, poetry, and drama of this period, creates moments in which an early modern person's emotional response simultaneously constitutes an embodied experience of temporality. Furthermore, the critical fields of affect theory and histories of the emotion reflect, in a surprising way, early modern understandings of one's emotional life as embodied and relational. These philosophical projects explore how certain forms of representation attest to post-Cartesian, post-human, non-hetero-normative, and queer modes of being in bodies and being in history, which enables me to

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<sup>31</sup> Craik, *Reading Sensations in Early Modern England*, 5.

<sup>32</sup> Paster, *The Body Embarrassed*, 3.

postulate that pre-Cartesian, pre-modern literature expresses a similar sense of affective history and emotional time. For example, the work of Gilles Deleuze provides the underpinning for my reading of the highly relational and temporal registers built into affective experiences. In his work on Baruch Spinoza, Deleuze reclaims the resonance of Spinoza's use of the term *affectus* as "a line of continuous variation in the passage of intensities or the forces of existence."<sup>33</sup> I find this definition distinguishes affect as an intensely embodied, yet often subconscious, phenomenon, and also posits affect as an ontologically transformative and inherently relational process. Affect both requires and creates a moment of contact between two beings, and these encounters (*rencontres*) open us up and out to another. I understand affect as an encounter that temporarily suspends us and renders us porous to a form of existence that, while not necessarily empathetic or rooted in identification, is rather "with, it is on the road, exposed to all contacts, encounters, in the company of those who follow the same way."<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, affect, as a process of "becoming," denotes a hyper-realized sense of being-in-time as being-in-the-present.<sup>35</sup> As Melissa Greg and Gregory Seigworth note, "Affect arises in the midst of in-between-ness;" therefore, to experience affect roots a person, bodily and mentally, in a visceral state of now, which makes us aware of our embeddedness in time even as it reorients our relationship to time.<sup>36</sup> In addition, I propose that the affects represented in and elicited by the works of literature under consideration in this study have the ability to render all temporal positions into one of embodied in-between-ness. Affect renders past and future, then

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<sup>33</sup> Gregory J. Seigworth, "From Affection to Soul," in *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, ed. Charles J. Stivale (Durham: Acumen, 2005), 189.

<sup>34</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 62.

<sup>35</sup> "Subjectivity is never ours, it is time. . . it was initially the affect, that which we experience in time; then time itself, pure virtuality." Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. H. Tomlinson and R. Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 82-83

<sup>36</sup> Melissa Greg and Gregory J. Seigworth, *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 1.

and now into an intense experience of encounter and contact, and through its dual powers to simultaneously suspend and move, I view affect and its effects in the world as a powerful heuristic toolkit for exploring how Hall, the *Mirror* authors, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton could make their readers and audiences *feel* time.

Lauren Berlant similarly examines the relationship between temporality and physical sensation, finding that the body's experience of time can be not only vibrantly somatic, but also politically manipulated and affectively charged. Berlant's *Cruel Optimism* concentrates on affective responses that express a historical sense of the present from within the present, what one might call a hyper-awareness of the now. Such an affectively charged consciousness of the present derails a model of time as natural and objective, which reveals the experience of being in the present as "a thing that is sensed and under constant revision, a temporal genre."<sup>37</sup> Time functions as an emotionally-laden and physical experience of the subject's now-time, and Berlant demonstrates that temporal categories of present, past, and future constitute genres with their own forms, structures, and affective dimensions. As genres, temporal modes "provide an affective expectation of the experience of watching something unfold, whether that thing is in life or in art."<sup>38</sup> Berlant's model of affective time envisions the present as an experiential space in which history happens *for* and *to* a person, which gestures to the embodied dimension of affective time and the experience of "being in history as a densely corporeal, experientially felt thing."<sup>39</sup>

Being in history produces encounters with bodies in time that models my assertion that early modern history writing facilitates sensual contact between past and present. Elizabeth

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<sup>37</sup> Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 4.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

Freeman offers, to my mind, the best elaboration of the fully somatic and affective valences of such encounters with pastness through her concept of erotohistoriography:

Erotohistoriography is distinct from the desire for a fully present past, a restoration of bygone times. Erotohistoriography does not write the lost object into the present so much as encounter it already in the present, by treating the present itself as hybrid. And it uses the body as a tool to effect, figure, or perform that encounter. Erotohistoriography admits that contact with historical materials can be precipitated by particular bodily dispositions, and that these connections may elicit bodily responses, even pleasurable ones, that are themselves a form of understanding.<sup>40</sup>

Freeman's formulation of the bodily contact that occurs in the encounter between past and present underpins my concept of how the past becomes an embodied, felt moment for an early modern subject. Erotohistoriography recognizes that pastness is always a condition of the present, and foregrounds that history can make itself pleurably felt in the now because of the embodied presence of and embodied contact with said pastness. Freeman's theory of alternative, queer histories making themselves felt in a visceral present enables me to examine how different forms of historical representation create emotional experiences of the past within an early modern subject. As an affective and bodily phenomenon, history "stages the very queer possibility that encounters with history are bodily encounters, and even that they have a revivifying and pleasurable effect."<sup>41</sup> Early modern historical genres reenact history for the present and allow for readers and spectators to take pleasure in this moment of visceral being-in time. Thus, in my view the emotions of history are never exclusively ones of loss, or grief, or melancholy, or nostalgia; and the early modern plays, poems, and prose under consideration here strive to create experiences in which the past can be felt as pleasurable, or erotic, or thrilling, or

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<sup>40</sup> Freeman, *Time Binds*, 95-96. Freeman's vocabulary of encounter is also indebted to Walter Benjamin.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 105. Although Freeman here discusses the affective and sensual possibilities of encounters with history through a close reading of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, her claim that the novel presents an alternative queer experience of pleasurable temporality echoes the vocabulary of both early modern historiography and emotional theory, which takes unmistakable pleasure and joy in being able to represent the past for the present.



suspenseful specifically because these works depict the past as in-process. The texts I examine deliberately liquidate distinctions between past, present, and future; instead, historical prose, poetry, and drama depict the past as a porous moment that acts upon and reorients the early modern subject's relationship to his or her world. Therefore, throughout this dissertation, I advance a larger argument concerning how affect structures and orients a subject's experience of time in ways that are hybrid and non-linear.

### Chapter Summaries

I begin with one of the most influential works of historiography in this period: Edward Hall's *Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Houses of Lancaster and York* (1548). I demonstrate that Hall radically transforms conventional didactic and exemplary modes for representing the national past by infusing his depiction of England's fifteenth-century with dialogically interacting moods of hope and dread. These affective atmospheres enable readers to feel as if the past could have happened differently, and thus Hall injects history with a sense of suspense that encourages readers to develop a responsive relationship with the history they read. Hall's influential chronicle sets the stage, so to speak, for the kind of performative, interactive engagement with the past that later texts take up.

*A Mirror for Magistrates* (1559), which uses Hall's *Union* as a principal source, shares the chronicle's conviction that a successful history of the nation must encourage emotional responses to the national past. But unlike their predecessors in the historiographical or *de casibus* traditions, the *Mirror*'s authors start interacting with history in surprisingly theatrical ways that are the subject of the second chapter. Uniquely, the *Mirror* documents the process of its composition through a prose frame. According to these prose pieces, the *Mirror*'s authors pretend to be fifteenth-century figures whose complaints they then record. These dramatized

complaint poems require the *Mirror*'s authors to take on the stories, personalities, voices, and (imaginatively) mutilated bodies of past people. I argue that the *Mirror*'s prose frame enables its contributors to turn historical play-acting into an innovative methodology for experiencing the past in the present. The prose frame invents a performative model of history, in which the past can be made emotionally and physically present. I then consider how changes in the *Mirror*'s second edition (1563) evidence a discomfort with and fear of the very encounters with history that this methodology enables. This affective reaction leads the *Mirror* authors to abandon a form of performative history that the following generation of English writers and playwrights deliberately seek out.

The experiential potentials of representing history serve as the basis for Chapter Three's examination of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. Chapter Three argues that through the character of Britomart—the future progenitor of the Tudors—Spenser represents British history as an emotional experience of temporality. As a character who intensely feels an English past that has not yet happened, Britomart's embeddedness within time allows Spenser to explore how the categories of past, present, and future can collapse into themselves through affective, embodied engagement with time as the arena for personal fulfillment. However, fulfilling a history that is not yet constitutes a crippling paradox. While Britomart offers a model for how to affectively engage with time, she also reflects how any hyper-realized engagement with time from the position of the present can be painful and potentially unfulfilling.

Chapters Four and Five examine Shakespeare's first and second tetralogies of history plays (1591-93 and 1595-99). I argue that the English history plays constitute a revolutionary formal intervention into early modern England's obsession with its national past. These plays illuminate how, by staging the past as an unfolding present experience, affective history can

function as a form of time-travel. Furthermore, I consider how these works facilitate affective and embodied contact between the past represented onstage and the late-sixteenth century audience that comes to function as a form of “worlding”: that is, a history play stages the past as in-process and happening in the here and now. 2 and 3 *Henry VI* and *Richard III* blend unflinching historical violence with a weirdly attractive, exciting affective energy, which creates an experience of the past becoming the present, and encourages playgoers to become active participants in history as it takes place onstage. In the *Henry IVs* and *Henry V*, however, Shakespeare interrogates the pitfalls of affective history through the character of Prince Hal, whose efforts to forge a national future unmoored from certain personal pasts ironically reinforce the troubling recursiveness of feeling time.

The final chapter, which functions as an epilogue, reflects on the legacy of affective history in the work of John Milton. Milton illustrates his own attachment and indebtedness to the forms of affective history explored throughout this project in a letter to Henry de Brass: “He who would write worthily of worthy deeds ought to write with no less largeness of spirit and experience of the world than he who did them.” Milton gestures to the historian’s achieving embodied and emotional contact with the past in ways that echo the affective histories of his poetic, dramatic, and historiographical predecessors. This chapter considers *The History of Britain* as a meta-reflection upon Milton’s emotional relationship with England’s past, and examines how Milton’s historiography both employs and actively questions forms of feeling and experiencing English history developed by his sixteenth-century forebears.

## Chapter One

### Hoping for and Dreading History in Hall's Chronicle

If Edward Hall's chronicle, published posthumously in 1548 as *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Houses of Lancaster and York*, could be said to hold any significance for the literary history of early modern England, that significance has been attributed to the *Union*'s function as a source for late-sixteenth-century drama and poetry.<sup>1</sup> Hall's contribution to English history writing provides the subject matter for *A Mirror for Magistrates*, Holinshed's eponymous chronicle, Shakespeare's English history plays, and Samuel Daniel's *Civil Wars*, to name a few. However, most early modern scholarship has generally passed over the *Union* for two reasons. First, the chronicle has been viewed as a less-than-original historiographical endeavor because of its relationship to didactic history, the predominant form of historiography practiced in England up to and through the 1550s. Second, if Hall is not being charged with a lack of originality, he is conversely being charged with outright plagiarism because of the *Union*'s resemblance to the developing genre of political, humanist history epitomized by Polydore Vergil. As such, Hall's *Union* has been dismissed as either rudimentary source material for later authors, or as hopelessly derivative of both didactic and humanist history.<sup>2</sup>

Whether reparative or disparaging, however, all scholarship on Edward Hall has acknowledged two aspects of his chronicle as completely groundbreaking for English historical writing in either the didactic or political modes: the first is Hall's supposedly "florid" and

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<sup>1</sup> Hall's chronicle was incomplete at the time of his death in April 1547. In his will, he asks to be buried in Greyfriars and "give[s] to Richard Grafton prynter my Cronycle late made trusting that he will sett it forward." Grafton printed the first edition of the *Union* in 1548; in a prefatory note to the 1550 second edition, Grafton claimed that he finished the chronicle using Hall's notes and added his own work to conclude the text with Henry VIII's death. See A. F. Pollard, "Edward Hall's Will and Chronicle," in *The Bulletin for the Institute of Historical Research* 9 (1931-32), 177; and Paul Herman, "Hall, Edward (1497-1547), lawyer and historian," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 1 Feb. 2018, <https://doi-org.colorado.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/11954>.

<sup>2</sup> For an analysis of the various stages of English historical writing between 1500 and 1750, see D.R. Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), and *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500-1730* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

rhetorically passionate prose style; the second is the insistence that his work gives English history an overarching theme.<sup>3</sup> Unconsciously, these observations gesture to Hall's unique investment in the *responsive* potentials and expectations of historiography. This chapter argues that Hall's *Union* radically changes English history writing by transforming the conditions for emotional response established by his predecessors, because Hall discovers that English history's ability to provide models for the present bears a dialectical relation to its ability to elicit physically affective responses. I will show that Hall adapts the responsive conventions of his predecessors to craft an historiographical model in which readers experience the past as dialogically-interacting atmospheres of hope and dread. Through this "hope-dread model," Hall brings sixteenth-century readers and past people into lively, physically felt interaction by representing the past as a series of affectively charged moments that *happen to* the reader as they *happen in* the text. By infusing historical moments with specific affective atmospheres, furthermore, the *Union* pioneers a form of history writing that turns the act of reading about the past into an experiential encounter with that past in the present. Thus, Hall does not just provide sixteenth-century prose historians, poets, and playwrights with raw subject matter, but rather with rhetorical and representational strategies for turning history into a relational, felt experience between early moderns and their viscerally present pasts.

I will first establish the conventions of the humanist and didactic historiographical modes, both to acknowledge Hall's indebtedness to his predecessors, and to showcase how Hall revolutionizes these models to transform the act of reading English history into a vibrantly affective, and necessarily responsive, experience of the English past. First published at Basel in

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<sup>3</sup> See W. Gordon Zeeveld, "The Influence of Hall on Shakespeare's English History Plays" *ELH* 3 (1936): 317-53. Zeeveld compares Hall's and Holinshed's formal influence on William Shakespeare, and finds that while *Holinshed's Chronicle* consistently tones down or excises Hall's affectively charged language, the same episodes in Shakespeare's history plays conversely echo and indirectly copy Hall.

1534, Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historia* constitutes the first historical work in the humanist mode to be published about England. Although it is almost impossible to offer a concise definition of what constitutes "humanist" history, the mode has certain consistent characteristics. To use F.J. Levy's pithy assessment, humanist history "involved a return to the classics, a preponderant enthusiasm for style. . .and a strong moral bent;" in addition, the movement's passion for philology and pristine Latin correlates to its development of a sense of anachronism.<sup>4</sup> In terms of historical method, anachronism led humanist historians to analyze how and why the past differed from the present, which evolved into a preoccupation with causation.<sup>5</sup> Vergil's work participates in this humanist mode in two important ways; first, he submitted his source materials, particularly Geoffrey of Monmouth, to intense logical scrutiny, which resulted in the *Historia*'s infamous evisceration of Britain's mythic Trojan origins. Second, Vergil's history offers a theory of causation that is not strictly theological, but that expresses an interest in human psychology and character as a leading factor in the making of history.<sup>6</sup>

Scholars have lengthily debated just how much Hall adapted, or copied from, or ripped off Vergil's text, and traditionally the verdict has not been in Hall's favor. However, Henry Ansgar Kelley's glib comment that Hall structures his chronicle "by using Vergil's history as the framework for his own, and much of his own is nothing more than a pompous translation of Vergil's Latin," is hardly fair given Hall's important departures from Vergil's mode.<sup>7</sup> First, it must be noted that the *Historia*, written in Latin, was intended for a learned audience in the

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<sup>4</sup> F.J. Levy, *Tudor Historical Thought* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1967), 37.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 33-77. See also Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and Rennascences in Western Art* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 53-68. See also Denys Hay, *Polydore Vergil: Renaissance Historian and Man of Letters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952).

<sup>7</sup> Henry Ansgar Kelley, *Divine Providence in the England of Shakespeare's Histories* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 109.

international republic of letters, including educated readers in England. Vergil began to research English history both to gain the patronage of Henry VII and Henry VIII, and to provide a European reading public with information about England through a humanist historical model.<sup>8</sup> Subsequent scholarship has acknowledged that Hall augmented Vergil's text through material drawn from medieval and early Tudor chronicles (particularly the *Chronicle of London*), French and Burgundian histories, and now non-extant primary documents.<sup>9</sup> More importantly, Hall's chronicle quite often surpasses Vergil's in its treatment of domestic affairs; thus, as a work of English history written by an English man for English people, Hall's chronicle goes beyond Vergil's humanist interest in historical causation to probe an emotionally charged question: how, and why, did England's past take the route that it did, and why should that matter to the present?<sup>10</sup>

In Hall's view, the English past possesses a clear and pressing narrative that extends into and inescapably shapes his sixteenth-century present; moreover, this connective thread through which the past infiltrates and affects the present has a specific point of origin. To be more blunt, Hall views English history as a compelling story with a theme and a clear beginning, middle, and end. Unlike any previous chronicler before him, Hall "does not commence with Brutus, the legendary founder of Britain. . . but with an event that loomed large in the political mind of the Tudor era, the deposition and murder of Richard II in 1399-1400 by Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Lancaster, and the appalling consequences of that act for England in the following century. . . .

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<sup>8</sup> See Levy, *Tudor Historical Thought*, 55.

<sup>9</sup> Scott Lucas, "Holinshed and Hall," in *The Oxford Handbook of Holinshed's Chronicles*, ed. Paulina Kewes, Ian Archer, and Felicity Heal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 205.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. D.R. Woolf makes an even stronger argument for the independence of thought in Hall's text when he notes that while the *Union* "lacks both Vergil's style and his foreign perspective on events in England, it is not notably inferior. . . Though it has long been established that Hall drew from Vergil a very large portion of his treatment of the fifteenth century. . . it is going too far to say that his chronicle is, except at certain points, merely a translation of the *Anglica Historia*." Woolf, "Edward Hall (1497-1547)," in *Sixteenth-Century British Nondramatic Writers: First Series* vol. 132, ed. David A. Richardson (Detroit: Gale, 1993), 163.

[which] make[s] the whole of his chronicle a single story (with many tales, subplots, and digressions within its frame).”<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, Hall believes that 1399 and its aftermath are not by any means distanced from the present, and he meditates on the past’s pervasive, and even bodily, persistence in his nation’s present in the *Union*’s dedication:

But what miserie, what murder, and what execrable plagues this famous region  
hath suffered by the devisioun and discencioun of the renowned houses of Lancastre  
and Yorke, my witte cannot comprehend nor my tounge declare nether yet my  
penne fully set further. . . . For what noble man liveth at this daie. . . whose linage  
hath not been infested and played with this unnaturall devisioun.<sup>12</sup>

Hall finds that England’s fifteenth-century seeps into and infects the present time; indeed, the crimes of the Wars of the Roses have an embodied presence in the present moment, since his readers’ families are inescapably formed by what took place in their country between 1399 and 1485. In the *Union*’s dedication, Hall passionately argues that England’s past is by no means truly past because that past is trying to tell the present something: that “as by discord greate things decaie and fall. . . so the same by concord be revived and erected” (“Dedication,” V-VI). I hardly think Hall merely “pompously translated” such a view out of Polydore Vergil; rather, Hall instead discovers that England’s history could offer itself to the present “as a kind of drama, as a morality in which chaos was the villain,” and he took it upon himself to transform his sixteenth-century readership into the appropriately responsive audience for that past.<sup>13</sup>

The *Union*’s exuberant declaration that English history has a theme and message for the present goes beyond a simple humanist interest in historical causation as a response to a sense of

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<sup>11</sup> Woolf, “Edward Hall,” 162.

<sup>12</sup> Edward Hall, “Dedication,” *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Houses of Lancastre and York*, (1547), V-VI, *Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership*, <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/colorado.idm.oclc.org/A02595.0001.001>. The chronicle begins new foliation at the start of each new reign; therefore, passages from the text will be cited according to both reign and folio numbers. The chapter titles for the chronicle’s internal sections were added to the second edition, probably by Richard Grafton. All further citations to Hall’s *Union* will appear in the text.

<sup>13</sup> Levy, *Tudor Historical Thought*, 174.



anachronism. Furthermore, Hall's insistence that his readers heed history's urgent communications with the present demonstrates the chronicle's unique investment in cultivating a reader's response. However, this brings us to the primary charge of unoriginality levelled against Hall, because history's chief function from antiquity up through the Renaissance was to train its students to correctly respond to history's *example*. Nearly every work of history published in England—be it classical, ecclesiastical, political, chorographical, local, or some hodgepodge of the above—felt the need to pose the same rhetorical question in its opening pages: why should an English person read a history book? The answer lay in history's function as a source of virtuous or vicious examples to be either imitated or shunned, which provided the philosophical basis behind the historiographical mode referred to as either “didactic” history or “exemplary” history.<sup>14</sup> Again, didactic historiography's pedigree was ancient and longstanding in England. In the first sentences of his *Ecclesiastical History* (ca. 731), the chronicler Bede proclaims that King Ceolwulph should “industriously take care to become acquainted with the actions and sayings of former men of renown, especially of our own nation. For if history relates good things of good men, the attentive hearer is excited to imitate that which is good.”<sup>15</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, recording the trauma of the Norman conquest in his *History of the English People* (ca. 1155), still proclaims that “the splendour of historical writing is to be cherished with the greatest delight. . . .Where does the grandeur of valiant men shine more brightly, or the wisdom of the prudent, or the discretion of the righteous, or the moderation of the temperate, than in the

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<sup>14</sup> Thomas Greene traces the pervasiveness of exempla in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century writing to Petrarch, whose desire to literally inhabit ancient Rome led to the development of a poetics in which “imitation embodies and dramatizes a passage of history, builds it into the poetic experience as a constitutive element.” Greene, *The Light in Troy*, 41.

<sup>15</sup> Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*, Book 1, Preface, *The Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, Fordham University, accessed Jan. 30, 2018, <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/bede-book1.asp>.

context of history?”<sup>16</sup> Similar, if not identical, sentiments can be found in Ranulf Higden’s *Polychronicon* (1387, 1482), and the chronicle of Robert Fabyan (1533), and Edward Hall faithfully follows suit.<sup>17</sup> Hall’s dedication of the *Union* to Edward VI asserts “how much therefore are princes, governours, and noble menne bounde to theim whiche have so lively set furth the lives and actes of their parentes, that all though thei bee ded by mortall death, yet thei by writyng and Fame live and bee continually present? . . . Thus, writyng is the keye to enduce virtue, and repress vice” (“Dedication,” V-VI). By representing the actions of dead ancestors as moral examples for their present descendants, Hall’s text participates in the long-standing historiographical tradition that refused to separate history’s literary value from its didactic effectiveness.

In traditional accounts of didactic or exemplary history, most scholars have defined the expected response by a reader to the example as essentially mimetic. The exemplar—generally a classical or Biblical figure—functions less as an actual character than as a representation of a larger moral or ethical dictum, and thus Timothy Hampton views exemplarity as a moment “distinct from other rhetorical gestures of citation and allegation in that the exemplar makes a claim on the reader’s action in the world.”<sup>18</sup> Ideally, then, the rhetorical force of exemplarity lies in its ability to shape a person’s behavior in the world via mimesis. However, I do not believe that mimesis fully captures the interaction between past people and present readers embedded in didactic history, particularly as Hall employs that historiographical mode. Again, according to

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<sup>16</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *The History of the English People 1000-1154*, trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), I.1.

<sup>17</sup> “Great thankynge lawde & honoure we merytoryously ben bounde to yelde and offre unto wryters of hystories / whiche gretely have proufftyed oure mortal lyf / that shewe unto the reders and herers by the ensamples of thynges passyd / what thyng is to be desyred / And what is to be eschewed.” Higden, *Polychronicon*, *Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership*, <http://name.umd.umich.edu/colorado.idm.oclc.org/A03319.0001.001>. Higden’s Latin chronicle was translated into English by John Trevisa in 1387, and printed by William Caxton in 1482.

<sup>18</sup> Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1990), 3.

Hampton, exemplary forms of representation “seek to provide the reader with a variety of options for possible action in the world. They educate a faculty of judgment and seek to influence behavior within a specific social sphere. They aim to move readers to various types of moral and political behavior.”<sup>19</sup> The exemplum is supposed to do something to the reader to make him act, and to direct his behavior in highly mediated way; however, what happens when the exemplum is an evil or vicious figure whose behavior is meant to be shunned? The ideal response in such a case would be one of revulsion and avoidance rather than imitation, and thus mimesis falls short as a model for explaining how didactic history shapes or influences a reader. Rather, didactic historiographical modes only function if they cultivate the reader’s interest and emotional investment (be it positive or negative) in the historical exemplar; simply put, effective exemplarity and didactic history need to produce an affective response in readers rather than a primarily imitative response. Moreover, Hall posits that historiography’s emotional substance—and therefore its ability to produce the appropriate moral responses and judgments from readers—lies in the text’s ability to bring present readers and past people into lively, physically felt interaction: “Thus memorie maketh menne ded many a thousande yere still to live as though thei wer present: Thus Fame triumpheth upon death, and renoune upon Oblivion, and all by reason of writyng and historie” (“Dedication,” VI). The historical text, by stimulating the reader’s memory and imagination, creates a meeting point between present and past. The exemplar, who in the most basic sense is a dead person being represented in a text, is seemingly brought back to life through language that embodies the past so that it can be felt and experienced by the present.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 4.

Both didactic history and humanist history demand from readers specific responses to the represented past, and it is the argument of this chapter that Hall's signal achievement lies in transforming those expected moral or intellectual responses into affective responses. This chapter examines one such technique in which Hall encourages readers to feel hopeful about the past by portraying historical events as conditional and undetermined. For Hall, historical hope illuminates how the past takes place through the decisions, personalities, behaviors, agencies, and emotional lives of historical people. Thus, the *Union* revivifies didactic history into a form of resurrection, turning the historical example into a thinking, acting figure with whom the reader interacts. Moreover, Hall's model of historical hope further transforms humanist history's fascination with historical causation. To confront the choices and behavior of people in the past provokes an awareness of how history could have happened differently, and makes one hope that the past will happen differently *this time* because the reader has become emotionally invested in the unfolding of history within the text. By representing the past as a contingent and evolving product of people in time, Hall turns the act of reading history into an encounter between the reader and the historical figure in which the sixteenth-century reader enters into a responsive relationship with the English past.

At the same time, and somewhat contradictorily, many episodes of Hall's chronicle bemoan how unchangeable the past is, which induces a sense of historical dread as the past flaunts its determinacy. The *Union* continuously alludes to the end result of a past moment as that moment happens in the text, which demands that readers recognize the seeds of impending doom within seemingly innocuous historical events. This technique of affectively manipulating the reader's historical awareness allows the *Union* to craft encounters between past and present in which the reader must emotionally confront, and eventually accept, the past's outcome. When

Hall laments the past's determinacy, he simultaneously exhorts the reader to emotionally prepare themselves for, and respond appropriately to, history's outcome. These episodes of heightened historical foreshadowing build upon the emotional connection between the past and the present to make the reader complicit in a relational interaction with the past that is inseparable from Hall's notion of historical understanding. Ultimately, the moment of encounter between the reader and past figures—whether accompanied by hope or dread—constitutes a forceful moment of the now, a suspension of temporality in which historiography brings the past and present into felt contact. Thus, Hall's affectively responsive historiographical model transforms an early modern reader's experience of historical time, and introduces English writers and playwrights to a form that would enable them to bring the past into the present to be read, witnessed, and felt.

### **Asking “What If?” of History and Hoping for the Past**

As a text intent upon explaining how sixteenth-century England both survived and owed its present existence to “the olde devided controversie betwene the fornamed families of Lancastre and Yorke” (“Introduction,” i), Hall's *Union* begins with the event that most sixteenth-century readers considered the original sin of English history: Richard II's deposition. By positing this act as the ground zero of the English past, however, Hall must answer a question that stymies any straightforward moral interpretation of Richard's overthrow. In the didactic historical model, Richard's deposition is the textbook example of conduct to be shunned by obedient subjects. But if Henry Bolingbroke, contrary to the laws of God and man, wrongfully deposed Richard (which would explain the ensuing insurrections of his rule, in a providential model), why was the punishment for that sin not also visited upon his son, Henry V? More

importantly, if Henry V hailed from the usurping Lancastrian line, how could one possibly explain his unparalleled success as the conqueror of France and paragon of English kingship?<sup>20</sup>

Hall's reflections upon Richard's downfall—and specifically his comparison of Richard and Henry V—sidesteps these knotty (and unsolvable) questions of providential or didactic history by focusing instead upon the agency possessed by these historical figures. As a result, Hall injects a sense of potentiality into the historical record by highlighting the possibilities for different choices when history was still technically in the process of being made. The reader is invited by these “what if” moments to come into empathetic contact with the past, and specifically with the people whose decisions in time made the past what it is. In his introduction to “The Victorious Actes of King Henry the Fifth.” Hall marvels at how Prince Hal transforms himself into Henry V through a decisive character shift that “declared and shewed that honors ought to change manners. . . [Henry] determined with hymself to put on the shape of a new man, and to use another sorte of livyng, turnyng insolencie and wildness into gravitie and soberness, and waveryng vice into constant vertue” (‘Henry V,’ xxxiii). Hall's admiration for Henry's self-transformation allows him to introduce a governing theme of his text: that people in the past possessed agency and could choose to behave virtuously or viciously, could choose to improve themselves or could refuse to behave as was expected of them. This reflection on the effort Henry V puts into cultivating the personality and virtues expected of a good ruler provokes Hall's greatest criticism of Richard II:

What can bee more shame or reproche to a prince, then he whiche ought to governe and rule shall by cowardnes, slouth and ignorance. . . being of [twenty] or [thirty] yeres and more, shall be compelled to obey and folowe the willes of other, and be ruled and bear no rule. . . Suche a governor was kyng Richarde the seconde, whiche of hymself beeyng not of the moste evill disposicion, was not of

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<sup>20</sup> Kelley notes that Hall is generally uninterested in Providential explanations for political events. Kelley, *Divine Providence*, 111-113.

so symple a minde, nor of suche debilitie of witte, nor yet of so little herte and corage, but he might haue demaunded and learned good and profitable counsaill, and after aduise taken, kept, retayned and folowed the same. ('Henry V,' xxxiii)

For Hall it is not evil Lancastrian machinations, Providence, or a time out of joint that leads to Richard II's usurpation. Rather, Hall lays the blame for this epochal shift in English history squarely at Richard's feet because Richard had the capacity to change himself for the better, but did not. Richard's fault lies in his unwillingness to find better counselors and to learn how to behave as a prudent ruler, particularly since he possessed the knowledge and wherewithal to effect such a transformation. While Hall cannot blankly approve of Richard's deposition, he can assert that Richard abdicates his agency and responsibility long before he abdicates his crown and throne.<sup>21</sup> Thus, the chronicle locates historical causation in the unfulfilled potential of Richard's agency, which allows Hall to pose a crucially important question to the reader: *what if* Richard had behaved differently?

The *Union* recognizes options within the supposedly closed book of the past when it meditates upon how Richard "*might* haue demaunded and learned good and profitable counsaill, and after advise taken, kept, retayned and folowed the same" ("Henry V" xxxiii, emphasis mine). The *Union* turns the concluded past into a transpiring experience of what could have been, and Hall's ability to represent history as an occurring phenomenon happening to the reader fosters an interaction with the past, and with past people, that fundamentally differs from the purely didactic mode. The chronicle often presages a description of a historical event with a lengthy characterization of the historical people most involved with it, focusing especially on personality traits, mental ability, strengths, weaknesses, and flaws. And with no two figures does Hall more

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<sup>21</sup> Hall displays an intriguing ambivalence regarding whether or not Henry IV's usurpation of Richard should be condemned. Overall, he prefers to focus on the moral resonance of the event as a reflection of the mutability characteristic of human existence. See Kelley, *Divine Providence* 113-19.

enjoy ruminating upon the historical consequences of personality than with Henry VI and Queen Margaret:

King Henry. . . was a man of a meke spirite, and of a symple witte, preferring peace before warre, reste before businesse, honestie before profite, and quietnesse before laboure. . . But on the other parte, the Quene his wife, was a woman of a greate witte. . . of haute stomacke, desirous of glory, and covetous of honor, and of reason, pollicye counsaill, and other giftes and talentes of nature, belongyng to a man, full and flowyng. . . but yet she had one poynt of a very woman: for often tyme, when she was vehement and fully bente in a matter, she was sodainly like a wethercocke, mutable, and turning. (“Henry VI,” Cli)

Hall’s technique of elaborating upon the personalities of historical people crafts an up-close and personal encounter between the reader and the historical agent, in which the reader confronts how the past person’s behavior and emotional life shapes history’s course. Henry VI is good, peaceful, and honest, but also a little too meek and a little too trusting for the times. Similarly, Margaret has unbelievably admirable qualities that should compensate for Henry’s flaws. Indeed, as the polar opposite of her husband, Hall’s Margaret offers a modicum of hope that all cannot be lost for the Lancastrians since, in Hall’s hilariously astute assessment of this royal marriage:

“She did all, she saied all, and she bare the whole swynge, as the strong oxe doth, when he is yoked in the plough with a pore silly asse” (“Henry VI,” Cli).<sup>22</sup> Yet Henry and Margaret fail at every turn to capitalize on their virtues; rather, Henry’s peaceable nature and Margaret’s courageous wit lead them to make deplorable decisions whose consequences forever skew the course of English history, such as in the case of Gloucester’s death: “*If* this Duke had lyved, the Duke of Yorke durst not haue made title to the crowne: *if* this Duke had livyd, the nobles had not

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<sup>22</sup> Hall’s misogynistic descriptions of Margaret’s behavior, including her ‘womanly changeability’ as a primary cause of her bad-decision making, obviously complicate this point. However, I find that Hall does not really take issue with the fact that Margaret behaves contrary to patriarchal gender-norms; more than anything, Hall condemns Margaret for her lack of foresight in terms of whom she supports and betrays. For a contrary perspective to my own that reads Hall’s misogyny as part of traditional representations of Margaret up until Shakespeare’s characterization of her in the *Henry VI* plays, see Nina S. Levine, *Women’s Matters: Politics, Gender, and Nation in Shakespeare’s Early History Plays* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998).



conspired against the King. . . *if* this Duke had lyved, the house of Lancaster had not been defaced and destroyed” (Henry VI, Cli-Clii, emphasis mine). Here, Hall destabilizes the didactic model of history by unflinchingly presenting people and their actions as utterly un-exemplary. But again, Hall rarely characterizes his historical figures as simply good or bad, and the *Union* thus refuses didactic history’s method of representing past people as distant examples of abstract principles. Rather, Hall presents the figures of England’s past as dynamic actors adjudicating and making decisions in their own tensely felt moment of “now.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, Hall impresses upon his reader that the outcomes of this person’s choices are conditional, which allows the reader to discover possibilities within the past as the historical person exercises his or her agency.

By prompting the reader to ask “what if” about the past, the *Union* fosters an interaction between the past and present readers in which the reader hopes that the historical actor will choose to make history differently even as he must confront how the past figure’s best traits also turn out to be their worst flaws. To facilitate this symbiotic interchange between the reader and the past agent, Hall plays up moments when historical people realize that they could have, and should have, made different choices, such as when Margaret learns that Edward IV has been made king and the Lancastrian cause lies in shambles:

When [Margaret] harde all these miserable chaunces and misfortunes. . . she like a woman all dismaied for feare, fell to the ground, her harte was perced with sorowe. . . This Quene Margarete *might well consider and thynke*, that these evill adventures, chaunced to her for the moste parte, for the unworthy death of Humfrey Duke of Gloucester, uncle to her husbände: Of the whiche mischaunce, although she wer not the very occasion and provoker, yet she greatly offended in that she concented thereto, and did not save his life, when she rulyng all other, might conveniently haue staied and letted it. (“Edward IV,” CCxviii-CCxix, emphasis mine)

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<sup>23</sup> This representational generosity does not hold true for people of different nationalities or ethnic groups, and Hall’s description of French combatants against Henry V serve as a case in point.

Hall crafts a multilayered depiction of Margaret's affective and mental reactions to her faction's downfall, and the reader undergoes with her these various layers of response. Hall allows his reader to admonish Margaret because she admonishes herself, and the reader recognizes with Margaret that she has failed to utilize the very strength and power that allowed the reader to empathize with her, respect her, and even cheer for her. But Hall then qualifies this moment of regret with the phrase "Queen Margaret might well consider and think." Now Hall's narrative shifts from an immediate, viscerally wrenching emotional experience to an experience of deliberation and thoughtfulness within the past, in which an historical person actively thinks through and tries to understand how history has happened. Human beings feeling, thinking, deciding, and reacting in time sends causal shock waves through time, and Hall asks his readers to render a responsive judgment to those actions that is grounded in both personal feeling and careful thought. He closes this section upon the fate of Queen Margaret with a direct address to his readers, requesting "that all men would in egall balance, ponder & indifferently consider the causes, of these misfortunes and evill chaunces" (Edward IV," CCxix). The *Union* here insists upon acceptance and understanding, a response that is not quite forgiveness but is beyond simple blame, as an essential element in the interaction between the reader and historical actor. Hall hopes that his readers reach a point of ethically potent cognizance in which, even as they feel disappointment or resignation about the choices that have crafted history, they still understand that human agency has shaped the past that the reader experiences in this moment.

For Hall, people making good or bad decisions in time constitutes the stuff of history; moreover, history can only be thought through, and its causes and effects fully understood, if the reader has affectively experienced that history along with the historical actors making it happen. Thus, despite their morally ambiguous and often downright reprehensible natures, Hall's

historical characters do not simply elicit righteous judgment from readers. Instead, by crafting the reader's experience of the past as an interactive dynamic between the affective and the intellectual, Hall's *Union* represents English history as an active process of people making choices about their present. Witnessing that exercise of agency and choice produces an entire range of emotional experiences for the reader, from hope, to intrigue, to surprise, to regret; however, Hall posits the moment of emotional response as the building block to a deliberative response, which together fosters a relationship of responsive understanding between the reader and the historical actor.

By interacting with the past in this viscerally relational way, in which readers both witness and undergo the thoughts and decisions of past human beings, Hall's sixteenth-century reader comes to understand that the making of history is optative, that choice was always available in the past and is available in the present. For example, following the death of Richard, duke of York, Hall portrays English people facing their options regarding which faction they should support, since that faction will ultimately rule them:

The citezens in the same tyme began maturely to consult, what parte they should follow. . . and in conclusion when they considered that kyng Henry was such an innocent person, as of hym self was not most apte to moderate and gouerne the publique wealth of the realme. And that on the other syde. . . kyng Edward was such a person as was able bothe to defende hym selfe and also all hys, from injurie and hostilitie, wherupon all men were glad to leane to hym, and to take hys parte. They concluded to take hys parte & to recryve hym in to the citie. ("Edward IV," CCxvi)

Having previously focused on the deliberations as well as the affective lives of history's great and powerful, Hall now turns to a moment of shared feeling and thinking by ordinary English people who, despite the distance of over half a century, very closely resemble the London populace for whom Hall wrote. Hall represents these people facing a monumental decision in which they can turn the tide of history. Furthermore, he focuses not only on how this group

responds with honest, unadulterated emotion to what they have endured in the past, but also on how the populace ponders whether those emotions should factor into their decision to support Henry VI or Edward IV. Hall represents a group of English people going through an experience of collective feeling and thinking in which they consider the personalities, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses of the two men who might govern them. Moreover, the people think and feel through these options historically by debating which traits have had negative effects for them in the past. The people then make a choice that results in them feeling glad and relieved; moreover, Hall's readers undergo these similar processes of decision-making and emotional release. The *Union* invites its readers to actively consider which long-dead king they trust, which one makes them feel safer, which one has proven himself more competent and more capable of ruling well. By portraying historical agents exercising their ability to change and to effect change, the *Union* encourages its reader to hope that history is never closed off; rather, past and present constitute a symbiotic arena where people feel emotion, think about and through the challenges facing them, and make decisions accordingly.

Rather than shaping a reader to behave according to a moral gleaned from the exemplary figure, Hall enables the reader to experience history being made through human decisions and through the possibilities infusing the represented past. The reader is asked to come face to face with historical people, including their best virtues, their worst shortcomings, and the desires and actions tinged with a morally ambiguous shade of gray. The *Union* turns historiography into a contingent space where readers can interact with and respond to the past, where they can hope that Henry V will still be victorious, that Henry VI will grow a backbone, that the better angel of Margaret's nature will triumph, that Yorkist kings will be an improvement upon Lancastrian kings. Therefore, the sixteenth-century reader forges an affectively responsive relationship with

the fifteenth-century historical actor, in which the reader feels himself to be both a witness to and participant in an unfolding past whose outcome hangs in the balance.

### **Dreading the Past and the Ethics of Historical Awareness**

By representing history as a transpiring moment, in which the choices and behaviors of past people are shot through with potential and possibility, Hall's *Union* turns the experience of reading history into an experience of hope. The reader is invited to ponder what options were available to historical actors, and to envision how both past and present might have taken a different course. This portrayal of history as an experiential space encourages the reader to cultivate a positive emotional relationship with the past in which the reader always looks to what could have or should have happened. Such optimistic relationality between past and present is just one side of Hall's historical model, however; indeed, history quite often has the opposite effect of oppressing the present with its immunity to transformation or redemption. The other half of Hall's affective historiographical model examines the crushing inevitability of the past, which leads readers to dread the history they see perniciously lurking around the corner (or on the next page).

When discussing the genesis of the house of York's enmity towards the Lancastrians, Hall finds that the Yorkists' feelings of violent frustration and hostility serve as disturbing hints of English history's impending outcome. Hall pinpoints the instant when the tide of history turns for the worst by exposing the family's festering emotional lives following Richard's deposition: "Richard erle of Cambrige the sonne to Edmond duke of Yorke. . . wer with these doynge nether pleased nor contente. In so much that now the devision once beyng begon, the one lineage persecuted the other, and never ceased till the heires males of bothe the lines wer by battaill murdered or by sedicion clerely extinct and destroyed" ("Introduction," x-xi). Hall brings the

Yorkists' cloaked feelings of ambition, animosity, and cunning into the open as the instigators of a specific, and aberrant, timeline within the English past. Cambridge's inner life, particularly his feelings of hatred and dissatisfaction supposedly hidden from posterity, in fact causes what the sixteenth century knows to be history, and these emotions lead to actions that further denigrate human relationships in and across time. Hall emphasizes that Cambridge's feelings cause violent actions that initiate a secret turning point, a rift in time that covertly poisons everything that follows.

The Union emphasizes the determined and unchangeable nature of the past when Hall unveils how emotions create a course of events with which the reader is already painfully familiar, but completely unable to prevent even if they might want to. Thus, Hall demands that his readers acknowledge their awareness of what happens next, even though such foreknowledge makes a reader dread and want to avoid the past. For example, Hall asks his reader to exercise their historical foreknowledge in his discussion of the earl of Cambridge's unsuccessful plot against Henry V, which results in Cambridge's execution:

This done, the kyng thought surely in his conceipte all sedicion to be drowned & utterly extincte. But if he had cast his eye to the fyre that was newly kindled, he should have surely sene an horrible flame incensed against the walles of his owne house and family, by the whiche in conclusion his line and stocke was cleane destroyed and consumed to ashes, *whiche fyre at that verye tyme paradvventure might have bene quenched and put out.* ("Henry V," xliiii, emphasis mine)

Of course, Hall's Henry V cannot see the future and cannot predict the consequences that preventing this rebellion will have upon subsequent generations of English people. Hall's readers, however, know exactly what the future (which is already their own national history) holds from this point forward, and this foreknowledge positions the reader between two interacting experiences of affective time. On the one hand, the text portrays this episode of history as a suspenseful event unfolding as one reads; the reader can watch Henry V close in on

the conspirators and applaud as the conspirators meet their downfall. Yet even as he insists that the reader experience this conspiracy and Henry's swift action to stop it, Hall eliminates any feeling of possibility. The *Union* makes it seem as though the past happens in the reader's mid-sixteenth-century present, but it simultaneously impresses upon the reader that the moment of history's unfolding is always shot through with the event's aftermath. Hall's readers must admit that they already understand how Cambridge's venomous affective legacy, bequeathed to his son and grandsons, instigates the rivalry with Henry VI, the breakdown of the nobility into Yorkist and Lancastrian factions, and ultimately the Wars of the Roses. In these instances, Hall turns the reading of history into a heightened experience of expectation and trepidation; the reader knows what Cambridge's execution will cause, and dreads it.

Hall's technique of instilling dread in his readers, which asks them to remember their own awareness of history's outcome before the narrative depicts it, places the reader in multiple modes of affective interaction with the past. To dread certain historical moments involves both wishing that the event will not happen, and yet knowing that it cannot be avoided.

Simultaneously, that sense of dread fosters a sense of both suspense and preparation; the reader battens down his hatches so as not to be overwhelmed by the historical narrative, but he cannot take his eyes off the page to see what happens next. In this sense, dreading the past carries with it an element of weird fascination akin to being unable to take one's eyes away from a car wreck. Hall fosters such feelings of suspenseful, tense dread, for instance, in the following passage that describes the celebration of a temporary truce between the Lancastrians and Yorkists:

For the open apparaunce, and demonstracion of this godly concorde, publique processions were appointed. . . the Kyng in habite royal, and his dyademe on his hedde, kept his estate in procession, before whom, went hand in hand, the duke of Somerset, the erle of Salisbury, the duke of Excester, and the erle of Warwyke, and so on of the one faccion, and another of the other sect, and behynd the kyng the duke of yorke ledde the Quene with great familiaritie to all mens sightes: but

wo worth dissimulacion, and false flatteryng contenaunce. . . . For their bodyes were joyned by hand in hand, whose hartes were farre a sonder: their mouthes lovingly smiled, whose corages were inflamed with malice: their toungues spake lyke suger, and their thoughtes were all invenemed. ("Henry VI," Clxxii)

The *Union* once again masterfully places the reader within two emotional environments through the presentation and then unmasking of past emotions on a grand scale. Hall first allows his reader to experience and enjoy a striking piece of royal theatrics. As each principal combatant of the Wars of the Roses processes hand in hand, the reader is given the opportunity to feel positively, to be interested and caught up in the spectacle. But without so much as a pause, Hall reverses the entire tone and experience of the passage through a dramatic reveal of what his reader already knows; each person in this tableau is trying to figure out how to destroy the person next to him or her. The *Union* jolts their reader with this brutal realization through rapid juxtapositions of public versus private affect in the past: familiarity is dissimulating; flattery is false; smiles mean malice; and sweet words mask deadly venom. While Hall presents this cast of characters parading in a public display of friendship, he reminds his readers that they already know how this part of the story ends: with a pile of corpses and two noble families obliterated.

For Hall, this constant triggering of foreknowledge and hindsight facilitates a vibrantly affective, albeit painfully contradictory, experience of the past; what the reader hopes for the past never ends up being how the past turns out, and the reader is burdened with this tension as a result. By foreshadowing and hinting at what the reader already knows will take place, Hall stages moments in time as pregnant with a significance that no one in the past recognized at the time, but that the present must understand now. Hall's injects these episodes in which the past flaunts its outcome with a sense of impending disaster, such as when the Duke of Somerset openly displays his loathing of Richard, duke of York, while York takes a subtler (and more pernicious) emotional approach towards his enemy:



Although the duke of Yorke, bothe for birthe and corage, was worthy of this honor and preferment, yet he was so disdained of Edmond duke of Somerset. . . that by al waies and meanes possible, he bothe hindered and detracted hym. . . . The Duke of Yorke, perceivynge his evill will, openly dissimuled that, whiche he inwardly thought prively, eche workyng thynges, to the others displeasure. This cancard malice, and pestiferous division, so long continued, in the hartes of these two princes, till mortall warre consumed theim bothe, and almoste all their lynes and ofsprynge, as within few yeres you shall perceiue and se. ("Henry VI," Cxxix)

While Hall condemns both Somerset and York for their cultivation of "cancard malice" towards each other, the tone of this passage evinces a sense of uneasiness and special opprobrium toward York's concealment of his desire for the crown and his detestation of the Lancastrians. For Hall, Richard, Duke of York serves as the most extreme example of what happens when people nurse secret grudges and ambitions over the course of a lifetime. The *Union* obsessively traces how York has had a private desire for revenge, and a private obsession with his own royal entitlement, festering in him since he was a young man. In fact, whenever York appears in the chronicle, Hall sounds all manner of historical and affective alarms bells to remind readers that *this* Richard is the son of the executed Cambridge, and that this "Richard duke of Yorke. . .not prively but openly claimed the croune" ("Henry V," xliiii). Thus, Hall crafts these episodes as moments of exposure for his reader; while York might have been able to hide his feelings of enmity and spite from his contemporaries, the *Union* brings those emotions into the open so that the reader will feel suspicion and foreboding whenever the Duke of York appears in his text.

Hall's model of historical dread requires that readers interpret York's dissimulation of his maliciousness (even more so than the maliciousness itself, to an extent), as a pathologically unhealthy way to occupy one's present. This is because, in York's case, the disjunction between his true feelings and the feelings he presents to the world not only spiral the English past into terrible violence, but also mask a corrupted desire to return absolutely to the past, and to turn the

present into a “truer” version of what has been. In a 1460 speech before the House of Lords, which is largely an original invention by Hall, York finally reveals in public his conviction that Lancastrian rule is unlawful, and that the crown must revert to himself and his bloodline: “[Henry IV] by force & violence, contrary both to the duety of his allegiaunce. . . usurped and entruded upon the royall power and high estate of this Realme. . . I am the very trew and lyneall heyre, which discent, all you can not justely agayn say, nor yet truly deny” (“Henry VI,” Clxxvii).<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, he defends this assertion through an historical argument grounded in the claim that the present is a deviant abnormality, a version of a timeline that never should have happened: “I am compelled to use power in stede of prayer, and force, in stede of request (not as I sayde before) for my private. . . peculiar profite, but to restore peace, love, and quietnes to this our naturall region: which ever sythe the fyrste ungodly usurpacion of the forenamed Henry, untruely called kyng Henry the .iiii. hath ben clerely banished” (“Henry VI,” Clxxvii-Clxxviii). Hall’s York strikingly employs several of the *Union*’s trademark rhetorical and affective techniques to make his Parliamentary audience feel that both the right family and the right historical trajectory have been wrongfully commandeered. He pinpoints the usurpation and death of Richard II as the origin point of the conflict. He encourages his audience to ask “what if” about his own royal claim and to feel as if the past should never have taken the route it did: “Then remember this, if the title be myne, why am I put from it: if I be trew heyre to the croune (as I am in dede) why is my right withholden: if my clayme be good, why haue I not justice” (“Henry VI,” Clxxvii)? Finally, York insists that by making him king and returning English rule

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<sup>24</sup> Kelley suggests that Hall adapted works of Yorkist propaganda and portions of Hardyng’s *Chronicle* for the substance of this speech, but he also concedes that Hall “succeeded in making a more elaborate case for York than any of the Yorkists.” See Kelley, *Divine Providence*, 124 n. 49.

to the family that should have exercised it for the past century, the Lords will be making a choice that corrects and improves upon the violent mistakes of the past.

York insists that the sins of the Lancastrians manifest themselves in English history as a century of unbroken violence and lawlessness: “What murders and manslaughter hath bene perpetrated, and committed within thys countrey, sythe the beginnyng of that vngracious vsurpacion. . . I require you diligently to consider, with what great tormentes & afflictions God hath whypped & scorged this miserable Isle” (Henry VI,” Clxxvii-Clxxviii). According to York, the solution to this deviant historical pattern rests in choosing to negate everything that has happened from Richard II up to the moment of York’s speech. But as Kelley observes: “As for York’s claim that all the troubles that have recently befallen England were punishments sent by God, Hall was aware that most of them were caused by the secret machinations of York himself.”<sup>25</sup> York’s demand that over a century of English history should not count, and indeed should be totally abnegated through Parliamentary action, constitutes for Hall an abnormal historical perspective and dangerous mode of being-in-time. York’s overwhelming sense that an injustice has been committed against his family, and his belief that such an injustice can only be righted by massacring Lancastrians and being invested with absolute power, has trained him to believe that the past can be disregarded and eradicated just as the Lancastrian and Yorkist factions have eradicated their enemies. Thus, the *Union* uses York to convince the reader that this historical perspective, and how York acts in response to it, is what makes this chapter of English history aberrant; York’s conviction that the time is out of joint produces actions bent on rewriting time, which in turn warp the very world he purports to reform.

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<sup>25</sup> Kelley, *Divine Providence*, 126.

While the *Union* intends for York's oration to astonish and alarm readers, by this point the reader has witnessed York's private obsessions fester over the course of thirty years, so when he demands that the past be ripped apart just as the country has been through civil conflict, the reader should understand that a frightful prospect has been proposed. By consistently demanding that they exercise their historical foreknowledge, moreover, Hall prepares his readers to combat and resist the Duke of York's bald power grab and misguided effort to rewrite history. In fact, the affective resistance that Hall demands from readers mirrors the fifteenth-century Lords' own emotional resistance to York's demand that they forswear the past and instead swear allegiance to him. Hall depicts the Lords as dumbfounded by York's bravado: "When the duke had thus ended his oracion, the lordes sat still like Images graven in the wall. . .neither whisperyng nor spekyng, as though their mouthes had been sowed up" ("Henry VI," Clxxxix).<sup>26</sup> York does not receive a ringing and unquestioning affirmation of his claims, but rather forces his listeners into an unnerving silence. I believe this intense discomfort and wariness culminates the historical dread Hall has trained his readers to feel in York's presence, because York presents a destructive view of how history works and how past and present interact. Unlike the stunned Lords of the fifteenth-century, moreover, Hall's sixteenth-century readers should affectively and conceptually respond to York with a strident refusal of his logic and his claims. York's historical argument for his right to the throne (while factually unassailable), completely devalues the very relationality and responsiveness that Hall has strived to develop within readers through his hope-dread historiography. Furthermore York's historical perspective constitutes a destructive historical

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<sup>26</sup> Hall's description of the shocked, silent Parliament makes an intriguing (and I believe deliberate) appearance in Shakespeare's *Richard III*, when Buckingham relates his oratorical efforts on behalf of Richard's claim to the throne. Instead of a receiving his desire response—"God save Richard, England's royal king" (3.7.22)—Buckingham reports that the citizens "spake not a word / But, like dumb statues or breathing stones, / Stared each on other and looked deadly pale" (3.7.25-27).

idealism that hints at the approaching disaster of the English past: Richard III, who represents the apex of what it means to be disloyal to history and disloyal to one's relationships.<sup>27</sup> Thus, Hall posits this episode as the climax and chief test of his readers' cultivated responsiveness to their feelings of historical dread; the reader is expected to actively reject York's historical perspective because it demands that people abjure their felt experience of and responsive relationship with the past.

While Hall intends for his reader to feel both fascinated and horrified by the gulf between public behavior and inner emotion in these depictions of fifteenth-century factional nobility, those feelings are also meant to condition the reader and develop within him or her a heightened affective readiness for, and intensely responsive relationship to, the past as it takes place within the narrative. The reader knows that terrible crises of English history (such as the Battle of Tewkesbury, the murder of Henry VI, and looming larger than any, Richard III) are coming up as they read. Yet even as one dreads what comes next, or hopes that it would not happen, those feelings of fear and anxiety prepare Hall's reader for the ultimate emotional pay-off, and central thematic message, of the *Union*. To illustrate that readers' foreknowledge need not make them despair or give up on history, Hall turns to the one moment in the English past where, against all odds, history took the correct route—that is, in the marriage between Henry VII and Elizabeth of York:

Like a prince of just faith and true of promes, detestyng all intestine & cyvel hostile, [Henry VII] appoynted a daye to joyne in matrimony the lady Elizabeth heyre of the house of Yorke, with his noble personage heyre to the lyne of Lancastre. . . . By reason of whiche mariage peace was thought to discende oute of heaven into England, consideryng that the lynes of Lancastre & Yorke, beyng both noble famylies equivalent in ryches, fame and honoure, were now brought into one knott and connexed together. ("Henry VII," ii-iii)

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<sup>27</sup> The *Union*'s section on Richard III is largely a copy of Thomas More's *History of Richard III*, with some additional commentary added by Hall.

If at any point it would be fair to label the *Union* potentially “florid,” it would be in these instances when Hall reflects on the marriage between Henry VIII’s parents. However, his celebration of the marriage that founded the House of Tudor functions as much more than a propagandistic or nationalistic paean. The deeply enthusiastic emotion displayed by the *Union* in this episode makes sense if one understands that, in Hall’s view, *this* union represents the turning point in England’s historical trajectory, and thus for Hall it possesses political, historical, and in some sense cosmic significance. Let us not forget that the full title of Hall’s chronicle reads as follows: *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustrious Houses of Lancaster and York, beeyng long in continual discension for the croune of this noble realme with all the actes done in bothe the tymes of the princes, bothe of the one linage and of the other, beginnyng at the tyme of kyng Henry the fowerth, the first auctor of this devision, and so successively procedyng to the reigne of the high and prudent prince kyng Henry the eight, the undubitate flower and very heire of both the sayd linages*. So this instance of marital union also initiates the overarching, healing union that England’s past has yearned for from “The unquiete tyme of Kyng Henry the fourthe” through “The trobleous season of Kyng Henry the sixt” and up to “The tragical doynges of Kyng Richard the thirde.” Furthermore, Hall posits that the marriage between the Yorkist heiress and Lancastrian heir has powerful temporal effects, making the evil, dissenting, discordant timeline of civil war cease to be. Therefore, after hundreds of pages of making readers dread history’s outcome, Hall instead shows that history rewards their hope, and emphasizes the rejuvenating embodied effects that the past can impart to the present: “By conjunccion of matrimony, malice is extinct, amitie is embraced, and indissoluble aliance and consanguinite is procured. What profite, what comfort, what joy succeded in the realme of England by the union of the fornamed two noble families, you shall apparantly perceive” (“Introduction,” i). This marriage effects an

affective transformation within England's past, shifting the emotional atmosphere from negative to positive; malice gives way to amity, and England becomes imbued with comfort, profit, and joy. While its readers' emotional connection to the past was previously one of dread, anxiety, or disappointment, the *Union* now illustrates that history can sometimes repair and even improve those emotional relationships between the present and the past.

Through his celebratory itemization of the vast political, civil, national, and affective transformations that Henry VII's and Elizabeth of York's marriage produced for England, Hall's historiographical model finally demonstrates the potential for radical relationality and embodied interaction between past and present. Hall's affective historiographical model of hoping for and dreading the past brings the past immediately into the reader's world. Thus, the act of reading about English history provides the present with an experience of that past, of the moments when human beings thought through and made decisions that created the course of history: sometimes for good, and sometimes for evil. Hall shows that the past maintains an embodied and emotional hold on the present, and that the present can and must come into felt contact with the past through stories like Hall's, because the past demands that the present become better than itself.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, Hall reminds his readers that they arrived at this affectively rewarding point through the act of reading, and thus experiencing, the past through his chronicle. Together, Hall demonstrates, the present has gone back in time and discovered that going back can bring the present into better focus or even allow readers to emotionally and imaginatively get outside of their present. This ability to move forward by going back, I will argue, represents Hall's primary formal and affective contribution to historical writing of the early modern period, because it is a

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<sup>28</sup> Kelley notes: "In setting forth his theme, Hall does so on a purely ethical level, with no explicit reference to the providential order. He is emphasizing the benefits of union and the evils of discord, with the view of encouraging his readers to avoid dissension and work for concord." See Kelley, *Divine Providence*, 111.

strategy discovered by Hall himself when his own present began making history in dangerous, dread-inducing ways.

For the *Union*, historical texts allow readers to encounter the humanity of the past, in which readers experience then and now as an active space being constantly made through the emotions and actions of human beings. I assert, moreover, that Hall uncovered this vibrant ability to affectively contact and forge relationships between past and present through his decades-long, and non-chronological, act of writing the chronicle. That is, if we attend to the textual history of the *Union*'s composition, as well as Edward Hall's own biography, we see that Hall turns to affective history, and in some sense emotionally transports himself back into the past, in order to feelingly understand and historicize his own tumultuous present. Unlike professional historians such as John Foxe, John Stow, or William Camden, historical scholarship or antiquarian research did not constitute Hall's primary occupation. Instead, the majority of Hall's life was spent in courts of law and Parliament. Born in 1497 to a successful grocer, Hall received his education at Eton and Cambridge, and he entered Grays Inn by 1521. He was first elected to the House of Commons in 1523, and in 1528 he was included in the group of noblemen, counselors, and judges "summoned by Henry VIII to Bridewell Castle to hear the king explain his 'great scruple' in person."<sup>29</sup> In 1529, Hall represented the borough of Much Wenlock in what came to be known as the "Reformation Parliament;" later on, Hall administered the oath of succession to Londoners as common sergeant of London, a position to which he was elected at the king's request.<sup>30</sup> In a later commission as mediator for Ludgate prisoners, Hall

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<sup>29</sup> Herman, "Hall, Edward (1497–1547), lawyer and historian."

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. Hall was highly commended for his service in a letter Henry wrote on 1 June 1535, in which he asked for "our well-beloved subject Edward Hall to be now promoted to the office of under sheriff." See A. Harding, 'Hall, Edward', *HoP, Commons, 1509–58*, 2.279–82.



witnessed the first confession of Anne Askew on 20 March 1545, which led to her liberation; he did not participate in the 1546 interrogation that resulted in Askew's execution.

As this summary of his career indicates, Edward Hall had a front-row seat for—and in some cases directly participated in—the most significant and fraught moments of Henry VIII's rule and the first wave of the English Reformation. Moreover, he likely kept a record of these events as they took place. While Hall left no indication of when he began to compose his chronicle amid his almost constant record of public and royal service, his eyewitness accounts of the first half of Henry's reign suggest that he began the *Union* in the 1520s with the section entitled "The triumphant reigne of king Henry the viii"<sup>31</sup> As previously noted, the *Union* was incomplete at the time of Hall's death and left off at 1532, the twenty-fourth year of Henry's reign. Both Scott Lucas and D.R. Woolf propose that Hall deliberately chose to stop working on the Henry VIII section at a certain point in the 1530s. Woolf attributes the turn from current events to the English past primarily to Hall's increasing bureaucratic duties at the time.<sup>32</sup> Conversely, Lucas suggests that the incompleteness of the Henry VIII section can be attributed to "the increasingly erratic actions of Hall's prince, including his execution of Hall's friend and benefactor Thomas Cromwell in 1540, [which] made carrying a careful study of Henry's actions into the 1530s and 1540s either too unpleasant or too potentially dangerous."<sup>33</sup> I agree with Lucas's hypothesis that Hall read the sinister (and blood-soaked) writing on the wall, and thus he left the present behind to delve into 1399 and its aftermath. Moreover, because Hall recognized the genuine threat awaiting anyone who too-closely scrutinized Henry VIII's activities in the latter part of his reign, I argue that Hall found emotional respite—and some ability to make sense

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<sup>31</sup> Lucas, "Holinshed and Hall," 204 n. 3. As Lucas notes, however, Richard Grafton likely completed the section on Henry VIII following Hall's death.

<sup>32</sup> Woolf, "Edward Hall."

<sup>33</sup> Lucas, "Holinshed and Hall," 204.

of the present—by going back in time, and thus this decision set the foundation for the radically affective, and temporally reorienting, effects of his chronicle.

I posit that Hall's own experiences of lauding and enduring Henry VIII's rule serve as the foundation for his historiographical model of hope and dread. Indeed, Hall lived through the transformation of Henry VIII's reign and his own historical moment from an affective atmosphere of hope to an unsettled affective atmosphere of dread.<sup>34</sup> Thus, at a certain point, whether due to his once adored King's strikingly erratic behavior, or perhaps just because he was himself increasingly too occupied by his own immediate present, Edward Hall turned to his nation's past. And Hall's groundbreaking achievement lies in feeling his way back into history and training his readers to similarly feel themselves to be in affective contact with the past. By reading and thus feeling their national past in the present, Hall shows his readers that they themselves have undergone history, that they have made emotional contact with it and can do so again. This ability to read, feel, respond to, and thus undergo the past in the present represents the formal and affective inheritance that Hall bequeaths to his literary descendants. As will be seen throughout the subsequent chapters, the poets and playwrights who followed Hall would similarly attempt to embody the past in the present by turning to the affective history established by Hall's 1547 *Union*.

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<sup>34</sup> As he laboriously describes the minute details of Henry's coronation, for instance, Hall admits that Henry's more ineffable qualities escape even his own powers of description: "The features of his body, his goodly personage, his amiable visage, princely countenance, with the noble qualities of his royall estate, to euery man knowen, nedeth no rehearsall, consideryng, that for lacke of cunnyng, I cannot expresse the giftes of grace and of nature, that God hath endowed hym with all" ("Henry VIII, ij).

## Chapter Two

### Embodied Encounters and Performative Pasts in *A Mirror for Magistrates*

Although *A Mirror for Magistrates* immediately garnered the acclaim of mid-sixteenth-century readers for its verse tragedies, delivered as complaints by cautionary ghosts, neither the 1559 nor the 1563 edition of the *Mirror* begins with these historical apparitions. *A Mirror for Magistrates* instead begins with a prose frame that describes the work's genesis through a writing process familiar to most (if not all) former students: the *Mirror* authors research and write the work in less than twenty-four hours in what one critic humorously refers to as a "marathon one-day research and composition session."<sup>1</sup> The *Mirror*'s prose frame narrates its own origins from the perspective of its chief contributor William Baldwin, who admits his initial reluctance to take on the huge task the *Mirror* originally set out to accomplish: continuing John Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* (1431-39) into the 1550s.<sup>2</sup> Baldwin agrees to oversee the project only if he is assisted by a group of collaborators, and *A Mirror for Magistrates* opens on the day in question when George Ferrers, Thomas Chaloner, and five other anonymous writers join Baldwin to complete the work.<sup>3</sup>

Of course, this entire set-up— the unwilling author, the banding together of mid-sixteenth century literati, the astonishing all-nighter— is fictional.<sup>4</sup> Because of the shamelessly unrealistic

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<sup>1</sup> Sherri Geller, "What History Really Teaches: Historical Pyrrhonism in William Baldwin's *A Mirror for Magistrates*," in *Opening the Borders: Inclusivity in Early Modern Studies: Essays in Honor of James V. Mirollo*, ed. Peter C. Herman (Cranbury: University of Delaware Press, 1999): 158.

<sup>2</sup> "Because it was a matter passyng my wyt and skylle, and more thankles than gainefull to meddle in, I refused utterly to undertake it, excepte that I might have the helpe of suche, as in wyt were apte, in learning allowed, and in judgemente and estymacion able to wield and furnysh so weighty an enterpryse." Lily B. Campbell, ed., *The Mirror for Magistrates: Edited from Original Texts in the Huntington Library* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), 68. All further references to *A Mirror for Magistrates* are to Campbell's edition and are cited parenthetically by page number in the text.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of the known identities of *Mirror* contributors, as well as a departure from Campbell's findings, see Scott Lucas, *A Mirror for Magistrates and the Politics of the English Reformation* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009), 36 n. 38.

<sup>4</sup> The bibliographical history of *A Mirror for Magistrates* attests to the fact that it took substantially longer than a day to compose and see into print. Originally entitled *A memorial of suche princes*, the work was commissioned by the printer John Wayland as an addendum to his new edition of John Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* (1431-39), and given

composition process it depicts, much scholarship has largely ignored the *Mirror*'s prose frame.<sup>5</sup> However, ignoring the *Mirror*'s prose paratext simultaneously ignores the *Mirror*'s indebtedness to, and adaptation of, Edward Hall's emotionally responsive historiography. I find that the *Mirror* authors both fully embrace and innovate the forms of affective history developed by Edward Hall as outlined in the previous chapter; indeed, with Hall's *Union* as their chief source text, the *Mirror* contributors transform Hall's historiographical model into a performative one. Thus, passing over the *Mirror*'s fictionalized origins obscures how its frame narrative transforms the writing of history into a theatrical, and problematically avant-garde, experience for the *Mirror*'s writers and readers.

This chapter argues that the *Mirror*'s prose frame turns historical play-acting into an innovative methodology for experiencing the past in the present. In order to solve what they view as the formal limitations of *de casibus* literature, the *Mirror* contributors pretend to be fifteenth-century ghosts. These dramatized complaint poems require the sixteenth-century writers to take on the stories, personalities, voices, and sometimes (imaginatively) the mutilated bodies of past people. In this way, the prose frame invents a performative model of history, in which the past can be made emotionally and physically present. Moreover, even though each complaint poem closes with an historical figure prescribing an inherently didactic response to his story, the prose sections that bridge the complaints document reactions and emotions that do not match the "moral" of those verse tragedies. By tracking the instances of affective slippage in the *Mirror*

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to the printer William Baldwin in 1554. Most of the *Memorial* and all of Lydgate's *Fall* had been printed when Bishop Stephen Gardiner ordered the *Memorial* to be suppressed in 1554. All copies of it were scrapped, and the work did not see the light of day until Mary's death and Elizabeth's accession when Thomas Marshe printed it in 1559 in a lightly revised form as *A Mirror for Magistrates*. For the most thorough analysis of the suppression of the original *Memorial* project, see Lucas, *A Mirror*, 18-66.

<sup>5</sup> Although this trend has begun to shift following the publication of the first full length essay collection on the *Mirror*, *A Mirror for Magistrates in Context* (2016), Geller was among the first scholars to argue that the prose paratext had been unfairly subordinated to the verse tragedies by previous scholarship. See Geller, "What History Really Teaches," 150-84.

contributors' reactions to their performances of the past, we can see how *A Mirror for Magistrates* transforms the process of writing and reading history into a viscerally felt experience of the past in the present. The *Mirror* thus gestures to new, intensely emotional, and highly invested ways for early modern readers to feel themselves participants in making history happen.<sup>6</sup>

However, the *Mirror* also generates within its writers conflicting and inconsistent responses to the performed past. In their efforts to manage or even ignore certain negative emotions generated by their elaborate methodology for making the past unfold before them, the *Mirror's* authors confront the disturbing reality that they are neither affectively nor mentally prepared for such encounters with history. In its second edition, the *Mirror*, realizing that to perform the past makes one vulnerable to the past, abandons performativity in favor of allegory. This decision enables the *Mirror's* writers and readers to avoid the threatening pressures of embodied encounters with history, even though the following generation of English people will deliberately seek out such encounters by turning to the *Mirror's* performative methods. In this way, the publication history of the *Mirror* manifests both the affective morass in which an England scarred by religious and monarchical upheavals found itself, and a way out of that morass.

### **De Casibus and Its Discontents**

When mid-twentieth-century scholars resuscitated the *Mirror* as an example of the "Tudor myth," their attentions focused almost solely on the complaint poems as possible

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<sup>6</sup> Several contributors to *A Mirror for Magistrates in Context* have similarly turned their attention to intended or unintended affect in the *Mirror*. I will address their arguments individually in what follows, but Harriet Archer's and Andrew Hadfield's introduction ably demonstrates that emotion and affective response have become salient areas of concern for *Mirror* scholars. See Archer and Hadfield, eds., *A Mirror for Magistrates in Context: Literature, History, and Politics in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 1-14.

storehouses of Elizabethan political theory.<sup>7</sup> Their choice to ignore the *Mirror*'s prose frame stemmed from an issue readers and scholars have found with the *Mirror* in general; neither the verse tragedies nor the prose sections espouse the cohesive message regarding moral or political life outlined in its prefatory addresses.<sup>8</sup> However, ignoring the *Mirror*'s prose frame obscures the fact that Baldwin and his fellow writers explicitly begin the project not only with an established philosophical and educational goal in mind, but also with a cut-and-dried narrative form that they must follow given the genre within which they have chosen to work. When, in his dedication to the reader, Baldwin boldly proclaims that “whan noughty men had the regiment, Our owne country stories (if we read and marke them) will shew us examples ynow. . . Howe [God] hath delt with sum of our countrymen you auncestors for sundry vices not yet left” (64), there is no question that the group intends to pursue the familiar literary and didactic goals of *de casibus* literature, following the example of a single predecessor. In England specifically, the *de casibus* genre owes its existence almost entirely to John Lydgate, who at the behest of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, translated Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium* with reference to Laurent de Premierfait's French prose version, *Des Cas des Nobles Hommes et Femmes* (ca. 1409).<sup>9</sup> Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* (1431-39) participates in the genre's standard conventions by accruing biographies that “depict a life that moved from a good situation to a

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<sup>7</sup> See Lily B. Campbell, *Shakespeare's "Histories:" Mirrors of Elizabethan Policy* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1947), 106-112; and E.M.W. Tillyard, “A *Mirror for Magistrates* Revisited,” in *Elizabethan and Jacobean Studies*, ed. Herbert Davis and Helen Gardner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 1-16. For a general overview of *Mirror* criticism through 1980, see Jerry Leath Mills, “Recent Studies in A *Mirror for Magistrates*,” *English Literary Renaissance* 9 (1979): 343-52.

<sup>8</sup> For an assessment of how scholarly assumptions have created a general misunderstanding of the *Mirror*, its purpose, and its intended audience, see Lucas, *A Mirror*, 4-15. Lucas argues that previous scholarship turned to the *Mirror* to find in it the political orthodoxies and philosophical perspectives they *expected* to find; when the *Mirror* did not satisfy these expectations, scholars disparaged it as a disorganized literary failure.

<sup>9</sup> See A.S.G. Edwards, “The Influence of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* c. 1440-1559: A Survey,” *Mediaeval Studies* 39 (1977): 426-28. Chaucer's “The Monk's Tale” is more often lauded as the first English *de casibus*, but Edwards demonstrates that, for fifteenth- and sixteenth-century English readers, Lydgate's *de casibus* truly defined the genre.

bad, with the purpose of demonstrating by the weight of the accumulated examples that a falling pattern is typical of the lives of great persons.”<sup>10</sup> It was the changes Lydgate made to his predecessors’ audience and form, however, that made his poem and *de casibus* generally into a popular English literary form. First, Lydgate yoked the philosophical impetus of *de casibus* to the separate genre of “mirrors for princes,” which allowed the *Fall* to posit, more overtly than its predecessors, the monarch as its chief audience.<sup>11</sup> Second, and more importantly, Lydgate added Envoys that provided moral and didactic commentary on the preceding tragedies, and these Envoys became some of the most popular literature in England through the first half of the sixteenth century.<sup>12</sup> Lydgate’s *de casibus*, therefore, not only exemplifies a century of English literary taste but also reflects the persistent and “incurably didactic” readerly experience demanded by this genre.<sup>13</sup>

The experience intended for a reader of *de casibus* literature is essentially heuristic, especially in Lydgate’s *de casibus* where moral truths are demonstrated through an accumulation of historical examples presented by the poet and then further instilled through the Envoys. As Lydgate outlines in his opening envoy: “Bi examplis which that notable be / Off pryncis olde, that whilom dede fall, / The lowere peeples from ther errour call” (I.208-10).<sup>14</sup> Either the reader learns that history operates according to a pattern of rise and fall through a (by and large) third-

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<sup>10</sup> Paul Budra, *A Mirror for Magistrates and the De Casibus Tradition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 18.

<sup>11</sup> See Larry Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power: The Medieval Exemplum and the Chaucerian Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 323-326; and Jessica Winston, “A Mirror for Magistrates and Public Political Discourse in Elizabethan England,” *Studies in Philology* 101 (2004): 386.

<sup>12</sup> Edwards notes that “Lydgate’s own sententious generalities. . . seem to have struck a sympathetic note... Particularly prominent are selections from Lydgate’s innovation, his Envoys, which seem often readily to have achieved the status of separate poems.” Edwards, “The Influence of Lydgate’s *Fall*,” 431. See also John Thompson, “Reading Lydgate in Post-Reformation England,” in *Middle English Poetry: Texts and Traditions, Essays in Honor of Derek Pearsall*, ed. Alastair Minnis (York: Boydell & Brewer, 2001), 181-193.

<sup>13</sup> Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (London: The Trinity Press, 1970), 11.

<sup>14</sup> All citations of *Fall of Princes* are from Henry Bergen’s edition, *Early English Text Society, Extra Series* (London: Oxford University Press). Book and line numbers are given in parentheses.

person account of Xerxes, or Theseus, or Herod; or the Envoy acts as a didactic safety net that directly tells the reader what they should have learned and why. Lydgate's layers of narrative structure, and his persistent emphasis on moral inculcation, creates a formal and imaginative distance between the reader and the historical personages being represented.<sup>15</sup>

As a descendent and continuation of Lydgate's *de casibus*, the first edition of *A Mirror for Magistrates* claims to share the genre's didactic purpose of teaching royals and government officials how to practice virtue and avoid vice. The dedication magisterially pronounces that its readers "shall see (if any vice be in you) howe the like hath bene punished in other heretofore, whereby admonished, I trust it will be a good occasion to move you to the soner amendment" (65-66). One might think, then, that the first prose frame would function similarly to Lydgate's heuristic Envoys by serving as a guide for how a reader *should* respond to these stories.

Despite similar didactic purpose, however, the *Mirror* authors do not follow their predecessor's established form. In the first prose section, the group cracks open *The Fall of Princes* to guarantee that they start their own poem precisely where Lydgate concludes. Despite this desire to ensure their volume's "better observation of his order" (69), however, the *Mirror* writers confront a problem with remaining formally and chronologically faithful to Lydgate. Although Baldwin admits that "we lyked well" the *de casibus* poem's overall form, "yet woulde it not cumlily serve, seyng that both Bochas and Lidgate were dead, neyther were there any alyve that meddled with lyke argument, to whom the unfortunat might make their mone" (69). The *Mirror* authors object first to the temporal constraints of Lydgate's form, and then to Boccaccio's and Lydgate's entire compositional situation. In Lydgate's translation and his source

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<sup>15</sup> Pearsall notes that even though Lydgate's *de casibus* must necessarily turn to the past for its subject matter, "The stories of Troy and Thebes are for him not vehicles for the display of passion and human tragedy but storehouses of moral exempla. His whole theory of poetry is based on the idea that poets should teach by offering examples of behavior." Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, 11.



text, the poems are produced because dead figures appear to Bochas (Boccaccio) in a vision. Sometimes the historical people speak, but most of the time Lydgate describes Bochas's third-person accounts of their "rise and fall" after seeing the figures "in his inward sight" (l.477). As the *Mirror* writers bluntly point out, Boccaccio and Lydgate are both dead. Since the point of the project is to glean moral lessons from English figures who, by and large, lived and died *after* 1450, Baldwin and the other writers realize that this method of making a tragic complaint makes no sense chronologically.<sup>16</sup>

The *Mirror*'s opening vignette depicts its authors grappling with the realization that their source text's form and function fall drastically short of the text they envision for their sixteenth-century readership, and Baldwin and his fellows decide that the dream vision will not work for an even more pressing reason than anachronism. When the contributors admit that "neyther were there any alyve that meddled with lyke argument," they acknowledge an impassable temporal and formal gap between themselves and their literary forbear, in that no one alive in the mid-sixteenth century can serve (or wants to serve) as a vessel for the injunctions of a dream vision figure. The *Mirror*'s writers disclose that they do not want to "meddle" or engage in the "lyke argument" of persistent moral inculcation demanded by Lydgatean *de casibus* because it does not fit their present time. Furthermore, by noting that Lydgate's form no longer offers a means by which "the unfortunate might make their moan," the group expresses a desire to make the dead of English history speak, and recognizes that the dead need someone to speak to. If the *Mirror* authors are to serve as those "to whom the unfortunate might make their moan," they

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<sup>16</sup> See Mike Pincombe, "William Baldwin and *A Mirror for Magistrates*," *Renaissance Studies* 27 (2011): 184. Pincombe also points out the impracticality of the dream vision form given the collaborative nature of the project: "The *de casibus* tradition required a frame narrative in which the poet saw and heard the apparitions of the fallen in a dream or vision; and there can only be one dreamer or visionary at a time. But no fewer than eight poets gathered to write the continuation." *Ibid.*, 188. Unless the *Mirror* were to develop some process akin to the film *Inception*, eight people cannot possibly have the same vision at the same time.

propose to craft a one-to-one relation between themselves, their reader, and the past. For Baldwin and his comrades, therefore, the formal conventions of Lydgate's *de casibus* as moral education by any means simply will not accommodate the representation of English historical figures for the mid-sixteenth-century present.<sup>17</sup>

Their printer's injunction to remain faithful to Lydgate creates a problem for the *Mirror* writers, and Baldwin relates how the contributors arrive at a solution to this formal conundrum by turning their drafting meeting into a session of historical "improv":

To make therfore a state mete for the matter. . . al agreed that I shoulde usurpe Bochas rowme, and the wretched princes complayne unto me: and tooke upon themselves every man for his parte to be sundrye personages, and in theyr behalfe to bewaile unto me theyr grevous chaunces, hevy destinies, & wofull misfortunes. (69)

To give a presence and a voice to their flawed kings, dukes, earls, and other notables, the *Mirror* writers play pretend. Each *Mirror* collaborator performs the complaint of a fourteenth- or fifteenth-century person while Baldwin serves as both addressee and scribe and the rest of the group serves as the audience for the revived historical person. Both Jessica Winston and Paul Budra account for this overt theatricality of the *Mirror*'s composition process in light of the *de casibus* tradition. Winston describes how the contributors' choice to act out their complaint poems for one another provokes the discussion, debate, and collaboration that Winston views as central to the *Mirror*'s ethical and political aims.<sup>18</sup> I do not disagree with Winston that the *Mirror*'s components often try to encourage political and ethical thought in sixteenth-century

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<sup>17</sup> Given Baldwin's extensive career as a printer prior to composing the *Mirror*, perhaps he also made a calculated business decision in abandoning the *de casibus* format, since Lydgate's *Fall* had flooded the market thanks to separate printings by Richard Tottel and John Wayland in 1554-55. See Thompson, "Reading Lydgate," 183.

<sup>18</sup> Jessica Winston, "A *Mirror* for Magistrates and Public Political Discourse," 382. Winston has further developed these arguments to trace the *Mirror*'s influence on the political legacy of *de casibus*, finding that the *Mirror* anticipates neoclassical tragedy's "endorsement or departure from absolutist models of governance at the heart of *de casibus*" (200). Winston, "Rethinking Absolutism: English *de casibus* tragedy in the 1560s," in *A Mirror for Magistrates in Context*, 199-215.

readers. However, I stress that the *Mirror* deliberately sidelines Lydgatean heuristic experiences because of its contributors' growing fascination with acting out the complaints, and thus moral pronouncements themselves become part and parcel of the complaints' theatrical effects. Budra views the dramatic aspects of the *Mirror* as largely metaphorical, and claims that the text does not create what could properly be called a theatrical situation.<sup>19</sup> I argue, in contrast, that the decision to act out the complaints cannot be read as just referential or metaphorical because the announced decision to perform the complaints makes it seem as though the complaints are happening in real time. The *Mirror*, therefore, very consciously leaves behind the *de casibus* form and experience as its authors cultivate a process of embodied performance that allows the wretched princes of English history to speak directly to the contributors' mid-sixteenth-century present.

From this initial decision to play pretend, a choice that looks like more of a lark than a practical method for writing didactic historical poetry, *A Mirror for Magistrates* thus develops new form of historiography, one that foregoes didacticism in favor of an emotional form that writes the past into the immediate present. Its authors transform a seemingly purposeless prose frame into a dramatic world capable of giving flesh and blood, voice and presence, to the corpses of England's fifteenth century. As a result, the 1559 *Mirror* discovers that the present can make embodied contact with the past, and that such encounters can transform both its contributors and readers into affective participants in history's unfolding. By crafting a situation in which readers become implicated in history, and indeed feel history in an entirely participatory way, the

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<sup>19</sup> "There is little in the way of direct reference to dramatic tragedy in the *Mirror*, and most of what appears seems to be conventional metaphor rather than an engagement with theatrical condition." Budra, *A Mirror for Magistrates and the De Casibus Tradition*, 77. Budra has slightly amended this perspective in his latest chapter on the *Mirror*, which examines the complexity of rhetorical affect at play throughout the work. See Budra, "A miserable time full of piteous tragedyes," in *A Mirror for Magistrates in Context*, 35-52.

*Mirror*'s performative methodology pushes the boundaries not only of narrative and affective experience, but also of a reader's experience of time itself. This potential for embodied interactions with a performatively present past, therefore, makes the first edition of *A Mirror for Magistrates* a truly avant-garde form.

Some might think that I am making an overblown, if not theoretically inaccurate, claim in calling the 1559 edition of *A Mirror for Magistrates* "avant-garde." However, the *Mirror* cannot be considered anything other than radically innovative and ahead of its time if one considers the actual moment in time from which it emerges. The 1559 *Mirror* should be recognized as ground zero of the affective quandary that Stephen Mullaney has diagnosed as "the reformation of emotions" within Shakespeare's generation. If "the generation born Elizabethan. . . did not know what to believe whether in terms of their own faith or the spiritual identities of those around them, and. . . perhaps even as a consequence, did not know what to feel,"<sup>20</sup> one cannot then ignore the fact that this crisis of feeling originates traumatically in the parents of the Elizabethans: specifically, the generation to which William Baldwin, George Ferrers, Thomas Chaloner, and every other anonymous *Mirror* contributor belonged. The 1559 *Mirror* thus confronts, and through its avant-garde performativity tries to adjudicate, the immediately unfolding crises of national and historical identity whose latent presence, as Mullaney claims, would so deeply affect the emotional make-up of the generation of English people who came of age in the 1570s and 1580s. As Scott Lucas has so skillfully demonstrated, moreover, the *Mirror* engages in a hyper-timely and frantically emotional response to the religious and political conflicts of the 1550s, such as "the wrenching divisions and upheavals of Queen Mary's early reign. . . Wyatt's rebellion and its bloody aftermath, the reviled marriage of the English queen to

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<sup>20</sup> Mullaney, *The Reformation of Emotions*, 16.

the Prince of Spain, and the return of England to the Roman Catholic fold.”<sup>21</sup> More generally speaking, the *Mirror* also takes up the broad and desperate questions around which every conflict of the early 1550s had revolved: What, as English people, is our past? What, given the sheer avalanche of changes over the past thirty years, counts as our history? The 1559 *Mirror* implicitly endeavors to answer such questions by bringing the national past into the present to be both felt and witnessed. In so doing, its contributors discover an experience in which the divisions wired into temporality itself, such as the very distinction between past and present, dissolve through a historiographical form that demands total affective and embodied participation in the contested national past.

### **Performing Affective History**

Despite the group’s announced intention to “t[ake] upon themselves. . . sundrye personages” (69), one contributor to the 1559 *Mirror* cannot forgo his own didactic, Lydgatean impulses. At the conclusion of the first prose section, George Ferrers decides that they will begin their story with Robert Tresilian, whose corrupt actions as King Richard II’s chief justice will “warne all of his authorytie and profession, to take heed of wrong Judgementes, mysconstruyng of lawes, or wrestyng the same to serve the princes turns” (71). Ferrers emphasizes didactic inculcation at every turn, and at one point proclaims that the lessons to be garnered from Tresilian are so important that Baldwin must “print it for a president to remayne for ever, / Enroll and recorde it in tables made of brasse, / Engrave it in marble that may be razed never” (73). Another anonymous contributor’s reaction, however, deflates the moral high ground and pompous didacticism claimed by Tresilian’s complaint by cheekily commenting that Ferrers’s performance of Tresilian is chronologically incorrect:

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<sup>21</sup> Lucas, *A Mirror*, 9.

An other whiche in the mean tyme had stayed upon syr Roger Mortimer, whose miserable ende as it should appeare, was sumwhat before the others, sayd as foloweth. Although he be not greatly appertinent to our purpose, yet in my judgement I thynke it woulde do wel to observe the times of men, and as they be more aunciente, so to place theym (81).

Stating that he has found an older figure in Roger Mortimer, the contributor asks for the company's leave to correct their initial mistake and suggests that they all be more careful about dates in the future.

Much of this contributor's interjection sounds like a case of scholarly persnickiness, as well as a none-too-subtle jab at Ferrers. Aside from ironically poking fun, however, this contributor also injects an important new element into his performance when he describes his ghostly character's physical appearance: "I will take upon me the personage of the last, who full of woundes, miserably mangled, with a pale countenaunce, and grisly looke, may make his mone to *Baldwin* as foloweth" (81). The contributor asks the audience to envision him inhabiting Mortimer's body. By emphasizing the pale, mangled, moaning human body giving voice to the complaint, the *Mirror* contributors begin to shift their writing process away from the didactic goals of *de casibus*, and towards a methodology that privileges the people of English history who have the most to offer dramatically.

With this shift from offering warnings to any potential chief justices in their reading audience to asking their audience to imagine a pale, grisly corpse, the *Mirror* takes its first steps towards enacting a model of performative, affective history. Mike Pincombe argues that that the *Mirror* authors "could never take the idea of a talking cadaver quite seriously," and that as a result the "tragic bodies described in the prose take on a slightly grotesque aspect."<sup>22</sup> I counter instead that the injunctions to imagine embodied, decaying cadavers talking to the sixteenth-

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<sup>22</sup> Mike Pincombe, "Tragic and Untragic Bodies in the *Mirror for Magistrates*," in *A Mirror for Magistrates in Context*, 53, 55.

century present accomplishes specifically theatrical effects. The evocation of Mortimer's mutilated body in the prose link constitutes a performative utterance in which Baldwin, the other contributors, and early modern readers are encouraged to re-embody Roger Mortimer in their imaginations. By "performative," I mean that the injunction to imagine a suffering human body full of stab wounds makes both the audience of collaborators and the *Mirror's* readers *do* something: specifically, they perform the mental revivifying that gives Mortimer a visceral, ghastly, undeniable presence in the room where the *Mirror's* writers have gathered. In so doing, the *Mirror* creates an inherently theatrical situation in which writers and readers actualize Mortimer into being by creating a dramatic world with conditions that allow him to have an embodied presence. Asking that writers and readers embody the ghost in their persons or in their minds constitutes a first instance of "world-creating" that transforms the prose frame from a documentary account of the writing process into the vehicle for presenting the past as a dramatic, and fully present, experience.<sup>23</sup> The prose frame thus begins to create the rules and conditions for performativity, becoming the space in which the conceptual—the bare facts, figures, and lessons of written English history—becomes an actual dramatic world.

Ferrers interjects to establish order following Mortimer's complaint, but this time his efforts to organize the ongoing work resemble those of a dramaturge rather than a moralist. Ferrers remarks: "Seyng it is best to place eche person in his ordre, *Baldwin* take you the Chronicles and marke them as they cum: for there are many wurthy to be noted, though not to be treated of" (91). Ferrers radically revises the criteria he initially advocated for the *Mirror's*

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<sup>23</sup> My discussion here draws not only upon J.L. Austin's canonical definition of the "performative utterance," but also upon the discourse of theatrical semiotics, in which the act of "world-creating" on the part of a spectator can be defined as "hypothetical ('as if') constructs. . . recognized by the audience as counterfactual (i.e. non-real) states of affairs [that are] embodied *as if* in progress in the actual here and now." (Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* 2 ed. [New York: Routledge, 2002], 91). To simplify the semiotician's terminology, a dramatic world becomes an actual world for the spectator because the dramatic world must be *shown* and is therefore an embodied phenomenon taking place in a viscerally immediate present.

selection of appropriate material. He dismisses the “worthiness” of certain stories within the chronicles, and states that while instructive examples should be noted in passing throughout the course of the project, these past people do not necessarily merit the dramatic formal “treatment” that the contributors have developed. In essence, Ferrers admits that some historical people, however exemplary they may be, will not do justice to the *Mirror* writers’ methodology, meaning that they are not worthy of being performed by the company. It is through the complaint of Lord Mowbray, who engineered the death of Thomas Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, that the *Mirror* fully establishes a method for composing the complaints of past English people that favors the performative. The *Mirror* collaborators are delighted by Mowbray’s complaint: “This tragical example was of all the company well liked” (110). The suggested moral of the complaint receives no attention or response from the company; rather, the contributors focus on their experience of watching the complaint and the emotions it engenders. Both historical fact and moral instruction thus become components of turning the English past into a viscerally present performative experience with one overarching goal: soliciting an affective response from *Mirror* collaborators and *Mirror* readers.

We see this model of history as that which is performative, and as that which elicits emotional response, in the *Mirror*’s verse tragedy on Richard II. Once the company has agreed that both didactic pronouncements and historical facts have to be theatrically effective, another contributor asks that they move on to the person with whom every previous verse tragedy has been intimately connected: “I would (quoth one of the company) gladly say sumwhat for king Richard. . . .And therefore imagine Baldwin that you see him al to be mangled, with blew woundes, lying pale and wanne al naked upon the cold stones in Paules church, the people standing round about him, and making his mone in this sort” (111). A *Mirror* writer once again



calls upon both his fellow writers and readers to imagine a past person's mutilated, deceased body; yet the gory specificity of this invocation exceeds any previous performative utterances. The contributor demands that Richard II be not only re-embodied as a naked corpse with partially decaying "blew" stab wounds, but also that the moaning body be given a dramatic setting for his complaint on the stone floor of the old St. Paul's Cathedral.<sup>24</sup>

By asking that both the company and readers imaginatively place themselves in the fifteenth-century space where Richard's corpse is displayed, the *Mirror* in effect creates a virtual theatrical space, making it seem as though a curtain opens on Richard's dead body as the text segues into his complaint. Furthermore, the *Mirror* creates several different levels of audience members to whom Richard can address his complaint. According to the performing contributor, Richard II is surrounded by a crowd of people, and the ghastly murdered king's first words editorialize the commentary he garners from the fifteenth-century peanut gallery: "Beholde my hap, see how the sely route / Do gase upon me, and eche to other saye: / Se where he lieth for whome none late might route" (112). The *Mirror* has turned the opening of Richard's complaint into a crowd scene, and these observers have quite a lot to say about what Richard's mangled corpse makes them think and feel:

The Kyng whych erst kept all the realme in doute,  
The veryest rascall now dare checke and lowte:  
What moulde be Kynges made of, but carayn clay?  
Beholde his woundes, howe blew they be about,  
Whych whyle he lived, thought never to decay. (112)

Richard's fall results in the crowd achieving an unprecedented amount of access to him. They notice that "the veryest rascall now dare check and lowte" Richard, which not only means that Richard has lost the aura of authority that previously kept his person sacrosanct, but also alludes

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<sup>24</sup> In fact, the *Mirror* might be ironically invoking a single historical occasion involving the dead Richard II: the public display of his corpse, specifically to prove that he was dead, in St. Paul's on 17 February 1401.

to the fact that Richard's corpse has become a locus of performativity that in turn gives the fifteenth-century people gawking at his body an actual presence. Looking at Richard provokes dialogue from the fifteenth-century crowd, and the inclusion of this crowd noise serves to create a theatrical environment in which distinctions between king and subject, observers and observed, and, most importantly, past and present visibly dissolve.

When the crowd finishes expounding upon what they take away from Richard's untimely end, Richard turns back to his sixteenth-century audience, as though he too had been listening to the crowd's musings, and states:

Me thinke I heare the people thus devise:  
And therfore Baldwin sith thou wilt declare  
How princes fell, to make the living wise,  
My vicious story in no poynt see thou spare. (112)

Richard's dialogue here does more than simply outline the obvious moral and ethical warnings one can derive from his downfall; in addition, the direct address to Baldwin culminates the gradual process throughout the *Mirror* of turning time in on itself through performing the past. The *Mirror* has created a situation in which the fifteenth century, where Richard lies rotting on the floor of St. Paul's observed and commented upon by his contemporaries, is simultaneous with the sixteenth-century moment in which a contributor pretends to be Richard and Baldwin records what happens. Past and present, then and now as distinct temporal experiences have been enmeshed, as the *Mirror* shows the past so that it happens for and before sixteenth-century readers as spectators. This process of making the past present, furthermore, is geared to turn both *Mirror* contributors and their readers into the right kind of audience members: specifically, spectators who watch, experience, and then respond just as the imagined fifteenth-century crowd did. Learning what one is supposed to from these experiences requires not simply scholarly knowledge or a philosophical bent. Rather, the *Mirror* expects of its readers-turned-spectators an

imaginatively and affectively engaged responsiveness that is cultivated through watching and experiencing the past as something happening right in front of them.

### **Controlling Responses to Present Pasts**

Richard II's complaint highlights how the *Mirror's* performative historiography dissolves any sense of distance between past and present; furthermore, this model renders impossible the critical, distanced response required by didactic history, and instead facilitates an emotionally participatory responsiveness to the history being performed and recorded. However, the prose section following Richard's complaint shows the group trying to process their shared viewership of a theatrically present past, which highlights unanticipated difficulties with feeling and embodying history in the present. Notably, the authors' responses to Richard II indicate that their performative composition process can be not just generative or provocative, but also overwhelming. Baldwin states that when the writer performing Richard "had ended this so wofull a tragedy, and to all Princes a ryght wurthy instruction, we paused: having passed through a miserable time full of piteous tragedyes" (119). For the first time in the *Mirror*, a complaint provokes silence rather than lively conversation as the contributors realize that trudging through the nasty deeds of English history, while stimulating, is also a weighty task. The process of dramatizing the past serves only to proliferate the bodies, voices, personalities, and perspectives that demand the attention and response of the present. This unleashed polyvocality thus exposes to the *Mirror* writers that performative contact with the past implicates them in a direct experience of the past. To use the *Mirror's* exact wording, its writers, readers, and the dead people they embody "pass through a miserable time;" they have moved through and undergone the past together, and the group has become emotionally exhausted from re-living the dark side of their national history.

As the group mutely ponders the implications of making history happen again, the *Mirror*'s performative historiography works to determine what emotions should be elicited by these performances, and which emotions do not belong. Baldwin assiduously speed-reads their source material to figure out whom the project should take on next, but he finally realizes the crushing silence that has overpowered the company and views it as a cause for concern:

And finding Owen Glendour next, one of fortunes owne whelpes, and the Percyes his confederates, I thought them unmete to be over passed, and therefore sayde thus to the silent cumpany: what my maysters is every man at once in a browne study, hath no man affeccion to any of these storyes? You minde so much sum other belyke, that these do not move you. (119)

Baldwin has to snap his fellows out of their "browne study," and he cloaks within this call to attention a pointed criticism of the intellectual and affective implications of their unresponsive reaction to Richard II's complaint. A "state of mental abstraction or musing," the term "browne study" also carries with it various meanings relating to gloomy meditations and "idle or purposeless reverie."<sup>25</sup> Witnessing Richard's tragic musings has driven the *Mirror* contributors into a state of depressed and inactive contemplation, and Baldwin reprimands them for this reaction based upon its simultaneously melancholic and antisocial nature.

By using the accusatory term "browne study" to describe the contributors' response to Richard II, Baldwin begins to actively cordon off and discourage certain emotional reactions to the performed past. The authors' "browne study" represents the opposite of improvisation, and it is the fact that the *Mirror* writers aren't spurred to any further action or discussion that so pointedly displeases Baldwin. If the group allows itself to be driven into silent despair by a complaint, then the contributors cannot engage in the very activities of reaction, discussion, and performative imagining that allow them to perform the past in the first place. The *Mirror* project

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<sup>25</sup> "brown study, n." *OED Online*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.

as they have formulated it up to this point is inherently social; it depends upon interaction, upon encounters between different voices and points of view and, most importantly, upon an attentive audience and readership whose imaginative faculties can be spurred to turn dead figures into theatrically present players. The *Mirror* has established that both its writers and readers need to be active and animated themselves if they are to re-animate English history; therefore, their melancholic affect presents a risk to the project that must be kept in check.

The vehemence with which Baldwin corrects his fellow authors illustrates that such responses not only undermine their creative project, but also pose a threat to their emotional and intellectual well-being. The *Mirror* fully delves into the risks of negative and despondent responses to their re-embodied ghost performances following the complaint of Thomas Montague, Earl of Salisbury. Salisbury's unparalleled position as a relatively decent past magistrate who chose not to behave monstrously towards his subjects becomes shot through with pathos and irony when the ghost describes his gruesome death after his cheek is blown off by cannon shot. Although Salisbury concludes his complaint with a standard reflection on Fortune's fleeting nature—"See Baldwin see the uncertaynty of glory, /. . . And warne all princes by my broken story, / The happiest Fortune chiefly to mistrust" (153)—the *Mirror* contributors are left with a crushing sense of waste. His sudden death shocks the writers into their most extreme depressive response yet: "This straunge adventure of the good erle drave us al into a dumpne, inwardly lamenting his wofull destynye" (154). Salisbury's complaint has made the collaborators feel "down in the dumps" and pushes them to doubt the possibility of logic or order within history itself.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Lucas, who interprets Salisbury as an indirect allusion to Edward Seymour, claims that the *Mirror*'s description of his death "moves readers to dismiss the troubling implications of Seymour's failure. . . as an instance of tragic bad luck, a freak accident" (Lucas, *A Mirror*, 147). I agree that the *Mirror* consciously draws attention to the "freakish"

The seemingly illogical force governing Salisbury's destiny pushes the *Mirror* authors into a state of grim, uncommunicative cynicism until one contributor brings them out of it with the following consideration: "To what ende (quoth one) muse we so much on this matter. This Earle is neyther the first nor the last whom Fortune hath foundered in the heyth of their prosperitey. . . . We shall find many whych have bene likewise served" (154). The group has been confounded by the blackly ironic fact that history's potential "good guys" sometimes die at the worst possible moment, leaving English subjects at the mercy of evil men. But as this contributor points out, Salisbury is certainly not the first to suffer this fate, so what use is it for them to succumb to antisocial brooding bordering on despair? Since Salisbury's "wofull destynye" seems to be the rule rather than the exception within history, the contributor suggests that the group should not dwell too deeply upon this case, and that they should instead press on with the project. The performance of Salisbury's complaint intellectually and emotionally cripples the *Mirror* authors, and the only apparent solution to this bleak state of non-responsive, non-interactive contemplation is to not think about the implications of Salisbury's complaint and to keep on with the performances. However, one must ask why ignoring, and even preventing, the negative emotions engendered by the performances, functions as a positive solution to the seeming lack of justice the *Mirror* writers find within history. Surely such relativism represents the exact opposite of encouraging virtue and dissuading from vice, a goal the *Mirror* project never forswore even as it abandoned its predecessors' methods for achieving it. How can the sixteenth-century reader possibly learn "howe the like hath been punished in other heretofore" (65) if corrupt royal servants like Tresilian or Mowbray and virtuous nobles like Salisbury seem to suffer the same fates in this sea of ironic historical unfolding?

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nature of Salisbury's death, but I counter that it is the total lack of sense or justice embedded in this event that makes this complaint impossible to dismiss, and instead drives the collaborators into extreme depression.

The *Mirror* authors do not offer an answer to these difficult questions, but they do discover a partially satisfying solution embedded within their performative methodology itself. One collaborator posits that, in the face of these various dilemmas regarding what constitutes an appropriate or healthy emotional response to the past, their collective efforts to think through and talk about the knotty questions of Fortune, cause and effect, and justice raised by their performances of the past are enough: “It is wurth the labour (sayd one) to way the workes and judgementes of God: which . . . are knowen most evidently by comparyng contraries” (170). History’s contrariness, such as the fact that someone like Salisbury dies before his time while a malicious magistrate like the Duke of Suffolk gets his just deserts should not engender negative emotions or intellectual sluggishness.<sup>27</sup> Instead, the group concludes that such blatant contradictions unveiled by their performances provide a satisfying intellectual framework for working through and working out together how history takes shape. For the *Mirror* authors, performative experience of the past, the emotional responses it provokes, and the learning and discussion that takes place in a collaborative setting constitute appropriate and constructive actions in and of themselves. Moreover, their performance of the past encourages an experience of learning in community, of shared mental and conversational activity, whose pleasures and challenges are meant to be enjoyed by the *Mirror*’s readers as well. “Passing through” affective history implicates readers in the past itself, if they so choose, and the *Mirror* acknowledges that there is much to be gained and appreciated from emotionally involving oneself in the past by performing it, watching it, and endeavoring to understand it.

### **The Threat of Performative Pasts**

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<sup>27</sup> It is Suffolk’s complaint that produces this reflection, and one can infer that the *Mirror* authors are more disposed to conversation and critical thought based upon the sheer glee that Suffolk’s death inspires in them: “Whan this was sayd: Every man rejoyced to heare of a wicked man so marvaylously well punished” (170)

The contributors collectively realize that their social project of performing the past need not be solely a source of depressive angst despite the occasionally confounding emotions such experiences engender. Following this, the *Mirror* proceeds at a considerably more lighthearted pace, and the group even recovers some of its previous sense of humor, with one contributor jokingly critiquing his fellow writer's performance of Jack Cade: "By saint mary. . . yf Jacke wer as well learned, as you have made his oracion, What so ever he was by byrth, I warraunt him a gentylman by his learning" (178). Baldwin, however, begins to feel the effects of their all-nighter, but when he tries to rest his imagination cannot stop turning over the tales that the group has been perusing of people killed in the Wars of the Roses: "For I was so wearye that I waxed drowsye, and began in dede to slumber: but my imaginacion styll prosecutyng this tragicall matter, brought me suche a fantasy" (181). One might argue that Baldwin's dream merely represents a reflection or throwback to the dream visions of medieval literature. Or perhaps it can be diagnosed as a clear-cut case of a dream arising from one's experiences during the day. Indeed, *A Mirror for Magistrates* is full of historical figures who interpret their dreams as prognostications of their fate.<sup>28</sup> Baldwin's act of dreaming here, however, constitutes a narrative oddity that cannot be explained away according to the generic conventions of dream visions or through the theories of Macrobius, since the dream first harnesses and then perverts the *Mirror's* performative ability to make the past happen in the present.

Baldwin's dream ruptures the *Mirror* both formally and structurally because the dream departs from the logic of dramatic action that has facilitated the performance of all the previous

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<sup>28</sup> For an assessment of early modern dream theories and the impact of dreams, actual and fictionalized, on early modern English politics and literature, see Carole Levin, *Dreaming the English Renaissance: Politics and Desire in Court and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 33-60. Although Levin includes examples of dreams from *A Mirror for Magistrates* in her study, she focuses only on dreams described by historical figures during their complaints, specifically the dreams of Eleanor Cobham, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, and Lord Rivers. Ibid., 97-99.



complaints. Baldwin does not choose a historical person and make him performatively present; rather, the past forcibly comes to Baldwin and starts to happen whether he likes it or not. The dream conjures up a decapitated man accompanied by an eviscerated little boy coated in his own blood, all nightmarish details that the *Mirror* infuses with equally discomforting tenderness since the two walking corpses appear holding hands:

Me thought there stode before us, a tall mans body full of fresshe woundes, but lackyng a head, holdyng by the hande a goodlye childe, whose brest was so wounded that his hearte myght be seen, his lovely face and eyes disfigured with dropping teares, his heare through horroure standyng upryght, his mercy cravyng handes all to bemangled, & all his body embrued with his own bloud. (181)

The entrance of the dismembered ghosts is at once gory, disturbing, and excessive, which is compounded by the fact that Baldwin does not know who these people are. This withholding of identity both infuses the approaching complaint with an element of suspense and, more importantly, necessitates that the ghosts introduce themselves. Not knowing these mangled people creates the demand for an interaction in which the present spectators (including both Baldwin and his readers) have to forge a connection with the ghosts, and thereby become implicated in their complaint and plight.

As the nameless man and child approach Baldwin, the physical effort of looking at their grotesque bodies overwhelms him: “Through the gastfulnes of this pyteous spectacle, I wared afeard, and turned awaye my face” (181). Baldwin is justifiably terrified by the sight of these two ghosts, and just as one might cover one’s eyes or hide one’s face in a blanket at the climax of a horror movie, he has to turn away his face. This avoidance of eye contact in turn denies the specters an opportunity to make contact, which provokes an infuriated reaction from the decapitated corpse:

Me thought there came a shrekyng voyce out of the weasande pipe of the headles bodye, saying as foloweth. . . .

What meanest thou Baldwin for to hide thy face?  
Thou nedest not feare although I misse my head:  
Nor yet to mourne, for this my sonne is dead. . . .  
For I am Richard prince Plantagenet,  
The duke of Yorke in royall rase beget. (181-82)

The tall man shrieks through his severed windpipe insisting that Baldwin *look at him*. York and his son demand recognition, a recognition they can achieve only if the present pays attention and watches them. York actually has to insist several times throughout his complaint that Baldwin acknowledge him by looking at him— “But marke me now I pray thee Baldwin marke” (183)—and these adamant commands represent perhaps the most strident call within the *Mirror* for the sixteenth-century present to become an affective, and actual, audience for a viscerally present national past. However, York’s demand for attentive and responsive spectatorship negates the performative agency that has governed the *Mirror* up to this point. York’s ghost is not willfully conjured by Baldwin using the methodology developed by him and his fellow writers. Rather, York places Baldwin and the *Mirror*’s readers-turned-spectators in an unprecedented quandary because they are being forced against their will to bear witness to an invasive past. Viewership has been imposed upon Baldwin, and no matter how much he tries to look away or spare himself the horror of York’s spectacle, it is the past that now controls the project and him. Thus, performance of the past mutates into non-volitional possession by the past and its mutilated ghosts.

The *Mirror* authors’ response to Baldwin reveals their inability to cope with or adjudicate the consequences of their methodology. In fact, one could characterize the prose section following the nightmare as a blatant non-response to the dream itself. York’s complaint ends with Ferrers shaking Baldwin awake, and the questions Ferrers asks him imply not that Baldwin was just talking in his sleep, but that the nightmare manifested itself so forcefully in its victim

that Baldwin ceased to be Baldwin: “Why how now man, do you forget your selfe? belike you mind our matters very much: So I do in dede (quoth I) For I dreame of them” (191). Ferrers’s apprehensive expressions of concern suggest that Baldwin’s behavior during his dream shocked and frightened the group. Baldwin admits that he does “mind” their project in the sense that it has taken over his mind, and he turns to his fellow authors for help by telling them everything that happened during his dream: “Whan I had rehearced my dreame, we had long talke concerning the natures of dreames, which to stint and to bring us to our matter againe, thus sayde one of them: I am glad it was your chaunce to dreame of Duke Richard, for it had bene pity to have overpassed him” (191). The group refuses to discuss or record any detail of that conversation, and they gloss over the horrific specifics of the dream in favor of generalities about dream states. By not documenting how or if Baldwin’s dream elicited any sort of affective response from the group, the *Mirror* suggests that its authors might not be capable of dealing with the implications of possessive history replacing performative pasts. Faced with this experience of affective and mental assault, the *Mirror* writers must acknowledge that their performative methodology has opened them up to possible possession by the past, a consequence that they have no means of controlling.

The non-consensual assault of Baldwin by the past illuminates a new and striking problem with the *Mirror*’s innovative ability to make the past present. The contributors are left floundering for a means of coping with Baldwin’s possession by York, and this moment of emotional unmooring anticipates what Mullaney has identified as an affective rupture suffered by Shakespeare’s generation in the decades following the Reformation, in which “structures of feeling. . . were reformed as well as structures of belief.”<sup>29</sup> In the *Mirror*’s case, no structure of

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<sup>29</sup> Mullaney, *Reformation of Emotions*, 8. As I suggested earlier, the *Mirror* serves as a proto-example of what Mullaney has termed an “affective technology” designed to help sixteenth-century people navigate and process the

feeling exists that can help them figure out what emotions are appropriate for their radical ability to make history happen. How are the *Mirror*'s readers, who have already been shown the potential pleasures of making contact with a performatively present past, supposed to react to this process when they know it can mutate from willful performance into violation? Should early modern people open themselves to history in this way, and then just accept the possibility that history might possess them against their choosing? How, in short, are the *Mirror*'s writers and readers supposed to feel, and what are they supposed to do, once the bleeding and shrieking ghosts give them back control of their minds, their bodies, and their text?

The *Mirror* has exposed an unnavigable quandary at the core of its ability to make the past happen, and following Baldwin's dream the text as a whole begins to search for any means of available escape from invasive violation by the past. The *Mirror* instead returns to performing; one contributor almost manically insists that they perform Lord Clifford's complaint with the same amount of gore as York's.<sup>30</sup> Yet this prose section marks the moment in which the *Mirror* simultaneously tries to leave its performative model behind. The *Mirror* contributors' silent and solitary leave-taking of one another at the 1559 edition's conclusion indicates that the pressures of feeling and making the past present, and the risks of having one's mind and body possessed by the past, have become unbearable.<sup>31</sup> Not knowing how to feel about the method

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Reformation's forced separation of the nation's present from its Catholic past. I would add, though, that the *Mirror* does not so much address Mullaney's central question ("How did it feel to be an Elizabethan?"), but rather grapples with a broader issue of how readers and audiences should feel about the pleasures and risks of their formal ability to make history happen in and for the present. See *Ibid.*, 7-50.

<sup>30</sup> "Wherefore as you thought you sawe and heard the headles duke speake thorow his necke, so suppose you see this lord Clifford all armed save his head, with his brest plate all gore bloud running from his throte, wherin an hedles arrow sticketh" (191). Pincombe interprets this moment as yet another instance of Baldwin injecting humor into the narrative through an "untragic body." See Pincombe, "Tragic and Untragic Bodies," 64. I am convinced, though, that the similar performative moment, and even its supposedly grotesque excessiveness, speaks to the fact that the *Mirror*'s methodology has gotten beyond the authors' control, and they fear it.

<sup>31</sup> Edward IV, the 1559 edition's final ghost, concludes his complaint with the solemn reflection: "Et ecce nunc in pulvere dormio." Left with the grave thought that everything eventually sleeps in the dust, "Every man tooke his leave of other and departed" (239-40).

they have unleashed, and having no guideposts for their readers-turned-audience for how to cope with these experiences, the *Mirror* authors begin to retreat from their project. And in its next edition, the *Mirror* will successfully accomplish that retreat through an overcorrection into “readerly” forms and experiences.

### **Escaping Embodied Pasts**

The performative methodology of the *Mirror*’s first edition encouraged readers to make emotional and physical contact with history, and specifically with historical people, through participatory spectatorship in the performed past. The 1559 *Mirror* thus uncovered an utterly embodied narrative process that could potentially shift the very emotional, mental, and perhaps spiritual bedrock of an early modern person’s being. However, as we’ve seen and as Baldwin learned firsthand, embodied performative involvement in the past simultaneously creates the possibility that history might infiltrate one’s body in the wrong way. The ability to craft a direct, one-to-one interaction with the past through embodied performance poses too great a risk, and at the conclusion of their first edition the *Mirror*’s contributors face the fact that their avant-garde methodology has become both unstable and unsustainable. As a solution, in their second edition the *Mirror* authors retreat into a recognizable narrative form whose discourse of embodiment is still palpably present, but also once removed.

The 1563 edition of *A Mirror for Magistrates* picks up, ostensibly, one week after the conclusion of the first meeting; in reality, four years separated the publication of the first and second editions.<sup>32</sup> According to the second edition’s frame, Baldwin arrives at their next meeting “with suche storyes as I had procured and prepared” (243), and the group begins by collating and

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<sup>32</sup> Baldwin was in the process of editing the Marian tragedies and prose links that had not made it into the first edition when he died in September 1563. He had also sought out new tragedies and rewrote prose links to reflect Elizabethan rather than Marian concerns. Thomas Marshe decided to print everything he had rather than scrap the project. See Lucas, *A Mirror*, 247-48.

organizing a stack of manuscripts containing the complaints of Lord Rivers, Jane Shore, Lord Hastings, Richard III, and Edmund, Duke of Somerset, to name a few. In contrast to the first edition, the complaints have already been written down prior to the contributors' meeting, so Baldwin jettisons the performative method of anatomizing the complaining historical figure and instead declares that "we wyl take the cronycles, & note theyr places, & as they cum, so wil we orderly reade them al" (244-45). Historical improvisation is replaced with reading fully drafted and finalized verse tragedies. Moreover, the emphasis on "ordering" the verse tragedies demonstrates that the 1563 authors have substituted bibliographical and codicological practices for performative method. The activities described in the second edition's prose frame, such as "noting," "procuring," and "preparing," signal that the 1563 *Mirror* contributors have forgone experimental play-acting in favor of the humanist scholar's true calling: producing a good and readable text.

Reading through and editing an orderly *Mirror* becomes a simultaneously retrogressive and progressive process that protects authors and readers from the pressures of the avant-garde even as it enables the project itself to continue. The 1563 *Mirror* consciously posits the act of reading as a means not to experience but to control one's experience of historical time. The group changes the text's narrative form to facilitate this control with the complaint of the Duke of Buckingham authored by Thomas Sackville, which brings with it a unique formal feature:

I have here the duke of Buckingham, king Richardes chyefe instrument. . . Read it we pray sayd they: with a good wyl (quoth I) but first you shal heare his preface or Induction. Hath he made a preface (quoth one) what meaneth he thereby, seeing none hath used the like order? (297)

Sackville's addition of a poetic induction to his complaint provokes a noticeably irritated reaction from the other contributors; who, in short, does Sackville think he is?<sup>33</sup> Despite the group's professed disapproval, however, Sackville's Induction signals a moment of revision and retreat. The Induction uses the act of reading to quietly distance and discourage readers from the performative process of its predecessor. As a poetic frame inserted between the previously performative prose frame and Buckingham's complaint, the Induction creates a barrier separating the collaborators and readers from the history they were previously able to make happen in their present.

The Induction further amplifies these narrative buffers between readers and the potentially invasive past by returning the poem to a comfortingly familiar literary experience: the allegorical dream vision. Unlike Baldwin's disturbing, generically aberrant dream of York, one could say that Sackville's Induction constitutes a laundry list of the poetic conventions and devices used in dream vision poetry from Virgil up to and beyond Chaucer and Lydgate.<sup>34</sup> The Induction begins with the poem's speaker, known in characteristic dream vision form only as "I," wandering contemplatively through a dark, wintry landscape until he loses track of time. When the sun goes down, he is plunged into darkness as the visionary experience begins:

My busie minde presented unto me  
Such fall of pieres as in this realme had be. . .  
And strayt forth stalking with redoubled pace  
For that I sawe the night drewe on so fast,  
In blacke all clad there fell before my face  
A piteous wight. (300)

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<sup>33</sup> Baldwin goes on to explain that, due to censorship of the *Mirror* in 1554, Sackville even decided to try and compose his own personal version, which would have drastically changed the *Mirror*'s form by going all the way back to William the Conqueror "to continue and perfect all the story him selfe, in such order as Lydgate (following Bochas) had already used" (297). Had Sackville succeeded in his efforts, his *Mirror* would have returned chronologically and poetically to Lydgate, thus escaping the dual pleasures and risks of performativity pioneered by the first edition.

<sup>34</sup> This proliferation of generic calling cards is no doubt what has made the Induction the only section of the *Mirror* read in any capacity by most students of Renaissance literature.

The speaker's vision seems initially to promise an experience similar to the first edition, in which historical figures performed by the contributors appear before Baldwin. However, the darkly clad and weeping "piteous wight" in the speaker's path is not a historical personage, but rather the allegorical figure of Sorrow. At this point, the Induction starts to spiral both the speaker and the *Mirror*'s readers further away from an immediately present English past, and further into a safe "readerly" experience.

Sorrow informs the speaker that, if he wishes to eventually hear Buckingham's complaint, he must undertake a journey to hell:

I shall the guyde first to the grisly lake,  
Where thou shalt see and heare the playnt they make. . .  
This shalt thou see, but great is the unrest  
That thou must byde before thou canst attayne  
Unto the dreadfull place where these remayne. (304)

Sorrow cautions that danger and unrest await the person who undertakes this endeavor to speak with the dead. But the speaker's risky quest to make contact with Buckingham does not require him to engage in the process of embodied and affective performativity so familiar from the 1559 *Mirror*. Instead, the speaker must run a gauntlet of personification in which he observes the woes of Remorse, Dread, Revenge, Misery, Greed, Old Age, Malady, Famine, and War. This formal shift serves to protect readers through a poetic form in which embodied encounter is both once-removed from and secondary to the experience of reading itself.

By replacing performativity with allegorical personification, Sackville's Induction introduces layers of representation that intentionally distance the *Mirror*'s readers from an immediate encounter with the past. In addition, the Induction allows the *Mirror* to abandon one discourse of embodiment—performative, radical, unstable, and therefore unsustainable—in favor of a familiar allegorical form whose processes of embodiment traditionally gesture to the



conceptual rather than the actual. While allegory can be a dynamic and affectively transformative form, Sackville's Induction relies upon a stereotypical notion of allegory as stable and predictable in order to "capture the substantiality of beings and raise [them] to the conceptual plane."<sup>35</sup> The *Mirror* authors turn to allegorical personification to capture and render static the performativity that could, through affective engagement, give palpable substance to the past. In this web of allegory, the past cannot get through either to be performed by or to haunt the present.

Thanks to Sackville's Induction, a reader's experience of interacting with the *Mirror*'s second edition is transformed from one of affectively participatory spectatorship to one of readerly allegorical decoding. The experience of reading the Induction protects the *Mirror*'s readers from the risks of performative pasts because it is an experience for which they have well-established affective expectations and interpretive skills. This risk containment is demonstrated in the way the collaborators themselves react as readers to the complaint of Lord Hastings. At the conclusion of this complaint, one of the contributors complains that it was "harde to be understood: excepte it were diligently and very leasurely considered" (297). Another counters, however, that the complaint's difficulty, and the intellectual labor necessary to unravel its meanings, makes him "like it the better. . . For that shal cause it to be the oftener reade, and the better remembred" (297). While still fascinated by their own processes of composition, the *Mirror* contributors no longer view their complaint poems as scripts through which they can embody and encounter the past within the present. Instead, the past has now become a riddle for readers to interpret and solve, and has been distanced from the present via didactic allegory. If they choose, the *Mirror*'s readers can delve into the details of the allegory, digesting its message

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<sup>35</sup> Gordon Teskey, *Allegory and Violence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 18. See also Andrew Escobedo, "Daemon Personification: Will, Personification, and Character," *Spenser Studies* 22 (2007), 203-25.

and reveling in its symbolism through “diligent and leisurely” reading. In fact, the pleasure and edification the one contributor receives from this now allegorical *Mirror* reflects Gordon Teskey’s proposal that allegory “elicits continual interpretation as its primary aesthetic effect, giving us the feeling that we are moving at once inward and upward toward the transcendental ‘other.’”<sup>36</sup> By directing readers to just keep interpreting and to just keep reading, the allegory’s insistence on interpretive games frees readers from the affective and embodied demands of performative history. The 1563 *Mirror* harnesses allegory’s “project of capture” in order to conceal from readers the potentially violent rift in temporal experience that the 1559 *Mirror*’s performative project unleashed, thereby promising readers literary satisfaction rather than affective angst.<sup>37</sup> Foregoing their capabilities as enactors and spectators, readers of the 1563 *Mirror* can take control of their experience of historical time because, in 1563, the past stays past.

The 1559 *Mirror for Magistrates* pioneered a narrative form not only for writing English history, but also for enacting it. This capacity to make the past performatively present, and to craft an experience of feeling history in such a way that it seems to be actually happening, carries within it the possibility that the past could not just please, but also harm the present. Reading and decoding history as allegory enables the 1563 *Mirror* to quietly avoid the emotional risks and fraught bodily invasions of affective history. The *Mirror*’s contributors evidently felt their own mid-sixteenth-century readership to be affectively and psychologically unprepared for such visceral encounters with the past in the present. However, English people would be ready to

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 8. My argument draws upon and adapts Teskey’s thesis that allegory constitutes a formal abstraction that simultaneously covers up the violence it commits, thus sustaining the very ideological order it represents. For a departure from Teskey’s perspective, see Judith Anderson, who argues that allegory functions as an intertextual, and therefore vibrantly relational, literary form. Anderson, *Reading the Allegorical Intertext* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 1-23.

serve as such spectators thirty years later. Although the *Mirror*, in its subsequent iterations, would never return to the performative methodologies of its first edition, in the 1580s the *Mirror*'s performative energies become actualized through the genre of the English history play.<sup>38</sup> Thus, the 1559 *Mirror for Magistrates* lays the groundwork for a form of dramaturgy in which the past can be represented and experienced as an unfolding moment, and gestures to a new way of feeling the past that would allow the "generation born Elizabethan" to embody and encounter the national past as playwrights, players, and playgoers.

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<sup>38</sup> The *Mirror*'s popularity among English readers endured into the seventeenth century, as evidenced by numerous reprintings and spin-offs. A third revised edition appeared in 1571, and versions entitled *The Last Part of the Mirror for Magistrates* appeared in 1574, 1575, and 1578. John Higgins extended the *Mirror* all the way back to the foundation of Britain in 1574, while Thomas Blenerhasset completed *The Second Parte of the Mirror for Magistrates* in 1578. A 1587 edition added Roman figures to the mix, while in 1610 Richard Nichols brought together all the verse tragedies, nixed the prefaces, and published the *Mirror* as an anthology of poetry. See Archer and Hadfield, *A Mirror for Magistrates in Context*, 1-4; and Harriet Archer, *Unperfect Histories: The Mirror for Magistrates, 1559-1610* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). Archer's monograph offers the first scholarly study of the *Mirror*'s full transmission history.

### Chapter Three

#### “But yet the end is not:” Making Affective Future Past in *The Faerie Queene*

In Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, the female knight Britomart serves not only as the allegorical figure for Chastity, but also as the figure who models a form of learning and feeling history as a source of personal fulfillment. Throughout the epic, Spenser depicts Britomart as both constantly feeling—in the space of a few lines, she variously undergoes “hart thrilling throbs. . . [and] feuer fit” (3.2.5), then “woxe[s] inly glad” (3.2.11)—and constantly interpreting narratives about her destined place in British history.<sup>1</sup> Of course, Britain’s mythic history is a fundamental feature of the poem, and historical narratives are not exclusively the purview of the “Mayd martiall.” Arthur, as “the once and future king,” initially serves as Spenser’s allegorical embodiment of British history, and even Redcrosse Knight gets to participate when it is revealed that he represents St. George. But, I argue, Britomart comes to serve as Spenser’s chief figure for an intensely emotional way of reading and experiencing the past as a form of self-fulfillment. For Britomart, hearing history prophesied as the future, reflecting upon past and future exemplars, and sharing national origin stories produces visceral emotional reactions to a past that Spenser transforms into an immediate venue for self-formation and action in the present. As Richard McCabe astutely notes, in *The Faerie Queene* “we are fixed in the past but a past that is active and continuous”; I argue that the exact same statement could be made regarding Britomart.<sup>2</sup> Britomart’s embodied affective reactions to her own history-in-the-making, and the quest that she undertakes in response to those reactions,

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<sup>1</sup> All citations in text and notes of *The Faerie Queene* (to book, canto, and stanza) are to Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A.C. Hamilton (New York: Longman, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Richard McCabe, *The Pillars of Eternity: Time and Providence in The Faerie Queene* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1989), 15.

effectively require that Britomart make time itself happen around her. Therefore, Britomart's quest for her future history functions as the allegory for Spenser's passionate interest in the past as a sphere that can be rendered present and felt through affective investment.

Spenser's fascination with British history has long been of interest to Spenserian scholars, who have tended to understand *The Faerie Queene's* historical dimension through the lens of late Elizabethan historiography and nationalism. First, scholars have assessed Spenser's use of chronicle material in light of Tudor efforts to craft a sense of English nationhood out of a tenuously documented past.<sup>3</sup> Of equal interest have been the intersections among this developing sense of English nationalism and Spenser's ambitions to be "poet laureate," particularly since Spenser's treatment of his nation's origins is grounded in the conventions of Virgilian epic.<sup>4</sup> Michael O'Connell notes that Virgil's *Aeneid* offers the key to Spenser's understanding of history, since it provides a model "of an epic typologically connecting fictional past with historical present;" as such, the British history episodes have also inspired topical readings that speculate how the poem mirrors ("fairly" or not) both Queen Elizabeth and the state of the nation in the 1590s.<sup>5</sup> However, Spenser's fascination with British history is also uniquely designed to provide readers' with emotional experiences of temporality, which echoes and builds upon the historiographical and dramatic forms of affective history I have explored in previous

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<sup>3</sup> See Carrie Ann Harper, *The Sources of the British Chronicle History in Spenser's Faerie Queene* (New York: Haskell House, 1910, reprinted 1964); Robert E. Burkhart, "History, Epic, and the *Faerie Queene*," *ES* 56 (1975): 14-19; Michael O'Connell, *Mirror and Veil: The Historical Dimension of Spenser's 'Faerie Queene'* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977); J.L. Mills, "Prudence, History, and the Prince in *The Faerie Queene* Book II," *HLQ* 41 (1978): 83-101; and Andrew Fichter, *Poets Historical: Dynastic Epic in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982). I will delve into more recent scholarship on Spenser and the "Tudor myth" later in the chapter.

<sup>4</sup> See Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); and Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

<sup>5</sup> Michael O'Connell, "Allegory, historical," in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. A.C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 23.

chapters.<sup>6</sup> Hall's development of a historiography that provokes responsive relationships between past and present, as well as the *Mirror*'s ability to make the past seemingly happen in the present, feature in Spenser's own theory of the "Poet historical." In the "Letter of the Authors," Spenser articulates not only a formal difference between the work of an historiographer and a poet, but also a fundamental difference between the two writers' relationships to time:

For the Methode of a Poet historical is not such, as of an Historiographer. For an Historiographer discourseth of affayres orderly as they were donne, accounting as well the times as the actions, but a Poet thrusteth into the middest. . . and there recouring to things forepaste, and diuining of thinges to come, maketh a pleasing analysis of all. (45-48)

Unlike the conventional chronicler, who can proceed only linearly through time in his representation of the past, Spenser envisions the "poet historical" as a sort of time traveler, able to move within and through time to represent past and future as a transpiring adventure. Thus, Spenser employs the unique time-bending conventions of "historicall fiction" to radically transform his readers' experience of the past as affectively present.

This chapter argues that Britomart serves as the experimental figure for Spenser's poet-historical, and that Spenser portrays Britomart undergoing history as an embodied process of becoming through feeling. As such, Britomart allows Spenser to illustrate how readers might achieve self-realization and fulfillment through the forms of affective history that Britomart experiences. Following her vision of Artegall, Britomart learns to experience history as desire, but it is desire for a history that is not yet; thus, Britomart's "feeling" the past is always future-oriented because, in desiring history, Britomart is called upon to create it. As a character who

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<sup>6</sup> Spenser no doubt would have read Edward Hall's *Union*, and we know that he relied on *A Mirror for Magistrates* as a source for the chronicle material in Canto 10 of Book 2. See Jerry Leath Mills, "Chronicles," in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. A.C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 151.

intensely feels a past whose very existence depends on her quest, Britomart demonstrates an embeddedness within time that testifies to Spenser's overarching concern with how temporal experience—and the very categories of past, present, and future—can collapse into themselves through affective, embodied engagement with time.

However, making time happen as a response to desire and love, and thus fulfilling history, constitutes a painful paradox for Britomart. The problem for Britomart—and thus the problem with the affective temporal experience she facilitates as Spenser's allegory for affective history—is that the experience of time as an always unfolding present (and an unfolding present that depends on her own actions for existence) is asymptotic. As much as she considers, listens, and responds to the genealogies and histories she encounters on her quest, and as close as she comes to being with the very person with whom she can satisfy history's demands and her own desires, none of these experiences brings her closer to the past-as-future that represents the horizon of her passion and fulfillment. Britomart illustrates the epistemological and ontological problems of feeling time for Spenser and his readers: if one affectively feels the past and, as a consequence, nurtures an embodied sense of intimacy with that past, how should those emotions in turn structure one's being in the world? Britomart thus offers a model for how to affectively engage with time, but also reflects how any hyper-realized engagement with time from the position of the present can be painful and potentially unfulfilling.

### **Forgoing Arthurian History and 'Once and Future Kings' for Affective History**

As Spenser's figuration of affective history, Britomart is best understood through comparison to *The Faerie Queene's* other primary figure for British history: Prince Arthur. While Arthur serves as the initial history-maker of Spenser's "historicall fiction," in the chronicle-reading episode of Book Two Arthur becomes a problematically ambivalent figure for

reading and feeling history. Both Arthur's emotional responses to reading *Briton moniments*, as well as Spenser's own manipulations of Arthur's backstory, reveal that Spenser has severed this Arthur from British history. I argue that Spenser's Arthur functions more as a species of fan-fiction avatar than "once and future king," and therefore his response to the chronicle indicates that he remains both invulnerable to, and closed off from, affective history. As a result, Spenser chooses to make Britomart rather than Prince Arthur responsible for addressing how one might feel the past as a deeply personal extension of oneself.

Spenser toys with the idea of Arthur's entering British history, and thus creating the Tudor genealogical line, through an episode of affective reading that brings Arthur face-to-face with his destined role as "the once and future king." When Arthur's and Guyon's field trip through Alma's Castle culminates in Eumenestes's library, "There chaunced to the Princes hand to rize, / An auncient booke, hight *Briton moniments*, / That of this lands first conquest did deuize" (2.9.59). The chronicle, which seemingly levitates into Arthur's hands as he stumbles through the clutter of memory's library, inspires a burning desire to stop and read. Arthur and Guyon, "Burning both with feruent fire, / Their countreys auncestry to vnderstond / Crau'd leaue of Alma, and that aged sire / To read those bookes" (2.9.60). Arthur's discovery of *Briton moniments* smacks of overdetermined Spenserian fortuitousness, and as a result the episode becomes infused with anticipation and excitement because Spenser implies that, if Arthur reads properly, British history might happen. Furthermore, by centering upon Arthur's immediate and intense emotional attraction to the text, the poem establishes that Arthur's ability to feel history directly correlates to his ability to activate it. Just as *A Mirror for Magistrates* posits performance of the past as a means for experiencing it in the present, Arthur's reading experience in Canto 10 posits the prince's affective response to history as a bridge fusing the past with the present. The



portrayal of Arthur's act of reading transports *The Faerie Queene's* readers through space and time, through the pages of the physical book and through the violent history-making actions of Britain's rulers.<sup>7</sup>

Spenser transforms the physical text of *Briton moniments* and the history it contains into a quest of sorts, in which Arthur's act of reading supposedly propels readers towards history's implied teleological end: the reigns of King Arthur and Queen Elizabeth. However, just as *Briton moniments* comes to the razor's edge between past and present, the formal structure of Spenser's poetic line transforms into a cliffhanger: "After him *Vther*, which *Pendragon* hight, / Succeeding There abruptly it did end, / Without full point, or other Cesure right" (2.10.68). Arthur and *The Faerie Queene's* readers come crashing into the present as the chronicle's narrative screeches to a halt in the middle of a line, and Spenser itemizes Arthur's reactions to the chronicle's abrupt ending as the Prince struggles to get his bearings following this session of binge-reading: "That so vntimely breach / The Prince him selfe halfe seemed to offend, / Yet secret pleasure did offence impeach, / And wonder of antiquity long stopt his speech" (2.10.68). The inexplicable pleasure Arthur gets from reading history silences him, and his silence continues until the third line of the next stanza in a simulation of contemplation. The emotions Arthur feels once he must stop reading (half-offense, pleasure, wonder) gradually intensify, and Spenser's readers also undergo a similar emotional percolation as they wait to see what the result of Arthur's reading will be. Arthur *wonders* about what he has read, and we must consider not simply the affective and educational resonances of "wonder," but also, as Jeff Dolven describes, its temporal orientation as "an opening, in which new knowledge can take place. Wonder is full of possibility,

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<sup>7</sup> My claim here echoes Bart Van Es, who argues that Spenser "draws threads of narrative from the fabric of the past." Van Es, *Spenser's Forms of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 200.

a prophetic mood, perhaps.”<sup>8</sup> Arthur’s wonder positions him in a liminal state that is affectively and viscerally present, and yet distinctly turned toward a historically-tinged future, open to a possible trajectory that he has not yet imagined but that all of Spenser’s readers eagerly await. In this moment of thinking, Spenser flirts with the possibility that Arthur’s sense of “wonder” at the point where the past and present merge might lead him to acknowledge and take up his role as British history’s originator.

Arthur’s reading of *Briton moniments* almost moves the history it records into the present and, by coming to the precipice between past and present, Arthur brushes up against his identity as “the once and future king.” However, to the eternal frustration of readers and scholars, Arthur does not meld past and present, does not recognize his destined identity, and does not step from the world of *The Faerie Queene* into Arthurian legend or Tudor dynastic history. Not knowing Uther Pendragon from Adam, Arthur can only react to the chronicle and vocalize a response to the panoply of affects that have been bottled up in his silence heretofore:

At last quite ravisht with delight, to heare  
The royall Ofspring of his natie land,  
Cryde out, Deare countrey, O how dearely deare  
Ought thy remembraunce, and perpetual band  
Be to thy foster Childe. . . .  
How brutish is it not to vnderstand,  
How much to her we owe, that all vs gaue. (2.10.69)

Arthur’s ravished reaction to the chronicle has consistently raised critical eyebrows, and some scholars have read Arthur’s lack of self-knowledge here as a failed opportunity for both Arthur and *The Faerie Queene*.<sup>9</sup> Andrew Escobedo, who has skillfully articulated both the scholarly and the emotional implications of Arthur’s non-self-recognition, suggests that Arthur’s cognitive gap

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<sup>8</sup> Jeff Dolven, “Panic’s Castle,” *Representations* 120 (2012): 6.

<sup>9</sup> See Elizabeth Mazzola, “Apocryphal Texts and Epic Amnesia: The Ends of History in *The Faerie Queene*,” *Soundings* 78 (1995): 131, 138-39.

regarding his place within the historical record reflects a crisis moment in Tudor historiography. Escobedo argues that the increased interest in history during the sixteenth century stems from the Tudors' desire to locate a uniquely British national community throughout time. However, this search for the past merely illuminates the mythical or fictional basis of British origin stories; as a result, history's potential to create a national community instead "registers a profound sense that the English past was missing and unrecoverable."<sup>10</sup> According to Escobedo, Arthur's "'historiographic' identity is circumscribed by his apparent inability to play a part in British history and give his nation the posterity it needs;"<sup>11</sup> therefore, Arthur's failure to read himself into history signifies a negative moment of loss in which Spenser expresses his "sense of the gap between past and present even as he tries to forge a bridge."<sup>12</sup>

Arthur remains inactive and unfulfilled in the liminal space of the uncompleted caesura, caught between the chronicle's representation of the past and his destined future as king. However, I think we must interrogate how awful, or mournful, or unfortunate Arthur's non-recognition of self really is given Spenser's allegorical thought-experiment with affective history. Because if we posit Arthur's act of reading as a failure to acknowledge his destiny or to capitalize on history's relevance for himself, I must pose a seemingly fatuous question in response; exactly which self is this Prince Arthur? Is this the Arthur who pulled the sword from the stone, leader of the Knights of the Roundtable and Camelot, darling of Malory (and Monty Python), founding father of the Tudors and, above all, the *rex quondam rexque futurus*? The *Briton monuments* episode and Spenser's own theories in the "Letter of the Authors" demonstrate

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<sup>10</sup> Andrew Escobedo, *Nationalism and Historical Loss in Renaissance England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 3. See also John Curran Jr., "Spenser and the Historical Revolution: *Briton Moniments* and the Problem of Roman Britain," *Clio* 25 (1996): 273-292.

<sup>11</sup> Escobedo, *Nationalism and Historical Loss*, 73.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

that, no, this character is decidedly not that Arthur. Spenser initially frames his narrative of Arthur as a prequel of sorts that picks up with Arthur's established mythology "after his long education by Timon" (29). However, in yet another crucial instance of caesura and interruption, Spenser interrupts Arthurian legend when he explains that *his* Arthur has "seene in a dreame or vision the Faery Queen, with whose excellent beauty rauished, he awaking resolved to seeke her out, and so. . . . He went to seeke her forth in Faerye land" (30-32). As C.S. Lewis observes: "One is tempted to answer the letter [of the Authors] in such terms as the following: 'You say *I chose the historye of king Arthure*. But you didn't.'" <sup>13</sup> Instead of heading off to pull the sword from the stone, the Spenserian Arthur's dream of Gloriana, and the desire the dream provokes, takes over and sublimates Arthur's mythic historicity.

*The Faerie Queene* explicitly severs Arthur from history—and indeed his own history within English literature—long before he encounters the incomplete Galfridian history in *Briton moniments*. Elizabeth Bellamy points out that the dream vision of Gloriana fundamentally reorients Arthur's destiny along an alternative timeline: "The founding moment of *The Faerie Queene* (and of Tudor renovation) is not a beginning point for narrative at all, but rather an indeterminate temporal dialectic between past and future."<sup>14</sup> Spenser's Arthur occupies a liminal temporal position between his own literary history, the future genealogical history of the Tudors that he is supposedly meant to create, and the quest for Gloriana that Spenser creates for him; due to this liminality, he cannot link up with either past or future. I further argue that, by not inserting himself into the half-offensive caesura of *Briton moniments*, Spenser's Arthur definitively reveals himself to be not "the once and future king," but rather an a-historical species

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<sup>13</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Spenser's Images of Life*, ed. Alistair Fowler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 137, emphasis in the original.

<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth J. Bellamy, "Reading Desire Backwards: Belatedness and Spenser's Arthur," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 88 (1989): 796-97.

of Arthurian fan fiction. Arthur cannot enter nor can he create history as a result of his emotional response to it because Spenser's Arthur has been placed outside of the timeline and the storyline of *Briton monuments*. Therefore, he cannot recognize his place within either that narrative or that history because he technically has no place in it.

Most scholars have acknowledged that Arthur's solely affective, and pointedly inactive, response to the chronicle signals that he is a "'virtual' figure—almost part of history, but not quite."<sup>15</sup> However, this virtuality continues to be read as symptomatic of Tudor anxiety regarding England's lack of a national origin story. I agree to some extent that a reader of *The Faerie Queene* (like C.S. Lewis, perhaps) might experience some sense of loss—or, more accurately, annoyance—over the scrapping of the "once and future king" plot trajectory, especially since Spenser seems to have "appropriated the calculus of Arthurian narrative (the anticipatory trajectory of the *rex quondam rexque futurus*) only to unravel its peculiar temporal logic."<sup>16</sup> Arthur, as a mythical, historical, and literary figure towering over (or perhaps uncomfortably butting up against) any version of England's national history, induces in readers a certain affective expectation; Arthur is expected to read the chronicle in the right way, respond to it in the right way, and thus step into history. The fact that Spenser thwarts this anticipation by inventing an Arthur in an alternative universe divorced from Tudor dynastic history is no doubt what has compelled centuries of irritation with this episode of pointless reading.

However, while Arthur's clueless response to the chronicle might leave some readers with a bad taste in their mouths, two things need to be remembered regarding this episode and its place within the history-making concerns of Spenser's poem generally. First, the overall tone of the episode suggests that there is nothing inherently wrong with Arthur's enjoying the chronicle,

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<sup>15</sup> Escobedo, *Nationalism and Historical Loss*, 72.

<sup>16</sup> Bellamy, "Reading Desire Backwards," 790.

despite the obvious silliness of his exclamations to his “dearly dear” country (2.10.69). Even though Arthur fails to learn anything of substance from this act of reading, Spenser might not have condemned such an instance of non-learning. Jeff Dolven, in his study of pedagogical methods represented in early modern romance, examines Spenser’s skepticism regarding the stock Renaissance belief in history’s didactic utility. Dolven finds that Spenser continuously renders ambiguous not only the efficacy of learning through example, but also the very relevance of historical examples at all. If an example is completely irrelevant—as the genealogy of ancient British kings seems to be for Arthur—and if one does not learn anything from it but simply wonders at it, is that necessarily bad?<sup>17</sup> I would argue, in the case of the *Briton moniments* episode, that it is not, especially if we consider Arthur’s concluding exclamation regarding the love of country the chronicle has induced in him: “How brutish is it not to vnderstand, / How much to her we owe, that all vs gaue” (2.10.69). Although a mere platitude from the perspective of those who anticipate Arthur taking up the mantle of British history-making, if considered from the expectations of Renaissance pedagogy, this declaration illustrates that Arthur has attained at least a baseline level of historical understanding.

The second point that I believe must be remembered regarding Arthur’s identity as fan-fiction avatar rather than “once and future king” concerns Arthur’s allegorical function in the poem. Spenser’s intentional, conscious departure from the mythic-historical Arthur is hinted at within the text of *Briton moniments* itself, when the narrator wonders about who or what has caused the chronicle to drop off from history into indeterminacy. Musing that it is “as if the rest some wicked hand did rend / Or th'Author selfe could not at least attend / To finish it” (2.10.68,

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<sup>17</sup> Jeff Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 165-71. Dolven’s argument centers on Britomart in the House of Busirane, and how “her wonder is a tendentious alternative to learning of any kind” (170), but I believe his argument is equally relevant to my reading of Arthur’s unlearned wonder here.

emphasis mine), Spenser suggests why he broke off from chronicle history and the possibility of Arthurian historical fulfillment.<sup>18</sup> The author, in this case Spenser, could not be bothered to finish the chronicle with Arthur because the author does not want nor need Arthur to be a part of that story in *The Faerie Queene*'s universe. And, as the pun on "Arthur" and "author" shows, Arthur's own intentions reflect that of the author; this Arthur isn't going to bother about "finishing" the genealogy either. Transplanting Arthur outside or beyond history structures Arthur's affective life in *The Faerie Queene* as a whole, and indeed shapes the poem's concern with the emotional capacity necessary to make history happen. While he can be affected by a standard "love for country," Arthur remains unaffected—and un-infiltrated—by that country's chronological destiny, which seems to hint at a certain aspect of Arthur's function as "magnificence in particular" that must deny, or indeed never entertain, the possibility of feeling history. Joseph Campana notes that Arthur's "virtue in *The Faerie Queene* is as blinding as it is violent," which shows that Arthur's affective engagement with his world appears to be more antisocial than those characters who cultivate an "ethical virility [that]. . . would have to result not from moderation but from an incitement and intensification of and openness to sensation and affect, pleasure and pain."<sup>19</sup> While he can wonder at and delight in what he reads, Arthur remains emotionally and physically closed off from the generations of human beings that have been and that are to come. By choosing not to have Arthur serve as the poem's English history maker, Spenser establishes that a person who might make history must also be an agent who can viscerally feel it, a person open to the world and to sensation in a way that is fundamentally different from Arthur.

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<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of the pun on "Author" and "Arthur" through the lens of *auctoritas*, see Kenneth Gross, *Spenserian Poetics: Idolatry, Iconoclasm, and Magic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 124-25.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph Campana, *The Pain of Reformation: Spenser, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Masculinity* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 126, 10.

### Britomart's Desire as History-Making and History-in-the-Making

For Spenser, Britomart becomes the alternative to Arthur's magnificent, but affectively closed-off, approach to history. Moreover, by making Britomart responsible for feeling and creating the English past, Spenser starts to explore how a history-maker must necessarily occupy and embrace a form of being in the world in which "instances of pain, pleasure, sensation, and affect might be experienced in a way that would be transformative rather than obliterating."<sup>20</sup> When we meet the unnamed Britomart, Spenser impresses upon us the character's unique embeddedness in and relationship to the poem's various time-scapes. In a crucial stanza of identification and naming, Britomart is presented to us as the character we are meant to know, as though a reader of *The Faerie Queene* should *remember* her: "Even the famous Britomart it was, / Whom straunge aduventure did from Britayne fett, / To seeke her loue (loue far sought alas), / Whose image shee had seene in Venus looking glas" (3.1.8).<sup>21</sup> McCabe observes that "in the world of *The Faerie Queene* to cross paths is to cross histories. When knights meet they engage as the sum total of their respective pasts"; in Britomart's case, this crossing of paths gestures to the sum total of Britomart's past, present, and future, and hints at the ways in which Spenser is experimenting with history as a non-linear affective experience.<sup>22</sup> The naming stanza contains within it the three temporal positions Britomart either occupies or strives towards throughout the course of the poem; everything that Britomart was, is, and is going to do is intimated in these lines. As the "famous Britomart," Spenser posits that she is already embedded in readers' memories. Moreover, the brief mention of her "straunge aduventure" points to a personal history

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>21</sup> The description of Britomart as "famous" also explicitly aligns her with Arthur ("the famous Briton prince") and thus alludes to her taking up the history making project that Spenser almost gave to Arthur. (3.1.8 n.6). Of course, Spenser also playfully draws attention to Britomart's literary history since he bases her off *Orlando Furioso*'s Bradamante.

<sup>22</sup> McCabe, *The Pillars of Eternity*, 31.



that has thrust Britomart into Spenser's narrative, which then shifts the naming stanza into Britomart's present and in-progress mission "to seeke her louer." Spenser finally foreshadows the quest's immediate and future outcomes through an affective exclamation; Britomart's lover is and will continue to be "far sought," which concerns Spenser's narrator (and readers by implication) and provokes his pity. While the less-than-hopeful interjection of "alas" might not seem directly expressive of the quest's future, the outburst couched within the parenthetical suggests that the trouble Britomart has had finding her lover is a pattern that is likely to continue.

The stanza naming Britomart hints at her vital embeddedness in the poem's various temporal registers, and Spenser establishes Britomart's relationship to history and the past as especially formative. Britomart's existence in Spenser's poem is essentially conditioned by what has already happened to her because she enters the here and now of *The Faerie Queene* as a character outside and separate from the mythic frame narrative of Gloriana's court, the forever absent origin point of the poem's other knights. Britomart's own history and identity emerge in a narratively independent manner through a flashback that suspends and redirects Spenser's historical fiction along an alternative timeline. As Redcrosse begins, at Britomart's behest, to describe Artegall's appearance, the narrative leaves the two knights behind and travels back in time to the moment when Britomart's desire for Artegall began:

Him whylome in Brytayne she did vew,  
To her reuealed in a mirrhour playne,  
Whereof did grow her first engrafted payne. . . .

By straunge occasion she did him behold,  
And much more straungely gan to loue his sight. (3.2.17-18)

The full extent of Britomart's identity, her quest, and the "straunge" infliction of desire that structures her being-in-the-world of *The Faerie Queene* now unfolds in the most extensive and significant flashback of the entire poem. Of course, *The Faerie Queene* is full of important

flashbacks or recitations of past experiences that fundamentally structure a character's identity. Some notable examples of such flashbacks include Arthur describing his dream of Gloriana, the dying Amavia explaining Mordant's bewitchment by Acrasia, and Scudamore relating his seizure of Amoret. However, Britomart's back-story significantly differs from these other instances because it is not narrated from her first-person perspective; rather, Britomart's affect drives Spenser's narrative into the past. If one considers the etymological roots of "affect," which from the late 1300s was used in its noun form to denote "the capacity for willing or desiring", and in its verb form "to aim at, aspire to," Spenser appears to use Britomart's affective experiences as wavelengths that aim and direct the narrative movement of the poem.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, for Britomart to feel and to be moved implies her ability to move feelingly in and through time.<sup>24</sup> Britomart's emotions therefore function as a form of affective time travel, transporting the narrative back into her personal past and thus enabling readers to experience the development of Britomart's identity in real-time.

The flashback, which Spenser produces via Britomart's visceral emotional responses in her exchange with Redcrosse, foregrounds the moment when Britomart becomes an emotionally agential time-lord. Spenser turns Britomart's own affective history into the generative substance of British history itself through his extensive description of the abject pain and illness Britomart endures once she sees Artegall in the mirror. When Cupid shoots Britomart, he injects her with emotion in such a way that she is explicitly deprived of agency and control: "But the false Archer, which that arrow shot / So slyly, that she did not feele the wound, / Did smyle full smoothly at her weetlesse wofull stound" (3.2.26). Cupid's arrow physically forces Britomart to

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<sup>23</sup> "affect, n." and "affect, v." *OED Online*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.

<sup>24</sup> "Emotion" carried with it a connotation of movement in the early modern period. "emotion, n." *OED Online*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.

feel desire, and Cupid's sadistic "smyle" following this invasive act should provoke a critical pause for readers who might consider Cupid's actions here as a standard poetic trope.<sup>25</sup> More importantly, I argue that this assault violently thrusts Britomart *into time*; reflecting on her once "prowd portaunce," Spenser's narrator reports that Britomart "*now* did quaile: / Sad, solemne, sowre, and full of fancies fraile / She woxe; yet wist she nether how, nor why" (3.2.27, emphasis mine). This coercive fixing of Britomart causes her dangerously undirected experience of her present as both affective and embodied pain. Furthermore, Britomart's emotional and embodied problem is simultaneously a temporal one of being stuck in desire and thus stuck in "now," and she herself acknowledges that this transfixing state of non-stop feeling impacts her temporally as well as physically.<sup>26</sup> As she admits to Glauce, if the knight in the mirror is only an image or shade, then she "can haue no end, nor hope of my desire, / But feed on shadowes, whiles I die for food" (3.2.44). To borrow language from Jessica Murphy's account of Britomart's greensickness, which the early modern period would have diagnosed as a literal obstruction of menstruation, Britomart's entire being is obstructed temporally as well as physically because of her desire.<sup>27</sup>

Through the flashback, Spenser establishes that his chosen history-maker occupies time in a viscerally emotional and embodied way; however, her present state of transfixing and unrequited desire constitutes a dangerous affective mode that stalls and threatens the very history that Britomart is responsible for bringing to life. However, a solution presents itself to Glauce

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<sup>25</sup> My emphasis on the violation of Britomart by Cupid departs slightly from scholarship that seeks to diagnose Britomart's symptoms according to early modern perspectives of female gynecology and puberty. See Jessica C. Murphy, "Of the sicke virgin": Britomart, Greensickness, and the Man in the Mirror," *Spenser Studies XXV* (2010): 109-27.

<sup>26</sup> My use of "transfix" here, which the OED defines as "to pierce through or with, to impale upon. . .to fix or fasten by piercing" ["transfix, v." *OED Online*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.], is extremely deliberate. Like Amoret's heart, which Busirane "quite through transfixing with deadly dart" (3.12.21), Britomart is in a sense impaled within an immediate present through unceasing embodied affect.

<sup>27</sup> Murphy, "Of the sicke virgin," 113-16.

that reflects the methods of Spenser's own "poet historicall;" Britomart and her nurse "thrust into the midst" to find "he, which made / That mirrhour, wherein the sicke Damosell / So straungely vewed her straunge louers shade" (3.3.6). When the two women seek out Merlin, Spenser breaks the poem's affective atmosphere free from the symptoms of stuck-ness and affective entrapment that have dominated it throughout the flashback. Merlin's playful demeanor, moreover, fundamentally transforms the affective register so that Britomart might begin to interact with the world differently. Indeed, Britomart's apprehension at meeting the wizard is almost instantly dispelled by his glib recognition of her, which causes her to blush. As "her pure yuory / into a cleare Carnation suddeine dyde" (3.3.20), Britomart subtly changes from the suffering virgin who "lyke a pined ghost became" (3.2.52) into a subject who can feel and experience emotions other than the longing forced upon her by Cupid. Theresa Krier observes that "any of [Spenser's] characters who are capable of change or of education have the grace to blush, and Britomart is the greatest blusher of all"; and I agree that this instance of blushing instigates a change in Britomart's emotional involvement with the world around her.<sup>28</sup> Britomart's blush creates a moment of pause that affectively reboots her, and this instance of emotional release paves the way for her to be educated regarding the nature of her desire and its relationship to historical time.

When Merlin interprets Britomart's vision of Artegall as a manifestation of prophetic history, he does not just give the amorphous image a local habitation and a name.<sup>29</sup> I argue that Merlin's prophecy allows Britomart to feel her future as an affective past in-process, and that this

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<sup>28</sup> Theresa M. Krier, *Gazing on Secret Sights: Spenser, Classical Imitation, and the Decorums of Vision* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 155.

<sup>29</sup> For a detailed assessment of early modern philosophical perspectives on Providence, and the working of Providential history within Spenser's overall narrative, see McCabe, *The Pillars of Eternity*, 184-93.

emotional connection gives Britomart the capacity to undertake the construction of the future through her quest:

Let no whit thee dismay  
The harde beginne, that meetes thee in the dore,  
And with sharpe fits thy tender hart oppreseth sore.

For so must all things excellent begin,  
And eke enrooted deepe must be that Tree,  
Whose big embodied braunches shall not lin. . . .  
For from thy wombe a famous Progenee  
Shall spring, out of the auncient *Troian* blood. (3.3.21-22)<sup>30</sup>

The opening to Merlin's prophecy positions Britomart upon a threshold, just as the caesura within *Briton moniments* placed Prince Arthur on the threshold between past and present.<sup>31</sup> However, and decidedly unlike Arthur, Britomart is tasked to recognize that her emotionally embodied life constitutes history's beginning because it is only through her acting upon those feelings that history can begin at all. The language of rootedness throughout Britomart's threshold moment testifies to both her embeddedness in history and history's embeddedness within her. Merlin explains that because Britomart "by fatall lore / Hast learn'd to loue" (3.3.21); she feels love as intensely as she does because British history depends on her feeling this love in order to actualize it. The sheer force of Britomart's affect correlates to her affect's potential effects; what she feels is time waiting to unfold, because time depends on her to make it happen.

Spenser uses Merlin's prophecy to demonstrate how Britomart's pain manifests her active relationship with time, which figures a vibrantly affective and relational mode of being in

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<sup>30</sup> My argument here draws upon and echoes J.K. Barret, who finds that "Spenser's repeated treatment of accounts of Britain's origins betrays a shrewd recognition that the future controls the events of the past. . .and also emblemizes the notion that the history of the future requires an understanding of the present moment as an act of narrative construction." Barret, *Untold Futures: Time and Literary Culture in Renaissance England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), 103.

<sup>31</sup> Barret offers an extensive and careful reading of the correspondences between the historical episodes in 2.10 and 3.3 that considers the ways in which the episodes work together to explore how "national history discovers and invents a future enabled by retrospective, even backward-headed, process and prospect" (63.) Ibid., 63-92.

(and crafting) history. Merlin categorizes her desire as a love that is imbued with historical promise; therefore, Britomart needs to productively (and reproductively) respond to her emotions based upon this relationship. However, the teleological drive of Merlin's revelations introduces a singular problem that Glauce helpfully articulates: "But read (saide *Glauce*) thou Magitian / What meanes shall she out seeke, or what waies take? / How shall she know, how shall she finde the man (3.3.24-25)? In the midst of Merlin's elevated prophetic rhetoric that envisions Britomart's womb as a Jesse Tree, Glauce brings us back to earth with the practical consideration of what exactly is needed to make history: in short, a physically present Artegall whom Britomart wants—and needs—to marry and have sex with. Glauce's interruption illustrates that what Britomart feels, and how Merlin interprets her feeling to give her emotions monumental consequence, demands practical action in the real world. Simply put, destiny can decree all it wants, but Britomart still has to find the guy. If Merlin has succeeded in emotionally rebooting Britomart by casting her desire as constitutive of history itself, then what is the next step? How can she translate this knowledge of her future descendants, and her obligations to time itself, into actions that will actualize them?

The solution, or at least a partial solution and the first step in Britomart's affective training to become *The Faerie Queene's* history-maker, comes when Merlin laments the "woe, and woe, and euerlasting woe" (3.3.42) that shall come to the Britons following their subjugation by the Saxons. Crucially, Merlin cries out for someone to mourn with him: "O who shal helpe me to lament, and mourne / The royall seed, the antique Troian blood" (3.3.42), and Britomart answers his call for help:

The Damzell was *full deepe empassioned*,  
Both for his griefe, and for her peoples sake,  
Whose future woes so plaine he fashioned  
And sighing sore, at length him thus bespake;

Ah but will heuens fury neuer slake,  
Nor vengeaunce huge relent it selfe at laste? (3.3.43 my emphasis)

In response to Merlin's despair and the prophesied conquering of her future descendants, Britomart feels "empassioned." Meaning "to fill or inflame with passion; to infuse passion into," "empassioned" seems like a word that would be a favorite of Spenser's to describe the panoply of passionate affects that pervade *The Faerie Queene's* universe.<sup>32</sup> Surprisingly, however, this word is only used five times in the 1590 edition, and four times in the 1596 edition.<sup>33</sup> With the one exception of the narrator feeling "empassioned so deepe, / For fairest *Vnaes* sake" (1.3.2), there is just one character in the 1590 *Faerie Queen* that can be "empassioned." That character is Britomart.

To be "empassioned" is Britomart's affective trademark from this point forward in the poem, and following this first experience of it with Merlin, Britomart will continue to be infused with passion as a viscerally sympathetic response to someone else's emotional state.<sup>34</sup> Britomart starts learning how to feel the pain of others even as she tries to cope with her own pain, and she shows a nascent ability to engage in this social sharing of affect in and across time. In this case, she simultaneously empathizes with unborn people and their historical travails as she empathizes with and answers the magician's pleas for companionship in his woe. Britomart's capacity to open herself up to the sufferings of human beings both directly in front of her and a thousand years in the future corresponds to the ethics of vulnerability that Joseph Campana has identified

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<sup>32</sup> "impassion, v." *OED Online*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.

<sup>33</sup> See Charles Grosvenor Osgood, *A Concordance to the Poems of Edmund Spenser* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1915), 437. The omitted instance is of course due to the revisions of Book 3's conclusion between 1590 and 1596, in which Spenser replaced Scudamore and Amoret's reunion with Britomart and Amoret emerging from the House of Busirane to find Scudamore gone. I will delve into the implications of Britomart's "empassioned" reaction to the couple (3.12.46\*) later in the chapter.

<sup>34</sup> My argument here builds off Judith Anderson's assertion that Britomart becomes "progressively defined through relations of sympathy and antipathy with characters and events." Anderson, "Britomart," in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. A.C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 114.

as a primary concern of Spenser's poetics. Campana argues that *The Faerie Queene* configures vulnerability as an openness to sensation, and especially pain, that when shared "would constitute the ground for ethical behavior."<sup>35</sup> I agree that Britomart's ability to feel "empassioned" by and for other characters illustrates a striking example of this ethics of vulnerability; moreover, I would add that this capacity to be vulnerable to and to share in another's affect is, to Spenser's mind, precisely what makes Britomart qualified to be the history-maker of *The Faerie Queene*. By participating in and responding to Merlin's grief while feeling grief for the fate of her own descendants, Britomart experiences her embodied emotions not as solitary confinement in present pain, but rather as "dense social networks of affect and obligation."<sup>36</sup> This initial foray into feeling with others thus lays the foundation for Britomart to make herself affectively vulnerable to both her present world and to the trajectory of historical time. As a result of such vulnerability, she will be called upon to both feel and act in service to communities that are and communities that are yet to be.

### **Feeling Future-Pasts and Striving Towards Personal Historical Fulfillment**

Following the conclusion of Merlin's prophecy, and in spite of his perturbing (but critically indecipherable) "suddein fitt, and halfe extaticke stoure" (3.3.50), Britomart and Glauce depart from the magician "conceiuing hope of comfort glad" (3.3.51). Fueled by Merlin's assurances that Britomart can and will achieve union with Artegall, she and her nurse now set about the nitty-gritty process of how to find him. Moreover, while Glauce's "bold deuise" (3.3.52) that Britomart disguise herself as a knight might seem an obvious life-preserving necessity given that she is about to go out into a world populated by hyper-allegorized monsters and potential rapists, the justification Glauce gives for such a disguise further illustrates

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<sup>35</sup> Campana, *The Pain of Reformation*, 17.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.



Britomart's intimate embeddedness within history and time. After acknowledging they both will need a bit of practice to be able to wield broadswords and shields, Glauce assures Britomart that it isn't just some minor combat training that will "shortly make [her] a mayd Martiall" (3.3.53):

And sooth, it ought your corage much inflame,  
To heare so often, in that royall hous,  
From whence to none inferior ye came:  
Bards tell of many wemen valorous,  
Which haue full many feats aduenturous,  
Performd, in paragone of proudest men. (3.3.54)

Glauce draws Britomart's attention to that most quintessentially Renaissance source of motivation and precedent: historical exempla. Glauce's invocation of bold Bunduca, stout Guendolen, renowned Martia, and redoubted Emmilen encourages Britomart to take courage from the examples of familial and literary female forebears who took up the mantle of knighthood. Moreover, these inspirational ancestral warrior mothers prove so effective that Britomart responds with the textbook reaction that exempla were designed to provoke: "Her harty wordes so deepe into the mynd / Of the yong Damzell sunke, that great desire / Of warlike armes in her forthwith they tynd / And generous stout courage did inspyre" (3.3.57).

Once again, a comparison to Arthur invites itself, particularly with regard to how Arthur and Britomart are moved to action in the world as a result of their emotional engagement with historical examples. Earlier I argued that during the *Briton moniments* episode of Book 2, Arthur's emotional response to the chronicle constitutes a strangely antisocial and disconnected response; while Arthur might be delighted by the history he reads, such emotion does not convert into any sort of action based on feeling empathy for historical people. In fact, I believe that Spenser goes to great lengths to keep Arthur from being moved by affective history because such a reaction would keep Arthur from his apparent duties as a "magnificent" knight: in this case, feasting and defending Alma's castle. Conversely, Britomart is moved by the historical precedent

of female knights in both mind and body and, by building upon her affective training with Merlin, she converts those emotions into action: “She resolu’d, vnweeting to her Syre, / Aduent’rous knighthood on her selfe to don” (3.3.57). Britomart takes her emotional identification with and feelings of inspiration from the past and channels them to shape her present, and when she steps back into the present-tense of the poem clad as the Knight of Chastity, she also reenters the poem’s time-scape as “a threshold figure that engages the uncanny gap between past and present.”<sup>37</sup> Thus, unlike Arthur, Britomart once again shows herself to be *The Faerie Queene*’s most qualified history-maker because she can affectively reach back into her ancestral past and feel time in ways that enable her to occupy her present as an active agent.

As Spenser closes the extended flashback with the striking image of Britomart riding forth, it becomes clear that his “mayd Martiall” has come a long way from the diseased and stagnant abject position in which she was mired earlier. However, such progress is quickly hampered when Britomart takes leave of Redcrosse and begins thinking about Artegall. Imagining that she might “beguile her grievous smart” (3.4.6), Britomart tries to trick herself into not obsessing over the fact that she still experiences her love as unfulfilled desire, but such efforts prove familiarly ineffective and harmful: “But so her smart was much more grievous bredd, / And the deepe wound more deep engord her hart, / That nought but death her dolour mote depart” (3.4.6). The invasive, infectious, and crippling painful nature of Britomart’s desire overtakes her, which provokes the first of three complaints that structure Canto 4.<sup>38</sup> As Suzanne Wofford observes, Britomart turns to Petrarchan poetic forms in order to express her

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<sup>37</sup> Escobedo, *Nationalism and Historical Loss*, 157.

<sup>38</sup> Suzanne Wofford links Britomart’s reversion into dangerously affective interiority to the Petrarchan subtext of Canto 4, and argues that “Britomart’s restlessness and her turn inward, then, must be understood as indicating that she is taking up the position of the Petrarchan lover, with all the dangers for her quest and her poem which that stance entails.” Wofford, “Britomart’s Petrarchan Lament: Allegory and Narrative in the *Faerie Queene* III, iv,” *Comparative Literature* 39 (1987): 33-34.

suffering, but ironically, while “erotic frustration leads to allegory. . . .allegory may be a mode which itself leads to erotic frustration.”<sup>39</sup> However, when the allegorization of her desire into stormy waves proves counter-productive, Britomart ceases her Petrarchan complaint to the sea and instead tries to implement the affective tool-kit for managing her suffering that she began to develop with Merlin: “Then sighing softly sore, and inly deepe, / She shut vp all her plaint in priuy griefe; / For her great courage would not let her weepe” (3.4.11). Glauce plays a crucial role in these efforts to manage rather than simply flounder in pain by encouraging Britomart to once again feel time:

That old *Glauce* gan with sharpe reprieve,  
Her to restraine, and giue her good reliefe,  
Through hope of those, which *Merlin* had her told  
Should of her name and nation be chiefe,  
And fetch their being from the sacred mould  
Of her immortall womb, to be in heauen enrold. (3.4.11)

Glauce’s rebuke checks Britomart’s emotions before they devolve into parasitic obsession, and also comforts Britomart by making her focus on an affective and temporal point beyond her present.

However, it is not the example of past female knights that saves Britomart from spiraling into abnormal hyper-feeling. Instead, this time Glauce tells Britomart to both look backward and forward, and *to feel* backward and forward, for her inspiration and will to live: back to Merlin’s prophecy of her future children, and forward to the actual human bodies to which she will someday give birth. Through this process of thinking back and feeling forward, therefore, Glauce posits Britomart’s children and subsequent descendants as her exempla. For Britomart, exempla are not merely static textual representations of a past that she can imitate, and Glauce’s

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 40.

recommendation that she look back to something that does not yet exist echoes Barret's argument that "looking to the status of the past can affect the promised (or threatened) future it predicts."<sup>40</sup> The exempla Britomart most strongly feels reside in the future because the process of actually getting to make those people is the destination towards which all of her actions are bent. By counseling Britomart to feel her family's future history as inspirational, and by reminding her that the future depends on her present action and endurance, this invocation of future exempla "her recomforted" (3.4.12). Britomart is thus rescued from the pitfalls of this Petrarchan form of feeling by being encouraged to feel and act upon her obligation to her future pasts. More importantly, this ability to establish an emotional relationship of exemplarity with people who do not exist yet testifies to the striking hybridity of temporality in Spenser's poem, in which temporal distinctions are liquidated in favor of a continuum upon which the future exists as a past or history in the process of being made. For Britomart, the future is historical or, more accurately, the future is her exemplum, and turning the future into history is the horizon of achievement towards which she strives. Her quest for Artegall, and by extension her quest for the future past that is their family tree, consists now of a process of feeling that which has been and that which will be as something to which she is beholden.

When we meet Britomart again following her defeat of Marinell, she gets her first chance to act in service to felt future pasts through her efforts to create a community based in shared affective history. However, the poem's final extended treatment of Trojan-British history in Malbecco's castle initially appears interested in anything but an accurate account of Galfridian material. Having been prompted by Hellenore "to tell / Of deeds of armes, which vnto them became, / And euery one his kindred, and his name" (3.9.32), Paridell doubles down on the

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<sup>40</sup> Barret, *Untold Futures*, 64.

seduction process he has instigated and begins to describe his descent from Paris and the fall of Troy. Heather Dubrow ably demonstrates how this historical episode—and Paridell’s selfishly motivated complaint—relates to *The Faerie Queene*’s larger concern with history’s objectivity, and indeed the question of what motivates one to read or write history in the first place.<sup>41</sup> And yet portions of Paridell’s tale provoke a passionately affective response not from Hellenore, but from Britomart: “She was *empassiond* at that piteous act, / With zealous enuy of Greekes cruell fact, / Against that nation, from whose race of old / She heard, that she was lineally extract” (3.9.38, emphasis mine). Britomart again experiences her trade-mark affect upon hearing “of Troian warres, and Priams citie sackt” (3.9.38) as she feels passionately involved in the experiences of others in and across historical time. Directly participating in the suffering of her ancestors serves as form of identification that mirrors what Philip Schwyzer defines as “one of the distinctive features of national communities...their boundless inclusiveness when it comes to two sorts of ‘strangers’: the dead, and the unborn.”<sup>42</sup> As we have already seen, Britomart is constantly affectively engaged with and striving toward both the dead and the unborn, and this past-as-future, future-as-past continuum allows her to respond to Paridell in such a way that signifies the potentially relational and communal nature of Britomart’s ability to feel and move proactively through time.

Britomart now experiences her embodied emotional life as inexorably bound up with those who came before her, and in addition to feeling the pain of the past as her own, she translates her “empassioned” affects into social interaction: “Behold, Sir, how your pitifull complaint / Hath found another partner of your payne: / For nothing may impresse so deare

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<sup>41</sup> Heather Dubrow, “The Arraignment of Paridell: Tudor Historiography in *The Faerie Queene*, III.ix,” *Studies in Philology* 87 (1990): 312-16.

<sup>42</sup> Philip Schwyzer, *Literature, Nationalism, and Memory in Early Modern England and Wales* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 2.

constraint, / As countries cause, and commune foes disdayne” (3.9.40). By seizing upon how Paridell’s story has brought them closer in terms of their shared ancestry and shared emotions, Britomart “explicitly connects the process of thinking back and recounting a story of origins with *eros*, a development that works to recast and elucidate the personal, emotional engagement common to the fragments of history scattered throughout the poem.”<sup>43</sup> While Paridell might not have gained the “partner” of his pain that he was hoping for, Spenser’s diction here indicates that sharing personal and national history has placed Paridell and Britomart into a relationship of sorts. Indeed, Britomart’s eager request that Paridell continue the story testifies to the affectively responsive and relational potentials of reading or learning history that Spenser’s readers would have immediately recognized. As D.R. Woolf asserts, “The very nature of historical knowledge [in the early modern period] was such that it was intended to be socially circulated: once read in a book, it was supposed to be put to practical moral or political use, talked about, shared with friends and family, and interactively revised and reshaped by the reader.”<sup>44</sup> For Spenser and his readers telling, or reading, or listening to history constitutes an invitation for communicative interaction with someone else; thus, Britomart’s passionate reaction to the history she hears functions as Spenser’s exemplary instance of how one can be affectively open to and with historical communities throughout time.

The sharing of history in Malbecco’s castle illustrates how Britomart possesses structures of feeling that allow her to feel an immediate connection with the past as a social world. As a result of this ability to feel time, she tries to create fellowships of shared affective history by narrating Britain’s future past:

There there (said Britomart) a fresh appeared  
The glory of the later world to spring,

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<sup>43</sup> Barret, *Untold Futures*, 94.

<sup>44</sup> D.R. Woolf, *Reading History*, 80.

And Troy againe out of her dust was reard,  
To sitt in second seat of soueraine king,  
Of all the world vnder her gouerning.  
But a third kingdom yet is to arise,  
Out of the Trojans scattered of spring. (3.9.44)

The verbal parallels between this moment and its predecessors in Book 2, Canto 10 and Book 3, Canto 3 do not just tie together and conclude the poem's Galfridian material, but also gesture to Britomart's cultivated ability to feel and be in time. Her opening epizeuxis in response to the founding of Rome of course mirrors Arthur's arrival at the caesura within *Briton moniments* ("There abruptly did it end" [2.10.68]). But unlike Arthur, whose "there" interrupts any contact between past and present, Britomart tries to bridge past and present with her repeated "there." Furthermore, after emotionally guiding her listeners through how they should be inspired by the second Troy, Britomart looks toward the future as she directly quotes Merlin's portentous "but yet." As Britomart looks both backward to Brutus's Troynovaunt, and forward to that dynasty's implied future in Spenser's Elizabethan present, she commits an act of narrative imagination that knits past and future together in an affectively charged present.<sup>45</sup> Britomart's ability to envision past, present, and future as a continuum that is always in process allows Spenser's readers to imagine a form for emotional participation in history. And most importantly, for Britomart history takes shape here, albeit contingently and incompletely, through an exchange of stories and ideas with other people in an effort to share the pasts that have been and the pasts that are yet to come.

By sharing pasts and futures in Malbecco's castle, Spenser illustrates how affective history can constitute a form of relationality. However, *The Faerie Queene* simultaneously calls

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<sup>45</sup> Barrett notes the uniquely generative potentials of this ability to feel and imagine time unfolding both back into history and forward into a future: "To imagine what kind of past the present will become is also to grasp how thinking about the future is always an effort to understand the present." Barret, *Untold Futures*, 18.

into question the extent of Britomart's success at forging communal connections in this manner. Dubrow pursues the ambiguity of history-sharing in this episode through her argument that Britomart, like Paridell, might pursue an equally self-interested end in defending the epic version of Trojan-British history.<sup>46</sup> While I believe that Britomart's engagement with national history at least gestures to how feeling the past opens up alternative modes of relationality and pushes epic models of selfhood "away from Vergilian doubt and pathos, in the direction of happiness and fulfillment," I have to agree with Dubrow that the poem wrestles with the uncomfortable valences of both knights' uses of history.<sup>47</sup> The poem hints at the problematic undercurrents of the two knights' history-sharing in the Argument to Canto 9 when it summarizes that "Paridell giusts with Britomart: / Both shew their auncestry" (3.9.Argument). Jousting is directly aligned with the "show" of ancestry, and as a result "showing" is coded as equally competitive and combative. Paridell and Britomart "showing" their ancestry is also a form of "showing off," and this peacocking quality makes the whole exchange feel like a form of indecent exposure. After all, the exchange of Trojan ancestry does not facilitate any epic awareness of selves or communities, but instead concludes with the image of the sexually aroused Hellenore, who hangs "with vigilant regard, and dew attent" (3.9.52) on Paridell's every word. Britomart's "empassioned" outreach to Paridell appears relatively one-sided, and overall this episode's ancestry-measuring serves as an odd prelude to the following book's parody of the act that instigated the *Illiad*. Perhaps Spenser's narrator protests too much when he argues that "good by paragone / Of euill, may more notably be rad" (3.9.2). In this episode, it is not at all obvious if Britomart's showing of history is innocent, just as problematic as Paridell's imitation of Paris, or

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<sup>46</sup> Specifically, Dubrow questions if Britomart's exchange of epic history "is an antithesis and even an antidote to the secretive, seductive, and self-serving mode of communication practiced by Paridell and Hellenore—or merely another version of it." Dubrow, "The Arraignment of Paridell," 320.

<sup>47</sup> Krier, *Gazing on Secret Sights*, 181.



perhaps simply guilty by association, because there is a fruitlessness to exhibiting ancestry that renders the whole endeavor itself suspect.<sup>48</sup> In having Britomart and Paridell “shew their auncestry,” *The Faerie Queene* stumbles upon a form of exhibitionist history that produces as many potential problems as it does potential benefits. Thus, in uniquely Spenserian fashion, the episode allows itself to fall short of its proposed vision of affective history, and cuts itself off.

### **The Heroics of “Empassionment” Leading to Asymptotic, Problematic Affective History**

Following Hellenore’s amorous defection to the centaurs and Malbecco’s mutation into a cuckolded Gollum, Spenser pursues the notion that feeling time makes one actively responsible not simply to destiny, but to actual human beings in need when Britomart stumbles upon the prostrate Scudamore. As she observes the knight violently bemoan the loss of his beloved Amoret, Britomart offers both sympathy and practical assistance to the suffering lovers: “Perhaps this hand may helpe to ease your woe, / And wreak your sorrow on your cruell foe, / At least it faire endeuour will apply” (3.11.15). Britomart pledges to do all she can to help Scudamore, an offer that in its bare simplicity is both proactive and astonishingly kind. Concerned yet calm human interactions—not to mention listening-skills—are in rare supply in *The Faerie Queene*, and in her response to Scudamore Britomart’s sense of obligation to history and to making history manifests in the way she places herself in emotionally responsive and active service to other people.

In her response to Scudamore and subsequent rescue of Amoret from the House of Busirane, Britomart’s structures of feeling time enable her to participate in radically social

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<sup>48</sup> Escobedo hints at a similar discomfort with this episode when he considers the problematic position of historical fiction as the “compromise between the need for a national origin and the fact of historical loss.” This problem emerges in Malbecco’s castle because “Britomart can translate epic continuity to the British past only in so far as she identifies herself with the fictional story of Troy’s fall.” Escobedo, *Nationalism and Historical Loss*, 173, 182.

affective contact with her present. Thus, we see all Britomart's impassioned prowess activated by Scudamore's description of Amoret's kidnapping:

With this sad hersall of his heauy stresse,  
The warlike Damzell was empassiond sore,  
And sayd, Sir knight, your cause is nothing lesse,  
Then is your sorrow, certes if not more. . . .  
I will with proof of last extremity,  
Deliver her fro thence, or with her for you dy. (3.10.18)

In this instance of feeling "empassioned," Britomart commits herself to a heroic form of relationality. Astonished at Britomart's unflinching response to the extreme life-threatening risks attendant on rescuing Amoret, Scudamore communicates the magnitude of Britomart's "empassioned" pledge when he asks her "what huge heroicke magnanimity / Dwells in thy bounteous brest" (3.9.19). Britomart's unique ability to feel with and for other people is now identified as magnanimity, the apex of Aristotelian virtue. As one of two characters in *The Faerie Queene* said to possess this greatness of soul, her conduct throughout the whole of the Busirane episode places her in the unparalleled role of Spenserian superhero who, when confronted by other desperate or hurting beings in need, vibrantly taps into the passions of others and affectively takes on their suffering as her own quest.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, if we remember the "Letter of the Authors" description of how the Knight of Chastity fits into the frame narrative of Gloriana's court, we see that this singular ability to occupy and participate in her present in a thoroughly responsive way has been a hallmark of Britomart's being-in-the-world of Spenser's poem since he invented her. The letter describes the report of Amoret's kidnapping, which results in Scudamore's leaving the court of the Faerie Queene to rescue her. However, the letter then announces that Scudamore, who cannot save Amoret from Busirane "by reason of the hard

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<sup>49</sup> Guyon is the other character, in whose face Arthur "redd great magnanimity" (2.8.23).

Enchantments, after long sorrow, in the end met with Britomartis, who succoured him, and reskewed his loue” (77-78). The basic substance of Britomart’s identity in *The Faerie Queene* rests upon these two intertwined acts of aid, of succor and rescue, which reveal that Britomart’s heroism consists of feeling for, with, and in service to other people by embracing “states of vulnerability. . .that resist the management, restriction, or expurgation of pain, pleasure, affect, and sensation.”<sup>50</sup> In the face of the manifold affective, psychological, and bodily risks that she faces in the House of Busirane, Britomart’s magnanimity emerges as a result of her development as a feeling agent throughout the course of the poem. Simply put, Britomart can be heroically attuned and act in response to the emotions and needs of others because she has been asked to feel the emotions and needs of people throughout time.

Although the majority of critical attention given to Britomart’s conduct during the Busirane episodes centers upon her role as a fit reader or interpreter, what I believe gets lost in these considerations is the simplicity of action that, for Spenser, constitutes the substance of Britomart’s heroism in the first place. Britomart’s courage manifests through her choice to go forth and to keep going forth regardless of the enchanted flames or horror-show of embodied love poetry conventions that cross her path. Feeling past and future has demanded of Britomart a remarkable form of affective responsiveness that she now employs to offer herself and all she has in service to another, which demonstrates that her greatness of spirit results from how she has learned to affectively and proactively be in, think about, and move through time. Lauren Silberman has argued that Book 3 of *The Faerie Queene* posits “the erotic as an intellectual model” through which Spenser portrays exploratory, forward-looking, and risky forms of being

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<sup>50</sup> Campana, *The Pain of Reformation*, 12.

and being with others.<sup>51</sup> I believe that Britomart's magnanimous succoring of Scudamore and rescuing of Amoret demonstrates the results of accepting the erotic as both an affectively intellectual and affectively *temporal* model. As Spenser's magnanimous history-maker, Britomart embraces the exploratory, risky mode of learning from and interacting with the world because she experiences time itself—be it past, present, or future—as an anticipation of moving toward erotic and historical fulfillment. Britomart's greatness of soul, therefore, is a greatness of feeling, because it is a way of feeling that traverses temporal as well as social or actual boundaries. Regardless of the near-crippling depression, unfulfilled desire, or hyper-allegorized monsters that stand in her way, throughout Book 3 Britomart gradually learns how to experience her past, her future past, and the present as intertwined environments for growth and transformation. Affective history and future pasts constitute Britomart's horizon of fulfillment, and when she emerges with Amoret from the House of Busirane at the conclusion of the 1590 *Faerie Queene*, she has made possible an experience of embodied and affective life as “an image of desire in the process of being gratified, an expansive and expanded selfhood that embraces figures of its history and its future.”<sup>52</sup>

Yet the gratified desire with which Spenser concludes the first installment of *The Faerie Queene* is not Britomart's, but rather Scudamore's and Amoret's. In response to the couple's blissfully erotic reunion, Britomart experiences her own and the poem's final instance of impassioned feeling that triggers less than magnanimous emotions once the rescue is complete: “Britomart halfe enuying their blesse, / Was much empassiond in her gentle sprite, / And to her selfe oft wisht like happinesse, / In vaine she wisht, that fate n'ould let her yet possesse”

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<sup>51</sup> Lauren Silberman, *Transforming Desire: Erotic Knowledge in Books III and IV of The Faerie Queene* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 6.

<sup>52</sup> Krier, *Gazing on Secret Sights*, 181.

(3.12.46\*). In the presence of the couple's ecstasy Britomart can only be reminded that, an entire book of *The Faerie Queene* later, the desire that instigated her quest—and the desire upon which history-making depends—remains unfulfilled. Furthermore, this problematically tinged and final instance of impassioned feeling subtly marks *The Faerie Queene*'s shift away from affective history in the poem's next edition. Britomart's striving "empassionment" is replaced in the 1596 continuation with the painfully anticlimactic revelation that Scudamore was neither patient nor trusting enough to just wait. The cancellation of Amoret's and Scudamore's reunion illustrates Silberman's argument that *The Faerie Queene* replaces the erotic intellectual model of Book 3, in which loss is experienced as an opportunity for finding, with an economy of winning and losing in Book 4.<sup>53</sup> I further argue that Spenser's replacement of fulfilled passion with bizarre absence also transforms, and indeed problematizes, the poem's depiction of affective history as a sustainable model for being in, getting through, and making history.

In Books 4 and 5 of *The Faerie Queene*, the vibrantly erotic and expansive model of self, time, desire, history, and destiny as that towards which Britomart rides forth are now experienced as an asymptote, as a not yet.<sup>54</sup> For example, in perhaps the most fortuitous moment that the poem has provided her thus far, she cannot see Artegall for the metaphorical trees that are the demands of chivalric knighthood parodied throughout Book 4:

Vpon her first aduenture forth did ride,  
 To seeke her lou'd, making blind love her guide.  
 Vnluckie Mayd to seeke her enemie,  
 Vnluckie Mayd to seeke him farre and wide,  
 Whom, when he was vnto her selfe most nie,  
 She through his late disguizement could not him descrie. (4.5.29)

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<sup>53</sup> Silberman, *Transforming Desire*, 72.

<sup>54</sup> Silberman similarly notes that in Book 4 "we see the quest romance being refigured, as a pattern of interpolated duty and delayed gratification, rather than satisfaction approached." *Ibid.*, 116.

With its emphasis on the “unlucky” Britomart’s ironic missed opportunity, the poem interrogates its previous investment in affect’s function as an emotional GPS for navigating the present. In being guided by blind love, Britomart approaches but then rides away from the person toward whom her desire and future pasts are bent; thus, Spenser suggests that being in and feeling her present as both temporally hybrid and completely affective has become more of a hindrance than a help to Britomart.

Due to *The Faerie Queene*’s new focus on asymptotic missed chances over and against the personal, vibrant, and fulfilling potential of affective history—a focus we might now distinguish as fighting against time rather than moving productively through it—Canto 6 of Book 4 registers as an unfulfilled and unfulfilling episode in its depiction of Britomart’s and Artegall’s long-awaited meeting. When Britomart, after a charged exchange of blows, recognizes “the louely face of Artegall” (4.6.26),

Soone as she heard the name of *Artegall*,  
Her hart did leape, and all her hart-strings tremble,  
For sudden ioy, and secret feare withall,  
And all her vitall powres with motion nimble,  
To succour it, themselues gan there assemble. (4.6.29)

Britomart experiences an almost boundless proliferation of emotionally embodied reactions that harken back to the porous and erotic potentiality of Book 3, because her emotions seem to carve out a space and time in which she and Artegall can enter into affective union. Throughout the brief scenes of their courtship, Spenser uses Britomart’s and Artegall’s developing affective attunement to explore the possibility of fully immersive intimacy with another. However, the fact remains that “Sir Artegall, who all this while was bound / Vpon an hard aduventure yet in quest, / Fit time for him thence to depart it found” (4.6.42). While James Kuzner finds that “Spenser puts the recognition of shared vulnerability—one that stays swords and induces complete

incapacity—at the inception of England itself,” I counter that we do not see English history beginning here, but rather being approached and then evaded.<sup>55</sup> Artegall remains *en media* quest, and indeed has his own history-making to accomplish if we hearken back to Merlin’s prophecy. Artegall’s own personal future-past, in which he returns to Britain “to withstand / The powre of forreine Paynims” to then be “cut off by practice criminall, / Of secrete foes” (3.3.27, 28), remains to be fulfilled, and therefore the fulfillment of Britomart’s desired future-past will have to wait.

Spenser reemphasizes the asymptotic sense of lost future-pasts and incomplete affective history in his depiction of Britomart’s anger and disappointment at Artegall’s departure. While Britomart may have found the knight in the mirror, and even though she “yeelded leaue, howeuer malcontent / She inly were, and in her mind displeased” (4.6.44), she now must endure the affective history that awaits her as an undetermined and insufferable moment of pause. Through her angry sense of abandonment, and through the next book’s subsequent scenes of crippling negative feeling, Spenser indicates that Britomart’s methods for moving through and achieving fulfillment in time might be too much to ask of anyone, including *The Faerie Queene*’s magnanimous “mayd Martiall.”

Much has been made of Britomart’s violent reactions of jealousy and rage in Book 5 when she learns of Artegall’s capture and imprisonment by Radigund. While she does misinterpret Artegall’s subjection as evidence of infidelity, I do not think the poem or Spenser condemns Britomart for her reaction here. First, Spenser signifies that Britomart’s pain and

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<sup>55</sup> James Kuzner, *Open Subjects: English Renaissance Republicans, Modern Selfhoods, and the Virtue of Vulnerability* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 39-76. Such evasiveness reflects Katherine Eggert’s argument that in Books 4 and 5 “both the desirability and the conclusiveness of marriage become deeply compromised, and weddings are generally delayed or evaded.” Eggert, *Showing Like a Queen: Female Authority and Literary Experiment in Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 34.

worry stems from the unproductive nature of how she's made to spend her time: "After that the vtmost date, assynde / For his returne, she waited had for nought, / She gan to cast in her misdoubtfull mynde / A thousand feares, that loue-sicke fancies faine to fynde" (5.6.3). In a scene that mirrors her suffering following Cupid's violation, Spenser shows that Britomart feels this time of waiting as a barren time spent brooding upon a desired but unreachable point of self-fulfillment, which appears to be more dangerous and unbearable for Britomart than any danger she faced upon her quest.<sup>56</sup> Second, I argue that Spenser intends Britomart's agony and fury at Artegall to be interpreted, not as evidence of immaturity or irrationality, but rather as a sign of the mammoth and unsustainable difficulty inherent in feeling time, her own pain, and the pain of others as fully as she does:

When she had with such vnquiet fits  
Her selfe there close afflicted long in vaine,  
Yet found no easement in her troubled wits  
She vnto *Talus* forth return'd againe. . . .  
And gan enquire of him, with mylder mood,  
The certaine cause of *Artegals* detaine. . . .

All which when she with hard enduraunce had  
Here to the end, she was right sore bestad,  
With sodaine stounds of wrath and grieffe attone. (5.6.15,17)

When told that Artegall has been imprisoned rather than seduced by Radigund, Britomart explodes into a flurry of panic, wrath, and grief. She is then rewarded with further debilitating affect because of her efforts to calm herself and listen empathetically to Talus's report. The poem therefore shows how Britomart's ability to feel in the radically social and relational ways that she does can be just as harmful as it is magnanimous. Indeed, in a recent *Scientific American* article

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<sup>56</sup> Barret's exploration of vacant versus spare time in Book 5 helpfully articulates the dually affective and temporal discomfort of Britomart's period of waiting. Barret "link[s] vacant time to the set of experiences one might have had, but didn't. . . . Vacant time is not inextricably tied to fleshing out those possible experiences, and, in fact, highlights a problem of access to what might be." J.K. Barret, "Vacant Time in *The Faerie Queene*," *ELH* 81 (2014): 11.



entitled “Too Much Emotional Intelligence Is A Bad Thing,” Agata Blaszcak-Boxe offers an overview of recent studies that “challenge the prevailing view that emotional intelligence is uniformly beneficial to its bearer.”<sup>57</sup> In a similar move to these studies which suggest “that emotionally perceptive people might be particularly susceptible to feelings of depression and hopelessness. . . [and] may assume responsibility for other people's sadness or anger,” Spenser questions Britomart’s previously heroic porousness to the emotions of others both in her present and across historical time.<sup>58</sup> Such active and militantly engaged feeling can endanger the self as much as it strengthens or creates expansive, unbounded selves, as Britomart’s depressive hopelessness in Book 5 demonstrates. Therefore, as Britomart employs the only palliative she possesses to combat her pain as “forth she rode vppon her ready way, / To seeke her Knight” (5.6.17-18), the poem turns away from its experimentation with the structures of feeling that have encouraged such temporally hybrid yet risky emotional intelligence.

### **Abandoning “Empassioned” Affective History**

Book 5 of *The Faerie Queene*, and specifically the instance of revelation and interpretation in the Temple of Isis, suspends and unravels the affective technologies that have structured Britomart’s quest and the poem’s overall exploration of history as an unfolding present. Britomart’s “wondrous vision, which did close implie / The course of all her fortune and posteritie” (5.7.12), is meant to be directly juxtaposed to the episode in Merlin’s cave, when Britomart was first trained in how to feel and be in time. Britomart’s vision of both becoming Isis and being protected by her, of being wooed and impregnated by the crocodile, and of finally giving birth to a conquering lion rightfully provokes a “thousand thoughts feeding her fantasie”

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<sup>57</sup> Agata Blaszcak-Boxe, “Too Much Emotional Intelligence Is a Bad Thing,” *Scientific American*, March 1, 2017, accessed March 7, 2017, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/too-much-emotional-intelligence-is-a-bad-thing/>.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

(5.7.16-17).<sup>59</sup> And just as Merlin helped her understand what the image in his looking glass meant for her, Britomart divulges her dream to Isis's head priest for assistance in interpretation. However, whereas Merlin assured Britomart that her love for the supposed vision marked the *beginning* of both British history and Britomart's own destined future-past as dynastic wife and mother, the priest in the Temple of Isis interprets her vision as the definitive *ending* of both her affective and actual quest.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, while Merlin encouraged Britomart to feel her family's past as potential, and thus introduced Britomart to a form of affective history that simultaneously enabled her to make history, the priest's strictly allegorical reading of her vision untangles the hybridized affective time pioneered in Book 3:

Can from th'immortall Gods ought hidden bee?  
 They doe thy lineage, and thy Lordly brood;  
 They doe thy sire, lamenting sore for thee;  
 They doe thy loue, forlorne in womens thraldome see.

The end whereof, and all the long euent,  
 They doe to thee in this same dreame discover. (5.7.22)

Upon discovering Britomart's identity, the priest redefines and establishes who she is in relation to a distinctly linear sense of time governed by that which is omnipotent and immortal; moreover, the priest carefully demarcates Britomart's past, present, and future into three unmingled states. Britomart has a past that is defined by her ancestors, a future that is defined by her offspring, and a present that is defined by her relationship to her suffering father and her betrothed, and ne'er again the three shall meet. With affective history and future pasts now rendered into separate times of past, present, and future, Britomart is assured by the priest that

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<sup>59</sup> For an account of how Britomart serves as both "spectator and participant" in her dream, and consequently sets aside her interiority in order to become an iconographic figure reflective of Elizabeth I, see Julia M. Walker, *Medusa's Mirror's: Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and the Metamorphosis of the Female Self* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998), 104-16.

<sup>60</sup> In a similar emphasis on beginnings versus endings being established in this episode, Walker argues "that it is the dream that allows the quest for self-identity generated by mirror vision to end." *Ibid.*, 104.

the dream has revealed the end of her story, that she will get the ending she wants, and therefore that she need no longer affectively strive to wrench destiny into being, but rather can simply “giue thee ioyance of thy dreame” (5.7.23).

The priest’s interpretation of Britomart’s dream as a clear and uncomplicated revelation of her destiny as it has been promised to her transforms the poem’s previous investment in “empassioned” response with a new and opposing emphasis on Britomart’s desire for “easement.” As I argued earlier, the formative step in Britomart’s affective training as a history-maker is the moment when she is “empassioned” by Merlin’s own suffering. In her states of “empassionment,” Britomart achieves a radically social and active capacity for affectivity that constitutes the grounds for her heroism, and that represents Spenser’s most daring experiment with affective temporality as a means of fashioning readers’ capacities for vibrant shared feeling. However, in the Temple of Isis Britomart’s trademark affective state is instead replaced with a more tepid emotional response to her own story’s ending: “When she vnto the end had heard, / She much was eased in her troublous thought” (5.7.24). Britomart does not worry about nor agonize over the priest’s interpretation of her dream, nor does she pose questions about it as she did with Merlin; rather, she accepts the interpretation because it makes her not feel as much. Allowing Britomart to feel “eased” lets her off the hook in terms of the affective expectations that have governed her role as the poem’s history-maker. By letting Britomart be eased and then depart to chop off Radigund’s head, Spenser pumps the brakes on both the vibrancy and conversely consuming force of her affective life.

*The Faerie Queene* will no longer depend on Britomart’s ability to feel and thus make history happen, and I believe Spenser’s readers are meant to wonder if this is such a bad thing. Rather than committing what Silberman calls “Monday morning quarterbacking of the allegory,”

perhaps Spenser wishes to remind us that, in crafting a figure whose very ontological status is defined by her ability to feel with and for others, such affectivity has very nearly killed Britomart on multiple occasions.<sup>61</sup> A part of me agrees with Judith Anderson's argument that "Britomart, the too-human woman whom we first see in Book V, is gradually being rationalized out of her own individual existence;" but, as the poem's depictions of the emotional and physical cost of being an all-too-human "mayd Martiall" shows, perhaps it is logically time for Britomart to stop feeling time.<sup>62</sup>

By juxtaposing Britomart's educational experiences in Merlin's cave and Isis Church, and consequently by juxtaposing the former's investment in "empassioned" response with the latter's acceptance of being "eased," Spenser concludes his poem's experimentation with feeling time as a means for making both history and personal fulfillment possible. Furthermore, the poem's turn to historical allegory through allusions to very recent historical events seem to demand the replacement of the affective history experienced by Britomart. Indeed, the trial and execution of Duessa by Mercilla forcibly demonstrates that Britomart's "empassionment" no longer has a place in this poetic universe. When Duessa's advocates plead for her following Zele's condemnation of her crimes, one onlooker is moved to share and feel the suffering of the accused: "With the neare touch whereof in tender hart / *The Briton Prince was sore empassionate,* / And woxe inclined much vnto her part" (5.9.46, emphasis mine). In a surprising twist, Prince Arthur experiences his future kinswoman's and heroic female counterpart's trademark affect, and as a result he briefly wonders if Duessa should be shown mercy. But in this world of allusion and allegory such impassioned feelings no longer hold their magnificent, nor

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<sup>61</sup> Quoted in Walker, *Medusa's Mirrors*, 103.

<sup>62</sup> Judith Anderson, "'Nor Man It Is': The Knight of Justice in Book V of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*," *PMLA* 85 (1970): 72.

their history-making, resonance. As Katherine Eggert has argued, Book 5 explicitly turns to historical allegory in order to overcome the threat of female authority—and female literary form—with which Spenser has experimented. “Book 5’s repeal of feminine authority,” Eggert claims, “becomes both the motivation and the prerequisite for its turn toward the bleak new genre of historical allegory. . . . A shift in genre is baldly signaled by a shift in the gender of political regime.”<sup>63</sup> In a similar vein, I argue that we see historical allegory forcefully turn off affectively impassioned forms of history-making, and this generic and emotional experimentation is abandoned once it is encoded as strictly (and misogynistically) female.

When Arthur briefly feels a glimmer of impassioned empathy for Duessa, the examples of both Aretgall and Mercilla subtly admonish the Prince for this detour into “feminine” feeling. Artegall “with constant firm intent, / For zeale of Iustice was against [Duessa] bent” (5.9.49), while in the face of this “firm” demand for justice Mercilla “was touched nere / With piteous ruth of her so wretched plight” (5.9.50). Mercilla is afforded the luxury of feeling pity—and theoretically contemplating mercy—for Duessa because that is what great ladies do. But, crucially, Mercilla’s reluctance to execute Duessa is simultaneously a feminine case of feeling too much, and thus hampering effective, unyielding male justice “with more than needfull natural remorse” (5.10.4). For justice’s champions and administrators, such impassioned emotion no longer functions as a heroic means for striving toward and making history; rather, this feminized feeling is more of a hindrance than a help and must be checked by historical allegory. After all, as the allegorical stand-in for Mary Queen of Scots Duessa must, logically and historically, be punished for her crimes. What good is feeling impassioned in a world in which justice and history demand her head on a spike, in which Irena must be rescued and Belge

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<sup>63</sup> Eggert, *Showing Like A Queen*, 25.

liberated from a tyrant's rule? If one's goal is to represent immediately relevant issues of Elizabethan justice and foreign policy, hybrid time and feeling history as something that is "not yet" simply will not work. The bluntness of justice demands an equally blunt, straightforward means of being-in-time, and in Book 5 temporal hybridity and affective expansiveness are replaced with "a tunnel vision meant to afford narrative progress" and a veneer of historical progress.<sup>64</sup>

So, to echo Patricia Parker's observation regarding *The Faerie Queene's* dilatory poetics, at the conclusion of *The Faerie Queene* affective history "remains on the threshold of a posited presence."<sup>65</sup> Britomart's ability to feel history and thus make it, to be affectively in contact with past and future, functions as the posited presence towards which she—and occasionally the reader—strives. Through Britomart and her vibrant engagement with the potentials of affective history, Spenser is able to explore how, if pasts and futures can be made both affective and embodied, then poetry itself can facilitate a sort of emotional continuum beyond the restrictions of linear time. And yet, having gone forth, and forth, and forth, Britomart is left to cope with the attendant risks of being-in-time by constantly "thrusting into the midstest:"

There she continued for a certaine space,  
Till through his want her woe did more increase:  
Then hoping that the change of aire and place  
Would change her paine, and sorrow somewhat ease,  
She parted thence, her anguish to appease. (5.7.44-45)

Her fate, and the fate of affective history generally in *The Faerie Queene*, is to be left waiting; waiting for Artégall, waiting for emotional satisfaction, waiting for the Tudors. The quest to make history, to find fulfillment, to be with others and to live in fellowship with them, is

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 43

<sup>65</sup> Patricia Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 82.

consistently rendered asymptotic; the end retreats even as it approaches, and for each step taken forward, two are taken back. Spenser thus confronts and acknowledges the inherent risks of ontologically occupying all points in time as a perpetual now or an unanswered “not yet.” And perhaps that is a small part of what Merlin sees, and what Merlin feels, when he admits to Britomart “but yet the end is not” (3.3.50).

## Chapter Four

### History-Making Theatrics of Hate in *Henry VI* and *Richard III*

Shakespeare's first history plays, written and performed in the early 1590s, face a question posed by every text examined in this project so far: what are the emotional, physical, and mental consequences of affective history on an early modern subject? What happens when an early modern person not only feels the past, but also comes into embodied contact with it as a result of aesthetic representation? Must affective history always be experienced as an invasive haunting that has to be repressed, as in the *Mirror*? Or must the sensual potential of feeling time, and of vibrantly experiencing it as a hybrid of future-pasts, necessarily devolve into a crippling excess of emotion, as it does with Britomart? Can English history be represented so that it is dynamic, viscerally present and, above all, entertaining?

In this chapter, I argue that Shakespeare's first English history plays, specifically *Henry VI, Parts 2 and 3* and *Richard III*, successfully enact the emotionally experiential and pleasurable potentials of affective history.<sup>1</sup> By turning the English past into a fully theatrical, and thus fully embodied, form of entertainment, Shakespeare's history plays offer a revolutionary formal intervention in early modern England's obsession with its national past; furthermore, the plays illuminate how, by staging the past as an unfolding present experience, affective history can function as a form of time-travel.<sup>2</sup> And, as this chapter will show, the Shakespearean history play makes the past emotional, embodied, and thus present through a constant dialectic between two

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<sup>1</sup> I subscribe to the argument that 2 *Henry VI*, first published in 1594 in quarto as *The First Part of the Contention Betwixt the two famous Houses of York and Lancaster*, was written first out of the three *Henry VI* plays, and that the play published in the 1623 Folio as *Henry VI, Part One* was written after Parts 2 and 3 as a "prequel" of sorts. For a summation of these views, see Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 111-12. For the argument that 1 *Henry VI* came first, see Hanspeter Born, "The Date and Authorship of 2, 3 *Henry VI*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 25 (1974): 325-34.

<sup>2</sup> This dynamic is hinted at in a lecture given by A.R. Humphreys, in which he considers how the history plays "reach out into mental dimensions of space and time and thereby form imaginative complexes of great vitality." Humphreys, "Shakespeare's Histories and 'The Emotion of Multitude,'" *Proceedings of the British Academy* 54 (1968): 265.



species of affective encounter: the viscerally violent negative encounter between embodied historical people onstage; and the seductive encounter between this brutal dramatized history and the audience that affectively participates in its unfolding. 2 and 3 *Henry VI* and *Richard III* make history happen dramatically through rapid-fire exchanges of spite, jealousy, ambition, rage, and grief that repetitively devolve into acts of mutilation and murder. This pervasive affective and physical violence therefore functions as the dramaturgical dynamite that makes the English past “phenomenal in the experiential as well as the evaluative sense of the word.”<sup>3</sup> However, after undergoing this saga of hatred, betrayal, cruelty, mutilation, and murder that constitutes their national past, Shakespeare’s audiences are not repelled, but rather seduced into pleurably participating as history takes place in all its nastiness.

My account of this dialectic between stage and audience, brutality and seduction, hatred and pleasure stands in contrast to both early modern and current assessments of the history play’s form and function. Ever since Thomas Nashe’s and Thomas Heywood’s separate defenses of the English theater, much commentary on the first and second tetralogies has attributed the sudden emergence and unquestionable success of Shakespeare’s English history plays to various species of nationalist (or proto-nationalist) feeling. Nashe challenges anyone suspicious of theater’s moral virtue to pay their penny and witness how “our forefathers valiant acts. . . are revived, and they themselves raised from the Grave of Oblivion, and brought to pleade their aged Honours in open presence.”<sup>4</sup> Heywood similarly draws attention to the ways in which history plays revivify history’s heroes for an audience’s edification: “What English blood seeing the person of any bold English man presented and doth not hugge his fame, and hunnye at his valor. . . so bewitching a

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<sup>3</sup> Mullaney, *The Reformation of Emotions*, 125.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Nashe, *Piers Pennilesse His Supplication to the Devil*, in *The Works of Thomas Nashe* vol. 1 ed. R.B. McKerrow (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958), 212.

thing is lively and well spirited action.”<sup>5</sup> As Graham Holderness observes: “When contemplating the capability of history to revive the past...early modern thinkers seemed to have conceived of history, certainly metaphorically and even at some sense literally, as a power of resurrection.”<sup>6</sup> As demonstrated by Nashe’s and Heywood’s rhetorical zeal, and as I have shown in previous chapters, the analogy of historical representation to bodily resurrection is just as literal as Holderness senses it might be. In the space of an afternoon, actors raise from the dead noble, bold, and honorable men of England’s past who fight, bleed, and die all over again and yet seemingly for the first time. Moreover, by experiencing the re-embodiment and inevitable reinternment of these figures, early modern audiences are roused (and perhaps aroused) to absorb, as if through osmosis, the virile strength of England’s historical demi-gods. Nashe and Heywood boldly proclaim that an English history play serves a singular purpose: to provide an unabashedly patriotic and ambitiously didactic encounter with the best and bravest in the English past. Apparently, Shakespeare’s mission with this multi-play saga of Henrys, Richards, and Edwards was to create a nation of Talbots, or to at least put forth the idea of England as a potential nation of Talbots.<sup>7</sup> In turn, the past century of scholarship on Shakespeare’s history plays has similarly linked their popularity to their nationalistic emotional impact. The Tillyard-Campbell school argued that Shakespeare’s first and second tetralogies solidified a providential “Tudor Myth” regarding the country’s origins in the deposition of Richard II, and its redemption in the reign of Henry VII and his descendants.<sup>8</sup> A later generation of scholarship claimed that the

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas Heywood, *An Apology for Actors* (1612) ed. Richard H. Perkinson (New York: Scholars’ Facsimiles and Reprints, 1941), sig. B4.

<sup>6</sup> Graham Holderness, *Shakespeare: The Histories* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 43.

<sup>7</sup> “How would it have joyed brave Talbot (the terror of the French) to thinke that after he had lyne two hundred yeares in his Tombe, hee should triumphe againe on the Stage, and have his bones newe embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least, (at severall times) who in the Tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding.” Nashe, *Works*, 212.

<sup>8</sup> See E.M.W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1943), and Lily Campbell, *Shakespeare’s “Histories.”* For early challenges to the Tudor Myth narrative prior to the rise of New Historicism

Shakespearean history play belonged to a larger cultural fascination with the national past, and thus participated in writing the English nation into being.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, by placing history plays in conversation with early modern philosophies of history, this historicized approach aligned Shakespeare's first and second tetralogies with the Renaissance's development of historical anachronism. Thus, while serving an inspirational and mimetic function by helping early modern audiences learn how to feel like and thus *be* Englishmen (emphasis on men), the English history play also cultivates a quintessentially Renaissance sense of loss and nostalgia for a past that could be represented only from a distance.<sup>10</sup>

### **Hatred as Affective Dramaturgy in Shakespeare's Histories**

The dominant scholarly narratives of the past eighty years seem to view Shakespeare's history plays as consistently in dialogue—a dialogue that, depending on the individual scholar's perspective, could be fraught, ambiguous, or critical—with the views put forward by Nashe and Heywood. However, if one examines Shakespeare's first history plays holistically, it is immediately obvious that “the brave Talbot” is the lone exception to a rather stark rule: that English history's main players are mad (in all its senses), bad, dangerous to know, and hell-bent on eradicating one another from the face of the earth. Furthermore, if early modern audiences indeed “hunnye” at anything within these plays, it is not so much valor as it is metaphorical, and sometimes literal, backstabbing.<sup>11</sup> According to every tenet of Renaissance humanism, and according to the philosophy of nation-building espoused by these plays in Heywood's and

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and Cultural Materialism, see Robert Ornstein, *A Kingdom for a Stage: The Achievement of Shakespeare's History Plays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972); and David L. Frey *The First Tetralogy, Shakespeare's Scrutiny of the Tudor Myth* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Greene, *Light in Troy*; and Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1992).

<sup>10</sup> See Rackin, *Stages of History*, 86-145.

<sup>11</sup> The OED defines the verb form of “hunnye” as “to delight, gratify; to flatter, ‘butter-up’.” “hunnye, v.” *OED Online*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.

Nashe's minds, these plays should have sent audiences running for the exits. Instead, playgoers returned for multiple sequels and prequels; but why?

By way of an answer, I offer an episode from *Richard III* that I believe exemplifies the affective technologies enabling these plays to bizarrely titillate and win over an audience: Richard's brazen and surprisingly successful seduction of Lady Anne. As the mourning Anne accompanies the corpse of Henry VI to its final resting place, Richard slithers into the scene, offering terms of endearment and begging for Anne's understanding. Anne replies with mirror insults and epithets. Anne's and Richard's encounter also juxtaposes two different perspectives on what counts as history, and how the present should emotionally react to crimes of the past. As Anne enumerates the members of her family that contribute to Richard's substantial body count, Richard demands she "say that I slew them not" (1.2.89), to which Anne parries, "Then say they were not slain. / But dead they are, and, devilish slave, by thee" (1.2.90-91).<sup>12</sup> Richard insists that his own past—and the past staged just a few years earlier in *Henry VI, Parts 2 and 3*—should not count because the crimes committed therein were "provoked" by extreme passion for Anne. According to his logic, the justice demanded by historical events takes a back seat to a history of emotion and, in this perverse instance, "sexual" desire. Because Richard's murders were provoked by intense feeling, not only should the effects of those emotions be forgotten, but also the cause itself should be rewarded and reciprocated. Anne, conversely, argues that what has happened in the past demands an appropriate response, an enraged and vengeful response, on the part of witnesses and survivors: "It is a quarrel just and reasonable / To be revenged on him that killed my husband" (1.2.139-40). In the view of Nashe and Heywood—and indeed every

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<sup>12</sup> *King Richard III*, ed. James E. Siemon (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2009) All further references to *Richard III* (using act, scene, and line numbers) will be to this edition.

Renaissance moral commentator—Anne is in the right here, and in an ethically perfect world an audience would nod in approval at her rightfully disgusted and sound recriminations.

However, the lightning-paced repartee between Richard and Anne results not in justice, but in a bewildering betrothal. Facing a viciously manipulative verbal barrage by the tormentor whose crimes she knows by heart, Anne astounds audience and Richard alike when she muses, “I would I knew thy heart” (1.2.195), and then lightheartedly acquiesces to Richard’s request that she leave Henry VI’s body in his care: “With all my heart, and it joys me too / To see you are become so penitent” (1.2.222-23). Richard’s assault on Anne’s hatred progresses as a tour de force of emotional abuse and manipulation that possesses a shocking energy; and I argue that the successful seduction of Anne reflects how an early modern audience responds to the repetitively violent encounters with the past made present through the history plays. In the face of recurring petty plots and acts of betrayal, as well as copious murders and beheadings, Shakespeare’s audiences come back for multiple helpings, and they return to the theater not to observe the flaws of the past to shape their conduct in the present, nor to imitate the manly English virtue (if they can find any) exemplified onstage.<sup>13</sup> No, the intrinsic affective technology underpinning the first tetralogy is this; Shakespeare turns his audience into Anne, thus establishing a dialectic between violent encounter and seductive encounter that enables English history to be embodied and thus experienced by Shakespeare’s audiences.

It is my argument that Shakespeare’s first tetralogy pioneers a “theatrics of hatred,” a dramaturgy in which history comes to be embodied onstage through obliterating affects and

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<sup>13</sup> Andrew Cairncross articulates this disjunction between “expected” moral response and actual audience response when he argues that “the whole ‘didactic’ argument. . . appears fallacious the more one studies Shakespeare’s histories. . . . The interest of the dramatist’s audience is not to be incited to glory, nor to learn what to pursue and what to shun in government. His audience is less likely to be interested in a political theory underlying the play than to be concerned with the characters and the action for their own sakes, with the pleasurable experience it may give.” Cairncross, “Shakespeare and the History Play,” *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 1 (1973): 69.

obliterating acts of violence; but, as a result, playgoers are trained to become excited by and respond pleurably to the onstage unfolding of their hate-filled, brutal national past. Hatred, I will argue, recreates the past as a dramatic and presently embodied world just as, for instance, A *Mirror for Magistrates* found that affective performativity could make history's corpses speak and be present. Thomas Wright's discussion of hatred in *The Passions of the Mind in General* (1601) offers a useful backdrop for my postulation of hatred as the source of "world-creating" in the *Henry VIs* and *Richard III*. As a practical manual for how an early modern person could identify, control, express, and harness all forms of feeling, Wright's treatise takes a surprisingly pragmatic approach in its discussions of hatred. In Wright's view, the arch-negative passion can: enable people to avoid vicious behavior, if they are trained to hate abomination or sin; create friendships among those who hate similar behaviors or peoples; or serve a nationalistic function if directed against one's enemies. More importantly, Wright defines how hatred operates as a passion constituted by an intimate, albeit pernicious, relation to another person: "In hatred and envy contrariwise, everyone detesteth not only the person, but also all that appertaineth unto him. . . neither can he abide to see anything prosper which concerneth him."<sup>14</sup> He then illustrates this precept with the example of King David, who prayed that God would punish both his enemy and his enemy's family through physical, mental, and economic violence.<sup>15</sup> For Wright, to hate someone or something necessarily means that one is consumed with that passion for everything associated with that person or thing. Hatred, therefore, constitutes an interactive passionate state, and brings one into personal, relational contact with other people, which we see forcefully enacted between Richard and Anne. Wright further notes that he "never knew any man troubled

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<sup>14</sup> Wright, *The Passions of the Mind in General*, 199.

<sup>15</sup> Wright's David variously asks that his enemy's children be orphaned, his wife widowed and forced to penury, and the enemy himself sacked by usurers and despoiled by strangers. See *Ibid*.

with a vehement passion of hatred, ire, or love, who would not bring many reasons to confirm his purpose. . . . For in very deed, while the Passion is afloat, the execution and performance thereof, is conformable and very convenient.”<sup>16</sup> Hatred spurs one to make ugly, vengeful, and brutal things happen, particularly because the passion gains satisfaction from, can be justified by, and exists in relation to two other affects: ire and pleasure. As Philip Fisher argues: “In anger, a high-spirited, active, energetic response to the world is placed at the heart of what we mean by impassioned states.”<sup>17</sup> In feeling hatred one is driven to act upon it through explosions of anger—hatred’s corollary affective napalm—that are regrettably transformative in nature, since their aim is to obliterate the object of hatred and everything associated with it. Hatred, more simply, is a history-making affect, which serves as the basis for Shakespeare’s theatrics of hate.

In dramatizing the dark side of England’s national past, Shakespeare utilizes hatred as a dramaturgical fuel, and indeed he finds that this brutally annihilating affect actually contains within it the ability to make dramatic worlds, to bring characters into felt and violent contact, and most importantly, to generate embodied, felt experiences of the nation’s history. Such a statement, that hatred and the violence it causes can enable an experience of the past in the present, at first seems illogical. As will be shown throughout this chapter, the plots of the first tetralogy are dominated by flare-ups of uncontrollable rage so instantaneous that the characters’ feeling these emotions appear to have no reflective awareness of what they feel until they act on it, and as a result the savage crimes they commit seem to have no relationship to time. However, the deeply embedded, enduring, and distinctly historical affect behind each act of violence emerges if we consider that, as Kant puts it, while “the emotion of anger easily forgets. . . the

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 126-27.

<sup>17</sup> Philip Fisher, *The Vehement Passions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 15.

passion of hate takes its time.”<sup>18</sup> Shakespeare’s theatrics of hatred consists of hatred taking its time and taking time, reaping what it has affectively sown over the course of generations and over the course of the theatrical saga through performative acts of violence. To hate means to be fully embedded and embodied in time, to sustain affective and bodily sensations over years or even decades, and Shakespeare’s theatrics of hatred depend on both the enduring and the instantaneous valences of this emotion to achieve its performative, and captivating, function.

While Wright tries to protest that, for those who act upon their hatred, “After he had performed his pleasure. . . he condemned himself,” I find that all the main players of the first tetralogy take unabashed pleasure in the hatred they feel, and the actions that said passion drives them to commit.<sup>19</sup> As we see in the seduction of Anne, hatred actually fuels the interaction and provides it with its bizarre erotic energy. Furthermore, just as Anne is affectively bulldozed and relentlessly sweet-talked—or to use Heywood’s vocabulary, “hunnyed”—into a dysfunctional relationship with Richard, so too is an audience seduced into feeling itself in sensual contact with the past, and into enjoying nearly every minute of it despite its gut-wrenching brutality. To borrow Linda Charnes’s astute argument concerning *Richard III*, throughout his first history plays Shakespeare “foregrounds the pleasurable *pulsion* in the repulsive—its irresistible movement towards power, identification, annihilation.”<sup>20</sup> Hatred, and the dark history it crafts, can give pleasure and can entertain because it seduces and fascinates in equal measure to how it repels or shocks. As will be shown throughout the chapter, this encounter between Anne and Richard in Act One of *Richard III* replicates, and indeed perfects, a pattern of affectively

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<sup>18</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. Victor Lyle Dowdell, ed. Hans H. Rudnick (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), 156.

<sup>19</sup> Wright, *Passions of the Mind*, 126.

<sup>20</sup> Linda Charnes, *Notorious Identity: Materializing the Subject in Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 67, emphasis in the original.



tangible, searingly hateful encounter that structures the two preceding *Henry VI* plays. My consideration of 2 and 3 *Henry VI* and *Richard III* will trace how each play depicts the past as a series of affectively and physically violent encounters, which in turn establishes a form of relationality between Lancaster and Yorkist, stage and audience, past and present that comes to function as a form of worlding.<sup>21</sup> Shakespeare's history plays, by blending unflinching historical violence and a weirdly attractive, painfully exciting affective energy, constitute a dramatic genre through which the past becomes present, and through which a playgoer becomes an active participant in history's unfolding.

## **2 *Henry VI*: Petty Affects and History-Making Effects**

Despite opening with a relatively stilted depiction of an English court attempting to salvage the remnants of Henry V's epic legacy, 2 *Henry VI* very quickly trivializes the "epic" English past into a series of quickly forgotten buzzwords. Instead, the play establishes an almost pathological spitefulness as the affective atmosphere out of which history will violently erupt.<sup>22</sup> The affective roots of Shakespeare's Wars of the Roses do not reside in feelings of noble rage, or spirited defiance, or any of the more classical passions that one might associate with an "epic" history of the nation. Granted, Gloucester's reaction to Suffolk giving away Anjou and Maine as part of the marriage contract with Margaret seemingly resounds with an Achilles-like sense of wrath:

O peers of England, shameful is this league;  
Fatal this marriage, cancelling your fame,

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<sup>21</sup> My argument here aligns with that of Peter Womack, who asserts that the English nation comes to be represented in the history plays "not in spite of the disjunctions between stage and kingdom, beleaguered army and nation, but through them. . . . It is an audacious tactic, basing its appeal not on the show's capacity to display the truth, but on the fictive productivity of its relationship with the audience." Womack, "Imagining Communities: Theatres and the English Nation in the Sixteenth Century" in *Culture and History, 1350-1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities and Writing*, ed. David Aers (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), 95-96.

<sup>22</sup> My use of the term "affective atmosphere" draws upon Sianne Ngai's theorization of tone as a meta-emotional moment in which a text communicates an "'objectified emotion,' or unfelt but perceived feeling." Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2005), 28-30.

Blotting your names from books of memory,  
Razing the characters of your renown,  
Defacing monuments of conquered France,  
Undoing all, as all had never been! (1.1.93-100)<sup>23</sup>

Gloucester's lament for the lost territories foregrounds a standard aristocratic Renaissance relationship to time; he and every other member of the nobility measure their worth and manliness according to their past participation in Henry V's conquest of France. To lose Anjou and Maine, Gloucester proclaims, is to lose history itself, or rather to be erased from it, as though such a timeline never existed. However, as Shakespeare illustrates through his listeners' underwhelmed reaction to Gloucester's speech, England's heroic patrimony is neither the real issue nor the real affective center of this saga. Gloucester's lament is rhetorically excessive and intentionally rings off-key, as Cardinal Beaufort's interjection demonstrates: "Nephew, what means this passionate discourse, / This peroration with such circumstance? / For France 'tis ours; and we will keep it still" (1.1.101-03). The Cardinal's interruption not only deflates Gloucester's speech of its grand sense of injustice and pending oblivion but also, more importantly, it makes visible the emotional cracks and fissures that constitute English history's ground-zero, in Shakespeare's mind.

Shakespeare pinpoints the affective causation behind English history not in Gloucester's nobly philosophical indignation, but rather in the pervasive pettiness, the underlying catty meanness, that structures the affective environment of *2 Henry VI*. For example, Gloucester's and Beaufort's acrimonious tête-à-tête provokes a prescient prediction that summarizes *2 Henry VI*'s emotional environment and its relationship to the political history being staged: "Rancour will out" (1.1.139). At every turn in this play, pressingly relevant political issues are obfuscated

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<sup>23</sup> *King Henry VI, Part 2*, ed. Ronald Knowles (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1999). All further references to *2 Henry VI* (using act, scene, and line numbers) will be to this edition.

by pervasive rancor bubbling over into factious backbiting, such as when Gloucester angrily departs and the remaining nobles pair off to plot against each other's main antagonist. York highlights the triviality of this "rancorous" atmosphere when he observes that his peers behave like "pirates [who] make cheap pennyworths of their pillage / And purchase friends, and give to courtesans, / Still revelling like lords till all be gone" (1.1.219-21). While York's criticism strikes a darkly ironic note—given that he is the most Machiavellian schemer of the saga until his son's appearance—what is important about this simile is that it is not a simile at all. For Shakespeare, the characters he finds in the chronicles of England's fifteenth-century *are* piratical, and their lordly behavior consists of nothing more than reveling in the wholesale destruction of one another.<sup>24</sup>

Although the volatile alliances and unstable relationships between characters in *2 Henry VI* have legitimate political foundations, the sheer volume of vindictiveness felt by every member of the aristocracy defies pragmatic Machiavellian justification.<sup>25</sup> Instead, *2 Henry VI* is entranced by just how bad, nasty, and conniving the nobility can be for what feel like completely specious reasons; and as in any modern reality television show, there is something inappropriately fun about watching the rich and powerful be naughty. For instance, when faced with a divisive court whose rivalries openly undermine her husband's authority, Queen Margaret does not address the legitimate threat posed by York, Beaufort, or Somerset, but rather obsesses over sophomoric slights from Dame Eleanor: "Not all these lords do vex me half so much / As that proud dame, the Lord Protector's wife. / . . . / Shall I not live to be avenged on her?"

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<sup>24</sup> Levine notes the correspondences between the antagonistic nobles of the *Henry VI* saga and the "factionalism [that] had escalated to dangerous levels" within Elizabeth's court during the 1590s. Although Levine's argument here centers upon *1 Henry VI*, her findings can be applied equally well to *2 Henry VI*. Levine, *Women's Matters*, 30.

<sup>25</sup> Janet Adelman briefly observes the inexplicable, almost baseless nature of venomous affect in these plays when she notes that "aggressive masculine ambition" constitutes "the unexplained norm of the history plays" until Richard of Gloucester's soliloquy in *Part 3*. See Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to The Tempest* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 2.

(1.3.76-77, 83). For every “high” sentiment expressed over the marriage of Henry to Margaret, or the loss of lands in France, or practical questions of maintaining monarchical power when the person of the monarch is unable or unwilling to do so (as Henry is), such issues are consistently undercut by personal spite and petty conflicts.

While every character’s mutual desire to watch one another burn in hell might seem over-the-top, I find that this fixation is also dramatically generative. In these undignified, marginally historical micro-aggressions, such as when Margaret slaps Eleanor with her fan, Shakespeare locates the seedlings of how to make the past felt:

MARGARET. Give me my fan. What, minion, can you not?  
*She gives the Duchess a box on the ear.*  
I cry you mercy, madam. Was it you?

DUCHESS. Was ’t I? Yea, I it was, proud Frenchwoman.  
Could I come near your beauty with my nails,  
I’d set my ten commandments in your face. (1.3.138-43)

What initially looks to be a stereotypical courtly set-piece degenerates into an altercation worthy of a soap opera, and this pattern of the nobility lashing out at one another is not gender-specific.<sup>26</sup> Across the board, any interaction in *2 Henry VI* follows this pattern in which Gloucester, Margaret, Eleanor, York, Salisbury, Beaufort, and the rest of the entourage engage in ridiculously undignified, and thus surprisingly funny, trash-talking. Through these first few acts, Shakespeare establishes that history happens not because of the noble or elevated emotions that people feel, but rather because of minor angsts, subtle annoyances, and coyly pernicious

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<sup>26</sup> My point here contrasts with, on the one hand, the arguments of Phyllis Rackin and Leah Marcus—who have separately explored the plays’ depiction of women as a disruptive force on the patriarchal order—and, on the other, Levine’s assertion that female characters illuminate problems with that patriarchal political order. While I agree with both perspectives, I contend that the conflict (initially) in *2 Henry VI* has less to do with gender than with an overall affective environment in which *everyone* chooses to behave like children willing to break a toy rather than share it. Gloucester’s and Beaufort’s constant squabbling via asides, York’s and Somerset’s competition for the regency in France, and the unified plot to oust Gloucester from his position as Lord Protector all serve as examples of this. Of course, the Yorkists’ rabid misogyny directed at Queen Margaret in *3 Henry VI* exemplifies the pattern that Rackin, Marcus, and Levine separately trace.

maneuverings, hardly the stuff of history from a humanist standpoint. More importantly, the play relies upon this petty affective environment to generate the rabidly violent actions that transform English history from a distant set of facts within chronicles into a vibrant experience of the past happening around us. *2 Henry VI* thus locates in the percolating affective angst felt by the courtly factions a vitally performative form of history-making. Importantly, however, this performativity remains slightly undeveloped in scenes where only noble characters participate, and their emotional venom very often finds expression in Marlovian monologues that stiltedly promise vengeance for any minor slight. Gradually, though, commoners interrupt and redirect the raging of the aristocratic factions, which allows *2 Henry VI* to fully mine its capacity to make the past both embodied and viscerally felt.

### **The Pleasures of Cruelty and Laughing Oneself Into the Past in *2 Henry VI***

Collisions between the commons and the aristocracy—such as when the petitioners are intercepted and abused by Margaret and Suffolk, or when York threatens to “have thy head for this thy traitor’s speech” (1.3.195) following the accusations of Peter and Horner—result in violence being either threatened or committed against the bodies of the commoners. I argue that this violence turns *2 Henry VI*’s thus far petty affects into the vital force propelling the past into the sixteenth-century present of Shakespeare’s audiences. For example, when Gloucester exposes Simpcox’s fake miracle regarding his “cured” blindness, the Protector doubles down on the farce by ordering that a stool be brought so he might prove Simpcox’s paralysis fake as well: “Now, sirrah, if you mean to save yourself from whipping, / Leap me over this stool, and run away” (2.1.137-38). With all the court gathered, Gloucester resembles an able director, or perhaps more accurately a master of the revels, carefully stage-managing the action according to certain rules of the game that will give his audience the maximum amount of pleasure. Obviously, and

terrifyingly, the chief rule of this game is that Simpcox loses no matter what; whether he sits or stands, he gets a whipping.

The scene is at one level a disturbing exercise of violent force over the powerless, as demonstrated by the pitiful protests of Simpcox— “Alas master, what shall I do? I am not able to stand” (2.1.145)—and Simpcox’s wife— “Alas, sir, we did it for pure need” (2.1.149). However, the stage gives us a sense of how Shakespeare’s audiences might have responded to this pending (and offstage) torture scene: “*After the Beadle hath hit him once, he leaps over the stool and runs away; and they follow and cry ‘A miracle!’*” (2.1.145 SD).<sup>27</sup> The “they” in this stage direction indicates the townspeople of St. Albans, who have tagged along to the audience with Henry VI and who have quietly watched this miniature performance play out between the snide aristocrats and the pathetic Simpcox. Richard Helgerson calls attention to how the judicially sanctioned acts of torture committed here and elsewhere raise ethical questions about the collapse of law and order within the play, and provoke a troubling consideration of Shakespeare’s political sympathies: “But how do we account for the fact that this play, so thickly crammed with class slurs, was written, performed, played, and viewed by base, abject, ignoble villains, grooms, and clowns? Did none of them notice that they were themselves the objects of abuse they were so generously handing out and so eagerly taking in?”<sup>28</sup> After all, while the treatment of the commons by the nobility is unjust at every turn, dramatically the episodes are intended to produce an entirely different reaction: laughter. As Margaret admits, “It did make me laugh to see the villain run” (2.1.147); but what sort of laughter is it? And is Shakespeare’s audience in on the joke, or the butt of it?

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<sup>27</sup> The Arden adopts the Folio stage direction.

<sup>28</sup> Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, 206.

While the physical abuse and humiliation of Simpcox is deliberately sadistic, it is a sadism in which the audience is meant to participate, and for which I argue they are not meant to feel guilty. The dramaturgy at work here defies responsive paradigms of exemplarity on the one hand (after all, is there any conduct in this scene worthy of emulation?), and sympathetic or empathetic identification on the other, such as we saw in the *Mirror* or *The Faerie Queene*. Paradoxically, in this scene of corrupt injustice, in which the character who most reflects the situation of audience members is technically most in need of their sympathy, Shakespeare explicitly discourages his playgoers from participating in Simpcox's feeling. Rather, Shakespeare's playgoers enter into a more complex form of relationality with the action onstage through *non-identification* with Simpcox as they both join in Margaret's laughter and join the townspeople who, whether obviously or tongue-in-cheek, herald Simpcox's fleetness of feet.<sup>29</sup> Robert Weimann outlines how this dynamic relationship between the audience and dramatic characters (elite or not) becomes enacted through the physical stage itself. Examining medieval cycle plays, and specifically the character of Herod, Weimann identifies a dramaturgical tradition in which the division between the *locus*, the space of mimetic action, and the *platea*, the downstage or offstage area occupied by the audience, can be traversed and brought together through a physical and affective rapport with certain characters. Weimann argues that Shakespeare's dramaturgy in scenes like the Simpcox episode depends on the "represented" world and the "actual" world coming into contact through character types that "enjoyed the most flexible positions on the stage and most varied modes of performance because they moved easily

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<sup>29</sup> Stephen Mullaney offers a similar argument concerning the social dimension of emotion as understood by early modern emotion theorists vis a vis Ciceronian oratory, which viewed all emotional response as essentially mimetic. Mullaney finds that "a mimetic dynamics of feeling. . .[are not] always adequate to comprehend the social dynamics of emotions, which are more dialectical and recursive, interpersonal, intersubjective, and inherently transactional." Mullaney, *Reformation of Emotions*, 53.

between both the fixed and unlocalized settings. . . . [between] the more illusionistic scaffold. . . and the *platea*, or pageant area closer to the audience.”<sup>30</sup> In the case of the Simpcox interlude, such connection and interaction develops not so much because of an individual, subversive character, but rather through the interruptive presence of the staged commons who make both audience and locus-inhabitants laugh out loud.<sup>31</sup> This laughter minimizes the gap between players and audience, action and reaction, the dramatized past and the sixteenth-century present of its performance. Even if it is a “cruel laughter,” nevertheless *2 Henry VI* encourages its audience to feel and participate in this cruelty, and to gain a distinct pleasure from it.<sup>32</sup> To adapt Frederic Jameson, history might be what hurts but, in this play, the hurt in the past is what enables it to be felt as entertaining in the present.<sup>33</sup>

My use of the *platea* and *locus* theory calls attention to how the blending of hierarchical stage space, each seemingly dedicated to its own type of dramatic representation, facilitates a blended, hybrid experience of time. The physical presence and voice of the commons onstage gradually succeed in turning *2 Henry VI* into an experience of the past-in-process because the violence committed against them, and eventually the violence that commoners commit, makes English history an embodied and affectively tangible experience. Dame Eleanor calls attention to

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<sup>30</sup> Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function*, ed. Robert Schwartz (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 65.

<sup>31</sup> Rackin utilizes Weimann’s theory of *locus* and *platea* to argue that a specific character type of “the plebian clown. . . subverted the authority of historical representation and the ideological repressions it required.” Rackin, *Stages of History*, 206. For Rackin, the material presence of commoners via clown characters unleashes a subversiveness that interrogates the repressive structures of historiography.

<sup>32</sup> Stephen Greenblatt finds that both Shakespeare’s and various other Renaissance writers’ representations of the English past, and the commons place within it, “echo instead with a strange laughter. . . a taut, cruel laughter that is at once perfectly calculated and, as in a nightmare, out of control.” Greenblatt, “Murdering Peasants: Status, Genre, and the Representation of Rebellion,” in *Representing the English Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 15.

<sup>33</sup> Much of my argument here is indebted to Joel Slotkin’s concept of “sinister aesthetics,” which he develops in an analysis of *Richard III*. Slotkin finds that “the play encourages audiences to appreciate Richard because of his evil, not in spite of it, and that this response to a literary representation is not inherently pathological or corrupt.” Slotkin, “Honeyed Toads: Sinister Aesthetics in *Richard III*,” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 7 (2007): 7. I am similarly interested in how Shakespeare crafts this attraction to evil and mayhem across the *Henry VI* saga.



this dynamic, and to the agential, history-making capacity of the commons' affective presence as both actors and spectators, when she performs her public penance:

Come you, my lord, to see my open shame?  
Now thou dost penance too. Look how they gaze!  
See how the giddy multitude do point  
And nod their heads, and throw their eyes on thee. . . .  
Methinks I should not be thus led along. . . .  
And followed by a rabble that rejoice  
To see my tears and hear my deep-fet groans. (2.4.19-22, 30, 32-33)

As she marches through the city being jeered at by the populace, Eleanor picks up on the layers of response and reaction that her spectacle, like the overall spectacle of 2 *Henry VI*, provokes.<sup>34</sup> After all, it is not simply the London crowd whom Shakespeare has placed onstage that gaze and point at Eleanor, but also the thousands of playgoers who have paid to see her open shame reenacted. Furthermore, Eleanor does not provoke feelings of pathos from the crowd; indeed, Shakespeare overdetermines, and thus ironizes, her historical status as an exemplum of conduct to be shunned.<sup>35</sup> Instead, Eleanor's humiliation makes the London crowd "giddy," and I argue that the use of giddy is meant not only to foreshadow the eruption of the commoners into "giddy" rebellion (as the Arden notes state), but also to comment on the audience's emotional participation in Eleanor's punishment.<sup>36</sup>

Both of Eleanor's audiences, the dramatized fifteenth-century crowd and the present sixteenth-century crowd, are stoked to a delighted fever pitch by her punishment, and her

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<sup>34</sup> Eleanor's act of calling attention to the crowd gazing on her is both thematically and verbally reminiscent of Richard II's verse tragedy in *A Mirror For Magistrates*, in which the dead king asks that the *Mirror* contributors observe how the "sely route" stares at him.

<sup>35</sup> Levine offers one of the few sustained analyses of Eleanor of Cobham, and finds in the representation of her crime/entrapment "a model for reading, and interrogating, other cases of treason and rebellion within the play" because "'containment' ironically not only fails to preserve the state, but in fact contributes to its ruin." Levine, *Women's Matters*, 50, 65.

<sup>36</sup> The Arden 3 edition of the play glosses "giddy" as follows: "Several meanings are implied here: 'fickle,' the crowd turning from former respect; 'excited' to the point of being maddened by her demonic criminality; 'dizzy' literally and metaphorically in the sense of unstable, an incipient crowd hysteria, and thus ultimately dangerous. All these meanings are realized in the Jack Cade scenes" (n.2.4.21).

monologue knits emotional responses in the past together with emotional responses in the present into a singular moment of pleasure in her immediately rendered historical suffering. Indeed, Eleanor's speech perhaps comments not only upon the crowd noise Shakespeare has built into the scene, but also on possible cat-calls and interjections by the audience itself: "The ruthless flint doth cut my tender feet, / And when I start, the envious people laugh, / And bid me be advised how I tread." (2.4.34-36). We see once again a relational interaction (centered upon laughter) crafted between actor and audience, past and present, *platea* and *locus* that, as Weimann asserts, highlights the centrality of this interplay in Shakespeare's ability to make the past seem present: "Unlike the theater of the subsequent three hundred years, the actor-audience relationship was not subordinate, but a dynamic and essential element of [Shakespeare's] dramaturgy. For the Elizabethan playgoer the drama was more than a play taking place on a stage separated from the audience; it was an event in progress."<sup>37</sup> Thus, the commons' laughter, its rejoicing, and its irreverent interjections generate an overall affective environment—akin perhaps to modern-day professional wrestling—that turns history into a present event. The affective participation, and viscerally interruptive presence, of the commons in these scenes collapses distinctions between commoners onstage and groundlings, who through their explosive affectivity make the past experiential, chaotically exciting, and unabashedly enjoyable. While 2 *Henry VI* initially stages the nation's past as a drama "identified exclusively with kings and nobles," this story becomes forcefully suspended and displaced in the play's actualization of a prophetic bit of crowd noise.<sup>38</sup> Following Gloucester's murder, as Salisbury reports that the commons demand justice in the form of Suffolk's execution, the commons itself erupts with an offstage demand: "An answer from the King or we will all break in!" (3.2.278). In one sense, as I

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<sup>37</sup> Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition*, 213.

<sup>38</sup> Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, 195.

have argued, they already have. The commons are there, standing and sitting at the Curtain or the Theatre, feeling this history into being as they witness it embodied onstage.

This pattern I have traced so far of commoners affectively interrupting, invading, and transforming the courtly world of 2 *Henry VI* into an experiential form of contact with the past reaches its explosive climax in Jack Cade's rebellion. Cade's rebellion has provoked pervasive debate concerning the political ramifications of Shakespeare's violently anarchic depiction. Is the rebellion morally unjustifiable, or a necessary instance of popular protest?<sup>39</sup> Is Shakespeare on the rebels' side, or is he having an insidious laugh at the expense of the commoners both on his stage and in his audience?<sup>40</sup> Does Cade function as the exemplification of theater's generative subversiveness against the repressions of national history, or is the rebellion's leader a nightmarish incarnation of "the many-headed monster"?<sup>41</sup> Of course, any answer to these questions takes Helgerson's *Forms of Nationhood* as its starting point, since Helgerson unequivocally finds that "popular revolt, and perhaps popular culture generally, was the theater's dark other, the vestigial egalitarian self that had to be exorcised. . . In *The Contention*, Shakespeare sets to the work of exorcism with savage zeal" through the characterization of Cade.<sup>42</sup> However, such consideration of the political orthodoxy or heterodoxy at play in the Cade scenes completely disregards a simple fact of their dramatic function; they are meant to be funny,

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<sup>39</sup> See Anne-Marie E. Schuler, "Shakespeare's Mad, Unruly Mob: Petition, Popular Revolt, and Political Participation in *King Henry VI, Part 2*," *Selected Papers of the Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference* 7 (2014): 156-71.

<sup>40</sup> Paola Pugliatti, using language that echoes Greenblatt's, views the Cade scenes as Shakespeare's sinister mockery of the rebels in which "the kind of laughter that came to his mind was not the liberating and festive laughter of the carnival tradition; it was the grim, bitter, moralistic laughter that comes from the grotesque." Pugliatti, *Shakespeare the Historian* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 170; Greenblatt, "Murdering Peasants," 15.

<sup>41</sup> See Rackin, *Stages of History*, 205-22; and Stuart Hampton-Reeves, "Kent's Best Man: Radical Chorographic Consciousness and the Identity Politics of Local History in Shakespeare's 2 *Henry VI*," *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 14 (2014): 63-87.

<sup>42</sup> Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, 212. Helgerson uses a shortened form of the Quarto title to refer to 2 *Henry VI*.

if not downright hilarious.<sup>43</sup> Rather than eliciting a sort of authorial or audience hand-wringing, Shakespeare discovers in the Cade scenes the capacity for an explosive irony that brings English history into being onstage through the vibrant relationality, and time-blending, between stage and audience that this black humor pioneers. This is illustrated most forcefully when Cade enters and recites his mock genealogy before his confederates:

CADE. We, John Cade, so termed of our supposed father—

DICK. *aside* Or rather of stealing a cade of herrings.

CADE. For our enemies shall fall before us, inspired with the spirit of putting down kings and princes. Command silence.

DICK. Silence! (4.2.29-34)

As multiple critics have noted, Cade's recitation of his lineage directly parodies York's earlier, and painfully dignified, pronouncement of his own right to the throne. More important, however, is the non-stop interaction between Cade and his *platea* comrades. Cade is persistently interrupted, and corrected, by the other members of the rebellion through statements marked by editors as "asides," but as Stephen Longstaffe has argued, the stage direction perhaps does not apply if we consider this interaction as a species of carnivalesque, inclusive laughter.<sup>44</sup> I believe our strongest hint in support of this argument, and the key to understanding the affective and temporal dynamic crafted here, is the moment when Cade stops his speech and directs Dick the Butcher to "Command silence" (4.2.33). This indicates that Cade can hear his fellow rebels' taunts, and that his command for silence extends beyond the world of the stage-play to the 1590s audience itself. Thus, Cade's rebellion consciously takes place in two points in time by

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<sup>43</sup> Peter Womack advances a similar point in his analysis of the purposeful "infelicity" of the rebels' dialogue: "The rebels' refusal to observe these discursive rules is at once anarchic and funny. . . . The rebellion has the absolute (but circumscribed) subversiveness of a joke." Womack, "Imagining Communities," 132.

<sup>44</sup> Stephen Longstaffe, "'A Short Report and Not Otherwise': Jack Cade in 2 Henry VI," in *Shakespeare and Carnival: After Bakhtin*, ed. Ronald Knowles (London: Macmillan Press, 1998), 24-30.

“inhabiting the real time of the performance as well as the fictional time of the story, disrupting and travesty[ing] the speech world of the serious characters.”<sup>45</sup> During these temporally hybrid moments, as they are yelled at by fifteenth-century rebels/contemporary actors, Shakespeare’s playgoers are tasked to affectively inhabit two points in time simultaneously: the represented past taking place onstage and the present performance in which they are being too noisy.

Instead of using Cade’s rebellion to admonish the unruly mob, to caution against or contain their ever-bubbling desire for subversion, Shakespeare crafts a dramaturgical moment in which the audience *is in* the past, because they feel it and feel a part of it via this disruptive, ever-present, and in some sense communal laughter. When Cade and his cronies variously make their most famous pronouncements of total anarchy—“Let’s kill all the lawyers” (4.2.71), “Hang him with his pen and inkhorn about his neck” (4.2.100-01), or “Away, burn all the records of the realm” (4.7.11-12), for instance—most commentators have speculated that the rebels provoke a deserved, typically humanistic horror from both the playwright and spectators of a play about the very national past Cade proposes to annihilate.<sup>46</sup> However, the unashamed humor of these anarchic directives (an oxymoron if ever there was one) exposes instead how the rebels “establish their own relationship with the audience—a more intimate one in some ways—on terms wholly different from those of the nobles.”<sup>47</sup> As they raucously plan to raze their nation’s history, Cade and the rebels make that national history physically present through their chaotically embodied and violent presence on Shakespeare’s stage.

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<sup>45</sup> Womack, “Imagining Communities,” 132.

<sup>46</sup> In answer to these arguments, I side with Longstaffe who states that “we should be wary of assuming that merely showing Cade’s violent actions would frighten an audience into repudiating his politics.” Longstaffe, “A Short Report,” 19.

<sup>47</sup> Womack, “Imagined Communities,” 132.

Furthermore, with every act of murder or beheading that is accompanied by inappropriately funny commentary, Cade and the rebels establish the conditions for an audience's affective response to these atrocities that Shakespeare will replicate in the saga's remaining plays. When the rebels present the severed heads of Lord Saye and his son-in-law to Cade, Cade delivers a shocking direction: "Let them kiss one another, for they loved well when they were alive" (4.7.122-23). The treatment of the dead bodies here is simultaneously disgusting and disturbingly funny, but more importantly it registers how "the correspondence between the butchery of the lower orders and that of the nobles finds its emblem in the severed head."<sup>48</sup> Cade's grisly instruction to make the heads kiss at every corner mirrors the earlier episode in which Margaret caressed and grieved over Suffolk's severed head. This astonishing parallel of unbridled violence combined with almost sensual intimacy introduces the importance of the rebellion as not only a parody and reflection of the nobility's actions, but also as a dress rehearsal for the barbarism to come in subsequent plays, and for how playgoers should respond to it. In the words of Robert Ornstein, "Cade's ramshackle army is the antimasque to York's rebellion."<sup>49</sup> While most critical assessments of audience response to the episode center upon its possible "horror" at the rebellious *hoi polloi*, Shakespeare's ironization of the nobility's actions through the Cade episode highlights that an audience should be just as horrified by the nobility's behavior. As John Palmer notes, why is it that "those who find in Cade's barbarity an indication of Shakespeare's horror of the mob should neglect to find in the barbarity of Queen Margaret or of my lords Clifford and York an indication of his horror at the nobility?"<sup>50</sup> If Cade and his rebels seem barbarous and terrifying, then York's annihilating ambition should seem equally so,

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<sup>48</sup> Ronald Knowles, "Introduction," in *King Henry VI, Part Two* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1999), 100.

<sup>49</sup> Robert Ornstein, *A Kingdom for a Stage*, 51.

<sup>50</sup> John Palmer, *Political and Comic Characters of Shakespeare* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1961), 318-19.

since he apparently kicks off the greatest civil conflict England had ever seen up to that point because he simply *feels like* he is “far better born than is the King, / More like a king, more kingly in my thoughts” (5.1.28-29). Cade and company propose to tear down London Bridge, burn all written records, and legalize rape; but in Act Five of 2 *Henry VI*, Shakespeare’s *locus* characters unleash a civil war that quite nearly brings all those proposals to life when York, in a hysterical overreaction to Margaret’s equally stupid release of Somerset, demands that Henry VI “give place! By heaven, thou shalt rule no more / O’er him whom heaven created for thy ruler” (5.1.104-05). If an audience shudders at, deplores, or even ridicules Cade’s rebellion, should not York’s audacious demands, and the variously shocked, confused, and chaotic fall-out of the court into Yorkist and Lancastrian factions, provoke an even more astonished and condemnatory response from Shakespeare’s playgoers?

One would think. However, the dark irony of an audience’s response to both Cade and the nobility is that it is not exactly horrified by either. Rather, Shakespeare crafts a disorganized affective atmosphere in which an audience feels pleasure in both their horror at and fascination with the historical chaos unfolding onstage. Trained by the unbridled affective contact with the past that they have experienced through the violence of Cade’s rebellion, playgoers are now poised to experience historical violence as pleasurable and entertaining. The nobility’s rapid descent into internecine butchery delights an audience because the commons as a whole—both onstage and off—have already been seduced into taking utter delight in it, as York’s earlier soliloquy intimates:

I will stir up in England some black storm  
Shall blow ten thousand souls to heaven or hell. . . .  
And for a minister of my intent  
I have *seduced* a headstrong Kentishmen,  
John Cade of Ashford,  
To make commotion. (3.1.347-57, emphasis mine)

Like York, Shakespeare's first history play has unleashed the blackest storm of England's past onstage; and like Cade, his audience is seduced into viewing all violence, that committed by the base drudges and that committed by the peers of the realm, as fascinating and fun. In the environment of the public theater, Shakespeare's audiences experience an embodied, emotional encounter with the past; as a result of this pleasurable contact, playgoers are delighted rather than repelled, entranced rather than sickened, by the brutality that serves as the base substance of their history. England's national past is grisly, but it is the visceral grisliness of its violence that serves as the medium through which history takes shape in the next play.

### **Embodying the Past in the Present Through Hatred in 3 *Henry VI***

It cannot be denied that, with Cade's death at the hands of Iden and the rebellion's dispersal, the commons' participatory laughter disappears from the *Henry VI* saga. However, with his playgoers now spellbound by this tangible past unfolding before them, Shakespeare now turns to a zero-sum, obliterating form of affect in his dramatization of the English past. In its concluding battle scenes, 2 *Henry VI* introduces hatred—blind, pitiless hatred—as the dramaturgical fuel that will propel the past into the present in the subsequent play. This hatred manifests first in the character of Young Clifford, whose father becomes one of the first “formal” casualties of the Wars of the Roses, when he discovers his father's dead body:

O, let the vile world end,  
And the premised flames of the last day  
Knit heaven and earth together!. . .  
Even at this sight,  
My heart is turned to stone, and while 'tis mine  
It shall be stony. (5.2.40-42, 49-51)

In the wake of his maddened, totalizing grief, Young Clifford pledges that he “will not have to do with pity” (5.3.56), and commits himself to only the most deadened, obliterating forms of



feeling and action. He fashions himself into a “Destroyer of Worlds,” specifically vile Yorkist worlds, and he calls for both the earth and sacred history itself to match his emotional state by fast-forwarding to Judgment Day. Young Clifford refuses to experience his present as anything other than a hatred that demands annihilating satisfaction, and with this pledge Shakespeare transitions to a dramaturgy of rabid encounters based in a hatred that is distinctly historical. Going forward, this “felt pressure of pre-existent time” acts as an affective powder-keg capable of exploding history into being.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, to render the past into an experiential process through this bludgeoning, consuming affect, *3 Henry VI* will discover new means for staging hatred as an embodied, relational, and affective experience of temporality.

The pleasures of hatred come to serve as the affective foundation of *3 Henry VI* because hatred and anger are posited as the emotional energy behind history itself.<sup>52</sup> An example of this “history-making” function of hatred occurs in the abrupt opening of *3 Henry VI* when the Yorkist army spills onto the stage fresh from a victory over the Lancastrians. The Yorkists begin to take stock of their achievements in the previous play’s battle as they present grisly evidence of their martial prowess to Richard, Duke of York:

EDWARD. I cleft his beaver with a downright blow.  
That this is true, father, behold his blood.

MONTAGUE. And, brother, here’s the Earl of Wiltshire’s blood,  
Whom I encountered at the battles joined.

RICHARD. [*Shows the head of Somerset.*]  
Speak thou for me, and tell them what I did. (1.1.12-16, 20)<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> David Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Shapes of Time* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1982), 50.

<sup>52</sup> Like John D. Cox, I view *3 Henry VI* as a keystone for “any critical approach to the early history plays. If we can discover a consistent and satisfying purpose in this ugly duckling of the first tetralogy, the exercise may enhance our understanding of the other plays” (42). My focus on hatred as the play’s structural affect in some ways echoes Cox’s examination of medieval analogues as fuel for the play’s intense moral ambiguity. Cox, “*3 Henry VI*: Dramatic Convention and the Shakespearean History Play,” *Comparative Drama* 12 (1978): 42-60.

<sup>53</sup> *King Henry VI, Part Three*, ed. John D. Cox and Eric Rasmussen (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2001), 102-03. All further references to *3 Henry VI* (using act, scene, and line numbers) will be to this edition.

Following the interim since Part 2, *3 Henry VI* transports its audience to a brutal episode of show-and-tell in which the characters make a public and shameless show of their bloodlust. The scene also carefully juxtaposes temporality with affect, because while the characters reference actions that have been committed in the past (and in a separate play), the sheer glee that they feel at displaying their swords covered in bloody gore and severed heads makes the previous play's violence feel viscerally immediate and embodied.<sup>54</sup> The rowdy pleasure and delight felt by York, his sons Richard and Edward, and their supporters creates a weirdly animated atmosphere that collapses distinctions between then and now into an intense present experience.

When Henry VI and his compatriots finally interrupt the Yorkists, who in the meantime have convinced York to seat himself on the throne, the two sides attack each other with the full rhetorical force of their mutual antipathy:

KING HENRY. Thou, factious Duke of York, descend my throne  
And kneel for grace and mercy at my feet.  
I am thy sovereign.

YORK. I am thine.

EXETER. For shame, come down. He made thee Duke of York. . . .

WARWICK. Exeter, thou art a traitor to the crown,  
In following this usurping Henry.

CLIFFORD. Whom should he follow but his natural king?

WARWICK. True, Clifford, and that's Richard Duke of York. (1.174-77, 80-83)

The ping-pong-like arguments regarding the lineal descent of either claimant constitute a galling dramatic and political stalemate, because to some extent the Lancastrians and the Yorkists are

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<sup>54</sup> Shakespeare combines details of two Yorkist victories in this scene. The invasion of Parliament was preceded by the Battle of Northampton, fought on 10 July 1460. However, Shakespeare also imagines that the action immediately follows the Battle of St. Albans, which concluded *2 Henry VI* and was fought five years earlier.

both right.<sup>55</sup> However, Shakespeare stages this confrontation as a logical and political impasse to shift the emotional scripts that have structured these performative declarations of one's right to the throne. Whereas in *Part Two* York's audience (onstage and off) politely listened as he solemnly intoned that "Edward III, my lords, had seven sons" (2.2.10) in a histrionic demonstration of his place in the succession, such arguments no longer hold any weight with the players onstage or their audiences. Rather, like Richard who begs his father to "tear the crown from the usurper's head," and Edward who cajoles, "Sweet father, do so; set it on your head" (1.1.114-15), Shakespeare's playgoers champ at the bit to see English history decided not through arguments about family trees, but through barely glorified blood sport. As a result, an audience feels its national history, and the most basic version of the question that has shaped it—who gets to rule in a patrilineal monarchy and why—being generated not through any sort of logic or precedent, but through generational hatred.

Beginning with Clifford's murder of Rutland, Shakespeare specifically uses the emotion of hatred as a perversely generative form of history-making that embodies the English past in the present. Widely regarded as one of the most unjustified crimes of the first tetralogy, the episode of Rutland's murder would seem to defy any act of critical reparation. Indeed, by making Rutland ahistorically younger and drawing upon the "Murder of the Innocents" pageant from the mystery cycles, Shakespeare seemingly renders impossible any audience response other than horror and disgust.<sup>56</sup> Yet as Rutland pleads with the Lancastrian hell-hound for his life, Clifford delivers a startling speech regarding the nature of his bloodlust that illustrates the bizarre

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<sup>55</sup> In fact, as Cox notes, an audience might be less than focused on the stalemate between the Lancastrians and the Yorkists because the scene echoes one of the more famous episodes in the mystery cycles: the fall of Lucifer. See Cox, "3 *Henry VI*: Dramatic Convention," 44.

<sup>56</sup> Rutland was seventeen when he was killed by Clifford as he fled the Battle of Wakefield.

capacity of his hatred, and the acts of butchery it inspires, to fashion an alternative present and past:

Had I thy brethren here, their lives and thine  
Were not revenge sufficient for me.  
No, if I digged up thy forefathers' graves  
And hung their rotten coffins up in chains,  
It could not slake mine ire nor ease my heart.  
The sight of any of the house of York  
Is as a Fury to torment my soul:  
And till I root out their accursed line  
And leave not one alive, I live in hell. (1.3.25-33)

If he could, Clifford would eradicate the house of York from existence, erasing even their historical presence by desecrating their graves. Moreover, only by annihilating the house of York from every conceivable timeline—past, present, and future—can Clifford begin to be in the world differently, to exist outside of the blinding grief and rage that has possessed him since his father's death. The affective rationale of Clifford's pitiless murder of Rutland mirrors one school of thought concerning how to fight a forest fire: it has to be allowed to consume whatever lies in its path, and thus burn itself out, for regeneration to be possible. As disturbing as it might be, hatred is presented here as a means for remaking time and one's place in it. Thus, as I argued earlier in my discussion of Thomas Wright, Clifford's hatred for the House of York brings him into violently interactive, relational contact with its members; and this hateful relationality, in murdering children and exhuming corpses, simultaneously attempts to deprive the House of York of both a past and a future.

The murder of Rutland enables Shakespeare to highlight the similarities between Clifford's response to the killing and his own audience's response to the bevy of atrocities that constitutes the drama of their national past. Despite the gut-wrenching pleas, bargaining, and excessive pathos that Rutland marshals to defend himself, the pseudo-passion play between

himself and Clifford reaches its logical conclusion. Rutland dies with a well-placed quote from Horace that pretty well sums up how Clifford's vengeful act has been critically received.<sup>57</sup> But Clifford's startling outburst following the murder highlights the disturbing dynamics of audience response at work here: "Plantagenet, I come, Plantagenet! / And this thy son's blood, cleaving to my blade, / Shall rust upon my weapon till thy blood / Congealed with this do make me wipe off both" (1.4.49-52). At first glance, Clifford's cry looks like nothing more than a Senecan pledge for revenge. However, this pronouncement bears an uncanny resemblance to a later line of Shakespeare's that will become one of his more famous statements of all-consuming erotic desire: Cleopatra's call to Antony prior to her suicide, "Husband, I come" (5.2.278). I assert that Clifford's declaration similarly approaches the orgasmic. Yes, he "comes for" the House of Plantagenet, in the sense that he pursues them; but the sense of sexual consummation and release upon stabbing Rutland is equally present, especially considering how Clifford lingers over the image of the innocent child's blood coating his invasive "blade." The way in which Clifford revels in the brief erotic satisfaction the crime affords him signals the densely complicated nexus of affects and responses this episode can stimulate. The satisfaction of vengeance and the satisfaction of orgasm are rendered inseparable here. Therefore, the sadistic and simultaneously sensual pleasure that Clifford derives from butchering the House of York suggests that the pleasures of hatred are not restricted to the onstage world, but rather infiltrate playgoers and condition their responses to this violently embodied past.

While an audience no doubt acknowledges that Clifford's murder of Rutland is abominable, there is an orgiastic excess to Clifford's bloodlust that makes it difficult not to be equally entranced and fascinated by this episode, not in spite of but *because of* its brutality.

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<sup>57</sup> Rutland quotes Ovid's *Heroides*, "*Di faciant laudis summa sit ista tuae* ('The gods grant that this be the height of your glory')," 2.66.

Shakespeare is long past the carnivalesque yet inclusive pleasures of violence that revived England's past in Part 2. Instead, the murder of Rutland in Part 3 highlights that his audience can indeed come into affective, embodied contact with this violent past through the weird eroticism of its excessive violence, because the staging of these violent historical acts produces a tense yet unabashed pleasure alongside and in spite of any logical revulsion history inspires. But how can the murder of a child, and the perpetrator's barely disguised sexual release following the crime's completion, garner any response other than fear and loathing?

To better flesh out the dynamics of response that Rutland's murder can inspire, I return to its dramatic and affective descendent, an episode that might be said to be an improvement on the parent: Richard's seduction of Anne in *Richard III*. Before he undertakes the wooing of Anne, Richard admits that his only reason for attempting to win her is the fact that she hates him; "What though I killed her husband and her father" (1.1.154)? Richard views Anne's hatred as necessary for the seduction to work, and the palpable energy of their repartee derives from the sheer venom with which Anne parries almost all of Richard's advances. Fascinatingly, however, Anne's rhetorical and emotional resistance to Richard deteriorates the moment his seduction becomes explicitly sexual; she deems him "unfit for any place but hell," to which Richard replies that the only other "fit" for him in all of God's creation is her bedchamber (1.2.111-14). Anne, who seconds before could turn Richard's Petrarchan sentiments into an elaborately parallel invective, now rather lamely counters Richard's mounting sexual puns, wishing that "ill rest betide" whatever chamber Richard resides in. He seizes the advantage not only to double-down on the intercourse allusions—"So will it madam, till I lie with you" (1.2.115-16)—but also to

turn the tide of the exchange in such a way that he will succeed in the seemingly impossible task of getting to Anne's bedchamber.<sup>58</sup>

As his rhetorical and logical gymnastics progress, Richard turns the obvious reasons Anne detests him into equally obvious reasons for why she should give in and accept his proposal:

RICHARD. Is not the causer of the timeless deaths  
Of these Plantagenets, Henry and Edward,  
As blameful as the executioner?

ANNE. Thou wast the cause of that accursed effect.

RICHARD. Your beauty was the cause of that effect. (1.2.120-24)

This scene probably constitutes one of the most quintessential episodes of victim-blaming in Western literature, but it is necessary to parse out its logic to understand the interacting, and inseparable, dynamics between hatred and pleasure at play in this scene, which I claim are established in the dramaturgy of *3 Henry VI*. Anne unknowingly made Richard fall in love with her; he killed in order to have her love; she hates him for those crimes for which she is “the cause,” so her only option is to love him for his abominations in equal measure to how much she currently hates him for those abominations. In Richard's twisted game pleasure is the logical corollary to and outcome of hate, yet his famously triumphant reflection on his success further shows that, while he might be surprised that Anne's heart and bedchamber could be the outcome of hatred and violence, Shakespeare is decidedly not surprised:

What, I that killed her husband and his father,  
To take her in her heart's *extremest hate*,  
With curses in her mouth, tears in her eyes,  
The bleeding witness *of my hatred by*. . . .  
And I no friends to back my suit withal

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<sup>58</sup> Charnes acknowledges both the historical revisionism and power-play built into the ways Richard flips Anne's hatred into sexual allusions: “Richard provides a new epistemology for the revulsion Anne feels, taking an emotional history surrounding one kind of history and substituting it for another.” Charnes, *Notorious Identities*, 40.

But the plain devil and dissembling looks. (1.2.233-36, 238-39 emphasis mine)

From murder comes marriage, from hatred comes sexual conquest, and from this moment of emotional abuse comes a stunning dramatic success that might, if John Manningham is to be believed, have resulted in the literal seduction of at least one female playgoer.<sup>59</sup> Charnes argues that “however preposterous his success may seem, it reveals as much about the play’s libidinal structures and affective investments as it does about Richard;” I add that Richard’s success simultaneously replicates and comments upon the latently seductive affective investments of the previous two plays’ dramaturgy.<sup>60</sup> Richard’s speech functions as a metatheatrical comment on the very dramaturgical and affective techniques employed throughout *3 Henry VI*, which is replete with corpses and severed heads to serve as bleeding witnesses of the hatred that makes England’s past. Just as Richard has no friends to support his suit to Anne, Shakespeare has very little to help him in staging the national past as anything other than one, decades-long “Red Wedding” episode a la *Game of Thrones*. Shakespeare’s first history plays, however, recognize the appeal, the attraction, and the erotic energy of evil and mayhem long before locating those energies solely in the character of Richard Gloucester. While Cade, Clifford, York, or Margaret might be less-than-dissembling devils, they are devils nonetheless who carve out English history as they carve up each other onstage. Therefore, the play that has been historically written off as a plodding transition to the early masterpiece of *Richard III* instead hones the dramaturgy through which the excessive violence of England’s past can be experienced as affectively interesting and pleasurable. Thus, it is in *3 Henry VI* that Shakespeare perfects the theatrics of hatred, which

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<sup>59</sup> In a 1602 diary entry, Manningham records that “when Burbage played Richard III, there was a citizen grew so far in liking with him, that. . . she appointed him to come that night unto her by the name of Richard III. Shakespeare, overhearing their conclusion, went before, and was entertained and at his game ere Burbage came. The message being brought that Richard III was at the door, Shakespeare caused return to be made that William the Conqueror was before Richard III.”

<sup>60</sup> Charnes, *Notorious Identities*, 38.



turns this pernicious passion into a mode of relationality that not only gives birth to the English theater's most infamous villain, but that also brings past and present into felt contact against all odds.

### **Discouraging Sympathy in Favor of Amoral Fascination in *3 Henry VI*'s Torture Scenes**

Following the murder of Rutland, *3 Henry VI* illuminates how hatred and rage exist in dialectic relation to the experiences of affective history that the play is designed to generate through its theatrics of hatred. Of course, the general consensus is that an audience's experience of history and time in *3 Henry VI* is rather one-dimensional. Jean Howard states that "the vicious energies of hate and ambition that propel the play make its enactment an intense and exhausting experience."<sup>61</sup> Reflecting on the pathological viciousness of *3 Henry VI*, J.P. Brockbank finds that Shakespeare follows a historiographical precedent in Holinshed by making "his characters' public masks, without intimately felt life, and therefore hardly seeming responsible for what they do" in a process of characterization that renders everyone "savagely mechanical."<sup>62</sup> I would counter that, in *3 Henry VI*, Shakespeare instead finds in his characters' hatred an odd sort of intimacy, because these figures sustain affective and bodily feelings of antipathy over years or even decades. Furthermore, it seems to be precisely the savagery of and endurance of hatred that makes the affect ideal for staging historical time. As David Kastan argues, Shakespeare locates in hatred a "form and value of time. . . that permits past (in memory) and future (in anticipation) to be held in the present."<sup>63</sup> This notion of holding the past in one's present speaks to the strangely intimate nature of both the historical substance of hate and the hateful substance of history, which we see exemplified in the scene of York's torture at the hands of Margaret.

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<sup>61</sup> Howard, "Introduction," *3 Henry VI* in *The Norton Shakespeare*, 319.

<sup>62</sup> J.P. Brockbank, "The Frame of Disorder—*Henry VI*," in *Early Shakespeare*, ed. John Russell Brown and Bernard Harris (London: Edward Arnold LTD., 1961), 93.

<sup>63</sup> Kastan, *Shapes of Time*, 11.

York's capture, torture, and beheading by the Lancastrians present a conundrum; how is an audience supposed to react to the unquestionably cruel treatment of a character who, up until his death, has been the saga's main antagonist?<sup>64</sup> If the scene were operating merely along a responsive pendulum of sympathy and antipathy, or a characterological one of victim and persecutor, York completely deserves our pity, and Margaret completely deserves our censure. Many perceptive feminist scholars have demonstrated how critical condemnation of Margaret replicates the misogyny of York's diatribe against her, and how her own violent actions in defense of patriarchal monarchy—and her son's right to succeed his father—highlight the aberrance of the Yorkist rebellion.<sup>65</sup> While these assessments helpfully complicate the traditional interpretation of Margaret as a manifestation of early modern terror regarding unruly women, they also tend to pass over the possibilities of apolitical, or even morally disinterested, responses to the scene.<sup>66</sup> As I have previously argued, the dramaturgy of the first tetralogy is designed to discourage sympathetic or identificatory responses; instead, the plays' excruciating enactment of historical violence—combined with an audience's excited, tense investment in history's spectacle—fosters an affectively responsive relationship between stage and playgoer, past and

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<sup>64</sup> In answer to this question, Paul Strohm reevaluates the "tragic" nature of York's demise. He finds that Margaret and Clifford unintentionally turn the torture into a reflection of Christ's torture, and that the spectacle of York's suffering intersects with Walter Benjamin's concept of "bare life, that state of revealed abjection in which life is either discovered to lack, or given an opportunity to reclaim, its sacrificial capacity." Paul Strohm, "York's Paper Crown: 'Bare Life' and Shakespeare's First Tragedy," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 36 (2006): 75-76, 91.

<sup>65</sup> See Levine, *Women's Matters*, 68-96. See also Marilyn L. Williamson, "When Men Are Rul'd By Women: Shakespeare's First Tetralogy," *Shakespeare Studies* 19 (1987): 41-59; and Jean Howard and Phyllis Rackin, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (London: Routledge, 1997), 43-99.

<sup>66</sup> Cox notes this moral ambiguity in Shakespeare's use of medieval analogues—in York's case, the buffeting of Christ—which he notes possess an "unsettling effect, creating ambivalence and uneasiness about his characters rather than allowing us to praise or condemn them with confidence." Cox, "3 *Henry VI*: Dramatic Convention," 48. For my purposes, this "unsettling" discouragement of audience identification is central to 3 *Henry VI*'s emotional and theatrical appeal.

present.<sup>67</sup> When Margaret verbally torments York, for example, the impetus behind many of her taunts is for him to interact with and respond to her in a reciprocal fashion, almost as though the two are improvising the scene and she needs him to say, “Yes, and:”

Alas, poor York, but that *I hate thee* deadly  
I should lament thy miserable state.  
I prithee, grieve to make me merry, York. . . .  
Why art thou patient, man? Thou shouldst be mad;  
And I *to make thee mad* do mock thee thus.  
Stamp, rave, and fret, that I may sing and dance.  
Thou wouldst be fee’d, I see, to make me sport. (1.4.84-86, 89-92, emphasis mine)

Noting that if it weren’t for the fact that she “hates him deadly,” York’s predicament would logically inspire her pity, Margaret highlights the basis for this torture in the simultaneously historical and affective nature of the relationship between her and York. Margaret can do these terrible things to York, and revel in the physical and emotional suffering she causes, because of the strength of her hatred for him. Oddly, then, Margaret’s hatred is simultaneously rooted in a disturbing sense of intimacy that seeks satisfaction in a closer, more invested, more sinister form of torture. Margaret seems to view the entire episode of torment as necessarily relational and interactive, as she requests that York respond to her in the appropriate emotional and dramatic way. In fact, Margaret’s derisive jabs at York resemble a director’s hints about how to play the scene, and her mocking contains within it metatheatrical gestures towards the performative purpose of the torture.

The theatrics of hatred we see on display in York’s torture fosters an affective environment in which fascination overcomes pity (and critical contempt). When she presents York with the napkin stained with Rutland’s blood, Margaret itemizes the responses she can or

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<sup>67</sup> That being said, to account for the obvious complexities of response to this scene in a way that previous considerations of York’s torture do not, I think we must acknowledge that, for every spectator or critic who has felt badly for York, there has been an equal (albeit less vocal) population that has cheered for Margaret.

should get from the presentation of this gory prop. York should grieve or be made “mad” at this evidence of his son’s murder, while in response Margaret can finally rejoice at the undoing of her archenemy. Indeed, to Margaret’s mind the napkin becomes a provocateur of various types of early modern stage action; York’s stamping and raving belong to revenge tragedy (or Herod’s over-acting in the mystery cycles), while Margaret’s singing and dancing calls to mind the jigs that concluded many performances. While Margaret’s command that York perform his grief and rage for her personal satisfaction is a mark of her own *schadenfreude*, the diversity of affects and responses of which the napkin is capable suggests once again the possibilities rather than the uniformity of an audience’s response to this scene. Of course, York’s mental and physical anguish overtakes the scene, and I agree that no response goes so far as to take pleasure in this dying father’s suffering. However, this simple one-to-one (victim=sympathy) model of response is itself complicated, and indeed overdetermined, by York’s misogynistic rant that dedicates more lines to Margaret’s appearance than to his own grief for Rutland, and by the overly prescriptive interjections of Northumberland.<sup>68</sup> York promises that “if thou tell’st the heavy story right, / Upon my soul the hearers will shed tears” (1.4.160-61), while Northumberland comments, “Beshrew me, but his passions moves me so / That hardly can I check my eyes from tears” (150-51). York’s pronouncement raises an intriguing question: if York’s story is told properly, is it really such a tear-jerker as he believes? While it is entirely possible that these observations serve as a guide for audience response, it is just as possible that they do not, since York and Northumberland must go to such trouble to remind their hearers how they should feel

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<sup>68</sup> York’s diatribe beginning with “She-wolf of France” goes on for 35 lines (1.4.111-460), while his speech demanding vengeance for Rutland’s murder consists of about 17 lines (1.4.151-68).

when witnessing such atrocities.<sup>69</sup> Instead, we might look to Robert Greene's famous adaptation of York's last words as a litmus test for response. Like York verbally eviscerating Margaret, Shakespeare's first critic expresses dripping disdain for the "tygers hart wrapt in a Player's hyde." But what Greene's venom illustrates even more forcefully is that, in spite of himself, he was so riveted by the playwright's ability to "bombast out a blank verse" that he memorized that blank verse.<sup>70</sup> Thus, Shakespeare finds a theatrics of hatred uniquely suited to staging national history because it deadens sympathy. After all, in the face of these continued and relentless acts of carnage, how is an audience supposed to respond sympathetically to either side?<sup>71</sup> Rather, the audience is made to feel like Richard when he is told of his father's death and beheading: "I cannot weep, for all my body's moisture / Scarce serves to quench my furnace burning heart" (2.1.79-80). In some sense, *3 Henry VI* renders weeping impossible, and in a distinctly non-humanist moment of recognition, Shakespeare seems to have realized that history does not happen, and thus cannot be embodied and made to happen again onstage, through human beings' sensitive passions and faculties.

The ritualistic torture and killing of York marks a watershed moment in *3 Henry VI* and the saga because, following this act of violence, the history being enacted onstage descends into episodic spurts of butchery. Indeed, the play briefly exposes the risks and detriment of feeling

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<sup>69</sup> Cox acknowledges the difficulties of responding with complete sympathy to York: "Our engagement with his suffering is qualified by our detachment from his vindictiveness, bitterness, and disappointed ambition when he finally decides to give his assailants a tongue lashing." Cox, "*3 Henry VI*: Dramatic Convention," 54-55.

<sup>70</sup> Robert Greene, *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit*, ed. D. Allen Carroll (Binghamton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 1994), 84-85.

<sup>71</sup> Like Mullaney, I emphasize that early modern drama, and even this brutal scene, constitutes "a distributed phenomenon in an affective as well as a cognitive sense. It extend[s] beyond the acting space to take place in and with the audience, its necessary participant and dramaturgical collaborator." Mullaney, *Reformation of Emotions*, 62. Of course, what I am interrogating is just *how* the affective phenomenon of York being tortured and killed onstage extends and infiltrates an early modern audience. As Greene's commentary illustrates, the episode quite forcefully extends beyond and lives within audience members' emotional memories even after they have left the theater, but not as the traumatic or sympathy-inducing experience we might have previously been led to believe.

the past through a theatrics of hatred in its depiction of the three York brothers, who not only bask in the unbridled violence upon which such theatrics depend, but also prove that history is both made and *won* through such rabid theatrics. For every act of mutilation, murder, and betrayal committed by these scions of the house of York— and even when they commit these acts against each other—Edward, George, and Richard rack up points on history’s scoreboard. This is savagely demonstrated in Clifford’s death at the Battle of Towton, when the brothers discover him with an arrow in his neck and either torture him to death or abuse his corpse:<sup>72</sup>

RICHARD. Clifford, ask mercy and obtain no grace.

EDWARD. Clifford, repent in bootless penitence.

WARWICK. Clifford, devise excuse for thy faults.

GEORGE. While we devise fell tortures for thy faults. (2.6.69-73)

In a chilling litany that attempts a sort of demonic resurrection, the choric voices of the brothers and Warwick taunt Clifford for the express purpose of reviving him so that they may torture him in a more extravagant fashion. Once again, through willful denial of pity, sympathy, or mercy, hatred coalesces and performatively manifests as sadistic call and response, with the distinguishing feature that response is not possible because the necessary participant has bled to death. In contrast to York’s death, moreover, the brothers’ treatment of Clifford more forcibly illustrates how history happens through hate because the outrages being committed onstage are committed by history’s winners. After all, for an audience in 1592, the onstage Edward who mocks and denies mercy to Clifford is simultaneously the current monarch’s great-grandfather. A past rendered viscerally present through performance—and the present as constituted by that past—collide, and this instance of violently hybrid time hammers home that the substance of

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<sup>72</sup> While the Octavo version specifies that Clifford dies “with a groan” at SD 41, the Folio does not specify a moment of death.

history and time is, in these plays, sadistic. Or, to follow Wolfgang Clemen, the violent contact between past and present facilitated by this theatrics of hate gives one the feeling that the past “is altogether too present, too obtrusive, too much a matter of course; there is too much of it.”<sup>73</sup> While Henry VI—meditating as always while these atrocities unfold around him—might wish that he’d been dealt a lot in life that would enable him “to carve out dials point by point, / Thereby to see the minutes how they run,” and to watch “how many hours brings about the day, / How many days will finish up the year, / How many years a mortal man may live” (2.5.24-25, 27-29), Shakespeare deflates this pastoral fantasy of Henry’s to craft and measure time, because the play itself has proved to be the true crafter of time. And in *3 Henry VI*’s universe, time is made and measured not by units carved out on a sundial, but rather by fatal stab wounds carved into human flesh.

### **Richard Gloucester: The Fusion of History-Making and Performative Hate**

No single character in Shakespeare’s corpus appears to understand this concept of time as violence, and history as body count, better than Richard Gloucester. As Stephen Marche notes, Shakespeare’s Richard is “one of the most historically self-conscious characters ever presented onstage;” I further argue that the historical self-consciousness built into Richard is the same self-consciousness Shakespeare distributes across characters and moments in the previous *Henry VI* plays, albeit in Richard this historicity achieves its most concentrated form.<sup>74</sup> Thus, Richard is no stark exception, but rather the perfect fulfillment and logical evolution of the affective atmosphere of *2* and *3 Henry VI*.<sup>75</sup> In the speech that has been deemed the first instance of “a

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<sup>73</sup> Wolfgang Clemen, “Past and Future in Shakespeare’s Drama,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 52 (1966): 236.

<sup>74</sup> Stephen Marche, “Mocking Dead Bones: Historical Memory and the Theater of the Dead in *Richard III*,” *Comparative Drama* 37 (2003): 40.

<sup>75</sup> Of course, Richard’s theatrical pedigree is both inherently historical and inherently theatrical, as demonstrated in Bernard Spivack’s classic study of Richard as a descendent of the Vice figure. See Spivack, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958)

fully developed subjectivity” on Shakespeare’s stage, Richard highlights his similarities to, rather than his differences from, his predecessors in wrenching history into being through chaotic violence as he wrestles with how best to achieve his desires given the examples available to him.<sup>76</sup> Edward’s modus operandi of seducing women and pursuing sexual pleasure will not work, nor will following the rules of patrilineal succession work either, since that demands Richard simply wait around as more nephews and nieces nudge him further down the line of succession. When Richard reaches the most famous part of his soliloquy, in which he describes himself in proto-Freudian terms as one lost in a thorny wood, he arrives at an affective and practical solution to his problem that, while groundbreaking in its rhetorical density, reproduces the main way that the past-as-drama has been forged in the *Henry VI* plays up to this point:

And yet I know not how to get the crown,  
For many lives stand between me and home,  
And I, like one lost in a thorny wood,  
That rents the thorns and is rent with the thorns. . . .  
Torment myself to catch the English crown:  
And from that torment I will free myself,  
Or hew my way out with a bloody axe. (3.2.172-75, 179-81)

The third York brother feels caught between a rock and a hard place, and to get out he chooses to follow the example of Cade, of Clifford, of Margaret, and of his own father; he is going to slash his way out of third place, onto the English throne, and into English history. In my view, the thorny wood Richard senses himself trapped in is time: time pressing him in on all sides, time demanding its fulfillment, time demanding that it be made into history. And English history’s undeniable end, from the perspective of the Wars of the Roses and Shakespeare’s dramatization of it, is Richard III/*Richard III*.<sup>77</sup> In his pledge to achieve sovereignty by any means necessary,

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<sup>76</sup> Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers*, 1.

<sup>77</sup> Marche acknowledges this dynamic, albeit from a perspective of historical narrative rather than theatrical enactment: “Richard understands that the ability to shape the narrative of history is indistinguishable from the ability to shape the events of history itself.” Marche, “Mocking Dead Bones,” 40.



Richard adopts the exact methods and affective technologies of the first tetralogy's dramaturgy. Each play is a desperate toil in which characters strive violently for the crown, and in which playgoers feel their way through the past as the bodies pile up, serving as physical and temporal markers for how tantalizingly close the past is to becoming the present. The only way to alleviate the unbearable tension that Richard describes, and the only pressure valve available to turn the past into the present within the present theatrical moment, is through Richard himself.

The theatrics of hate constitute the bedrock of Richard's subjectivity, and thus Richard understands and excels at the performativity built into Shakespeare's dramaturgical history-making. Richard's hatred is inherently theatrical: "Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile, And cry 'Content' to that which grieves my heart, / And wet my cheeks with artificial tears, / And frame my face to all occasions" (3.2.182-85). Shakespeare's Richard turns the substance of his reality—and therefore the substance of English history between 1471 and 1485—into a performance, and thus appropriates for himself alone the dramaturgical power to turn "then" into "now." Excerpts from Richard's first soliloquy in *3 Henry VI* are very often added to his opening soliloquy in performances of *Richard III*, and by taking the two speeches together, we see emerge an obsession with timeliness that is inextricable from the performativity of Richard's identity, and indeed that testifies to the history plays' governing concern of making history take place in the here and now. In *3 Henry VI*, Richard expresses a startling awareness of himself, his desires, and how the present is uniquely designed to frustrate his ambitions. *Richard III*'s opening speech further develops and complicates Richard's oppressive feeling that he is "stuck" in a timeline that will never allow him to achieve the full extent of his ambition. The two speeches allow Richard to unpack and interrogate what he views as the distinguishing factor

shaping his own position in time: his deformity.<sup>78</sup> Because he is “cheated of feature by dissembling nature, / Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time / Into this breathing world scarce half made up” (1.1.19-21), Richard’s embodiment constitutes an overdetermined state of being-in-the-present and being-in-time. Richard feels himself to be inherently untimely—or, as Charnes suggests, to be monstrously and excessively in time—as his physical body renders him unable to fit into the present moment.<sup>79</sup> This is what makes the opening line of *Richard III* so infinitely striking; the “now” Richard announces is emphatically not his “now,” and thus the present offers no space or avenue for Richard to be in the world. However, in Shakespeare’s view Richard’s skills as a history-maker allow him to refashion the present. The English past is Richard’s creature, his magnum opus so to speak, and at the outset of *Richard III* he decides to transform “the glorious summer of this son of York” into his own “now:” “I am determined to prove a villain, / And hate the idle pleasures of these days” (1.1.2, 30-31).<sup>80</sup> Richard endeavors not to remake the present in his own image per se, but as Garber argues he “generates and theorizes deformity as a form of power” to craft a timeline that is both his alone and upon which English history necessarily depends.<sup>81</sup>

Richard uses hatred as his means of history-making, just as Shakespeare has, and in so doing he replicates what the previous history plays have been doing: making the past be “now”

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<sup>78</sup> For an account of Richard’s deformity and the ways it exposes the inherent instability of physiognomy as a signifying category, see Michael Torrey, “‘The plain devil and dissembling looks’: Ambivalent Physiognomy and Shakespeare’s *Richard III*,” *ELR* 30 (2000): 123-53.

<sup>79</sup> “Richard’s problem is not that he has been sent prematurely into this world. . .but precisely the opposite: he has been overlong in the world, sent too often, too made-up, overdetermined by repeated textual births that have rendered him too readable and his body too legible.” Charnes, *Notorious Identities*, 54.

<sup>80</sup> “Richard is not only deformed, his deformity is itself a deformation. His twisted and misshapen body encodes the whole strategy of history as a necessary deforming and *unforming*—with the object of reforming—the past.” Garber, “Descanting on Deformity: Richard III and the Shape of History,” in *The Historical Renaissance: New Essays on Tudor and Stuart Literature and Culture*, ed. Heather Dubrow and Richard Strier (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 86.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

so an audience can feel it and take pleasure in it.<sup>82</sup> While he might not be “made to court an amorous looking glass” (1.1.15), Richard understands that his desires and the desires of his audience are kin to and dependent upon one another. One wishes to violently hew out a present in which his ambitions are achieved not in spite of but because of his deviancy; the other wants to go along for the ride. Furthermore, Richard knows that he alone possesses the power to fully satisfy those desires, because in him Shakespeare has invested the dramaturgical and affective potencies of his theatrics of hate.<sup>83</sup> Thus, in *Richard III* the pleasures of hatred and the pleasures of history completely fuse through the drama of the past unfolding onstage. Moreover, it constitutes the moment when an audience’s seduction by the past is fully achieved because, as Richard murderously refashions the English past into a “world for me to bustle in” (1.1.152), playgoers feel the past to be completely now, being offered up by English history’s consummate villain and actor as an adventure in which they take part.

Before I leave behind *3 Henry VI*, and risk becoming seduced myself by the bravado and antics of Richard Gloucester, I must briefly return to one of *Part 3*’s final moments: the murder of Prince Edward in front of his mother, Queen Margaret, in order to show how Shakespeare begins to question and complicate the experience of affective history generated by his theatrics of hatred. As much as it might seem that an audience has been delivered to, or delivered itself up to, Richard as so much putty in his hands, this penultimate act of violence serves as a kernel of resistance to Richard’s seductions, and will be nurtured throughout *Richard III* as a necessary, and equally enjoyable, counter to Richard’s seductive theatrics of hatred. The sudden and pitiless killing of Edward exemplifies Brockbank’s observation that, in the chaotically unjust past that is

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<sup>82</sup> “What Shakespeare does is make his project Richard’s project.” Charnes, *Notorious Identity*, 40.

<sup>83</sup> My claim here draws upon Katherine Eggert’s point that, by appropriating the “sexual bewitchment” of female characters from previous installments of the saga, “What Richard gains thereby is an ability to ravish his courtly audience, diverting them from their right minds.” Eggert, *Showing Like a Queen*, 71.

3 *Henry VI*, English history “is being generated by the happenings we are made to witness.”<sup>84</sup> Following this shocking “happening,” an event so instantaneous it seems outside time and yet rooted in a history of hatred to its very core, Margaret begs for death also. Only too willing to oblige, Richard is halted by Edward IV, and Richard responds to his brother’s mercy with the chilling query: “Why should she live to fill the world with words?” (5.5.44) Practical as Richard’s murderous intentions may be, he also acknowledges an implicit power in Margaret’s unique ability to wield words and “rail,” a power that contains the similar dramaturgical, worlding function as his own hatred. As we have already seen, Richard possesses an unparalleled ability to fill his world with words, and indeed to create a world unto himself and his audience through speech alone. However, Richard seems aware that the theatrical balance of power has subtly shifted through this murder because the affective power of Margaret’s grief and rage lies outside the bounds of Yorkist control. After all, if history can be crafted through theatrical dialogue—as 2 and 3 *Henry VI* substantively prove—what sort of alternative, combative, anti-Yorkist versions of history will this violently bereft, radically wronged woman with nothing to lose wrench into being by filling the world with words? By killing Margaret, Richard thinks that he can keep the murder of Edward a mere “happening:” a terrible crime, a regrettable one even, but one that, like all the countless deaths and murders in these plays, simply could not be helped. It happened, but such is life, and such is history. Crucially, however, Margaret refuses to allow her son’s murder to become simply a “happening.” Instead, she appropriates some measure of the history plays’ dramaturgical ability to make the past happen onstage through her own personal project of “filling the world with words.”

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<sup>84</sup> Brockbank, “The Frame of Disorder,” 98.

### **“It’s Happening Again:” Margaret’s Resistance to the History Play’s Recursive Seductions**

Margaret fashions herself to exist in and for vocal memory alone, and this obsession with never-forgetting and always remembering imbues her with a power of world-creation so potent that, almost like Hermione in *The Winter’s Tale*, her theatrical character possesses the power of resurrection, defying her historical counterpart’s death in exile in 1482.<sup>85</sup> Shakespeare’s Margaret survives the *Henry VI*s to become the most commanding vocal opponent to Richard in the subsequent play, because her powers reside in knowing what has happened and, therefore, what will happen now. However, both characters in *Richard III* and scholarly commentators offer skewed interpretations of Margaret’s predictive capacities by portraying her as a voice of prophecy, a Cassandra whose warnings about the future are doomed to go unheeded. Rather than serving as the voice of prophecy in *Richard III*, I argue that Margaret serves as perhaps the only character in the play capable of accurately pinpointing historical cause and effect, and thus the only character capable of preventing Richard’s covert crimes from passing into the mists of history—and audience response—as mere “happenings.” While Richard might playfully and seductively admit his deepest secrets and darkest plots to us, Margaret makes an audience briefly acknowledge that this is not just theatrical pillow-talk. Rather, Richard’s playful asides always have been and will continue to be embodied and actualized as horrific crimes. Margaret understands what will happen to Rivers, to Hastings, to Buckingham, to Queen Elizabeth, and to Elizabeth’s children because she has seen it happen before; therefore, she uses her verbose power

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<sup>85</sup> Mullaney also notes Margaret’s ahistorical presence in *Richard III* but, contrary to my argument, he reads her character as a cipher for a form “of historical trauma. . . marked less by an undesired return of the repressed than by active, often quite remarkable efforts to erase a previously acknowledged past. . . . Margaret is, in a sense, profoundly absent whenever she is present, a memory that recalls and embodies its own forgetting.” Mullaney, *The Reformation of Emotions*, 96, 99. I counter that Margaret embodies a principle of memory that is militantly opposed to, and trying to combat, the forms of forgetting encouraged by Richard’s seductive theatrics of hate.

of recall to infiltrate Shakespeare's audience with the sense and awareness that we too have seen this all before.

To better demonstrate how Margaret initiates different responsive conditions that oppose the seductive theatrics of hatred, allow me to indulge in a brief illustrative detour. At a critical moment in Season 2 of the cult television show *Twin Peaks*, the character known only as "The Giant" appears in a waking vision to Special Agent Dale Cooper, who has come to the small Washington town to investigate the murder of Laura Palmer and the increasingly paranormal circumstances surrounding it. In this vision, the Giant repeatedly delivers the cryptic message: "It is happening again. It is *happening again*."<sup>86</sup> Agent Cooper watches and listens with an intent, questioning, and slightly fearful expression on his face, but the Giant's words remain obscure to him. Cooper can only sense that something has gone terribly wrong, and that he has failed to prevent it. However, the audience is made not only to sense but also to know exactly what is happening again.<sup>87</sup> This dynamic of feeling as well as knowing that an event of history has repeated itself forms the bedrock of Shakespeare's affective shift from *3 Henry VI* to *Richard III*, which begins to provide alternatives to a performative theatrics of hate that make history happen again but that render its participants blind to such repetitiveness. In her first scene of the play, Margaret in fact establishes a dynamic between herself and the audience that resembles the dynamic between the Giant and Cooper. Unheard and unseen by any of the main players onstage, Margaret speaks in asides, reminding the audience how each person onstage has wronged her, remembering and making the audience remember what has happened in previous plays. When Margaret finally makes her presence known, at which point Richard snarls at her, "Foul wrinkled

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<sup>86</sup> "Lonely Souls." *Twin Peaks*, season 2, episode 7, ABC, 10 Nov. 1990.

<sup>87</sup> This is because the scene of the Giant's message is interrupted and cuts to the revelation of Laura Palmer's killer committing yet another horrific murder. See *Ibid*.

wretch, what makest thou in my sight?” Margaret replies that her sole purpose in the present is “but repetition of what thou hast marred” (1.3.163-64). Margaret exists to repeat, to make the past present through her smoldering grief and vitriolic memory. By knowing what has happened, and by refusing to let either onstage or offstage hearers forget it, Margaret can claim with great confidence that the past is indeed happening again, and can foreshadow the inevitable through her curses. In filling the world with words, therefore, Margaret pioneers an alternative method for making the past present that interrogates the very means by which the previous history plays have made the past feel present and embodied.

While initially theatrically powerful, though, even Margaret falls victim to Richard’s seemingly unassailable control of *Richard III*’s affective dynamics. As she observes when the ensemble that was “ready to catch each other by the throat” (1.3.188) turns as a pack upon her, “filling the world with words” has a dramaturgically ineffective catch to it. Most of the time, those words are extremely inaccurate, partial, and reactionary rememberings of past personal wrongs. As illustrated in Act Two, Scene Two, every character who suffers a loss (unknowingly) at Richard’s hands posits their loss as the single greatest calamity any human being has ever experienced. Queen Elizabeth hyperbolically announces King Edward’s death as “an act of tragic violence,” to which the Duchess of York responds, “What cause have I, / Thine being but a moiety of my moan, / To overgo thy woes, and drown thy cries” (2.2.39, 59-61). Meanwhile, Clarence’s children chime in with bizarre taunts that they could not care less about their aunt’s loss: “Our fatherless distress was left unmoaned; / Your widow-dolour likewise be unwept” (2.2.64-65). How can an audience help but react to this emotional one-upmanship as excessive, disingenuous, and a tad repetitious, especially with Richard winking from the sidelines? After all, if there are any repeat viewers of 2 or 3 *Henry VI* in the audience, the loss of these fathers,

sons, and husbands is really nothing special. This accounts for Richard's unmitigated affective and actual success throughout the first half of the play; when everyone decides to "fill the world with words" in this fashion, Richard can deflect onstage attention and emotional energy away from himself and at the same time appropriate and monopolize the audience's attention and interest.<sup>88</sup> In one sense, Richard alone—with well-timed help from Buckingham—fully occupies and shapes the present while forcing everyone else to become stuck in a history of grief and injustice. As we see in the episode of Hasting's arrest and execution, moreover, Richard can even recraft the past and present to an extent when he demands that his onstage lemmings forget his own bodily history. The substance of Richard's accusations against Hastings rest on a moment of crass bravado in which he orders the council of lords to "look how I am bewitched! Behold, mine arm, / Is like a blasted sapling withered up" (3.4.67-68). As every man sitting in that room knows—and as every spectator sitting in Shakespeare's theater knows—Richard's arm has been deformed since birth. However, Richard violently revises his own historical embodiment, and thus appropriates for himself the unique ability to remake how others' interpret time through sheer force of will, and threat of death. To an extent, by "hating the idle pleasures of these days," Richard achieves his goal of becoming un-stuck in time by making time exclusively his own; in this way, he resembles a more successful Clifford, who thought he might remake his place in the world and in time by eradicating the House of York from history. Through the worlding capacity of his hatred, Richard momentarily frees himself of the torment that he so keenly felt in *3 Henry VI* by indeed violently hewing his way out and into history—and onto the English throne.

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<sup>88</sup> Charnes similarly argues that Richard's affective and actual success stems from "his ability to be 'familiar'. . . the focal point of all affective reactions in the play. We might think about this fascination in the terms Bataille uses about the peculiar power of modern fascist figures. . . . 'The affective flow that unites him with his followers. . . is a function of the common consciousness of the increasingly violent and excessive energies and powers that accumulate in [his] person.'" Charnes, quoting Bataille, *Visions of Excess*, 143, in *Notorious Identities*, 65.



But such momentum only lasts up to a single point, and from the instant of Richard's coronation Shakespeare flips a dramatic switch that has been tangibly felt by centuries of playgoers and critics. Some attribute the momentum shift to formal standards of tragedy in both its classical and medieval forms: Fortune's wheel always turns; *hamartia* strikes again; Providence necessarily demands Richard's downfall and demise. Regardless of the reason, history itself dictates that Richard only gets to bustle in this world—dramatic as well as historical—for so long. The instance of this shift from rise to tragic fall is generally pinpointed to the moment when Richard declares to Buckingham: "I wish the bastards dead, / And I would have it immediately performed" (4.2.18-19). As with previous instances of child-murder throughout the saga, the murder of the princes functions as a moment of affective rupture, another "happening" that signals a rift in time from which the perpetrator can neither return nor redeem himself. Richard's increasing paranoia, and his loss of the wily charisma that kept an audience on his side even as he brazenly dispatched both enemies and friends, certainly contributes to an audience's affective attachment shifting away from him. However, I argue that it is Margaret's interpretation of the murder of the princes for Elizabeth and the Duchess in Act Four, Scene Four that fully accomplishes an emotional turning of the tide, in which an audience's interest and investment becomes rooted in Richard's downfall in equal measure to its previous desire for his success.

In the confrontation between the three grieving women in Act Four, Scene Four, Shakespeare collapses the past in on itself in such a way that forcibly illustrates the famous quip, "History doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes;" and this metadramatic and metahistorical instance of rhyming critically examines the affective consequences of a history play's dramaturgy. When Margaret reappears in Act Four, she is highly conscious of her role as

spectator: “Here in the confines slyly have I lurked / To watch the waning of mine enemies. / A dire induction am I witness to” (4.4.3-5). Margaret admits to the dark entrancing pleasure she has gained from watching the past reap what it has sown upon her enemies. But when she emerges from the shadows to confront the grieving Elizabeth and Duchess, Margaret injects their mutual and yet competitive sorrow with a different affective resonance born out of her own hyper-historical awareness:

If ancient sorrows be most reverend,  
Give mine the benefit of seniory, . . . .  
If sorrow can admit society,  
Tell over your woes again by viewing mine.  
I had an Edward, till a Richard killed him;  
I had a husband, till a Richard killed him.  
Thou hadst an Edward, till a Richard killed him;  
Thou hadst a Richard, till a Richard killed him. (4.4.35-36, 38-43)

Although still mired in historical and emotional one-upmanship, this chorus of names begins to erase the distinctions between the husbands, fathers, sons, and grandsons that a single Richard has murdered. The refrain of dead Richards, Edwards, and Henrys instead coalesces into a point of singularity, a black hole of England’s past that illuminates the interwoven and mutually constitutive recursiveness of both English history and that history’s unfolding on Shakespeare’s stage. The echoes of past plays, past violence, and previous rancor-filled encounters reverberate across both actual and theatrical history as Margaret recites their shared genealogy of loss. This sense of time doubling-back on itself has been a potent undercurrent pulsing beneath the history plays’ attraction and appeal; Margaret herself confesses the unadulterated pleasure she has taken in witnessing history’s ravenous recursiveness, and her admission of pleasure simultaneously highlights the delight an audience takes in watching Richard, “This charnel cur / [Prey] on the issue of his mother’s body” (4.4.56-57). Crucially, however, Margaret underscores the pleasures of her hatred to flip an affective switch between herself and the Yorkist women who are both her

dire enemies and theatrical counterparts. Through this instance of shift, furthermore, Margaret makes an audience keenly aware of both the captivating and the sobering qualities of the history play's "rhyming" recursiveness.

Despite how delightfully fun it might be to watch, Margaret insists that an audience should think twice about how the seductive pleasures of Richard's, and the history play's, brutality create a harmful affective experience of the past. "Bear with me," Margaret asks both her onstage and offstage hearers, "I am hungry for revenge, / And now I cloy me with beholding it" (4.4.61-62), and in this moment of pause the wronged Lancastrian queen alters *Richard III*'s affective register by making her audience consider if they too might have overindulged in the saga's theatrics of hatred. As "beholders of this frantic play" (4.4.68), Margaret asks Elizabeth, the Duchess, and the playgoers of Shakespeare's theater to temper their emotional investment in both their own grief (in the case of the former) and their own pleasure (in the case of the latter). In so doing, Margaret's audiences are tasked to admit that the pleasures of experiencing the past in the present depend in part upon accepting history as an excessive, unpreventable downward spiral into unbridled violence. However, as she catalogues how Elizabeth has been reduced to "the flattering index of a direful pageant" (4.4.85), Margaret illustrates that there is also a fascination to this recursiveness, to seeing the history we have experienced over the course of three plays condensed into a terrifically entrancing litany of loss:

Where is thy husband now? Where be thy brothers?  
Where are thy two sons? Wherein dost thou joy? . . .  
Decline all this, and see what now thou art:  
For happy wife, a most distressed widow;  
For joyful mother, one that wails the name. . . .  
For queen, a very catiff crowned with care. (4.4.92-93, 97-101)

Margaret hammers home that to experience the past in the present—especially in the theater—is to encounter history as an endless loop in which the deaths of children, grandchildren, brothers,

husbands, and fathers echoes (or rhymes with) previous episodes in which these men with the same three names fell “a very prey to time” (4.4.106). But Margaret’s recriminations do not simply veer into a moralizing instance of “I told you so.” Rather, she exposes the history play’s dramaturgical rendering of the past into “a flat circle” precisely so that an audience develops a heightened awareness of—and unavoidable fascination with—the way a history play makes them experience time circling back on itself.<sup>89</sup> Through Margaret, an audience now experiences the past becoming present through its recursiveness, which is unavoidably enthralling but also provides some serious food for thought. This has all happened before and is happening again, Margaret demonstrates, and that awareness provides a different, but still compelling affective experience of the past in the present that stands in deliberate contrast to Richard’s seductive theatrics. Thus, as she bequeaths to Elizabeth her ability to “fill the world with words,” Margaret establishes new conditions for an audience to feel, experience, and respond differently to embodied affective history as the play’s protagonist returns—in yet another instance of metadramatic recursiveness—to the seductive dramaturgical techniques that previously served him so well.

### **Breaking Free of the Flat Circle and the Dialectic of Violent/Seductive Encounter**

In Richard’s efforts to “seduce” the absent Princess Elizabeth via her grieving mother, *Richard III* both exposes and unravels the seductive structures of feeling behind its dramaturgy. The scene is an eerie, disturbing echo of the seduction of Anne, in which Richard employs the same methods but in such a way that instead of succeeding they shock and disgust. When bargaining with Elizabeth, Richard himself falls into the play’s now dominant recursive structures by justifying his brazenness with the same logic he used on Anne: that a history of

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<sup>89</sup> “Time Is a Flat Circle,” *True Detective*, season 1, episode 5, HBO.

sexual desire or, in the case of his niece, a desperate desire to keep the kingdom under his control erases and condones a parallel history of violent crimes. But the eroticized language of this attempted seduction of the Elizabeths devolves into the grotesque, exposing the perverseness of Richard's obsession with both making time and making up for time. "If I have killed the issue of your womb," he concedes to Elizabeth, "To quicken your increase I will beget / Mine issue of your blood upon your daughter" (4.4.296-98). Richard's last-ditch plan to be in history, to make the present all his own, and to burst out of the deformed time that he himself has deformed around him, is to commit a barely disguised sexual crime. To make up for murdering Elizabeth's sons, he proposes to impregnate her daughter with their replacements: "In your daughter's womb I bury them, / Where, in that nest of spicery, they will breed / Selves of themselves, to your recomfiture" (4.4.423-25). The incestuous acts proliferate upon themselves in this imagery, in which the fetuses seem to breed with one another to reproduce themselves as doppelgangers of the two dead princes. Richard is no longer the master seducer, nor the acceptably evil Vice, but an Incubus bent on raping his way into an alternate timeline against all odds. Richard's affective and dramaturgical methods for crafting history have devolved from the seductive into the incestuous through this proposal to embody the present into being through sexual intercourse with his own niece. Through Richard's incestuous designs on history-making, furthermore, Shakespeare subtly problematizes his plays' embodiment of history as a dialectic between violent encounter and seductive encounter, but without making an audience feel guilty for so wholeheartedly participating in this dialectic.

Through Elizabeth's response to Richard's "marriage proposal," Shakespeare consciously highlights the methods behind the affective dramaturgy he has used over the course of three plays to make the past happen again; however, the pleasures an audience derives from this

episode consist in resisting, rather than giving in to, the seductive theatrics of hatred that Richard has employed with such success up until now. Elizabeth consistently maintains the upper hand in this confrontation by turning Richard's seductive (or rather rapist), history-negating logic on its head to prove that the passions embedded in his crimes make such acts excessively historical, to the extent that the events of the past infect and pervert time itself. Elizabeth swiftly pierces through Richard's repeated efforts to swear that he will not murder her daughter once he's through with her, and as his titles, his dead father, and even God prove futile, Elizabeth finally asks him, "What canst thou swear by now" (4.4.387)? When Richard responds with "the time to come" (4.4.388), Elizabeth offers a powerful statement on the ways in which Richard, but more importantly the history plays themselves, have rendered time into a flat circle of recursiveness, in which the future is perverted by the past before it even comes into view:

That thou hast wronged in the time o'erpast,  
For I myself have many tears to wash  
Hereafter time, for time past wronged by thee. . . .  
Swear not by the time to come, for that thou hast  
Misused ere used, by times ill-used o'erpast (4.4.388-90, 395-96)

For Elizabeth, and by extension the English nation, the future is already the past, and is already the dark deformed creature of Richard's past violent crimes. Richard's actions reverberate across and through historical time in Elizabeth's model, because in murdering children and parents indiscriminately, Richard has replaced a natural progression of time with his own abortive genealogy of violence. Elizabeth's indictment is a scathing and philosophically poignant one; however, if Richard is guilty of committing this violent rending of time—as an audience no doubt judges him to be thanks to the force of Elizabeth's rhetoric—is not the history play equally guilty? Charnes ably claims that "Richard is in fact not the exception everyone in the play (and many audiences and critics) would like to believe. Rather, as the designated embodiment of the

violent ambition shared by so many, Richard is a site of likeness.”<sup>90</sup> I would add that, as the perfect embodiment of the history play’s most successful dramaturgical methods for bringing the past into the present, is not Richard the micro-version of the history plays’ macro-goal to embody “times ill used o’erpast”? Richard’s vision of embodying and carving out English history has always been violent because the history plays themselves are unrepentantly so. But, now that Richard’s history-making project is a perverse and incestuous one—“It cannot be avoided but by this; / It will not be avoided but by this” (4.4.341-42)—must we judge the history play as a whole as a similarly diseased experience of time?

I believe that Shakespeare deliberately deflects the implications of this question for his most groundbreaking genre experiment, and instead redeems his history plays through recourse to the redemptive narrative that English historiography had already grafted onto Richard’s demise. Like More, Hall, and Holinshed before him, Shakespeare has Richard bear the brunt of history’s inevitable recursiveness, making Richard “but a very prey to time” (4.4.106) so his audience, the English nation, and English history generally does not have to be. Richard might suppose that Elizabeth is a “relenting fool, and shallow-changing woman” (4.4.431), but as Stanley later reports she has escaped to make possible an alternative history to Richard, and her escape mirrors how an audience emotionally escapes Richard’s clutches as well. As Richard feverishly dreams in his tent, he awakens to be returned to his own origin point, alone and guiltily confessing rather than boldly proclaiming his villainy. It is Richard who is unable to get out, who remains trapped in the past, and for whom it is *always* happening again.<sup>91</sup> Thus,

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<sup>90</sup> Charnes, *Notorious Identities*, 64.

<sup>91</sup> Patricia Cahill offers a nuanced reading of the haunting in which she argues against any redemptive reading for Richard III/*Richard III*. Cahill finds that critics’ focus on redemption “neglect[s] the play’s extraordinary staging of a traumatic past whose haunting temporality persists despite the play’s desire to disavow it.” Cahill, *Unto the Breach: Martial Formations, Historical Trauma, and the Early Modern Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 210. I agree with Cahill, to an extent, that this haunting temporality persists within the history play genre as a

Shakespeare's *Richard III* makes Richard rather than the history play genre solely responsible for and guilty of history's seductively recursive violence. The play's surviving characters and Shakespeare's audience, by contrast, are given what one might call the "Disney" ending, with Henry Tudor filling the role of perfectly bland and perfectly timed Prince Charming. This happy ending does more too, I argue, than toe the line of Tudor propaganda; rather, in deflecting and repressing the more disturbing issues of the potentially pernicious experience of time that a history play provides, Shakespeare makes it seem like the patterns and recursive structures of the past can be broken. Tellingly, the last couplet of the play and of Henry VII's histrionically hopeful speech begin with the exact same word with which *Richard III* began: "Now civil wounds are stopped; peace lives again. / That she may long live here, God say 'Amen'" (5.5.40-41, emphasis mine). Shakespeare makes us feel as though we have together broken free of the seductive, pleasurable, yet ultimately infected and repetitive cycles of violence that mark the "now" of the *Henry VI*s and *Richard III*. Instead, our "now" is a Tudor now, an unabashedly triumphant present in which it appears that we can get out of one timeline and get into a better one, a Tudor one, an Elizabethan one. Shakespeare's early masterpiece closes with this fantasy that leaves playgoers with the belief that they can escape, that they can break history's paradigms of violent happenings and time doubling forever back on itself.

However, it is precisely this version of English history—triumphant, hopeful, pattern-shattering—that Shakespeare returns to in his second tetralogy. And in this saga, slowly but surely, history's recursive rhyming and its disturbing choric repetition rear themselves again. Through the protagonist of Prince Hal turned Henry V, who as a self-conscious affective

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whole, and that Shakespeare elides it at *Richard III*'s conclusion but cannot help returning to these concerns in the second tetralogy.



historian attempts to craft his present as a victorious narrative of futurism, and who invests all his energies in these discourses of triumphant time, Shakespeare's history plays will fall back into that flat circle, and offer a much darker meditation on what it means to be in time, to embody the past, and to experience that past again as a playgoer.

## Chapter Five

### “Past and to Come Seems Best”? Making Futures, Repeating the Past, and Staying Stuck in the Second Henriad

Unlike the *Henry VI*s or *Richard III*, Shakespeare’s *Henry IV*s and *Henry V* stage an English past that is variously obsessed with, paralyzed by, and in relentless pursuit of a specific affective future: that is, the victory at Agincourt. Furthermore, through the character of Hal turned Henry V, Shakespeare explores how one might feel one’s way into the future as a means of crafting a nation’s history. In this chapter, I argue that Shakespeare further develops his affective dramaturgy of rendering history into a present, viscerally felt theatrical experience through Hal’s reformation, because Hal’s transformation into Henry V depends upon the prince’s considerable talents as an affective historian. By this I mean that Hal—like Shakespeare in his first tetralogy—views time as a generative medium that he can mold to serve specific affective ends. Hal’s project to “redeem time” constitutes an ambitious effort at future-making that simultaneously reforms and retunes his subjects’ emotional assessments of Hal’s own history. Uniquely in the *Henry IV*s, Hal believes that the past need not determine nor impede the progress of the future; as such, Hal attempts to forge a timeline of English history in which his own personal past, and his family’s ignominious path to the succession, does not count in the face of the glorious future-history he strives to actualize for the nation.

However, Hal/Henry V’s mode of being-in-time demands that his subjects (onstage and off) sacrifice the affective connections and relationships they have forged with the past. Thus, in *2 Henry IV* and *Henry V* Shakespeare explores how emotional meddling with time morphs into disordered and haunted experiences of temporality. In the previous chapter, I argued that Shakespeare’s first tetralogy interrogates the more pernicious consequences of feeling history happen again, but that *Richard III* ultimately provides playgoers with an affective lifeline that

emphasizes the pleasures rather than the emotional morass of staging the past in the present. In the final two plays of the second tetralogy, however, Shakespeare returns to this idea of time as a ceaselessly flat circle, and explores the debilitating effects of his own experiments with affective history. As fractured simulacra of their predecessor, *2 Henry IV* and *Henry V* turn history into a weirdly recursive experience, with the past unsettlingly repeating itself as it reembodies itself in the present.<sup>1</sup> Thus, both theatrical characters and sixteenth-century playgoers come to experience embodied affective history as an uncanny and harmful form of being-in-time. As much as Hal/Henry V senses that his nation's history depends upon him repairing his predecessors' dysfunctional modes of being-in-time—and as successful as he seems to be in achieving triumphant future-history on the field of Agincourt—in his final history play Shakespeare instead showcases the bleak futility of the hyper-conscious affective connection with the past that his own history plays have enabled.

### **“Redeeming Time” and Usable Present-Pasts in *1 Henry IV***

More so than with the first tetralogy, scholars observe that Shakespeare's second tetralogy deals with the concepts of history and time in both intensely philosophical and dramaturgical ways.<sup>2</sup> John Blaupied notes that these later history plays create an experience of the past capable of “rupturing the fabric of time and continuity,” while Michael Goldman argues

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<sup>1</sup> This dynamic is noted by Harry Berger Jr. when he argues against critics who view the three plays as stand-alone works: “What makes the Henriad a single text is that it unfolds in a process of continuous revision in which earlier textual moments persist like ghosts that haunt and complicate later moments, and thus take on new meaning.” Berger Jr., “On the Continuity of the Henriad: A Critique of Some Literary and Theatrical Approaches,” in *Shakespeare Left and Right*, ed. Ivo Kamps (New York: Routledge, 1991), 227.

<sup>2</sup> The following list is by no means exhaustive. See Charles R. Forker, “The Idea of Time in Shakespeare's Second Historical Tetralogy,” *The Upstart Crow* 5 (1984): 20-34; Patricia Russell, “The Stewardship of Time in Shakespeare's Second Tetralogy,” *Publications of the Arkansas Philological Association* 9 (1983): 81-89; Maurice Hunt, “Time and Timelessness in ‘1 Henry IV’,” *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 10 (1984): 56-66; Jack R. Sublette, “The Distorted Time in *2 Henry IV*,” in *Essays on Shakespeare: In Honour of A.A. Ansari*, ed. Tika R. Sharma (Meerut: Shalabh Book House, 1986), 195-210; Robert B. Bennett, “Four Stages of Time: The Shape of History in Shakespeare's Second Tetralogy,” *Shakespeare Studies* 19 (1987): 61-85; Paul Dean, “Forms of Time: Some Elizabethan Two-Part History Plays,” *Renaissance Studies* 4 (1990): 410-30; and David Rutter, *Shakespeare's Festive History* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003).

that the plays make an audience intensely conscious of “the process of experiencing the drama—of undergoing, construing, fighting with, surrendering to the play as it unfolds—[that] becomes in many ways the process of history-making itself.”<sup>3</sup> In addition, the majority of *1 Henry IV*’s characters can be distinguished by their relationship to history, since the play’s central conflict stems from both Henry IV and the Percy family’s guilty, biased, or manipulated memories. Henry IV is plagued by the past and how he came to the throne, while the Percys seek to justify their rebellion against him through deliberate mis-rememberings of their own role in Richard II’s deposition. Yet while Henry attempts to atone for the past through “our holy purpose to Jerusalem” (1.1.101), and while Worcester advocates rebellion because “the King will always think him in our debt” (1.3.280), I further contend that *1 Henry IV* is uniquely concerned with futurity as a philosophical and emotional problem: that is, what will “now” become, and what relationship will that future have to this present once it becomes the past?<sup>4</sup> As the first two scenes of the play demonstrate, for *1 Henry IV*’s main players this question of futurity is a fraught business because Hal’s misbehavior has seemingly rendered the present adrift from any healthy connection to the past or productive relationship with the future. Such rifts between the present, the future, and the past manifest in disordered or unnatural relationships in the present, demonstrated when Henry wishes that his own family’s history could be rewritten through an act of baby-swapping with the Percys: “O that it could be proved / That some night-tripping fairy had exchanged / In cradle clothes our children where they lay” (1.1.85-87). Henry’s desire to “have his Harry, and he mine” (1.1.89) subtly speaks to the ways in which *1 Henry IV*’s

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<sup>3</sup> John W. Blanpied, *Time and the Artist in Shakespeare’s English Histories* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1983), 14; Michael Goldman, “History-Making in the Henriad,” in *Shakespearean Illuminations: Essays in Honor of Marvin Rosenberg*, ed. Jay L. Halio and Hugh Richmond (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998), 203.

<sup>4</sup> All references to *1* and *2 Henry IV* and *Henry V* are taken from *The Norton Shakespeare* 2 ed., ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2008).

characters experience their present moment as that which should not be, which exacerbates the play's treatment of temporality itself as an experience of entrapment. Even as Hal and Falstaff jest that the latter has no business concerning himself with a time that is not the immediate present— "What the devil hast thou to do with the time of the day?" (1.2.5-6)—the conversation circles around more tense questions of possible futures for the heir-apparent and his companions. Falstaff goes on to repeat the clause, "When thou art king," three times during the exchange as he tries to get an assurance from Hal regarding his own future and how it will exist in relation to Hal's past and present in Eastcheap. This emphasis on "when" contributes to an affective atmosphere of undetermined and unsettling temporality caused by others' interpretations of, and emotional reactions to, Hal's present behavior. Both the stressed world of Henry IV's court and the festive world of Eastcheap thus manifest the same affective sense of being *stuck* in the present with no foreseeable way out.

In *1 Henry IV*, a future ominously looms because Hal's conduct seems to offer the only available (and anxiety-inducing) gauge of what that future will be. But in his famous revelatory soliloquy at the end of Act One, Scene Two, Hal's admission of the ulterior motives behind his "madcap" behavior allows the prince to outline how he chooses to be in the present in ways that fundamentally differ from his father's, his father-figure's, and his rivals' modes of being-in-time. Hal reveals that the pending future is not being shaped by his present indiscretions, but rather by the decisive moment when he will, without fail, abandon these behaviors:

I know you all, and will a while uphold,  
The unyoked humour of your idleness.  
Yet herein will I imitate the sun,  
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds  
To smother up his beauty from the world,  
That, when he please again to be himself,  
Being wanted he may be more wondered at. . . .  
So when this loose behaviour I throw off

And pay the debt I never promised,  
By how much better than my word I am,  
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes;  
That my reformation, glitt'ring o'er my fault,  
Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes  
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.  
I'll so offend to make offense a skill,  
Redeeming time when men least think I will. (1.2.173-79, 186-95)

Throughout this speech Hal, like Falstaff, repeats and focuses on a future point in time he demarcates as “when,” not because he intends to maintain any continuity between this present and the future, but because Hal believes he can craft that moment of “when” by abandoning his current timeline.<sup>5</sup> Hal's manipulation of his princely image is simultaneously an historical project because he views his present as a usable past that can and will be discarded. Through his associations with these “idle” companions whom he claims to know so intimately, Hal forges a present that will be explicitly disavowed, abandoned, and thus remembered as a history that does not count. Indeed, Hal's rhetoric posits “when” as a sort of temporal hinge ushering in the moment of transformation in which the future becomes the present. “When” marks the instance of shift in which the sun can shine, loose behavior can be abandoned, and redemption achieved despite all expectations to the contrary. Hal is thus in the process of creating a present that can only exist as a past that has no bearing upon his future other than to inspire awed remembrance regarding its difference from that “redeemed” future-present.

In the confident assertion that this current timeline is of Hal's own making, and that the present only exists so it can be replaced by an alternative, reformed future time-scape, Shakespeare characterizes Hal not only as the consummate Machivellian prince or metatheatrical

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<sup>5</sup> Dale Uhlmann offers an attentive formal analysis of Hal's soliloquy, and finds that the speech employs the structure of a sonnet to signal the “momentousness” of Hal's revelations. This sense of momentousness, and Hal's ability to strategically wield it, hints at his capabilities as a manipulator of affective time. See Uhlmann, “Prince Hal's Reformation Soliloquy: A ‘Macro-Sonnet’,” *The Upstart Crow* 5 (1982): 152-55.

royal shape-shifter, but also as a strikingly adept affective historian. By this I mean that Hal views temporality itself as a malleable, performative tool, and he understands that past, present, and future can be wielded to produce specific emotions. For Hal, the future is his creature because he is constantly making it in the now; moreover, the future he envisions depends upon fostering forms of affective investment and projection within his subjects that will be rendered inaccurate by Hal's reformation. The anxiety, distrust, and even approbation that others feel in response to his conduct will not make sense once he reforms; by "glitt'ring o'er his fault," Hal creates the conditions for his subjects' wish-fulfillment and the affective conditions that will gratify it. More importantly, though, Hal's project to "redeem time" creates a present that cannot and will not coordinate with the future borne out of said redemption, because Hal desires to create a future in which his subjects cannot interpret the present in relation to the past. Thus, Hal's mode of being-in-time injects time with certain emotional scripts that forego affective continuity between past, present, and future.

Of course, Hal's mission to "falsify men's hopes" introduces the crucial ethical issues that have dominated critical discussions of *1 Henry IV* because, as F. Nick Clary astutely observes: "How can one recognize reformation when one sees it?"<sup>6</sup> What I would like to call attention to, though, is the fact that Hal's planned reformation-as-falsification constitutes an act of temporal manipulation also. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, Hal's use of "falsify" here means "to fail in in fulfilling, or prevent the fulfilment of (a prediction, expectation, etc.);" thus, "falsification" functions as one of Hal's tools for crafting a future out of

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<sup>6</sup> F. Nick Clary, "The Recovery of Meaning in *Henry IV, Part One*," in *Ambiguities in Literature and Film: Selected Papers from the Seventh Annual Florida State University Conference on Literature and Film*, ed. Hans P. Braendin (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1988), 80. See also Stephen Greenblatt, "Invisible Bullets," in *Shakespearean Negotiations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 21-65; and Jonathan Crewe, "Reforming Prince Hal: The Sovereign Inheritor in '2 Henry IV,'" *Renaissance Drama*, 21 (1990): 225-42.

a present he views as disposable.<sup>7</sup> One should perhaps acknowledge that, in the best sense, Hal endeavors to make a future that is better than the “falsified” version his subjects expect of him. However, this falsification of peoples’ predictions for a bad future still constitutes an act of deceit and of bad faith since, as Maurice Hunt argues, “Hal conceives of his future reformation as mostly show with little substance. . . . Thus Shakespeare implicitly criticizes the idol worship latent in Hal’s conception of his reformation.”<sup>8</sup> After all, the emotional pay-off of Hal’s proposed reformation depends upon the enormity, and thus upon the successful performativity, of his current mad-cap behavior; he must “so offend, as to make offense a skill” (1.2.194), and to do this Hal treats his relationships and interactions as a form of throwaway time. He brags to Poins: “I am sworn brother to a leash of drawers, and can call them all by their Christian names, as ‘Tom,’ ‘Dick,’ and ‘Francis’. . . . To conclude, I am so good a proficient in one quarter of an hour that I can drink with any tinker in his own language during my life” (2.5.5-8, 15-17). Hal handles his present moment, and the ordinary people whom he charms into declaring their undying (if inebriated) allegiance to him, with a startling performative pragmatism. Tom, Dick, and Francis are expendable companions whose worth can be measured in time itself: that is, they are worth about fifteen minutes to Hal. Thus, by treating the present as a timeline he can just reject, Hal wields time as a sort of weapon even as he treats it like so much garbage, and Shakespeare highlights the ethical ambiguity behind this history-maker’s manipulative betrayals of the present in the interests of the future.

The more sinister aspects of treating the present as a throwaway backdrop for the future become clear during the role-playing scene with Falstaff. As many critics have noted, Falstaff’s

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<sup>7</sup> “falsify, v.” *OED Online*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.

<sup>8</sup> Maurice Hunt, “The Hybrid Reformations of Shakespeare’s Second Henriad,” *Comparative Drama* 32 (1998): 182.



own philosophies of *carpe diem*, as well as his pursuit of pleasure as an uninhibited mode of being-in-time, provide a vibrant alternative to the calculating ambitions of the play's nobility.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, when Falstaff initiates the role-playing it seems to serve as an expression of his own temporal *modus operandi*: "Watch tonight, pray tomorrow. Gallants, lads, boys, hearts of gold, all the titles of good fellowship come to you! What, shall we be merry, shall we have a play extempore?" (2.5.254-57). Falstaff's belief that present pleasures should be seized, and that certain monarchical futures can be postponed through playing and fellowship, pointedly contrasts with the instrumentality of Hal's own conduct, and no doubt accounts for centuries of spectators' affection for the old knight.<sup>10</sup> However, as the role-playing progresses Falstaff's presentism gives way to his own desired, imagined future, which directly conflicts with Hal's own future-making mission:

But for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff, and therefore more valiant being, as he is, old Jack Falstaff,  
Banish not him thy Harry's company,  
Banish not him thy Harry's company.  
Banish plump Jack, and banish all the world. (2.5.433-38)

When Falstaff pleads (as Hal) for Henry IV (and Hal) to show him mercy, he does more than make a tender, moving plea for his own relevance. In fact, Falstaff asks that Hal afford him and their relationship the same affective (and ethical) lee-way that Hal affords himself, but with a

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<sup>9</sup> See Blanpied, *Time and the Artist*, 145-78; Hunt, "Time and Timelessness"; Greenblatt, "Invisible Bullets,"; Tim Spiekerman, "The Education of Hal: *Henry IV, Parts One and Two*," in *Shakespeare's Political Pageant: Essays in Literature and Politics* ed. Joseph Alulis and Vickie Sullivan (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 1996), 103-124; and Ellen M. Caldwell, "'Banish All the Wor(l)d': Falstaff's Iconoclastic Threat to Kingship in *I Henry IV*," *Renascence* 59 (2007): 219-311.

<sup>10</sup> For various accounts of Falstaff as the embodiment of Carnival and festivity, as well as a reflection of the Lord of Misrule, see J. Dover Wilson, *The Fortunes of Falstaff* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1944); C.L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and its Relation to Social Custom* (New York: Meridian, 1963); Neil Rhodes, *Elizabethan Grotesque* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980); and Ruitter, *Shakespeare's Festive History*, 69-137. Kristen Poole helpfully complicates this focus on Falstaff's "presentism" in her examination of Falstaff as "the image of a grotesque Puritan" (54). See Poole, "Saints Alive! Falstaff, Martin Marprelate, and the Staging of Puritanism," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 46 (1995): 47-75.

distinct difference. Whereas Hal thinks that he can disregard the past in favor of a scripted affective future, Falstaff asks Hal to disregard this future in favor of the present and the past, the time and space of their shared companionship. By asking both the current prince-pretending-to-be-his-father and the future King Henry V to “banish not him thy Harry’s company,” Falstaff tries to convince Hal that the two can remain in their moment of now, and that this version of now can be the future. While Falstaff produces this alternative vision for how history and time might unfold, Hal and his plan do not have the patience for this proposed camaraderie, except temporarily. When he delivers his chillingly clipped reply, “I do; I will” (2.5.439), Hal fully embodies and embraces his chosen role as an affective historian who makes the future by scripting the present as a usable past.<sup>11</sup> His reply firmly roots Hal in his preferred time-scapes of the present and the future as he shows precisely how he can repress or deny certain pasts (“I do”) so that timeline will inevitably recede into a history that does not count.

However, as assured as Hal is in leasing out the present to make a future that bears no resemblance to its forbear, his future-making has a dangerous, and unanticipated, side-effect. As the actual audience with his father illustrates, Hal does not seem to realize that his grand plan produces emotional responses that he cannot control, which Henry IV confirms when he informs his son that “the hope and expectation of thy time / Is ruined, and the soul of every man / Do prophetically forethink thy fall” (3.2.36-38). Henry argues that Hal’s behavior has already seeped out and into the future because Hal’s transgressions live in the memories of his subjects; thus, in Henry’s view Hal has spoiled the future (like Richard III) before it even has a chance to take shape. Hal endlessly deflects or ignores his responsibility for the affective responses his

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<sup>11</sup> Ruitter finds that Hal uses this moment to posit Falstaff as a sacrificial offering through which the prince “create[s] a socio-political event that will both ensure his kingship and unite the community.” Ruitter, *Shakespeare’s Festive History*, 70.

conduct elicits that do not fit into his “redeemed time” script, but through Henry IV’s critique Shakespeare hints that simply repressing history by “falsifying men’s hopes” is a much trickier task than Hal thinks. Furthermore, Henry’s hawk-like attention to both the perceptions and observing eyes of the people allows Shakespeare to introduce a resonant question that will come to structure the next two plays: how can Hal possibly be successful in transfiguring emotions by cutting the railway ties to his own past, when he is constantly observed by a theatrical audience? Can Hal reform the multiple timelines and multiple wavelengths of affective response embedded in his spectators’ emotional experience of the very past he attempts to repress? Is it even possible to redeem time in the ways Hal proposes, since such a mode of being-in-time demands severing a playgoer’s own memory of and connection to the past they have felt unfold within the sixteenth-century present?

Of course, Henry IV is wrong about his son and about the consequences of his affective manipulation of the present, at least in this play, and Shakespeare allows for the above questions to be temporarily deferred in favor of triumph for his proto-action hero. In killing Hotspur, Hal directs his plan to redeem time and reform the future against a specific individual as he renders his dramatic foil and rival into “time’s fool.” Furthermore, his brief eulogy for the supposedly dead Falstaff allows Hal to declare unequivocally that he no longer has the time for either his old friend or the past that Falstaff represents: “I should have a heavy miss of thee, / If I were much in love with vanity. / Death hath not struck so fat a deer today, / Though many dearer in this bloody fray” (5.4.104-08). History has never exactly mattered to Hal, and as he dismisses his chief rival as “food for worms,” and his best friend with the succinct, “I could have better spared a better man,” (5.4.85-84, 103), Hal truly glitters over and seems to eclipse his past faults. It would seem that the future is now for Hal at the conclusion of *I Henry IV*, as Hal’s mode of being-in-time

appears to succeed over his father's guilt-ridden anxiety over the present and the past, over the rebels' ambitious mis-remembering, and over Falstaff's nostalgic desire to craft a future that looks exactly like the present.

### **Uncanny Time and the Consequences of Affective Memory in *2 Henry IV***

While Hal's vision of reformed time triumphs to an extent at *1 Henry IV*'s conclusion, as Blanpied notes: "The shadows that dog the triumphs of the first become the substance of the second."<sup>12</sup> Hal and his father fail to contain the dominant affective force that feeds the rebellion and that presents the most potent challenge to Hal's pursuit of a redeemed future-history. That force is affective memory, which in *2 Henry IV* mutates into an embodied, diseased, and obsessive experience of being-in-time that forces the play's characters to endure the present as an experience of being imprisoned by and in the past. Hotspur hints at the misguided and dangerous power of affective memory towards the end of *1 Henry IV* when he tries to explain the historical roots of the rebellion: "My father and my uncle and myself / Did give him that same royalty he wears;/ . . . / My father, in kind heart and pity moved, / Swore him assistance, and performed it too" (4.3.56-57, 66-67). Hotspur's memory of an altruistic and empathetic Northumberland—not to mention a weeping Bolingbroke—scarcely jives with the ruthlessly politic characters Shakespeare created in *Richard II*. Such affectively saturated (and often inaccurate) remembering dominates *2 Henry IV*, and the constant recollections of its predecessor craft "a relationship between the two *Henry IV* plays. . . in the sense that the second play constitutes a critique—even an undoing—of the first."<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, Shakespeare capitalizes on the nature of this installment as a sequel to explore how a history play encourages forms of feeling and being-

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<sup>12</sup> Blanpied, *Time and the Artist*, 181.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Yachnin, "History, Theatricality, and the 'Structural Problem in the Henry IV Plays,'" *Philological Quarterly* 20 (1991): 169.

in-time that are troublingly recursive and repetitive.<sup>14</sup> *2 Henry IV* forces an audience to experience their memories of the previous play in the same ways that Northumberland, the Archbishop of York, Henry, Hal, and Falstaff experience their own memories: as passionate transactions with materially felt time, through which the past becomes felt as a present experience of bleeding and hurting, of disease and infection, of rejection and loss. Because pathological recollection constitutes the majority of *2 Henry IV*'s dramatic action and conflict, therefore, the play's morbidly uncontrolled remembrances introduce the emotional and physical detriments to embodied, affective experiences of the past.

Shakespeare gives a body and a voice to *2 Henry IV*'s fascination with flawed, affectively crippling memory through the character of Rumour. After a blazon of its more infamous functions, Rumour answers its own question, "Why is Rumour here" (Induction.22), in such a way that acknowledges the implicit question that its presence provokes: why is Rumour opening a history play?<sup>15</sup> Bluntly, Rumour exists to spread "fake news," and its transmission of false information regarding the Battle of Shrewsbury and the end of *1 Henry IV* has affective consequences as well: "From Rumour's tongues / They bring smooth comforts false, worse than true wrongs" (39-40). Rumour transforms *2 Henry IV*'s present into a perverted space of feeling, in which one's emotions do not correspond to reality because Rumour has morphed reality into a fabricated report of its other. According to Loren Blinde, beginning the play with Rumour changes the time-scape of *2 Henry IV* by situating the dramatic action in what Blinde calls a

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<sup>14</sup> Paul Dean similarly asserts that the two-part play structure "allows the dramatist the opportunity to oppose, or examine the relationship between, two visions of Time: as a process of growth and fruition shaped by a benevolent providence, or as a darkly inscrutable cycle of apparent meaninglessness." Dean, "Forms of Time," 419.

<sup>15</sup> For a study of prologues in early modern theater that considers their function as "interactive, liminal, boundary-breaking entities that negotiated charged thresholds between and among, variously, playwrights, actors, characters, audience members, playworlds, and the world outside the playhouse," (2) see Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann, *Prologues to Shakespeare's Theatre: Performance and Liminality in Early Modern Drama* (London: Routledge, 2004).

“perpetual present,” which “suggests to the audience that history has not yet been set in stone,” and which I further argue makes *2 Henry IV* feel stuck in a memory of the immediate past.<sup>16</sup> The past does not change, but by remembering and then falsifying that memory, Rumour injects those memories with contrary affective resonances whose volatility manifests itself as chronically felt time. Northumberland acknowledges this sense of wildly careening through time with no stable connection to either the past or future: “The times are wild: contention, like a horse / Full of high-feeding, madly hath broke loose” (1.1.9-10). This sense of time’s wildness intensifies through the conflicting reports of Hotspur’s fate at Shrewsbury. In this odd opening scene, emotions uncomfortably shift from triumphant relief to unhinged grief when Travers accurately reports Hotspur’s death following Bardolph’s incorrect report. Furthermore, these destabilizing reversals introduce *2 Henry IV*’s interest in affective history as an unsettling experience of repetition.

The pervasive affective atmosphere of *2 Henry IV* is one of uncanniness, that “species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar.”<sup>17</sup> First theorized by Sigmund Freud and developed by later theorists such as Jacques Lacan and Julia Kristeva, as well as the roboticist Masahiro Mori, the uncanny constitutes an affective experience in which something feels disturbing or frightening specifically because it is familiar.<sup>18</sup> Freud stresses that the uncanny cannot be separated from a sense of recurrence or return; using his own dream in which he wanders through a vaguely familiar Italian town, Freud describes repeatedly experiencing an “unintentional return” that produces a “feeling of helplessness.”<sup>19</sup> What I would

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<sup>16</sup> Loren M. Blinde, “Rumored History in Shakespeare’s *2 Henry IV*,” *English Literary Renaissance* 38 (2008): 36.

<sup>17</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 124.

<sup>18</sup> The “uncanny” contributes to Kristeva’s concept of abjection, specifically when recognition of the abject occurs. Mori’s “uncanny valley” theorizes the gap in response when a living person encounters a human-like-robot.

<sup>19</sup> Freud, *The Uncanny*, 144.

like to highlight is that the uncanny is as much a temporal experience as it is an affective one; indeed, I would argue that uncanniness constitutes an inherently historically tinged feeling, because through return and repetition the present becomes shot through with a sense pastness that jars and unsettles us precisely because it has returned. Furthermore, I claim that Shakespeare chooses to stage *2 Henry IV* as an uncomfortable return to a once familiar world, and that his audience experiences embodied affective history as this uncanny moment of contact between past and present. The autumnal or even “off” feel that many critics have sensed within *2 Henry IV* is therefore a product of Shakespeare taking the familiar world of *1 Henry IV* and having it recur “as nothing new or strange, but [as] something that was long familiar to the psyche and was estranged from it.”<sup>20</sup>

Throughout *2 Henry IV* Shakespeare stages the present as the uncanny version of its predecessor, in which characters, episodes, and conflicts from *1 Henry IV* occur with just enough difference that the supposedly familiar past staged by *2 Henry IV* feels both damaged and weirdly alien.<sup>21</sup> Particularly in the Eastcheap scenes, Shakespeare fills this dramatic world with melancholy remembrances of what it used to be, which causes both characters and playgoers to experience the present as bewildering repetition saturated with estrangement. Falstaff’s previously amusing or tame venality has since turned into full blown corruption; moreover, the once festive and improvisational world of the tavern has morphed into an arena of openly damaged relationships, evidenced when Falstaff complains that Hal “may keep his own grace, but he’s almost out of mine, I can assure him” (1.2.23-24). Something has gone wrong between

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>21</sup> For an account of the “uncanny” effects of Shakespeare’s characterization of Hal and Hotspur in *1 Henry IV*, see Matt Bell, “*Henry IV Part 1*: When Harry Met Harry,” in *Shakespeare: A Queer Companion to the Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. Madhavi Menon (Duke University Press: 2011), 106-13.

Hal and Falstaff, and this sense of difference is compounded by Hal's palpable absence from the theatrical space that was previously a site for familiarity, intimacy, and playfulness. Falstaff further vents palpable bitterness against Hal in his exchange with the Chief Justice, whose exclamation, "God send the Prince a better companion," provokes the following outburst from Falstaff: "God send the companion a better prince! I cannot rid my hands of him. (1.2.181-84). An audience cannot help but ironically note that Shakespeare has rid Falstaff of Hal, and that "everything that was intended to remain secret, hidden away" about their relationship "has come into the open."<sup>22</sup> Shakespeare frustrates both his greatest comic creation and his audience by denying them Hal's presence, and by upsetting our memory of what this world once was and our expectations about what it should be.<sup>23</sup> Thus, Shakespeare forces his audience to experience history as an uncanny return that thwarts hopes and refuses to fulfill expectations, because "even if we wish to recapture the warmth and vitality of the past, we cannot."<sup>24</sup>

*2 Henry IV*'s troubling moments of uncanny repetition set the scene for the play's more aggressive depictions of felt time as obsessive and diseased imprisonment in the present. The Archbishop of York serves as the mouthpiece for this experience of time as disordered embodiment when he meditates upon the causes of the ongoing rebellion which he leads. As justification for the insurrection, the Archbishop figures England's past and present as a diseased body in the grip of a sort of historical bulimia:

The commonwealth is sick of their own choice;  
 Their over-greedy love hath surfeited. . . .  
 O thou fond many, with what loud applause  
 Didst thou beat heaven with blessing Bolingbroke,

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<sup>22</sup> Freud, *The Uncanny*, 132.

<sup>23</sup> Blanpied similarly observes *2 Henry IV*'s willful frustration of audience expectations based upon the predecessor: "Part 2 seems deliberately effortful, even self-destructive. For it is not only the characters' expectations that are mocked, but repeatedly our own as well." Blanpied, *Time and the Artist*, 180.

<sup>24</sup> J. McLaverty, "No Abuse: The Prince and Falstaff in the Tavern Scenes of *Henry IV*" *Shakespeare Survey* 34 (1981): 110.



Before he was what thou wouldst have him be!  
And being now trimmed in thine own desires,  
Thou, beastly feeder, art so full of him  
That thou provok'st thyself to cast him up.  
So, so, thou common dog, didst thou disgorge  
Thy glutton bosom of the royal Richard;  
And now thou wouldst eat thy dead vomit up,  
And howl'st to find it. (1.3.87-100)

The Archbishop envisions Richard's usurpation, Bolingbroke's popularity, and the current rebellion against Henry IV as disturbing imagery of overindulgence and purging, and he posits himself and his fellow rebels as the necessary ipecac for English history. The political events depicted in *Richard II* and *1 Henry IV* are imagined as people vomiting up and then consuming again their memories of Richard and Bolingbroke. Furthermore, this excessive purging stems from affective gorging upon Richard's memory that the Archbishop views as ahistorical: "What trust is in these times? / They that when Richard lived would have him die / Are now become enamoured on his grave" (1.3.100-02). The English people have passionately fallen back in love with the king that, in an act of political food poisoning, they violently rejected. According to the Archbishop, therefore, the English past contaminates the present, with Richard II functioning as both a material purgative and affective lightning rod.

The Archbishop's visceral indictment of this impassioned, disordered memorial bulimia illustrates *2 Henry IV*'s fascination with diseased forms of being-in-time that result from experiencing the past again through affective history. Indeed, the panicked vitriol seeping through the Archbishop's speech speaks to a larger crisis within the play regarding pathological memory: that is, the inability to forget or to stop remembering the past. *2 Henry IV*'s rebels suffer through their present as an uncontrolled embodied experience of the past whose affective weight manifests itself as decay, disease, and instability. When the Archbishop admits that "past and to come seems best; things present, worst" (1.3.108), he testifies to the ways in which

embodied memory and somatic experiences of time in fact impede time's progress. Jonathan Baldo observes that "it is hard to locate a productive use, either personal or collective, for memory in *2 Henry IV*, one that enables characters to experience real growth based on more or less authentic remembrances of things past."<sup>25</sup> Instead, when a character remembers the past in *2 Henry IV*, the act initiates a debilitating affective free-for-all in which the past infects the present, turning the present into an enervating ordeal in which the past repeats but the future never arrives. Thus, embodied affective memory forms the bedrock of the play's staging of the English past as uncanny, uncomfortable recursiveness.

The incessant, uncanny reiteration of what once was traps Henry IV, the rebels, Falstaff, and even Prince Hal in an unhealthy feeling loop, in which the present is experienced as a paralyzing roadblock of pastness. Hal in particular highlights the exhausting consequences of feeling the past in the present through memory. In his melancholic and depressed assessment of himself, Hal generates in the audience yet another fractured uncanny memory of his triumphant, confident mode of being-in-time in *1 Henry IV*, and he goes on to criticize his inability to *stop* remembering: "By my troth, I do remember the poor creature small beer. But indeed, these humble considerations make me out of love with my greatness. What a disgrace it is for me to remember thy name! Or to know thy face tomorrow" (2.1.10-13). Hal experiences layered affective memories of his personal past that generate both affection and shame; furthermore, Hal's attunement to his own memorial vulnerability stimulates further provocative uncanniness because this sort of reflection defies playgoers' own expectations and memories of the Hal in *1 Henry IV*. As the saga's affective historian, we do not expect Hal to feel either so depressed by or so responsible for the personal history that provokes these memories; after all, Hal has pledged to

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<sup>25</sup> Jonathan Baldo, *Memory in Shakespeare's Histories: Stages of Forgetting in Early Modern England* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 98.

abandon this present and its associated timeline through his reformation. Instead, as Blanpied argues, “Part 2 repeats, mocks, and wastes Part 1,” and through these “repetitions, distortions, and mockeries of Part 1, Hal confronts the stifled specters of his determined self-idealization.”<sup>26</sup> The Hal of 2 *Henry IV* finally seems to sense the detrimental consequences of crafting time in the way that he has, because his own memories cannot and will not meld with the future history towards which he strives. Hal’s mission to redeem time by “falsifying men’s hopes” appears to have caught up with him, as his testy impatience with his own emotional memories hints that his ambitious time-scripting has falsified even his own hopes.

While Hal’s conflicted emotions regarding “small beer” and the deeply intimate relationships it signifies could be dismissed as simple nostalgia, Shakespeare complicates the connections between Hal’s current affective memories and his planned future history when Poins condemns Hal as “a most princely hypocrite” (2.1.42). Poins justly calls out Hal’s affective inconsistency because his palpable regret—and specifically his anxiety over his father’s illness—does not match his historical patterns of frat-boy carelessness. Yet Poins’s utter bewilderment that Hal should feel anything other than immense excitement at his father’s pending death speaks to the deterministic ways in which 2 *Henry IV*’s characters interpret the relationship between past and present. As we saw with the rebellious Archbishop, and as we shall continue to see with Henry IV, 2 *Henry IV*’s main players feel trapped in a dysfunctional temporal loop, and believe they are doomed to repeat patterns and act according to historical precedent even if it is to their detriment. Hal, however, refuses this logic of fatalistic surrender to the past and to past behaviors:

PRINCE HARRY Marry, I tell thee, it is not meet that I should be so sad now my father is sick; albeit, I could tell to thee. . . I could be sad, and very sad indeed too.

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<sup>26</sup> Blanpied, *Time and the Artist*, 183, 186.

POINS           Very hardly, upon such a subject.

PRINCE HARRY By this hand, thou thinkst me as far in the devil's book as thou and Falstaff. . . .Let the end try the man. But I tell thee, my heart bleeds inwardly that my father is so sick. (2.1.29-30, 31-35, 35-37)

Hal's exasperation with Poinz speaks first to the implicit hierarchical (and manipulative) dynamics at play in this interaction. Hal berates his social inferior for being so bold as to remember Hal's previous disregard for his father, and he chides his companion for thinking that he is "as far in the devil's book" as Poinz even though Poinz has ample evidence to justify this hard-boiled assessment of Hal's proclaimed "sadness." At the same time, though, Hal finally seems to acknowledge the tricky implications of his desire to reform time even as he struggles against the determinism of others' affective memories. Hal senses that people remember him and his past, and that like Poinz those memories prescribe or assume certain behaviors of him. Hal insists, though, that just because he has behaved a certain way in the past does not determine who he is or how he feels in the present moment, and his desire to weep over his father serves as evidence of that. Hal bleeds inwardly *now*, and to him that is the most important thing because the present serves as the fuel that crafts and molds his future. Thus, as he struggles to renounce his memories of a cherished past, and suffers with the sense that he has created a present that stifles rather than fulfills his planned redemption of the future, Hal defiantly rejects the notion that he must always feel as he once did, and that the past therefore dictates what his future must be.

When Hal declares, "Let the end try the man" (2.1.36), he not only recommits himself to his desire for redemption and reform, but he also dedicates himself to breaking out of the obsessive, pathological, and stifling present timeline, in which uncanny repetition and non-stop memory turn the present into a constant experience of suffering through the past again. As we

have seen, of course, Hal's desire to reform time has more sinister political consequences, and this instance is no exception. For Hal, the past should have no bearing on his present unless he desires it so, and his frustration with Poins speaks to the fact that Hal does not want people interpreting him in an historically critical way. While undoubtedly problematic, though, Hal's dedication to a future unmoored and unshackled from the past appears to be the only productive alternative to the incessant uncanniness of *2 Henry IV*.

### **Rejecting Uncanny Present-Pasts to Forge National Future-Histories**

Hal's abrupt leave-taking of Falstaff speaks to the fact that Hal might be the only character capable of getting out of the play's structural cycle of return and repetition. The entirety of Act Two, Scene Four could be read as a case-study in uncanniness, in which the familiar pranks, jokes, and lies of *1 Henry IV* recur but in a different, minor key. Every aspect of the scene functions as the disturbing doppelganger of its predecessor. Falstaff attempts to preside over the tavern as its master of revels, but descends into morbidity even as he asks Doll: "Do not speak like a death's-head, do not bid me remember mine end" (2.4.208-09). Pistol, Doll, and Mistress Quickly verbally and physically spar, but it pales in comparison to Hal and Falstaff's generative and lively repartee from Part One. And Hal and Poins once again catch Falstaff in a lie, but the lie itself is borne out of resentment, and the disguised Prince wields undisguised (and pitiless) power over the whole charade as he threatens "to draw [Falstaff] out by the ears" (2.4.261). Shakespeare forces his characters to go through these motions again, but with total joylessness, which simultaneously forces playgoers to both recognize and wince at the episode's familiarity. Yet again, the present is rendered into an uncomfortable return to the past until Hal receives news of the ongoing rebellion in the north and criticizes himself: "I feel me much to blame / So idly to profane the precious time" (2.4.329-30). Through this outburst, Hal recognizes

that by participating in this prank he has allowed himself to wallow in uncanniness. Just as he berated the disgracefulness of his memories of Pains, here Hal views his return to the antics of Eastcheap as a base and wasted use of the present moment. As pleasurable as it once was, playing around with Falstaff doesn't make futurity, and Hal seems to realize that by giving in to the familiar, he has engaged in the same dysfunctional modes of being-in-time that mire the present in an ongoing, unhealthy relationship with the past. Thus, with the brusque "Falstaff, good night" (2.4.34), Hal departs from the play itself and its uncanny returns to the past, leaving it to others to adjudicate how one can endure these felt experiences of time. For Hal's part, he will have none of it until the future arrives on his doorstep and, on the threshold of becoming Henry V, he can force redeemed time into being through a complete rejection of the past.

While Hal absents himself from a play seemingly stuck in an affective feedback loop, the remaining characters are left to adjudicate these overwrought experiences of the past in the present without him. In Hal's absence, furthermore, the problematic, unhealthy, and theatrically stultifying effects of the Archbishop's and Henry IV's affective memories demonstrate that Hal's choice to foreswear this form of relationship with the past might not be such a bad thing. When the rebel faction meets to parlay with John of Lancaster, we see that they have flung themselves headlong into despairing affective memory, to the extent that their justifications for the rebellion approach a sort of temporal hysteria. Moreover, the Archbishop's bulimic vision of how the past has produced (or thrown up) the present reaches its climax:

Wherefore do I do this? So the question stands.  
Briefly, to this end: we are all diseased,  
And with our surfeiting and wanton hours  
Have brought ourselves into a burning fever,  
And we must bleed for it. (4.1.53-57)

York experiences the past as a plague that has killed a king and now lays to waste the present, and he explains that he and his followers *have to* rebel because such an action has precedents based on their interpretation of the recent past: “The examples / Of every minute’s instance, present now, / Hath put us to these ill-beseeming arms (4.1.70-72, 80-84). The Archbishop employs the beloved humanist notion of exemplarity to argue that the past’s infection of the present presents them with bleeding examples exhorting them to rebellion. However, the sheer ineffectuality of both the archbishop’s rhetoric and the rebellion itself points to the ways that Shakespeare ironizes and critiques this obsessive remembrance. While the rebels frantically assert that “the time misordered doth, in common sense, / Crowd us and crush us to this monstrous form” (4.1.259-60), Shakespeare encourages his playgoers to view this as an excessive and paranoiac way of being-in-time. Furthermore, the rebels morbidly acute sense of history feverishly invading their bodies renders them unable to accomplish anything dramatically; thus, this form of embodied memory suspends both temporal and dramatic progress (not to mention entertainment) in a way meant to rub playgoers the wrong way.

By constantly conjuring and remembering the past as an experience of haunting, the rebel faction of *2 Henry IV* wallows in time. This mode of being-in-time is thus cast as ineffectual, extreme, and to an extent ridiculous, given John of Lancaster’s blunt quashing of the rebellion following these rhetorical antics. Henry IV also falls victim to this form of thinking about and feeling time on occasion, particularly when he hypothesizes that the future can be nothing more than a catastrophe. Burdened with a guilt he cannot admit and convinced that his past is directly responsible for the rebellious present, Henry offers a dark meditation on how the past determines the future:

O God, that one might read the book of fate,  
And see the revolution of the times. . . .

The happiest youth, viewing his progress through,  
What perils past, what crosses to ensue,  
Would shut the book and sit him down and die. (3.1.44-45, 52.2-52.4)<sup>27</sup>

The King finally gives full vent to the bleak belief that the past utterly determines the future. In Henry's view, the future cannot become anything other than the past, primarily because the future bears within it traces of past, and broken, relationships. Henry poignantly muses on how the men who presently rebel against him—and the man whom he deposed—were once close friends: "Tis not ten years gone / Since Richard and Northumberland, great friends, / Did feast together. . . / It is but eight years since / This Percy was the man nearest my soul" (3.1.52-55). For Henry, fractured bonds and betrayed friendships serve as crosses that line the road from the present into the future, which leads inescapably back into the past. However, Shakespeare also casts this view of the past and the future it inevitably makes as hyperbolic because, after all, is not Henry's own son a reflection of that happy youth endeavoring to understand his path into the future? Henry feels and fears the future because he predicts that it will be an embodied copy of past and present, but Shakespeare's playgoers have been witnessing Hal—both confidently and questioningly—try to counter this fatalistic perspective. Worcester's measured response to the king's overwrought musings—"There is a history in all men's lives" (3.1.75)—gestures to the fact that Henry's obsession with "the hatch and brood of time" (3.1.81) has done nothing to move time forward. Thus, Shakespeare's playgoers begin to sense some benefit to a mode of being-in-time that pushes back against this determinism and that pushes forward towards the very futurity Henry so fears.

2 *Henry IV* offers an alternative approach to affective memory's pathological embodiment of the past when Hal returns to Henry's deathbed, and father and son are forced to

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<sup>27</sup> Lines 52.1- 52.4 are included in the 1600 quarto, but not the First Folio.



confront each other's contradictory views on what it takes to make a kingdom, a king, and a future that improves upon the past and present. Continuing to believe that the past becomes embodied through memory and perpetuates itself in the future, Henry cannot envision any future that does not correspond to Hal's past: "The blood weeps from my heart when I do shape / In forms imaginary th'unguided days / And rotten times that you shall look upon" (4.3.58-60). Hal's decision to take the crown from his sleeping father seems to drastically affirm Henry's opinion, and gives Henry the chance to violently rail against the son whom he's convinced will "give that which gave thee life unto the worms. / Pluck down my offices, break my decrees; / For now a time has come to mock at form" (4.3.244-46). But Shakespeare uses this showdown to facilitate more than a final moment of misunderstanding, and tense reconciliation, between Henry and Hal. When Hal tries to explain why he took his father's crown from his bedside, *he lies*, and these lies represent the Prince's boldest exercise yet of his ability to "falsify men's hopes" through historical revision and repression. In the actual moment of taking the crown, Hal does meditate upon the burden of majesty when he questions "why doth the crown lie there upon his pillow, / Being so troublesome a bedfellow" (4.3.151-52), but he hardly reaches the wrought heights he describes to his father when he claims to have "upbraided," "accused," and "tried with" the crown. However, Hal's lies do succeed in retuning Henry's affective response to his son's behavior, and perhaps Henry even admires Hal's audacious ability to glitter over his fault in this extreme instance: "God put it in thy mind to take it hence / That thou mightst win the more thy father's love, / Pleading so wisely in excuse of it" (4.3.306-08). Furthermore, Hal's pleading blatantly falsifies what Shakespeare's audience has already witnessed, creating the conundrum of whether a playgoer wants to believe what he's seen with his own eyes, or the alternative history Hal has rhetorically created. Regardless, Hal's falsifications in the crown

episode—of both his father’s negative expectations, and what his audience has just seen—completely reform the affective atmosphere in his favor, which sets the stage for a shift in the balance of power to the heir apparent and his mission to “redeem time when men least think” he will.

Following Hal’s brazenly successful act of emotional time-meddling, the final confrontation over the crown also constitutes a final confrontation of the starkly different views of affective temporality both men possess. Henry’s guilty and foreboding sense that the past will always be embodied in the future endures to an extent as he reflects upon “what by paths and crook’d ways / I met this crown, and I myself know well / How troublesome it sat upon my head” (4.3.312-14). However, even Henry’s obsessive fears for the future give way to Hal’s investment in futures totally severed from history. Hal pushes back against uncanny and obsessive affective memory, as well as the conviction that the past dictates and scripts the future: “My gracious liege, / You won it, wore it, kept it, gave it me; / Then plain and right must my possession be” (4.3.348-50). Instead of feeling stuck in time, Hal briskly deals with his father’s tumultuous history in clipped past tense verbs, succinctly disposing with history, affective memory, and the angst and disease they provoke. Instead, Hal posits his accession as separate from and immune to the past’s influence, with the exception of textbook patrilineal succession. Henry V’s kingship simply will be “plain” and “right,” and to accomplish this Hal turned Henry V must exercise his considerable reformatory/repressive skills to finally make his history—and the timeline in which he was both a “madcap” and a “sweet wag”—no longer count.

When he first appears as king, Henry V acknowledges his shared grief with his brothers as a way of asserting dominion over their emotions: “Let me but bear your love, I’ll bear your cares. / Yet weep that Harry’s dead, and so will I; / But Harry lives that shall convert those tears /

By number into hours of happiness” (5.2.58-61). While they grieve and weep now, Henry insists that this emotional environment will only exist for as long as he allows it to, and that he is instead focused on converting the future into a happy “now.” Thus, Henry fosters an illusion of affective fellowship predicated on the condition that everyone correspond to his preferred emotions—suppliant love and happiness—sooner rather than later. Furthermore, the new king publicly acknowledges—just as he has admitted to Shakespeare’s audience so many times before—that people have already given their verdict as to what kind of future he will enact. But, Henry V proclaims to his onstage and offstage audiences, they will be sorely mistaken:

My father is gone wild into his grave,  
For in his tomb lie my affections;  
And with his spirits sadly I survive  
To mock the expectation of the world,  
To frustrate prophecies, and to raze out  
Rotten opinion, who hath writ me down  
After my seeming. (5.2.122-28)

Not content with simply “falsifying men’s hopes,” Henry embodies the collective affective memory of himself and buries it; indeed, he claims to physically transfer his former self into the grave while his father’s spirit and temperament transmigrate into him. Henry V also finally uses the appropriate verbs to describe his intention to “reform” history and historical memory. The past will be frustrated and razed, and the future predicted by people like his brothers and the Chief Justice based on the buried Hal’s personal past will only survive as a joke to be mocked. Allison Thorne proposes that “the only way that Hal can set his kingdom on a progressive course towards a brave new future of national self-assertiveness is by cutting it loose from the past,” and here we see the first official assault against a past that Hal/Henry V has been so determined to

reject.<sup>28</sup> In the infamous rejection of Falstaff, moreover, Henry receives the perfect opportunity to launch a full-scale repudiation of *2 Henry IV*'s structures of uncanniness, debilitating repetition, and the dysfunctional sense of being stuck in time that can no longer be tolerated now that the future has arrived in the form of Hal turned Henry V.

When Falstaff rushes to London upon the announcement of Hal's accession, he bases his conviction that "the young King is sick for me" (5.4.125) on his faith that Hal will recognize his old companion's essential sameness; that is, King Hal cannot help but value and elevate Falstaff because the old knight has not changed. Just as in *1 Henry IV*, when Falstaff advocated for a form of friendship that defied futurity, Falstaff believes that he embodies qualities of steadfastness and unchanging affection rooted in his wholesale investment in the past and present.<sup>29</sup> Pistol summarizes Falstaff's optimistic view that his intractable sameness will be rewarded when he states: "'Tis *semper idem*, for *absque hoc nihil est*" (5.5.26).<sup>30</sup> However, it is precisely the fact that Falstaff remains "ever the same" that dooms him since, as Paul Dean notes, "What Falstaff shows is that we are trapped within Time;" and it is precisely this entrapment in an uncanny and dysfunctional present that Henry V has pledged himself against.<sup>31</sup> What Falstaff does not realize until it's too late is that Henry V is hell-bent on a crusade against sameness, against repetition, and against history itself, specifically the histories that keep circling back and stymying his kingdom in pernicious feedback loops of rebellion, regression, and regret.

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<sup>28</sup> Allison Thorne, "There is a history in all men's lives: Reinventing History in *2 Henry IV*," in *Shakespeare's Histories and Counter-Histories*, ed. Dermot Cavanagh, Stuart Hampton-Reeves, and Stephen Longstaffe (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2006), 63.

<sup>29</sup> According to Thorne, Falstaff, Shallow, and the other cronies who have accompanied them to London represent a form of memory that Henry V is determined to bring under his control: that is "the meanderings of the oral tradition in which the past is typically reconstituted in anecdotal form through the informal medium of rumour, hearsay, gossip, and personal reminiscence." Ibid., 49. See also Wilder, *Shakespeare's Memory Theatre*, 83-106 for an account of "competing mnemonics" in the *Henry IV*s.

<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, the first part of Pistol's statement quotes Elizabeth I's motto: "Ever the same." The second phrase translates: "Apart from this, there is nothing."

<sup>31</sup> Dean, "Forms of Time," 429.

When Henry declares, “I know thee not old man,” (5.5.45), he inverts and finally fulfills the first sentence of his famous soliloquy delivered so long ago, “I know you all.” In fact, Henry strategically deploys a sense of uncanniness here, echoing with a disconcerting difference those famous promises of *1 Henry IV*, to enforce that the time is up for any sort of resemblance or continuity between past and present:

I have long dreamt of such a kind of man. . . .  
But being awake, I do despise my dream. . . .  
Reply not to me with a fool-borne jest.  
Presume not that I am the thing I was,  
For God doth know, so shall the world perceive,  
That I have turned away my former self;  
So will I those that kept me company. (5.5.47, 49, 53-57)

Henry V’s rejection of Falstaff, and the proto-Freudian figuring of his former friend as a recurring but despicable dream, acts as a violent set-piece for the king to assert that nothing is the same, that the prior timeline has been discarded, and that the unlooked-for future is indeed now. Sameness and pastness are banished on pain of death along with the character who has epitomized the more attractive aspects of ignoring time’s demands. The moment of rejection is shocking and unavoidably chilling, because in the repeated use of imperatives Henry V rejects not only “the tutor and feeder of my riots,” but also Shakespeare’s audience. The playgoers, even more so than their beloved Falstaff, constitute the former “company” for Henry V’s former self, and they are forcibly warned that the promises of Part One are being fulfilled. We are ordered not to presume, and are indeed blamed along with Falstaff as the source of the former Hal’s “unintentional returns” into revelry and debauchery. But there will be no more returns, no more repetitious history, and no more familiarity; if Shakespeare’s spectators have any place in Henry V’s glorious redeemed time-scape, it is as foot-soldiers whose emotional responses best conform to the affective scripts Henry V has established.

The rejection of Falstaff serves as the opening salvo in a crusade against history, and the critical consensus has generally held that Falstaff's banishment serves as an unconscionable (or at least regrettable, from an audience point-of-view) act of political and historical suppression. However, as the inevitable outcome of his aggressive desire to craft a future unmoored from the pernicious consequences of living too much in the past, Henry V's rejection of his friend is saturated with the ethical shades of gray that will come to dominate the final play of this long saga. While Henry's pronouncement that "being awake, I do despise my dream" (5.5.49) represents an act of forceful oblivion with problematic and oppressive consequences for both king and kingdom, I also assert that this act of willful forgetting constitutes the first act of destructive world-creation upon which *Henry V* depends. Garrett Sullivan claims that "forgetting in early modern literature and culture...is frequently associated with resistance to or the retooling of normative models for behavior," while Jonni Koonce Dunn argues that "Shakespeare demonstrates that forgetfulness can be not only pleasurable in one form but also advantageous and empowering in another."<sup>32</sup> Therefore, forgetting can ironically facilitate productive action and agency. Furthermore, as Lina Perkins Wilder states, we have seen throughout Part Two that "remembering, especially if unintentional, can be considered pathological...Given the persistence of memory, the ability to forget on cue is seen as a desirable skill."<sup>33</sup> For Henry V, as he moves on from a world in which forgetting became pathologically impossible into a future in which he must "busy giddy minds / With foreign quarrels, that action hence borne out / May waste the memory of former days" (4.3.340-43), forgetting becomes both an act of world-shattering and an

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<sup>32</sup> Sullivan, *Memory and Forgetting*, 1; Jonni Koonce Dunn, "The Functions of Forgetfulness in 1 Henry IV," *Studies in Philology* 113 (2016): 83.

<sup>33</sup> Wilder, *Shakespeare's Memory Theatre*, 42.

act of world-making that bolsters his violent struggle to create triumphant future history on the fields of France.

### **Remembering History and the History Play in *Henry V***

In *Henry V*, forgetting and repression become productive forms of world-creating and nation-fashioning through conquest.<sup>34</sup> However, aside from the fact that Henry now practices his future-making through violent combat, the affective focus of his historical mission has not changed at all. Just as he unequivocally declared that he could “glitter o’er his fault,” Henry V similarly casts his projected conquest of France as a zero-sum historical game:

France being ours we’ll bend it to our awe,  
Or break it all to pieces. Or there we’ll sit,  
Ruling in large and ample empery. . . .  
Or lay these bones in an unworthy urn,  
Tombless, with no remembrance over them. (1.2.224-26, 228-29).

Once again, Henry approaches this pending glorious future-history as a blunt either-or; either he will be victorious in France, and thus eternally exist in history as England’s greatest warrior king, or he will not. But defeat in Henry’s model is the antithesis of history, and in his view defeat consigns him to oblivion, just as he relegated his personal past in Eastcheap to the dust heap outside of history and time. For Shakespeare, however, Henry’s enduring model of glorious history or no history at all just doesn’t work because Henry’s fate is truly a both-and for an audience in 1599. Henry might declare that “either our history shall with a full mouth / Speak freely our acts, or else our grave, / Like Turkish mute, shall have a tongueless mouth” (1.2.230-32), but in reality it’s both; Henry *does* conquer France and become known to posterity as the

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<sup>34</sup> “The play confirms that power can usually get away with forgetting a great deal, suppressing any public memory that might challenge it, so long as it wears the cloak of remembrance, as Henry does throughout the play.” Baldo, *Memory in Shakespeare's Histories*, 103.

model of a Christian king, and the fruits of his victory are forever lost, becoming nothing more than a muted history for the sixteenth century.

With this final history play, Shakespeare interrogates not simply how history comes to be constructed, but also the very strategies of affective contact and emotional embodiment that he pioneered in his previous history plays.<sup>35</sup> This is because *Henry V*, as the concluding play of the second tetralogy and the play meant to depict England's greatest moment of foreign conquest, offers an experience of densely layered, embedded memories of English history and of an audience's history watching this saga unfold in Shakespeare's theater. Henry now faces a future that he appears to have successfully unmoored from the past—as the bishops remark, “Never came reformation in a flood / With such a heavy currance scouring faults; / Nor never Hydra-headed willfulness / So soon did lose his seat—and all at once-- / As in this king” (1.1.34-38)—but his strategies of repression, strategic forgetfulness, and even his forceful acts of imprisoning or executing the embodied representatives of his personal history are consistently undermined by the appearance of physical characters from and references to previous plays. With *Henry V*, Shakespeare develops a citational dramaturgy that undercuts his protagonist's aggressive future-making energies. We see such citation at work when we are told that “the scene / is now transported, gentles, to Southampton” (2.0.34-35), where we will get to witness Henry ably foil the treacherous plot of “a nest of hollow bosoms” (2.0.21), but instead the scene shifts to Eastcheap. Mistress Quickly, Pistol, Bardolph, Nim, and the ghostly presence of the dying Falstaff embody a history and a past-world that is beloved and remembered by their theatrical

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<sup>35</sup> Brian Walsh similarly claims that Shakespeare's history plays “*enact* historicity as a sense of discontinuity and all the while reflect on the strategies through which historical representation, particularly *corporeal* representation, addresses that discontinuity.” Walsh, *Shakespeare, The Queen's Men, and The Elizabethan Performance of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 20, emphasis in original. While I disagree that every Shakespearean history play enacts the discontinuity between past and present, I do agree that *Henry V* explicitly stages the distance between past and present in order to interrogate the history play's ability to embody history onstage.



audience, despite the fact that their history is precisely what Henry V intends to destroy through his invasion of France. Even more so than the cartoonish French nobles, these fading yet persistent memories of Eastcheap (and, by extension, the experiences of *1* and *2 Henry IV*) are what Henry V has declared war against.<sup>36</sup> But even though this world seems to be passing away in front of us as we are informed that “the King hath killed his heart” (2.1.79), Shakespeare will continuously check Henry’s merciless quest towards a glorious, redeemed national future through these uncanny citations of his history plays’ own history, rendering the accomplishments of England’s “greatest Christian King” ambiguous and tonally discordant thanks to these referential shadows of past plays.<sup>37</sup>

As I have previously argued, Henry V prefers if both his onstage and off-stage subjects forget or simply choose not to remember certain things that he has said and done, and while he largely gets away with this throughout *1* and *2 Henry IV*, Shakespeare injects all of Henry’s triumphs in *Henry V* with tiny shards of the past that this king has been so determined to obliterate. These slivers of pastness initially seem inconsequential, and Henry generally treats them that way, as we see when Bardolph is sentenced to death. Pistol pleads that “Fortune’s Bardolph’s foe and frowns on him, / For he hath stol’n a pax, and hanged must a be. / . . . / Let gallows gape for dog, let man go free” (3.6.34-35, 37). Here, we see embodied representatives of former modes of feeling and being-in-time pitted against King Henry V’s soberly unyielding affective and temporal mode. Pistol, in effect, begs for an altered response to Bardolph’s crime, a response that Henry cannot and will not give since mercy towards the thieving denizen of Eastcheap scarcely fuels the affective script of “just Christian king lawfully pursuing his rights,”

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<sup>36</sup> “Most of the battles in the play are over memory, the importance of which to the formation and strength of a sovereign national state is evident throughout.” Baldo, *Memory in Shakespeare's Histories*, 102.

<sup>37</sup> See R. Scott Fraser, “The king has killed his heart’: The Death of Falstaff in *Henry V*,” *Sederi* 20 (2010): 145-57.

which Henry is so keen on preserving throughout the invasion of France. When Fluellen reports the offense and sentence to the king, Henry's response, "We would have all such offenders so cut off" (3.6.98), utterly negates memory, history, and feeling through its rigid presentism; furthermore, it illustrates an aspect of Hal-turned-Henry V's emotional life that, while latent up until now, begins to take center-stage.<sup>38</sup> As we have seen before, Hal/Henry V is remarkably skilled at framing every action he takes according to specific, and rigid, emotional scripts, and he ably deflects or represses histories and feelings that do not meld with his overarching goal to "redeem time." And yet, the closer Henry gets to achieving the triumphant future-history—and the unassailable assessment of himself as England's greatest king—that he has pursued for three continuous plays, the more his emotional life and mode of being-in-time reveals itself as nakedly instrumental.

Henry V only experiences emotion to produce emotional and affective responses about himself. Of course, this talent serves as the cornerstone of Henry's inherently performative construction of self which we have observed since *I Henry IV*; but the provocative wielding of others' emotional responses for his own benefit fully manifests in the king's disguised interactions with his troops before Agincourt. More simply, Henry only feels—and quite consciously externalizes his feelings—to make people feel very specific, very controlled, very positive feelings about him. We are led to think that Henry functions as an emotional bulwark on the eve of the battle, and that "a little touch of Harry in the night" (4.0.47) radically transforms

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<sup>38</sup> Although Bardolph's execution does not take place onstage in Shakespeare's text, most modern productions choose to stage the hanging along with some special effect to suggest that an audience should be disturbed by Henry V sentencing an old companion to death. But Shakespeare long ago framed this episode as shot-through with disturbing, recursive uncanniness. In *I Henry IV*, following the elaborate prank on Falstaff, Hal and Bardolph jest about Bardolph's perpetually red face. Bardolph argues that his face portends "choler. . . if rightly taken," to which Hal replies, "No, if rightly taken, halter" (2.5.297-98). Hal's play on words states that, if Bardolph gets arrested ('rightly taken'), he will face a noose (collar/"choler"/halter). These inconsequential puns thus receive a stark fulfillment in *Henry V*.

the affective atmosphere so that “every wretch. . . plucks comfort from his looks” (4.0.41-42). Henry supposedly bolsters his troops by selflessly imparting his own affective storehouses to them. Instead, however, Henry perversely fishes for praise and a sense of affective connection between himself and his troops as he wanders through the camp, but the kindest word he gets is from Pistol, who claims, “I love the lovely bully” (4.1.49), even as he launches an obscenity at his disguised king. Henry weirdly tries to appropriate and manipulate the affective lives of his starving, fearful soldiers to justify his repeated “falsifications of men’s hopes” that have led his own countrymen to the brink of a seemingly unwinnable foreign war:

I think the King is but a man, as I am. . . . And though his affections are higher mounted than ours, yet when they stoop, they stoop with the like wing. Therefore, when he sees reason of fears, as we do, his fears, out of doubt, be of the same relish as ours are. . . . I think he would not wish himself anywhere but where he is. (4.1.100, 103-06, 114-15)

Henry channels the perfect equanimity of an ideal subject and soldier, and he performs this part to make his own subjects and soldiers feel this equanimity towards and admiration for him. Furthermore, he tries to impress upon his troops that he feels the same emotions they do, and yet starkly differentiates the king’s emotions as that which *cannot be shown*, hinting therefore that the troops should empathize with and be even more grateful for a king who possesses such affective self-control. As Anne Barton so capably demonstrates, though, Henry’s dual performance of disguised king playing the ever loyal soldier “summon[s] up the memory of a wistful, naïve attitude toward history and the relationship of a subject and king which this play rejects as attractive but untrue: a nostalgic but false romanticism.”<sup>39</sup> Through the discussion with Williams and Bates, Shakespeare jolts Henry out of this calculated affective fishing when

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<sup>39</sup> Anne Barton, “The King Disguised: Shakespeare’s *Henry V* and the Comical History,” in *The Triple Bond: Plays, Mainly Shakespearean, in Performance*, ed. Joseph G. Price (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975), 99.

Williams envisions a future-history following Agincourt that grimly contradicts Henry's plan for a future redeemed from history's crimes and demands: "But if the cause be not good, the King himself hath a heavy reckoning to make, when all those legs and arms and heads chopped off in battle shall join together at the last day, and cry all 'We died at such a place'" (4.1.128-31).

Contrary to Henry's belief that by "falsifying men's hopes" he can forge a future-history freed from his current timeline, Williams positions the pending battle within the larger scope of salvation history. According to this vision of a reembodied past that the king is so desperate to deny, Henry's decision to invade France and send men to die in battle *cannot be* forgotten or repressed; moreover, the reincarnation of his soldiers' mutilated corpses on Judgement Day will render redemption impossible for King Henry V.

### **Defying Memory and Embodying Affective Futures at Agincourt**

Williams's unsentimental assessment of his king baldly refuses the affective scripts that Henry has so capably constructed to deflect responsibility for treating his present as a disposable dress-rehearsal for the future. Williams in fact succeeds in making Henry feel a genuine, uncalculated emotion (anger) when the soldier refuses to grovel in gratitude at the king's refusal of a ransom: "He said so, to make us fight cheerfully, but when our throats are cut he may be ransomed" (4.1.179-80). More importantly, though, the argument highlights for Henry the affective stakes and next-to-impossible odds of his repeated attempts to create a new future by forgetting, repressing, imprisoning, or executing the past. The conversation with Williams provokes Henry's only soliloquy of the play, which concludes with a prayer in which he makes two intriguing requests. First, he asks God to "steel my soldiers' hearts. / Possess them not with fear. / Take from them now the sense of reck'ning, ere th'opposed numbers / Pluck their hearts from them" (4.1.271-74). Basically, Henry prays that his soldiers will lose the ability to count so

they cannot comprehend the fearful odds they face. However, “reckoning” also carries with it a connotation of remembering; in another sense, then, Henry asks that God take away his soldiers’ ability to remember what the morning holds for them and how many men the French armies have. This sense of “reckoning” as “remembering” then precipitates the second request and emotional core of the prayer, in which Henry pleads for the Almighty to hold off on any Providential retribution against the House of Lancaster for a little while longer: “Not today, O Lord, / O not today, think not upon the fault / My father made in compassing the crown” (4.1.274-76). By asking God not to make today the day that he punishes the House of Lancaster’s deposition of Richard II, Henry actually asks God *not to remember the past*. Extraordinarily, Henry spiritually readies himself for his day of reckoning by praying that even divine memory will prove faulty or forgiving. By asking for historical and divine memory to be absent from the battlefield in the coming hours, Shakespeare shows us that Henry is trying to outrun history with all of this future-making. In essence, the protagonist to whom Shakespeare has dedicated three plays is trying to beat divine justice to the punch by making a history in which his glorious achievements outweigh his family’s sin.

Henry chases a future history that will prevent or forestall the providential history he senses nipping at his heels. Again, his chief antagonist in this effort appears to be memory; the memory of his family’s crime that demands divine punishment, and the memories of soldiers who cannot forget that death looms for them all in a few hours. Through the Crispin’s Day speech, Henry launches perhaps his most daring and desperate assault against his memorial and affective combatants with an astonishing piece of rhetoric that crafts a future time-scape of embodied memory that simultaneously represses the immediate present:

This day is called the Feast of Crispian.  
He that outlives this day and comes safe home

Will stand a-tiptoe when this day is named  
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.  
He that shall see this day and live t'old age  
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbors  
And say, 'Tomorrow is Saint Crispian.'  
Then will he strip his sleeve, and show his scars  
And say, 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.' (4.3.40-48)

Henry's chief task in the Crispin's Day speech is to make everyone forget what "now" is, and to do that he makes "this day" jump timelines from the present into a vibrantly imagined space in which "this day" only exists as a memory in the future. Furthermore, Henry generates this future-scape as an embodied experience of redeemed, triumphant time; the soldiers are no longer soldiers, but veterans whose pending wounds and pain have been transposed and sublimated into aged scars and saccharine memory. The present, in which Agincourt must be fought and in which thousands of soldiers will die drowning in mud or suffocating in their own armor, is skipped over and fast-forwarded to a future-past of feasting. Crucially, the grisliness of what must be done on "this day" for it to exist as glorious national history is elided in Henry's vision. The battle is already fought, the men are already home, have already prospered and aged, and the actual physical violence and suffering of battle has been transubstantiated, and reembodied, as memory:

Old men *forget*; yet all shall be *forgot*,  
But he'll *remember*, with advantages,  
What feats he did that day. Then shall our names,  
Familiar in his mouth as household words . . . .  
Be in their flowing cups freshly *remembered*.  
This story shall the good man teach his son,  
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by  
From this day to the ending of the world  
But we in it shall be *remembered*. (4.3.49-52, 55-59, emphasis mine)

Harry acknowledges the necessary corollary of memory, which is forgetting, but then displaces it through an emphasis on remembrance of Crispin's Day (but not the present, pending fight at

Agincourt) that turns the memory of “this day” into an embodied form of eternal life. Yes, Henry says, one day all things shall be forgotten, but *not* Crispin’s Day, because the old veteran will remember. In Henry’s speech, “we few, we happy few, we band of brothers” become affective historians capable of feeling and embodying the past in ways that enact that beloved Ciceronian maxim of history as “vita memoriae, magistra vitae.” The memory of Crispin’s Day now exists prior to any actual creation of those memories, displacing the fact of what must happen on 25 October 1415 and dimming the oppressive awareness, and “reck’ning,” of today.

Henry projects himself and his audience into a future where everyone gets to enjoy redeemed time, while in the process affectively denying the existence of a present that not only defies, but could very well annihilate, this emotional script. And his impressive affective and temporal gymnastics are nearly obliterated when Mountjoy repeats the French’s final ransom offer in front of the troops. In his infuriated response to the messenger, Henry offers a very different vision of how his soldiers’ embodied memories will craft a future that is no less victorious, but decidedly less transcendent and decidedly more pungent, than the future-history envisioned in the Crispin’s Day speech:

Those that leave their valiant bones in France,  
Dying like men, though buried in your dunghills  
They shall be famed. For there the sun shall greet them  
And draw their honours reeking up to heaven,  
Leaving their earthly parts to choke your clime,  
The smell whereof shall breed a plague in France.  
Mark then the abounding valour in our English,  
That, being dead, like to the bullets grazing  
Break out into a second course of mischief,  
Killing in relapse of mortality. (4.3.99-107)

Henry envisions his soldiers rotting corpses achieving in death what they fail to achieve in life; although they might be buried ignominiously in France, they will metamorphose into a living, agential plague that will eventually defeat the French. Henry posits for his men a form of future

embodied memory that is the exact opposite of the living memory envisioned in the Crispin's Day speech—they will be diseased, rotting and, above all, dead—but in a strange way the embodied memory of the English corpses mirrors the achievements of “we few, we proud few.” To an extent, the explicitly gross nature of this speech speaks to the ways in which Henry can appropriate memory for his own purposes; he might beg God not to remember, but he also has no problem envisioning his soldiers as embodied, putrefying memorial substances drifting up to heaven even as they choke France with disease. However, one cannot get around the fact that this speech butts up uncomfortably against the affective memorial future-scapes of the Crispin's Day speech. By placing this speech immediately before the start of battle, I argue that Shakespeare explicitly renders the Crispin's Day speech affectively ambiguous and, more importantly, structurally shifts the play, and the second tetralogy as a whole, back into the oddly circular and troublingly repetitive structures we observed earlier.

Even in the heat of the battle that represents the apex, and last-ditch effort, of Henry V's history making, unsettling reminders of previous plays and repressed histories begin to make themselves felt. Again, Shakespeare injects those problematic shards of the past into the midst of Henry's triumph, which introduces a weirdness into the affective atmosphere even as Henry seems to finally achieve the redeemed, reformed future-history he so desires. The most striking example is when Gower and Fluellen interpret the King's order to cut the prisoner's throats. Fluellen, for all his ridiculousness, appears to have once been an apt grammar school pupil as he offers an extensive historical comparison of Henry and Alexander the Great.<sup>40</sup> Gower takes issue with one aspect of the comparison, though, when Fluellen expounds upon how Alexander the Great killed his friend Cleitus: “Our King is not like him in that,” Gower interrupts, “He never

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<sup>40</sup> See David Quint, ““Alexander the Pig”: Shakespeare on History and Poetry,” *boundary 2* 10 (1982): 49-67.



killed any of his friends” (4.7.33-34). Fluellen, peeved at the interruption, further explains that the point is good based on the contrast between the two: “So also Harry Monmouth, being in his right wits and good judgments, turned away the fat knight with the great-belly doublet—he was full of jests and gipes and knaveries and mocks—I have forgot his name” (4.7.38-42). Gower supplies the missing information: “Sir John Falstaff” (4.7.43). This is one of those instances, like a low but ominously repetitious note in a symphony, that again triggers those uncanny feelings so familiar from *2 Henry IV*. Falstaff is dead, Henry rejected and banished him, but his memory and his name emerge during the heat of battle like bizarre white noise. David Quint observes that “alive or dead, Falstaff haunts the play from the wings;” and thus Shakespeare has the past present itself at the completely wrong moment to demand that the present recognize it.<sup>41</sup> Harry Monmouth and his troops desperately fight for Henry’s vision of an English history liberated from the past; however, as these slivers of pastness and uncanny echoes attest, that past is creeping along despite Henry’s best efforts to outrun it.

Immediately following the mention of Falstaff, victory is declared in favor of the English, and at face value it seems that playgoers would no doubt echo Exeter’s assessment of the victory at Agincourt: “Tis wonderful” (4.8.106). Hal-turned-Henry V has finally accomplished what he set out to do three plays ago, and has apparently achieved that glorious future-history he envisioned when he swore to “redeem time.” But how does an audience respond? Was George Bernard Shaw right when he fumed over the fact that Shakespeare “thrust such a Jingo hero as his Harry V down our throats,” and would Shakespeare’s playgoers have enjoyed that? Maybe. But I would argue that we see alternative models for a spectator’s response, not in the *Non nobis* and *Te deums* (so famously overwrought in Branagh’s film) that Henry commands be sung, but

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 52.

rather in the affective resistance epitomized by Williams and Princess Katherine. Williams's response to the elaborate and bizarrely timed reveal that he in fact threatened the King of England to a duel—"I will have none of your money" (4.8.62)—angrily refuses Henry's efforts to buy him off and thus force Williams to conform to the emotional scripts that Henry wants established following the victory. Williams resists the pushiness of both his king and Fluellen, who seem slightly anxious at this discordant note among all those *Te deums*, and he is left in his resistance; there is no stage direction indicating that he takes the money. The episode of wooing Princess Kate, furthermore, has perplexed critics in equal measure to the Princess's own confusion at Henry's unnecessary efforts; more important, though, is the fact that Katherine consistently denies the affective atmosphere that Henry seeks in playing the role of inept wooer/ardent lover. Every response that Katherine gives to one of Henry's protestations of love is a deflection—"I cannot tell vat is dat," (5.2.169), "I cannot tell" (5.2.184), "I do not know dat" (5.2.198)—and while no doubt meant to be funny, these denials speak to more than just the language barrier. Here, we see Henry once again performatively externalizing his emotions to provoke specific emotional responses about himself. Instead, however, the responses he receives are distanced and resistant, refusing these affective scripts even as Henry consolidates his achievement of "redeemed time." Williams and Kate register moments of failed response for a character who so rarely fails at anything. And, I argue, Shakespeare's playgoers have been trained to respond to *Henry V* in much the same way, thanks to the deliberately alienating effects of one of Shakespeare's strangest creations: the Chorus.

### **Anbandoning Affective History and Getting Out of the History Play**

Through the figure of the Chorus, Shakespeare puts affective history under a microscope, exposing and interrogating how he has enabled audiences to come into felt contact with the past

through “the flat unraised spirits that hath dared / On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth / So great an object” (Prologue. 9-11). The Chorus has long fascinated critics as an overtly metatheatrical voice, as well as a possible critic of—or humble-bragger for—theater’s representational capacities.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, it would seem the Chorus serves as the spokesperson for the very sorts of emotional embodiment and felt contact that I have explored throughout Shakespeare’s histories. We see the Chorus explicitly ask the audience to assist the theatrical endeavor in making the past happen:

Let us, ciphers to this great account,  
On your imaginary forces work. . . .  
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts:  
Into a thousand parts divide one man,  
And make imaginary puissance. (Prologue.17-18, 23-25)

The Chorus enlists the audience as a necessary contributor to the dramatic experience, outlining how their imaginations can give history a palpable presence even though the performance itself falls short of dramatic realism. However, I argue that the Chorus protests too much, and rather than enlisting playgoers’ imaginations as stage hands, the Chorus prevents the exact form of audience engagement for which he pleads. Richard Hillman notes that “by regularly interposing between audience and spectacle. . . the Chorus interferes with the very ‘imaginary forces’ that he invokes.”<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, in Walsh’s words: “It’s safe to say that, by now, [Shakespeare’s] audience had gotten the message that theatrical representation does not deliver the past as it really was.”<sup>44</sup> More important than an audience’s perception of the Globe’s lack of verisimilitude, though, is the fact that Shakespeare long ago trained his playgoers to simply do

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<sup>42</sup> Lawrence Danson, “Henry V: King, Chorus Critics,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 34 (1983): 27-43; Brian Walsh, *The Queen’s Men*, 178-208.

<sup>43</sup> Richard Hillman, “‘Not Amurath and Amurath Succeeds’: Playing Doubles in Shakespeare’s *Henriad*,” *English Literary Renaissance* 21 (1991): 164.

<sup>44</sup> Walsh, *The Queen’s Men*, 180.

the affective work necessary for the past to be embodied in the present. Throughout 2 and 3 *Henry VI*, *Richard III*, and 1 and 2 *Henry IV*, Shakespeare's playgoers have been feeling and participating in the ways that the Chorus deems absolutely essential for any successful embodiment of *Henry V* onstage. Therefore, the Chorus draws so much attention to the audience's ability to feel the past in the here and now that it renders such forms of participatory affective engagement impossible.

By repeatedly asking playgoers to imagine and perform the emotional work they have been doing with previous history plays, the Chorus's exhortations have the opposite emotional effect on an audience; instead, the Chorus renders the past distant from, and in a sense closed off to, the late-sixteenth-century present in which it is staged. This might seem antithetical, since the Chorus appears to occupy an embodied space of 'now-ness,' and harps upon his and his audience's temporal situation of now as a means through which dramatization of the past happens. The Chorus is obsessed with "now" as the moment in which the past becomes present onstage—"Now all the youth of England are on fire" (2.0.1), "There is the playhouse *now*, there must you sit" (2.0.34), "*Now* entertain conjecture of a time" (4.0.1)—but I argue that this hyper-conscious awareness of the present renders impossible the dialectic affective atmosphere of previous history plays. As I argued in the previous chapter, actors onstage and spectators together generate the embodied energy necessary to experience history taking place in the present. The Chorus, however, embodies and highlights the distinctions between now and then, present and past, negating the possibility for any relational contact between the two.

By anxiously highlighting and begging for playgoers' affective engagement, the Chorus destroys the possibility for affective contact between sixteenth-century spectators and the English past unfolding onstage. In its opening speech of Act Three, for instance, the Chorus

effectively offers a laundry-list of a Shakespearean history play's dramaturgical capacity to embody the past in the present. But why should an audience "suppose" they have observed the king at Dover, "suppose" they have (time)-traveled across the Channel to France, and "suppose" they arrive mid-siege at the gates of Harfleur? With every single history play before this, no supposing was necessary; "then" became "now," and the audience was simply a part of whatever aspect of the past was happening onstage. However, the Chorus renders this experientiality metaphorical by insisting that the drama itself cannot happen if the audience does not employ their imaginations "in motion of no less celerity / Than that of thought" (3.0.2-3). Every single line of the Chorus's Act Three speech offers an obsessive command for the audience: "Suppose," "Play with your fancies," "Do but think," "Follow, follow," "Work, work your thoughts," "And eke out our performance with your mind" (3.0.1-35). I find that such exhortations have a Brechtian, alienating effect on Shakespeare's playgoers, exposing and thus rendering critically distant the history plays' dramaturgy.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, I agree with Chris Fitter that the Chorus's disruptions and exhortations constitute "deliberate frustrations and coolings of the audience by Shakespeare."<sup>46</sup> Lawrence Danson claims the Chorus "woos the audience as King Henry woos Kate," but I counter that *Henry V* exposes the "wooing" potential of the theater (such as we saw throughout the first tetralogy) to sap the history play of its actual seductive power.<sup>47</sup> Thus, Shakespeare casts the Chorus as an ineffective affective historian who distances playgoers from the very past it is so desperate to render viscerally present.

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<sup>45</sup> See Chris Fitter, "A Tale of Two Branaghs: Henry V, Ideology, and the Mekong Agincourt," in *Shakespeare Left and Right*, ed. Ivo Kamps (New York: Routledge, 1991), 259-75. See also Peter Womack, "Henry IV and Epic Theater," in *Henry IV, Parts One and Two*, ed. Nigel Wood (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1995), 126-57.

<sup>46</sup> Fitter, "A Tale of Two Branaghs," 264.

<sup>47</sup> Danson, "King, Chorus Critics," 28.

As a failed affective historian and dramaturg, the Chorus fosters a critical distance and emotional separation from *Henry V* and the history it stages, creating an affective atmosphere and experience of the past that is the antithesis to the affective history Shakespeare has perfected throughout the first and second tetralogies. But why would Shakespeare wish to render his own dramaturgical triumph moot? Why deplete of its affective energy the genre that has brought English playgoers into felt, experiential contact with their nation's history onstage, and that has brought Shakespeare his greatest success as a playwright to date? In the midst of Henry's and England's underdog-narrative of victory against impossible odds, uncanny echoes and familiar repetitions hum underneath the current of the play, and I argue that Shakespeare created the Chorus in order to keep his audience distanced from, and thus immune to, a terrifying reality that he uncovers at the heart of affective history. Throughout the *Henriad*, the past has continued to insist that it will not go quietly into the oblivion to which Henry V has consigned it. Finally, at the precise moment when Hal/Henry V's ambitious mode of being-in-time and striving toward the future appears most successful, and when it seems that he has catapulted his nation into a timeline of triumphant future-history, Shakespeare violently and deliberately shatters the illusion:

Thus far with rough and all-unable pen  
Our bending author hath pursued the story,  
In little room confining mighty men,  
Mangling by starts the full course of their glory.  
Small time, but in that time most greatly lived  
This star of England. Fortune made his sword,  
By which the world's best garden he achieved,  
And of it left his son imperial lord.  
Henry the Sixth, in infant bands crowned king  
Of France and England did this King succeed,  
Whose state so many had the managing  
That they lost France and made his England bleed,  
*Which oft our stage hath shown.* (Epilogue.1-13)

Brian Walsh has stated that this epilogue constitutes “the most temporally complex vision of history—and the history play—in the Shakespeare canon,” and I agree because with this conclusion Shakespeare brings English history and the history of his own history plays crashing into the present to hammer home the inherent, horrific uncanniness at the heart of these affective ventures into the past.<sup>48</sup> With the concluding image of Henry VI’s reign “which oft our stage hath shown,” Shakespeare’s supposedly glorious and triumphant *Henry V* instead circles back to where the genre of Shakespearean history play began: with Henry V dead, and a funeral dirge.<sup>49</sup> No matter how many pasts Hal rejects in favor of the future, and no matter how many times he successfully fights the battle of Agincourt, Shakespeare refuses to let us forget that Henry V’s future is irredeemably past. Henry V always dies prematurely, and his son’s reign always leads to the hell-scape depicted in the first tetralogy. Thus, despite the affective experiences of the past-in-process that Shakespeare has engineered, Hal can never catapult England into an alternate timeline of redeemed future-history, and Shakespeare can never stage the past as anything other than what it is.

As much as Hal/Henry V senses that his nation’s future depends upon breaking out of the past, Shakespeare instead showcases the bleak futility of the hyper-conscious affective connection with the past that his own history plays have enabled. While Shakespeare pioneered the history plays as a pleasurable experience of history happening again, here he casts his history plays as an inevitable spiral into terrifying entrapment. Building off of Hall, the *Mirror*, and Spenser, Shakespeare goes the furthest in turning affective history into a vibrant encounter with the past in the present; more so than any of his predecessors, moreover, Shakespeare confronts

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<sup>48</sup> Walsh, *The Queen’s Men*, 178.

<sup>49</sup> I refer here to *1 Henry VI*, which begins with the following stage direction: “*Dead march. Enter the funeral of King Henry the Fifth*” (1.1.SD 1-2).

the claustrophobic reality that, if one makes history happen again, that happening again can never be changed, or redeemed, or turned into a future. In 1599, Shakespeare appears to have concluded that the affective and embodied contact with the past made possible through his history plays could only ever repeat “the constant recurrence of the same thing. . . the same characters, the same destinies, the same misdeeds, even the same names, through successive generations.”<sup>50</sup> Understandably, therefore, I think Shakespeare intentionally abandoned the history play in 1599, before the genre could trap him and his drama in the same unchangeable century of the English past.

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<sup>50</sup> Freud, *The Uncanny*, 142.



## Epilogue

### The Remains of Affective History in John Milton's *History of Britain*

If early modern England could have been said to produce a true affective historian, someone who developed a desire to viscerally feel the past and encounter that past in the present, that person was John Milton. This epilogue will explore the legacy of early modern affective history through the lens of Milton's lifelong engagement with England's history. Through his education and his independent reading, I argue, Milton inherits and indeed embraces the concept of affective history that I have explored throughout this dissertation. In Prolusion VII, for example, Milton offers a vivid vision of affectively vibrant history rendering the past into a present experience for the reader:

What delight it affords to the mind to take its flight through the history and geography of every nation. . . . This, my hearers, *is to live in every period of the world's history, and to be as it were coeval with time itself*. And indeed while we look to the future for the glory of our name, this [history] will be to extend and stretch our lives backward before our birth, and to wrest from a grudging Fate a kind of retrospective immortality.<sup>1</sup>

To write history, according to the young Milton, one must achieve a certain soulful and experiential symbiosis with the past itself; thus, even in his Cambridge days Milton envisions the historian achieving embodied and emotional contact with the past in ways that echo the affective history of England's sixteenth-century historiographers, poets, and playwrights. Furthermore, when Milton returned from his European tour in 1639, he continued the ambitious personal program of study initiated upon his graduation from Cambridge; and between 1639 and 1641 his reading centered on British histories—Malmesbury, Foxe, Speed, Stow, Camden, and Holinshed. This reading formed the basis for both his first prose tract, *Of Reformation* (1641), and his first

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<sup>1</sup> John Milton, Prolusion VII, in *Complete Prose Works* Vol. 1, 288-306, emphasis mine. All further references to Milton's prose will be cited parenthetically according to volume and page number.

self-conscious presentation of himself as an historian. As French Fogle observes, Milton's vast reading of both classical, Continental, and English histories reflects an ambitious mission to wend his way through time itself: "What he was trying to do was to find his way from the reliably classical world of Greece and Rome to the voluminously, though less accurately, recorded world of medieval Europe, and thence to the times of the recent past."<sup>2</sup> Early in his career, therefore, Milton views his own study and knowledge of history as the first step in an epic project, as though reading and then writing the nation's history constitutes both an act of time travel and an act of heroic endeavor on par with the actual historical events he will record.

Milton clearly views history—and the "worthy" writing of his nation's history—as a central component of his own vocation. In *Of Reformation's* closing prayer, for instance, Milton envisions himself "offering. . .high strains in new lofty measures" at the moment when the Reformation achieves fulfillment, and this temporal point of affective futurity appears to be both celebrated by, and in some sense created by, Milton's song (*CPW* 1:616). David Lowenstein demonstrates that Milton "often saw himself, especially during the revolutionary years, as actively engaged in shaping and representing the drama of history."<sup>3</sup> I agree that Milton possesses a uniquely performative concept of history, as Lowenstein shows, and I would further add that this dynamic concept of temporality as a space for action and agency parallels the affective history I have traced in the work of the *Mirror* authors, Edmund Spenser, and William Shakespeare. This view of the national historian as a "history-maker" for the nation receives its fullest articulation in a 1657 letter to Henry de Brass, in which Milton outlines the qualities that a national history, and the national historian, should possess: "He who would write worthily of

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<sup>2</sup> French Fogle, "Introduction," *History of Britain*, in *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton* Vol. 5 pt. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), xxvi.

<sup>3</sup> David Lowenstein, *Milton and the Drama of History: Historical Vision, Iconoclasm, and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 2.

worthy deeds ought to write with no less largeness of spirit and experience of the world than he who did them.”<sup>4</sup> Milton outlines how effective history must also be affective; that is, Milton delineates a “largeness of spirit” that enables the historian, not so much to imitate the great historical deeds that he records, but to tap into the emotional atmosphere of the historical moment that he represents. By *feeling like* the past, Milton suggests, the historian can represent history faithfully because he has kept emotional faith with that past and, crucially for Milton, the past has kept faith with the historian.

However, Milton’s emotional relationship with England’s past highlights the affectively shifting sands this relationship endured as Milton attempted to “worthily write” the national past in a better way than his sixteenth-century predecessors. Milton’s stirring rhetoric in the de Brass letter coincides with the years in which he was completing *The History of Britain*, the only formal work of historiography that Milton would ever write. Milton worked on the *History* off and on over the course of twenty years; the bulk of the composition took place in 1649, was interrupted by his appointment as Latin Secretary, and Milton concluded the *History* shortly before Charles II’s restoration and published it in 1670.<sup>5</sup> Thus, while one might readily expect the work to register Milton’s shifting (and pessimistic) view of England’s recent past, what is so striking is how the *History* manifests an increasingly agonistic relationship with the previous century’s efforts to record and write that past. Paul Stephens argues that Milton’s relationship to the nation between 1649 and 1666 becomes “agonistic both in terms of his idealistic determination to develop and reshape the identity he had inherited and his complex response to

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<sup>4</sup> Letter 23, in *Columbia*, XII, 91-95.

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed account of *The History of Britain*’s byzantine textual history, see Nicholas von Maltzahn, *Milton’s History of Britain: Republican Historiography in the English Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) 22-48. Von Maltzahn notes that the biggest impediment to studying the *History* is confusion over when parts of it were composed. Von Maltzahn finds that the Digression, the source of much of this confusion, was added in 1680 but was no doubt written as part of Book III during its composition in “the revolutionary years of 1648-49” (21).

the various pressures that would try and disrupt his community-inspired self-fashioning project.”<sup>6</sup> I adopt this model to argue that Milton’s agonistic relationship to the nation bears itself out as an equally agonistic relation to both the national past and the affective history of the sixteenth-century. In *The History of Britain*, Milton is by turns furious and impatient with, bitingly ironic towards, and dismissive of England’s pre-Norman history. But while previous examinations of the text have noted how these emotions are directed at the dissolute post-Roman Britons, the slavish Saxons, and above all those “dubious Relaters. . . . blind, astonsh’d, and strook with superstition. . . .in one word, Monks” (*CPW* 5:127-28), what has been less considered is how Milton’s jeremiads might register his own deeply passionate and deeply conflicted emotional relationship with the sixteenth-century affective history from which he inherited both the material, the narrative form, and the affective technologies of his own historiography.

*The History of Britain* offers a distinct meta-reflection upon Milton’s emotional relationship with both England’s past and the previous century’s efforts to write that past. Therefore, this epilogue will examine how Milton’s historiography both employs and actively questions forms of feeling and experiencing English history developed by his sixteenth-century forbears. To illustrate what I view as Milton’s adoration of, and anger with, affective history, I will compare the *History of Britain* to a sixteenth-century work not yet examined in this dissertation: Holinshed’s *Chronicles*. I think that by comparing Milton’s incomplete effort in the *History of Britain* to the text that has come to define sixteenth-century English historiography, we might be in a better position to deal with the angsty, bitter, and censorious overall atmosphere of Milton’s work. In railing against the dubiousness of ancient British history, I argue, Milton simultaneously battles an experiential philosophy of time and history that he would have

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<sup>6</sup> Paul Stevens, “Milton and National Identity,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Milton*, ed. Nicholas McDowell and Nigel Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 346.

encountered in the writing of Edward Hall, the *Mirror*, Edmund Spenser, and William Shakespeare. Furthermore, I think that Milton embraced affective history so fully that it led him to develop a personal faith in English history that would ultimately fail him: the faith that the English nation could (and would) perform worthy deeds, and that Milton would then write them worthily.

I acknowledge that the comparison of Milton and Holinshed's *Chronicles* might initially seem an odd choice. While, as Nicholas von Maltzahn shows, Milton follows Holinshed in his choice of stories, and while Holinshed proves a valuable source to Milton throughout the *History*'s five books, there would appear to be more obvious sources of influence elsewhere: particularly in the historiography of Bale or Foxe, in republican classical historians like Sallust, and in post-classical sources like Gildas.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, as Wyman Herendeen has argued in his examination of Holinshed's impact on later historians, Holinshed's influence can be hard to track because many authors tried to mask or suppress their emulation of the chronicle.<sup>8</sup> But what I think makes this comparison fruitful is the fact that Holinshed and Milton pointedly differ on a fundamental issue of form. Both Holinshed's *Chronicles* and the *History of Britain* espouse what I call an "inclusion principle"—i.e. what material should be included and why—that is intended to provoke and influence a reader's emotional response to history. Holinshed's "inclusion principle" is, to positively adopt F.J. Levy's negative term, one of "agglomeration."<sup>9</sup> That is, Holinshed's *Chronicle* refuses to exclude stories and indulges wholeheartedly in *copia* because, for this work, the affective substance of history resides in its details, and to omit even the most

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<sup>7</sup> "He may also have relied on Holinshed's guidance as he wrote; certainly his choice of stories reflects Holinshed's choice, and his opening sentence echoes Holinshed's opening." Von Maltzahn, *History of Britain*, 26.

<sup>8</sup> Wyman Herendeen, "Later Historians and Holinshed," in *The Oxford Handbook of Holinshed's Chronicles*, ed. Felicity Heal, Ian W. Archer, and Paulina Kewes (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2012), 235-250.

<sup>9</sup> Levy, *Tudor Historical Thought*, 184.

insignificant minutiae would deprive the reader of an affective entry point into the past itself. In stark contrast, Milton's *History* adopts an inclusion principle of "brevity" in the belief that his work thus provides "that which hitherto hath been needed most, with plain, and lightsome brevity, to relate *well and orderly things worth the noting*, so as it may best instruct and benefit them that read" (*CPW* 5:4, emphasis mine). By trying to distill the whole mass of ancient British history into its "Sparknotes" version, Milton sets himself up in agonistic relation to Holinshed and the sixteenth-century's methods for facilitating affective contact with the nation's past.

As Annabel Patterson influentially established, the "bloated" nature of Holinshed's *Chronicles* is in fact a methodological strategy, and what previous centuries of scholarship took for disorganization, lack of vision, or plain incompetence on the part of the Holinshed contributors was in fact a deliberate formal choice with proto-liberal political goals in mind.<sup>10</sup> In the address "To the Reader," Holinshed offers a refreshingly unapologetic reason for the *Chronicle*'s length and its inclusion of seemingly unimportant detail: "I was lothe to omit any thing that might encrease the Readers knowledge, whiche causeth the booke to grow so great"<sup>11</sup> Patterson demonstrates that, in their copious and non-exclusionary attention to detail, the Holinshed writers pursue an intentionally "hands-off historiography" that bears witness to their radical project to turn readers into critically discerning historians. Jennifer Richards extends this argument to show that "Holinshed et al. understand the documents they present as rhetorical actions, and it is clear that the reader is expected to arrive at a judgment by evaluating some

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<sup>10</sup> Annabel Patterson, *Reading Holinshed's Chronicles* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 1-21. For an overview of the *Chronicle*'s origins, the contributors to Holinshed's *Chronicle*, and the major differences between its 1577 and 1587 editions, see also "The Making of the Chronicles," *The Holinshed Project*, <http://www.cems.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/chronicles.shtml>.

<sup>11</sup> "Preface to the Reader," *Holinshed's Chronicles*, vol. 6, 1587, *The Holinshed Project*, [http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/texts.php?text1=1587\\_1425](http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/texts.php?text1=1587_1425).

strongly worded and deeply interested arguments.”<sup>12</sup> I am pursuing a similar point, from a different angle; in my view, Holinshed’s *Chronicles* advance a form of history as “choose your own adventure” based on its encouragement of emotional response and affective contact between readers and the past. Holinshed readily acknowledges that much of the ancient history documented by the *Chronicles* is not only doubtful, but very likely untrue: “First concerning the Historie of England, as I have collected the same out of many and sundry Authours, in whome what contrarietie, negligence, and rashnesse, sometime is founde in their reports.”<sup>13</sup> But rather than responding with the crippling doubt or anxiety that others have diagnosed in early modern treatments of British history mythic origins, Holinshed shrugs off the difficulty: “For my parte, I have in things doubtfull rather chosen to shewe the diversitie of their writings, than by over ruling them, and using a peremptory censure, to frame them to agree to my liking: leaving it neverthelesse to eche mans judgement, to controlle them as he seeth cause.”<sup>14</sup> Holinshed sanguinely argues that a work of history has a responsibility to the reader: a responsibility not to censure or abbreviate one’s sources, but rather to provide as much vibrant, diverse detail as possible from the source. Holinshed’s *Chronicles* invite the reader to adjudicate, judge, and indeed select the version of ancient British history that satisfies him or her both intellectually and emotionally. Thus, Holinshed employs *copia* as the reader’s affective lifeline into the past; as “choose-your-own-adventure,” or more accurately as “choose-your-own-history,” Holinshed’s *Chronicles* endeavor to create an experience of the past for their reader in which they decide what constitutes their history based on how that history makes them feel, in addition to how that history engages the reader intellectually.

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<sup>12</sup> Jennifer Richards, “Rhetoric,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Holinshed’s Chronicles*, ed. Felicity Heal, Ian W. Archer, and Paulina Kewes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 287-88.

<sup>13</sup> “Preface to the Reader.”

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

Through rhetorically intentional agglomeration, Holinshed's *Chronicles* create an experience of the past that draws readers into history and that encourages their participation and responsiveness. Furthermore, as Bart Van Es has shown, "Holinshed helped to create a kind of *reader* as well as a kind of *writer*."<sup>15</sup> This notion of participatory, responsive reading constitutes the chief legacy that Holinshed would have imparted to John Milton. I argue that Milton absorbed Holinshed's encouraged form of affective engagement with the national past in such a way that it shaped his personal mission to write England's own glorious history into being, pending of course the English nation actually making that glorious history happen in the first place. In the *History*, however, we see a much different attitude toward history in general and British history in particular, an attitude that subtly reflects Milton's increasingly antagonistic relationship to the copiously detailed, textured, lively affective history he would have encountered in Holinshed (and, by implication, the texts examined in this dissertation). As Von Maltzahn observes, Milton opens the *History* with a sentence that almost directly copies Holinshed's opening line: "The beginning of Nations, those excepted of whom sacred books have spoken, is to this day unknown" (*CPW* 5:1). But Milton offers not only a justification for his inclusion of mythic British history—a justification famous for its nod to the "rhetoricians and Poets" who have made better use of this history than the historians—but also a stinging explanation for why ancient British history remained undocumented in the first place:

Perhaps esteem and contempt of the public affairs then present, as not worth recording, might partly be in cause. Certainly oft-times we see that wise men, and of best abilitie have forborn to write the Acts of thir own days, while they beheld with a just loathing and disdain, not only unworthy, how pervers, how corrupt, but often how ignoble, how petty, how below all History the persons and thir actions were. (*CPW* 5:1-2)

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<sup>15</sup> Bart Van Es, "Later Appropriations," in *The Oxford Handbook of Holinshed's Chronicles*, ed. Felicity Heal, Ian W. Archer, and Paulina Kewes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 576.



In this indictment of the past as unworthy of a historian's labors, we see the negative fruits of Milton's engagement with affective history of the sixteenth-century. His enthusiastic embrace of affective history as that which facilitates felt contact with the past simultaneously encouraged Milton's belief in *eloquence* as the determining factor for what counts as history, and what doesn't. At some point, the "worthy deeds" of history and the eloquence with which they were written into history became inseparable, in Milton's mind. That is, certain deeds produce well-written history if they merit it; if the past itself is not worthy, or falls short of Milton's characteristically rigorous and forever entwined moral and formal standards, then it simply does not count as history.

Milton defines history based upon inseparable categories of formal and ethical worthiness; but increasingly Milton's own affective connection to England's past mutates to the point where, even as he wrote the *History of Britain*, he viewed the British past as undeserving of history and deserving of oblivion. In stark contrast to his predecessors of the previous century, who were loath to leave out anything that might benefit, instruct, or please a reader, Milton battles against their principles of inclusion and "choose-your-own-history." Instead, Milton adopts an organizing principle of extreme brevity to just get through instances in the English past where heroism and eloquence are not in proper, symbiotic relation. While we might explain Milton's brevity as evidence of his extreme fatigue with the task of writing this contemptible past for an equally contemptible present, he also calls attention to his formal difference from his predecessors in order to critique those predecessors in the scathing terms he usually reserves for members of the clergy:

Hitherto hath bin collected what there is of certainty with circumstance of time and place to be found register'd, and no more than barely register'd in annals of best note. . . .But this disease hath bin incident to many more Historians: and the age wherof we now write, hath had the ill hap, more then any since the first

fabulous times, to be surcharg'd with all the idle fancies of posterity. (*CPW* 5:162-63)

This statement serves as the prelude to Milton's examination of King Arthur, and in belittling the sources for the story that was once to be the subject of his own great epic, Milton also lashes out at the affective history that once allowed him to view the English past as the best field for him to exercise his talents and fulfill his vocation. Both the English past and the English present have failed Milton's impossibly high emotional, ethical, and histrionic standards, and he uses moments of abbreviation in the *History* to call attention to his own angry departure from sixteenth-century means of representing and feeling history that he has inherited, learned, and practiced: "He who can accept of Legends for good story, *may quickly swell a volume with trash*, and had need be furnish'd with two only necessities, leasure, and beleif, whether it be the writer, or he that shall read" (*CPW* 5:166, emphasis mine). Here, Milton excoriates the principles of affective participation and "choose-your-own adventure" that have allowed the Arthur myth to maintain its hold over English historiography for so long. Shockingly, moreover, he deems chronicles (and, by implication, the poetry and plays they inspired) that enabled English readers not to just know history, but to feel it and come into emotional contact with it, as trash. Milton cannot write his own present into history, nor can he write his nation's past as history, because he views it as ignoble and unworthy. To Milton's mind, the present must prove itself worthy to become the past, and the past must prove itself worthy to become history. But, as the *History of Britain* attests, England's past (both distant and recent) does not deserve to become history; and thus, even at the heights of his righteous anger at England's past, Milton's abbreviated historiography illustrates his increasing "indifferen[ce] to the particular nation," and its particular past, "that had betrayed his best hopes."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Stevens, "Milton and National Identity," 343.

For John Milton, affective history's chief legacy is one of intense disappointment and, to an extent, betrayal, because the affective history of Hall, Holinshed, the *Mirror*, Spenser, and Shakespeare trained Milton to have faith that his nation might make Reformist future-history possible. In feeling his nation's past, and in experiencing it as if he "were coeval with time itself," I think that Milton believed England could in fact leap timelines and achieve its glorious destiny as paragon of the Reformation. Crucially, moreover, affective history led Milton to yoke together his vocations as both a national poet and a history-maker; perhaps more so than any early modern subject, Milton tries to feel his way into the past, and thereby shape the present and future. However, the *History* demonstrates that having an embodied, emotional relationship with the past paradoxically placed Milton in a past he did not wish to return to, that he could not redeem, and that too violently reflected his own present. Thomas Corns observes that "Milton's *History* is almost a text without heroes. . . . [He] surveys the peoples trooping over the British landscape in the dark ages and finds them all wanting."<sup>17</sup> Thus, through his combative principle of brevity in handling his chronicle source material, we see Milton encouraging readers to avoid all-together the structures of feeling that brought him into such visceral, and bitterly disappointing, affective contact with his nation's past.

Through this strenuous exertion of brevity in his handling of the ancient British material, Von Maltzahn concludes that Milton "subordinates his subject, and asserts the moral rigour of the author even as it controls and diminishes this ancient history. For many of his early readers this was enough."<sup>18</sup> Milton's *History* was commended, if not exactly praised, by readers for its condensed version of Britain's detailed mythic history; thus both the material of sixteenth-

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<sup>17</sup> Thomas N. Corns, "Miscellaneous and Posthumous Publications," in *John Milton: The Prose Works* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998), 133.

<sup>18</sup> Von Maltzahn, *History of Britain*, 220.

century historiography, and the affective structures for feeling and experiencing the past that such works facilitated, give way to Milton's deliberate, and perhaps therapeutic, abbreviated censure of his predecessors. As von Maltzahn, David Lowenstein, Andrew Escobedo, and others have suggested, writing the *History* seems to have led Milton to a different conception of historical time that influences the later poems.<sup>19</sup> While he might have given up on British ancestors or English countrymen ever realizing the gloriously reformed timeline the young Milton so exuberantly imagined, the mature Milton appears to have reached the end of British history with the ability to set his poetic sights on an affective history of greater scope. I concur that Milton's agonistic battling of affective history throughout the *History of Britain* at least brings him to perhaps a more patient philosophy of being-in-time. I close this consideration of affective history's legacy with one of the *History*'s more poignant images, in which Milton renders history's process into a vibrant, if mellowed, vision that resonates with the conclusion to *Paradise Lost*: "By this time, like one who had set out on his way by night, and travail'd through a Region of smooth or idle Dreams, our History now arrives on the Confines, where day-light and truth meet us with a cleer dawn, representing to our view, though at a farr distance, true colours and shapes" (*CPW* 5:37). The *History* provided a fruitful—if combative—trial ground for the poet to begin seeing history itself as a story not just of frustrating failure, but of "wand'ring steps and slow" (12: 648).<sup>20</sup> Therefore, in writing and thus feeling his way out of England's past, Milton places himself in felt, embodied contact with salvation history.

While the affective history of Hall, the *Mirror*, Spenser, and Shakespeare might have left Milton feeling betrayed by, and eventually unresponsive to, England's past, I do not believe

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<sup>19</sup> See Lowenstein, *Milton and the Drama of History*, 92-151; Escobedo, *Nationalism and Historical Loss*, 185-204.

<sup>20</sup> All references to Milton's verse are to John Milton, *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Odyssey, 1957).

Milton ever wholly abandons the structures for feeling history that once imbued him with such hope. Instead, affective history facilitates Milton's developing and rich treatments of temporality throughout his late masterpieces, including that uncanny, temporally hybrid, emotionally radical moment in *Paradise Regained* in which all of cosmic history collides in two lines of iambic pentameter: "Tempt not the Lord thy God; he said and stood. / But Satan smitten with amazement fell" (4:561-62). As Christ and Satan recognize one another, and enact in miniature all historical time, Milton betrays his continued indebtedness to affective history's ability to eliminate distinctions between present, past, and future; and England's last affective historian offers one of early modern English literature's final experiences of viscerally embodied, present pastness.

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